



Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

INTRODUCTION TO SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS

We are happy that you have become a student of the incomparable teachings of our Guru-Founder, Paramahansa Yogananda. Through application of the moral and esoteric principles of original Christianity and of original Yoga presented in these teachings -- especially the simple techniques of meditation handed down to us by the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship -- you will discover a life divine. You will realize a spiritual fellowship with other truth seekers on this path; and the supreme joy of "**satsanga**" -- fellowship with God, our one Father.

The real meaning of any scripture can be known only through direct experience. That inner knowledge is accessible to all men who attain soul-perception or Self-realization. Followers of all creeds may apply Self-Realization Fellowship teachings: basic spiritual truths that develop man's potentialities for living a **godly** life. Our **humble** desire is to help you, through these teachings, to expand your consciousness until you understand by your own Self-realization **the eternal Truth** behind all great religions, and to foster goodwill and **universal brotherhood** in the name of the one God.

The Self-Realization Fellowship principles and techniques will help you to erase forever all doubts as to the existence, nature, and power of God. But merely reading the words of our Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, will not suffice to bring forth the inner illumination of Self-realization. He often said: "Mahavatar Babaji and Lahiri Mahasaya have given to the world, through this work that they sent me here to establish, the scientific techniques by which real truth seekers can consciously follow the quickest route to the Infinite. The Lessons you will receive are impregnated with the spirit of the great masters of Self-Realization Fellowship: Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, **Mahavatar Babaji**, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Swami Sri Yukteswar. If you study the Lessons with reverence and deep attention, and, along with that, deeply practice meditation, you will be in touch with the divine link of these masters. When a student tunes in with the wisdom of a God-sent guru-preceptor, then by his efforts to follow the guru's teaching, and by the inner guidance he receives from the guru, that student can find liberation. Those who are steadfast will ultimately be lifted into the kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness."

You should give some time to God. No person is really so busy that he is unable to devote a part of each day to the most important of all man's duties -- seeking oneness with his Creator. Students who knock at the door of spiritual opportunity with their best efforts will find it swinging open, for God does indeed "help those who help themselves." As soon as the devotee begins to

understand the ultimate Reality that sustains all things and all beings, he cries in joy: "Lord, nothing that I ever sought in the world is as wonderful as Thou art -- Thou, the Giver of all **gifts.**"

Paramahansaji again and again stressed that the universal precepts of the scriptures are meant not only for followers of the monastic life but for all mankind. He pointed out that attuning the limited **human** consciousness to God's will is not otherworldly, but practical. "Have a partnership with the Lord in all your undertakings," he advised. Without God's support man inevitably fails; because strength and wisdom for success in the battle of life come from the Infinite Source. Ignoring God, man cuts his own lifeline. Those persons are closest to unraveling the mystery of life who are consciously seeking communion with God, the First Cause.

Regardless of religious affiliations, all persons who sincerely seek spiritual advancement are welcome to study the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. These sacred teachings constitute the formal religion of students who make **Self-Realization Fellowship** their Church. Initiation in the highest technique of meditation, Kriya Yoga, is the spiritual baptism of this Church, and is given when students establish church-membership affiliation with Self-Realization Fellowship.

Application for Kriya Yoga may be made after completing Steps **I** and **II** of the Lessons, a period of approximately one year if the Lessons are received without interruption on a biweekly basis, as is the case with the majority of students. Initiation in Kriya Yoga signifies acceptance of the holy guru-disciple relationship between the student and Paramahansa Yogananda. Kriya Yogis pledge their spiritual loyalty to the Gurus and to Self-Realization Fellowship.

You are welcome to write us any questions about the Lessons or about spiritual problems; or to request divine assistance through prayer. Your letters will receive sympathetic attention and will be treated confidentially. Such correspondence is looked after by monks and sisters of the Self-Realization Order. These renunciants have dedicated their lives to finding God by following this path, and to serving Him by helping others (insofar as it is within their power to do so) toward that highest of all achievements.

We pray that to the end you travel with us the Kriya Yoga highway to the Infinite.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE LORD'S PRAYER*

An Interpretation by Paramahansa Yogananda

O Heavenly Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God! may our ceaseless silent utterance of Thy holy Name transform us to Thy likeness.

Inspire us, that our matter worship be changed to adoration of Thee. Through our purified hearts may Thy perfect kingdom come on earth, and all nations be liberated from misery. Let the soul freedom within us be manifested outwardly.

May our wills grow strong in overcoming worldly desires and finally be attuned to Thy faultless will.

Give us our daily bread: food, health, and prosperity for the body; efficiency for the mind; and, above all, Thy love and wisdom for the soul.

It is Thy law that "with the same measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."** May we forgive those who offend us, ever mindful of our own need for Thine unmerited mercy.

Leave us not in the pit of temptations into which we have fallen through our misuse of Thy gift of reason. **Shouldst** Thou wish to test us, O Spirit, may we realize Thou art enchanting beyond any earthly temptation.

Help us to deliver ourselves from the shadowy bonds of the sole evil: ignorance of Thee

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

* Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

** Luke 6:38.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SRF TEACHINGS SRF teachings are a special dispensation for the Atomic Age, sent forth from India, ancient land of spiritual wisdom, by a line of fully enlightened, Christlike Gurus -- Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda. Self-Realization Fellowship teachings fulfill **Christ's** promise that he would send the "**Comforter**." "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to **you**" (John 14:26). Our Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, has given the following explanation:

These Biblical words refer to the threefold nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Sat, Tat, and Aum in the Hindu scriptures). God the Father is the Absolute, the Unmanifested, existing beyond vibratory creation. God the Son is the Christ Consciousness (Brahma or Kutastha Chaitanya) existing within vibratory creation; this Christ Consciousness is the "**only** begotten" or sole reflection in creation of the **Uncreated** Infinite. The outer manifestation of the omnipresent Christ Consciousness, its "**witness**" (Revelation 3:14), is Aum, the Word or Holy Ghost: invisible divine power, the only doer, the sole causative and activating force that upholds all creation through vibration. Aurn the blissful Comforter is heard in meditation and reveals to the devotee the ultimate Truth, bringing "**all** things to. . . remembrance. "

The student receives in the 29th Lesson the Aurn (Om) Technique of Meditation, through whose practice he may hear the cosmic sound of Aum, the Holy Ghost. By deep attunement with Aurn he comes to feel the presence of **the** Christ. It is thus that we may "receive **him**"--i.e., consciously commune with the Christ Consciousness that was manifest in Jesus and in all other illumined masters. This experience of receiving the Christ Consciousness within **one's** own consciousness is the real "**second coming**" of Christ.

Devoted, regular practice of the Aurn (Om) Technique of Meditation (Lesson 29) and of the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration (Lesson 21) is essential in the daily life of every Self-Realizationist who is seriously seeking spiritual advancement. He should also faithfully practice the Recharging Exercises (Lesson 8-A), whose principles were discovered in 1916 by **Paramahansa Yogananda**.

PLAN OF SRF LESSONS The Lessons are grouped into "steps," each of which **contains** approximately twenty-five Lessons; at the end of each step the student receives a summary of the preceding material, together with pertinent questions to help him in reviewing that step; and a brief questionnaire that may be completed and sent to Self-Realization Fellowship as a progress report.

Many different subjects are covered, in some cases at length (by continuation from Lesson to Lesson). There is something of interest for everyone, young or old, busy or at leisure. And whether a subject is of immediate

interest to the student or not, the principles of Self-realization brought out in each case are universally applicable.

THE BEST METHOD OF STUDY For a discriminative understanding of SRF teachings, the following method of study has been found by most students to give the best results:

- (1) Read over an entire SRF Lesson once, trying to grasp its main purport. Do not break the continuity of thought to mull over points not immediately clear to you as you read.

- (2) Now begin reading again, but this time read only one paragraph and, focusing your deepest attention on the subject matter, weigh the meaning of the words in the balance of your mind. Proceed to the next paragraph and continue in the same manner.

In this way you will grasp the full meaning of all important points without fatiguing memorization and without loss of time owing to wandering thoughts.

Mother Center will be happy to help you with your questions concerning the SRF teachings and techniques. But remember that understanding is a process of growth. If you feel you are encountering some real problem or obstacle, do not hesitate to write to Mother Center for guidance and help. Otherwise, first give yourself time to study, apply, and assimilate the instructions in the SRF Lessons. More and more of your questions will be answered with each successive SRF Lesson. All of your queries will be resolved as you deepen your own intuitive, all-knowing soul faculty of perception and understanding by the regular practice of deep meditation.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, Guru-Preceptor **Parama-**hansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts.

THE WAY TO A HIGHER LIFE

Self-Realization Fellowship teaches the highest principle of spiritual living: meditation combined with activity. Everywhere people are working, but they have forgotten God. First meditate and feel the divine Presence; then do your work saturated with the consciousness of God. If you do this you will never become tired. If you work for your Divine Beloved, your life will be filled with love and strength. SRF students are taught how to dedicate inwardly to God all the day's activities; and, when work is done, to commune with Him in the temple of silence.

Spirituality cannot be bought in a marketplace. God must be earnestly sought. When you are very desirous of finding Him, the Lord sends a guru. A true guru is a direct link with God. The guru has only one purpose: to introduce you to the Heavenly Father. When you are in tune with a true guru you are in tune with the Lord. The relationship is eternal. Even after death, a guru continues to help his disciples (i.e., those who recognize him as their guru and who faithfully follow his teachings). This is a spiritual law.

Hence every SRF student should understand and respect the significance of the link of SRF Gurus--Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda--with whom all SRF students are connected by affiliation with Self-Realization Fellowship. Those who desire the help of these Gurus in finding God should follow the way that the Gurus have shown. There are students who do not follow the teachings, yet expect spiritual benefits just the same. Those benefits will not come! An SRF student should never go to bed without first giving his deepest attention to God. Those who practice the SRF techniques of meditation daily, with sincere devotion to the Lord, will find by their own Self-realization the validity of SRF teachings. SRF asks no one to believe blindly, but to practice the methods offered in these sacred teachings. By being loyal to the Gurus in this way, the student makes it possible for the Gurus to guide him surely to the Divine Goal.

SRF teaches control of the body until one is its master. Then when you sit to meditate you will not nod. Practice these teachings and you will make your body a fit temple to receive God. The human body has to be made ready to receive the divine power. The state of consciousness has to be right. Then God will come to you!

But the Lord may not respond right away. Only when He is convinced that you seek Him not for the satisfaction of temporal desires or for spiritual glamour and glory--but simply to be His, unconditionally, forever--will He open the door. The devotees who are faithful to the end are those for whom He will open the door. But only He can tell when that day of final beatitude will come.

God does not always appear before us just because we have meditated deeply for several years, or for whatever we consider a proper length of time. If there is some flaw in their love, even saints who have meditated for incarnations may be chastened by God's failure to appear. But to those who make no demand, who just keep on striving, saying, "Lord, I will wait for you, no matter how long it takes," He will come. The greatest factor for success with God is to have that resolute desire. Lord Krishna said, "Out of one thousand, one seeks Me; and out of one thousand that seek Me, one knows Me" (Bhagavad-Gita VII:3).

God is caressing you through the breeze, in the sunshine. He is the food that you eat. He is the One that nurtures you as father, mother, and relatives. He is the only eternal relative. That is why Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold--now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

No one belongs to another person. We have all come from God. On earth we are seemingly strangers; it is only when we love the Lord that we become truly brothers and sisters of all. Salvation is for men and women who love God, those who go on seeking Him to the end--not just to "stick it out," but because they love Him.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God" was Jesus' advice to all people. Man was not made merely for producing children and for selfish aggrandizement. Millions of persons have thought those goals to be sufficient, but they were mistaken. At death they left this world, bewildered and dissatisfied, their soul hunger unappeased.

Jesus, Krishna, and the Masters are great reflections of God, perfect examples for you to follow. Thus you may know you too are a potential child of God. We are all sons of the one Father. But you have to realize that! May that consciousness come to you! No one should call himself a sinner. Whatever your errors, they belong to the past; they are not you. God is yours! Christ, Krishna, and the great Masters are yours! Hold that truth in your bosom, in every thought you have; and one day you will find that you have only dreamed you were a man; you will wake and know you are a god, an eternal reflection of the Infinite Spirit. The greatest sin is ignorance of our oneness with Him.

Self-Realization Fellowship teachings are a great dispensation sent forth into the world by Jesus Christ and Mahavatar Babaji to unite the original Christianity and the original Yoga, to bring real God-communion to people in all lands. SRF has come to show people how to seek God. Self-Realization is the new dispensation that was promised in the scriptures. Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost after he had departed. "Holy Ghost" means the sacred cosmic vibration that underlies the structure of all creation, the vibration you can hear by practicing the "Om" (Aum) technique of meditation (Lesson 29). SRF is bringing that teaching, that scientific method, which has never before been given to the world. When you practice the technique and hear and commune with the sacred vibration, the Aum (Om) or Amen, you will be one with the Lord through the Christ Consciousness immanent in it.

If you sincerely follow this path of the Masters, Self-Realization Fellowship will take you to your highest Goal, the Cosmic Beloved--God!

Anyone who receives this message with an open heart shall not go away unfulfilled. His heart shall become a wonderful cup of realization that will gradually expand to receive the ocean of Infinity, the power of the eternal Spirit.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

If you will study these Lessons for at least half an hour every day, you will soon realize a new goal of happiness, inner awakening, and Self-realization that will forever shed light upon you so that you may live according to the highest standards of existence. You will feel God; you will see Him smiling in the stars and the blossoms; you will see Him templed within every human being and in every good thought and every love that you have.

When you have understood by your own Self-realization the spiritual message given here you will also realize that within these pages is the best that India has to offer. Self-Realization Fellowship brings you the universal technique of salvation, the royal highway to the Infinite.

AFFIRMATION

This day shall be the best day of my life. Today I will start with a new determination to dedicate my devotion forever at the feet of Omnipresence.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS--Volume 1

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MAY I ACT FROM FREE CHOICE, NOT HABIT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Teach me, O Father, to seek the soul's lasting happiness rather than temporary sense pleasures.

Strengthen my will power, that I escape from bad habits and reform myself by meditation **and** the influence of ~~spiritually~~ **spiritually minded** companions.

Give me the wisdom to follow happily the ways of righteousness. May I develop the soul faculty of discrimination that detects evil, in even its subtlest forms; and that guides me to the humble paths of goodness.

I would direct my life by the God-given power of free choice, not by the compulsions of hardened habits.

--From "**Whispers from Eternity**"

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to contact Thee first and thus harness my will and activity to the right goal.

THE DYNAMIC POWER OF WILL

DYNAMO OF VOLITION Volition is the dynamo that feeds all our powers. It initiates and keeps in continuous operation all our physical, mental, and spiritual actions. Without the spring of volition, we cannot walk, talk, think, work, or feel. In order not to exercise volition, or will power, one would have to lie down and enter a state of suspended animation. Even the slightest movement of the muscles (as in winking the eyelids) or any act of thinking is initiated by the use of volition.

A wish implies a helpless desire of the mind. A desire is a stronger wish; it is often followed by fitful efforts to manifest itself into action. An intention, or a determination, is a definite, strong desire expressed very forcefully once or twice through action for the accomplishment of a certain purpose. Such a determination, however strong, is often discouraged after one or perhaps several unsuccessful efforts. But a volition consists of a series of continuous, undiscourageable, unceasing determinations and acts revolving around a desire, until it becomes dynamic enough to produce the much-craved result. "Will and act until victory" is the slogan of all volitive activity. No matter how impossible of accomplishment his goal may seem, the man of volition never stops repeating conscious acts of determination to achieve it, as long as he lives.

WILL POWER GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE Does not will power govern evolution? Coercion or compulsion never brings about growth. It is freedom that accelerates evolution. Too much dependence upon what is external or objective throttles the possibility of progress and nips in the bud the potent factors of evolution. Progress presupposes the existence of the power of growth from within; and that a subject will evolve by adjusting itself to its environment, or by adapting its environment to itself. Unless he trains his will by application of scientific techniques such as Self-Realization Fellowship offers, man's power of volition atrophies.

The use of will power developed by the practice of SRF methods opens up limitless possibilities for all-round success. We must will to move or think. And we are almost continuously moving some part of the body and thinking. Therefore the determined direction of physical activities and thought force by a developed, consciously exercised will power, can accomplish many things that might be considered impossible. Using the will does not necessitate physical or mental strain. Exertion of conscious will means a cool, calm, determined,

increasingly steady and smooth-flowing effort of the attention and the whole being toward attaining a definite goal.

PHYSICAL PERFECTION THROUGH WILL POWER

SRF instructions combine the basic laws of physical well-being utilized by the ancient Hindu yogis and discoveries of modern physiological science.

Some Western athletes have learned to control certain muscles by will, but have failed to see the scientific principles underlying such control. The yogis of India have a large number of postures that they practice in order to strengthen and develop their will power. The will can be utilized to develop the body; and the will itself is developed in the process by the very exercising of it. Physical and mental development are intertwined, and help each other. The SRF technique of recharging the body by will is distinctive in that it teaches one how to concentrate his attention upon the inner energy--direct giver of strength and vitality to all the tissues in the body. The faithful student will find that practice of the technique invariably and consciously develops his will power along with his bodily strength.

EVOLUTION OF WILL POWER

The evolution of this great force should be thoughtfully studied. The newborn baby's first cry announced the birth of will power. The baby cries because it wants to remove the feeling of discomfort owing to the first painful opening and activity of the lungs. This is called "automatic physiological will." When the baby grows old enough to talk, and unquestioningly follows the wishes of its mother, it is said to possess "unthinking will." The mother calls the infant a "good boy" because he obeys her.

Then the baby grows older and begins to think for himself; and if the mother denies something that the baby thinks he should have, he begins to manifest obstinacy by offering resistance. The mother may become angry and call her child "naughty." But, in the first act of obstinacy, the baby is only using the next phase of evolving will, "blind will."

BLIND WILL

Will at this stage is termed "blind" because it is not usually guided by wisdom. Most young people use this explosive blind will without any worthwhile purpose, wasting energy and higher possibilities on passions, temptations, brawls, fast driving, rash resolutions, ungoverned appetites, and so forth. In the East we give the following illustration of the folly of letting the senses go ungoverned: The bee, for love of fragrance settles in the lotus flower; the petals entomb it if the bee forgets to get out before they close. The fish loves the taste of water; it dies when taken out of it. The moose loves music and is lured to its death by the flute of the hunter. The wild male elephant loves the sense of touch and is lured by the tame she-elephant to captivity--behavior true to human beings too! The insect loves the sight of light and perishes trying to enjoy the white loveliness of the candle flame. So each of these creatures dies because it is addicted to a single sense. But man is attached to all five senses, and he must watch his step if he would save

himself from his blind will, which urges him to jump into one of the yawning crevasses of the five sense lures.

THINKING WILL Realizing the futility of blind will--after experiencing its results--the youth learns what is meant by "thinking will." Even thinking will, however, is not an end in itself; for unless it is guided by discrimination, it becomes semiparalyzed by wrong activities. But if one's thinking will retains its normal power and is made to revolve around a definite purpose, it becomes "dynamic volition." When such volition is used for wholesome purposes--actions in tune with the universal harmony or good--the will is strengthened and leads to success. A wrongly used will weakens itself, owing to lack of encouragement from truth, as it is out of tune with the universal order. When one knows that his objective or the nature of his purpose is worthwhile, then the tenacity of his volition becomes greater. The man of volition says:

"I will use my dynamic power of volition to fight for the truth until success comes. If death intervenes, I shall take up my activity with renewed determination in another incarnation, until I have fulfilled my good purpose. I'

A WILL--A WAY A strong will, by its own dynamic force, creates a way for fulfillment of its intention. By its very strength, the will sets into motion certain vibrations in the atmosphere; and nature, with its laws of order, system, and efficiency, thereupon responds by creating favorable circumstances. Will derives its greatest strength from an honest purpose, lofty motives, and a noble solicitude for doing good to the world at large. A strong will is never stifled; it always finds a way.

GOD'S WILL AND YOUR WILL God did not make us inert automatons, but instruments of His will, endowed with free choice to use that power as we please. God's will is not guided by whim or temptation. His will is guided by wisdom. God made us, His children, in His image, that we might guide our will with wisdom, even as He does. To teach people not to use their will is not only a ridiculous denial of the Divine Father's wish; indeed, it is an impossibility, since the will is involved in even the slightest movement of the muscles or in thinking.

NOT TEMPTATION BUT GOD All human craving and desire should be transmuted and turned toward God, instead of being allowed to delude the soul-image of God in man. Temptation is a delusive, compelling, conflicting, joy-expecting thought which should be used to pursue happiness-making truth and not misery-producing error. Although God is the Creator of consciousness, the vitiated consciousness in man turns away from Him and tries to lure the soul to concentrate upon temporary pleasures of the senses.

CONTACT GOD FIRST When you want to accomplish something important,

will and act after you have first contacted God. By contacting God first, you harness your will and activity to the right goal. As you cannot broadcast through a broken microphone, so must you remember that you cannot broadcast your prayers through a mental microphone that is disordered by restlessness. Repair your mind microphone by practicing deep calmness. Then give God a real soul-call. Do not give up after only one or two broadcasts if He does not seem to respond. You cannot get an answer by just calling someone and then running away. Similarly, it is ineffective to pray once and then let the attention run away. Continuously broadcast your prayer to God through your calm mental microphone until you hear His answering voice. Most people pray in restlessness, and without the determination to receive a response.

IN TUNE OR If one uses his will ignorantly, it produces wrong or evil
OUT OF TUNE actions. But if one guides his will with wisdom, his actions
 bring about good, for they are in tune with divine will, and
divine will is guided by wisdom. Wisdom-guided, self-initiated human will, and
human will guided by God's wisdom-guided will, are one and the same thing.

"THY WILL BE DONE" Jesus found his will so completely guided by wisdom
 that he could say to a dead man, "Lazarus, come
forth," and bring him to life; or "O my Father... Thy will be done," and with
full knowledge submit to the betrayal that led to his crucifixion (Matthew 26:42).
Many people misinterpret the real meaning of "Thy will be done," and preach a
dangerous doctrine of not using the will. Many others are physically lazy--and
most people are mentally lazy. They are unwilling even to initiate creative
thinking, or self-emancipating thinking, lest they succeed.

DIVINE WILL HAS The only savior of man is a constantly progressive
NO BOUNDARIES dynamic will. Human will, however powerful, is still
 limited by the circumference of the body and the bound-
aries of the physical universe. Man's will can initiate successful activities in
the body, or on earth, or in finding out the mysteries of distant stars. But
divine will has no boundaries; it works in all bodies, in all things. God said:
"Let there be light," and there was light. God's will is working in everything.
When by deep meditation and by wisdom-guided, unflinching, never discouraged
determination we can successfully keep our volition revolving around all our
noble desires, then our will becomes one with divine will.

Man's will ordinarily works within the boundaries of his own little circle of family, environment, world conditions, destiny, and prenatal and postnatal cause-and-effect governed actions. But divine dynamic volition can change destiny, wake the dead, move mountains into the sea, and divert the course of planets.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

For absolute control of your life and for destroying prenatal and postnatal root-causes of failure, you must exercise your will in every undertaking, until it shakes off its mortal delusion of being human will and becomes all-powerful divine will. You do not need to acquire this dynamic divine will. You already possess it in the image of God within you.

TWO FROGS IN TROUBLE

Once a big fat frog and a lively little frog were hopping along together when they had the misfortune to jump straight into a pail of fresh milk. They swam for hours and hours, hoping to get out somehow; but the sides of the pail were steep and slippery, and death seemed certain.

When the big frog was exhausted he lost courage. There seemed no hope of rescue. "Why keep struggling against the inevitable? I can't swim any longer," he moaned. "Keep on! Keep on!" urged the little frog, **who** was still circling the pail. So they went on for awhile. But the big frog decided it was no use. "Little brother, we may as well give up," he gasped, "I'm going to quit struggling."

Now only the little frog was left. He thought to himself, "Well, to give up is to be dead, so I will keep on swimming." Two more hours passed and the tiny legs of the determined little frog were almost paralyzed with exhaustion. It seemed as if he could not keep moving for another minute. But then he thought of his dead friend, and repeated, "To give up is to be meat for someone's table, so I'll keep on paddling until I die--if death is to come--but I will not cease trying--'while there is life, there's hope!'"

Intoxicated with determination, the little frog kept on, around and around and around the pail, chopping the milk into white waves. After awhile, just as he felt completely numb and thought he was about to drown, he **suddenly** felt something solid under him. To his astonishment, he saw that he was resting on a lump of butter which he had churned by his incessant paddling! And so the successful little frog leaped out of the milk pail to freedom.

AFFIRMATION

I shall tune my free will with the infinite will of God, and my only desire shall be to do the wisdom-guided will of Him who created me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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○ SPIRIT, I WORSHIP THEE IN ALL SHRINES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Into the temple of peace come Thou, O Lord of Joy!
Enter my shrine of meditation, O Bliss God! Sanctify me
with Thy presence.

Eternal Allah, hover over the lone minaret of my holy
aspiration. The mosque of my mind exudes a frankincense
of stillness.

On the altar of my inner vihara I place flowers of
desirelessness. Their chaste beauty is Thine, O Spirit!

In a tabernacle not made with hands, I bow before the
sacred ark and vow to keep Thy commandments.

Heavenly Father, in an invisible church built of
devotion granite, receive Thou my humble heart offerings,
daily renewed by prayer.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, in Thy universal temple of silence we are singing unto Thee a chorus of many-voiced religions. Teach us to bow to Thee, manifesting in all churches and temples erected in Thine honor.

WHAT IS THE BEST RELIGION?

Most people who follow a variety of teachings stick to none. Their choices are usually influenced by curiosity and imitation, rather than by any logical reason or necessity. Such students like to listen perpetually to new ideas from new personalities, without ever making a personal effort to assimilate the ideas. They may be compared to one who sets out to reach a certain destination, but becomes so enamored with walking that he wanders here and there, forgetting all about his goal.

Some students are led by curiosity to adopt a particular spiritual path, hoping to reach the destination of truth and wisdom; but they often become sidetracked by their insatiable curiosity. As they keep trying new ways for the thrill of a change, they never reach their goal. These people are interested in listening to spiritual truths, but not in making the effort to apply those truths in actual life and to realize them through experience, within the Self.

Superficial seekers fail to get anywhere because they do not separate the kernel of truth from the chaff of untested beliefs. They imagine they understand the truth of different teachings, without even trying to feel the joyous experience that comes through Self-realization of truth.

Real students are satisfied only when they can realize truth within themselves as a direct, personal experience. The difference between curiosity seekers and real seekers is that the former always seek new imaginary satisfactions or "thrills" from their studies. This seeming thirst for knowledge is an indication, more **often** than not, that such persons are actually satisfied with mere theories. Real seekers test and compare until they find applicable truths that increase their realization.

CHANGEABLE ENTHUSIASTS

What is the best way to find a true (and hence soul-satisfying) religion? Let us draw our conclusions from the following illustration:

When a dietitian eloquently expounds the wonderful results a particular system of diet will produce, Mr. John (who represents the average enthusiastic but changeable faddist) is inclined to be very much impressed. But if Mr. John continually puts off trying out that system of diet, he naturally loses interest in it as soon as the lecture series is over. But later on, when another dietitian visits town, Mr. John is eager to listen to him, because he remembers the sense of enthusiasm and imaginary stimulation he felt while listening to the previous lectures about a system of dietetics.

The chances are that once the second dietitian leaves town, Mr. John will not try out his system of diet either. Or perhaps Mr. John tries it for a little while, and then falls back into his old habit of eating ham sandwiches made with white bread, instead of cheese or egg sandwiches made with whole-wheat bread, as might have been suggested by the dietitian. Mr. John, being impelled by the theoretical desire to live right, thus develops the habit of listening to all the new dietitians that come to town, without ever following any of their instructions.

Mr. John also develops the habit of going only to dietitians whose names and teachings are new to him--no matter what their value. He, of course, thinks he is smart and that he has "outgrown" the best principles of dietetics prescribed by the first dietitian--even though such principles may have been better than the ones that have more recently aroused his enthusiasm. He imagines he knows a great deal about the various systems of dietetics just because he has listened to various disconnected lectures on the subject. So long as listening to new principles of dietetics produces the desire and the necessary action to work them out in daily life, so long is it good for a person to listen to such lecturers; but every "Mr. John" should remember he cannot follow all the systems of diet at the same time, and that he should not discard a good system for a lesser system of food science just because the latter happens to be new to him.

SEEK- - THEN CHOOSE THE BEST

The foregoing principles also apply to religion. Some students who have only theoretically tried different teachings are still seeking, instead of applying in their lives the best teachings they have found. They believe that they "know" all the principles just because they have heard them once, or because they put into practice a few of the principles for a little while. Such persons may be classed as curiosity seekers, and so long as they maintain this shallow approach they will never taste the bliss of Self-realization. Accepting the shadow for the substance, they are like persons who are satisfied merely

by listening to descriptions of orange blossom honey, given by different producers of the product, without ever tasting the honey itself.

Some people want to swallow every variety of food that is at hand, without giving the body a chance to assimilate any of it. This does not revitalize the system, it merely produces indigestion. Likewise, there are scriptural students who love to swallow good ideas without making them a part of their lives. Naturally, they suffer from theoretical indigestion. One who has nothing to eat must seek anything at hand in order to satisfy his hunger; but when one has access to various kinds of food, he should discriminate as to what is the best kind of food.

Also, if you are spiritually hungry and you do not find the right teacher --one who has attained Self-realization through true spiritual experience-- then you are justified, in the beginning, in trying to know truth through select books and lectures. But when you **have** experienced a little awakening, you will become increasingly hungry. At the same time you will find that your sources of spiritual food have multiplied. Then you should select carefully, from among the many teachings, that system best adapted to your needs--and stick to it.

Remember, if you are anxious to get to New York from Los Angeles, you do not spend half a lifetime trying out different kinds of conveyances such as bullock carts, horses and carriages, ships, automobiles, slow or fast airplanes; and in investigating the different long and short routes. You select the shortest route and pick the safest and fastest conveyance available, and use these to reach your destination.

Is any business more urgent than that of reaching, through Self-realization, the Source of all life? Then forsake habit-imposed theological beliefs that have proven to be blind alleys leading nowhere. You cannot ride in the fast airplane of Self-realization and in the old theological bullock cart at the same time, any more than you could follow two contradictory, dogmatic, theological routes at the same time. The best way lies in selecting the **shortest** route: the best technique of meditation. If you deeply, joyously, and continuously practice the techniques contained in these Lessons, without deviating from these methods of practice, you will be taking the fastest "airplane" to God.

Many seekers fail to find Truth because they **lose** themselves in the forest of theology, moving from one thicket of theory to another until they feel utterly bewildered. Prove that you are a true seeker by determining now, from the very beginning, that you will give careful, practical attention to the techniques and principles you have judiciously selected; and that with the help of your chosen teacher, or guru, you will keep on learning and practicing until you are able to see the results in yourself. The guru's help is important, for while you may find true religious principles expressed in good

books, you can never realize their full meaning until you see them manifested in the life of an enlightened teacher. Such a guru can help you when you are attuned to him, even though you are not in his presence.

Now you are just starting on your journey toward the goal of Self-realization. Persevere; and when you feel a growing satisfaction, an ever increasing peace, wisdom, and assurance from within, you will begin to realize that the best religion consists in your continuously progressing perception of your constantly growing inner happiness, felt in meditation.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Have you found Truth? True religion lies in conscious communion with God. The practice of religion should give you the joy of feeling God-consciousness. Concentrate on experiencing God's love, not on "miraculous" visions or demonstrations. Merge your consciousness into God-consciousness. Once you have found God, He will tell you all that you need to know.

The secret of true religion lies in the cave of stillness, in the cave of wisdom, in the cave of the spiritual eye. By concentration on the point between the eyebrows and by delving into the depths of silence, one can find answers to all the religious queries of the heart.

AFFIRMATION

I worship the one God honored
on the altars of all religious faiths.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"

3



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HOW TO MEDITATE

(Basic instructions, with an exercise in visualization)

INTRODUCTION Meditation is the science of reuniting the soul with Spirit.

The soul, descending from God into flesh, manifests its **consciousness** and life force through seven chakras, or centers of light, in man's cerebrospinal axis. (These are the "seven stars" and "seven churches" spoken of by St. John in the little-understood book of Revelation in the Bible.) Encased in the bodily prison, the soul consciousness and life force become identified with the physical vehicle and its mortal limitations. Scientific meditation awakens the soul consciousness in the seven cerebrospinal centers. In a state of divine recollectedness, the soul intuitively realizes its immortal nature and origin. -The **various progressive** states of soul awakening are accompanied by an ever increasing accession of inner peace and joy. In the most exalted states, soul and Spirit become reunited in ecstatic, blissful communion, or samadhi.

By meditation, then, we connect the little joy of the soul with the vast joy of the Spirit. Meditation should not be confused with ordinary concentration. Concentration consists in freeing the attention from distractions and in focusing it on any thought in which one may be interested. Meditation is that special form of concentration in which the attention has been liberated from restlessness and is focused on God. Meditation is concentration used to know God.

POSTURE One of the first requisites for meditation is correct posture.

The spine should be erect. When the devotee is seeking to direct his mind and life force upward through the cerebrospinal axis to the centers of higher consciousness in the brain, he should avoid stricture or pinching of the spinal nerves caused by improper posture.

Those persons whose legs are supple may prefer to meditate sitting **cross-legged** on a cushion on the floor, or on a firm bed. However, Paramahansa Yogananda recommended for most Westerners the following meditation pose:

Sit on a straight armless chair with the feet resting flat on the floor. Hold spine erect, abdomen in, chest out, shoulders back, chin parallel to the

ground. The hands, with palms upturned, should rest on the legs at the juncture of the thighs and the abdominal region to prevent the body from bending forward. The meditation chair should be of comfortable height, otherwise there is a tendency to allow the torso to lean forward or backward. If the correct posture has been assumed, the body will be stable yet relaxed, so that it is easily possible to remain completely still, without moving a muscle.

Each of the foregoing details is a contributing factor toward the chief aim of the meditation posture--an erect spine, held stable without strain or tension for the duration of the meditation period. If, because of bad habits of posture or congenital defects of posture, you experience difficulty or discomfort in maintaining the specified positions of feet, hands, shoulders, chest, and abdomen, make whatever commonsense adjustments are necessary to your individual need; but strive always toward accomplishing the ideal posture recommended by Paramahansa Yogananda.

When you are established in the meditation pose, inhale slowly and deeply (through the nostrils) to a count of 20; hold the breath to a count of 20; exhale slowly (through the mouth) to a count of 20. Practice this six to twelve times. (A shorter count may be used, provided it is the same count in each of the three parts.) Then inhale, tensing the whole body and clenching the fists. Relax all the body parts at once and, as you do so, expel the breath through the mouth in a double exhalation, "huh, huh." Repeat this practice six times. Then forget the breath. Let it flow in and out naturally, of its own accord, as in ordinary breathing.

With the eyelids half closed (or completely closed, if this is more comfortable to you), look upward, focusing the gaze and the attention as though looking out through a point between the eyebrows. (A person deep in concentration often "knits" his brows at this spot.) Do not cross the eyes or strain them; the upward gaze comes naturally when one is relaxed and calmly concentrated. What is important is fixing the whole attention at the point between the eyebrows. This is the Christ Consciousness center, the seat of the single eye spoken of by Christ: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). When the purpose of meditation is fulfilled, the devotee finds his consciousness automatically concentrated at the spiritual eye, and he experiences, according to his inner spiritual capacity, a state of joyous divine union with Spirit.

Making a steadfast effort, the beginner may in time perceive light, or even see the spiritual eye of three colors--a reflection of the actual luminous eye in the medulla oblongata (at the base of the skull where it joins the neck). This single eye of light reflected in the forehead is the astral eye of intuitive omnipresent perception. It takes deep **concentration** and calmness to behold the spiritual eye; a golden halo surrounding a circle of blue, in the center of which palpitates a five-pointed white star. Those who do see the spiritual eye

should strive to penetrate it by deeper concentration and by devoted prayer to God. The depth of calmness and concentration necessary for this are naturally developed through steady practice of the scientific SRF techniques of concentration and meditation (Lessons 21 and 29).

Whether you see the light of the spiritual eye or not, however, you should continue to concentrate at the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows, praying deeply to God and His great saints. In the language of your heart invoke their presence and their blessings. A good practice is to take an affirmation or a prayer from the Lessons, or from Paramahansa Yoganandaji's "Whispers from Eternity" or "Metaphysical Meditations," and spiritualize it with your own devotional yearning. Silently chant and pray to God, keeping the attention at the point between the eyebrows, until you feel God's response as calm, deep peace and inner joy.

VISUALIZATION Divine consciousness is **omnipresent**. In order to attune one's consciousness to it, it is necessary first to expand the mind by meditation on some aspect of God's infinite nature. Visualization is not realization; but visualization is an effective aid in deepening one's concentration, which is essential for the deep meditation that yields realization. The following exercise in visualization and mental expansion given by **Paramahansa Yogananda** will be found helpful in preparing the mind to practice the scientific techniques of meditation that are given in later Lessons:

"Sit upright. Focus your gaze and your mind at the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows. Fill your heart with joy. Behold! the sphere of darkness that you see with closed eyes is becoming a sphere of light and joy. This sphere is enlarging. Now it is bigger than your body. Go on expanding the sphere of joy and light. Your home and everyone in it are present in the sphere of light that you are beholding. Go on expanding it until you see your whole city in this sphere of light and joy. Ever increasing, the sphere of light and joy is encompassing the entire United States, and still it is expanding, including Europe, Asia, the world! See the world bathed in the light of this peaceful sphere of joy. The earth appears as a little ball moving in the vast sphere of light and joy. The sphere is becoming even larger; see! our planetary and stellar system, the Milky Way, and island galaxies, like little bubbles, are floating in it.

'Expand the sphere of light and joy within you, in which all things are moving, glimmering like the lights of a city. Meditate on and try to be one with that joy. God is joy, and we must find Him through joy. The scriptures say: 'Thou art That.' Your Self is one with this vast sphere of light that is your Father. You are this sphere of light and joy! Meditate on that. You have no boundaries--eternity above, below, everywhere. In this eternal sphere of light and joy all things are moving. Mentally affirm: 'In me worlds are floating like bubbles. I and my Father are One.'

"Now open your eyes. Look at the body and see how little it is! Close your eyes and realize again that you are not the body. You are the eternal sphere of light and joy in which all things have their being. Go on meditating, mentally affirming: 'I am the cosmic sphere of light, of joy, of love, in which worlds and universes are floating like bubbles. My Father is this cosmic sphere of light; my Father and I are One. I am not the body; I am the eternal sphere of light. Aum. Aum. Amen.'"

(Paramahansa Yogananda cautioned devotees against the erroneous thought, "I am God." One should realize, rather, "God has become myself." The soul is like a wave on the sea-bosom of Spirit. The soul wave is one with the Sea, but the wave is not the Sea.)

Through daily practice of the foregoing instructions, you can prepare yourself for the practice of the basic techniques of concentration and meditation that are given in later Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. These scientific techniques will enable you to dive ever more deeply in the great ocean of God's presence. We all exist at this very moment in that ocean of Spirit; but only by steadfast, devoted, scientific meditation may we consciously perceive that we are individualized soul waves on the vast ocean of God's bliss.

The meditation period should last at least thirty minutes in the morning and thirty minutes at night. The longer you sit, enjoying the state of meditative calm, the faster you will progress spiritually. Carry into your daily activities the calmness you feel in meditation; that calmness will help you to bring harmony and happiness into every department of your life.

Unending joy awaits the sincere truth seeker who **conscientiously** meditates each day. Through the grace of God, through the blessings of the Masters, and through your own devotional effort you can achieve the state of divine joy experienced by all saints that have become established in the Lord (that have become consciously aware of their soul unity with Spirit).

KEY POINTS

1. Set aside a regular time and place for your daily practices of the spiritual techniques taught by Self-Realization Fellowship. Try to find a quiet place where you can be free from outside distractions and thus be able to concentrate with more intensity. If possible, never use that place for any other purpose than meditation. Thus you will impregnate the spot with spiritual vibrations that will help you to make each day's meditation deeper than the meditation of the preceding day. You may have there a small altar with the pictures of Christ, Krishna, and the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship.
2. Always begin **and** end your meditation with a prayer, such as: "Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri

Yuktaswarji, Guru Preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. Free my life from all obstacles of delusion, and lead me to Thy shores of fulfillment." Or, "May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

3. Early morning, upon arising, and the period just before retiring at night are excellent times for meditation. Do not try to meditate just after eating. Wait at least an hour if possible. The kind of food one eats also has a definite bearing on one's health or ill health, not only of the body but of the mind. Be sure the diet includes an abundance of fresh vegetables and fruits. Eat nuts, cheese, eggs, and vegetable proteins in preference to meat. Fruits are the **most** spiritually beneficial of all foods.

4. It is good to use a woolen blanket or silk cloth (or both, with the silk on top) to cover your meditation seat. Drape the cloth over the back of the chair if a chair is used, and place one end of the cloth on the floor under your feet. The cloth helps to insulate the body from subtle earth currents. Their magnetic downward pull toward material perceptions is undesirable for the meditating devotee. The yogis have found, also, that facing East (the direction from which subtle spiritual solar currents are always flowing) is helpful in meditation.

5. Bathing has a cleansing effect not only on the body but also on the mind, and is therefore a beneficial practice **before meditation**. Bathing opens the pores allowing toxins to escape; it also helps to distribute life energy evenly throughout the body, quieting the nerves and inducing calmness. One should also take a "mental bath" before meditation: put aside all worries and problems. Completely give to God the time you have set aside for meditation. Concentrate on one of His infinite aspects--Peace, Joy, Wisdom, Love, Light, Beauty--or on a personal aspect, such as that of the ever-loving, all-forgiving Divine Mother. Many devotees find inspiration by meditating on divine incarnations of God such as Christ and the Masters. Reading a devotional passage from "Whispers from **Eternity**" or "Metaphysical Meditations" or singing a devotional song from "Cosmic **Chants**" helps to uplift the mind. Meditation in itself is an unequalled "**spiritual bath**"--a cleansing and rejuvenation of body, mind, and soul.

6. Practice of the Self-Realization Fellowship Energization Exercises--and also certain yoga **asanas** (body postures)--is beneficial in preparing the body for deep meditation. The life forces in the body are harmonized by these relaxing and calming methods, and one's attention is freed from aches and pains and from the drowsiness or restlessness that keep the mind sense bound and body conscious.

Be regular in your meditations (whether they be deep, or, in the beginning, restless). Be persistent if you would attract God's attention. Remember that meditation should be practiced with devotion, with real love for God.

Paramahansaji has said that love for God means craving for God. He cannot resist the magnetic attraction of human soul yearning. Meditation techniques help you to awaken and whet that divine craving which will take you to the heights of realization, of soul union with God-Bliss. Resolve that you will never give up until He comes to you. Whether you realize it or not, He is listening to the cry of your heart. In His own time He will bestow the supreme gift of Himself.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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FRIENDSHIP

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Is friendship the weaving of the red strings of two hearts?
Is it the blending of two minds into a spacious one-mind?
Is it the spouting of love founts together--
To strengthen the rush of love on droughty souls?
Is it the one rose grown 'twixt twin mind-branchlets
Of one compassionate stem?
Is it the one thinking in two bodies?

Friendship is noble, fruitful, holy--
When two separate souls march in difference
Yet in harmony, agreeing and disagreeing,
Growing, improving diversely,
With one common longing to find solace in true pleasure.
When ne'er the lover seeks
Self-comfort at the cost of the one beloved,
Then, in that garden of selflessness
Fragrant friendship perfectly flowers.

Ah, friendship! Flowering, heaven-born plant!
Nurtured art thou in the soil of measureless love,
In the seeking of soul-progress together
By two who would smooth the way each for the other.
And thou art watered by attention of affection
And tender dews of inner and outer sweetness
Of the inmost, selfless heart's devotion.
Ah, friendship! Where thy soul-born flowers fall--
There on that sacred shrine of fragrance--
The Friend of all Friends craves to come and to remain!

PRAYER

Divine Mother, I behold Thee as the only Friend, helping me, encouraging me through all my friends.

FRIENDSHIP

WHAT IS TRUE FRIENDSHIP? Friendship is God's love shining through the eyes of your loved ones, calling you home to drink His nectar of **eternal** unity. Friendship is God's trumpet call, bidding the soul destroy the partitions of ego consciousness that separate it from all other souls and from Him. True friendship unites two souls so completely that they reflect the unity of Spirit and its divine qualities.

True friendship is broad and inclusive. Selfish attachment to a single individual, excluding all others, inhibits the development of divine friendship. Extend the boundaries of the glowing kingdom of your love, gradually including your family, your neighbors, your community, your country, all countries--all living sentient creatures. Be also a cosmic friend, imbued with kindness and affection for all God's creation, scattering love everywhere. Such is the example set by all avatars and saints. Such was the example set by Christ, by Swami Shankara, and by Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Swami Sri Yukteswar.

Consider no one a stranger. Learn to feel that everybody is akin to you. Family love is merely one of the first exercises in the Divine Teacher's course in friendliness, intended to prepare your heart for all-inclusive divine love. Realize that the same lifeblood is circulating in the veins of all races. How may anyone dare to hate any other human being, of whatever race, when God lives and breathes in all? We are Americans or Hindus, or other nationalities, for just a few years, but we are God's children forever. The soul cannot be confined within man-made boundaries. Its nationality is Spirit; its country is Omnipresence.

ATTRACTING FRIENDS It is not necessary to know and love all human beings and other creatures **personally** and intimately. All you need do is to be ready at all times to shed the light of friendly service over all living creatures whom you happen to meet. This attitude requires constant mental effort and preparedness; in other words, unselfishness. The sun shines equally on diamond and charcoal, but the former has developed qualities that enable it to reflect the sunlight brilliantly, while the latter is unable to reflect the sunlight. Emulate the diamond in your dealings with people. Brightly reflect the light of God's love.

To have friends, you must manifest friendliness. If you open the door to the magnetic power of friendship, souls of like vibrations will be attracted to you. The more friendly you become toward all, the greater will be the number of your real friends. When perfect friendship exists either between two hearts

or within a group of hearts in a spiritual relationship, such friendship perfects each individual. The heart purified by friendship provides an open door to unity. Through it you should invite other souls to enter the temple of brotherhood-- those who love you, and even those who love you not.

Friendship should not be influenced by the relative positions of people. It may and should exist between lovers, employer and employee, teacher and pupil, parents and children, and others. God's effort to unite strife-torn humanity manifests itself within each heart as the friendship instinct.

SERVICE TO FRIENDS True friendship consists in being mutually useful in offering one's friend good cheer in distress, sympathy in sorrow, advice in trouble, and material help in times of real need. Friendship consists in rejoicing in the good fortune of one's friends and in sympathizing with them in adversity. One who has given his friendship to another gladly foregoes selfish pleasures or self-interest for the sake of his friend's happiness, without consciousness of loss or sacrifice, and without counting the cost. Jealousy is self-love and death to friendship. Human love and friendship have their basis in service on the physical, or mental, or business plane. They are conditional and may be short-lived. Blind friendship between selfish and unthinking persons may end suddenly in blind hatred. Divine love has its foundation in service on the spiritual and intuitional planes, and is unconditional and everlasting.

The greater the mutual service, the deeper the friendship. Why does Jesus have such a wide following? Because he, like other great masters, excelled in service to humanity. Hence to attract friends, one must possess the qualities of a real friend.

Help your friend by being a mental, aesthetic, and spiritual inspiration to him. Never be sarcastic to a friend. Do not flatter him unless it is to encourage him. Do not agree with him when he is wrong. One who feels real friendship cannot witness with indifference his friend's indulgence in harmful pleasures. This does not mean one should pick a quarrel. Suggest mentally, or if your advice is asked, give it gently and lovingly. Unwise persons argue. Friends discuss their differences.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES The secret of Christ's strength lay in his love for all, even his enemies. Far better to conquer by love the heart of a person who hates you than to vanquish him by vindictive force. To the ordinary man such a doctrine seems absurd. His first impulse is to return two slaps for the one he has received--and to add a kick for good measure! Why should you love your enemy? In order that you may bring the healing rays of your love into his dark, hatred-stricken heart. When friendship is so released, it can behold itself as pure golden love. Thus will the flame of your love burn away the partitions of hatred and misery that separate your soul from other souls, and that separate all unenlightened souls from the vast sea of Infinite Love.

Practice loving those who do not love you. Feel for those who do not feel for you. Be generous to those who are generous only to themselves. If you heap hatred upon your enemy, neither he nor you will be able to perceive the inherent beauty of your soul. Avoid doing anything that brings harm to yourself or to another. If you are self-indulgent, or if you encourage a friend in his vices, you are an enemy disguised as a friend. Be true to yourself and to others, and you will gain the friendship of God. Once you make your love felt in other people, it will expand until it becomes the one Cosmic Love that flows through all hearts.

There are people who do not trust anyone, and who utterly doubt the possibility of ever having true friends. Some, in fact, actually boast that they get along without friends. But those who fail to be friendly disregard the divine law of Self-expansion, by which alone the soul evolves and returns to Spirit.

If humility and apologies on your part will bring out the good qualities of a person who considers himself your enemy, by all means apologize when necessary. The person who can do this has attained a definite spiritual development, for it takes character to be able to apologize graciously and sincerely. It is the consciousness of his own inferiority that makes a man hide behind a display of pride. Do not, however, encourage a wrongdoer by being too humble and apologetic. You need not fawn on your enemy, just silently love him. Silently be of service to him whenever he is in need, for love is real only when it is useful and expresses itself through action. Thus man may rend the veils of hatred and of narrow-mindedness that hide God from his sight.

You may ask: "How can I learn to love my enemies? I am not strong enough to do that." My answer is this: "Constant communion with the Infinite by SRF methods of meditation fills one with divine love, which alone enables one to love one's enemies."

Always remember that you need the inspiration of better company--of those more highly evolved than yourself--to keep constantly improving. And you should also share your own goodness with people of inferior qualities who need your help. A saint once said: "Good company is of paramount importance, as it influences your reason and will, which, by repetitions of good thoughts and actions, form good habits."

FRIENDS OF PAST INCARNATIONS Make every effort to rediscover your friends of past incarnations, whom you may recognize through familiar physical, mental, and spiritual qualities. Try to resume such friendships, begun in a preceding incarnation, and perfect them into divine friendship.

One may come in daily contact with some people and yet not feel in sympathy with them. You have to adapt yourself to such persons and learn to love them. But there are others with whom you feel instantaneously sympathetic at first meeting; it seems as though you have always known them. This indicates that they are your friends of previous incarnations. Do not neglect them,

but strengthen the friendship existing between you. Always be on the lookout for friends of past incarnations, by being calm within when you meet others; mental restlessness and inattention may prevent your recognizing such friends. Not infrequently such old friends are very near you, drawn into the orbit of your life by the friendship born in the dim, distant past. They constitute your shining collection of soul-stars. Add to it constantly and seek in these bright galaxies to behold the one Great Friend smiling at you radiantly and clearly. It is God who comes to you in the guise of a true and noble friend to serve, inspire, and guide you.

Each human being has his own conception of what constitutes physical and mental beauty. What seems ugly to one may appear beautiful to another. Looking at a crowd, you like some faces instantly; others do not attract you. The immediate attraction of your mind to the inner and outer features of an individual is your first indication that you have found a friend of the past. Your dear ones whom you loved before are drawn toward you by a prenatal sense of friendship.

Do not be deceived by physical beauty. Ask yourself whether or not the expression of a face, the manner of walking, everything about a particular person appeals to you. Sometimes overeating and lack of exercise may sufficiently change the features of a friend of former lives so that he escapes your recognition. But an unattractive body may harbor the soul of a real friend. Sometimes a beautiful woman falls in love with a homely man, or a handsome man with a physically plain woman, owing to the loving friendship of a past incarnation. Therefore to be sure that your eyes have not deceived you with regard to physical characteristics of a person whom you surmise may be a former friend, ascertain whether you are mentally and spiritually congenial. Guard yourself against being prejudiced by little peculiarities. Delve deeply into that person's mind in order to find out whether your tastes and inclinations essentially agree. Seek your friends of past incarnations in order that you may continue your friendship with them in this life, and perfect it into divine friendship. One lifetime is not always sufficient to achieve the perfection of unconditional divine love between friends.

Ugliness of disposition and selfishness drive away all friends of former incarnations, whereas friendliness draws them toward you. Therefore be ready always to meet them half-way. Never mind if one or two friends prove false and deceive you, for others that are true will bring you many blessings.

DIVINE FRIENDSHIP Friendship is the universal spiritual attraction that unites souls in the bond of divine love. It may manifest itself either in two or in many persons. The Spirit was one. By the law of duality it became two--positive and negative. Then, by the law of infinity applied to the law of relativity, it became many. Now the One in the many is endeavoring to unite the many and make them One. This effort of Spirit to unify many souls into One works through our emotions, intelligence, intuition, and finds its greatest expression through friendship. When divine friendship reigns supreme in the temple of your heart, your soul will merge with the vast Cosmic Soul, leaving far behind the confining bonds that separated it from all of God's animate and inanimate creation.

When you behold--assembled all at once beneath the canopy of your perfected universal friendship--the souls of the past, present, and future, then the friendship-thirst of your heart will be quenched forever. Then God's creation will ring with the emancipating song of all-difference-dissolving celestial friendship. Then the Divine Friend will rejoice to see you come Home after your evolutionary wanderings and roamings through the pathways of incarnations. Then He and you will merge in the bliss of eternal friendship.

Only mutual effort to build wisdom and spiritual and intuitive understanding can bind two souls by the laws of everlasting, universal divine love. When true friendship exists between two souls and they seek spiritual love and God's love together, when their only wish is to be of service to each other, their friendship produces the flame of Spirit. Through perfected divine friendship, mutually seeking spiritual perfection, they find the one Great Friend.

No man who fails to inspire confidence in other hearts, and who is unable to extend the kingdom of his love and friendliness into other soul-territories, can hope to expand his consciousness into Cosmic Consciousness. If you cannot conquer human hearts, you cannot conquer the Cosmic Heart of God. All this may seem very complicated, but when you touch the Infinite, your difficulties will melt away. Divine love will come to you. Beautiful intuitive experiences of universal friendliness will play like fountains in your mind.

Keep in mind this prayer:

"O Divine Friend, let those who are my own come unto me. Finding them, may I perfect our friendship, and find friendship with all; thus may I find Thee. "

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER Making others happy, through kindness of speech and sincerity of right advice, is a sign of true greatness. To hurt another soul by sarcastic words, looks, or suggestions, is despicable. Sarcasm draws out the rebellious spirit and anger in the wrongdoer. Loving suggestions bring out repentance in him. Repentance consists in thoroughly understanding one's own error and in abandoning it.

Friendship is pure by nature. When you have a lily in your hands, how can you crush it? When you love a person dearly, how can you hurt him, even though he may be wrong? Divine love is unlimited and infinite. When two or more persons are friends always, no matter what happens, that is an expression of divine love, or divine friendship.

AFFIRMATION

Today I will forgive all those who ever offended me, and I will give my love to all thirsty hearts--both to those who love me and to those who do not love me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE ARE PART OF THY CHANGELESS BEING

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Spirit, we toss and dance on the waves of Thy creation. Make us realize Thy presence beneath the waves of illusion. O Spirit, divert our eyes within to see the vastness of Thy glory behind all appearances.

O Beloved Immortality, teach us to behold Thy vastness, Thy changelessness, behind all things, that we may perceive ourselves, not as part of the change, but as part of Thy changeless Being.

We shed our tears of light through the eyes of stars at the feet of the blue. Father, receive our gathered tears of light to wash Thy feet of immortality. We are Thy children; Thou art ours: make us realize this truth. From the incense vase of our hearts we offer unto Thee the fragrance of our love. May we not become enthralled by passing desires, but be awakened to Thy glory. May we dissolve this dream of delusion and behold Thee: the only Reality. Make us immortal stars in the firmament of Thy Being.

Good will unto all religions; peace unto all people; peace unto all nations; peace unto all creatures; peace unto all that lives. Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, recharge our beings with Thy power; recharge our minds with Thine efficiency; recharge our souls with Thine everlasting wisdom. May we cast away all feelings of identification with the limitations of the body. In every cell of our being may we feel Thy joy and the peace of meditation.

PRAYER

○ Spirit, teach me to heal the body by recharging it with Thy cosmic energy; to heal the mind by concentration and smiles; and to free the soul from ignorance by meditation-born intuition.

THE ART OF ENERGIZATION -- Part 1

PHYSICAL BODY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING Physical change, such as the body undergoes in disease or death, does not mean annihilation. It means certain changes of motion that we human beings sometimes fear and dislike. The nature of matter is change. The nature of Spirit is changelessness.

The millions of tiny cells that make up our flesh and bones are full of life and activity; the human body, which looks so compact and solid, is in fact nothing but a bundle of motions, of forces whirling together in ultrarapid motion. In order to keep the activities of the bodily cells in motion certain external factors are necessary:

1. the ultraviolet rays in sunshine;
2. oxygen;
3. nourishing food;
4. pure liquids, such as water and fruit juices.

But, more important, the body's living cells are created and energized internally by thoughts and by biological forces. From an inner spiritual source the various chemical, molecular, atomic, and other motions of the bodily cells are constantly flooded with subtler rejuvenating motions of consciousness, subconsciousness, superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. The vital sparks of intelligent energy that constitute life are but condensed thoughts of God. Without these vital sparks of life, the external sources of bodily energy are of no avail in maintaining life in the body.

The importance of depending more and more upon the limitless supply of energy available from the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness, and less upon other sources of bodily energy, now becomes clear. Healthful food is necessary, but eating all the time will only make the body grow old more quickly. The only way to keep the body really rejuvenated is to unite human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation. Avoid any suggestion to the mind of human limitations, sickness, old age, death. Instead one should constantly impress the mind with this truth:

"I am the Infinite that has become the body. The body, as a manifestation of Spirit, is the ever-youthful Spirit."

The first process in energizing the body is to supply it with the basic elements of food chemicals that it needs; plus sunshine from regular sunbaths (a half-hour sunbath twice a week, or preferably ten minutes every day), and sufficient oxygen from regular proper breathing. The following exercise will be found beneficial:

BREATHING EXERCISE

While walking, as one should do every day, inhale, counting one to twelve. Hold the breath twelve counts; then exhale, counting one to twelve. Do this twenty-four times every time you are out walking.

Ordinarily, people concentrate only upon food, air, and sunshine to keep the body well, but a time may come when health fails in spite of an abundant supply of these external sources of life. The realization then comes that this body-battery must also be recharged by the inner source.

Bread (i.e., food) alone does not support life. If it did, one could put food into the body of a dead man, lay him out in the sun, and expect him to come to life. The Power that creates life, that enables the body to convert food and air into energy -- That is the direct source of life.

The life of an automobile battery depends not merely upon distilled water indirectly supplied from outside, but upon the vibrating electric current flowing into it through the mouth of the wires from the engine.

Similarly, man's body-battery does not live solely by means of indirect outer sources -- food, oxygen, liquids, sunshine -- but by the direct inner source of the will, which causes vibrating life current from the invisible dynamo of Cosmic Energy to flow into the body through the medulla oblongata, the "mouth of God." (The medulla is located at the base of the brain, where the back of the skull joins the neck.)

It is electricity that changes the distilled water into the force that recharges an automobile battery. It is the life energy that converts oxygen, solids, and liquids into the force that keeps us alive. It is the same life energy that made solids and liquids what they are; when we put them into our stomachs they must again be converted into energy before they are of any use to the body. And when the energy that is in them is taken out, it is life energy that forces the residue of this mass of waste material out of the body through the pores, intestines, and kidneys. Just as distilled water (the outer source of sustenance) alone will not sustain life in the automobile battery or bring life back to the battery after it is dead, so oxygen, solids, liquids, and sunshine alone will not help a dead body-battery. The body must also have life energy.

GOD, THE ORIGINAL
SOURCE OF ENERGY

The medulla oblongata is the original point of intake of the life force as it comes from God. The medulla oblongata is called the "mouth of God" because that is where God "breathes" life force into man. Do not con-

fuse this with the Bible passage that reads:

"God...breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living **soul**" (Genesis 2:7).

An explanation of the foregoing verse is given in the Lessons on Genesis.

Of all the body parts only the medulla oblongata cannot be operated upon by the surgeon. Why? Because it is the center of all the centers of life in the brain and spine. It is the one center through which the life force enters the body. The heart, brain, and cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal centers of the spine are minor centers, acting merely as distributors of that life force they receive through the medulla oblongata.

HOW TO RECHARGE THE BODY WITH ENERGY Science has proved that everything is being constantly recharged by cosmic energy. The human body is surrounded by a halo of conscious cosmic energy. The medulla oblongata is the antenna of the bodily receiving station that receives the radiographed cosmic energy from Cosmic Consciousness through the bodily radio operator -- will. Just as man can use the invisible vibratory waves of radio to control far distant ships on the sea, so God, through vibrations of His intelligent cosmic energy, supplies our bodies with life force without any visible connection.

God created the original cosmic vibration or energy which, once started, became perpetual; and by wireless will power we can draw upon it and bring it into the body through the medulla oblongata. This cosmic energy, the same energy out of which we and everything else in the universe were created, surrounds and permeates all creation, all the time. It enters the body through the "mouth of God" (medulla oblongata) and is the invisible "word" that sustains all life.

We can learn to live more and more by that eternal supply of cosmic energy which is always all about us, and thus ever available to us for recharging the body with vitality. One may use the knowledge gained from these instructions to make the body fit in every way. A body that is free from disease and weakness presents less resistance to the meditation methods and practices by which Self-realization is attained, and by which the human consciousness, as well as the body, is raised to the fatigueless state.

Self-realization may be and sometimes is attained even by people who are struggling with sick and otherwise imperfect bodies; but it cannot be attained unless one can concentrate and meditate uninterruptedly upon God. Since it is difficult to concentrate and meditate while the aches and pains of the body continually have the attention of the mind, the path to Self-realization is made much easier if the imperfections of the body are eliminated and if the operation of its functions are so harmoniously arranged that the mind need not at any time

be interrupted in meditation because of the demands of the physical body.

By constantly holding the peaceful aftereffects of meditation in mind; by believing in eternal life instead of the illusory changes we behold in this life; and by feeling the ocean of immortal Bliss (God) underlying the changeable waves of experiences of past lives, and the waves of perceptions of childhood, youth, and age in this life, we can bring about not only the perpetually youthful consciousness of the soul, but also maintain youthfulness of body, if so desired. When the body is found to be, not isolated from Spirit, but a number of rising and falling waves of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, we may implant in the body the perpetually rejuvenating power of Spirit.

SELF-REALIZATION DEFINED

Self-realization is the knowing -- in body, mind, and soul -- that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that **it** come to us, that we are not merely near **it** at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing.

Self-realization means knowledge of one's own soul and of its oneness with the Father.

~~So long as it dwells on the material plane, human consciousness~~ cannot encompass the universal Christ Consciousness no matter how desirous it may be of doing so. By practice of the scientific concentration and meditation techniques taught in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons, the sincere student can increase and refine the receptivity of his consciousness so that he may ultimately perceive the Christ Consciousness universally present in every atom of creation.

St. John referred to this expansion of the human consciousness to receive the divine when he declared of Christ:

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (St. John 1:12).

Thus, according to the Bible, all men may discover their actual oneness with Christ Consciousness. By intuitive Self-realization, or knowledge of his own soul, man becomes aware of his oneness with the Christ Consciousness. Those who attain the highest Self-realization know without any doubt that they are "the sons of God."

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Health and strength are not synonymous terms. A person may have cultivated great strength in his **limbs** or in certain **muscles** by the use of mechanical appliances, but still he may not have good health. The healthy action of the lungs and stomach, for example, is far more important than abnormal strength in the arms, legs, or back. Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons faithfully practiced will be found to be a sure and effective combatant against bodily diseases and inharmonious conditions of the mind, acting as a healing balm for nervous afflictions and abnormalities. With the aid of these Lessons, the general vitality can be definitely raised, resulting in a wonderful development of tissue strength and nerve vigor, and thereby insuring longer life. Memory and brain power may also be increased through greater blood supply. These Lessons also teach how to send the curative energy consciously to any diseased body part.

AFFIRMATION

○ Eternal Energy! awaken within me conscious will, conscious vitality, conscious health, conscious realization. Good will to all, vitality to all, good health to all, realization to all! ○ Eternal Youth of body and mind, abide in me forever and forever.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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RECEIVE THE FERVOR OF OUR SOULS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, bless our thoughts that they may remind us of Thy bliss, bless our feelings that they may feel Thee alone, bless our desires that they may seek Thee alone, and bless our ambitions that we may be ambitious only for Thee. Thou art the nectar which our souls seek.

May we feel Thy vibrations, and feeling them may we remain awakened. We offer our humble prayers for a new prosperity in Thee, a new consciousness in Thee, a new mental power within.

Bless all who have helped to spread Thy message, Thy living fire on earth. Be Thou manifest within them. Receive the blossoms of our hearts, the fervor of our souls. Thou art our One Father, seated on the throne of our united hearts. Receive the offering of our devotion. Bless us all, destroy all barriers. Ignite our ignorance, establish Thy light evermore.

PRAYER

Help me, O Spirit, to learn to live more and more by direct cosmic energy and less and less by food. Being energy, burning in the bulb of the senses, I recharge myself with Thy cosmic energy.

THE ART OF ENERGIZATION--Part 2

PHYSICAL BODY The physical body is a bundle of motions, a combination
A BUNDLE of cells composed of moving molecules, which in turn are
OF MOTIONS made up of whirling atoms, composed of protons, electrons,
 neutrons, positrons, and mesons, whirling in the relative-
 ly immense space within each atom. These minute, semi-intelligent forms
 are manifestations of sparks of thought from the Infinite Intelligence, God.

Underlying the chemical motion in cells are dancing waves of molecular motion, beneath which surge waves of atomic motion. Below the atomic layer are waves of electronic and protonic motion, hiding in turn bright waves of dancing sparks, the vital forces. Underlying these expressions of life energy are waves of sensation, and deeper still are waves of thought, feeling, and will force. Hidden at the very bottom of all these waves of varied motions of life is the ego.

Ego is soul in the delusive state of being
 identified with the physical body.

Although the body appears to be a solid mass of limited proportions, occupying but a small area of space, the cells that compose the body are manifestations of a vast ocean of molecular waves. The molecular waves of the body are manifestations of the still greater ocean of atomic waves. Atomic waves are manifestations of the immense ocean of electrons, protons and other atomic particles. The waves of **protons**, electrons, etc., are manifestations of vaster oceans of vital force. The vital force (or life energy) is a manifestation of the measureless powers of all forms of **subconsciousness**, superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness.

As a manifestation of chemical motion the body appears small, but since these chemical motions of the bodily cells are actually condensed waves of Cosmic Consciousness, the body is potentially vast and **omnipresent**.

Tissue is the general name for all the different cellular groupings of which body organs are composed. The same invisible force that makes tissues of some cells so arranges other cells as to form hard bones, wonderfully worked into a skeletal frame around which flesh can **cling**; and others form the bloodstream.

It is strange that the body has to be kept alive by external forces of food, chemicals, and sunshine, instead of simply being flooded with vitality from the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness. But the body, being a mass of cellular motion, cannot live without motion; its cells have to be kept stirred with life by external food forces, and kept dancing with vitality derived from the internal Source.

POWER OF WILL Concentration on the muscles, as in the practice of mechanical physical exercises, tends to make one think of himself as a physical being only. Self-Realization Fellowship instructions teach the science of concentrating on the inner life energy and will power and thus awakening one's consciousness of his subtle spiritual nature. Strength comes from within; not from the muscles. Life is sustained from the powers within; it does not depend solely upon food or exercise.

Example: A dead man artificially made to exercise with dumbbells does not become strong; nor does stuffing his stomach with food bring him back to life, because life energy is absent.

Self-Realization Fellowship instructions teach one to spiritualize the body-- to perceive it as a reflection of Spirit and to think of oneself as the divine life energy that sustains the body, rather than as a mere physical vehicle consisting of bones and muscles of a certain volume and weight. ~~You will be shown how~~ energy can be made to permeate the body by tension, and how it can be withdrawn from the body by relaxation.

Life energy is expended in all processes of thought, feeling, and physical activity. Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, when practiced correctly, replenish the energy by tapping its source, the medulla oblongata; life energy can be continually supplied to the body from this source by stimulating the medulla oblongata center with conscious will. The power of will bridges the gulf between the life energy in the body and the Cosmic Energy surrounding it. By keeping in touch with the Cosmic Source of life energy it is possible to work without fatigue.

All our limbs and muscles are moved by the exercise of will and life energy. The flow of life energy into the sensory nerves is caused by divine will and our own will together; the flow of life energy into the motor nerves is caused by our own will.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: The greater the exertion of the will, the greater the flow of life energy into a particular body part.

When angry, human beings and animals manifest abnormal strength. No physiological improvement of the muscle fibers is possible in such a short time. The sudden accession of strength comes from the will. Anger stimulates the will,

and thus causes an extra flow of strength-giving energy into the muscles and other body parts.

Most physical culture systems are mechanical and do not take into account the foregoing facts. Exercises that make use only of the unconscious mechanical will are merely "muscle bumping." Such exercises do not cause a sufficient flow of life energy into the muscles and tissues to be more than temporarily beneficial. By following the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship you can learn how to vitalize every body cell.

Relaxation means the release of the energy and consciousness that have been employed either by the body as a whole or by some of its parts during mental or physical activity. Man receives sensations coming from outside stimulation through his eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin surface by means of impulses that travel through the sensory nerves. He responds to sensations by sending energy out through the motor nerves, which causes tension or contraction of the muscles.

Tension results when you will to send energy to any muscle. Lift your right arm. What powers have you used in lifting the arm? "Will power," you say. But suppose your arm were paralyzed; your will to lift it would still be present, but you would be unable to raise that arm. Why? Because the energy could not then flow freely through the nerves into the muscles of the arm, transmuting the command of your will into action. If the arm were healed, you would again be able to lift it by will power.

Now drop your right arm to your side again. Feel it throbbing with energy. But can you lift it again without using will power? No! It is clear from this simple experiment that both energy and will power are required in the movement of any part of the body.

ENERGY AND WILL POWER
(Experiment) Raise your right arm in front of you, with the palm of the hand turned upward, until it is shoulder high and parallel to the ground. Close your left hand in a fist and place it on the up-turned palm of the right hand, pressing downward as if your left hand weighed five pounds. Resist this pressure by tensing the right arm. Now increase the pressure of the left hand to ten pounds. Will to hold it with the right hand, and increase the tension in the right arm by willing to send more energy there. Now increase the pressure of the left hand to fifteen pounds. Relax and drop your arms at your sides.

ANOTHER EXPERIMENT Now practice this weight-lifting exercise mentally without any pressure of the hand or the use of weights: first lift your right arm, with palm of the hand upturned, parallel to the ground, as in the first experiment. Hold it there. Realize that a certain amount of will and energy is holding your arm in this position. If you take away the will power from the uplifted right arm, the arm will fall, drawn by gravity, and will hang at your side. The same thing would happen if the nerves of the arm were

suddenly severed, or paralyzed, or if the energy in the arm were withdrawn. Now tense your upraised arm as much as would be required to hold an imaginary weight of five pounds; tense more strongly, as if the imaginary weight were ten pounds; fifteen pounds. Relax the arm and let it drop to your side.

It is necessary to will to hold either an actual or an imaginary weight of five pounds, and the amount of energy required to hold that weight increases accordingly. When you will to hold an increased weight you automatically increase your will power, and the amount of energy sent to the arm, in order to hold the greater weight.

Therefore we experience weight according to the degree of will power and the amount of energy that we spend in lifting it. The experiment of lifting imaginary weights proves that an act of will produces actual energy in a body part, and, in so doing, produces tension (i.e., contraction of the muscles) in that part.

If one touches the two poles of an electric battery, his hands will be energized and tensed. If one drinks milk or eats food when tired, he will feel some energy in his body. In either case, one has produced this energy through some outward material agency introduced into the body.

But in tensing or energizing the arm, or any body part, with will, as in the foregoing experiments, one produces energy in that particular body part purely ~~by the power of consciousness or will. By imagining that one is sending energy~~ to his right arm he may succeed in sending a faint current there; but it is only by will power that one can send a perceptible amount of energy. By energizing through tension, the great link between consciousness, will, and the body is found. By willing to energize the right arm, for example we:

- 1) arouse energy felt as power,
- 2) create tension in the muscles.

This shows that consciousness (will) is the prime factor in creating changes in the flow of energy to muscles or to any body parts. Also, in lifting weights by will power, the important relation between will and energy is found.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The motion or energy or life force within you is that which heals. The only purpose of external physical methods is to rouse this life energy. **Self-Realization Fellowship** Lessons teach you how to rouse by will the life energy (life force) that creates every part, every organ, of the body.

The link between the mind and flesh is supplied by the life force. When, by will power, you can contact that dynamic power, a steady current will go through your hands and eyes, and you will say:

"Oh, I thought that this little body contained only a fragile little life, easily crushed by storm or accident; but now I realize that beneath this life is the Cosmic Life. "

These SRF Lessons teach you how to contact Cosmic Life; when you are attuned to the Cosmic Life you will never tire because you will feel, beneath your energy, the ocean of God's cosmic energy. The greatest method is to tap that energy directly from the inner source and not through the artificial stimuli of medicines, emotion and so on. Then you can say:

"Right beneath the flesh is a tremendous current. I forgot it, but now, by digging with the pickax of Self-realization, I have discovered that life force again. I and my Father are One. I am not the flesh. I am the charge of divine electricity that permeates this body. "

AFFIRMATION

I am youthful; I am youth.
I am healthy; I am health.
I am strong; I am strength.
I am immortal; I am immortality.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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INITIATE US WITH THINE ETERNAL ABUNDANCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, Thou art our cosmic house of supply. Bless us all that we may manifest Thy blessings in our health, in our mental aspirations, and in our soul expressions. Thou art the life in the stars, Thou art the energy in the atom. Heavenly Father, teach us to charge ourselves with Thine unlimited power, with Thine unlimited wisdom, and with Thine unlimited originality. Forgive us our transgressions, our willful wanderings in the land of error. Bring us to the right path. Show us that Thou art the supreme source of health; show us that Thou art the ocean of life; show us that Thou art the fountainhead of all wisdom. Shake away our ignorance; shake away our diseases; shake away all our suffering. Let the flood of Thy wisdom carry away the dross that is within us.

Tear away the veil that hides Thy face from us. Come as a burning light, come as the glory in the stars, come as the immortal power of our thoughts. Father, we will never be satisfied with anything except Thee. We want Thy guidance, Thy strength, Thy counsel in everything. As often as we think wrongly, let Thy whisper in the temple of silence guide us to the right path, which leads to Thee.

Come, Father, come! Initiate us in Thy creative power of eternal abundance.

PRAYER

O conscious Cosmic Energy, it is Thou who **do**st directly sustain my body. Solid, liquid, and gaseous foods are converted and spiritualized into energy by Thy cosmic energy. Therefore it is Thy cosmic energy that supports my body.

THE ART OF ENERGIZATION--Part 3

All true scriptures have a threefold meaning, because they are intended to benefit mankind on the three planes of human existence: the material, the mental, and the spiritual. The scriptures are indeed divine wells whose **wisdom-**waters man may draw to quench his threefold thirst for material, mental, and spiritual fulfillment.

Physical well-being is not necessarily a prerequisite for spiritual perfection. It is desirable, however, because it is more difficult to **make the** effort to achieve spiritual perfection when physical inharmonies are present. The aspiring devotee who is not well physically may become discouraged, because it is not easy to concentrate or to meditate uninterruptedly upon God when bodily aches and pains are clamoring for attention.

A body that is relaxed and calm conduces to mental peace, which is necessary for meditation, the spiritual art of communing with God. Therefore one of the first steps in a balanced program of spiritual development is relaxation of the mind and body--that is, the calming of the activities of the heart, lungs, circulatory system; and of the restless movements of the muscles stimulated by nerve impulses from the brain. By reducing the amount of energy expended in restless (and often unproductive) muscular and mental activity, relaxation frees energy to be used for the highest and most constructive purpose: concentration on the Divine Indweller.

IMPORTANCE OF
RELAXATION, AND
TESTS OF PHYSICAL
RELAXATION

Sometime when you are sitting or lying down and **feel-**ing completely relaxed, with the breath expelled make this test: Have someone lift your hands or feet a little way and then drop them. If your limbs fall with a thud, without even an involuntary effort on your part to lower them gradually, you are relaxed. If any muscle is unconsciously willed to become energized or tensed, you do not have perfect relaxation.

Relaxation of the muscles and limbs helps to reduce motion--and hence to reduce the normal processes of cell decay in the physical body. When by tension the bodily cells are kept active, that is, in motion, the cells deteriorate with wear and must be replaced. By perfect relaxation, cessation of motion in the bodily cells is achieved. When there is no activity there is no wear; the cells

remain in a state of suspended animation, sustained directly by the cosmic energy flowing into the body through the medulla oblongata.

TESTS OF MENTAL RELAXATION You have attained mental relaxation when you can control the flow of thought for any length of time desired; and when you can at will free the consciousness from awareness of the body, and at will resume body consciousness. When you can remain calm at all times in spite of severe trials, and when you are secure in undying faith in God and guru, you are truly mentally relaxed.

FIVE STAGES OF MENTAL RELAXATION

1. Most people are so restless all the time that they cannot close their eyes and hold the eyeballs still, or keep the body motionless, or concentrate upon one thing at a time even for a little while; yet peace and calm concentration are attributes of man's soul, of his true nature. Most people have developed a second nature, which is "restless all the time without ever being restful;" This is the first stage.
2. By practice of meditation, the foregoing person who is all the time mentally restless succeeds in becoming "once in a great while restful, although restless most of the time." This is the second stage.
3. Further practice of concentration and meditation enables the student to develop calmness to a point where he is "able to attain restfulness easily but is still easily made restless by events or environment."
4. By deeper practice of concentration and meditation and by higher lessons such as can be learned only from a true guru-preceptor, the student reaches the fourth stage, in which he is "restful most of the time, and restless only once in a while." This is the opposite of the second stage. By scientific meditation, it is possible to reverse one's nature from restlessness to calmness.
5. By the practice of the highest meditation methods given by a true guru-preceptor or God-realized teacher,* the student at last becomes one with God in samadhi, a state of pure bliss in which the devotee feels that he, his act of meditation, and God--the Object of meditation-- have become One. This is the fifth and last stage of relaxation and Self-realization, in which the devotee is "restful all the time without ever becoming restless." It is the reverse of the first stage, and can be attained only by being able to enter the state of samadhi at will, any time, anywhere.

*i.e., methods such as are taught in these Lessons by Paramahansa Yogananda.

SPECIAL KINDS OF RELAXATION

1. Imperfect Muscular Relaxation.

Most people are partially tensed even during periods of seeming relaxation. The energy and consciousness are partly, or imperfectly, withdrawn from certain muscles, limbs, and organs, but not from the five senses of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. This may be termed imperfect muscular relaxation. The body cannot thrive in such a state of continual partial tension because it is fatiguing.

2. Partial Muscular Relaxation.

Throwing the breath out (exhaling completely) and remaining without breath as long as one can do so comfortably, calms the action of the lungs and diaphragm and slows the heart action, thereby helping to remove the greater amount of motion and deterioration from the active internal organs of the body. When the limbs, lungs, and diaphragm are inactive, and the heart is partially calm, the body is in a state of almost perfect muscular and motor relaxation.

3. Unconscious Sensory-Motor Relaxation.

In sleep the consciousness and life energy are involuntarily switched off from the muscles and the inner organs; from the bulbs of the five senses; from the motor nerves; and partially from the heart, lungs, and diaphragm. This is called unconscious **sensory-motor** relaxation.

4. Conscious Sensory-Motor Relaxation.

By studious practice of meditation and concentration techniques for a number of years, one can voluntarily withdraw energy and mind from the senses and muscles while still remaining conscious.

5. Unconscious Perfect Sensory-Motor-Organic Relaxation.

Death is unconscious, perfect, sensory-motor-organic relaxation. It is the forced switching off of the consciousness and life current from the entire body: limbs, muscles, senses, organs, heart, spine, and so forth. Just as the electricity retires into the dynamo when a bulb is broken, so when the body completely stops activity, the life current and consciousness return to the dynamo of Cosmic Energy and Cosmic Consciousness. As long as the wires to a certain point are not destroyed, a broken bulb at the end of them can be replaced by a new bulb, and the light can be switched on again. In the same way, as long as the wires of earthly desire running out

of the dynamo of Spirit remain undestroyed and connected with the earth and its attractions, as often as one body bulb breaks (goes out at death), it is necessary to replace it with a new body bulb. But when all the wires of earthly desire are cut, then reincarnation of the spiritual **current** in a bulb of flesh ceases, even as the destruction of certain electrical wires would cause all current to withdraw into the dynamo and would prevent the current's flowing again into a bulb. Death signifies the complete destruction of the body bulb, but not of the desire wires behind it.

6. Conscious Sensory-Motor-Organic Relaxation.

Conscious sensory-motor-organic relaxation consists in the switching off and on at will of the life current and the consciousness in the limbs, muscles, inner organs, lungs, diaphragm, and especially in the heart and spine. This superior, conscious relaxation, governed by the brake of calmness, is to be taught soon in another SRF Lesson.

The six forms of relaxation just described can be illustrated by the various stages of light that may be produced in a bulb attached to a dimming apparatus--bright, less bright, dim, more dim, **barely** visible. The various stages of relaxation represent the withdrawing, or dimming, of the consciousness and life **current from the bulb of the body.** In full bodily activity, as in running, the body bulb is fully and brightly ablaze with life. In imperfect relaxation, it is **semi-**illuminated with life. In perfect muscular relaxation the life light is less bright. In sleep the life light is dim and calm. In meditation, the life light is a faint glow. In conscious trance, the life energy retires from the body bulb, but is ready to be switched on again at will. In death the body bulb is broken, but in conscious sensory-motor relaxation one learns to switch off consciousness and life current from the body bulb and to switch them on again at will. This power gives victory over death.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The body is sustained by will power and energy. If they were taken away you would die. Will power brings energy from the outer cosmic source into the inner storage battery of the body--the medulla oblongata. By will that energy may be directed to any part of the body. The greater the will, the greater the flow of energy into a body part. Energy is the "missing link" between the body and the mind.

A nervous will is a mechanical will, drawing energy from the bodily storehouse in the brain and dissipating it without conscious direction. SRF students are taught to visualize the body as divided into twenty parts (as each part has a

different set of tissues); and to direct energy, by will, to each part individually. The alternating tension called for in SRF exercises is not muscular control, but a recharging of the muscles with the energy drawn from the outer cosmic source by the power of will. If you learn to utilize this energy that is constantly flowing in you, you will never feel tired. SRF exercises help you to feel and control that energy in the body.

Too often we write out checks of energy and do not replace energy funds. If we write out checks and keep on putting money in the bank, our account will always show a balance in our favor, and we will not miss what we spend. But if we keep on writing checks and do not deposit more funds in our bank account, it will soon be overdrawn. So it is with the body. If we write out checks of energy and do not put back any more energy, we will become weak. But if we replenish our bodies with energy, we will never feel tired. Nothing can heal but life force. The whole purpose of true exercise is to awaken the inner source of energy which we have ignored throughout our lives. How to awaken that inner source? By sending life energy into the body by will power.

AFFIRMATION

Daily I will try to realize that
Thou, O God, art the power that keeps
me healthy, prosperous, and seeking
spiritual truth.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TEACH US TO DIVE DEEP IN MEDITATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Christ, resurrect us in Thy consciousness. May we realize Thy vastness within and without. As Thou **didst** resurrect Thyself into the infinity of Spirit, may we arise from the tomb of ignorance into the vast light of wisdom. May our souls awaken in Thee. Thou art present in the lilies and the stars. Awaken, Thou, our aspirations. O Christ! be Thou the polestar of our shipwrecked thoughts.

Teach us to dive deeper and deeper in the ocean of meditation. If by one or two or many diversings we do not find the pearls of Thy contact, may we not say that the ocean of meditation does not contain Thee; may we find fault with the lack of depth and persistence in our meditations. Teach us to dive deeper and deeper in the ecstasy of meditation until we find Thee.

O Spirit, templed in the skies, templed in our souls and in our thoughts, receive the joy of our souls! Open the gates of wisdom. Destroy the darkness that veils our vision. Make us realize that Thou art ever ours. Recharge our bodies with Thy power and our souls with Thy bliss!

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to recharge my body, mind and soul with Thine unlimited, all-healing light which is within me.

THE ART OF ENERGIZATION--Part 4

(Review Lessons 5, 6 and 7 to pick up again the thread of thought on this important subject and to improve your understanding of the principles of the Technique of Energization to be given in this Lesson.)

ENERGY FROM THE INNER SOURCE Food contains a limited amount of life energy; hence the body can extract from it some strength. But if the internal bodily supply of life energy is exhausted, food is of no use. A certain amount of energy is stored in the muscles, bones, marrow, blood, and tissues of the body, as in a storage battery. The supply of energy in the body parts depends upon the oxygen and food chemicals taken into the body, and upon the amount of energy drawn in through the medulla oblongata. We want healthy muscles, blood, tissues, and so on, but good health does not result from the exercise and energization of muscles alone. The cells in every body part must be energized. Therefore we should daily apply scientific methods of recharging the body with energy from the **inexhaustible** inner source. To teach a method of recharging all the bodily cells by tapping this inner source is the purpose of the present series of lessons on the art of energization.

To refresh your mind regarding the principle of energization of the bodily cells, perform this little experiment: lift up your arm, then drop it. What lifted your arm? Will power and energy. You cannot lift your arm by will power alone. It requires both will and energy. The arm can be lifted only when will power causes sufficient energy to flow into that bodily part to lift its weight.

Lift your arm again. What is holding it up? Will power and energy. If you do not use will power to keep it up, it will drop. Or, if the energy is somehow cut off, the arm will drop to your side again. Will power and energy are both necessary. Will power is the switch that controls the flow of

energy. The greater the concentration of will, the greater the flow of energy to a particular body part. The following exercise will further illustrate the connection between will power and energy.

MECHANICAL AND VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS OF MUSCLES COMPARED

Example A

1. Extend the right arm in front of you.
2. Place the left hand upon the biceps muscle of the right arm.
3. Bend the right arm at the elbow, observing the automatic contraction of the biceps through the mechanical movement. Note that the action of the will is in the bending of the arm and not in the contraction of the muscle.

Example B

1. Relax the right arm, so that it hangs loosely at the side.
2. With the left hand lightly grasp the biceps muscle of the right arm.
3. Close the eyes.
4. Then, without bending the right arm at the elbow, contract the biceps slowly to the maximum, using your will.
5. Sense the tensing of the biceps muscle as a result of the exertion of your will, but permit no mechanical movement of the arm.
6. Relax slowly.

Note that this contraction of the biceps muscle (if done successfully) results from direct action of the will on the muscle. (If you are not able to contract this muscle of the upper arm, make the **experiment** with the forearm, whose muscles some people find easier to tense at will.)

SCIENTIFIC TENSION AND RELAXATION Tension results when energy is sent by will power to any muscle. There are varying degrees of tension, depending upon the amount of energy directed to the muscle. For the purpose of explaining Self-Realization Fellowship recharging techniques, we shall refer broadly to three degrees of tension: low, medium, and high.

LOW indicates a small amount of energy;
MEDIUM, more energy; and
HIGH means as much energy as possible.

The withdrawal of energy from the muscles is **called** relaxation. This too may be considered to have three states or degrees, from partial to complete relaxation.

In order to tense one must first be relaxed. However, a popular concep-

tion of relaxation involves movement. A person who is asked to relax usually shifts his limbs about--in effect, tenses them--and then thinks he is physically relaxed. But even as an automobile standing with the engine running burns energy, so also many persons, even though they may be sleeping, sitting, or lying down, are actually partly tensed (low, medium, or high) according to the degree of their mental nervousness; they are thus burning energy even when their bodies are apparently at rest. When we move our arm or any part of the body to relax it, and keep on moving it, we are not relaxing (i. e. , withdrawing energy from it), but are really tensing (i. e. , sending energy to) it instead.

EXERCISE IN GENERAL TENSION AND RELAXATION Sit on a chair. Tense the whole body, then relax, taking care to keep the body motionless. Bend forward with arms down and, clasping your hands together, hold an imaginary cord tied to an imaginary weight of 25 pounds. Will to lift the 25 pounds, sending enough energy and will power to raise it one inch from the floor; tense the hands first and then add to their strength that of the tensed forearms. Add the power of the tensed upper arms, then that of the tensed chest, abdomen, buttocks, thighs, legs, and feet. The "weight" feels very heavy, but gradually tense harder and continue lifting it higher--two inches, six inches, twelve inches. Now lower the imaginary weight to the floor, feeling the tension leave all the body parts. Sit back on your chair, relaxed and motionless.

The best way to know the exact amount of energy required to lift an imaginary weight of 25 pounds (or any amount) is actually to lift something that weighs that much. Relax after doing so; then try to employ the same amount of tension to lift an imaginary object of equal weight. Try increasing the weight to 30, then to 40 pounds; thus increasing the amount of tension, and hence the amount of energy in the body parts used in lifting.

RELAXING EXERCISE Dogs and cats stretch and relax upon awakening, but man strips his muscle gears by jumping out of bed, suddenly throwing the body into action in response to an alarm clock or telephone bell. At whatever hour of the morning the consciousness first awakens in the body, remain lying on the back, with eyes closed, and practice the following exercise:

THINK OF THE BODY AS DIVIDED INTO THESE TWENTY MAJOR PARTS

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Left foot | 8. Right buttock | 14. Right upper arm |
| 2. Right foot | 9. Lower abdomen | 15. Left chest |
| 3. Left calf | 10. Upper abdomen and stomach | 16. Right chest |
| 4. Right calf | 11. Left forearm | 17. Left of neck |
| 5. Left thigh | 12. Right forearm | 18. Right of neck |
| 6. Right thigh | 13. Left upper arm | 19. Front of neck |
| 7. Left buttock | | 20. Back of neck |

Tense simultaneously all these twenty body parts. Hold the tension for a count of three; then quickly relax and exhale. Feel the energy and will power slipping away from the body as you relax. Remain perfectly still, without moving any muscles; and, for as long as you can comfortably do so, without taking another breath. Feel as relaxed as a jellyfish--without any awareness of bones and flesh--as long as you like.

We now come to the technique of recharging the body-battery, by which one may draw more and more life-sustaining energy from the ether, and thus depend less and less upon solids, liquids, sunshine, and gases, for sustenance.

THE TECHNIQUE OF ENERGIZATION

INDIVIDUAL TENSION AND RELAXATION

1. Gently and individually tense and relax each of the twenty body parts, mentally saying, "My children, wake up!"

CUMULATIVE TENSION AND RELAXATION

1. Place the attention on the instep of the left foot.
2. Slowly tense the left foot--low, medium, and high--drawing the toes under.
3. Continuing to hold the tension at high in the left foot, tense the right foot in the same manner; proceed upward until each of the twenty body parts has been tensed from low to medium to high. Hold the tension in each body part as you move on in slow, rhythmic succession to the next part.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| (1) left foot | (11) left forearm |
| (2) right foot | (12) right forearm |
| (3) left calf | (13) left upper arm |
| (4) right calf | (14) right upper arm |
| (5) left thigh | (15) left chest |
| (6) right thigh | (16) right chest |
| (7) left buttock | (17) left of neck |
| (8) right buttock | (18) right of neck |
| (9) lower abdomen (contract below navel) | (19) front of neck |
| (10) upper abdomen and stomach
(contract above the navel) | (20) back of neck |

4. Gently and simultaneously increase the tension in all twenty body parts and then vibrate the whole body, holding the breath for a count of six and maintaining high tension in all twenty body parts. Observe whether all the parts are tensed.

5. Exhale, and slowly relax the entire chain of tensed parts, moving in reverse order from the neck to the feet. When performing this exercise in sitting or standing position, upon exhalation simultaneously drop the chin to the chest and relax the front, back, left and right sides of the neck. Then go on **relaxing**, one part at a time; maintain the tension in each body part until its "**turn**" to be relaxed. If, while relaxing the parts above the waist, you find that you have also unintentionally relaxed the parts below the waist, then simultaneously tense these parts again and then relax them one by one.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. You can do this exercise in a sitting, reclining, or standing position. When standing, of course, you have to keep certain muscles of the feet, calves, thighs, spine, and neck engaged and tensed in order to hold the body upright. Therefore it is good to practice this exercise at least once before rising in the morning, as the tensing of the parts while in a supine position is accomplished entirely as a conscious act of will. Then practice it twice in a standing position.
2. Always practice very slowly, with closed eyes.
3. Do not tense or relax quickly and jerkily, but gradually.
4. Tense low only, any diseased or weak body part.
5. By exhaling or throwing the breath out--with a short, then a long exhalation, "huh, huhhh"--you relax the lungs, diaphragm, and abdomen.
6. Any time you feel tired or nervous, tense the whole body gently; then quickly exhale and relax--that is, withdraw the energy, consciousness, and active will power from the body; then remain still, enjoying the calmness of the body.
7. To heal any body part, gently tense and relax that part. Then tense low and hold that tension, counting one to ten mentally, electrocuting the disease by bombarding and recharging that body part with energy. Then relax. Repeat ten times, three times a day, or as often as you desire. Practice healing of any body part while lying down.

Master by faithful and regular practice this highly practical Technique of Energization, for your own knowledge and benefit. Each step of the **Self-Realization Fellowship** exercises will give definite, satisfactory, and invigorating results in body and mind that you can experience for yourself if you

are regular, faithful, attentive, and correct in your practice.

In a supplement to this Lesson, 8-A, you will be given an outline of thirty-eight Recharging Exercises, including the foregoing Technique of Energization, to be practiced night and morning. It is possible to perform the entire routine in approximately fifteen minutes, allowing up to five unhurried practices of each exercise. This routine is practiced morning and evening by all disciples of SRF headquarters and other colonies, prior to meditation.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

God is infinite omnipresence. He is present equally in wisdom-sparkling diamond souls and in charcoal mentalities dark with ignorance. It is because God has given men independence to choose between error and truth that some people keep their minds transparent with the purity of knowledge and love, while others keep their mental houses dark with dogma and inharmony. God has endowed man with His own power of liberty: we may shut God out, or through meditation, logic, and right actions in the struggle of life, receive Him.

That some people know less about God than others is not due to God's limiting the flow of His power through man, but to man's not allowing the Lord's light to pass through him. People who are stricken with the disease of ignorance--the cosmic delusion of separateness from God--may be healed by contacting the Christ Consciousness (the Son or Intelligence of the Father present in every atom of creation) by scientific meditation, devotion, and faith.

AFFIRMATION

O Prodigious Power, I am renewed
and strengthened by Thine inexhaustible
life-giving energy.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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EXPLANATION AND PRACTICE OF ENERGIZATION EXERCISES

The principles of the Energization Exercises were discovered in 1916 by Paramahansa Yogananda. He then developed this series of exercises for the all-round well-being of the body, instructing all Self-Realizationists to practice them faithfully every morning and night as a part of their regular spiritual routine.

The primary purpose of these exercises is to recharge the body battery with cosmic energy. This exercises the body, strengthens the muscles, and purifies the bloodstream. These are not ordinary physical exercises. They are a spiritual technique -- a form of pranayama, or life-force control. These exercises are important to your spiritual routine of meditation, for they not only help to keep the body in a state of health and calmness that is conducive to meditation, but they also help you to attain conscious control of the life force. When you have mastered the technique of conscious life-force control, the restlessness and sense perceptions of the body will cease to be obstacles to the attainment of the higher meditative states.

To obtain maximum results, each exercise should be performed with deepest attention and will power. Keep the eyes closed and focused upward at the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows. This center is the polar opposite of the medulla center at the base of the brain. The Christ center is the center of will in man. The medulla is the principal point of entry of cosmic energy into the body. Will is the power that operates the floodgate of the medulla. By keeping the eyes focused at the Christ center, and visualizing the cosmic energy flowing into the body through the medulla, a direct connection is maintained between the will and the flow of life energy.

Visualize the cosmic energy entering the body through the medulla oblongata, and direct it, by the power of your will, to the body part that you are exercising. Concentrate the energy on the central portion of that body part.

The Energization Exercises should be practiced outside in the fresh air, or at least before an open window. Do these exercises slowly with deep concentration! It is far more beneficial to practice each exercise correctly a few times in this manner than to practice it many times quickly and absentmindedly.

It is also important that the exercises be practiced in the order given. Paramahansa Yogananda's instruction was unequivocal on these three

points concerning the exercises: Practice them unhurriedly, with concentration, and in the correct order.

Any of these exercises may be practiced more than the number of times specified. In increasing the number of practices, however, take care not to lapse into hurried performance. You may also practice any or all of the exercises more than twice a day, if desired, to help relieve fatigue or other bodily inharmonies.

Once you have memorized the routine, it should not take more than fifteen minutes to perform all thirty-eight exercises, allowing the suggested number of practices of each one. By this timing you will know if you are performing them too fast or too slow.

In tensing a body part, always remember to start with a low degree of tension, progressing to medium, and finally to high tension; relax from high to medium to low.

Never tense with a quick or jerky motion.

Never exert tension to the point of strain or discomfort.

It is not necessary to hold "high" tension longer than three seconds at a time. Use only low tension on any diseased or weak body part.

Any instruction to "inhale twice" signifies inhalation, through the nostrils, of one short and one long breath. Instruction to "exhale twice" signifies exhalation, through the mouth, of one short and one long breath, thus: "huh, huhhhhh." "Huh" is not a spoken word but an aspirate sound, like a sigh but with more force. The expression "double breathing" means to inhale and exhale continuously in the manner just described.

Where no special instruction is given for breathing, one should breathe calmly and naturally, without any attempt to synchronize the breathing with the tension and relaxation.

It is recommended that, starting with Exercise 1 and proceeding in the order given, you learn and practice as many exercises as you can within fifteen to twenty minutes. Each day add one or a few new exercises to those already learned (keeping the period of study and practice to fifteen or twenty minutes) until all exercises have been learned and included in your morning and evening routine.

SPECIAL NOTE: If for any reason you cannot perform the actual movements of an exercise, you should, nevertheless, with closed eyes, mentally practice the exercise. Feel that you are sending the energy to that body part just as though you were actually going through the physical motions of doing so.

ENERGIZATION EXERCISES

Always begin with one of Paramahansa Yogananda's prayers for recharging body, mind, and soul, such as the following:

"Heavenly Father, it is Thou who ~~do~~ directly sustain my body. Awaken within ~~me~~ conscious will, conscious health, conscious vitality, conscious realization. O Eternal Youth of body and mind, abide in ~~me~~ forever and forever."

1. Double-Breathing Exercise (With Tension) (repeat 3-5 times)

Stand erect. Raise arms until they are stretched out horizontally at the sides, parallel to the ground. Keeping arms straight and at shoulder height, bring them forward in an arc until the palms touch in front of you. During this forward motion of the arms, exhale the breath twice through the mouth ("huh, **huhhhh**") in a slow, relaxed manner, and slightly bend the knees. The body should feel relaxed. Hold to a count of three.

Now close the fists and inhale twice while slowly drawing the raised arms out to the sides as in the beginning position. Simultaneously with the opening out of the arms, tense consecutively these body parts: feet, calves, thighs, buttocks, lower abdomen, upper abdomen and stomach, arms, chest, neck, and head, in a continuous upward wave of tension, until the inhalation is complete, the arms are fully extended sideways, and the entire body is tensed. Hold to the count of three.

Sweep arms forward until the palms touch, exhaling twice as before, relaxing all tensed body parts in reverse order from head to feet, and bending the knees slightly.

SPECIAL NOTE: In this exercise, tense and relax body parts on both left and right sides together, as both feet, both calves, and so forth. Do not bend the elbows; keep the arms straight.

2. Leg Recharging (repeat 3-5 times with each leg)

Balance the weight on the right foot. Bend left knee so that left foot is raised off the floor. Tense the left leg, concentrating tension particularly in the calf. Then swing leg (from knee down only) slowly forward and backward. Relax the muscle tension momentarily at the forward and backward end of each swing, retaining only enough tension in the backward swing to hold the leg up. After practicing three to five times, practice the succeeding exercise (Ankle Rotation). Then with the right leg repeat the Leg Recharging Exercise, followed by ankle rotation.

3. Ankle Rotation (rotate 5 times in each direction)

Balancing the weight on the right foot, tense the left ankle and rotate that foot slowly in a circular motion, five times in one direction, then five times in the other. Do the same with right ankle after practicing Exercise 2 with that leg,

4. Calf and Forearm, Thigh and Upper Arm Recharging (3 times with left arm and leg; 3 times with right arm and leg; 3 times with both arms and legs)

Place the weight of the body on the right foot with the left foot lightly resting on the floor, extended a little forward and to the left. Tense the left forearm and the left calf together; then relax. Tense the left thigh and the upper arm together; then relax. This counts as one practice. After three practices, shift the weight to the left foot and tense the right calf and the forearm; relax. Tense the right thigh and the upper arm; relax. Repeat three times. Then tense both calves and both forearms simultaneously; relax. Tense both thighs and both upper arms simultaneously; relax. Repeat three times.

5. Chest and Buttock Recharging (repeat 3 times, each side)

Tense the left chest and the left buttock together; relax. Tense the right chest and the right buttock together; relax. Continue, alternating right and left sides, until you have practiced three times on each side.

6. Three-Part Pack Recharging (repeat 3-5 times)

Tense and relax the muscles of the back along the spine: first those of the lumbar region, opposite the navel; then those between the shoulder blades; then those on top of the shoulders. In this consecutive order, tense and relax first the left, then the right side of each set of muscles. To do this you may have to move the body and shoulders slightly to isolate the muscles on each side of the spine.

7. Shoulder Rotation (3-5 times in each direction)

Place the fingers of the left hand on the left shoulder, right fingers on the right shoulder, elbows extended out to the sides. Starting from this position, simultaneously move arms, shoulders, and shoulder blades upward, forward, and around in as wide a circle as possible, three to five times forward and three to five times backward.

8. Throat Recharging (repeat 3 times)

Without raising the chin, tense simultaneously all the muscles of the throat: the front, the left and right sides; relax.

Tense simultaneously the left-front and the left-side muscles of the throat; relax.

Tense simultaneously the right-front and the right-side muscles; relax.

Repeat in this consecutive order until you have performed each phase of the exercise three times. Conclude with an additional performance of phase one.

9. Neck Recharging (repeat 3-5 times)

Lower the head so that the chin rests on the chest. Then, tensing neck and throat muscles, pull the chin upward against the tension until the head is tilted back. Completely relax the tension so that the head falls forward of its own weight and the chin drops quickly back to the chest. The falling motion of the head will culminate in a slight jerk as the neck reaches maximum forward position.

10. Neck Adjustment (rotate 3-5 times each way)

Exert low tension in the muscles of the throat and neck. While maintaining this tension, slowly rotate the head on the neck three to five times in one direction, then three to five times in the other. Relax the tension and rotate the head a couple of times in each direction.

11. Spinal Adjustment (6-8 times)

Bend the elbows so forearms are almost parallel to the ground, keeping the upper arms close to the body. With a quick jerk, twist the upper part of the body to the left and the hips to the right. Then twist the upper trunk to the right, hips to the left. (A twist in one direction counts as one time.)

12. Spinal Rotation (5 times in each direction)

Stand with the legs slightly tensed and the feet twelve to fourteen inches apart. Place the hands at the waist. Concentrate on tensing the muscles of the back along the spine. Now bend the trunk slightly forward, maintaining the tension along the spine, and rotate the torso above the waist five times in one direction, five times in the other. Do not move hips; rotate spine from the waist up only; keep the spine above the waist straight.

13. Spinal Stretching (Side to Side) (3-5 times)

In the same position as the Spinal Rotation Exercise, with muscles along the spine tensed, hands at waist, slowly sway the torso above the waist, first to one side then to the other side. Bend the spine as far as you can without moving the hips.

14. Spinal Adjustment (Forward and Backward)

Stand with the feet slightly apart. With the fingers of the left hand placed on the left side of the spine near the base or coccyx, and the fingers of the right hand similarly placed on the right side, incline the trunk forward slightly. Now bend the trunk gently backward, simultaneously pushing the lower spine forward with the fingers, arching the back and rising slightly off the heels. Repeat, moving the fingers a little higher up the back. Continue until you have gone as far up the spine as you can reach.

15. Spinal Twisting (6-8 times)

Stand with feet apart, legs straight, and spine tensed. Raise the arms forward to shoulder level. Clench the fists; tense the arms; and slowly swing them first to the left and then to the right, pivoting at the waist, so that you twist the trunk above the waist only. The movement should be smooth and rhythmical, not jerky. Palms of the fist face downward throughout this exercise.

As the left arm sweeps backward, the right arm should follow the arc, bending at the elbow so that the right fist touches the left shoulder when the left arm reaches the end of its backward swing. Relax tension momentarily; then tense and twist to the right, the left fist touching the right shoulder. Relax again momentarily. The head should turn, **following**

the arc of the outstretched arm in its backward sweep. (A twist in one direction counts as one time.)

16. Memory Stimulating Exercise (several times)

Briskly rap the entire skull with the knuckles. Concentrate deeply on each rap and feel that it is stimulating and awakening the brain cells. Excellent for improving the mental and nerve responses.

17. Scalp Massaging

Holding the fingertips firmly on the scalp so that the fingers do not slip on the hair, move the scalp with a rotary motion. Do this over the entire scalp. This exercise will loosen muscular tension in the scalp and stimulate blood circulation there.

18. Medulla Oblongata Massaging (repeat 2-3 times)

Place the first three fingers of each hand on the medulla oblongata, at the base of the skull. Pressing firmly against the medulla, move the fingers in a small circle, three times in one direction, then three times in the opposite direction. With the throat and head tensed as in the Neck Recharging Exercise, draw the head backward. Then relax and push the head forward with the fingers so that the chin drops quickly (but gently) to the chest.

19. Biceps Recharging (each arm, alternately, 3 times)

Clasp the hands over the head -- you may let them rest on top of the head if you wish -- and alternately tense and relax the biceps in each arm.

20. Four-Part Body Recharging (all four steps 1 or 2 times)

Refer to Lesson 8 for Technique of Energization of the twenty body parts and variations in its practice.

(1) Inhale deeply one short and one long breath, and simultaneously and slowly exert tension from low to high degree in all body parts. Vibrate with energy for three seconds. Throw the breath out in one short and one long exhalation and simultaneously and slowly relax. Feel the energy coursing through the entire body.

(2) Tense and relax each of the twenty body parts individually. Take about four seconds to tense and relax each individual part, in the following order:

1,2 -- left foot, right foot	11,12 -- left forearm, right forearm
3,4 -- left calf, right calf	13,14 -- left upper arm, right upper arm
5,6 -- left thigh, right thigh	15,16 -- left chest, right chest
7,8 -- left buttock, right buttock	17,18 -- left side of neck, right side of neck
9,10 -- lower abdomen, upper abdomen and stomach	19,20 -- front of neck, back of neck

(3) Tense consecutively each of the twenty body parts (from number 1 to 20), holding the tension in each one as you progress, until the whole body is tensed. (This should take about ten seconds.) As you begin the tension, simultaneously begin a slow inhalation. If you have not taken

in all the air your lungs can hold, without undue strain, by the time all parts are tensed, continue to inhale to capacity. The body should be tensed so that **it** literally vibrates with energy. Hold tension and breath, and vibrate for three seconds. Proceed at once to step four.

- (4) Exhale the breath quickly, and simultaneously relax the four parts of the neck and drop the chin to the chest. **But** continue to maintain tension throughout the rest of the body. Then relax the other body parts individually, in reverse sequence (from 16 to 1), until the whole body is relaxed. Remember to relax one part at a time: Maintain the tension in each body part until its "**turn**" to be relaxed. If, while relaxing the parts above the waist, you find that you have also unintentionally relaxed the parts below the waist, then simultaneously tense these parts again, and then relax them one by one. The entire relaxation should be complete in ten seconds. After the upper body parts have been relaxed, the head may be slowly lifted to normal upright position as the lower body parts are relaxed.

(Additional note: This exercise can be practiced any additional number of times throughout the day, in a sitting, reclining, or standing position. When standing, of course, you have to keep certain muscles of the feet, calves, thighs, spine, and neck engaged and tensed in order to hold the body upright. Therefore, **it** is also good to practice this exercise at least once before rising in the morning, as the tensing of the parts while in a supine position is accomplished entirely as a conscious act of will. **This** is the best way to awaken your body in the morning and set **it** in "**gear**" for the **day's** activity.)

21. Arm Recharging (Up and Down) (3-5 times)

Keeping elbows at sides, raise both forearms with tension as though lifting weights, until fists are at shoulder level. Relax momentarily; tense again; and let the imaginary weights down. Relax and repeat. The exercise is performed as though rhythmically lifting and lowering weights. Palms of fists should face each other.

22. Double-Breathing Exercise (Elbows Touching) (3-5 times)

With arms outstretched sideways at shoulder level, and with elbows bent so that the forearms are perpendicular to the ground, bring arms forward with a sweeping motion so that elbows, forearms, and fists meet. At the same time, exhale twice, relaxing the body **and** slightly bending the knees. Hold to the count of three. Inhale twice and tense the twenty body parts in upward order (as in Exercise 1), at the same time bringing the bent arms to the starting position. Hold to the count of three. Exhale twice and relax the twenty body parts in reverse order while bringing forearms together in the front again, and slightly bending the knees. Hold to the count of three. Remember to keep the spine straight, the **elbows** at shoulder level, and the forearms perpendicular to the floor at all times during this exercise. Palms of fists are toward sides of head in tensing position of this exercise. Palms of fists face forehead when in the relaxing position.

23. Arm Recharging (From Shoulders) (3-5 times)

From a starting position in which the **arms** are extended sideways at

shoulder level, with the elbows bent so that the fists are at either side of the head, extend the forearms outward to the side, with tension, keeping the upper arms at shoulder level. Relax tension momentarily. Then tense arms and draw them back to starting position; relax tension. This exercise should be done as though the arms were alternately pulling and pushing heavy weights toward and away from the sides of the head. Palms of fists face upward in the extended position, and downward when ~~at~~ the sides of the head.

24. Arm Rotation (Small Circles) (several times in each direction)

Extend the arms fully to the sides at shoulder level. Clench the fists tightly, and tense the whole arm. Fists should be turned so that the palms are upward. Continuously add to this tension as you rotate the arms from the shoulder in small circles several times. Relax tension momentarily. Then rotate in the opposite direction several times, with increasing tension.

25. Arm Recharging (From Forehead) (3-5 times)

With upper arms outstretched in front of the body at shoulder level, and elbows bent so that the fists are lightly touching the forehead, tense the arms and extend them forward. Relax momentarily; then tense and bring them back to the head as in the starting position. Relax momentarily; then repeat. This is done as though alternately pulling and pushing a heavy weight to and from the forehead. Palms of fists should be facing each other throughout this exercise.

26. Four-Part Finger Recharging (several times in each position)

With arms straight down at sides, tense the fingers and, keeping the tension, rapidly open and close the fists. Repeat same with arms extended to the sides at shoulder level, palms turned downward. Repeat with arms straight out in front at shoulder level, palms turned downward. Repeat with arms raised above the head, palms facing forward.

27. Four-Part Arm Recharging (3-5 times)

Start with arms down at sides. With tension in the arms, bend at elbows so that fists come up to the chest; reduce tension; then increase again, extending arms to the side at **shoulder** height; reduce tension; exert tension again to draw fists back to the chest; reduce tension; then exert tension again and thrust arms forward at chest height; reduce tension; exert tension again as you bring fists back to the chest, and reduce tension; finally, extend the arms upward over **the head**, stretching up on the toes and tensing the whole body, and simultaneously inhaling twice. Relax tension and exhale twice as fists are lowered first to chest and then to starting position at the sides. Palms of fists face downward when arms extended from sides and in front, forward when arms extended over head.

28. Arm Raising with Double Breathing (3-5 times each arm, alternately)

Without bending the elbows, tense the arm and swing it forward and up until perpendicular to the floor, inhaling twice and rising on the toes at the same time. Exhale in a double exhalation and put heels back on floor as arm is relaxed and brought down in a forward motion. Alternate with the left and the right arm.

29. Lateral Stretching (3-5 times each side, alternately)

Stretch trunk to the left as far as possible, bringing right arm straight up to the side of the head and stretching left arm down as far as possible at the side of the left knee as you bend in that direction. Then stretch to the right side in the same manner, with the left arm up by the head and the right hand down by the right knee. Alternate the left and right stretch.

30. Walking-in-Place (repeat 25-50 times)

Lift the feet alternately, as in marching (only greatly exaggerated), tensing the whole leg, including the thigh muscles in back. At the same time, tense the arm on the opposite side and bring the fist up to the chest. Then extend the arm straight down and relax as the leg is relaxed and set down again. This exercise is to be done in one place, as in "marking time."

31. Running-in-Place (repeat 25-50 times)

Run in place with a light, springy step but exaggerate the motion by bringing the heels up in back so as to strike the buttocks. Run on the balls of the feet so as to avoid jarring the body. Try to maintain a natural rhythm. Arms, with elbows bent, should remain in stationary position.

32. Fencing Exercise (3-5 times each side, alternately)

Bend arms at the elbows so fists are on the chest. Tense left leg and step forward with it about ten to fourteen inches ahead of the right foot; the left knee should be slightly bent. ~~Keep the right leg straight and~~ tensed with the heel flat on the floor. Simultaneously, clench the fist of the right hand and tense the right arm and extend the arm straight out from the chest, exhaling twice. There should also be a great amount of tension in the chest. Slowly relax tension as the foot and arm are brought back to the starting position, and inhale twice. Repeat alternately with the opposite foot and arm. At all times during this exercise the spine and head should be erect, perpendicular to the floor. When the arm is thrust forward, the wrist and arm should be in a straight line, not bent; and the palm of the right fist should be turned toward the left, and the palm of the left fist toward the right. In other words, the fist should be turned neither up nor down.

33. Arm Rotation (Large Circles) (3 times in each direction)

With arms hanging straight down at the sides, clench fists, tense arms, and rotate arms in a circular motion. First bring them forward and up, as if making the first part of a large circle, increasing the tension till they are directly overhead. Then begin to relax them slowly as they are brought down as far behind the trunk as possible, completing the circle. After three times, rotate in the opposite direction.

34. Stomach Exercise (5-10 times)

This exercise offers aid in stomach troubles of a general nature, such as indigestion and constipation. Place feet about ten inches apart. Incline the trunk forward, keeping the spine straight but at an angle. Bend the knees slightly. Place most of the weight of the torso on the hands, which should be resting with the palms flat on the thighs, at or a little

below the junction of the thigh and abdomen. Exhale breath twice and, without inhaling, draw the abdomen and stomach in and upward (this motion is assisted by the partial vacuum in the chest cavity). Force the abdomen and stomach out gently and slowly. Draw in and force out again. Take another breath; exhale and repeat. With practice, you may increase from two to ten the number of times the abdomen and stomach are drawn slowly in and pushed out without taking another breath. **But** do not hold the breath to the point of discomfort!

Never practice this exercise with a full stomach. Always wait two hours or more after eating, or practice before eating. Women should not practice this exercise during pregnancy.

35. Repeat Exercise One: Double-Breathing Exercise (With Tension) (3-5 times)

36. Repeat Exercise Two and Three: Leg Recharging and Ankle Rotation (3-5 times each)

37. Leg Rotation (3-5 times in each direction with each leg)

Stand with the weight on the right foot. Keeping the left leg straight, swing **it** out in front, to the left, to the rear, and back to the starting position, in a counterclockwise circle, three to five times. Then rotate the same leg three to five times in a large clockwise circle. Shift the weight to the left foot. Holding the right leg straight, swing **it** in a large clockwise circle; then reverse direction to a counterclockwise rotation.

38. Double-Breathing Exercise (Without Tension) (3-5 times)

Exhaling twice to expel all the breath, extend the arms (without tension) straight forward from shoulders, hands open and fingers extended. Hold the breath out to the count of twelve, or for as long as is comfortable. Concentrate the mind on calmness and on freedom from breath. Then inhale twice, taking in all the breath you can hold without straining; simultaneously, bend **arms** at the elbows to bring hands back to the shoulders. Hold again to the count of twelve, or for as long as is comfortable, again feeling the great calmness that comes with cessation of breath. Neither the torso nor the limbs should be tensed in this exercise, except insofar as **it** is necessary to maintain an erect posture with the arms extended.

These Exercises should be practiced every morning and night, preferably just before your meditation period.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY LOVE TOLD ME TO LOVE THEE ALONE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

As winter came with its garment of cold lily flakes,
My desires for summer joys were dulled
And I was told to seek the warmth of Thy heart.

As spring came dancing, decked with myriad flowers
And sprinkled with wild perfumes,
It told me to love Thee.

Summer came singing through leaves and swishing through pines,
~~Urging me to sing of Thee.~~
Even the soft-hearted sod caressed my hasty footsteps
And cautioned them tenderly to approach Thy temple everywhere.

And the fragrance told me to follow its trail
To Thy secret cloister in the forest of pollen.
And the birds told me I should try to sing of Thee as they were doing.
And the breeze, blowing over the lake,
Roused the ripples of my devotion to play over Thy bosom.
And with the bowed blades of grass I learned to bow my head to Thee.
The incense told me how fragrant Thou art
And that I should make my heart perpetually burn with sweet-scented goodness
Before Thy throne everywhere.

The mute, downtrodden, uncomplaining little stones
Told me to behold Thee in those people
Who try to tread upon my happiness.
And the foolish forgotten years told me
To send a message of love encased in every second.
And every thought told me to seek Thy hiding place in their hearts.

And my love told me to love all things in Thee,
And my love whispered to me to love Thee alone.

PRAYER

O Spirit, teach me to relax and cast aside all mental burdens, allowing Thee to express through me as perfect health, peace, love, and wisdom.

THE ART OF ENERGIZATION--Part 5

MENTAL RELAXATION Mental relaxation should signify complete mental rest. One may achieve this by practicing going to sleep at will. Relax the body and think of the drowsiness you usually feel just before you fall asleep. Then try actually to reproduce that state. Use imagination, not will, to do this. Most people do not relax even while they **sleep**. Their minds are restless; hence they dream. Therefore conscious mental relaxation is better than relaxation that is the byproduct of passive physical relaxation, or sleep. In conscious mental relaxation one can either dream or keep dreams off his mental moving picture screen, as he chooses.

No matter how busy we are, we should not forget now and then to free our minds completely from worries and all duties. They should simply be dismissed from the mind. We were not made for them; they were made by us. We should not allow them to torture us. When beset by overwhelming mental trials or worries one should try to fall asleep. If he can do that, he will find upon awakening that the mental tension has been relieved, and that the worry has loosened its grip. We need to remind ourselves at such times that even if we died, the earth would continue to follow its orbit, and business would be carried on as usual; so why worry? When we take ourselves too seriously, death comes along to mock us and remind us of the brevity of material life and its duties.

Mental relaxation consists in the ability to free the attention at will from nagging worries over past and present difficulties; from constant consciousness of duty, dread of **accidents**, and other haunting fears; from greed, passion, evil or disturbing thoughts and attachments. Mastery in mental relaxation comes with faithful practice in freeing the mind of all thoughts at will and then keeping the attention fixed on the peace and contentment within. One can then divert the attention from worry to peace through meditation.

Hence, the devotee who aspires to develop uniformly and steadily in spirituality should always calm the mind with the practice of concentration, keep the breath quiet by proper breathing exercises, preserve the vital essence by self-control, avoid temptation by mixing only with good company, and keep the body quiet and not in perpetual motion and restlessness.

Everyone needs to let go of his worries and enter into absolute silence every morning and night. At such times one should first try to remain for one minute at a time without thinking negatively, fixing the mind on the peace within, especially if worried. Then try to remain for several minutes with a quiet mind. Following that, think of some happy incident; dwell on it and visualize it; mentally go through some pleasant experience over and over again until you have forgotten your worries entirely.

Just as there are degrees of physical relaxation, so there are degrees of mental and metaphysical relaxation. The term "metaphysical" is used here to indicate those states which go beyond the physical and mental realms.

Metaphysical or super-relaxation consists in freeing the human consciousness entirely from its identification with the physical body, money, possessions, name, fame, family, country, the world, and the human race and its habits. Metaphysical relaxation means disengaging your attention by degrees from consciousness, subconsciousness, the semisuperconscious state felt after meditation, and Christ Consciousness; and in identifying yourself completely with Cosmic Consciousness.

Metaphysical relaxation therefore consists in releasing consciousness from the delusion of duality and truly resting the mind by keeping it identified with one's own real nature: unity with Spirit. Man has hypnotized himself into thinking ~~that he is a human being, whereas in reality he is one-with God.~~ - - - - -

PHYSICAL RELAXATION When practicing the energization techniques one may feel, perhaps for the first time, the difference between flesh and energy. With the tension of all body parts, energy is furnished to every body part. In the subsequent relaxation, simultaneous with the throwing out of the breath, relaxation is given to every body part.

When, after tensing the whole body, one relaxes and exhales the breath, he should cast away all restless thoughts, concentrating the attention on God-peace; he should remain without negative thought as long as possible, and without inhaling as long as no discomfort is experienced.

We should not jump out of bed suddenly upon awakening in the morning, but rather go through the routine of energizing the body while still in bed;

Close the eyes. Tense the whole body slowly and then relax, giving all the body parts a breakfast of energy. Tense and relax gradually; do not jerk. Then get up and repeat the routine twice in a standing position.

After one has learned how to concentrate, he will be able to withdraw energy from the body in this way and to consciously direct it toward the higher centers in the spine and brain where awareness of God's presence may be realized.

There is no greater method of relaxation than that which is taught in these Lessons. Whenever one is tired or worried, he should tense and relax the whole body; throw the breath out; remain without either breath or restless thought for a few moments; and he will soon become calm. However, when there is only slight contraction of the muscles, tension is not completely removed upon the release of contraction. It is important to tense "high" and then relax in order to have perfect relaxation.

SCIENTIFIC TENSION AND RELAXATION

It is possible to distinguish three degrees of tension by trying the following exercise:

Raise the right arm forward, parallel to the floor; gently grasp the right forearm just below the elbow with the fingers of the left hand. Then slightly tense and relax the right forearm by closing the right hand into a fist and then opening the fingers again. Now, hold the right forearm still, with drooping palm and fingers, and sense the following degrees of tension:

1. LOW TENSION. Partly close the fingers of the right hand; note the low tension of the muscles in the forearm.
2. MEDIUM TENSION. Close the fingers half way. This creates medium tension.
3. HIGH TENSION. Close the fingers tightly. This creates high tension.

(It is possible, but more difficult, to tense the forearm or the upper arm without closing the fingers. It is also possible to tense almost any muscle in the body individually, by application of Self-Realization Fellowship methods.)

Now drop the right arm to the side. Tense it with will (as in point three above), and keep the eyes closed. Open the fingers a little; then open the fingers halfway; then open the hand and let the fingers relax; when completely relaxed let the hand droop.

In this experiment one can experience three degrees of relaxation, ending with complete relaxation of those muscles. Feel the gradual withdrawal of energy and the loosening of the muscles during relaxation.

While one is relaxing the forearm or upper arm, he should be sure to let the arm hang loosely by his side, and not lift it up. Should one tense and then relax with the arm raised, he does not achieve perfect muscular relaxation, because in lifting the arm he has had to tense, or contract, the muscles that raise the arm.

Try the foregoing exercise with any part of the body, while lying on one's back on a firm bed, or on a blanket on the floor. These exercises may be practiced either standing up or lying down, to become calm and to gain great strength. Strength is valuable, of course, but above all, calmness is necessary to enable us to learn concentration and meditation. Without concentration and meditation, Self-realization is impossible.

Physical and mental relaxation may be very successfully accomplished by practicing the above exercises while lying on a blanket on the floor, early in the morning after the bath.

When performing such exercises, keep the **mind** on the medulla oblongata, and imagine the energy flowing into the body through the medulla and from thence to every part of the body. The medulla oblongata or "mouth of God" is located at the base of the brain. By keeping one's mind thus fixed upon the medulla, he will soon learn to draw in energy from the ether and send it to all parts of his body at will, without the physical process of tensing and relaxing.

A MEDITATION:

SPREADING THE RIPPLES OF PEACE

Fix your mind at the point between the eyebrows where the spiritual eye glows like a shoreless lake of peace. Watch the eternal circle of rippling peace around you. The more intently you watch, the more you will feel the wavelets of peace extending from your eyebrows to your forehead, from your forehead to your heart, and on to every cell in your body. Now the ripples of peace have left the banks of your body and peace is flooding over the vast territory of your mind. Now the flood of peace overflows the boundaries of your mind and moves on in infinite directions all around you, everywhere. Meditate, dwell on this and feel it.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The temple of God is within your soul. Enter into this quietness and sit there in meditation with the light of intuition burning on the altar. There is no restlessness, no searching or striving there. Come into the silence of solitude, and the vibration there will talk to you with the voice of God, and you will know that the invisible has become visible and the unreal has become real.

Realize that all power to think, to speak, and to act, comes from God, and that He is with you now, guiding and inspiring you. As soon as you actually

realize that, a flash of illumination will come and fear will leave you. Sometimes that power of God comes like an ocean, and surges through your being in great boundless waves, sweeping away all obstacles of doubt. There is a Power that will light your way to health, happiness, peace, and success, if you will but turn toward that Light.

You must always be guided by that divine power, which is unfailing. As I perceive, so may you perceive; as I behold, so may you behold the ethereal power that flows through you, through your speech, your brain, your cells, your thoughts. Every thought is a tube, a channel through which the divine light is passing. Open your heart, that the Divine Flood may pass through you.

AFFIRMATION

I am calmly active. I am actively calm.
I am a Prince of Peace sitting on the throne
of poise, directing the kingdom of activity.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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IN THE NIGHTLY GARDEN OF DREAMS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

In the nightly garden of my dreams grow many blossoms: the rarest flowers of my fancy. There, warmed by the astral dream-light, unopened buds of earthly hopes audaciously spread petals of fulfillment.

In the dream glow I spy specters of beloved forgotten faces; and sprites of dear, dead feelings, long buried in the soil of subconsciousness. All arise in shining robes. At the trumpet call of dream angels I behold the resurrection of all past experiences.

Lord, Thou hast given us freedom to forget our daily troubles by nightly visits to dreamland. May we escape from mortal sorrows forever by awakening in Thee.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Creator of All! in the garden of Thy dreams let me be a radiant flower. Or may I be a tiny star, held on the timeless thread of Thy love as a twinkling bead in the vast necklace of Thy heavens.

Or give me the highest honor: the humblest place within Thy heart. There I would behold the creation of the noblest visions of life.

THE PHENOMENA OF DREAMS

Most people dream at night, but few take their jumbled dreams seriously. The greatest lesson dreamland has to offer is that we must not take our earthly experiences too seriously either, for they are nothing but a series of vast dream movies shown to us to entertain us. The Heavenly Father meant to entertain and educate us, His immortal children, with a variety of earthly movies. We must behold comedies, tragedies, and newsreels of life's movies with an entertained, joyous attitude, and learn from them without being overcome by their emotional impact.

In the dreamland we forget our names, bodies, nationalities, possessions, and our frailties. We unconsciously enjoy the great freedom that is native to the soul. We must cultivate a similar but conscious awareness of soul freedom; we must realize the truth that the soul is not permanently attached to its present bodily and world environment, sex, or race, but is omnipresent, eternal, free of any limitation.

God "froze" His thoughts into substance, and by maya or cosmic illusion He causes us to perceive His dream of the cosmos, with its various sensations, as tangible and real. It is maya that keeps us from realizing that the universe is constructed of mind stuff and that it has no more reality than do our dreams, which we recognize, upon awakening from them, as creations of our own minds.

God has given the soul and mind the power to materialize thoughts in the dreamland; to create, in the same way that He does, a miniature cosmos. The phenomena of dreams show that we employ the instrument of the mind to reproduce an exact and realistic copy of this world and of the experiences of mundane life. God is showing us, in our dreams, that we, being His children, can create substance out of thought, even as He does.

In the dreamland the soul becomes free to create a cosmos after its own fancy. It can move in a new body, in a new world; enjoy ice cream or hot tea; live in the hot Sahara desert or in the bleak regions of Alaska, or in the heights of the Himalayas. In dreamland the soul can masquerade as a poor man or a king; it can satisfy all its unfulfilled earthly desires by materializing them into

dream experiences. Here the soul can create, if it will, a perfect world, free from poverty, sickness, wickedness, and **ignorance**. Here it can be a part of anything it thinks it cannot be in its earthly life. Here the soul can perceive the birth of a baby or the death of a man. Here it can cry or smile, hear songs, smell flowers, touch, feel, think, reason, meditate, and perform every activity, even as it does in this earthly life.

Just as we find this variety-filled dream life interesting, without believing in its actuality, so we must prove ourselves to be God's immortal children, who can learn from and be entertained by the cosmic movies, without forgetting that they are temporary and delusive. We must prove ourselves to be true sons of God by appreciating the **lessons** of the cosmic movies without losing the unchangeable joyous poise of our inner beings--our souls--which are true reflections of immortal, unchangeable God.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DREAMS All dreams have some significance even though all dreams are not true. For even "meaningless" dreams are reflections of disordered, purposeless thinking. In fact, all dreams signify the state of **one's** consciousness. The worldly man has worldly dreams. The active man has dreams of activity. The evil man has dreams of evil. Imaginative people have fanciful dreams. Matter-of-fact people have dreams of daily activities. The person who is filled with worry and fear has nightmares--which should warn him to change his attitude lest he attract the objects of his worry or fear; ~~not only through his conscious thoughts, but also through the powerful vibrations~~ of his subconscious thoughts. The one whose thoughts dwell too much on sexual matters has dreams of sex, which signify that he must make conscious effort to dislodge these acquired conscious and subconscious sex impulses from the conscious and subconscious minds. Subconscious optimism brings forth comedy dreams. Subconscious pessimism turns out tragedy dream films. Do not try to decipher the meaning of every dream--just remember that it probably symbolizes your mental or physical state; hence you must adjust your waking thought and actions if you would clarify or improve your dreams.

You may ask: "What about prophetic and warning dreams? Many people have had true dreams and visions." This subject, as well as the meaning of some dream symbols that show one's state of spiritual development, will be dealt with at greater length in Step 2 of the SRF Lessons.

DREAM ON THE LAP OF IMMORTALITY If you have faith in your relationship with the Infinite, through contact in deep meditation, you will know that whether or not nature shatters your body, you are still on the lap of that Infinite Assurance. Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of useless human habits and changing human thoughts. Live every second in the consciousness that you are immortal; thoughts and habits change, only your soul will live forever. This is not said to frighten you, but to quicken your understanding, to quicken your efforts, so that you will not keep the ever new bliss of your soul buried under temporary false satisfactions.

We have no real existence as creatures made of matter. The body you see is nothing but materialized electricity. How can electricity be sick? It is a delusion of this dream world, but simply saying that it is a delusion is not enough. If, in a dream, you see a wall and you see your head strike the wall, you will have a broken skull. . . in your dream. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches that it is only by coming in contact with God that one sees that the universe and the body are nothing but condensed electricity, thoughts or vibrations of God "frozen" into various forms. Science has said that electricity is nothing but energy. That energy is frozen Cosmic Consciousness. We must not call it simply "Mind"; that term is too limited in its connotations. It is Cosmic Consciousness that makes us sense different things; which enables us to have consciousness of matter as well as consciousness of Spirit.

Resurrect your soul from dreams of frailties. Resurrect your soul in eternal wisdom. What is the method? It includes many things: relaxation, **self-control**, right diet, fortitude, an undaunted attitude of mind, regular meditation with practice of scientific concentration and meditation principles. You may fail at first, but do not acknowledge defeat. To acknowledge defeat is greater defeat. You have unlimited power; you must cultivate that great power.

Meditation is the greatest way of resurrecting your soul from the bondage of the body and from all your trials. Meditate at the feet of the Infinite. Learn to saturate yourself with Him. Your trials may be heavy, may be great, but the greatest enemy of yourself is yourself. You are immortal; your trials are mortal. They are changeable; you are unchangeable. You can unleash infinite powers and shatter your finite trials. Resurrect yourself from weakness, ignorance, consciousness of disease, and above all, from the clutches of undesirable habits that beset your life.

Neither the dream of life nor the dream of death is lasting. Your last sleep in this body will be dreamless; nightmares and your beautiful dreams of earthly life will bid farewell, at least for a time. Then, after a short rest on the downy bed of blissful oblivion, you will wake up in another dream of another life, in a new earthly setting, or even on another planet. Then again you will be deluded into thinking that you are awake when you are still dreaming. Alas, this delusive sleeping and waking in dreams will continue until man knows that he can really awaken only in God.

As in our dreaming we divide our minds into thoughts of many things, such as minds, mountains, souls, sky, and stars, and make every picture out of the tissue of fancy, so God has created in His dreaming mind a star-checked savanna of the blue, a planetary family which includes the earth and its creatures, laughing, crying, living, dying.

May God make us fearless by letting us know that we are waking and dreaming in Him, and that we are His all-protected, ever happy Self. Let us unite our evanescent lives with His imperishable Life. Let us blend our flickering happiness, which stales so quickly, into His enduring, ever new Bliss.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Dreams can be consciously induced by relaxing and visualizing while looking intently at the point between the eyebrows. Perhaps you do not know that there is anything beyond the state of darkness. You can never believe unless you have experienced it yourself.

Do not be discouraged if a dream does not come for a long time, for it will finally come if you persist. Sometimes you dream things that later you do not recall. The reason one does not remember dreams is that the process of awakening withdraws the life energy from the subconscious mind, where the dream has been going on, and **employs** the life energy to vivify only the waking consciousness of the brain.

Many students on the spiritual path, striving to go from the conscious to the superconscious state, become sidetracted in the subconscious. They get caught in the movieland of dreams, and become satisfied. As you take your attention away from the motion picture of sensory experiences, do not lose yourself in the movieland of dreams. Pass by and race toward the Infinite Spirit.

THE MOUSE THAT BECAME A TIGER

The holy city of **Benares** in India is encompassed by a dark forest inhabited by wild animals. In the depths of this deep jungle was a beautiful hermitage in which lived a God-knowing saint. This holy man, who possessed great wisdom and many miraculous powers, had no one near to him in this world except a little pet mouse.

Many pilgrims and disciples braved the dangers of ferocious tigers and other wild beasts of the forest in order to visit the great master, bringing with them offerings of fruits and flowers. (A disciple never goes empty-handed to his master, who, as God's agent, gives him priceless spiritual treasures.) Everyone who came to visit the saint marvelled at the great friendship between him and the mouse, and enjoyed throwing tidbits to his pet.

One day while a group of students was visiting the great master in his secluded hermitage, the mouse, chased by a cat, ran squeaking to the feet of the sage for protection. Before the wondering gaze of his students, the saint changed the little trembling mouse into a huge, ferocious cat! The metamorphosed **mouse** henceforth went fearlessly in the company of cats without being molested, and was quite happy in its new form except when one of the disciples "who knew him when" would refer to him as the saint's "glorified mouse-cat."

Sometime later the same group of students was visiting the master again when the mouse-cat was pursued by wild jungle dogs. Meowing loudly, it came

at top speed to the feet of the sage who exclaimed: "Be thou a wild dog." The astonished students saw the mouse-cat change into a dog before their eyes. And great was the bewilderment of the wild dogs, who made a disappointed retirement. The mouse-dog eventually became better acquainted and even friendly with other wild dogs, playing and eating with them with a scornful sense of superiority to lesser creatures.

On another occasion, students who had seen the two preceding miracles were studying with the master. In the midst of the lesson they were dismayed to see a full-grown Royal Bengal tiger chasing the mouse-dog, who was racing as usual for shelter at the feet of the sage. But the master, once again using his miraculous powers, stopped the tiger in his tracks. Speaking to his pet, the saint said: "Mr. Mouse, it is foolish for me to go on constantly having to protect you from your enemies. Henceforth, be thou a tiger." The students, once they had recovered from their first fear, began to laugh and exclaim, "Look at the saint's fierce tiger! He is only a glorified mouse."

As time went by and visitors to the hermitage found out that the fearsome tiger patrolling the place was only a mouse uplifted to tigerhood through one of the saint's miracles, they frequently made disparaging remarks about the mouse-tiger. Newcomers would be told by older disciples, "Don't be nervous. That is not really a tiger. It is only a mouse glorified into a tiger by the Master."

The mouse that had become a tiger tired of this popular affront and he thought: "If only I could kill the saint, then the cause of my discomfiture would be removed." Thinking this, the mouse-tiger sprang to kill the sage. Instantly perceiving the motive of his ungrateful pet, the sage loudly commanded: "Be thou a mouse again!" and lo, the roaring tiger became once more a squeaking mouse.

Dear friend, never forget that by using God-given power you may change yourself from a little human mouse, squeaking with failure and fear, into a brave tiger of material, mental, and spiritual success. But do not forget also that if you become antagonistic to that power you may change again from a tiger of success to a miserable mouse of failure. Concentrate well on the duties you are performing, but always, in the background of your mind, hum a silent devotional song of love to your beloved Heavenly Father, remembering that all your abilities are gifts from Him.

AFFIRMATION

My dreams of perfection are bridges that carry me into the realm of pure ideas.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE DIVINE GYPSY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I will be a gypsy--
Roam, roam, and roam.
I will sing a song that none has sung!
I will sing to the sky,
I will sing to the winds,
I'll sing to my red clouds!
I'll roam, roam, and roam--
King of the lands through which I roam.

By day, the shady trees will be my tent,
At night, the stars shall be
My candles, twinkling in the firmament;
And I will call the moon to be my lamp
And light my silver, skyey camp.
I will be a gypsy--
Roam, roam, and roam.

I will eat the food that chance may bring;
I will drink from crystal sparkling spring;
I will doff my cap and off will go,
Like a wayward brook of long ago;
I will roll o'er the green
And scatter the joy of all my heart
To birds, leaves, winds, hills--then depart
To stranger and stranger lands, from East to West.
Oh! I will be a gypsy--
Roam, roam, and roam!

But always, when I lay me down to rest,
I'll sing to Thee my gypsy prayer,
And find Thee, always, everywhere.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, I often heard Thy gentle voice saying: "Come home," but it was drowned in the noises of the wild cravings of many lives. Now I have forsaken the jostling crowds of desires. In the solitude of my mind, my devotion is bursting to hear Thy voice again.

PLAIN LIVING AND GOD-THINKING

Do you realize how you spend your life? Very few of us know how much we can put into life if we use it properly, wisely, and economically. First, let us economize our time--lifetimes ebb away before we wake up, and that is why we do not realize the value of the immortal time God has given us. Too much time is spent in rushing, in getting nowhere. Very few of us stop, think, and try to find out what life can give us. Most people do not think at all--they just eat, sleep, and die.

It is important to differentiate between your needs and your wants. Your needs are few, while your wants can be limitless. In order to find freedom and Bliss, minister only to your needs. Stop creating limitless wants and pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of false happiness. The more you depend upon conditions outside yourself for happiness, the less happiness you will experience.

Fostering desire for luxuries is a sure way to increase misery. Do not be a slave of things or possessions. Boil down even your needs to a minimum. Spend your time in search of lasting happiness or Bliss. The unchangeable, immortal soul is hidden behind the screen of your consciousness, on which are painted at various times dark pictures of disease, failure, death, and so forth. Lift the veil of illusive change and be established in your immortal nature. Enthroned your fickle consciousness on the changelessness and calmness within you, which is the throne of God; then let your soul manifest Bliss night and day.

Happiness can be secured by the exercise of self-control, by cultivating habits of plain living and high thinking, and by spending less money, even though earning more than enough to provide for extra things. Make an effort

to earn more so that you can be the means of helping others to help themselves: there is an unwritten law that he who helps others to abundance and happiness always will be helped in return, and he will become more and more prosperous and happy. This is an infallible law of happiness. Is it not better to live simply and to grow really rich--in Spirit?

TRUE DESIRELESSNESS The soul's nature is Bliss, a lasting inner state of ever new, ever changing joy that eternally bestows Bliss that does not fade. One who has been made blissful by this joy of the soul, finds that the Bliss endures, even when he is passing through trials of physical suffering or death. Desirelessness is not a negation of joy, but the finding of fulfillment of all desires in the all-satisfying joy of God.

You must attain self-control in order to regain the eternal heritage of all-fulfillment lying within your soul. First, by meditation, give your soul the opportunity to manifest Bliss, and then, constantly living in this state, do your duty to your body and mind and the world. You need not give up your ambitions and become negative; on the contrary, let the everlasting joy, which is your real nature, help you to realize all your noble ambitions. Enjoy noble experiences with the joy of God. Perform real duties with divine joy.

You are immortal and are endowed with eternal joy. Never forget this during your play with changeable mortal life. This world is but a-stage on which you play your parts under the direction of the Divine Stage Manager. Play them well, whether they are tragic or comic, always remembering that your real nature is eternal Bliss, and nothing else. The one thing that will never leave you, once you transcend all unstable mental states, is the joy of your soul.

WHAT IS GOD? The usual conception of God is that He is superhuman, infinite, omnipresent, and omniscient; but in this general conception there are many variations. Whatever conception we have of God, if it does not influence our daily conduct, if our everyday life does not find an inspiration from it, and if it is not found to be universally necessary, then that conception is useless. If God is not conceived in such a way that we cannot do without Him in the satisfaction of a want, in our dealings with people, when earning money, in reading a book, in passing an examination, in the doing of the most trifling or the highest duties, then it is plain that we have not felt any connection between God and life. God may be infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, personal, and merciful, but these conceptions are not sufficiently compelling to make us try to know God. We have no immediate and practical use for those conceptions in our busy lives.

We read about God in the various scriptures. We hear of His presence and listen to His praise in the sermons of religious men and saints. We imagine Him behind the veils of the beauty of nature. We think about His

existence through the logic within us. But all of these windows, through which we try to see God, are **fitted** with an opaque glass of uncertain inference drawn from untested, unscrutinized data.

We cannot have full or direct knowledge of God through the limited powers of the intellect, which give only a partial and indirect view of things. To view a thing intellectually is to view it by being apart from it. Intuition is the direct grasp of truth, seeing it by being one with it. It is by intuition that God consciousness is realized. God is Bliss. He is ever existent. When we wish for eternal Bliss, or God, we also wish for eternal, immortal, unchangeable, ever conscious existence.

It must be remembered that to seek God does not give us any excuse to neglect the various physical, mental, and spiritual battles of life. On the other hand, the climbing spiritual aspirant must learn to conquer moods, habits, desires, and so on, in order to free the temple of life from the darkness of ignorance and the weakness of disease, so that God's perfect presence may be perceived. As a houseful of jewels cannot be seen in the dark, so the presence of God cannot be perceived while the darkness of ignorance, overpowering disease, or mental inharmony prevails.

HOW TO KNOW GOD To know God is to love Him. Knowledge of God precedes the ability to love Him. At least, we must have some little conception of what He really is. We are told "He is love," but we know only human love; how then can **we** conceive that wondrous divine love that makes all mankind free? Wood, stones, animals--all things are but different manifestations of God with varying rates of vibration. Our own feelings may be an expression of God, but they are not God. The wave may be a manifestation of the ocean, but the **wave** cannot be called the ocean. Is electricity God? No, for we cannot switch Him on or off. He is ever burning Cosmic Spirit.

Do you really know the Supreme Being? Have you seen Him? Some people say: "He dwells in everything," others say: "He is omnipresent." Yet space alone is not God.

When my Master asked me: "What is God?" I said: "God is Spirit." When he asked: "What is Spirit?" I answered: "Spirit is Infinite Intelligence." "Yes," he said, "but Infinite Intelligence is God, so **you** see you are talking and reasoning in circles, and in that way you will never get anywhere." Substituting different names for God does not define Him. Similarly, the Bible says: "The Word was God." But, what is the Word?

In the same way, when you are asked to define water, you **may** say: "It is H₂O, or aqua, or rain, or ice," and try to define it that way. If you really know what God is, then you can define Him satisfactorily to a new inquirer, but when you try to analyze or **define** God without knowing Him, you only give

your ideas about God. What is God? That was one of the questions I thought I was sure of until I found that I could not make a satisfactory explanation. But from my Master's explanation I really learned about God, and found Him for myself. God has been a reality to me ever since.

FORCE AND There are two elemental factors in this universe: first,
 CONTROLLING force, and second intelligence, controlling that force.
 INTELLIGENCE You cannot mention any one thing that does not have intel-
 ligence. The human body is simply a combination of ele-
 ments that can be found almost anywhere in nature's realm. Unless intelli-
 gence is in it, it is only a combination of these elements, and nothing more.
 With intelligence added, it becomes a live and thinking being. Can intelligence
 come out of nothing? Is it not reasonable to suppose that somewhere there is
 some sort of factory that produces that intelligence? We humans are only one
 of the many products of that factory of Cosmic Intelligence.

God is that invisible factory of intelligence that creates, gives birth to,
 and harmoniously develops all manifested things.

Why do the seasons come on time? Why do we have hunger in the body
 and food sources on this earth to satisfy that hunger? If there were no Cos-
 mic Intelligence, we might have hunger but no food. Throughout the universe
 --in spite of the many mischievous pranks of nature--there always seems to
 be a **rhythm**, and all things are products of the one factory of the One All-
 Ruling Intelligence. But even when we say this, still we do not define that
 Intelligence. Here is the explanation:

God is that Supreme Intelligence which governs everything!

Some people do not realize that there is a difference between force and
 intelligence. Electricity is a force, but unless we put it into a lamp, it can-
 not give a light that can be used. Intelligence puts it into the lamp. All the
 forces of nature cannot satisfactorily work by themselves without the guidance
 of intelligence. The Cosmic Factory of Intelligence works in a coordinated
 way. Steam has power to make things move and fire converts water into
 steam. These are only two of nature's forces, but they, of themselves, in
 their unharnessed natural state, do not accomplish anything importantly use-
 ful; but when harnessed by intelligence, and directed rightly, they can be
 made of great service to mankind. The earth and the whole universe seem-
 ingly have been placed on a routine so that human life is made possible. This
 cosmic schedule, "The rhythm of the spheres," is the product of Divine
 Intelligence.

The surest sign that God exists is the increasing heart-bursting joy felt
 in meditation. When your mind is free from prejudice; when narrow-minded-
 ness vanishes; when you unreservedly sympathize with everyone; when you
 hear the voice of God in the chorus of churches, temples, tabernacles, and

mosques; when you realize that life is a joyous battle of duty but at the same time only a passing dream; and above all, when you become increasingly intoxicated with the joy of meditation, and in making others happy by bestowing on them your divine peace--then you will know that God is with you always and that you are in Him.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Let us live simply outside, and be supremely happy within. Let us learn to build inner mansions of wisdom in the unfading garden of peace that blooms with the million-hued blossoms of beautiful soul qualities.

Let us "get rich quick" by acquiring the incomparable wealth of soul-peace, and become peace-millionaires. Let us live in our Self-created paradise, which lies buried in our fancy; and let us bring the living God of pure joy onto the altar of our hearts and worship Him there with flowers of deathless devotion.

Let us learn to love God as the joy felt in meditation. Let us choose only good paths of action on which we can race to the goal of Self-realization. Let us think of God as we travel on our life's path and finish all progressive actions.

Let us ask God to be with us when we, by our own will, choose good actions. We should think of God before we eat body-nourishing food; we should think of Him while we are eating it. Then when we are finished eating, we should think of God.

We should change our center of consciousness from material desires to a desire for God. We should ask God to make our peace, silence, joy and meditation His altars, where our souls may meet and commune with Him in the Holy of Holies.

Let our prayer be: make my understanding the temple of Thy guidance.

THE DISCONTENTED MAN--Part 1

Once there was a devout, rich bachelor, by the name of John, who thought he was free and happy in every way except for his indigestion. He tried everything, but his money could not buy a remedy for his chronic ailment. At the age of seventy, when John lay dying from an attack of acute indigestion, he inwardly prayed: "Lord God, if I am to be born again, I shall be a happy man in my next life if I am given a strong, healthy body free

from indigestion. I shall not care then whether I have riches or not. "

An angel of God appeared in a vision while John was dying, and whispered: "In thy next incarnation thy prayer shall be granted according to the sovereign command of the Most High. "

When John reincarnated, he was born in a very poor family. From infancy his body was as strong as a Sandow's. The early death of his parents added to the acuteness of his poverty. John's "inheritance" was a strong body with a gnawing hunger; he did not have enough money to buy sufficient food to appease its demands. However, according to the latent wishes of his past incarnation, John often thought to himself: "Lord, I am thankful to have a diseaseless, strong body; it doesn't matter that I have so little money. " Years passed, but no matter what he did, he was never able to provide adequate sustenance for his husky body.

At last, as John lay dying of starvation, he prayed: "Lord, I have had enough of muscles! What use are they if I have no money to buy food to keep them strong? Lord, if I must be born again, please give me money and health and I shall be happy. "

The angel of the Lord again granted John's wishes, and in his third incarnation he was born a wealthy, strong-bodied man. As the years passed, he often said to himself: "I have everything; I am happy. " But later began to add: "Just the same, I feel that health and money are useless without some one to share them with. " So as he lay dying of old age, brokenheartedly he prayed: "Lord, if I must be born again, do not make life so miserably lonely, but in addition to health and wealth give me a wife. "

The angel of the Lord, as usual, granted the wish of this devout, law-abiding man. In the fourth incarnation he was born rich, very healthy, and in due time came to marry a handsome but nagging, jealous wife. Our friend passed his life virtually her prisoner. As he again lay dying, from age and nervous debility caused by the constant nagging of his jealous wife, John prayed: "Lord, in the next life I want, in addition to prosperity and health, only a good wife. "

The angel of the Lord again granted John's wish; in the fifth incarnation he was born healthy and wealthy, and finally came to wed a good, faithful, meek wife, who agreed with him in everything. After two years, at the acme of matrimonial happiness, his beloved wife died. John was grief-stricken and passed his life like a monk, constantly worshiping the gloves, shoes, and other possessions of his lost good wife.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I will make a bonfire of all my desires for material possessions and burn them in the one great ever-increasing flame of desire that seeks only to know Thee.



Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear SRF Student:

Paramahansa Yogananda often stressed the spiritual value of group endeavor in meditation. Such effort is helpful to all devotees, and is especially important for beginners on the path of meditation. Paramahansaji said: "The spiritual power gained from group meditation is like a hedge around the tender plant of your spiritual realization, protecting it from its enemies: laziness, doubt, procrastination, and worldliness." He urged students to attend SRF services as often as possible as a means of hastening and bolstering their spiritual progress.

You will find listed in the Directory of "Self-Realization Magazine" complete information for Self-Realization Fellowship Temples in California and Arizona. Also shown are cities throughout the world in which SRF **Centers** and SRF Meditation Groups meet regularly for group activities. If one of these temples or groups is near your home, you are cordially invited to attend the meetings. For full information (not shown in the magazine directory for groups), please write direct to SRF Mother Center.

The primary activity of SRF groups is silent meditation with practice of SRF Yoga techniques learned in SRF Lessons study at home. Some groups also offer services in which special readings for the week are presented from selected writings of Paramahansa Yogananda, along with shorter periods of group meditation.

God bless you with steady threefold progress of body, mind, and soul.

In divine friendship,

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Center Department

Center Department

P. S. Beginning meditation groups also meet in some cities not listed in the directory of "Self-Realization Magazine." If you find no listing for your city, you are welcome to inquire by mail or telephone concerning a possible local meditation group.



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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DIVINE LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Love, thou art the mystic echo from the caverns of heart,
And the inaudible voice of feeling.
Thou art the unseen charmer of souls.
Thou art the fountain flowing from the bosom of friendship.
Thou art the Divine Cupid, enticing mystic souls
To pierce the heart of all living things.
Thou art the silent language of souls,
And the invisible ink that lovers use
To write letters on the pages of their hearts.
Thou art the mother of all affections,
And in Thy breast throbs the heart of God.
Love is the silent conversation between two hearts,
And it is the call of God to all creatures,
Animate and inanimate,
To return to His house of Oneness.
Love is the heartbeat of all life,
And the angel of incarnation.
Love is born in the garden of soul progress,
And it sleeps behind the darkness of outer attachments.
It is the oldest and the sweetest nectar,
Preserved in the bottles of hearts.
Love is the light that dissolves all walls
Between souls, families, and nations.
Love is the unfading blossom of pure friendship
In the garden of both young and mature souls.
Love is the door to heaven, the completed songs of souls.

PRAYER

I come to Thee with the song of my smiles.
Whatever treasures lie in the secret safe of my
soul, I have brought eagerly to Thee. I have
brought all the honey from the hive of my heart.
Whatsoever is mine, that also is Thine. The
taper of my happiness will merge with Thy blaze
of Bliss.

CONTROL OF YOUR EMOTIONS IS THE KEY TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

The teaching presented in the SRF Lessons is a comprehensive system -- a method to bring the individual into complete and balanced harmony with the great plan of the universe. There are many forces at work seeking to destroy this balance, to produce disease, fear, poverty, failure, and unhappiness. These forces attack the individual to upset his physical, mental, and spiritual balance. The great secret of mastering these forces was known for ages by the great Hindu saints, and it enabled them to live far beyond the usual term of life in perfect youthfulness of body and mind, and in perfect spiritual harmony.

There are only two ways to travel in life: one leads to happiness and the other to sorrow. There is no mystery about life; it is very simple in spite of its apparent complexities. You should look at life unmasked, in the mirror of your experiences. View time and space as they come to you in the form of problems, experiences, and relations. Look at the perpetual current of emotions and thoughts that arise within you. Go into the heart of your aspirations, dreams, hopes, and despairs. Dive deep into the mute cravings of your inner self. Life is manifesting itself through all these channels and demanding that you seek understanding with your highest intelligence, wisdom, love, and vision.

Sorrow has no being of its own. It has no objective existence, but arises rather in the subjective nature of the sufferer. Constantly you affirm sorrow, therefore it exists. Deny it in your mind and it will exist no longer. This assertion of the Self is what I call the hero in man. It is his divine or essential nature. In order to acquire freedom from sorrow, man must assert his heroic self in all his daily activities. Sorrow is not necessary for the progressive march of life, although the birth of joy seemingly comes out of pain.

In our relative existence it is evident that the conditions and circumstances surrounding life are conducive either to sorrow or to happiness, as if in their very nature they were **either** desirable or undesirable. The root of sorrow lies in the dearth of heroism and courage in the character of the average man. When the heroic element is **lacking** in the mental makeup of a person, his mind becomes susceptible to the threat of all passing sorrows. Mental conquest brings happiness into life, but sorrow arises out of mental defeat. As long as the conqueror in man is awake, no sorrow can cast its shadow over the threshold of his heart.

RISE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES Tears and sighs on the battlefield of life are the liquid cowardice of weak minds. Those **who** give up the fight become prisoners within the walls of their own ignorance. Life is worth nothing if it is not a continuous overcoming of problems. Each problem that waits for a solution at your hand is a religious duty imposed upon you by life itself. Any escape from problems, physical or mental, is an escape from life, as there can be no life that is not full of problems. Essentially, conditions are neither good nor bad; they are always neutral, seeming to be either depressing or encouraging because of the sad or bright attitude of the mind of the individual concerned with them. When a person mentally sinks below the level of **circumstances**, he surrenders himself to the influence of bad times, ill luck, and sorrow. If he rises above circumstances by the heroic courage that is in him, all conditions of life, however dark and threatening, will be like a blanket of mist that will disappear with the warm glance of the sun. The sorrows of the ordinary person do not arise out of the conditions of life; they are not inherent in the conditions. They are born out of the weaknesses and infirmities of the human mind and the effects of human experiences. Awaken the victor in yourself, arouse the sleeping hero in yourself, and lo! no sorrow will ever again overwhelm you.

Ignorant people, like some animals, do not heed the lessons that accompany pain and pleasure. Most people live a life checkered with sadness and sorrow. They do not avoid the actions that lead to suffering, and do not follow the ways that lead to happiness. Then there are people who are oversensitive to sorrow and happiness. Such persons are usually extremely crushed by sorrow and overwhelmed by joy, thus losing their mental balance. There are very few people who, even after burning their fingers in the fire of ignorance, learn to avoid misery-making acts. People wish to be happy, and yet most of them never make the effort to adopt the course of action that leads to happiness. Lacking imagination, they keep rolling down the hill of life, only mentally wishing to climb the peak of happiness, until something terrible happens to arouse them from their nightmare of folly. Usually it is only then, if their enthusiasm for happiness survives the crash to the bottom of unhappiness, that they wake up.

DO NOT POISON PEACE BY ANGER Anger defeats the very purpose for which it is aroused. Anger is not an antidote for anger. A strong wrath may

cause another to suppress his weaker wrath, but it will never kill that weaker wrath. When you are angry, say nothing. Knowing it is a disease, like the coming of a cold, break it up by mental warm baths consisting of thinking of those with whom you can never be angry, no matter how they behave. If your emotion is too violent, take a cold shower, or put a piece of ice on the medulla oblongata and the temples just above the ears, and on the forehead, especially between the eyebrows, and on the top of the head.

Anger gives birth to jealousy, hatred, spite, revengefulness, destructive instinct, wild ideas, brain paralysis, and temporary insanity--any of which may lead to horrible crimes. It is poison to peace and calmness. It is poison to understanding. Anger is a manner of misunderstanding. To conquer others by anger is the **method of fools**, for anger only rouses more wrath in the enemy and thus makes him a stronger and more powerful opponent. **A** righteous demonstration of anger to avert evil without causing harm is sometimes productive of good. Blind, uncontrolled anger is revengeful, spiteful; it only increases the evil that you wish to destroy. Be indifferent to those who seem to enjoy making you angry.

When anger comes, set your machinery of calmness in motion to manufacture the antidotes of peace, love, and forgiveness which banish anger. Think of love, and reflect that even as you do not want others to be angry with you, neither do you wish others to feel your ugly anger. When you become Christ-like and look upon all humanity as little brothers hurting one another ("for they know not what they do"), you cannot feel angry with anyone. Ignorance is the mother of all anger.

Develop metaphysical reason and destroy anger. Look upon the **anger-arousing agent** as a child of God; think of him as a little five-year-old baby brother who perhaps has unwittingly stabbed you. You should not feel a desire to stab this little brother in return. Mentally destroy anger by saying: "I will not poison my peace with anger; I will not disturb my habitual joy-giving calmness with wrath. "

OVERCOMING FEAR Secret fear creates tension and anxiety, and brings ultimate collapse. We must have faith in our ability, and hope in the triumph of a righteous cause. If we do not possess these qualities, we must create them in our own minds through concentration. This can be accomplished by determined and long-continued practice. Fortunately, we can start practicing any time and any place, concentrating upon developing those good qualities in which we are defective. If we are lacking in will power, let us concentrate upon that, and through conscious effort we shall be able to create strong will power in ourselves. If we want to relieve ourselves of fear, we should meditate upon courage, and in due time we shall be freed from the bondage of fear. Through concentration and meditation we make ourselves powerful. This new power enables us to focus our attention upon one point at a time, and continual practice for an extended period will enable us

to concentrate our energy upon a single problem or a single responsibility without any effort. It will become second nature to us. Possessed with this new quality, we shall succeed in our life's undertakings, whether spiritual or material.

As soon as the soldiers of wrong thoughts rally to attack your inner peace, it is time to wake up the soul soldiers of light, honesty, self-control, and desire for good things, and to wage furious battle. It rests with you whether you want greed, sense slavery, anger, hatred, revengefulness, worries, or inharmonies to rule your life, or whether you will let the divine soldiers of self-control, calmness, love, forgiveness, peace, and harmony govern your mental kingdom. Drive away those rebel sense habits that have brought misery to the empire of your peace. Be king over yourself, letting the soldiers of goodness and good habits rule the kingdom of your mind. Then happiness will reign within you forever.

You must possess courage, faith, and hope. Courage is needed to fight against dreaded fear. We have said before that fear destroys life. There are many people who will not even attempt to work because they are desperately afraid of not succeeding. They feel that they are not competent enough to do the work, and thus meet failure even before starting. The Bhagavad-Gita describes how Arjuna, at first overwhelmed with fear of losing courage on the battlefield, braces up and performs his sacred duty.

Always know that every day is a fresh opportunity on the part of the human ego to perform more and more exploits of heroism. Meet everybody and every circumstance on the battlefield of life with the courage of a hero and the smile of a conqueror. Whatever comes your way and needs attention **must** be considered as a duty. Duty is not imposed upon man by some superior power. It is the inherent urge of life toward progression; therefore, duty is action that needs care. Neglect of duty is a source of evil that can be avoided by wisdom.

ALL IS IN GOD Avoid associating with those who are always complaining about life. They may ruin your newly awakened spirituality, which is like a tender plant growing within you. Avoid such people and try to be always happy, no matter how you are situated. God will never reveal Himself to you unless you are contented and happy. You must saturate everything with the thought of God. Realize that all that exists is centered in God.

Be silent and calm every night for at least half an hour, preferably much longer, before you retire, and again in the morning before starting the day's activity. This will produce an undaunted, unbreakable inner habit of happiness that will make you able to meet all the trying situations of the everyday battle of life. With that unchangeable happiness within, go about seeking to fulfill the demands of your daily needs. Seek happiness more and more in

your mind, and less and less in the desire to acquire things. Be so happy in your mind that nothing that comes can possibly make you unhappy. Then you can get along without things that you have been accustomed to. Be happy because you know that you have acquired the power not to be negative, and because you know, too, that you can acquire at will whatever you need, and that you will never again become so material-minded that you will forget your inner happiness, even though you should become a millionaire.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Unselfishness draws everybody, including one's own self, into the circle of brotherhood. It brings many harvests--return service from others, self-expansion, divine sympathy, lasting happiness, and Self-realization.

Feeling the sorrows of others in order to help free them from further suffering, seeking happiness in the joy of others, and constantly trying to satisfy the needs of bigger and bigger groups of people, is what you might call being "sacredly selfish." The man of sacred selfishness counts all his earthly losses as deliberately brought about by himself for the good of others, and for his own great and ultimate gain. He lives to love his brethren, for he knows that they are all the children of the One God. His entire selfishness is sacred for whenever he thinks, not of the small body and mind of ordinary understanding, but of the needs of all bodies and minds within the range of his acquaintance or influence, his self then becomes one with the Self of all. He becomes the mind and feelings of all creatures. So when he does anything for himself, he can only do that which is good for all. He who considers himself as one whose body and limbs consist of all humanity and all creatures, he is the one who certainly finds the universal, all-pervading Spirit in himself.

THE DISCONTENTED MAN--Part 2

Finally, having reached a ripe old age, our friend John lay dying and he prayed: "Lord, if I have to be born on earth again, do grant me, in addition to health and wealth, a long-lived good wife." An angel of the Lord appeared in a vision and answered: "Your prayer will be granted."

In his sixth incarnation John was not only wealthy and healthy, but he had a long-lived good wife. They celebrated their silver wedding anniversary in happiness. One day John's male secretary died; John decided to engage a pretty nineteen-year-old girl secretary.

John became madly infatuated with his new employee. He thought: "My

good wife must not know about this. I love her with all my heart, and I would never dream of divorcing her; but alas, she has grown old and homely, and the face of my young secretary is beautiful and fresh as a lily." Infatuation got the upper hand. Eventually he did divorce his wife in order to marry the young girl. His new bride lived with John until she had secured most of his fortune; then she left him for a younger man.

Broken in spirit, John prayed in deep meditation for a vision of the Lord, who obliged him by appearing in a majestic form enveloped in golden light. The Lord said: "John, at the end of the first incarnation in which you had found your way to Me by prayer, you asked to be cured of indigestion; so in the next incarnation I granted you a strong body, but not the wealth that you had enjoyed in the previous life. You soon tired of health without the money to buy plenty of food, so in the following incarnation I gave you both health and wealth. Then, lonely, you prayed for a wife.

"The fourth incarnation brought you health, riches, and a wife; but she nagged you, and so you prayed for a good wife next time. In the fifth incarnation I granted you a good wife, and wealth, and health; but after two years of marriage your good wife died. Then you said you would be happy if you could only have a good long-lived wife in addition to health and plenty of money. But what a nest of trouble you have made for yourself, trying by these different ways to make yourself happy in this delusion-ridden earth of Mine! Now tell Me, what do you want next?"

John reverently answered: "Lord, I want nothing but constant awareness of Thee! It doesn't matter whether I am rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, married or single, on earth or in heaven, so long as Thou dost teach me Thy way to be happy everywhere Thou dost place me, in any circumstance of life. Henceforth I will use my own free will to do Thy will alone."

God replied: "My son, your answer pleases Me. This earth is but a movie house to which I sent all my immortal children to be entertained and to entertain, to play in ever-changing dramas of life with a blissful attitude of divine detachment. It grieves Me to find that most of My children forget that the tragedies and comedies of life are only My unreal dream-plays; thus they tarnish their joy with earthly desires. You can never find changeless, immortal happiness in My mortal, ever-changing earthly land. Do not build the mansion of your happiness upon the treacherous quicksand of material existence. If you want to be perennially happy, look within; play your role in the world as I, the Director, instruct you--not as you want to improvise, muddling up My drama! Then you will know that you only dreamed that you were unhappy and that you desired earthly things. Know now that you are My ever-happy, ever-perfect, ever-satisfied child, wanting naught of this imperfect, dissatisfying, delusive earth but to fulfill joyfully My plan for you here."

AFFIRMATION

I am the resistless fire of smiles. I shall fan myself with the breeze of God-Joy and shall blaze my way through the darkness of all minds. My smiles will bear His smiles, and whoever meets me will catch my divine joy. I shall strew fragrant purifying torches of smiles in all hearts.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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GOD! GOD! GOD!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

From the depths of slumber,
As I ascend the spiral stairway of wakefulness,
I whisper:
God! God! God!

Thou art the food, and when I break my fast
Of nightly separation from Thee,
I taste Thee, and mentally say:
God! God! God!

No matter where I go, the spotlight of my mind
Ever keeps turning on Thee;
And in the battle din of activity, my silent war-cry is ever:
God! God! God!

When boisterous storms of trials shriek
And worries howl at me,
I will drown their noises, loudly chanting:
God! God! God!

When my mind weaves dreams
With threads of memories,
On that magic cloth I do emboss:
God! God! God!

Every night, in time of deepest sleep,
My peace dreams and calls: Joy! Joy! Joy!
And my joy comes singing evermore:
God! God! God!

In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping,
Serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving,
My soul constantly hums, unheard by any:
God! God! God!

PRAYER

Teach me, O God, to sow the seeds of wisdom, health, prosperity, and happiness in the garden of my life.

DESTROY DEPRESSION BY SUBSTITUTING PROSPERITY

According to the law of God and of Christian brotherhood, this earth was meant to provide the shelter and supply of all mankind; the wealth of mines and other resources was to be distributed equally to those performing equal labors. And God established the law of divine birthright: that all men and women are made in His image, hence are essentially divine; and that all nations are of one blood, being descendants of common parents, Adam and Eve. If you believe in this fundamental relationship, if you feel love for all the world's inhabitants as for your own family, recognizing no inner difference between any of the outwardly different nationalities, then you are establishing a legitimate astral right to your share of earth's capital.

Those who seek prosperity for themselves alone are in the end bound to become poor, or to suffer from mental inharmony; but those who consider the whole world as their home, and who really care and work for group or world prosperity, activate astral forces that lead them ultimately to the place where they can find the individual prosperity that is legitimately theirs. This is a sure and secret law. Whether one prospers is not dependent solely upon one's creative ability, but also upon his past actions, and on his present efforts to activate the astral law of cause and effect. If mankind as a whole behaved unselfishly, the power of that law would distribute prosperity equally to all men, without exception. Those who by potent good thoughts and actions rouse this astral power to create positive prosperity succeed wherever they go, whether they are in prosperous or poverty-stricken environments. Therefore, seek prosperity not solely for yourself and your family but for a wider group: your friends, your country, the whole world.

Eschew the desire for luxury. Learn to use less expensive things in an artistic way, with faith in the truth that you are a child of God and that as such you have all the Father's riches, all the wealth of the earth behind you. When by meditation you release your consciousness from its preoccupation with human limitations and realize yourself to be truly a son of God, you will know also that whatever God has, you have.

YOUR GOAL Most people live almost mechanically, unconscious of any
IN LIFE ideal or plan of life. They come on earth, struggle for a living, then leave the shores of mortality without knowing why they came here or what their duties really were. No matter what one considers to be the goal of life, it is obvious that man's existence is so **under-**

mined with immediate material needs that he must struggle to satisfy them. The believer and the disbeliever in God must work hard to provide food. Therefore it is important that man should concentrate upon taking care of his real needs and not create additional burdens for himself by trying to fulfill useless desires for extra things.

Do not wander aimlessly, lost in the jungle of life, your happiness continuously bleeding away from thorn pricks of new desires. You must determine the goal of your life, and find the shortest road that can lead you there. Do not travel unknown roads, picking up new troubles. Too much ambition of the wrong kind is just as bad as too much passive contentment. As human beings, we have been endowed with needs and we must meet their demands. As man is a physical, mental, and spiritual being, he must look after his all-round welfare, avoiding overdevelopment of one side. To possess wonderful health and good appetite, with no money to maintain that health and to satisfy that hunger is agonizing. To have plenty of money and chronic indigestion is deplorable. To have robust health, and abundant wealth, and endless trouble with oneself and others, is pitiable. To have health, wealth, and mental efficiency, but lack peace and a knowledge of the ultimate truth is useless, disturbing, and dissatisfying.

EFFICIENCY THROUGH CONCENTRATION Assuming that the goal of material life is maximum efficiency, peace, health, and success, what is the surest way to prosperity? Prosperity does not consist just in making money; it also consists in acquiring the mental efficiency by which one may uniformly acquire health, wealth, wisdom, and peace, at will. Great wealth does not necessarily bring health, peace or efficiency; but acquirement of efficiency and peace are bound to bring a properly balanced material success. Most people develop mental efficiency as a by-product of their efforts for material success; but very few people realize that although money is made to give happiness, happiness cannot be found if in order to acquire it one develops an insatiable, soul-corroding desire for money.

Mental efficiency depends upon development of concentration. One should know the scientific method of concentration by which he may disengage his attention from objects of distraction and focus it upon one thing at a time. By the power of concentration, man can use the untold power of mind to accomplish that which he desires, and he can guard all doors through which failure may enter. All men of success have been men of great concentration, men who could dive deeply into their problems and come up with the pearls of right solutions. Most people are suffocated by distraction and are unable to fish out the pearls of success.

In concentrating upon his little physical needs man often forgets his greater need of developing mental efficiency in everything, and of acquiring divine contentment. Man is so busy multiplying the conditions of his physical comfort

that he considers many unnecessary things as an essential part of his existence.

The man of powerful concentration should ask God to direct his focused mind to the right place for success that is rightfully his. Passive people want God to do all the work; egotists ascribe all their success to themselves. Passive people do not use the power of God residing in their intelligence. Egotists, although they may use their God-given intelligence, fail to ask, and receive, God's direction as to where and how the intelligence should be used. I can blame inertia as the cause of failure in the first instance; but it hurts me to see intelligent egotists fail after making a real and well-thought-out effort.

However, even a man of concentration and power may dive deep into the sea of problems and still not find the pearl of success. There are many persons of powerful concentration, who do not know where to strike success; and many brilliant people with efficient minds have starved, or have had only meager success. This is where another factor in acquiring prosperity comes into consideration.

All prosperity is measured out to man according to the law of cause and effect, which governs not only this life but all past lives. That is why intelligent people may be born poor or unhealthy, and a mentally mediocre person may be born healthy and wealthy. All men were originally sons of God made in His image having free choice and equal power of accomplishment. But by misuse of his God-given reason and will power, man has fallen under the control of the natural law of cause and effect of action (karma) and has thereby limited his freedom to make a success of life. A man's success depends not only upon his intelligence and efficiency but upon the nature of his past actions. However, there is a way to overcome the unfavorable results of past actions. The causes of failure must be destroyed and a new cause for success set in motion.

GOD'S WILL Mentally broadcast this truth: "My Father and I are One"
AND YOUR WILL --until you feel His overpowering, all-solacing bliss.
 When this happens, you have made the contact. Then affirm your celestial right by praying: "Father, I am Thy child. I will reason, I will will, I will act, but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the right thing that I should do in order to acquire health, wealth, peace, and wisdom. "

Feel the presence of God first; then use your will and act. With His guidance you will be sure to harness your will and activity to the right goal.

GOD--THE REAL God is the secret source of all mental power, peace,
SOURCE OF OUR and prosperity. Why use the limited impractical human method of gaining prosperity? By visualizing prosperity or by affirmatibn, you may strengthen your sub-
PROSPERITY conscious mind, which in turn may encourage your conscious mind; but that

is all that visualization alone can do. The conscious mind still has to achieve the success, and may be hindered by the unfavorable working of the law of cause and effect. The conscious mind alone cannot initiate a new cause that will bring positive success in any direction; but when the human mind attunes itself to God, in the state of superconsciousness, it can be sure of success; for the superconscious mind is in tune with the unlimited power of God, and is therefore able to create a new cause of success.

THE SECRET WAY TO PROSPERITY

The surest way to prosperity lies in establishing first your oneness with God and afterward claiming a divine son's share. You must make the blissful union with God first by regular, ever deepening meditation each day, according to the Self-Realization Fellowship techniques. When you achieve that **attunement**, your status will be changed from that of a mortal beggar to that of a divine son and you will automatically gain what you need. The omnipresent Father knows all the needs of a true son.

If in this way the poor win victories in the struggle to satisfy the demands of real necessities, they receive contentment and may live and die rich. That is real prosperity. But to live without contentment and die spiritually poor in spite of material riches is real poverty. Maintain a prosperous attitude by smiling, no matter what happens. Do not be afraid to sell the bonds of smiles **when the market of happiness is low. Keep smiling while planning and** acting for success, and your smiles will fetch priceless treasure in the end. Wise, persevering activity with unfading smiles brings sure success.

PRAYER FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE AND PROSPERITY

Many persons have dived into the ocean of Thine abundance again and again to seek the pearls of opulence, power, and wisdom; but only a few divers have found them. These few persons have praised the wondrous riches of Thy sea because they dived well and found the secret treasure nook. Those who dived in the wrong places blamed Thy blue brine of abundance for being devoid of the most desired treasures. Many persons perish diving in Thy treasure sea, being devoured by monsters of selfishness, greed, faithlessness, doubt, idleness, and skepticism.

Heavenly Father, I will not say that Thine ocean of everything is empty, for Thou wilt show me that the fault is with my diving. I will put on the diving apparel of faith, power, and fortitude, and Thou wilt direct my mind to dive in the right place, where Thy bounty is hidden.

SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

@ Real success does not perish with this earthly life. Your success is conditioned by the law of cause and effect and by your environment. Jesus said:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things shall be added unto you. "
When you seek success by the material way, you are governed by the law of cause and effect, but when you have communion with God first, then success is given to you in innumerable ways both subtle and material. Compare the lives of saints and others who have lived with God, to the lives of nonspiritual people. The saints have everything because they have God.

Do not cry because of lowly position while you are on earth, nor beg for an improvement in it. In the last analysis everybody will go to sleep in the cold earth. Every cent must be left behind by the millionaire. All children of God are equal. Don't desire things just because your friends have them. If it is money or health you are seeking, depending upon God is the surest way to obtain them. When you deserve them, you will get them.

Success must always come from God. The world can give you just so much and no more. But God can give you health, prosperity, and wisdom without limit. Gold is not made by man, but by God. Man only makes the stamp. All things come from God. Not a grain of corn or wheat, or a dollar, is made by man, but by God. Why should you look to man for prosperity and health and happiness. Why not go to the Source of life, without whose power you cannot live.

Everything else has limited power, but God has unlimited power. Seek success from the Source that can give to you unfailingly. For fifty years you may try to make a million dollars, and then lose it. Do not go that way. Why go the way of limitation? Seek the way that can never fail.

God may take away something from you so that you will cease being immersed in matter and seek Him; then when you seek Him, you will find that which you lost. Isn't it greater to sweep the streets with God in your heart--working through you--than to be a millionaire riding in a Rolls Royce, with a cancer gnawing at your stomach and your entire being centered on your wealth?

The conscious state is marked by restlessness and attachment. When you are greedy, your ego is centered on the palate, and it is the same with the other senses. That is why the saints say: "Possession is not a sin, but to be possessed by possessions is wrong. " You have to detach your ego from its attachment to the senses: "I miss my coffee; I feel nervous. " That is what attachment does.

AFFIRMATION

Since our thoughts and words are the seeds that will bring forth our harvest of the future, I will begin today to fill my consciousness with the ideas of abundance.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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FOR THEE I WAS MADE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I was made for Thee alone. I was made for dropping flowers
of devotion gently at Thy feet on the altar of the morning.

My hands were made to serve Thee willingly; to remain folded
in adoration, waiting for Thy coming; and when Thou
comest, to bathe Thy feet with my tears.

My voice was made to sing Thy glory.

My feet were made to seek Thy temples everywhere.

My eyes were made a chalice to hold Thy burning love and the
wisdom falling from Thy nature's hands.

My ears were made to catch the music of Thy footsteps echoing
through the halls of space, and to hear Thy divine melodies
flowing through all heart-tracts of devotion.

My lips were made to breathe forth Thy praises and Thine
intoxicating inspirations.

My love was made to throw incandescent searchlight flames to
find Thee hidden in the forest of my desires.

My heart was made to respond to Thy call alone.

My soul was made to be the channel through which Thy love
might flow uninterruptedly into all thirsty souls.

PRAYER

O Divine Sculptor, chisel
Thou my life to Thy design.

HUMBLENESS VERSUS EGOTISM

Analyze your thoughts and see on what throne of consciousness your ego is seated; what kind of consciousness is predominant in your mind. Are your thoughts centered around yourself, or on others? If the former, your selfish egotism drives wise men and truth away from you. Try to be humble instead of egotistical and through the magnetism of humbleness attract the protecting presence of friends, saints, and God.

Humbleness is a fertile valley of consciousness where the rain of God's wisdom falls fruitfully. As on a mountain peak no rain can gather, so also on an upthrust ego no waters of knowledge can collect. Egotism shuts the door of recipience through which knowledge enters. Humbleness opens the portals wide and bids all wisdom come within. Egotism is an obvious ugliness written on the face of the egotist, and repels people; **whereas** humbleness is a fragrance that makes the bearer sweetly attractive to all. Egotism is born of an inferiority complex, which may appear as a so-called superiority complex, whereas humbleness is born of wisdom or knowledge of one's true Self.

Egotism refuses to investigate truth, whereas humbleness is always ready to learn. Egotism slaps wisdom in the face; humbleness entreats the lotus feet of truth to enter the innermost sanctum of the soul. Egotism reveals its smallness by ineffectually trying to make others feel small. Humbleness is the manifestation of an understanding heart, and sets an example of greatness for others to follow. Egotism is the brittle imitation armor of deluded souls, while humbleness is the inner costume of saints. Egotism repels friends and truth; humbleness attracts friends and understanding. The egotist, like an empty vessel, makes much noise, whereas the humble man is like a cask filled with the precious wine of wisdom.

Man in his egotism reveals a limitation of knowledge; whereas God, who is all wisdom, is humble and never egotistical, because He knows everything.

Humbleness is magnetic and is a distributor of happiness, and invites the all-protecting wisdom of true friends and God. The egotist shuts God out, daring to think much of himself while ignoring the omnipresence of God. The humble person knows that there can be no one greater than God, and therefore he draws God to himself through the fragrance of his humility.

The egotistical man has plenty of time to speak to others of his importance because he is not busy performing outstanding deeds, but the really great man is humble because he is so busy doing remarkable things that he has no time to speak of his greatness. The egotistical man watches some of his qualities so gloatingly that he forgets to acquire more good qualities; in fact he manages to be satisfied with his small attainments by making them look big to himself. Consequently he does not progress. Humbleness belongs to the great, who do not stand apart and exultingly watch over their greatness. Jesus said that the least, or the most humble one, is the greatest in the kingdom of God.

YOU WILL REAP WHAT YOU SOW If you want to be loved, start loving others who need your love. If you expect others to be honest with you, then start being honest yourself. If you do not want others to be wicked, then you must avoid doing evil yourself. If you want others to sympathize with you, start showing sympathy to those around you. If you want to be respected, you must learn to be respectful to everyone, both young and old. If you want a display of peace from others, you must be peaceful yourself. If you want others to be religious, start being **spiritual** yourself. Remember, whatever you want others to be, first be that yourself, then you will find others responding in like manner to you.

If you can discover and face your own faults without developing an inferiority complex, and if you can keep busy correcting yourself, then you will be using your time more profitably than if you spent it in just wishing others to be better. Your good example will do more to change others than your wishing, your wrath, or your words.

As a rule only the small-minded persons, and men and women who are ostentatious over just a little **knowledge**, are offensively and dangerously egotistical. Such pride not only offends wiser people, it leads the egotist himself to his doom; through his own shortsightedness he becomes entangled in difficulties and failures.

LAW OF SERVICE The law of service to others is secondary and corollary to the law of self-interest or self-preservation, which may be termed "selfishness." No sane man ever does anything without a reason. No action is performed without reference to a direct or indirect thought which is selfish. Giving service is indispensable to receiving service; therefore, to serve others by giving financial, mental, or moral help is to find self-satisfaction. You can prove that

service is not wholly unselfish by asking yourself this question: If you knew beyond a doubt that by service to others your own soul would be lost rather than strengthened, would you serve? If Jesus had felt that by sacrificing his life on the altar of ignorance he would displease God, would he have acted as he did? No! He knew that although he had to lose the body he was gaining his Father's favor and emancipating his own soul. Such immortal sons of God, and all martyrs and saints, make a good investment--they spend the little mortal body to gain immortal life.

RESURRECT YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS

One important thing you have to do is resurrect your consciousness from the environment of ignorance. You must blame yourself for environmental troubles which you have been creating, consciously or unconsciously, somewhere, sometime in the past. Free yourself from all neuroses or complexes. What are you afraid of? You are neither a man nor a woman. You are not what you think you are; you are an immortal. But be not immortally identified with human habits, because they are your deadliest enemies. Even in crucifixion Jesus could keep his loving attitude and say: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." So must you forgive your trials and say: "My soul is being resurrected; my power to overcome is greater than all the oppression of my trials, because I am a child of God."

Resurrect your soul from dreams of frailties into the light of eternal wisdom. What is the method? Meditation, exercise, relaxation, self-control, right diet, fortitude, and an undaunted attitude of mind. Do not acknowledge defeat. To acknowledge it brings greater defeat. You have unlimited power; you must cultivate that power--that is all, Meditation is the way to resurrect your soul from the bondage of the body and all your trials. Meditate at the feet of the Infinite. Learn to saturate yourself with God. Your trials may be great, but your greatest enemy is yourself--your ego. Your real Self is immortal; your trials are mortal. They are changeable, but you are unchangeable. You can unleash eternal powers to shatter your trials. When you receive, or realize by meditation the omnipresence of God, you can develop your mental powers by serious application. Your mental powers will then expand and your cup of realization will be big enough to hold the ocean of knowledge.

EGO'S FAILURE

Man's attachment to matter keeps the soul confined to the body prison and prevents it from finding freedom in God--in the realm of eternal Bliss. The ego attempts to satisfy through material channels the soul's constant, insatiable longing for God. Far from accomplishing its objective, ego-driven sense gratification only increases man's misery. The soul's hunger can never be appeased by indulging the senses. When man realizes this and masters his ego--that is, when he achieves self-control--life becomes glorified by God-Bliss while he is still in the flesh. Then instead of being enslaved by material desires and appetites, his attention is transferred to the heart of Omnipresence, resting

There forever in the hidden joy in everything.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

An inferiority complex is born of a secret awareness of real or imagined weaknesses. In trying to compensate for such weaknesses, a person may build an armor of false pride, and exhibit an inflated ego. Then those who do not understand the real cause of such an attitude may say the person has a superiority complex. Both manifestations of his inner inharmony are destructive to Self-development. Both are fostered by imagination and by ignoring facts, while neither belongs to the true, all-powerful nature of the soul. Found your self-confidence upon actual achievements plus the knowledge that your real Self (the soul) can never be "inferior" in any way, then you will be free from all complexes.

A SAINT WHO CHOSE A KING AS HIS SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Long ago there lived a great sage named Byasa. He was the writer of the greatest Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita. By his great spiritual power he invoked a saintly soul to enter the womb of his wife. As the baby ~~grew within the womb, he taught the unborn child~~ the secrets of the scriptures through the subconscious mind of the mother. This baby, when born, was named Shuka Deva. Because of his prenatal training he proved to be a most unusual child. At the age of seven he was already versed in the difficult Hindu scriptures and was ready to renounce the world and seek a true master.

In India it is customary for a devotee to seek out spiritual teachers until he finds the one whom he recognizes as his own God-chosen master or guru. The novice, through inner fitful urgings, receives lessons from various sources; but when his spiritual ardor becomes very great, God sends him a guru. God uses the divine soul-vehicle of the guru as His messenger or instrument to bring the novice back to his spiritual home in Omnipresence.

When Shuka Deva decided to go in search of his guru, his father advised him to go to King Janaka, the ruler of the province. As Shuka Deva entered the royal palace he saw the king sitting on an emerald- and diamond-studded golden throne surrounded by courtiers and by scantily clad women who were **fanning** him with big palm leaves (as is the custom in India during the hot season), King Janaka was smoking a big oriental pipe. This sight shocked Shuka Deva; he turned back and started walking briskly out of the palace. He muttered: "Shame on my father for sending me to that matter-soaked king! How could such a worldly man be my teacher?"

But King Janaka was both a king and a saint. He was in the world, but not of the world. Highly advanced spiritually, he could telepathically sense

the thoughts of the fleeing Shuka Deva. The saint-king sent a messenger after the boy, commanding him to come back. Thus the master and the devotee met. The king sent his attendants away and at once entered an absorbing discourse on God. Four hours passed; Shuka Deva was getting restless and hungry, but he dared not disturb the God-intoxicated King Janaka.

Another hour had passed when two messengers arrived, exclaiming: "Your Majesty, the whole city is on fire! The flames threaten to spread toward the palace. Won't you come and supervise the efforts to extinguish the flames?" The king replied: "I am too busy discussing the all-protecting God with my friend Shuka Deva. I have no time for anything else. Go and help others to put out the fire."

When another hour had passed, the same two messengers came running to King Janaka and cried: "Your Majesty, please flee! The flames have caught the palace and are fast approaching your chamber." The king answered: "Never mind! Don't disturb me, for I am drinking the wine of God with my friend. Go! do the best you can."

Shuka Deva was puzzled by the king's attitude, but he tried to remain likewise unaffected by the excitement. A short time later two scorched messengers leaped in front of King Janaka, shouting: "Mighty King, behold the flames approaching your throne! Run! before both of you are burned to death." The king replied: "You both run and save yourselves. I feel too peaceful in the arms of the all-protecting God to fear the audacity of destructive flames." The messengers fled. The flames leaped toward the pile of books that Shuka Deva had by his side; but the king sat motionless, indifferent.

The alarmed Shuka Deva lost his poise, he half rose from his seat and began slapping at the flames in order to save his precious books. King Janaka then smilingly waved his hand and the fire miraculously disappeared. Shuka Deva, in great awe, sank back to his seat.

The king said calmly: "O young Shuka Deva, you thought of me as a matter-drenched king--but look at yourself! You forsook the all-protecting thought of God to protect a pile of books, while I paid no attention to my burning kingdom and palace. God worked this miracle to show you that although you are a renunciant, you are more attached to your books than to God, or than I am to my kingdom, even though I live in the world instead of a hermitage." Humbled, the young Shuka Deva then recognized the saint-king to be his guru-preceptor.

. King Janaka put Shuka Deva through a process of discipline to teach him the art of living in the world without acquiring misery-making attachment to it. One day the king gave his new disciple two cup-shaped lamps, filled to the brim with oil. Janaka said: "Hold a lamp on the palm of each hand, and enter all the gorgeously furnished rooms of the palace. Come back to me

after you have seen everything; but remember, I will refuse to train you further if you spill a single drop of oil on the carpets. "

King Janaka instructed two messengers to accompany Shuka Deva and to refill the two lamps with oil as quickly as they burned down. It was a hard test; but, after two hours, Shuka Deva returned triumphantly without having dropped any oil from the lamps in his hands.

The king said: "Young Shuka Deva, tell me in detail what you saw in each chamber of my palace." To this Shuka Deva replied: "Royal Preceptor, my only accomplishment was that I **did** not spill any oil on your carpets. My mind was so concentrated on the thought of not dripping oil that I did not notice anything in the rooms."

King Janaka then declared: "I am disappointed! You have not completely passed my test. My injunctions were that you should see everything in all the chambers of my palace and that you should **not** drip any oil from the lamps. Go back with the lamps, and remember, no spilling of the oil while you are looking carefully at everything about the palace."

After ten hours, Shuka Deva calmly returned. He had not allowed any oil to drip, nor was he sweating with excitement as before. He could answer all the king's questions about the contents, however —minute, of all the palace chambers.

King Janaka was pleased. "My son," he said gently, "attachment to possessions, and not possession itself, is the source of misery. In this world we do not own anything; we are only given the use of things. Some have more to use than others; but remember, the millionaire and the poor man alike have to leave everything, all possessions, when death comes. One should not live a one-sided life thinking only of God and neglecting one's duties in the world--like your concentrating on the oil lamps and not seeing my palace. But on the second trip you kept your attention principally on the lamps without spilling oil, and at the same time thoroughly and minutely saw everything in the palace. So should you keep your attention on God, not letting a drop of your desire slip away from the lamp of God--revealing wisdom; and yet devote part of your attention to thoroughly performing the God-given duties of maintaining **yourself** and others given into your charge."

This instructive story shows the basis of the **world's** troubles. Indifference to spiritual matters leads to selfishness and unequal prosperity **amidst** **plenty**, and finally to widespread economic depressions. Hence those who want the unlimited Divine Power to work for them in business and family affairs **ought** to be as earnest about meditation as they are about earning money. He who makes it his business to have communion with God first will find imperishable inner happiness as well as outer material comforts. We must not be too busy to try to realize the presence of God. If God stops our

hearts from beating, we will not have any chance for business success. Since all our success depends upon powers borrowed from God, we should give enough time to God-communion.

SRF does not wish to make theological phonographs of its students by constantly repeating beautiful phrases. We want to teach you to attain, by the quickest method, Cosmic Power that you can use in every department of life. One hour's deep meditation will give you far more power and peace than would one month's reading of holy books for six hours a day. Try meditation!

AFFIRMATION

All my powers are but powers borrowed from Thee.
No one is greater than Thou, O my Father. I cease to
live and express without Thy wisdom and strength. Thou
art so big; I am so little. Teach me not to be proud.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THY MAGIC POWER

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Make my eyes behold what Thou dost see.
Make my ears catch the bursting of Thy voice
In the billows of all creation.
Make my speech the fountain of nectared words
Showered over souls scorched with bitterness.
Make my lips utter naught but the songs
Of Thy love and joy.

Beloved, work through me the work of truth.
Keep my hands busy serving all my brothers.
Keep my voice forever casting seeds of love
For Thee on the soil of seeking souls.
Keep my feet ever moving on the pathway
Of right action.
Lead me from dark ignorance to Thy light of wisdom,
Lead me from temporary pleasures
To Thine ever new joy within.
Make my love Thy love,
That I may know all things as mine.

Father, throb through my heart and make me feel
Sympathy for all living creatures.
Kindle in me the flame of Thy wisdom
And burn the dark forest of my mundane desires.
Let Thy reason be the preceptor of my reason.
Think through my thoughts,
For it is Thy magic power
Which uses my mind as Thy mind,
My hands as Thy hands,
My feet as Thy feet,
My soul as Thy spirit to perform Thy holy works.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to till
the soil of my mind with discipline,
and sow the seeds of good habits.

GOOD AND BAD HABITS

THE POWER OF HABIT The power of habit rules the day-to-day actions of the **average** person. A good many people let their whole life go by, making repeated good resolutions to improve, without ever succeeding in establishing and following new patterns of action that are wholesome. More often than not we find ourselves doing, not what we wish to do, but what we are accustomed to doing. That is why materially minded people find it difficult to be spiritually minded even when they try hard. Spiritual people find it similarly difficult to be material even when associating with worldly persons. It is difficult for vicious people to be good and kind; it is just as unthinkable for noble persons to behave meanly.

Habits are automatic mental machines installed by man to exercise economy in the initial use of willpower and effort required to perform specific actions. Habits make the performance of such actions easier. Friendly good habits are very helpful in making the performance of difficult good deeds easier. Evil **habits, however** sympathetic, are deadly, inasmuch as they are die-hards and keep on disturbing the senses even when strongly commanded to cease doing so. Bad habits and sin are temporary misery-making grafts on the soul. They must be thrown out sometime, as they are not a part of man's free nature and therefore cannot be tolerated indefinitely by his soul.

Very seldom do we realize that the health, success, and wisdom outlook of our life entirely depends upon the issue of the battle between our good and bad habits. Henceforth we should not allow our bodily kingdom to be occupied by bad habits. We should put bad habits to flight by training all our diverse good habits in the art of victorious psychological warfare.

The soldiers of bad habits and of ill health and negation are invigorated by specific bad actions; whereas the soldiers of good habits become stimulated by specific good actions. Do not feed bad habits with bad actions. Starve

them out by self-control. Feed good habits with good actions.

INFLUENCE OF EARLY HABITS The habits that were formed earliest in your life have kept you quite busy until now; unwelcome habits have perhaps crowded out many worthwhile activities. The social world moves on the wheels of certain habits. Few people notice whether it is headed for the mire of petty engagements that choke the progressive activities of life, or if it perchance is rolling recklessly toward the chasm of spiritual ignorance.

People should be taught from childhood to develop discrimination by meditative contact with the superior pleasures of peace, harmony, and joy, and should form spiritual habits early. Since we are ruled by habits--which form our tendencies, moods, and desires--if bad habits are in the lead our moods and actions become evil. So, the precedence of good habits is desirable, as they can guide our actions and moods to a happy goal.

Wrong habits may promise a little temporary happiness, but ultimately they bring misery and destroy happiness. People who yield to the temptation of harmful habits do not fully realize this. Eventually they become so used to these habits that they helplessly drift on, becoming more and more inured to the subtle tortures of continuing their wrong habits. Finally they reach a state where the thought of forsaking the poisonous comfort of their wrong habits is actually shocking. Persons used to the darkness of bad habits naturally hate the light and comfort of good habits.

ENVIRONMENT AND COMPANIONS Undiscriminating association with the world creates bad habits in you, but the world will not be responsible for your wrong actions springing from those habits. Then why give all your time to the world? Reserve at least an hour a day for actual soul-inspiring God-realization. Doesn't the Giver of the world itself--of your family, money, everything--deserve one twenty-fourth part of your day?

Material habits keep millions of people away from God. People of bad habits seek bad company. People of worldly habits seek materially minded companions. People of meditative, peaceful habits seek the company of Christlike saints. There is one thing very good about bad habits: seldom do they keep their promises. Bad habits are easily found to be habitual liars and deceivers. That is why souls can never remain perpetually in bondage. Never condemn the sinner, for he knows too well the fears and tortures of sin. Do not drown him in your hatred, but give him a chance to have his own knocks; then he will be only too willing to be lifted up.

People do not intentionally turn to evil, nor do they really enjoy being evil. They are evil because they do not know the greater charm of good habits, and are unable to compare and select the best. Or they fall under the

influence of others' opinions, and unconsciously are led to evil. Some people are evil owing to the precedence of evil in their environment in early life; and some people are evil because they do not know any better. People who are evil behave so because they wrongly think that through evil they will get happiness easily. People cling to evil because they falsely magnify the dread and torture supposed to be involved in self-control. People are evil because they think they are compelled to be so by the powerful influence of evil instincts, or wrong determinations.

SENSE SLAVERY If you are a slave to your senses, you cannot be happy.

 If you are a master of your desires and appetites, you can be a really happy person. If you overeat against your will; if you wish anything contrary to your conscience; if you act wrongly, forced by your senses, against the wish of your inner Self; then you cannot be happy. People who are slaves to the senses find that their evil habits compel them to do things which will hurt them. Stubborn bad habits bludgeon your will power every time it tries to take the lead and guide your thoughts to the kingdom of right action. The remedy lies in rescuing your will power from the imprisoning power of the senses.

 Almost every soul is a prisoner of the senses. The soul's attention is lured away from its inner kingdom in the medulla oblongata, the spiritual eye, and the spinal plexuses, to the outer regions of the body, where greed, temptation, and attachment have their strongholds. The devotee who wants to lead King Soul away from the misery-making slums of the senses finds that he cannot do so without a severe clash between the lurking robbers of sense attachment and the soul's divine soldiers of wisdom and self-control.

EVIL HABITS CANNOT HOLD ONE FOREVER You must cure yourself of evil habits by cauterizing them with the opposite good habits. For instance, if you have a bad habit of telling lies and by so doing have lost many friends, start the opposite good habit of telling the truth. It takes time to form either a good habit or a bad one. It is difficult for a bad person to be good, or for a good person to be bad; yet, remember that once you become good, it will be natural and easy for you to be good. Likewise, if you cultivate an evil habit, you will be compelled eventually to be evil, in spite of your desire, and you will have to pray: "Father, my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak." That is why it is worthwhile to cultivate the habit of being good and happy. People seeking happiness must avoid the influence of bad habits which lead to evil actions. Evil actions produce misery sooner or later. Misery corrodes body, mind, and soul like a burning acid, and cannot be endured long.

 I do not believe that any human being really means to be evil. The criminal does wrong because there is no realization, deep in his consciousness, of the true joy of right living. He is unable to see how he hurts himself through his errors; he would not want to commit error if he could really understand

the misery his errors will bring. The sin of all sins is ignorance. That is why Jesus said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the criminal could compare his evil way with the right way of living--by actual experience--would he still continue to follow evil? No. We are all seeking happiness.

Evil cannot keep man under the influence of error forever, because he is made in the image of God. In the beginning, the spiritual aspirant finds his soldiers of discrimination guided by the desire to be good. Later, as he meditates longer and prays ardently for inner help, he finds that a veteran occult general--the calm conviction of inborn intuition, or awakening inner light--emerges from the superconscious to guide the forces of discrimination. The emergence of this awakening inner light is the result of good habits of the past

CULTIVATE SPIRITUAL HABITS The power of habit can be especially advantageous on the spiritual path. If one is accustomed to meditating and contacting God, one will greatly desire to meditate longer and more often in order to contact God more frequently. Those who meditate little, and vaguely feel they may someday contact God, find that their desire to do so vanishes when they are invaded by the powerful habit of restlessness. Likewise, those who are accustomed to being calm attract more calmness and serenity, while those who are seldom calm find their precarious calmness easily disturbed when restlessness invades. Deep-seated unspiritual habits can entirely destroy the power of weak spiritual habits.

Habits of thought are mental magnets that attract specific things relative to their kind and quality. Material habits will always bring material results, and spiritual habits attract spiritual results.

Don't let unhealthful ideas float down the stream of your habit-forming thoughts. Watch the quality of the books you read. Watch the kind and quality of the people with whom you associate. Watch the influence upon yourself of family, business associates, and close friends who constantly associate with you. Many people are unsuccessful because their families have infected them and their subconscious minds with habit-forming, progress-paralyzing, discouraging thoughts.

When one meditates often and cultivates the taste for peace and contentment, and gradually forsakes indulgence in sense pleasures, he has a better chance for spiritual emancipation. The best way of all is to cultivate the habit of contacting superior soul pleasures through meditation, immediately upon awakening. Then, while filled with the superior joy of the soul, you may enjoy such innocent, harmless pleasures of the senses as eating, meeting friends, and so on, without any sense attachment. In this way the soul will spiritualize, or change the quality of, all material enjoyments.

The beginner on the spiritual path may take courage from this thought: no matter how many times one suffers from powerful attacks of sense attractions and restlessness-producing material desires, he finds the **meditation-born**, occult soldiers of his life, and of past lives, coming to his aid. A person who is always restless, and never meditates, thinks that he is all right because he has become accustomed to being a slave of restlessness. However, as soon as he tries to meditate and be calm, he finds resistance from the bad habit of mental fickleness. But after he has formed the habit of meditation, he learns that when the habit of restlessness tries to usurp the throne of his consciousness, it finds the new meditation-guard and the awakened occult soldiers of past lives offering resistance.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

You are the sole creator of good or bad habits. Therefore till the soil of your mind with discipline, and sow the seeds of good habits. To replenish your mind thoroughly with good habits you must be patient in cultivating them, while you continuously keep weeding out the bad habits.

Distinguish between the soul's lasting happiness and the temporary pleasures of the senses. Strengthen your willpower. Do not be enslaved by bad habits, but be guided by good habits, formed through cultivating good company and practicing meditation. Above all, be guided by wisdom. Stay away from evil by exercising good judgment and discrimination; do not allow yourself to be compelled by habits. Exercise your power of free choice to adopt the good in everything.

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT THAT HE WAS PROOF AGAINST TEMPTATION

Mr. J. was a confirmed drunkard, a nuisance to his family and to his neighbors. One day he met a saint. The experience was so uplifting that **he** took a vow to abstain from drinking. He asked his servants to hide his costly wines in locked boxes and to keep the key, instructing them to serve the wine only to his friends. Everything went along all right with Mr. J. for some time because of his joy in the power of his new resolution against drink. For a while he did not feel at all the gripping lure of the liquor habit.

As time went on, he began to feel wholly proof against temptation to drink. He asked his servants to leave the key to the wine room with him so that he could serve the red liquid to his friends **himself**. Feeling more and more mental security, he came to the conclusion that it was too much to bother to go to the cellar to get liquor for his friends; he would keep a few bottles upstairs in a cupboard.

Several days passed without mishap, and Mr. J. thought: "Since I am proof against the temptation to drink, let me look at the sparkling red wine in the bottle." So he had the wine decanter filled and placed on a table. Every day he looked at the bottle. Then he thought: "Since I am absolutely proof against the temptation, I may just as well enjoy the smell of the wine."

A few more days passed by. Then he thought: "Since I am no longer bound by the sense of taste and therefore no longer care for wine, I will prove it to myself by taking a mouthful, tasting it, and then spitting it out." He did this. Then he thought: "Since I am now so strong, I am surely proof against liquor. There can be no harm if I **drink** once and swallow a little." He tried this. Then he thought: "Since I have conquered the wine habit, let me take only one swallow at a time, as many times as my unenslaved will desires." In no time at all he was drunk--and he helplessly kept on drinking every day, just as he had done before.

The preceding story shows how the liquor-drinking habit of Mr. J. was put down temporarily by the strong resolution to conquer. But success was not lasting because Mr. J. failed to realize that his resolution against drinking liquor had not had enough time to ripen into a good habit.

It takes from five to eight years to substitute a good habit for a strong bad habit. Until the strong good habit is formed, one should stay away from his former evil habit-forming environment or actions. Our story shows the results when one disregards this law: Mr. J. brought his wine bottle near him, and gradually reawakened the memory of the drinking habit, and with it his former uncontrollable desire for liquor.

Therefore, to prevent the nourishment of bad habits, one should get away from surroundings that encourage him in wrong actions, and, above all, one should never deliberately bring evil thoughts into the mind. Resist evil thoughts, which lead one to seek evil surroundings.

Mr. J. not only made a mistake in bringing liquor so near him; he also failed to recognize the psychological weapons that his bad habit used to defeat his good resolution. The liquor habit remained unseen, hidden in his subconscious mind, secretly sending out armed spies of desire and pleasing thoughts of taste to prepare the way for reinvasion. Thus the liquor habit came back and usurped the free will of Mr. J., enslaving body and soul.

Anyone who has a tendency to live on the misery-producing material plane should learn to stay away from tempting environments outside and to cast out thoughts of temptation from within. He should surround himself with the right kind of environment, and keep his mind filled with the kind of thoughts that will produce the good effect he truly desires.

AFFIRMATION

I form new habits of thinking by seeing the good everywhere, and in beholding all things as the perfect idea of God made manifest.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE ONLY REALITY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I take a sacred vow!
Never will I throw my love's gaze
Below the horizon of my constant thought of Thee!
Never will I take down the vision of my lifted eyes
And place it on aught but Thee!
Never will I turn my mind to do anything
Which reminds me not of Thee!

I will abhor nightmares of ignorant acts.
I will love dreams of noble achievements.
I will love all dreams of goodness,
For they are Thy dreams.

I may dream many dreams.
But I am ever awake thinking of Thee.
In the sacred fire of constant remembrance
Burning on my soul's altar,
I will ever behold Thy face
With my ever watchful eyes of love.

Through Thy grace, I know that health and sickness,
Life and death, are but dreams.
When I finish my dream story of good dreams
And awaken behind the world-painted screen of delusion,
I shall behold Thee as the One Reality.

PRAYER

○ Divine Shepherd of Infinite Perception, rescue the lambkins of my thoughts, lost in the wilderness of restlessness, and lead them into the fold of silence.

THE ART OF CONCENTRATION AND MEDITATION

The term "meditation" is sometimes used interchangeably with "concentration" in ordinary speech and writing. Self-Realization Fellowship teachings make this distinction between them:

Concentration is focusing the mind through interest and determination on *any* line of thought.

Meditation is the application of concentration solely to know God.

In these Lessons the terms "meditate" and "meditation" are often used in a broader sense to mean the devotee's attempts to still the mind and achieve perfect concentration on God.

These are generalizations. The student of Self-Realization Lessons will learn these further distinctions of the terms:

Real concentration is one-pointed focusing of the mind on a particular thought by means of definite scientific methods.

Real meditation is focusing the scientifically concentrated mind solely on God, by definite spiritual techniques.

Thus the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration that you will soon learn will help you to achieve the one-pointed concentration necessary for real meditation. Through faithful practice you will soon experience glimpses of soul awareness and divine peace and joy.

The Om Technique of Meditation that you will learn later is a method for applying the Hong-Sau concentrated mind on a particular aspect of God--as

Om, the Cosmic Sound of Holy Ghost--to experience definite realization of God's presence in you and all creation.

Every activity requires a certain amount of concentration, and no effective action can be performed without deep concentration. Businessmen or artists or students in school as well as spiritual seekers must know the art of focusing all the powers of attention upon a single point in order to succeed in their respective vocations. Concentration denotes first the withdrawal of the attention from objects of distraction and then focusing of that recalled attention upon one thing at a time. The primary factor in concentration consists in withdrawing the attention from all diverting objects.

During the practice of concentration and meditation, environment is extremely important in gaining the best results. There are two kinds of environment: inner and outer.

Outer environment is one's physical surroundings (noisy or quiet, and so forth), and inner environment is one's mental state (distracted or serene).

You can be mentally restless even while sitting in a very quiet place with the body motionless and relaxed. It is therefore necessary to calm yourself interiorly, whether outer conditions are suitable or not, before real concentration can begin. Quiet places are naturally conducive to inner calmness, but if you are determined, you can remain inwardly undisturbed regardless of any commotion around you. So do not stop concentrating or meditating just because you cannot find a peaceful place! An inner environment of mental calmness despite outer distractions is the best altar for concentration and meditation.

MEDITATION IS THE WAY TO GOD You can never have a truly happy life both inwardly and outwardly unless you use the God-given power of concentration to reclaim the forgotten image of God within you. Only then can you solve the mysteries of life and control destiny. Through the art of meditation one learns how actually to contact Divine Bliss --which is God--by the faithful application of the science of spiritual law. The material scientist experiments with cosmic laws in nature to find out the secrets of her creation; and the spiritual scientist ought to apply his divinely bestowed powers of concentration, meditation, and intuition to investigate the divine laws by which he may learn the secrets of Spirit.

MEDITATION PLUS ACTIVITY To seek God does not, as some imagine, relieve one of the various physical, mental, and spiritual duties he has in this human life; nor should the search for God be used as an excuse for neglect of one's other responsibilities. In order to fulfill better his earthly duties, the climbing spiritual aspirant should learn to meditate; then he can banish dark ignorance and weakening disease from

the temple of his life and perceive therein God's perfect presence.

**WHEN AND WHERE
TO MEDITATE**

The living room produces conversation **consciousness**; the library, reading **consciousness**; the **bath-room**, cleansing consciousness; and the bedroom, sleeping consciousness. Similarly, a little place used only for meditation produces the divine silence consciousness. A small room with one or more windows, or a closet with a window, or a screened-off corner, or any quiet room that is neither too warm nor too cold, or a mountaintop or forest in the summer--any one of these is suitable for meditation. Even when riding in an automobile or train, or if you sleep in the same room with others, you can still practice meditation while pretending to be asleep.

If possible, select a noiseless place. In your small meditation room or screened-off corner put a straight armless chair facing east. This will be your **asan**, your meditation seat. Place on it a woolen blanket so as to cover the back and the seat and run down on the floor under your feet. The blanket may be covered with a silk cloth also, if you wish. The silk and wool insulate your body against earth currents, so that their opposite magnetic pull will not impede the flow of the life current and consciousness which you are trying to draw upward through the spinal centers to the higher centers of divine consciousness in the brain.

Be sure to practice meditation in the early morning and before going to bed at night, to take advantage of certain pronounced physiological changes that take place at these times: in the morning, poisons are thrown off as the body, calm and refreshed by sleep, assumes the active state; at night the body is again relaxed; the life force can easily be withdrawn from the sensory nerves, and directed into the spine and upward toward the centers of **God-awareness** in the brain.

Don't drug yourself with too much sleep and thus lose your vitality. Six hours of sleep is plenty for most adults. Wake up at **5:30 a. m.** and meditate. This time is suitable because your home and the neighborhood are usually quiet then. Metaphysically this is suitable because the rays and vibrations of the dawn are vitalizing and spiritually uplifting. At night, meditate from 9 to 10 o'clock, or 10 to 11 o'clock, or **10 to 11:30 o'clock**. When everybody else is asleep and quiet, you remain awake in God.

The more sweetening you put in water, the sweeter it becomes. Likewise, the longer you meditate intensely, the greater will be your spiritual advancement. On Sundays, holidays, and do-nothing loafing days, meditate in the morning from 6 to 9 o'clock, and from 9 to 12 o'clock at night. Remember that the longer you practice, with intensity, the nearer you will be to joyous contact with the silent God. Intensity consists in making today's meditation deeper than yesterday's meditation, and tomorrow's deeper than today's!

FOUR RELATED FORCES

In the practice of concentration, the relation between breath, life force, mind, and vitalfluid (sex energy) should be known even by the spiritual beginner. A balanced control of these four bodily forces brings quick spiritual results without any downfall or hindrance. In fact, every spiritual student can attain a concentrated mind just by the single, separate control of any one of the four bodily factors. For example, by strict celibacy alone, one can gain great mental concentration.

However, the balanced way to Self-realization consists in practicing exercises and principles that simultaneously control and harmonize breath, life force, mind, and vital power. Therefore, every spiritual aspirant should practice certain breathing exercises, special techniques controlling energy flowing in the sensory motor nerves, methods of mental meditation, and principles of calmness-producing celibacy (or for those who are married, sexual moderation). Students who meditate regularly without striving to calm the restless breath or control the life force and vital essence, often find insurmountable difficulties on the spiritual path.

If one's life force is restless, he is nervous and keeps his body in constant motion; then his mind is restless, vitality is restless, and breath is restless. But if one controls the life force by spiritual exercises and the practice of calmness through meditation, then his mind and vital power are within his control.

If the breath is restless, as in running, then the life force, mind, and vital essence will be restless. On the other hand, if breath is made calm and rhythmic by the practice of these Lessons, the life force, mind, and sexual instincts will be under control. Again, if the mind is restless, the life force through nervousness and physical desire becomes restless. Mental calmness is usually attended by calm nerves, controlled bodily energy, and a well-regulated moral life. Loss of vitality--resulting from living too much on the physical plane--produces mental dissatisfaction, melancholia, peevishness, nervousness, and heavy restless breath.

By proper breathing exercises and by attaining control of breath, one can achieve a state of deep concentration. By control of the life force in the sensory motor nerves--pranayama, as taught in the higher Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons--one can withdraw the currents from the senses and prevent disturbing sensations from reaching the brain, thus calming the mind. By mental concentration and self-control, as in meditation, one finds the breath and the life force automatically calmed, and thus stability is attained.

The real spiritual teacher knows that the safest, quickest and best spiritual method for the beginner lies in learning harmonization of these four bodily factors. Some people perform breathing exercises without realizing their

spiritual significance. They may grow into good athletes with plenty of lung power, but that is all. Others try to approach God by controlling the life force in the body; but, forgetting the divine conception of the astral technique --pranayama--they satisfy themselves with certain mental and astral powers and forget God entirely. Some try to know God by mind-bound meditation, by imagination only. They see false visions for the most part, and are impressed by subconsciously produced hallucinations, frozen images of their own imagination.

Thus development along any one of these lines alone is limited, one-sided, and often fraught with difficulties. Balanced, harmonious development of control of breath, life energy, mind, and sex instinct brings fastest success and real advancement to the spiritual aspirant.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Concentration consists of the art of focusing one hundred percent attention upon one thing at a time. All efficient people possess some power of concentration as a by-product of the vocation or avocation that they follow. People can reason without knowing logic, but its study makes them reason better. Similarly, though they naturally possess some power of concentration, they can greatly improve it by conscious knowledge of the art of concentration.

GURU NANAK ,

The life of the great divine reformer, Saint Nanak, was like a soothing dew of heaven manifesting on earth to quench mankind's thirst for knowledge. In certain respects Hindus and Moslems have different religious customs and beliefs, yet they were soulfully treated alike by this great Saint Nanak, and they flocked around his banner. No spiritual victrola or overtalkative reformer would ever have succeeded. But Guru Nanak lived the life of truth; piety and virtue were personified in his actions. He gave both the Hindus and the Moslems a chance to behold in manifestation the comforting universalities underlying the two religions. Guru Nanak, by his magnetic power of love and his exemplary conduct, dispelled the blind beliefs of his heterogeneous followers and showed them how to establish in their hearts a sense of the Oneness and Omnipresence of God and the spirit of universal brotherhood.

One day during the service hour in the Mohammedan mosque, instead of bowing down in front of the altar, Guru Nanak lay down with his feet toward the altar and his head away from it, and feigned sleep. Certain Mohammedans who were accustomed to demonstrative external modes of worship instead of

inner concentration upon God beheld through the corners of their squinted eyes the audacity of this strange man, Nanak, who lay down instead of sitting; who slept instead of praying; and who, above all, was sacrilegious enough to put his feet, instead of his head, toward the altar.

One of the orthodox coterie upbraided him: "You audacious sinner, take your feet away from the altar of God. If you don't, your feet will rot."

Calmly, Saint Nanak replied: "Pray tell me, which way shall I put my feet that there is no altar of God's presence? I behold Him north, south, east, and west, above, beneath, within, and without, and all around me. If you could show me a place where God is not, I would be only too glad to shift my feet to that place. Your outwardly praying minds are roaming over the hills of restlessness. Correct your indifference to God. Your heads are toward the altar, but your souls and minds are away from God. I am glad that even my feet are in the all-protecting, all-guiding power of God."

Unable to reply to the Master's admonitions, the orthodox leader became even more wrathful. He took hold of the feet of Guru Nanak and forcibly turned them away from the altar. But behold! a miracle occurred. With the turning of Nanak's feet from the east to the west, the altar and the whole temple wall moved accordingly.

When this happened, the priest's followers demanded that their leader be humble and recognize the great power of this God-knowing man. The whole company of them lay prostrate at the feet of the Master Nanak. Then the saint blessed them and said:

"Ye children of my Omnipresent Father, realize the presence of God within yourself first, on the best altar--your heart. And if you find Him there, through that inner window you will soon see God nesting in Omnipresence. To localize God at one point is to imprison Him in walls of finitude. Those who confine God within the limiting walls of their own imagination never find Him. Those who break the walls of sense experience with the hammers of all-dissolving intuitive silence, find God spread out in uncaged space, everywhere.

"Just as confined water rushes out in all directions when the walls holding it are broken, so also when the embankments of bigotry and restlessness are broken, the consciousness of man spreads out and expands into the omnipresent consciousness of Spirit."

INSPIRATION

Little soul-bird-of-paradise, get out of the body cage, with its cage bars of sensation. It is an optical illusion. Forget your little cage to which you are so attached. Behold your vast kingdom of Light and Bliss hidden behind the shade of darkness that now shrouds your spiritual eye, even when you have closed your physical eyes. Daily seeing the material sunlight, you are blinded and unable to behold the magic world of eternally spread luminous electrons shining behind the darkness of closed eyes. Listening to the little vibrations of earth sounds, you have forgotten how to float in the ocean of Cosmic Sound.

AFFIRMATION

I will find Thy presence on the altar
of my constant peace, and in the joy that
springs from deep meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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COSMIC CREATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

When the sparks of cosmic creation flew from Thy bosom of flame, I sang in the chorus of singing lights which heralded the coming of the worlds. I am a spark of Thy cosmic fire. Thou Sun of Life, as Thou didst peep into the mortal cups of mind, filled with molten liquid of vital sparks, Thou wert caught within the golden smallness of human feelings.

In each fragile, oscillating mirror of flesh, I see the restless dance of Thine omnipresent power. In the quivering lake of life, I behold Thine almighty life.

Let me calm, by the Christlike command of concentration, the storms of restless desires raging over the limpid lake of my mind. In the still lake of my soul, I love to behold Thine unruffled face of stillness. Break the boundaries of the little wave of my life, that Thy vastness may spread over me.

Make me feel that my heart is throbbing in Thy breast, and that Thou art walking through my feet, breathing through my breath, wielding my arms of activity, and weaving thoughts in my brain. Thy sleeping sighs wake when my sighs cry. Through Thy playfulness, the bubbles of Thy visions of creation float in the chamber of my delusive sleep.

It is Thy meteoric will that courses through the skies of my will. Make me feel that it is Thou who has become I. Oh, make me Thyself, that I may behold the little bubble of me, floating in Thee!

PRAYER

Teach me, O Spirit, by meditation, to stop the storm of breath, mental restlessness, and sensory disturbances raging in the lake of my mind.

POPULAR CONCEPTIONS OF CONCENTRATION

There are two kinds of concentration. One kind develops more or less by indirection, when a person tries to get his mind off a certain thing. The more he tries not to think about it, the more concentrated on it his thought becomes. This is not real concentration, as it is not under the control of the will. Scientific concentration, on the other hand, enables you to throw your attention at will on the object of concentration and to hold it there uninterruptedly for as long as you wish. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you a scientific method of doing this.

SOME ARE "Well," you may say, "many people do succeed in **concentrating** on each problem as it arises. They know how to keep their minds on the subject at hand and shut out all extraneous thoughts, even though they were never taught to concentrate, and have never seen Self-Realization Fellowship instructions." This is true; all successful people have good powers of concentration.

Then why should such people bother with any "method" of concentration? Because successful people have developed this power of concentration in the past, or in this life, by constant friction with difficult problems. By utilizing their previously acquired ability scientifically, they can increase their successes. For instance, one can reason without learning logic, but the clear-thinking man who adds logic to his mental tool-kit has an advantage over the one who knows nothing of the laws pertaining to forms of reasoning.

The ordinary successful businessman uses only about twenty-five percent of his powers of concentration, but the student of Self-Realization Fellowship can develop his power of concentration to one hundred percent usefulness and exert it scientifically. In addition--and this is most important--he will be led into the art of meditation and learn to balance material success with spiritual success.

By the practice of meditation man learns how to throw his thought concentratedly upon God and to appeal successfully to Him to recharge his concentration with God's perfect concentration. Only then--when scientifically acquired human concentration is charged with the concentration of Spirit--can man expect to accomplish all things. That kind of concentration is required in order to demonstrate successfully a command such as: "O ye mountains, go into the depths of the sea!"

THE RIGHT METHOD OF CONCENTRATION

The Self-Realization Technique of Concentration is uniquely scientific, because it teaches students how to reinforce the power of the human mind with the supercharged, concentrated consciousness of God. Everyone can benefit from application of the scientific Self-Realization method of God-directed, God-charged concentration: the busy housewife; the worry-burdened businessman; the restless-minded type whose uncontrolled thoughts make him go like a jumping jack; the devout churchman who is seeking greater knowledge; and the real spiritual aspirant--the yogi.

Through the voice of silence and peace God tries to speak to all His children in response to their prayers. But His voice is usually drowned out by rowdy sensations of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight, and by the tumult of sensation-and memory-roused thoughts. Finding the devotee's attention entangled in restlessness and engrossed with the incoming "calls" at the switchboard of sensation, God's voice recedes into the depths of silence.

God sadly turns away whenever He finds that His temple of concentration has been made a noisy place for the money-changers of material desires and sensations. The Christlike guru-preceptor (intuition) must come with the whip of self-control to drive away the materially busy, restless thoughts, and make the temple of silence into a temple of God.

Inequalities in the power of concentration exhibited by various people are reflected in the differing degrees of success they achieve. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches that by powerful concentration the businessman can increase his success; the focused power of detached attention may similarly be applied to making a greater success of a home, an art, a profession, a church, or in establishing a temple of silence in the soul. It is wrong, of course, to use high-powered concentration for self-success at the expense of others; one must know how to guide and reinforce concentration with the just, unselfish, service-giving, sympathetic, superconcentration of God.

Some persons who apply great concentration to become rich are satisfied to use their high-powered minds for gaining material success, while turning a deaf ear to cries of misery from others. But the man charged with the superconcentration of God wants success only when others may benefit at the same time. He tries to spiritualize the ideal of industry through service, and finds happiness through making others happy. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches the art of idealistic concentration for the good of self and all others.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Always reflect your balanced attitude toward others. A calm person has his senses fully identified with the environment in which he places himself. A rest-

less person does not notice anything, consequently he gets into trouble with himself and others and misunderstands everything. A calm person, by the virtue of his self-possession, is **always** at peace with others, always happy, always calm. Never change the center of your concentration from calmness to **restlessness**. Perform activities only with concentration.

Many persons think that their actions have to be either restless or slow. That is not true. If you keep calm, with intense concentration, you will perform all duties with the correct speed. The art of true action is to be able to act slowly or speedily without losing your inner peace. The proper method is to establish a controlled attitude, wherein you can work with peace without losing your balance.

This does not mean that you should be calm for a while and then let your mind run riot. It is not the person who meditates a long time for one day and then does not meditate again for several days who becomes successful on the spiritual path. The person who meditates and always holds to the aftereffects of meditation throughout the day is the one who quickly approaches to Godliness and Cosmic Consciousness. There are thousands of persons who are material. **Their** movements are of materiality. They are matter in motion. Do not be like them. Cultivate inner calmness and poise.

MADAME BUTTERFLY'S ATTEMPTS AT CONCENTRATION

Paramahansa Yogananda often told this story to illustrate what happens when a person with untrained mind sits down to concentrate. He called the principal of his story Madame Butterfly--though male students just as often have such experiences in their unrewarding efforts at concentration.

The scene is Madame Butterfly's living room. The time, the middle of a cold winter afternoon. Since all the housework is done, and it's too dismal to go anyplace, our friend has some of that "spare time" she's always looking for in order to practice concentration.

She sits down in a straight-backed chair. No sooner has her body touched the chair than she exclaims. "This seat is too hard! I should have a pillow." She finds one the right size and sinks down upon it. Then Madame Butterfly discovers that the chair squeaks. Transferring pillow and body to another chair she notices a draft, and closes the window. Next she develops a tendency to sneeze. But her handkerchief had dropped near the first chair. Her handkerchief reclaimed, Madame contentedly thinks, "Now for a delightful dip into the depths of concentration."

A few moments pass, and her mind is just beginning to settle when the boiling radiator begins to bubble. In disgust, she jumps up and roughly chokes the

radiator's voice.

Once more she settles herself, righteous indignation increasing the determination to dive deep into meditation. Then, in the apartment next door, someone starts to play the piano, accompanied by laughter and loud talking.

Now Madame Butterfly is both mad and disgusted. She considers pounding on the wall, but after all, it is the middle of the afternoon, and so the neighbors have a right to play if they wish. She begins to listen and to think: "That's really a good piano." Our friend then recalls other pianos she has heard. She remembers the pleasant days when she was a child and used to dance while her dear old grandmother played rustic airs popular in her own youth. She thinks of some of her grandmother's escapades as an attractive young belle.

And so on and on, until suddenly Madame Butterfly remembers her original purpose of concentration and jerks herself from her sweet reveries. She tries to assume the saintly dignity of a veteran yogi, rebuking her body and mind for their restlessness.

She makes a desperate effort to regather the battered fragments of her self-control. Her eyes have hardly closed again when the telephone crows out with impudent, patience-piercing pertinacity. "I will not answer it!" But the impertinent bell continues. Madame Butterfly begins to doubt her wisdom. "It might be an important call," she thinks. So she gets up and answers the phone only to find that someone has dialed the wrong number.

This ordeal over, she musters up enough courage to begin again. But now her head begins to nod. Her sense of shame at this is shoved aside by self-pity for her exhausted condition. But forcing herself to sit straight, Madame tries again.

This effort is diverted by the clamorous ringing of the hoarse-voiced doorbell. She remains still for a few moments, but the patience-breaking jangle goes on until she begins to think again, "It must be something important." Once at the door, however, Madame Butterfly assumes a galvanized smile as she greets three feminine acquaintances, all of whom have a master's degree in the art of gossiping. Behind the artificial flower of her forced smile our friend hides the stinging wasp of petulance, as she thinks: "Oh you pests, why couldn't you have stayed away and let me concentrate?"

Happily oblivious to this, the three visitors enter and busy themselves raking and prodding in everyone else's dirt heaps--secure in the knowledge that for the moment there is a "keep off" sign on their own. Madame Butterfly laughs pleasantly, and three hours slip away before she has the relief of closing the door behind these inordinate gossips.

Automatically she resumes her attempts at concentration. But now her attention is mobbed by memories of leaky radiators, piano-pounding, telephone

bells, raucous doorbells and gossipy tidbits. Guiltily she halts this mental resume. "What time is it anyway?" Madame looks at her watch, and with a resigned sigh, rises and starts to the kitchen to get supper.

The living room is empty again. And it might just as well have remained so all afternoon, as far as Madame Butterfly's efforts at concentration are concerned.

The above experience is not an exaggeration. It is only a sample of what happens to most people when they attempt to concentrate.

INSPIRATION

It is good to remember the following: seek intensely until you find God. Knock until the doors of all wisdom are opened unto you. Believe and act according to your faith, until you know. Pray until He answers. Meditate deeper and deeper, until you find and feel Him as unending joy. Love Him until you feel His love. Talk to Him continuously in silence until He speaks to you. Remember, the so-called certainties of life--such as money, fame, and friends --are really the most difficult to retain. They may slip away any minute. So, make the imperishable so-called unknown, uncertain God your own; you will find Him moat faithful, when all else leaves you beyond the last gate of this life.

AFFIRMATION

I will open the only gate, the gate of meditation, that leads to Thy blessed presence.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WHERE I FOUND THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I bow to Thee in silver rays;
I drink to Thee in sunbeams;
I stand in reverence before Thy mountain majesty;
I clasp Thine image reflected in the lake;
In the voice of the echo I hear Thy voice;
I embrace Thee in the calm caress of the breeze;
I bathe in Thy bubbling fountain of my bosom.
The explosions of my passions have died away
And I hear Thy whispers in the pines and in the
Gentle swish of the laughing waters of the lake.

I listened to Thy sermons through the voice
Of my reason.
I beheld Thee plowing the soil
Of my soul with trials,
And sowing the seeds of Thy wisdom therein.
Every day I watered the seeds sown by Thee,
But it was only when the sunshine
Of Thy mercy came
That those seeds sprouted, grew, and
Yielded the harvest of contentment.

Suddenly the waters, nature's green carpets,
The blue vastness overhead, the opaque stones,
And my body, became transformed into a vast mirror
By the magic touch of my silence,
And I saw myself reflected in everything.
And when in concentration I looked at myself,
I became transparent--and in my transparency
I could not find me--but only Thee, only Thee.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, let the magic wand of my intuition stop the gale of passions and unnecessary desires, and in the rippleless lake of my mind, let me behold the undistorted reflection of the moon of my soul, glistening with the light of Thy presence.

DEFINITIONS OF CONCENTRATION

The great Hindu sage, Patanjali, said that union with Cod is established by neutralizing the **restless** thought- and desire-waves of the consciousness. To illustrate: the image of the moon looks distorted if it is reflected in the waters of a lake whose surface is rippled by the wind; but if the wind subsides, the ripples vanish and the clear, undistorted, reflected perfection of the moon is seen. Cod is reflected as soul in the lakes of consciousness in myriads of human beings--just as the one moon may be reflected in a million lakes. But because the lakes of human attention are rippling with sensations and thoughts caused by the storms of breath and of mental restlessness, the soul-image of Cod reflected there is distorted.

When the Self-Realization Fellowship technique of concentration is successfully practiced, the waves of breath cease, owing to the restfulness of the heart; then the ripples of sensations and of restless thoughts vanish from the lake of attention, and the undisturbed reflection of the soul is seen. Patanjali emphasizes the negative side of concentration: that as soon as the attention is free from the objects of distraction, it can reveal the soul, just as the removal of the hand from in front of the lens of a flashlight reveals the things in front of it in the dark.

Jesus said: "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Matthew 18:8, 9).

In these words are hidden a Biblical definition of concentration. Jesus meant that every devotee must know how to concentrate and do away with all distractions of sensations such as touch ("**thy hand**") and sight ("**thine eye**"). The devotee must know how to calm the senses, i. e., take consciousness away from them, and how to withdraw the life force from the sensory-motor nerves, which are the conductors of disturbing sensations. Thus he will know how to enter the eternal life, the ever conscious, ever existing, ever new bliss of the soul. The life force in the nerves keeps the soul entangled with messages of sensations from the eyes, ears, hands, and so forth; but when the life force is plucked from the eyes and cut off from the hands, and from all **consciousness** of the body, the soul's attention becomes freed from the distracting

messages of the senses. Then the soul becomes cognizant of its divine nature. Only then is a state of complete concentration reached.

The following is a psychologically sound and scientific definition of concentration:

Concentration is that power which one can apply negatively to free the attention from objects of distraction, and positively to place the attention on a single idea or object at a time.

When the attention is freed from minor distractions, it may be directed to act positively by focusing its rays on any kind of problem, or upon God. It is all right to say that a person is concentrating on how to make more money in business, or that he is concentrating on God; but you should not say, "He is meditating on his business problems." For real meditation, as taught to Self-Realization students, is that specific form of concentration which is applied only to knowing God.

Many students try ineffectually to meditate, to think about God, but they are still hypnotized by restlessness and cannot forget their surroundings. In order to get results, one must learn how to detach his attention from distracting thoughts and sensations and apply it to God. No meditation is possible without knowing the art of concentration. Prayer, chanting, and singing all become a mockery without application of the positive and negative factors of concentration and meditation.

All people need to know the art of concentration in order to gain real success, each in his own respective path. No one can concentrate deeply upon God, art, business--or anything else--without first disengaging his attention from outer and inner distraction. Hence a scientific technique of freeing one's attention from the objects of distraction is the only way to get results. How hopeless it is for either the housekeeper, the businessman, or the spiritual aspirant to try to concentrate by employing the popular way of mental diversion! The student who wishes to learn real concentration should begin by learning two things:

- 1) What the objects of distraction are.
- 2) How the attention can be scientifically switched off from them.

Many men and women believe that prayer takes the place of concentration. This is true only when the laws of prayer are followed. Most people who try to contact God do so unscientifically, and hence ineffectively, either by blind devotion or by intellectual investigation. Of course, if the prayer is intense, the attention automatically disengages itself from objects of distraction and focuses itself upon God; then one has true concentration. But the program of worship in most cases consists in a variety of physical ceremonies, such as singing hymns and listening to sermons; the attention has no opportunity to go

deep into God-consciousness.

The Heavenly Father does not reveal Himself to those who are intellectually wise but without devotion; nor to the emotionally intoxicated, who are unable to reason clearly; but unto those who worship Him "as little children," wholeheartedly and with full attention:

"To those blessed ones who worship Me,
Turning not elsewhere, with minds set fast,
I bring assurance of full Bliss beyond. "

- - Bhavad-Gita

God will come into all churches and temples if He finds the heart doors of the devotees within open to Him, and if genuine soul-inspired concentration or meditation gives Him a welcome. God can never be bribed by the size of a church congregation, nor by its wealth, nor by well-planned sermons. God visits only the altars of hearts that are cleansed by tears of devotion and lighted by soul-stirring love.

FOUR STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The first state of consciousness is marked by complete identification of the self and its well-being with the struggle for and acquirement of material and physical satisfactions. Such a person does not try to understand the power behind his brain, without which no gainful or pleasurable activity can be carried on.

The second state is reached when a person, by occasional concentration on higher things, tries once in a while to get away from his preoccupation with the sensory world.

The third state is reached by deeper concentration; the yogi arrives at a middle point wherein he enjoys glimpses of inner Bliss; his spiritual and material tendencies are now evenly matched, as a result of steady effort at concentration and of proper schooling in the habits of silent concentration.

The fourth state comes when the consciousness becomes completely identified with the only good or God, and the yogi goes beyond the oppositional states of good and evil. Awakening in God, the yogi finds that the dual states of good and evil have vanished, just as sorrowful or joyous dream experiences of disease and health, bereavement and fulfillment vanish upon one's awakening from sleep.

PORTRAIT OF AN UNSUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN

He gulps down an inadequate breakfast, hurries to his office, and sits at

a desk littered with papers that mutely shriek "unfinished business." He picks up one or two letters and glances at them, but before his mind has formulated any replies he glimpses the appointment pad on his desk and realizes that he must decide on a course of procedure before he talks with Mr. Blank.

He tries to concentrate on this problem. However, his mind keeps reverting to the letters just put aside, and wants to mull over those problems instead. The din of his secretary's typewriter annoys him. He shouts at her to stop. A moment later, he realizes that she's typing on a rush assignment he gave her, so he shouts at her to go on again.

To calm himself, he begins smoking his after-breakfast cigar. This brings to mind another problem: he tells himself that he should be firm in his determination to quit smoking. Ragged nerves tug at the sleeve of his conscience, and finally he dashes the cigar into an ashtray.

At this inopportune moment the secretary brings over a pile of letters to be signed. The boss, unreasonably upset at the intrusion, angrily banishes her to the outer office. He tries to concentrate on his problem once more, but the pieces won't go together. His ineffectual struggle makes him sleepy and he dozes off in disgust at his inability to work out a solution.

This is his first comfortable moment, so he quietly drifts into deeper slumber. His secretary returns, jolting him back to consciousness just in time for his important appointment with Mr. Blank. But inasmuch as he has failed to map out a plan, he talks haphazardly all around the subject, gives the impression that he is only an ineffectual bluffer, and the deal he had hoped for falls through.

AFFIRMATION

I shall seek to know Thee first, last,
and all the time. Finding Thee first, I
shall find, in Thee, all things that I craved.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THY STATION, JOY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

From Thy station, JOY, I hear daily
Thine ineffable shrill-soft tones, dear and
familiar.

At first I tried to tune Thee in from so far,
far away; Thy program seemed beyond the
reception of the tiny instrument of my mind. But
after I had made many fine touches on the dial of
meditation, Thou didst come in on sudden etheric
wings.

Thou wert singing a melody of earth's good-
ness and the nobility in all hearts.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Spirit, teach me to pray with deep concentration, and to imbue scientific meditation with devotion. May my heart daily become more pure by all-surrendering love for Thee.

THE ART OF CONCENTRATION

DISTRACTIONS THAT INVADE SILENCE

People are eagerly seeking success or health; but even if they gain it, they are restless just the same. The soul's hunger cannot be satisfied by material **substitutes** nor by theological chaff. Some modern religious movements are adopting "going into the silence" in their program of Sunday worship. But "going into the silence," though it brings some peace, does not teach the groping spiritual aspirant how to commune with God. "Going into the silence," by diverting and silencing thoughts, is only a negative factor of **concentration** and a slow method of establishing God-contact.

The difference between spoken prayer and silence is considerable: In audible prayer the mind is busy with sounds and bodily motions, as well as with restless thoughts. In ordinary silence, the mind is kept partially quieted by keeping the body still, and the optic telephone is cut off by the closing of the eyes. But the thoughts within may still run wild. Some people succeed in silencing their thoughts for a moment or two, and get a little glimpse of the peaceful face of God through this temporary crack in the wall of restlessness. But often a real seeker is confronted by darkness, with only an occasional glimpse of peace, which is soon broken by the disturbance of restless thoughts. He begins to wonder, "Is this all there is to God and His inspiration?"

When he opens his eyes and gets out of this state of negative silence, at first he is filled with a new sense of wonder at the glory and immensity of sunlight; at the mysterious power of electricity that causes the trolley cars to run hither and yon; at the marvel of skyscrapers; at the lightning searing the sky; at the powerful light of the moon. But as he experiences only a little occasional peace in the silence, he gradually finds less and less consolation in the powers and manifestations of nature. Soon he begins to belittle his strivings for more spirituality and his inner experiences during periods of silence.

The Cosmic Light, or Cosmic Energy, the Creator of all forces, hides behind the darkness at first perceived in silence; but those who are in the darkness of negative silence do not comprehend that. In these Self-Realization Fellowship studies you will learn how to produce scientifically a positive state of meditative silence, and thus quiet all thoughts and sensations. There are higher states of concentration, and as the devotee ascends to them, one by one, he comes into higher and higher spheres of indescribable joys and uplifting experiences and visions. He blissfully realizes: "He whom I was seeking in the cloud-forests of the blue is here with me, within me. I sought Him as a Power without, only to find that He--the fountain of all nature's forces-- exists within me. In the silence, just behind the walls of darkness, I adoringly perceive Him. "

To perceive God, one must first learn the positive and negative factors of silence. It is necessary to analyze the definite psychophysical elements of distraction that invade silence as one's attention tries to march toward its mental objective.

SENSATIONS For example, as soon as you sit to concentrate upon your business in the office, your attention is busy with the noise of typewriters and other office equipment, or with the roar of streetcars and automobiles in the street outside, intruding on your consciousness through the auditory nerve wires. Touch sensations of comfort (pleasurable feelings of the flesh such as after-dinner satisfaction, or abundant vitality, and so forth) or of discomfort (disagreeable feelings such as itches, aches, binding of tight clothing, perspiration, heat, cold, hunger, and weariness) pour into the brain through the tactual nerve wires. Or your attention may become preoccupied with the body odors of nearby persons, or with the fragrance of flowers in the room, or the perfume used by someone near you--sensations that keep crowding into your brain through your olfactory nerve wires.

Or your attention may be busy with visual sensations being reported to your brain through your optic nerve telephones: the sight of your office furnishings, or others' apparel. Your attention may be busy with pleasant or unpleasant sensations of the palate: the taste of peppermint candy, or chewing gum, or an after-smoking taste, or the after-sensation of the taste of cold water that you may have drunk not long before. So you see that all the while your attention wants to concentrate upon a problem, upon business, or upon God, it meets with many distractions caused by sensations of sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell.

THOUGHTS EVOKED BY SENSATIONS But the five kinds of distractions just enumerated are not the only claims upon your attention. These sensations give rise to thoughts that lure the attention away from its pursuit of concentration. For instance, when you hear a noisy automobile outside the room in which you are trying to concentrate,

you perhaps begin to have thoughts about different makes of cars; or the chewing-gum taste in your mouth may make you think about the many flavors of chewing gum. The fragrance of flowers in the room may make you think of the florist's shop, or your grandmother's delightful garden. The sight of your business office may make you think of grander offices you have been in; and seeing the apparel of the people around, you may think of various kinds of clothes you would like to own.

PAST THOUGHTS ROUSED BY PRESENT THOUGHTS Thus sensations give rise to thoughts. Fresh thoughts arising from sensations may then rouse related thoughts in your subconscious memory. For instance, the sound of automobiles around your place may not only rouse many thoughts about other models of automobiles, but these, in their turn, may rouse in your consciousness latent thoughts of how you have driven many models of cars, or remind you of a bad accident you had with a certain powerful car. So your attention generally meets first with sensations, then with crowds of new thoughts, and finally with memory thoughts waking from their subconscious slumber.

Distractions--the enemies of attention--are threefold:

1. sensations;
2. new thoughts roused by sensations;
3. old memory thoughts roused by present thoughts.

The minute your attention wishes to march along the pathway of concentration toward a definite goal, it is waylaid by these invisible bandits of distraction.

POPULAR WAY OF CONCENTRATION IS DIVERSION If you should ask how you can succeed when trying to concentrate upon a problem or upon a Sunday sermon, most persons would tell you to divert your mind from the objects of distraction. But this seldom works successfully; for whenever you try hard not to think about a particular thing, your mind perversely dwells on it.

It is almost futile, for example, to try to divert your mind from a constantly ringing telephone bell when you are trying to concentrate. This is because, when the bell rings, the report of the sound is carried to the brain by the life force in the auditory nerves. Whether you wish to hear it or not, the bell sound penetrating through your auditory nerves is bound to register in the brain.

Trying to divert the attention from the disturbing sound of a bell by thinking of something else during the attempt at concentration is unscientific. However, a man of habitually intense concentration habits may be able to turn his mind deeply enough within so as not to hear the ringing. The question then arises: What physiological changes occur in this man to permit such deep

concentration that he really **does** not hear the sound of the telephone bell, although its vibration strikes the tympanum of his ear?

The logical conclusion is that there is an inseparable relationship between intelligence (the "operator" of the sense-telephone switchboard in the brain) and the life force flowing in the auditory nerve telephones. When the operator (intelligence) chooses, he can, by diversion or by scientific relaxation (as taught in these studies), shut out the sound of the telephone bell so that it will not disturb him. A **real** telephone operator working at a switchboard can do several things to be free from the disturbance of a ringing bell:

1. She may be so busy mentally doing something else that she does not **listen** to the telephonic sound, though it rings in her brain, transmitted through her auditory nerve wires. Thus by diversion her attention remains unaware of the sound.
2. She can fall asleep before the switchboard; then she will not hear the sound of the bell signaling the message coming through the wires.
3. She may simply switch off the current from the wires and thus prevent their transmitting the electrical impulse that sounds the bell.

Similarly, any person may do several things to prevent hearing the sound of a telephone bell:

1. By diversion one can disengage the attention of the intelligence that takes note of the switchboard signal of his auditory sense telephone. By this method, however, he does not remove the real cause through which the disturbing sound of the bell reaches his brain.
2. By sleep, or "**unconscious**" sensory-muscular relaxation, one can prevent the entry of the bell sound into the brain. In the subconscious state of sleep, the life force is relaxed from the muscles and from the five sense-telephone wires of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing.
3. One can scientifically switch off the thoughts and the life force from the senses. An explanation of the scientific method of doing this will follow in Lesson 20, and a special technique of concentration — Hong-Sau — will be given in Lesson 21.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The great spiritual **teachers** of India realized the necessity of discovering psychophysical methods of concentration. Concentration is an extremely important factor in achieving success on any plane. A great businessman or a big social or spiritual reformer is a man of keen concentration. By the concentrated rays of his attention, developed unconsciously, he burns away and destroys the roots of every difficulty that **comes** before him, and thereby makes a success of his undertakings. But he could be an even greater success if he knew the art of conscious concentration, which would enable him to focus the burning power of attention upon any difficult problem, just as the sun's rays, concentrated through a magnifying glass, can ignite **inflammable** objects beneath it.

MONKEY CONSCIOUSNESS

Tej Bahadur, a young businessman in India, had to spend a considerable amount of his hard-earned money to go to London to confirm his business transactions. He greatly desired to cut costs, but no matter how he cut down his overhead he was never satisfied. He was constantly thinking of schemes for saving money. Though a wealthy businessman, he once even considered the idea of going to London by working his own way as a sailor.

One day when Tej Bahadur was contemplating new ways to practice economy, he fretfully wondered why God had not made him fast moving like electricity, which traverses vast tracts of space in the twinkling of an eye. Just then a friend of his, who knew all about his exaggerated notions of economy, came hurrying toward him and told him excitedly: "Tej Bahadur, come to the banks of the river Ganges. I have found a man who can levitate and walk on water, and who is willing to teach the method to a worthy student."

Impressed, the wealthy Tej Bahadur said to himself: "Thank God for sending me a levitating tutor. I will ask him to teach me how to do it, and that will save me all that money I annually spend on my European business trips."

He wended his way toward the riverbank, where the levitating teacher was temporarily **encamped**, and asked to be taught the art of levitation.

The master gave Tej Bahadur the following instruction: "Son, every night, dim the light in your bedroom, lock the doors, and, sitting erect on a straight chair facing the east, with closed eyes mentally chant the holy word of the Cosmic Vibration--Om--for an hour. At the end of one month you will be able to race through the air over land or water."

As the businessman, inwardly wondering about the extreme simplicity of the lesson, thanked his teacher and was about to return home, he was called back by the master, who gently cautioned him further: "I forgot to tell you something about the technique of levitation. While you are mentally chanting and concentrating on 'Om,' be sure not to think of a monkey."

"That is simple," said the businessman. "Of course I won't think of a monkey." After saluting the saint, he returned home.

Evening found Tej Bahadur closing the windows, pulling down the shades, and seating himself in a straight chair in his bedroom to practice the technique of levitation. No sooner had he done so than the first thought that struck him was: "I must not think of a monkey!"

Two minutes passed and several times Tej Bahadur warned himself inwardly: "I must not think of a monkey."

By the time ten minutes had passed he had thought of all the different kinds of monkeys in South America, India, Africa, Sumatra, and still other places. Tej Bahadur was furious. He willed himself to banish the thoughts about the monkeys, which were leaping in rapid procession through the window of his helpless mind. At the end of an hour he found himself thinking of nothing but monkeys. With each succeeding day he meditated faithfully, but, to his great annoyance, he found that he was really only frantically trying not to think of the millions of imaginary monkeys that were jumping into his mind.

After a month's concentration upon the forbidden monkeys, Tej Bahadur raced back to his teacher and exclaimed: "Master, take back your lesson on levitation! You have taught me to meditate upon monkeys instead. Your method has only developed a monkey consciousness in me."

The saint laughed merrily. In a voice as soothing as the dew, he advised his pupil: "Son, I only tried to show you how untrained and slavish is your mental state of concentration. Unless you learn to make your mind obey you, you cannot achieve any material success, not to speak of the difficult art of attaining the power of levitation. First learn to attain mental control; then use that power to achieve small things; and when you are able to do that, try for bigger and bigger achievements, until your inner power becomes developed enough to levitate you, or better by far, to accomplish spiritual miracles in your consciousness."

AFFIRMATION

I will expand the little bubble of my joy. I will keep puffing at it with the breath of my concentration until it spreads all over my face, into my heart, throughout my entire body and mind, and over the Ocean of Infinity that is hidden in my consciousness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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O DIVINE HART!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Clad in the hunter's green of selfish desires, I pursued Thee in the forest of consciousness, O Divine Hart! The sound of my loud prayers startled Thee; Thou didst swiftly flee. I raced after Thee; but my erratic chase, the hue and cry of my restlessness, caused Thee to retreat still farther.

Stealthily I crept toward Thee with my spear of concentration, but my aim was unsteady. As Thou didst bound away I heard in secret echoes of Thy footfalls: "Without devotion thou art a poor, poor marksman!"

Even when I held firmly my meditation missile, Thine echo resounded: "I am beyond thy mental dart; I am beyond!"

At last, in submissive wisdom I entered the silent cave of selfless love. Lo! Thou, the Hart of Heaven, camest willingly within.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Divine Mother, Thou art present just behind our prayers, just behind the darkness, just behind the thoughts of our devotion, just behind our heartthrobs, just behind our brain. Break Thy vow of silence. Speak to us!

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ON CONCENTRATION

During slumber the life force is switched off from the sensory telephone receivers of eyes, palate, nose, skin, and ears. A sleeping person does not hear the telephone bell because the sound cannot reach his brain. The operator, intelligence, has unconsciously switched off the auditory nerve telephone along with the others. If one can sleep at will, therefore, he can produce at will unconscious sensory relaxation--or the switching off of the life force from the sense telephones, and thus prevent the noises from entering his brain. Though sleep is a good method of getting away from constant noises passing through the auditory nerves, still it is an unconscious, passive method. One does not wish to sleep every time he desires to become really quiet.

Self-Realization Fellowship studies teach an easy but scientific method of consciously disconnecting the life force from all the five sense telephones so that the stimuli, and their resulting sensations, do not reach the brain at all. If you learn to switch off the life force from the five sense telephones with which your operator, intelligence, is working, then you really remove the medium through which sensory stimuli flow into the brain. The mechanical telephone receives and transmits messages along the same wire. But the bodily house has two sets of telephones quite separate from each other in their functions. Through the sensory nerves, or receiving telephones, the messages of tactual, gustatory, auditory, olfactory, and optical sensations are received into the brain by the operator, intelligence. Another operator, will power, transmits messages of eye movement, nostril inflation, ear movement, or the movements of the tongue, or any muscles of the body, through another set of nerves called the motor nerves.

By the stillness of complete muscular relaxation--which necessitates lying down, so that no muscles are tensed--one can remove the life energy from the motor nerves and their connecting muscles. But this withdrawal of life force from the muscles and motor nerves is not complete sensory relaxation, for the five sense telephones are not shut off; one can still see, taste, hear, smell and be conscious of tactual sensation, even when one is muscularly relaxed. How is it possible, then, to switch off the life force from the five nerve telephones scientifically and consciously? By quieting the dynamo of the heart, which controls the life force in the sense telephones. In sleep, your heart action slows down, and this helps to withdraw the life force from the five sense telephones, and also from the motor nerves. The heart is the dynamo,

or the life, of the muscles, the cells, and the five sense telephones. When the heart involuntarily stops, we die.

CONTROL THE
DYNAMO OF
THE HEART

But the yogis of India anciently found that it is possible by calmness, and at will, to switch off the energy from the heart without causing death; that one can die or live at will, and conquer death. When the average man dies, his body remains inert; he cannot recall to it the life force that has fled. But St. Paul, like the Hindu yogis, knew that by learning to control the heart one can "die" daily. "I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily" (ICor. 15:31). In order to die daily, one has to live daily in the consciousness of God's presence. When one learns to live and die at will, he becomes free from the flesh.

Through this series of Lessons you can learn to quiet the heart by the use of a specific technique (Hong-Sau); and also by giving up worries and fears you can control the life force that works in the five sense telephones. The heart of a mouse in a mousetrap beats two times faster than usual because of its intense fear. The hearts of the calm Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington are said to have beat only fifty times per minute. Children's heartbeats are much faster than those of grown people. Their restlessness is the cause. Their sense telephones are always busy with outward stimuli. Children find it hard to quiet themselves, but as they attain adulthood they become calmer, and the ~~heart beats less~~ frequently.

Normally the heart pumps eighteen tons of blood a day. If you worry, you trouble the heart, and it beats faster. The poor overworked heart, which cannot even rest while its owner sleeps, is a much-abused slave. Therefore when it has done enough, it says: "You have been a bad master. Now I quit my job." As a result of your heart's refusal to work, you have to do without the whole machinery of your body.

Do not be frightened, thinking that you are going to stop your heartbeat permanently when you practice these instructions. They are not given as a convenient means of suicide. If anyone wishes to stop the heartbeat and not revive it, he does not need to bother to study these Lessons, for he can more easily accomplish his purpose by jumping into a river.

Remember, however, that psychologically a state of unconsciousness, or passive subconsciousness, should be avoided during the practice of the concentration technique. Also, physiologically, no strenuous method of holding the breath should be used in an effort to stop the heartbeat unnaturally. It is absolutely impossible to stop the heartbeat that way. But by practice of the Hong-Sau method described in the next Lesson, the heart becomes so restful, the lungs become so free from venous blood, that it is unnecessary for the heart to work. Then the heart rests because of its great calmness and the life force in the five sense telephones can gradually be brought under control.

CONCENTRATE ON THESE TRUTHS The soul, being individualized Spirit, can manifest all the fulfillment and satisfaction of the Spirit, if given a chance to unfold. It is through long-continued contact with changeable matter that material desires are developed. Desire is an impostor that hampers and encroaches upon the freedom of your ever-joyous soul and lures your ego to dance upon the unstable waves of the four-fluctuating and short-lived psychological states which are (1) sorrow, (2) false happiness, (3) indifference, (4) a deceptive passive peace that claims the ego for brief intervals, whenever the mind manages to shake off the other three.

The mind must be protected from these four alternating psychological states. Look at any face and you will be able to tell whether or not its owner is at the mercy of such moods. A person's face rarely remains calm while he is in the grip of one of the four unstable mental states.

Learn to swim in the calm sea of unchanging Bliss before you attempt to plunge into the maelstrom of material life, which is the realm of sorrow, pleasure, indifference, and deceptive temporary peace.

When the ego is not buffeted by sorrow or happiness, it sinks into the state of indifference. You can look around you and find many faces registering this state of boredom. You ask an indifferent person, "Are you sad?" "Oh no," he replies. "Are you happy?" "No," he drawls. "Well then," you ask, "what is the matter with you?" "Oh, I'm just bored."

Protect the soul from the mental disturbances created by the mad dance of sorrow-producing desire. Realize that you do not need material things, which create only misery. Learn to escape slavery to desire by searching within your soul until you find there true happiness and lasting peace, or Bliss. Thus you will become a "bliss billionaire."

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Build an inner environment inviolable. Practice silence! I remember the wonderful discipline of the great ones. When we used to talk and chatter, they would say:

"Go back into your castle of silence; do not recklessly slay your inner spiritual life by idle talk. Your peace will ebb away, to be lost forever."

THE PRODIGAL SON

You have wandered in the wilderness of distraction, far from your home of peace. You are a prodigal son. You want to go back to your home of happiness. The Father is waiting. Do not pray as a beggar imprisoned within the self-erected walls of limitations. Break the walls. Try to be a good son instead of a truant son. Your prayers remain imprisoned within your limitations.

When your mental microphone of mind is broken by hammers of restlessness, repair it before you try to broadcast your prayers. Do not cast aimless prayers to the winds. Repair your mind-microphone by the skillful mechanics of meditation and then broadcast your loving demands claiming your birthright of opulence, health, and knowledge through your calm mind-microphone. First loudly, then softly, and finally just mentally affirm: "Father, Thou and I are one," until you feel oneness, not only in your conscious intelligence or subconscious imagination, but in the intuitive conviction of your superconscious mind. Melt the words of the affirmation into intelligent flames of intuitive perception. Then pour those flaming, soulful affirmations into the mold of your calm, restful, firm faith. There your crude words will turn into a sparkling garland of gold--fit offering to lay at the feet of Cosmic Deity.

When your offering of words touches Infinity; when your message of yearning ~~reaches God after being properly sent through the microphone of meditation,~~ then you will feel His response coming. His response is plain, never indefinite. Hold your mind radio tuned with soft touches of deepest devotion, of the grandest, most constant love. Then suddenly He may burst upon you as a song or as a Cosmic Voice; or as the fragrance of a trillion mystic flowers. He may softly dance on your bursting heart, or He may televise His message as a fire-mist aureole, dancing on the floor of your vision; or a million nectars may invade your palate, or a sextillion sensations and perceptions of endless thrills of joy may dance on every sanctum of your body cells, on every blade of thought, on every open altar of your inspiration.

No matter what God broadcasts, remember that the surest sign of His Presence is the burst of the dawn of peace, which is the first messenger to herald His secret approach. Then peace bursts into more dazzling lights of endless joy. Then you are sure to behold Him in the light of increasing, ever new, ever charming, ever entertaining joy. This joy is not a dream of fancy. You can never bring this messenger unless you open the secret door of deepest meditation. Through this majestic door of God-dreams joy comes, and in the light of this joy alone can you behold the Mighty Deity spread over the sky-blue vastness, in everything.

Then, when the contact is made through increasing peace and joy, tell your Father that you are no longer a prodigal son. You are back home to tell Him again and again, deeply, with your superconscious conviction, that you

and He are One. You are back to stay in His mansion. Tell Him again and again, long and deeply. Then when your Father accepts your supreme demand of oneness with Him, ask for the lesser things--prosperity, power, or wisdom or anything you like, and you will receive them.

INSPIRATION

Calm yourself within and without. Fill the jar of your body with joy. The water of joy surrounds your body. You are in the ever-living ocean of joy. Joy is around your body, joy is within you. Joy is in the ether, in the stars, in the Milky Way; joy is in everything.

You and your Father are One. Your Heavenly Father is the joy within you. The spiritual joy and you are one. Bliss-God and you are One. Omnipresent joy and you are one. You are the Absolute Infinite Joy, Consciousness Eternal. You are ever new joy--ever living. You and the Absolute are One. You and the ever new joy are one.

AFFIRMATION

Today I will worship God in deep silence,
and will wait to hear His answer through my
increasing peace of meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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YOU **WERE** HIDING FROM HIM

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Forsake the tipsy dance of forgetfulness! Be sobered by the understanding that you **must** not neglect to honor the Silent Guest in your temple. Forgive your enemies but not yourself -- the greatest enemy of your own Self, who forgets to befriend your Best Friend waiting in the temporary parlor of your life.

The light of life is waning, and darkness is approaching fast. Kindle the **unextinguishable lamp** of love, that by its light you may behold Him when the chimerical gloom of death throws its curtain of darkness around you.

You were away and He was here in your heart, always waiting and waiting for you, and now you come whining that you have been waiting for Him. It is you who have been hiding from Him. And now that you have found Him, you must lose sight of Him no more in the self-woven cocoon of your own unknowing. Open your error-drunken eyes and behold the light, tapping at the gates of your closed eyelids. Open the inner eye of silence! Behold Him spread all over your being. Pull off the veil of sorrow, and find His blissful presence. Remove the self-created darkness of delusion and behold Him right within your bosom.

You ran away from your all-containing soul-home to stay in the dark hovel of evanescent pleasure. Now come and behold your home of all-fulfillment within you. He has not been hiding from you -- you have ever been hiding from Him!

PRAYER

O Father, teach me to realize Thy nearness behind the voice of my prayer. Teach me to breathe Thy breath in my own breathing.

THE TECHNIQUE OF CONCENTRATION

It is necessary to keep the attention free from distraction during concentration. The mind of the average person is restless, even when he makes a real effort to concentrate. Try as he will to keep his attention focused on one object of thought, his mind slips away and "concentrates" on everything else imaginable. When the attention thus becomes enslaved unconsciously by objects of distraction, efforts at concentration bear meager fruit.

BREATH AND LIFE FORCE This SRF Lesson deals with the scientific approach to God: harmonizing breath, life force, and mind to achieve one-pointed concentration on Him.

Controlling the life force in the body enables the yogi to switch off the current from the sensory nerve telephones, thus making it impossible for disturbing sensations to reach the brain and distract the attention from its march toward the Divine Goal.

Breath is not life, but it is necessary to ordinary physical existence because dark venous blood has to be purified by oxygen. Breath is the cord that ties the soul to the physical body. One who can live without breath can free his soul from slavery to the breath and hence from imprisonment in the body.

Because of the vital link between breath and life force, many persons think that pranayama -- life-force control -- consists in holding the breath for long periods. This is untrue. The mortal breath that binds the soul to the body cannot be made to stop by forcibly holding it in the lungs, which is dangerous. Rather by stopping decay (the normal process of cellular breakdown) in the system, and by developing calmness and practicing spiritual exercises such as Hong-Sau, yogis achieve the breathless state in a natural way. It is life force that governs breath, heartbeat, sensory impressions, and motor responses -- all the functions of the body. Pranayama means control of that life force, and hence control over all the functions of the body.

FUNCTION OF LIFE FORCE The first function of life force in the body is to supply energy directly to the brain. The all-surrounding Cosmic Energy enters the brain through the medulla oblongata. From the medulla, life energy is also transmitted to the heart, lungs, diaphragm -- to every organ and every cell in the body. Life force is the electric power that directly energizes the cells and keeps them functioning in a living way. Flowing into the body through the medulla, life force keeps the body battery

charged with life. Breath, food, and sunshine are merely subsidiary sources of energy; their breakdown by the activating life force creates additional electrical power for the body battery.

If the battery in an automobile has gone dead, it can be reactivated only by newly charging it with electricity from an outside source. Similarly, a dead body battery can be revived only by a fresh charge of life force from the cosmic source. It is useless to fill the stomach of a dead person with food, or to pump oxygen into his lungs; food and oxygen sustain life only if life force is already actively present in the body.

A storage battery could be used indefinitely if recharged by electricity, and if the physical characteristics of its positive and negative plates and the electrolyte did not change. Similarly, by higher training the body may be sustained by the intelligent life force alone, which acts as the recharging electricity and also prevents the deterioration of the physical properties of the body battery.

The fact that human beings and animals in states of suspended animation can maintain life indefinitely by spinal and mental energy, shows that life force itself is the only essential to sustaining life. Hindu saints have been buried alive beneath the ground for as long as several months -- even years -- without food or oxygen, and after disinterment have regained consciousness and resumed normal life.

In mortal existence, however, the life energy in the body, instead of drawing directly upon its source -- the inexhaustible Cosmic Energy -- distills energy from food, and thus comes to depend on being sustained by food. But food is not the cause of the presence of life force in the body; it is merely one of the conditions by which mortal life exists.

Without light, reading a book is impossible; but the reading matter is not caused by the light. Likewise, without food, existence is ordinarily impossible; yet food is not the cause that creates life. Through the habit of incarnations the body has become used to depending upon food and breath to maintain life. The more the body is trained to live by life force, the less it need depend upon food and oxygen.

THE FUNCTION OF BREATH The function of breath is to supply oxygen to the body. Breath indirectly supplies energy to the body by the explosion of oxygen into atoms of life force. Passing through the walls of the lungs into the blood stream, oxygen changes dark, waste-carrying venous blood into vitalizing red arterial blood.

The greater the amount of venous blood, the greater the necessity for breath. If there is no venous blood in the body (as in suspended animation when, through the prevention of waste-creating activity of bodily tissues, conscious rest is given to the bodily cells) there is no necessity for breathing. For this reason the Hindu masters taught control of the life force in the heart

by stopping cellular deterioration in the body, producing the resultant breathless state.

When one arrests cell decay -- the cause that creates venous blood -- the functioning of the heart becomes unnecessary for the time being. Yogis accomplish this by eating only pure foods that produce little waste in the body, and by practicing scientific spiritual methods of calming the physical and mental processes -- methods such as the SRF Recharging Exercises and concentration techniques.

**CALMNESS OF HEART AND
BREATH NECESSARY FOR
PERFECT CONCENTRATION**

The prevention of cell decay in the tissues means that the heart does not have to pump impurities-laden venous blood into the lungs for cleansing; nor to send oxygen-laden red blood to feed the bodily tissues. When the deteriorating process in the body is thus halted, and there is no venous blood to be pumped into the lungs, the heart becomes naturally and completely calm.

The yogi who has thus calmed the heart also finds that the absence of venous blood in the lungs, and the state of suspended animation of the bodily tissues, makes superfluous the absorption of oxygen from the air into the blood stream. Breathing simply becomes unnecessary.

**BREATHLESSNESS
IS DEATHLESSNESS**

The Hong-Sau Technique enables its practitioners to solve the mystery of breath by doing away with breath. Only those who properly regulate the breath -- that is, are able to do without breath at will by practice of a scientific technique such as Hong-Sau -- can attain Self-realization. If you can do without breath, you can control bodily life, prolong it, and rise beyond it to soul awareness in this life. To do without breath is to exist comfortably without feeling any need to breathe; going without breath does not mean forcing or suppressing air in the lungs.

Watching the breath is the preliminary step in controlling it; then the consciousness gradually realizes itself as distinct from the involuntary bodily function of breathing, and separates itself from the breathing function. The yogi who has gained breath-control is then able to recognize that consciousness is the only thing that is real about his existence. By training his consciousness according to the method to be described in this Lesson, the student begins to realize that his life is not dependent upon bodily functions, and that his real nature is spiritual and immortal. Thus he understands the delusive nature of ego consciousness which causes us erroneously to identify ourselves with the body instead of realizing the divine nature of our being: satchitananda -- eternal existence (sat), eternal consciousness (chit), eternal joy (ananda).

**THE BIBLE AND
THE HINDU
SCRIPTURES AGREE**

"Man (man's body battery) shall not live (cannot be sustained) by bread alone (by solid and liquid food and oxygen only), but by every word (unit of life

energy) that proceedeth out of (pours forth from) the mouth of God (the medulla oblongata at the base of the skull in the back of the head, through which cosmic energy descends into the body)" (Matthew 4:4). The life energy that transforms food into energy is the real sustainer of life. According to the Hindu scriptures, the food of the future will be **almost** solely this life energy from the cosmos. **When** man's body, mind, and soul batteries run down, they will be recharged directly by cosmic energy.

The following important results follow upon attainment of the breathless state:

1. The heart calms down and switches off energy from the five sense telephones, thus helping concentration.
2. The noise of the bodily machinery is stopped.
3. The process of cellular decay in the internal organs is stopped.
4. One realizes that the body lives by cosmic energy coming through the medulla oblongata.
5. One learns to live by Cosmic Consciousness and not by "bread" or breath alone.
6. The soul is released from bodily bondage and breath slavery.

PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE

This Lesson teaches you how to switch the life current in the body bulb off or on at will, and how to bring about perfect relaxation. Inattention during the practice of these exercises brings on sleep. Concentrated attention will bring a tingling sense of divine life to every body cell.

When practicing this technique of concentration, it is a good idea to sit on a straight-backed chair with a woolen blanket placed over it. The blanket should run down under the feet, insulating the body from earthly magnetic influences and disturbances. Face east and sit erect, without touching your spine to the back of the chair. Always keep the spine and head in a straight vertical line during practice. The body should be relaxed, with the hands resting palms upward on the thighs.

HONG-SAU TECHNIQUE OF CONCENTRATION

With eyelids completely closed, or half closed, focus your gaze at the seat of the spiritual eye, between the eyebrows. From that center of calmness and concentration, mentally watch (be aware of) the natural flow of your breath coming in and going out. Do not in any way use mental will or force to draw your breath in or to send it out. Try to feel as detached about it as you would if you were merely observing someone else's breathing.

As the breath comes in, mentally chant "Hong" (rhymes with song), at the same time move the index finger of your right hand toward the palm. As the breath goes out, mentally chant "Sau" (rhymes with saw) and move the index finger away from the palm.

The movement of the index finger is only to help you to differentiate in-

halation from exhalation, as we are ordinarily not accustomed to noticing which is taking place. If you have no difficulty in mentally differentiating inhalation and exhalation, or in chanting the right word with each ("Hong" with inhalation, "Sau" with exhalation), the movement of the index finger is unnecessary.

There should be no movement of the tongue as you mentally chant the words "Hong" and "Sau."

Every sound in the universe has a different mental correspondence and mental effect. "Hong" and "Sau" are two sacred Sanskrit chant words that have a vibratory connection with the incoming and outgoing breath. The mental repetition of "Hong" with the inhaling breath and of "Sau" with the exhaling breath has a markedly calming mental effect and thus helps the student to concentrate in this exercise of watching the incoming and outgoing breath.

By correct, continued practice you will feel a great **calmness**; gradually you will realize your true identity as soul, superior to and existing independently of your physical body.

**HONG-SAU MAY BE
PRACTICED
ANYTIME**

Practice this Hong-Sau Technique during your daily morning and evening meditation period. In addition, you may also practice **it** during leisure periods, or when you are traveling in a bus or streetcar, or whenever you are sitting anywhere doing nothing else. When practicing Hong-Sau in public, do so without moving the finger or closing the eyes or fixing the gaze between the eyebrows (which might attract the attention of people around you!); just watch the breath and mentally chant "Hong" with each inhalation and "Sau" with each exhalation. Keep the eyes open, gazing calmly ahead at some particular point. Restless movements of the eyes reflect the restlessness of the thoughts in the mind; and if the eyes are gazing about taking in various objects or scenes, these sight perceptions give rise to further restless thoughts.

In leisure moments, you may even lie down on your back, if you wish, and practice Hong-Sau, though in the supine position one is more susceptible to falling asleep. As a general rule, however, Hong-Sau should be practiced in the correct upright meditation posture.

**BEST TIME TO PRACTICE
CONCENTRATION TECHNIQUE**

There are four periods during each day that have a vibratory correspondence with the four seasons of the year; early morning is spring, noon is **summer**, early evening is autumn, and midnight is winter. Four changes take place in the body during these four magnetic seasons of the day. The **SRF** exercises and techniques neutralize the effects on the body of the four changing periods by vitalizing and magnetizing the body with life currents and with Cosmic Consciousness. These currents arrest change and suspend the decaying process in the cells.

Therefore **it** is best to practice this changelessness-producing technique (Hong-Sau) at these four periods of the day to obtain satisfactory scientific

results. Meditate between 5 and 6 a.m., 11 and 12 a.m., 5 and 6 p.m., and 10 and 12 p.m. (or between 11 and 12 p.m.).

The purpose of Hong-Sau practice is to gain conscious passivity, and to free the attention from sense entanglements. Under the spell of maya -- cosmic delusion -- man identifies himself with the physical body, which lives in and requires the atmosphere of air, just as a fish needs the environment of water. Breath is the cord that binds the soul to the body. When man learns to rise above the need for breath, he ascends into the celestial realms of angels.

As he watches the course of the incoming and outgoing breath, the yogi finds that his breath naturally slows down and calms the relatively violent action of the heart, lungs, and diaphragm.

HONG-SAU RESTS THE HEART

The most overworked organ in the body is the heart, which pumps about eighteen tons of blood a day and has no rest at night as the other organs have. The Hong-Sau Technique is a scientific method for resting the heart. Its practice thus increases longevity and liberates a tremendous amount of life current, which is distributed all over the body, recharging, revitalizing, and renewing all body cells and preventing their decay. This marvelous Hong-Sau Technique is one of the greatest contributions of India's spiritual science to the world: it teaches one how to lengthen the span of life, and is a simple and practical method of rising above body consciousness and realizing oneself as immortal Spirit.

In sleep we experience sensory relaxation. In death, complete relaxation involuntarily takes place, owing to the stopping of the heart's action. If one can learn to control the heartbeat, he can experience conscious death, as did St. Paul ("I die daily" -- I Corinthians 15:31) and many yogis of India who have practiced this Hong-Sau Technique, and through it achieved mastery over the action of the heart. Since ancient times India's great yogis have known how to leave the body voluntarily, honorably, and gladly; they were not thrown out roughly, or taken by surprise by death at the expiration of the leases on their body temples.

When the heart rests, breath becomes unnecessary. Life energy then withdraws from the heart and sensory nerves into the spine and brain. This disconnects the telephones of the five senses, whose incessant messages from the outside world ordinarily keep the ego continually disturbed and the attention scattered. Through sensory disconnection by practice of Hong-Sau, sensations cease to arouse thoughts, which in turn cease to arouse the subconscious mind by associated thoughts. The attention thus becomes scientifically free from all distractions, and the student is ready to go on to advanced concentration and meditation practice.

HONG-SAU -- THE SILENT KRIYA YOGA

Every **SRF** student should remember that Kriya Yoga is a science consisting of various steps, only one of which is that special technique called Kriya Yoga (the particular Kriya Yoga Technique that was taught by Lahiri Mahasaya and is now given through Self-Realization Fellowship).

Hong-Sau may be called the silent Kriya Yoga. But one advantage of the Hong-Sau exercise over Kriya is this: that one may practice **it** after dinner or before dinner, in silence or among crowds; whereas Kriya Yoga should be practiced only when the stomach is empty or partially empty, and in privacy and silence. Hong-Sau may be practiced any time the mind is not engaged in outward activity and is therefore free to be interiorized. Therefore, one should practice **it** often, during leisure periods, as well as during one's regular meditations.

Cultivation of Hong-Sau practice during leisure periods will augment the good effects derived from Kriya Yoga practice. Indeed, practice of the **Hong-Sau** Technique should never be forsaken, even after one receives the specific Technique called Kriya Yoga. The purpose in practicing the Hong-Sau Technique is the same as in Kriya Yoga: to produce the divine ecstasy that deep practice of Kriya Yoga gives. The only difference between Hong-Sau and Kriya Yoga lies in the degree of speed with which the effects are derived. Twenty-four hours of prayer or meditation by any other technique (except Kriya Yoga) will not produce as much spiritual advancement as one hour's practice of Hong-Sau. Likewise, **it** would take twenty-four hours of deep Hong-Sau practice to produce the same spiritual result gained from one hour's practice of Kriya Yoga.

Students should not erroneously think that they have nothing effective to work with until they have Kriya Yoga. Just as **it** is necessary to pass through high school in order to enter college, so **it** is necessary to carry on the practice of Hong-Sau in order to get the desired result from the higher practice of Kriya Yoga.

When a student passes from high school into college, he doesn't forget what he learned in high school; he takes that knowledge with him and expands **it** in his college training. Similarly, the **SRF** student should by all means continue with practice of the Hong-Sau Technique, and also the technique of listening to the Cosmic Sound (**Aum**, or **Om**) -- which will be given in a later Lesson -- along with the practice of Kriya Yoga, when he becomes eligible to receive **it**, if he wants to "make the grade" and attain realization of the Infinite.

AFFIRMATION

I exhale and stop the storm of breath, and the ripples of thought melt away. The grip of the senses is loosened. The cords of flesh are broken.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I WILL DRINK OF THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Divine Gardener, till the wild soil of my mind with the plough of Thy wisdom and sow therein the seeds of my devotion. Under Thine unvarying vigilance, the seeds will sprout and yield a harvest of Thy blessings.

In the wine press of my heart I will convert those luscious blessings into the nectar of Thy love. I will fill the spacious bottle of my soul with the aged wine of Thy love, and I will ask all my thoughts and feelings, and all my wisdom and intuition, to be joyous with the intoxicating wine of Thy constant affection.

I shall never be content drinking Thee out of the cask of silence. I want to pour Thee into the truth-thirsty mouths of all minds. I want to drink Thee and dance with Thee. Young and old, man and woman, all my brothers and sisters, must drink Thee with me, for it is more thrilling to drink Thee with others whom we love, and with all Thy children whom we should love.

I will dance, filled with Thee, and I will dance with all those who are saturated with Thee. We will dance with Thee and Lady Blossoms, Mother Moon, Sister Stars, and the Guardian Sun--all will join us in our joyous, ever new, rhythmic dance of Eternity in cadence with the soul-melting melody of the music of the spheres.

Ah, I will drink Thee and will dance with Thee eternally in the ever changing scenes of time.

PRAYER

O Father, teach me to breathe Thy breath in my own breathing. Teach me to feel Thine all-pervading life in my life. Flood my senses with Thy light.

ROUTINE OF CONCENTRATION

LIFE FORCE AND VITAL POWER Life force is the electric power in the sensory and motor nerve telephones that makes it possible for the ego and the intelligence to receive sensations of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell through the sensory nerves and to transmit impulses of reaction through the motor nerves. Control of the life force helps the ego to switch off the electric energy from the nerve telephones, and thus prevent the invasions of restlessness -creating, attention-enslaving sensations. To control the life force in the five sense telephones is to practice concentration scientifically. When energy is switched off from the nerve telephones, sensations are unable to snatch away the attention from its concentration upon a particular idea.

The vital essence of the body is formed of the most precious tissue and energy of the body. Every drop of creative chemical fluid is said to contain the concentrated essence of eight drops of blood and the electric energy that would be contained in their thousands of blood corpuscles. Each cell of the creative fluid is a condensed electric battery, containing a microscopic intelligence. To dislodge these mental and astral storage batteries from the body weakens the vitality of the body and the mind and makes the breath extremely restless. Myriads of atoms of life and intelligence are lodged, like encamped soldiers, in the creative chemical compound. To drive them out of the body foolishly (lured by the enemy sexual temptation) is to lose these soldiers of energy and mental power and to become a victim of the army of darkness, disease, weakness, fear, worry, dissatisfaction, melancholia, and even premature death.

The mind is the operator that controls the breath, the life force, the vital power, and all the functions of the body. Without its guiding power, all functions of the body would cease to operate. Mind-control leads to control of all the functions of the body; but mind cannot control all of the functions of the body until it knows its own powers and the relative powers of breath, life force, and vitality in connection with itself. The person who tries to attain mind-control by harmonizing breath, life force, and vital essence, finds freedom more quickly than the person who tries to attain mental control without the aid of controlled breath, energy, and vitality.

PREPARATION AND POSTURE

1. Facing east, sit erect on the edge of your bed with your feet on the floor, or sit on an armless cushioned chair, or sit on your bed with your legs crossed, with spine straight, chest out, abdomen in, shoulders back, chin parallel to the floor, and hands, with palms upturned, resting on the thighs close to the abdomen.
2. Precede the actual practice of the Hong-Sau Technique with an awakening prayer that coincides with your desire or purpose of concentration. For example: for wisdom, peace, and contentment, repeat the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswarji, Guru Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. Lead me from ignorance to wisdom; from restlessness to peace; from desires to contentment. "

3. (a) Inhale slowly, counting 1 to 20.
 (b) Hold the breath, counting 1 to 20.
 (c) Then exhale slowly, counting 1 to 20.
 Repeat this 6 to 12 times.
 (d) Take a breath and tense the whole body, clenching the fists.
 (e) Relax the whole body, throwing the breath out.
 Repeat 6 times.

(If you cannot hold the breath with comfort for the count of 1 to 20, reduce the number of the count accordingly. Hold the same count--whatever may be comfortable for you--during each of the three parts of this exercise, for example: 1 to 15 during inhalation, 1 to 15 during the holding of the breath, and 1 to 15 during exhalation. Counting in this exercise should be at the rate of approximately two counts per second.)

4. Then take another breath and exhale quickly, and remain without breath as long as it will stay out without discomfort, and mentally wait for the breath to come in. When the breath comes in of itself, mentally say, "Hong, " and when the breath goes out of itself, mentally say, "Sau. " Keep the eyes closed, or half open without winking, and gently fix the gaze upward and inward toward the point between the eyebrows.
5. After practicing this technique deeply for ten minutes to half an hour, exhale slowly and completely. Blow out of the lungs all the breath that you possibly can and enjoy the breathless state as long as you can without discomfort. Repeat three times. Then forget the breath and pray, or sit in silence, feeling peace.

**FOLLOW THESE
INSTRUCTIONS**

Long concentration should be preceded by practice of the Technique of Energization given on page five of Lesson 8. Morning and evening practice of the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration should be preceded by practice of the Recharging Exercises given in Lesson 8-A. By keeping in touch with Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters; by tuning in with the Guru in meditation and activity; by faithfully practicing each morning and night the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration (and the other spiritual techniques that you will be taught in future Lessons); and once a week, on any day suitable to you, having a three-hour meditation period in the morning or at night, you will advance on the spiritual path.

You should accustom yourself to practicing the Hong-Sau Technique with your eyes gently concentrated on the point between the eyebrows. Do not strain the eyes, however. If you are not used to holding the eyes in this position, practice some of the time with eyes half open, but most of the time with eyes closed. While resting on your bed, lie on your back and watch the breath, mentally chanting Hong-Sau. Remember, however, that your regular practice of the technique should be in the proper, upright meditation posture. The more you practice Hong-Sau in your leisure hours, the greater will be the results. Work overtime and you will gain still better results.

When you consciously watch the breath, what happens? The heart, the lungs and diaphragm gradually calm down and their muscles ultimately, during a long deep silence, refrain from their otherwise constant motion. Thus the normal processes of decay are stopped throughout the system; then no more venous blood need be pumped by the heart into the lungs. When the heart does not pump blood, the lungs do not have to expand to receive oxygen; then the breath ceases to flow: you are temporarily living directly from Cosmic Energy entering through the medulla oblongata.

It is always a good plan to drive out toxins before beginning Hong-Sau practice. By first practicing the inhalation and exhalation exercises (page 3), the yogi burns out the carbon in the venous blood and decay is partially stopped. You will notice that after deeply practicing this technique of inhalation and exhalation for a long time, when you throw the breath out you have no desire to breathe in again for some time. You can remain longer in the breathless state than if you tried breathlessness immediately after restlessness.

**THE ATTENTION
BECOMES FREE**

Death is simply involuntary complete relaxation. The medulla oblongata, through which life enters the human body, controls the heart. The heart, in turn, is the switch that controls all five sense telephones of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Sensations cannot reach the brain of their own accord; the sensory messages from the eyes, nose, ears, skin, and tongue are carried to the brain by the telephone wires of sensory nerves. When the jangling of incoming "calls" is stopped, thoughts do not arise, and when thoughts do not arise, associated

memory thoughts do not bother the brain. When you sit upright, relaxed in the meditation posture, and practice Hong-Sau, the production of decay and waste is slowed down in the muscles and limbs. And as soon as, by the practice of this technique, energy is withdrawn from the sensory and motor nerves, muscles, limbs, and the heart, no sensory impressions can register on the switchboard of the brain to disturb the operator's attention and coax it to rouse thoughts. This is the time your attention is free to be concentrated upon problems, creative ideas, or God.

After scientifically freeing the attention from objects of distraction, learn to concentrate upon any one thing, or upon God. You know now that that form of concentration in which you disengage your attention from the sense telephones and turn it upon God is called "meditation." You can concentrate upon money or upon God, but you meditate only upon God. Further instruction in meditation, and how to meditate upon an unknown God, will be explained in future lessons.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The moon's reflection in a whirling water-filled pot looks ruffled, but the moon is not distorted; it is the disturbed water that produces the illusion. ~~Calm the water in the pot, and you will find the perfect, undistorted image of~~ the moon. Likewise, no matter how the all-powerful, perfect image of God is distorted by the oscillations of our firm wrong convictions, if we can learn to calm our mental waves of thoughts by the magic wand of concentration, then we will behold in our mental mirror our perfect, all-conquering soul ability. Our mental restlessness and lack of conviction are solely responsible for the distortions of the perfect image in us. Our celestial abilities lie within us unharmed; it is the waves of our environment-grown wrong convictions and subconscious bad habits that make the powerful soul image in us appear distorted.

THE MAN WHO REFUSED HEAVEN

Long ago there lived in India an ascetic who spent his days on the peaceful banks of the holy Ganges. Years passed in deep contemplation, but the spiritual aspirant found that, although he was surrounded by a celestial environment of beautiful scenery and good people, of good books and devotional temple services, his mind nevertheless dwelt on harming and robbing people. The more he tried to ward off by meditation these uninvited thoughts, the more they made forceful inroads into his peace.

At last he vowed: "I will not stop praying until I find definite release from these disturbing thoughts which stab my peace during meditation."

One hour passed, two hours passed, and still the bandits of restlessness kept piercing the ascetic's meditation. Finally, at the end of three hours, the disturbing thoughts suddenly vanished from his mind; and in their stead he beheld a beautiful vision of a saint standing lifelike before him.

This radiant saint not only appeared to be living but spoke with celestial softness: "Son, in a former life you were a bad man, but before you died you resolved to be good. That is why you were born in this life with a holy resolution to be good--and also with bad thoughts which you harbored in your past life. It is a shame that amidst the holy surroundings of the Ganges, and with good friends and regular meditation, you have been living in the inferno of inward restlessness."

The saint went on after a gentle pause: "According to the decree necessitated by the past actions of your previous life, and because you have not made a greater effort to live peacefully in your present spiritual surroundings, it is metaphysically ordained that unless you work very hard at meditation now, at death you will have to choose between living in heaven with ten fools, or living in Hades with one wise man. Which of the two do you prefer?"

The spiritual aspirant replied: "I prefer to live in Hades with one wise man, for I know from my own experience that ten fools would make a Hades of heaven. Whereas, I believe that if I were with one real wise man, even in the stygian darkness of Hades, he would help me to make heaven of it."

If you have a peaceful, heavenly home but are constantly fighting with your family and friends, you are living in a self-created Hades. On the other hand, no matter what inharmonious surrounding you may have, if you meditate, or at least sit in silence for a few minutes every day, and live in harmony with your inner Self, you will always live in heaven and will carry your own portable paradise everywhere.

AFFIRMATION

I will acquire divinely deep concentration and then use its unlimited power to meet life's God-given demands.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE ARE ONE WITH THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

On the altar of silence we lay the flowers of our devotion, O Lord of Silence. He who humbly twinkles through the stars, breathes through our breath, circulates through our blood, talks through our hearts, is the same Spirit who is the light of lights. He is ours. To Him we give our utmost devotion.

Father, teach us to contact Thee. Teach us to pray with devotion. Teach us to demand Thy presence. Teach us to feel united with Thee. No more mechanical prayers, no more empty words, but the humble devotion of our souls we offer Thee.

With the language of our souls we demand Thy presence, for Thy presence is our wealth, wisdom, and devotion-- Thou art the essence of everything! and we are Thy children. Take away the nightmare of evil that engulfs us when we are not awake in Thee.

Father, we are awake in Thy presence. Thou art the light. Make us feel Thee and Thy presence in every fiber of our being, in every wisp of thought.

Father, twinkle Thy light through our thoughts and our beings. Strengthen us! Make us realize that we are Immortal and teach us to follow the one highway that leads to Thee. Awaken our souls! Awaken our hearts, which need to know Thee. Be with us! We are one with Thee.

PRAYER

○ Spirit, beloved Father, Oversoul of the universe, Spirit of spirits, Friend of friends, teach me the mystery of my existence! Teach me to worship Thee in breathlessness.

FURTHER FACTS ON CONCENTRATION

DELICATE ART OF BREATH CONTROL Persons unacquainted with the facts are often fearful of all breathing exercises. The great **Hindu** masters warned only against the practice of violent breathing exercises by persons **with** weak lungs; they urged truth seekers in general to follow the guidance of a competent teacher if engaging in any type of breathing exercises.

So, just as salads should not be tabooed for all people because those with ulcerated stomachs cannot eat **them**, so also healthful breathing exercises should not be condemned for all when it is only those persons who have diseased or unusually weak lungs who should not practice them. You can laugh at anyone who tells you that all breathing exercises are dangerous. Everyone is ordained by Nature to perform one perpetual "breathing exercise" no matter whether his lungs are good or bad. Violent breathing exercises are dangerous, of course; for they can cause trouble even to apparently strong lungs if there is any inherent weakness there. Cast out all fear when you practice the simple, extremely beneficial breathing exercises that **Self-Realization** Fellowship recommends.

WHEN YOU NEED TO BREATHE DEEPLY If you are starving for oxygen because of improper body posture, you need to breathe deeply and to breathe properly. A person who sits with a bent spine and walks with a caved-in chest squeezes the **diaphragm** and lungs and prevents them from properly expanding and receiving the amount of oxygen necessary to cleanse all the devitalized blood in the lungs. When the lungs and diaphragm do not expand properly, not enough oxygen is brought to the blood. Thus toxin-laden venous blood in the walls of the alveolar sacs of the lungs remains unpurified and is carried back into the system in this condition. If you sit and walk with the chest out and the abdomen in, you will take in the

proper **quantity** of oxygen; all your dark venous blood will be changed into bright red blood as a fresh supply of vitality is poured into your system.

If you want to rest the body it is better to lie on your back on a hard bed than to sit slumped in a chair with the spine crooked and the lungs squeezed. Use planks on your bed instead of springs, and put a spring mattress on top. This insures a straight yet soft bed, without endangering your health by bending your spine as a too-soft and springy bed does.

WHEN YOU DON'T NEED TO BREATHE DEEPLY Eating is necessary if you are starved for food; deep breathing is necessary if you are starved for oxygen. But as continuous eating is unnecessary when you have food in your system, so continuous breathing is unnecessary if your blood contains a minimum of impurities, owing to right habits of eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and a **minimum** of starch. Many people breathe hard because they have much waste material in their systems.

Calm people breathe less, while restless types, who as a rule eat starches and meat to excess, tend to breathe like bellows. Their life force and mind are kept constantly busy with the physical functions of breathing and with the heaviness and restlessness of the flesh.

If you are calm there is less motion in your body. As a result there will be less decay in your body and you will need to breathe **very** little; it is possible for an advanced yogi to remain without breath most of the time. If you breathe rapidly, the heartbeat will be very fast. When you run you breathe rapidly and your heartbeat accelerates.

Decay in the cells of muscles and some organs can be partially arrested by making the body motionless, but assimilative, circulatory, eliminative and other activities are still going on in the internal organs. Breathlessness and relaxation of the internal organs free the mind so that it can concentrate upon the soul. The higher you go in the study **and** practice of Self-Realization Fellowship instructions, the more slowly you will breathe. Never forget this truth: Breath is the cord that ties the soul to the flesh!

DON'T HOLD THE BREATH TOO LONG Even though one's lungs may be perfectly healthy, it is extremely unwise to hold the breath in the lungs to the point of discomfort. When the oxygen supply is used up, the pent-up carbon dioxide seeks vainly to escape. Because the oxygen supply has been exhausted, the incoming dark blood cannot be purified, and keeps on accumulating in the capillaries of the lungs, causing them to expand until they are ready to burst. The result is a suffocating pain.

To hold the breath forcibly in weak or diseased lungs obviously would be injurious. Persons with weak lungs should simply concentrate on breathing

properly, by keeping the body straight. They should be cured before attempting to breathe deeply. Deep breathing is not necessary for such persons until their lungs become strong. Everyone should learn to breathe correctly by always keeping the spine straight.

However, you cannot kill yourself by holding the breath too long in the lungs. Nature made the wise provision that when the venous blood strikes back toward the heart from the overfilled lungs, the heart palpitates and fretfully shoots its life current back to the medulla oblongata. The medulla is shocked, producing unconsciousness. Then breathing automatically starts again.

You can, however, injure the lungs and heart by foolishly holding the breath. When dark venous blood has filled the lungs to capacity, it tries to push back through the pulmonary arteries into the heart. This may result in pains in the heart or in leakage of valves, or in injury to the overexpanded lungs. Therefore you should never listen to anyone who tells you to hold your breath in the lungs for a long time, or to practice violent breathing exercises.

IMPORTANT POINTS CONCERNING THE HONG-SAU TECHNIQUE

1. In doing the Hong-Sau exercise, do not force the breath in and out. Breathe naturally, merely watching, i. e., being aware of, the incoming and outgoing breath, mentally chanting "Hong" and "Sau." Whether the breath remains in the lungs or flows out, always wait until it flows naturally again.
2. Remember that the purpose of this practice is to lengthen naturally the intervals when the breath does not **flow**. If as you mentally chant "Hong" the breath goes in naturally and does not flow out immediately, wait and enjoy the state of breathlessness. When the breath comes out again, mentally chant "Sau." If the breath goes out and stays out, enjoy that state of breathlessness until the breath wants to flow in again. Then chant "Hong" as it does so.
3. The breath should be expelled deliberately first, as a cue to begin practice properly with an incoming breath and the mental chanting of "Hong." In ordinary breathing you are seldom aware of whether you are inhaling or exhaling the breath.
4. Do not regulate the breath in order to chant in a definite rhythm. Let the mental chant follow the natural desire of the breath to flow in and out.
5. Concentrate upon the intervals when the breath does not flow, without forcing this quiet breathless state.
6. By watching the breath, you erase metaphysically the identification of the

soul with the breath and the body. By watching the breath, you separate your ego from it and know that your body is sustained only partially by breath.

7. When you tense and relax the body and throw out the breath before Hong-Sau practice, you halt motion and the resulting process of decay in the cells of the muscles, but not in those of the internal organs--the heart, lungs, diaphragm, and so on. As you watch the breath during Hong-Sau practice, breathing becomes rhythmic and calm; the heart is quieted. A restless and worried mind increases heart action; a quiet mind calms the heart action. Any flare of feeling increases heart action. A heaving breath also increases heart action, while quiet breathing calms the heart. By watching the breath calmly, you cause both the breath and the mind to become calm. A calm mind and breath slow down and quiet the motion of the heart, diaphragm, and lungs.

When, by relaxing and casting out the breath, motion is simultaneously stopped in the muscles and inner organs, the life energy that ordinarily is expended in pumping blood through the heart--which means moving a total weight of eighteen tons every twenty-four hours--retires to the spine and is distributed instead to the millions of body cells. This energy electrifies the cells and prevents their decay, making them like self-sustaining batteries. The cells do not then require oxygen or food chemicals to sustain life, because they do not need them to repair the damage of decay. And when decay is arrested in the outer and inner organs the blood does not accumulate impurities; hence it does not need to be pumped back to the heart and into the lungs for purification by the oxygen inhaled in the breath.

When by watching the breath the yogi does away with outer and inner motion (in the muscles and inner organs) and prevents the creation and increase of venous blood in the system, he temporarily accomplishes two things:

1. decreases the necessity of living by breath;
2. decreases the rate of heart action.

When man can live more by the "Word of God" (Cosmic Energy) and less by "bread" or breath, and can control the heart, his body battery will be internally charged with Cosmic Energy, and it will not need to depend so much upon the outer sources of life (food, liquids, and gases).

You have now learned the following points about the value of practicing the Hong-Sau Technique:

- a. It enables the body cells to brim over with life force.
- b. It stops decay in outer and inner organs.
- c. It slows heart action, giving rest to this vital organ.
- d. It calms the heart, which then switches off the energy in the five

sense telephones of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight. The heart is the secondary switchboard of the senses. The medulla oblongata is the main switch.

- e. It frees the body from slavery to breath.
- f. It reduces breathing to a minimum. Hence its repeated use is conducive to longevity when one wants to remain long in the body house.

When the life force and the consciousness are withdrawn from the five sense telephones, the sensations of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch cannot reach the brain through the nerve telephone wires. When sensations stop registering in the brain, the conceptions and associated ideas resulting from them cease. It is then that the mind, or the attention, becomes free to contemplate any particular object, or God,

SPECIAL EXERCISE

If you have good lungs, but suspect that you are not supplying your body with enough oxygen, the following exercise will be found beneficial:

1. With mild force make two short exhalations of breath through the mouth, creating a breathy sound, "huh, huh." (This exhalation clears the lungs of poisonous carbon dioxide.)
2. Draw fresh air in through your nostrils, counting 1 to 20 slowly.
3. Hold breath, counting 1 to 20.
4. Slowly exhale, counting 1 to 20.

(Counting in this and other breathing exercises should be at a rate of approximately two counts per second.)

Repeat the above exercise twelve times, three times a day in the open air, or more if you find it particularly beneficial. The count may be less than twenty, or more, according to individual comfort and capacity.

MEDITATION EXERCISE

Feel that you are everything and beyond everything. Concentrate all your energy at the point between the eyebrows. Breathe slowly. When the breath is calm, expel breath and forget it. Behold within your forehead the luminous light. That light is spreading! It is increasing, swallowing up your body and all space. Space has become a burning ball of **searless** flame. You are that. This ball of flame is very joyous. You are this flame of bliss that has melted everything in it. Meditate on that.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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SRF HONG-SAU TECHNIQUE OF CONCENTRATION

"Through meditation I shall stop the storm of breath, mental restlessness, and sensory disturbances that rage over the lake of my mind."

--Paramahansa Yogananda

TECHNIQUE:

1. Sit in the meditation posture, with spine erect. The hands, with palms upturned, should rest comfortably on the thighs where they join the abdomen. This position helps to check any tendency of the torso to lean forward.
2. With the eyelids either closed or half open, turn the eyes upward so that the gaze converges at the Christ-consciousness center or spiritual eye in the forehead between the eyebrows.
3. Mentally watch, i. e., become aware of, the continuous inhalation and exhalation of the breath with the same detachment that you would feel if observing another's breathing. Do not attempt to regulate the flow of the breath in any way; merely observe it. This practice helps you to transfer the sense of I-ness away from the body; and to become, like the soul, a "silent witness" of bodily activities.
4. As the breath flows in, mentally (not audibly) say "Hong." As it flows out again, mentally say "Sau." ("Hong" and "Sau" are two sacred Sanskrit chant words possessing an astral vibratory connection with the incoming and outgoing breath; a literal translation is "I am He.")
5. During any intervals when the breath may cease of its own accord to flow, concentrate on and enjoy the peace you feel during that breathless state.

KEY POINTS:

1. Prior to the practice of the technique of concentration, practice the SRF Recharging Exercises (Lesson 8-A) to free the body of inharmonies and local tensions.
2. Establish yourself comfortably **in the** meditation posture, and then sit very still. Don't move a muscle. Try consciously to relax each part of the body; make a mental check every now and then throughout your practice to be sure the body is really relaxed.
3. Before starting Hong-Sau, practice the following breathing exercises six to twelve times:

Inhale to a count of 20; hold the breath to a count of 20; exhale to a count of 20.

If 20 is too long a count for you, then inhale, hold, and exhale the breath to a lesser count. Whatever the count, it should be the same for inhalation, for holding the breath, and for exhalation.

4. After practicing the breathing routine described in the preceding paragraph, inhale, tense the entire body, throw the breath out (i.e., expel the breath in a double exhalation, "**huh, huh**") and relax. Repeat this exercise six times. It is a wonderful preparation for the practice of the Hong-Sau Concentration Technique.
5. Offer a prayer from your heart to God and the Gurus.
6. Keep the mind calm. This is important for successful practice.
7. With the eyelids still closed (or half open), keep looking upward throughout the practice of the technique. It is necessary to check yourself on this because the eyes have a tendency to lower their gaze after a time.
8. Throw the breath out before beginning the concentration technique, so that you can start with the incoming breath and the chant word "**Hong.**"
9. If you have difficulty in remembering to chant "**Hong**" with the incoming breath and "**Sau**" with the outgoing breath, the following practice may be found helpful. Move the right index finger toward the palm of the hand when the breath flows in; when the breath flows out again, let the finger resume its original relaxed position. The slight physical movement of the finger has nothing to do with the **technique** itself; it serves merely as a memory jog for keeping the correct sequence in chanting "**Hong**" and "**Sau.**"

10. Calmly watch the breath; have no care whether it flows in or out or not at all. Do not in any way use mental will or force to hold the breath, or to send it out or in.
11. Chant "Hong" and "Sau" mentally only. Don't move the tongue, mouth, or throat while practicing. (It is necessary to make a point of not doing so, as one can easily move these parts without realizing it.)
12. Let the chant follow the natural impulse of the breath to flow in and out. Don't regulate the breath to conform to the chant. (One often tends to do this unconsciously.)
13. Be keenly attentive to what you are doing; concentrate on the breath, the chant, and the feeling of peace that comes with the correct practice of this exercise.
14. Particularly enjoy, during the intervals between each inflowing and out-flowing of breath, the peace of breathlessness. Never force it, or attempt to extend it by any exertion of **will**.
15. Practice a long time for best results.
16. At the end of the practice, expel all breath from the lungs and enjoy the breathless state for as long as **you can** without discomfort. Repeat three times.
17. To get up immediately after practicing this or any other SRF concentration technique is like kicking over a pail that you have just filled with milk. Sit and pray a long time afterward, or go deep in meditation to expand your awakened awareness of God's^opresence.

AFFIRMATION

Breath is the cord that ties my soul to the body. In breathlessness I find my soul free to unite with Thine Omnipresence within and beyond my body. The storm of breath causes ripples of sensations and thoughts. I will stop the storm of breath that the lake of my mind may reflect the perfect image of Thy face.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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REPAIR MY NERVE WIRES, O MYSTIC ELECTRICIAN!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Come Thou, O Mystic Electrician! My little soul cottage by the brook of life is in need of repairs.

The nerve wiring has been shaken and torn by the winds of the years. The multihued lamps of my senses are no longer effulgent.

O Builder of Bodies, O Divine Dynamo of all cosmic currents of life force! resurrect the deadened wires of my wrecked nerves and infuse them with Thy power, that my senses gleam again with Thy glory.

I am the bulb and Thou art the Light within it. The truth and the miracle is this:

Thou art the Bulb and the Light.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, heal the shattered nerves and flood the **disease-**clouded bulb of flesh with the divine effulgence of Thy light.

HOW TO CURE NERVOUSNESS

DEFINITION Restless mind vibrating through the nerves is called nervousness.

Nervousness appears to be a simple ailment, but in reality it is very complicated and uncomfortable. If you are nervous, it is difficult to bring about healing of any disease you may have. If you are nervous, you cannot concentrate and work efficiently to attain success. If you are nervous, you cannot meditate deeply to acquire peace and wisdom. In fact, nervousness interferes with all the normal functions of the human body and mind, upsetting the physical, mental, and spiritual machinery.

The body may be compared to a factory in which many kinds of products are made by various machines that are run by electricity conducted through wires from a main dynamo. In the body-factory, the brain is the main dynamo that sends energy through a complicated system of special conductors, or nerves, to the different organs and members. These in turn act as machines to produce vision, touch, hearing, taste, smell, movement, metabolism, circulation, breathing, and thought. When electric wires in a factory are burned out, they can be replaced by the electrician; but you have been given only one nervous system to carry on the vital functions in the body-factory. If the nerve-wires are burned out, you can do nothing to replace them. You are the manager of your own body-factory, and you must see to it that its departments work together in perfect harmony, and produce the highest class of products--physical, mental, and spiritual.

SPECIAL CAUSES OF NERVOUSNESS Nervousness may be caused by restlessness of the mind, which sends extra energy vibrating along the nerves. Other causes of nervousness are great and continual excitement, whether it be excessive stimulation of the senses, as in pleasure seeking, drinking, wrong eating, overeating, faulty elimination, overactivity, or sexual indulgence; following the modern speed mania; or emotional overstimulation, such as long-continued fear, anger, melancholy, remorse, sorrow, hatred, discontent, or worry. Lack of any of the necessities for normal and happy living (such as proper exercise, fresh air, sunshine, right food, agreeable work, and a purpose in life) aggravates, if it does not actually cause, a condition of nervousness. This condition is highly contagious and may be "**caught**" by association with nervous, faultfinding, or otherwise disagreeable people.

The emotions that do most damage to the nerves are fear, worry, and anger. Constant fear affects the heart and may result in palpitation and other heart troubles. Worry and anger affect the brain as well as the rest of the body, and lessen brain power and general efficiency. Fear and worry are very closely connected. Worry is usually caused by a fear that something we consider undesirable is going to happen, although the thing we fear practically never does happen. Volumes can and have been written on the subject of worry. All that will be said here is that a calm analysis of the cause will usually remove it.

Any violent or continued mental or physical excitement causes a disturbance of the balance in the flow of life force through the sensory-motor mechanism (the sensory, or afferent, nerves and the motor, or efferent, nerves) and the bulbs of the senses. It is as if you put a current caused by 2000 volts through an ordinary 120 V incandescent lamp. It would burn out the lamp. Similarly, too great a stimulation upsets the functioning of the nervous system.

Then, too, there are both physical and mental causes of disturbance in the chemical balance of the body. The resulting discomfort sends a message through the nerves to the brain. Too much living on the physical plane saps the life force and the vitality. Every time you become angry or afraid you generate the secretion of poison in the body. Its caustic effect may ultimately burn out the nerves.

OVERCOMING STAGE FRIGHT Stage fright is another form of fear that causes nervousness in many people, so that they are unable to act in a natural manner before others. If you are shy and have stage fright, quiet your mind and remember that all the power you need is within you, all the power to convince people, all the power to give the direct truth. The particular kind of truth that you want to give is in the Infinite Spirit, which functions through you.

Overcome stage fright as follows:

1. By getting used to talking to groups.
2. By imagining whenever you give a talk that you are addressing an empty hall, or that you are talking to children or very simple people.

If you really desire to help and serve people, to make them happy, to give them some spiritual power that will electrify their souls, you have nothing to fear. You will be able to do it. Why be afraid of people when you can give enthusiasm, inspiration, and wisdom to them? Let God flow through you, and you will have all the power you need.

(The subject of stage fright is taken up in detail in Lesson 63.)

FEAROFDEATH **Fearofdeathisbornofthegreatestignorance**, and paralyzes activity, thought, and ambition. Death should be looked upon as something good--a new opportunity, a rest from the weary struggle on this earth. If you have made a mess of life, God sends relief in the form of death, and gives you a fresh trial. Besides, there is nothing to fear, because so long as you are not dead, you are alive; and when you are dead, it is all over and there is nothing then to worry about. Death is a universal experience, a change that everyone passes through. Live today well and the next step will take care of itself. Console yourself with the thought that death comes to everybody--sinner or saint--and that therefore it must be some sort of a holiday from the troublesome business of life.

CHOOSE RIGHT ASSOCIATES Associate with strong, happy, serene, kind, and spiritual people. This is of great benefit to the mentally or **emotionally** nervous person. Even a few moments in the company of a saint can work wonders in producing calmness and quiet. A real holy man acts as a spiritual raft to carry you over the sea of trials and suffering.

Do not seek knowledge only through intellectuality, allowing the soul to remain in the darkness of spiritual ignorance. It is sad that many persons who know the way to peace and permanent happiness are slow to take advantage of their knowledge and follow it. They take the SRF Lessons and forget. Make use of your opportunity for spiritual development.

Criticize and reform yourself. That is where your greatest problem lies. Affirm divine calmness and peace, and send out only thoughts of love and good will if you want to live in peace and harmony. Live a godly life yourself and everyone who crosses your path will be helped just by being with you.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

To be controlled by moods is to be a part of matter. If you keep your mind on the resolve never to lose your peace, you can attain godliness. Keep a secret chamber of silence within yourself, where you will not let moods, trials, battles, or inharmony enter. Keep out all hatred, revengefulness, and desires. In this chamber of peace, God will visit you.

Though you must remain in the world, be **not** of the world. Real yogis can talk and mingle with people, but all the while their minds are rapt in God.

THE SAINT WHO CALLED A KING A BEGGAR

In a little niche on the breast of a mountain, a God-knowing saint abided in dreams of happiness. From the incense-vase of his heart fervent prayers floated heavenward in spirals of deep sincerity. At the singular touch of those fragrant soul-pourings, the All-Knowing Silence breathed joy. A ceaseless exchange of unspoken invisible missives passed between the Great Omniscience and this beloved devotee, whose every prayer was visibly granted by the All-Satisfying Commander of all destinies.

One day, as the saint sat in the chamber of ecstasy communing with God, he prayed: "Beloved of all souls, grant me some mundane riches that I may fulfill my desire to build on this hillside a big temple in Your honor."

The Great One intimated to His devotee, through the tableau of a vision, that he should see the king of his state. Emerging from the portals of silence, the saint prepared himself for the journey to his vision-directed destination.

After several hours of pleasant wandering through blossoming woodlands he found himself walking the noisy, matter-vibrating streets of a city. When he came to the palace of the king he inquired of the gatekeeper the whereabouts of His Majesty. "The King is offering his prayers in the city mosque; you can visit him there," came the reply from behind the barred gate.

The saint, after questioning many a passerby (and after quite a few detours!) at last found his way to the city's monumental mosque. He entered and knelt on an empty place on the alabaster floor near the king. Just as the saint closed his eyes to pray the thought came to him: "I am at last in the presence of the King, who is very rich and powerful. In all probability he has had his every desire crowned with fulfillment. I am sure he does not have to ask for anything from anyone. I am glad I have come for financial aid to one who does not beg."

Even as the saint was thinking this, his attention was suddenly caught by the whispered prayers coming from the royal lips. The devotee listened raptly, expecting a royal prayer from a royal being. But to his amazement he heard the following words: "Heavenly Father, Possessor of all the glittering planets, arcana, paradise, and earth, please grant me more riches and make me more powerful than all other kings. Give me more territory to annex to my empire."

Stunned and disillusioned, the saint said to himself disgustedly, "What a joke!" He began to laugh uproariously, and with a scornful look at the king, he cried out: "Ha! I am satisfied. I sought out a king, but I find only a beggar here. I must get away from this place." He started to walk away from the mosque.

His outburst had broken up the prayer meeting, however, and the King followed him, wrathfully shouting, "Arrest the blaspheming imposter!" The saint stopped and looked back at the king, then fell to laughing again. Courtiers and citizens protectively surrounded the angry monarch. However, seeing that threats were of no avail against the fearlessly laughing holy man, the king composed himself and with folded hands knelt down before the saint and gently entreated him: "Pray, will you satisfy my great curiosity as to the cause of your laughter and strange antics during the services?"

The saint parried with a question: "Do you make the same request in your prayer every day?" "Why, yes," said the king. The saint laughingly began to explain: "I came to you for some financial help to build a temple." The king interrupted. "Of course! I will grant you that. But why did you laugh at me in the service and then leave?"

"Your Highness," the saint replied, "when I heard you pray for more opulence and territory, I saw that you are nothing more than a beggar--a king of beggars! I do not choose to ask anything of the biggest beggar I have ever met! No, thank you! I am going back to my mountain cave and to my Beloved who is waiting for me in the temple of ecstasy. And when I meet Him again, I am going to chide Him for sending me to a beggar for financial assistance, when He is the richest, the only King of the Cosmos, who has everything, and who does not need to supplicate anyone for anything."

This story offers a golden sermon to those who vainly seek to quench the thirst of their desires on the desert of limitations. This earth may have a few oases momentarily satisfying to our soul thirsts; but the eternal spring of all-satisfying divine nectar lies beneath the rocks of our indifference. They must be continuously hewn with the pickax of devotion until they allow a celestial flood to flow through us, quenching all the unslaked soul-thirst of incarnations, forever and forever.

AFFIRMATION

Today I will open the door of my calmness and let the footsteps of silence enter the temple of all my activities.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE DEVOTEE'S ASPIRATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I shall be a Niagara Falls, my joy thundering
in a ceaseless cascade. The powerful flood will
sweep away the heavy logs of others' difficulties.

I shall be a tornado of laughter, toppling the
timbers and towers of sorrow. Zooming over
endless miles of mentalities, I shall demolish
their troubles.

I shall be lightning flashes in the night, breath-
takingly bringing to view the panorama of Thy
beauty--long hidden by the darkness of unseeing
eyes.

I shall be moonbeams of bliss, banishing
melancholy from the earth.

I shall be rays of light, putting to flight the
gloom that lurks in recesses of human thought.
Through Thy grace the sudden shafts of wisdom
will dispel error accumulations of countless
centuries.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Thou art sacred perennial joy; Thou art the joy I seek; Thou art the lasting joy of the soul. Teach me to worship Thee through the joy born of meditation and doing good, and not through pleasures born of the misguided senses.

CULTIVATE INNER SOUL JOY--THE TRUE HAPPINESS

Although happiness depends to some extent upon external conditions, it depends chiefly upon conditions of the inner mind. In order to be ideally happy one must have good health, an efficient mind, a prosperous life, the right kind of work and, above all, an all-round, all-accomplishing wisdom.

Without inner happiness, one may be a prisoner of sorrows in a sumptuous castle. Happiness is not dependent upon success and wealth alone; real happiness depends upon struggling against the failures, difficulties, and problems of life with an acquired attitude of unshakable inner happiness. To be satisfied with outward happiness, or material pleasures, defeats the search for bliss. True happiness comes by being inwardly happy first and at all times, while struggling one's utmost to uproot the outer causes of unhappiness.

**SUPERIOR
LASTING
HAPPINESS** We can never be lastingly happy until we learn to seek satisfaction in spiritual progress and to guard happiness from all the influences that tend to destroy it. Even if you attain the perfect material conditions of which you dream, happiness would not come as a result; but, through spiritual progress, you can attain inner joy even while living fully and experiencing all the moods and activities of the average life.

No matter what you are doing, keep the undercurrent of happiness, the secret river of joy, flowing beneath the sands of your various thoughts and the rocky soil of your hard trials. Learn to be secretly happy within your heart in spite of all circumstances, and say to yourself:

"Happiness is the greatest divine birthright"-the buried treasure of my soul. Having found it at last, I shall be secretly rich beyond the dreams of kings. "

If the soul becomes completely engrossed in lesser pleasures, it fails to be attentive to the investigation of superior lasting happiness. Many persons reason that renunciation of material pleasures is almost an impossibility in the business world. But the average man is not advised to hide away in the jungle in order to find peace. He should learn rather to be in the world and yet not of it. He must be positive about his spiritual goal, and then take care not to so blind himself with material pleasures that he fails to continue to

enjoy the vision of superior pleasures.

AVOID BAD HABITS Don't make unhappiness a chronic habit. It is anything but pleasant to be unhappy: to be happy is a blessing to yourself and to others. Since it is easy to wear a silver smile or to pour out happiness through your voice, why scatter unhappiness around you by being grouchy? It is never too late to learn. You are as old as your chronic thoughts, and you are as young as you feel now, in spite of your age.

Ignorant people, like animals, disregard the lessons that accompany pain and pleasure, and thus live lives checkered with sadness and sorrow. They do not avoid the actions that lead to suffering, and do not follow the paths that lead to happiness. Then there are people who all their lives are consciously oversensitive to the glad or sad experiences of life. Lacking balance, such people are usually crushed by sorrow and overwhelmed by joy. Even after burning their fingers in the fire of ignorance-born experiences, very few people learn to avoid misery-making acts.

Everyone wishes to be happy, yet very few persons make the necessary effort to adopt a course of action that leads to happiness. Most people, while idly wishing for the strength and ability to climb the peak of happiness, instead keep rolling down the hill of life. Lacking imagination, they do not foresee the result of their folly. ~~It remains for some terrible nightmare of experience to -~~ awaken them to their error. But those whose enthusiasm for happiness survives the crash to the depths of sadness and disillusionment do wake up and begin to seek in earnest for the lasting joy that comes from inner soul-knowledge.

A man sliding down the path of evil tendencies finds no resistance; but as soon as he tries to oppose his wrong habits by following spiritual laws of self-discipline, he finds countless instinctive temptations roused to fight and frequently to foil, his noble efforts.

Cure yourself of evil (i.e., happiness-killing) habits by cauterizing them with the opposite good habits. If you have the bad habit of telling lies, and by so doing have lost many friends, start the opposite good habit of telling the truth. Of course it takes time to form either a good habit or a bad one, because at first it is difficult for a bad person to be good--or for a good person to be bad--but remember, once you become habitually good, it will be natural and easy for you to be good. Likewise, if you cultivate an evil habit, you will often seem to be compelled to be evil in spite of your desire to the contrary. You will have to pray to the Heavenly Father for aid, telling Him: "Father, my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak. "

TWO-EDGED SWORD OF CRITICISM Your individual happiness depends to a large extent upon protecting yourself and your family from the evil results of gossiping. See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil, feel no evil. Most people can talk about others for hours, and are as stimulated by poisonous gossip as by intoxicating wine. Is it not strange that

such persons can easily, joyously, and with caustic criticism talk about the faults of others for hours, yet cannot endure at all any reference to their own faults?

The next time you are tempted to talk about the moral and mental wickedness of another person, immediately begin to talk loudly about your own mental and moral wickedness and keep it up for just five minutes. If it hurts you to talk about your own faults, you certainly should feel more hurt when saying unkind, harmful things about others. Train yourself, and by word and example train each member of your family, to refrain from talking about others. "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1).

You do not help a man by giving publicity to his weaknesses. Instead you make him either wrathful or discouraged, perhaps for the remainder of his life, so that he gives up trying to be good. When you take away a person's sense of dignity by openly maligning him, you make him desperate.

When a man is down, he is only too well aware of his own wickedness. By destructive criticism you push him still deeper into the mire of despondency. Instead of gossiping about him, you should pull him out with loving, encouraging words. Only when it is asked should spiritual and moral advice be given to others. To your own children and loved ones, however, you may offer friendly, humble suggestions at any time, and thus strive to help them to overcome any sense of secrecy or sensitivity to criticism.

YOUR MENTAL ATTITUDE Make your home a valley of smiles instead of a vale of tears. Smile now! Never mind how hard it has been for you to do so. Smile now! If you will remember all the time to smile now, you will smile always. However, a mechanical smile will not do. Your smile should be a reflection of your inner soul state of ever new joy.

Some people smile most of the time, while beneath the mask of laughter they hide sorrow-corroded hearts. Such people slowly pine away behind a screen of meaningless smiles. But there are other people who smile genuinely once in a while, yet are very serious at other times; behind their austere appearance are secret fountains of laughing peace.

Happiness is a state of mind. Suppose you have enjoyed good health for fifty years then become helplessly sick for three years. You would likely forget about the long period of time when you laughed at the idea of sickness, being unable to imagine yourself in poor health. Instead, after having been sick for three years your mind would be unable to imagine your being in good health once more; it would tend instead to harbor the thought that you will never be well again,

Likewise, if after having been happy for a long time you become unhappy, even for a comparatively short time, you are apt to lose hope of ever being

happy again. This mood also is the result of lack of imagination. The memory of long-continued happiness should be a forceful subconscious habit to help you ward off the consciousness of your present trouble.

When wealth only is lost, nothing is really lost, for if one has health and skill one can still be happy, and one can make more money. But if health is lost, then to a great extent happiness also is lost; and when the goal of life (which is happiness) is lost, everything worthwhile is gone.

Pure love, sacred joy, poetic imagination, kindness, wisdom, peace, the bliss of meditation, and happiness in serving, are felt inwardly first in the mind or the heart, and their beneficial effects are then transmitted by the nervous system throughout the body and thence outward. Do not camouflage the joy of your soul with the veil of sermons and solemn words. Understand and experience the superior joys of the interior life; then everyone around you will feel and benefit from the pure joy that emanates silently from within your soul.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The joyous rays of the soul can be perceived if you interiorize your attention. ~~This can be done by using your mind to enjoy the beautiful scenery of~~ thoughts in the invisible, intangible kingdom within you. Do not search for happiness only in beautiful clothes, clean houses, delicious dinners, and soft cushions and chairs. These can imprison your happiness behind bars of externality. Rather, in the airplane of your interior visualization, glide over the vast tracts that comprise the limitless empire of thoughts. There behold the mountain ranges of unbroken, lofty, spiritual aspirations. If you have made up your mind to find joy within yourself, sooner or later you will find it.

The nemesis of darkness must be driven away by the burning light of smiles. You must find joy in melting away by the warmth of your smiles the frost of others' gloom. Wherever you go, you should build a big bonfire of smiles in the souls of men.

Learn to throw the light of joy into all hearts, so that they may burn away the darkness and find the light within themselves. You should spread the fire of smiles; and those smiles should be saturated with the smile of God, which comes through right meditation. Your smile should be the laughter of the gods --the echo of the Infinite.

EVER NEW JOY

Sri Yukteswar once said to me: "The spiritual aspirant who tries to fly the clutches of material attachments, in his delusion often wants matter in the form of miracles. Therefore, in trying to get away from matter, do not deceive yourself and invite it in another, subtle, form. If all miraculous powers

and every imaginable material possession were given to you, you would nevertheless remain dissatisfied; for you would grow tired of all that you had received. There is only one thing that you will never become tired of, if you once have it--you will never become tired of joy. Ever changing, everlasting, ever new joy is God--you will become tired of everything except ever new joy."

Instead of looking for God in starry chambers of mystery, or in the beauty of the earth--instead of keeping Him apart by thinking of Him as being in a certain distant spot--through Master's direction I silently cried continuously within myself: "Come! Come!" And in the temple of joy I always heard Him reply in the echo of my love: "I am here! I am here!"

Instead of assuming that I had to go on waiting during many lives in order to meet God, I plunged headlong and swam within myself, and lo! I found Him hiding within me. I found that forgetfulness and dark indifference were the veils that hid Him from me. I tore asunder those veils and discovered that my memory and my love for Him were doors to His presence. As often as I thought of Him, the door was flung open and I felt His presence. The memory of God is the altar of God's presence. Whenever you think of God, you manifest His omnipresence within you!

AFFIRMATION

Beginning with the early dawn, I will radiate my cheer to everyone I meet today. I will be the mental sunshine for all who cross my path this day.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The following summaries consist of quick, general reviews of each Lesson in Step One. These summaries are intended to refresh in your memory, and to fix firmly in your mind, the most vital points presented in the preceding Lessons. These reviews will also enhance your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice of the techniques, and of the importance of one to the other. Review is an important factor in any study, and particularly in the study of Self-Realization Fellowship teachings. If you have been steadfastly practicing SRF techniques, you will find that each time you review a Lesson you will discover something worthwhile that may have escaped you in **previous study**; or perhaps a point that had not particularly impressed you before will "come home" to you, giving unexpected satisfaction. It is through repetition of and meditation upon the truth that we learn the most.

The summaries include some explanatory notes not contained in the Lesson proper. It has been our sincere purpose to present the authentic **"why"** of all the principles expounded by the masters of India. In order to cover thoroughly these fundamental principles, the summaries that constitute Lesson 26 will be continued in a series of installments.

The review questions at the end of each installment of the summaries are intended to help you in your study of the Lessons, and can be an invaluable aid to you in evaluating your understanding of the teachings. The answers to these review questions are to be kept by you. At the end of Step **II**, you will have an opportunity to submit a written report on your practice of the techniques you are learning in the Lessons. In the meantime, if ever you feel the need for guidance in your practice of the **Energization** Exercises or Hong-Sau Technique, you are most welcome to write to the Mother Center. Our spiritual counselors here are always happy to be of assistance.

* * *

FIRST STEP In the first step you have learned the importance of connecting the little wave of life (the human body) with the Ocean of Life (the vastness of nature and God). Nature is the physical aspect, the body of God; while the life and consciousness hidden in men, animals, and flowers, and all forms of matter are the soul or consciousness of God. Man has a soul, life energy, and a physical body; God as Cosmic Intelligence has cosmic life, and His body is the cosmos.

If a person constantly looks at a wave, he becomes less and less aware of the sea. Likewise, when we concentrate upon and become attached to the little wave of our life, we lose sight of the Ocean of Spirit from which our life wave emanated. As variously situated electric lamps may be lighted by power flowing from a single dynamo, so all the variously moving and existing human beings are actuated by the one cosmic dynamo of God's intelligent Light.

LESSON NO. 1 Every Self-Realizationist should say daily the prayer given at the beginning of this Lesson:

"Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, **Babaji**, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, Guru-Preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Self-Realization Fellowship teaches the **highest** principle of spiritual living: meditation combined with activity. **SRF students** are taught how to dedicate inwardly to God all the day's activities; and, when work is done, to commune with Him in the temple of silence.

God must be earnestly sought. And when you are very desirous of finding Him, the Lord sends a guru. When you are in tune with a true guru you are in tune with God. The relationship is eternal. Even after death, a guru continues to help his disciples (**i.e.**, those who follow his teachings). This is a spiritual law.

Hence every SRF student should have deep regard for the link of **SRF** Gurus--Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Mahavatar **Babaji**, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda--with whom all SRF students are connected by affiliation with Self-Realization Fellowship, founded by **Paramahansa** Yogananda.

SRF teaches the student to practice control of the body until he is its master. The human body has to be made ready to receive the divine power. The state of consciousness has to be right; then God will automatically come to you! But God may not respond right away. Only when He is convinced that you seek Him, not for the satisfaction of temporal desires or for spiritual glamour and glory, but simply to be His, unconditionally and forever, will He open the door.

Jesus and the Masters are great reflections of God, perfect examples for you to follow. Thus you may know you too are a potential child of God. **Whatever** your errors, they belong to the past; they are not you. God is yours! The greatest sin is ignorance of our oneness with Him.

Self-Realization Fellowship offers you the universal technique of salvation, the royal highway on which all theological by-paths conjoin. If you will study these Lessons and then practice them daily you will soon realize a new goal of happiness, awakening, and Self-realization that will forever shed light upon you so that you may live according to the highest standards of existence.

Self-Realization Fellowship teachings are a great dispensation sent forth into the world by Jesus Christ and Mahavatar **Babaji** to show the unity of original Christianity and original Yoga, and to bring real God-communion to people in all lands. Self-Realization is the new dispensation that was promised in the Scriptures.

LESSON NO. 2 Every day you should commune with God as the ever new joy of meditation. Every day you should spread the message of Self-Realization Fellowship by the example of your life, and thus be a fisher of souls, in order to please God. Develop will power. Will and act until you achieve victory in everything worthwhile. Through will power you can energize the body. Learn to develop physiological, unthinking, blind will power into **the dynamic-divine** will that Jesus **referred** to **when he said:** "Thy will be done."

Will power should never be used wrongly; but the will should be used, guided by wisdom. Will power was given to man for his use. **It** is a metaphysical error not to try to use our will, for we cannot help using our will in every movement and every act. Only when we are physically dead or mentally dead do we not use will power. When our own will is guided by true wisdom **it** becomes one with the wisdom-inspired will of God. Our will and His will become one and the same thing. We should not isolate our will from God, but realize that behind the little motor of our own will throbs the Infinite Dynamo of God's endlessly powerful inexhaustible will.

A wish might be called "volition in embryo" -- helpless, unformed, lacking in power. **It** may remain as **it** is without further manifestation and eventually dissolve for lack of energy. Or **it** may grow into desire and then determination. Even determination may become discouraged. But when determination becomes volition, **it** becomes all-powerful. A volition consists of a series of continuous, never-discouraged, unceasing determinations accompanied by activities revolving around a desire until **it** becomes dynamic enough to produce the much-craved-for result. You can utterly destroy the roots of failure in your life by exercising your will until realization comes that this dynamic will is already in your possession as the image of God within you.

LESSON NO. 3 Many persons who are externally seeking truth fail to reach their goal because they do not make the effort to apply the different truths in actual life in order to experience them within. They fail to use their discriminative powers to separate the kernel of truth from untested beliefs, and so they never feel the joyousness of actual realization of truth through the intuitive faculty of the Self.

Led by curiosity and imitation, they enjoy listening to new ideas from new personalities. They enjoy the thrill of change. They become enamored of the "path" and forget the objective, although impelled by a theoretical desire to live according to high principles.

One should avoid theoretical indigestion caused by swallowing new ideas without assimilating them. Forsake the blind alleys of theological beliefs. Give selective, practical attention to your chosen path and keep on practicing and finding results in the Self. The best techniques of meditation are contained in the Lessons of Self-Realization Fellowship. This is the direct, the airplane way, to God. Keep going! One will know he has found the best way by a growing feeling of satisfaction; by an ever-increasing peace, wisdom, and assurance from within; and by a continuously progressing intuitive perception, and an inner happiness of silence.

LESSON NO. 4 Consider no one a stranger. First establish perfect friendship with one or two souls, then offer that divine friendship to all. Do not poison friendship by demand and compulsion and wrong familiarity; or by discourtesy, or harsh speech, or mental cruelty. Practice friendship in your parental, filial, conjugal, or any other relationship, as the Case may be. Be a true friend.

Friendship consists in becoming increasingly useful in every way (materially and spiritually) to your friends. Therefore, keep unceasingly developing if you want to be a good friend, or to inspire friends, or to receive others as your friends.

Love your enemies, for they too are your brothers. We are all children of one Father. See the image of God in all. Some people from the first meeting prove to be real friends always, while others that we meet daily we never really know.

Behold all races, your brother creatures, assembled beneath the canopy of God's friendship. Let those who are our own come unto us, until we know everyone is our own.

LESSON NO. 5 Energize your body by recharging it from the inner Source. Although you must eat properly in the mortal state, you should learn to rise above food-consciousness. When you make up your mind not to be a slave to hunger, you find that your will power can sustain your body by connecting it with the electro-protonic energy that surrounds your body.

The wet battery depends upon electricity and distilled water; so the body battery depends upon life force coming down from the **medulla-** battery of the brain, as well as from food and oxygen and sunshine. But as a dry battery depends only upon electricity, and not upon distilled water, so also the body battery, by training, can wholly or partly depend upon the life force flowing from cosmic energy.

The life in the body depends directly upon the cosmic energy, which comes through the antenna of the medulla oblongata, and is stored in the cerebrum and spinal plexuses. Bodily life depends upon food, oxygen, sunshine, and so forth only indirectly; but the soul, having identified itself with the body, thinks that food is the only source of life. When one learns to live more and more by will power and energy, he realizes, as Jesus did, that man's body battery does not depend upon bread alone (solids, gases, and sunshine), but upon every word (vibrating energy) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (medulla oblongata), through which the **operator-** will draws vibrating energy (Word) into the body.

The actual proof that the body can be gradually sustained by cosmic energy is proven by the following: whenever you are tired, you can replace some energy by drinking milk or eating food; but the next time you are tired, instead of eating food, practice the Recharging Exercises gently for ten minutes. When you have perfected your practice of the exercises you will find that your tired feeling will leave you without your eating food. This is an unfailing method ~~of removing fatigue by cosmic energy, in place of food-~~.

1. Physically charge your body by rousing cosmic energy through will power, as in the Recharging Exercises.
2. By feeling that ever new Bliss-God in meditation, stamp immortality on your changing life and make **it** changeless. Then, as waves change, but the ocean does not, so birth, childhood, youth, age, and death will dance in your consciousness like dream-waves without changing the one unforgettable ever conscious ocean of Cosmic Consciousness.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions on page 6 are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have **gone** over the **corresponding** Lessons, write out the answers to the **following** questions **from memory**. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in **the** summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings. This is the first of four sets of review questions covering the Lessons in Step 1. The questions in this first set cover **Lessons** 1 through 5.

REVIEW QUESTIONS -- STEP ONE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 1

1. What is the highest principle of spiritual living?
2. (a) Who are the Gurus of SRF?
(b) Why should one have deep regard for them?
3. When does God respond to the devotee?
4. What is the greatest sin?
5. What is the mission of Self-Realization Fellowship?

Lesson 2

1. What is the dynamo of all our powers?
2. Distinguish between "wish," "desire," "intention," and "volition."
3. What is meant by "blind will"? "thinking will"?
4. How can you be sure you are using your will rightly?
5. Should you use your will, or passively let God use it?
6. How is will the savior of man?

Lesson 3

1. What is the difference between curiosity seekers and real seekers?
2. What causes theological and theoretical indigestion?
3. What is the airplane way to God?
4. Why is a guru important on the spiritual path?
5. How can one know he has found the best way?

Lesson 4

1. How will you attract friends to you?
2. (a) How should one serve one's friends?
(b) Who is your best friend?
3. (a) How can you learn to love your enemies?
(b) Why is it important to do so?
4. Why is good company important?
5. What is your worst company?
6. How can you recognize friends of past incarnations?

Lesson 5

1. What is a good breathing exercise to practice while walking?
2. (a) Upon what sources does the body depend for sustenance?
(b) Which is the most important?
3. Compare an ordinary battery with the body battery.
4. What did Jesus refer to when he spoke of the "mouth of God"?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 6 Become a son of God by enlarging the caliber of your consciousness through concentration and meditation. We can receive the ocean of God-consciousness by enlarging the boundaries of our consciousness through meditation. The body is fed from external sources by food, oxygen, and so forth; and internally it is fed by cosmic consciousness and life force.

Most exercises teach the student to concentrate upon muscles, body movements, and instruments of exercise (such as dumbbells and barbells). SRF gives recharging exercises to energize the body by conscious will. Exercise signifies, first, the activation of energy, with the resultant movement of muscles or limbs. By practice of Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, the student learns to concentrate principally upon the motivating element: Energy.

Relaxation (**laxo**, "to release"; **re**, "again"): to release by an act of will the energy employed in a muscle or body part that has been tensed high or low.

Tension: sending energy into a muscle with the deliberate intention of causing that muscle to tense or contract. Just as you can switch light on or off in a light bulb, so by operating the switch of will power you can switch energy on or off in the lamps of the muscles.

IMPORTANT Read again very carefully the experiment on energy and will. Most people think that a human being is composed of only a physical body and mind; but essentially each human being is composed of:

- 1) consciousness
- 2) life energy
- 3) flesh

There are three principles involved in the act of the tension of a muscle:

- 1) **The will**, which sends energy to a particular body part.

- 2) The energy, which can tense the bundle of fibers in a muscle into stony hardness.
- 3) The muscle, which is tensed by energy and will.

We only know the lightness or heaviness of a weight from the feeling of how much energy we are expending. Remember, the relation between will and energy is:

"The greater the will, the greater the amount of energy and tension in any body part. "

LESSON NO. 7 All true spiritual scriptures have a threefold meaning, to suit the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of man.

IMPORTANT Specially study the five stages of mental relaxation described in Lesson 7. Also the special kinds of relaxation.

Relaxation means the releasing of energy and consciousness from the muscles in any of the following ways:

1. Imperfect muscular relaxation.
2. Partial muscular relaxation.
3. Unconscious sensory-motor relaxation--withdrawal of consciousness and energy from the senses, as in sleep.
4. Conscious sensory-motor relaxation--conscious withdrawal of energy and consciousness from the muscles and the senses by concentration, at will.
5. Unconscious perfect sensory-motor-organic relaxation--death--or the unconscious forced withdrawal of the energy and consciousness from the muscles, heart, spine, and brain.
6. Conscious sensory-motor-organic relaxation--higher meditation--in which one may consciously and at will withdraw the life energy from the muscles, senses, heart, spine, brain, and medulla oblongata, or from the entire body, thereby releasing it into the Infinite Dynamo of consciousness and energy, just as one might switch off electricity from a light bulb, permitting the electricity to return to the dynamo that produced it.

After death, we cannot switch on again the life in the body lamp. But by learning the method of conscious sensory-motor-organic relaxation, we may switch off life from the body while we are yet living, and "switch it on" again

at will. In other words, we can "die" and "live" again at will, even as Jesus did.

LESSON NO. 8 This Lesson on energization contains the key principles upon which the SRF Recharging Exercises are based. Review by reading this Lesson once every week until you thoroughly know and understand these principles and can successfully do the exercises. Every day upon waking, while still in bed, practice very slowly, with eyes closed, the exercises given in Lesson 8 under the subtitles of "Relaxing Exercise" and "The Technique of Energization." Practice these exercises also any time that you are tired. The more you practice these exercises slowly and with concentration, the more you will realize, by tension and relaxation of energy from the body, that you are not just so many pounds of flesh, but rather the energy and consciousness tied in the nerves, muscles, organs, and bones by the cords of attachment. By realizing yourself as the energy in the body and not as the flesh, you prepare the way for releasing your little caged life into the Infinite Life. These exercises also awaken deeper consciousness and greater energy in all body cells. A student of Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons should not think of himself as a fleshly body, but as the light in the body bulb, ready to be switched off or consciously released into the Infinite Light, or switched on again in the limiting body bulb.

~~Some~~ people know less than others, owing to wrong thinking ~~somewhere~~, sometime in the near or distant past. Their present limitations are self-created and not due to God's partiality. Break the bonds of self-created limitations and let the flood of will power drive away all weaknesses that enshroud the soul.

LESSON NO. 8-A Read over the instructions to the exercises, checking to see that you are practicing them correctly. Practice the Recharging Exercises faithfully every morning and night as a regular part of your spiritual routine.

LESSON NO. 9 The student should maintain a balance between the Eastern mode of meditation and the characteristically Western habit of intense activity. Affirm often:

"I will be calmly active, actively calm. I am a prince of peace, sitting on the throne of poise, directing the kingdom of my activity."

To be too calm is to be lazy; to be too active is to become an automaton. Meditate or fall asleep when you feel overwhelmed with trials. Note the different forms of mental relaxation. Mental relaxation signifies mental rest.

Free your mind from haunting worries by imitating the state of **drowsi-**ness. Keep your breath calm, your character steady. With self-control at your command, commune with God in meditation; and, whenever you seek company, be in **the** best spiritual company you can find.

Metaphysical relaxation consists in freeing one's mind from the body, money, possessions, name, fame, family, country, the world, and the habits of the human race. Every night in sleep we are separated from all bodily habits; but these limitations come back to us when we return from the subconscious state of sleep and again enter into wakeful consciousness. By complete, ecstatic communion with God, all bodily attachments are destroyed. Then man, whether asleep or awake, consciously realizes his oneness with the Father.

TENSION AND PHYSICAL RELAXATION The greatest technique of physical relaxation is to tense the whole body and then relax, exhaling the breath, casting away all restless thoughts. Remain as long as you can in this positive calm state, without the interruption of restless thoughts, and remain without breathing as long as there is no strain. This is very, very important to remember: never hold the breath to the point of discomfort or strain.

In the morning, while you are still in bed, practice the tension and relaxation of each of the twenty body **parts**; then after you are out of bed, practice again.

Read over the instructions and then thoroughly master the art of practicing low, medium, and high tension. Remember that low tension signifies a low charge of energy sent into a body part; medium and high tension signify the **influx** of more energy into the body part.

IMPORTANT Remember that when a muscle or a body part is fully tensed, you have charged that part with maximum energy. This signifies that you should not tense any more, for the same reason that you should not send 2000 volts of current into a 50-watt lamp. Just as a ship at sea can be operated by radio without the help of any of the crew, so the ships of human minds and bodies are operated by God's cosmic energy shooting through the cosmos and vibrating in the antenna of the medulla oblongata, or the "mouth of God." The will receives the light of God through the medulla, and stores it up in the brain and six spinal plexuses. The intelligent energy in the brain and the plexuses carries on the functioning of all the many trillions of body cells, and the intricate workings of the bodily organs.

LESSONNO. 10 Behind the **screen of sleep** and **lieth the mystery of the vast, formless, omnipotent, omnipresent soul**, a reflection of Spirit. Every night God disassociates your consciousness, possessions, race, good or bad qualities, and your body from your formless, happy, ever-existent soul.

In sleep you do not remember whether you are Hindu or American, man or woman, sick or well, rich or poor; and yet when you wake up you know that you existed consciously and happily without the consciousness of the body. **If** you were unconscious during sleep, then upon waking you could not possibly

say: "Oh I slept well," or, "Oh, I had a very light, restless sleep," because you would not remember. In sleep you partially realize your real nature: that you are formless, that you are limitless as space, that you are happiness. This recollection during sleep helps you to realize the forgotten image of God within you.

In a dream you can be a king, or a master, or an archangel; all the limitations of space and time and of human desires that infest earthly existence are removed. Some dreams have significance, being filmed by the **superconscious**, all-seeing mind, and then played upon the screen of your dream **movie-house**. Other dreams that are shown to you by your subconscious mind may be meaningless pictures, merely a result of worried or restless activity.

God shows you by dreams that you can materialize your thoughts into sensations, feeling, and all earthly experiences, by the power of your subconscious mind. When you can materialize thoughts into dreams, you will realize how God materialized His thoughts into the dream of earth and cosmos. Earth and cosmos are nothing but materialized dream-thoughts of God. By knowing this cosmos as God's dream, you can be free from birth and death, sorrow and pleasure, poverty and prosperity--for you will realize that all these **dualities** are untrue, like dream experiences. Upon waking from a dream, you realize the falsity of both good and bad dream experiences. Similarly, **upon waking** in cosmic consciousness, you will realize that you were only dreaming your existence as a human being.

LESSON NO. 11 Fostering the desire for luxuries is the surest way to lose money and cause unhappiness. Differentiate between your real needs and unnecessary "**necessities**." Happiness can be had by exercising self-control in everything.

Desirelessness is not negative. It signifies that you should be able to forsake the troublemaking, short-lasting desires of bodily and earthly existence for the superior, everlasting happiness of the soul. It is the vision of wisdom that directs you to seek soul happiness instead of sense happiness.

What is God and how can we know Him? God is the ever-existing, **ever-conscious**, ever-increasing, ever-new joy of meditation. Because God is ever-increasing, ever-new joy, we should all the more seek Him rather than temptation and sense happiness. God can be known and felt tangibly as the ever-increasing joy of deep and deeper meditation. Those who meditate only a little while do not know the indescribable happiness that springs forth like a cataract from the cleft of really deep meditation. To know God you must meditate intensely, as well as long; and regularly; and whenever you have spare time. The incoming happiness you will feel will let you know beyond doubt that it will consciously guide you in all things through your intuition. Of course it is better to meditate a little, even irregularly, than not to meditate at all--for by so doing you may gradually be encouraged to meditate more

often and to make deeper dives into Spirit.

SPECIAL NOTE You will learn the scientific way of communing with God in the second step of the SRF Lessons.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP ONE

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Lesson 6

1. The body is said to be a "bundle of motions." Describe the different sorts of motion of which it is composed.
2. Define Self-realization.
3. How can you hold Infinite Spirit in the cup of your consciousness?
4. What is the difference between mechanical exercises and the SRF art of energization?
5. Describe the importance of will in energizing the body.
6. How would you show the difference between will power and energy?

Lesson 7

1. What is the threefold significance of true scriptures?
2. What is the test of mental relaxation? of physical relaxation?
3. What are the five stages of mental relaxation?
4. What are the stages of physical relaxation?

Lesson 8

1. (a) By what experiment can you show that energization requires both will and energy?
(b) Recall the two experiments that show the difference between mechanically produced muscle movements, and will-produced muscle movements.
2. What are the three degrees of tension used in most of the SRF Recharging Exercises, particularly in the twenty-part Technique of Energization exercise described in this Lesson? (Also given as No. 20 in the exercises described in Lesson Supplement 8-A)
3. Describe in detail, naming the twenty body parts, how you practice the Technique of Energization exercises given in this Lesson:
(a) tensing the whole body at once.
(b) tensing and relaxing the twenty body parts in sequence given.
4. What important points do you keep in mind while practicing these?

Lesson 9

1. What is mental relaxation? metaphysical relaxation?
2. What is physical relaxation?
3. What routine should you follow immediately upon awakening in the morning?
4. What is the best method of attaining physical relaxation?
5. Describe the meditation exercise of "spreading ripples of peace."

Lesson 10

1. What do dreams teach us about the nature of worldly suffering?
2. What do your dreams tell you about yourself?
3. How real is matter?
4. How can the soul be resurrected from the bonds of materiality?
5. How can dreams be consciously induced?

Lesson 11

1. Why is self-control the way to true happiness?
 2. What is God?
 3. What is the surest sign that He exists?
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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 12 Look at life unmasked. Observe the perpetual current of emotions and thoughts that arise within you. Examine the heart of your aspirations, ideals, hopes, and despairs. Analyze the root of your cravings. Life manifests itself through these channels, and so it is that these fundamentals demand understanding, through intelligence, wisdom, and love.

From the emotions, the feeling in your heart, arise both thought and action. Quicker than thought is the action that springs from feeling. But the mind must view this as a spectator, and retain control.

'Sorrow has no objective existence, no being of its own. It does not arise out of the conditions of life; it is not inherent in conditions. It is born of spiritual ignorance and the infirmities of the mind. Essentially, conditions are neither good nor bad; they are always neutral, seeming to be depressing or encouraging, according to the understanding attitude of mind of the individual.

Duty is not imposed upon man by some superior power. It is the inherent urge of life toward progression; therefore, duty calls for attention and intelligent action. Every problem that waits for a solution at your hand is a solemn duty imposed upon you by life itself. Any escape from problems, physical or mental, is not an escape from life, but only delays your progress and is a source of further discomfort and evil.

Anger defeats its own purpose. It usually arises out of a feeling of ineffectualness, inability to impose one's own will, or selfishness of one form or another. It is a poison both physical and mental. Its method is that of fools, for it is a destroyer of peace and harmony, and arouses wrath, resistance, and resentment in others. When you recognize anger coming over you, know it instantly for what it is--that is half the battle won. Control your speech, saying nothing. Be alone for a few minutes if possible. Think of the offender as your brother who has acted in ignorance and whom in your heart you really love. Protect your peace by calmness. Destroy anger by metaphysical reason, for ignorance is the mother of anger. It is also helpful to take a cold

shower, or apply ice or cold water to the medulla oblongata, temples, between the eyebrows, and on top of the head.

Knowledge and training can be imparted from one person to another through the subconsciousness during the sleep state. It can be imparted to an unborn baby through the subconsciousness of the mother. In the wakeful conscious state, people learn and absorb the vibrations through the specific company they keep and through conscious will. Spiritually developed parents could bring about heaven on earth by bringing into the world only spiritual children. That is a personal responsibility.

LESSON NO. 13 Rules for acquiring prosperity:

1. Cut down luxuries.
2. Think of yourself and, by meditation, know yourself as a child of God.
3. Think of all nationalities as your brothers.
4. Most important of all, seek prosperity for others and they will seek prosperity for you.

Develop the power of concentration by regular practice of the techniques with great personal zeal. By concentration you learn to create at will what you need. Develop one hundred per cent efficiency by practicing the art of concentration. Your prosperity will be measured according to the degree and power of your concentration.

Read carefully and practice the meditation entitled "God's will and your will." Pray after meditation, when the mind is under control, and pray unceasingly until God responds to you through vision or through your deep intuition.

In only a very limited way can the conscious or subconscious mind create a new cause of success in anything. But the superconscious mind has unlimited power to create success, as it is not governed by any limitation, but by the boundless power of God.

LESSON NO. 14 Humbleness is the valley of beauty where the waters of divine wisdom gather to inundate the dry tracts of the human soul. Avoid an inferiority complex, for it means that you underestimate your powers; and avoid the attitude of superiority, for that means you overestimate your powers. Be natural; become great in humbleness and become great by effort and will power.

Egotists refuse to investigate **truth; humble** men are always ready to learn. Egotism shuts out higher knowledge and rebuffs the desire of the wise to help you for your own good; whereas by humbleness you will attract all kinds of wisdom to yourself. Besides, egotism only makes one appear big in one's own eyes; and very much less in the eyes of others. Humbleness makes

one look big in the eyes of others. To have personality requires a conviction of truth and the courage to utter it, but it does not mean the possession of repulsive egotism. Egotism slaps wisdom in the face; humbleness entreats the lotus feet of truth to enter the innermost sanctuary of the soul.

God, the knower of all things and possessor of all things, is not egotistical. Hence, all those who want to be powerful like Him must be free of egotism.

Jesus said: "**He** that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48). You have also heard the proverb: "An empty vessel makes a loud sound." The Hindu scriptures say: "In shallow men the fish of little thoughts cause much commotion. In oceanic minds the whales of inspiration make hardly a ruffle." **One** philosopher rightly said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." It often makes one inclined to egotistical display. The wise are so engrossed in their wisdom that they have no time for interminable "revelations."

Sow hate and you will reap hate. Sow love in all hearts and you will reap love everywhere. Every work is selfish. Even when we serve others, we do so to relieve ourselves of the pain that we feel when we see others suffer. Resurrect your soul **from** the dream of frailties. To acknowledge defeat is **greater defeat**.

Meditation is the only portal through which you can escape from all your troubles to infinite freedom. Meditation is the way to forget God's delusive dream of matter, and to remember and realize the forgotten image of God within you.

LESSON NO. 15 Do not use your body, mind, or soul for perishable pleasures, but use them for attaining the unending joys of Spirit. Repeat to yourself the prayer at the beginning of Lesson 15. Always affirm any prayer understandingly, with ever-increasing devotion at each repetition. Your soul should approach nearer to God with each thoughtful repetition of a prayer or affirmation.

Remember, you often do not do what you wish to do, but what your habits compel you to do. Good habits are automatic psychological machines, which do not require the effort of will in performing specific actions; they help to make easy the performance of these actions. Bad habits that compel you to do evil should be destroyed.

Though habits are compelling, yet you must remember that it is you who create them. If you can create bad habits, you can dislodge them by creating good habits. A habit grows from the repetition of an inner thought or in response to some outward company. Therefore, if you want to break an evil habit, change your bad company to good company, and substitute good thoughts

for evil thoughts. You can never break a bad habit if you keep feeding it by bad company, wrong thoughts, and evil actions. Remember the temptation of bodily pleasures--never fed, they are ever satisfied, and ever fed, they are never satisfied.

THE POWER OF HABIT A specific type of company, or a specific thought repeatedly presented to the mind, influences the will, feeling, brain, and muscular mechanism of the body. Recordlike grooves are formed in the subconscious mind, which by memory and the medium of attention repeats the playing of the record of a mental habit. To yield to your bad habits is to make your enemies stronger. To yield to good habits is to strengthen your friendly forces, which help you to do good without effort.

Cultivate the **spiritual** habit of meditating with zeal, and you will reach God easily. Remember, you are the sole creator of your good or bad habits. Till the soil of your mind with discipline.

Above all, remember:

1. Form the habit of deep meditation.
2. Form the habit of doing good to others.
3. Form the habit of being moderate in everything.
Cultivate a good character.
4. Form the habit of eating properly; taking enough exercise; and planning healthy, wholesome undertakings.
5. Form the habit of making practical, creative efforts that produce the necessary prosperity.

Remember the spiritual law of habit, and do not let material habits crowd out spiritual habits. Good habits must work in harmony, so that they cooperate to work for your highest good. Never neglect the most important habit of meditating for a less important habit of eating, or of doing something unimportant.

LESSON NO. 16 The following is a short definition that you should always remember:

Concentration is the power to focus the mind on any desired line of thought.

Meditation is concentration used only to know God.

Concentrate and meditate early upon waking and before going to bed, or anytime you are free. Fill in the gaps of leisure hours with meditation.

If you can be quiet anywhere, meditate anywhere; but if noises disturb you, try to select a quiet place, or wait for the silence of the night, for meditation. Or create your own silence by closing the ears when meditating. Act

ambitiously, discharging your necessary duties with your **mind** constantly meditating upon God. Select a little room, or a screened-off corner with harmonious vibrations, for your meditations. Sit on a woolen blanket spread over an armless chair, facing the east, when meditating.

METHODS OF CONTROLLING THE SEX FORCE

1. Keep the mind busy with good activities and meditation.
2. Keep the vital fluid transmuted into muscular and brain energy.
Don't waste it in bad company.
3. Keep the breath calm by eating 'less carbon-producing foods, and by entirely abstaining from beef, veal, and pork products.

If the mind is calm, sex and breath will be under control. If character is good, breath and mind will be calm. If you have breath control by the technique we shall teach, then mind and sex will be under control. If you disturb any one of the three, you will disturb the others. Disturb sex control, and mind and breath will be restless.

Do not sleep too much. Practice meditation long and with intensity. On Sundays and holidays, meditate in the early morning from 6 to 9, and at night from 9 to 12. Regular meditation should be at least one half hour in the morning, one or two hours before going to bed, and meditate deeply whenever you can in between. Do not be discouraged if it is not easy to meditate long in the beginning. Just keep practicing, extending the time a little more each day, until you are able to sit long in meditation without even thinking of time.

LESSON NO. 17 While in church, do not concentrate upon the social conclave, noises around the church, or individuals making a disturbance, but concentrate upon inner peace and on the sermon being preached. God talks to you through the voice of silence and peace in meditation, if you don't drown out His voice by the noise of your passions. With the whip of intuition, drive away the money-changers of material desires and restlessness from the temple of meditation, which is the real house of God.

Whatever your vocation may be--that of a businessman, a spiritual aspirant, a housekeeper, an artist--you can increase your efficiency one hundred percent by the regular, deep practice of meditation. Don't let anything interfere. This is what Jesus meant by: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. . . If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Mark 9:43, 47).

Life force in the nerves keeps the soul entangled with the messages of the sensations in eyes, ears, hands, and so forth. When life force is plucked from the eyes and cut off from the hands and the consciousness of the body, then its direction is reversed and it becomes focused on the omnipresent God. Concentration means freeing the attention from sensations, present thoughts and memory thoughts by consciously switching off the life force from the

sensory-motor nerves, thus preventing thought-rousing sensations from reaching the brain. This detachment of the mind from body consciousness is similar to that experienced in sleep, except that one remains consciously aware.

Thousands of persons pray in churches and don't know why they do so, or why they don't get an answer to their prayers. If they knew the law of **God**-contact, they would easily be able to commune with Him.

LESSON NO. 18 Read again and again the explanation of concentration.

When you try to concentrate upon one thing, you usually find that soon you have forgotten all about it and are thinking about everything else but the original object of your concentration. This is often experienced when you are thinking of a domestic problem at home or a business problem at the office, or a spiritual problem in the church. Forget the old method of concentration by diversion, and learn the scientific method of concentration. Remove the causes of disturbances that affect your concentration and apply the scientifically freed attention on anything you wish--material or divine.

LESSON NO. 19 God reveals Himself to those who develop their inner powers and use the laws of concentration and meditation.

By using the law of thermal-control, heating systems have been invented. By controlling life force and the power of concentration, God can be discovered. But remember, though God can be approached through law only, still He, being above law, cannot be compelled to reveal Himself to the true seeker by the mere force of the law of concentration. Devotion or surrender of the **Son**-Soul to the Father-Spirit is necessary for the devotee demanding absolute surrender of God. God can escape the small nets of discrimination, pure activity, or concentration, but He cannot escape the net of devotion. When the devotee completely gives himself to God, then God has to do likewise. God is very exacting when divine laws are concerned, but He is forgetful and becomes intoxicated and relaxed when He is given the nectar-wine of devotion. God loves to drink devotion from the secret **winepress** of the devotee's heart.

Approach God with the song of smiles. Silence signifies the silencing of one's thoughts as well as one's tongue. That is really possible during sleep; therefore it can be done during wakefulness also, by practice of higher methods of concentration. There are threefold disturbances:

- (1) sensations;
- (2) thoughts aroused by sensations;
- (3) past memory thoughts roused by present thoughts.

Read very carefully the pages in this Lesson about sensations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP 1

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 12

1. Why do emotions affect one's life?
2. What is the source of sorrow?
3. Should duties and problems be avoided?
4. Explain how to overcome anger.
5. Explain how to overcome fear.
6. In what three ways may knowledge and training be imparted to the subconscious mind?

Lesson 13

1. What are the four rules of prosperity?
2. How would you harmonize your will with God's will?

Lesson 14

1. What is the difference between humbleness and egotism?
2. ~~What is the best way to change others?~~
3. Is the law of service to others founded wholly on unselfishness?
4. How does the ego keep the soul earth-bound?

Lesson 15

1. What are habits?
2. Why do people indulge in evil?
3. What is the best way to overcome bad habits?

Lesson 16

1. What is the difference between concentration and meditation?
2. What is your most important environment?
3. Does seeking God imply neglect of physical duties?
4. What are the best times of day to meditate?
5. What is the relation between breath, life force, mind, sex energy?
How can one discipline them?

Lesson 17

1. If a person has a natural ability to concentrate, why should he learn the technique of concentration?

Lesson 18

1. Define concentration.
2. What did Jesus mean, in regard to the life force, when he said "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out"?

Lesson 19

1. Is "going into the silence" enough to contact God?
2. What are the three disturbances to the mind in meditation?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 20 The state of sleep proves that when the life force and consciousness are switched off from the five telephones of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing, the attention is freed from distracting sensations, sensation-roused thoughts, and thought-roused memory thoughts. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you how to consciously switch off **the life** force from the five nerve-wires of the senses. If you can do this by regularly practicing the technique, then no sensation-roused thoughts can disturb your mind. If sensations stopped cropping up in the brain, thoughts would not arise, and if thoughts stopped arising then memory-thoughts would not be awakened. In sleep, as soon as sensations stop reaching the brain, the conscious thoughts and the buried subconscious thoughts stop their activities; so by the conscious process of this technique, the same results can be **accomplished**. An attention free from disturbances is ready to be successfully used in material or spiritual accomplishment.

It is not only the yogis of India (yoga means "**union**" and a yogi is a person who scientifically tries to unite his soul with God) that have proved this. **For St. Paul** said: "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ (Consciousness)... I die **daily** (**withdraw** the life force from the heart, or die and live again at will)."

When the heart involuntarily stops beating, one dies; his life is switched off from the five sense-telephones of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. In sleep also, owing to the slowed-down action of the heart, a state of partial "death" or switching off of the energy from the nerve-telephones is accomplished. Death is the permanent, unconscious, involuntary switching off of the life force from the five sense-telephones. Sleep is a temporary, unconscious, involuntary switching off of the life force from the five sense-telephones by an unconscious method. Self-Realization Fellowship techniques offer a conscious way of withdrawing life force partially (from the senses, muscles, and heart) or completely (from the entire body, as in death); and of then **reinstalling** it in the senses, muscles, and heart, or into the entire "lifeless" body. In sleep, life energy retires from the sensory-motor nerves and from the muscles into the heart and spine. In death, the life force and consciousness leave the body. But by the SRF technique of concentration, one can switch life force on or off at will from any part of the body or from the entire body. The purpose of the **technique** is to quiet the heart so that the life force and

consciousness may be withdrawn from sensory channels and redirected to the higher centers of consciousness in the brain.

Restlessness, worry, wrong eating, overwork, strenuous activity, will cause the heart to beat and work fast. Calmness, calmness-producing food, and moderate activities are conducive to making the heart calm.

CONCENTRATION BY QUIETING THE HEART When you practice the concentration lesson, sit calmly, suspending all bodily activities (from the diaphragm, circulatory organs, lungs, and so forth) by practicing the Hong-Sau Technique of watching the breath.

When motion is temporarily halted in the outer and inner body, the deterioration of the cells stops and no venous blood accrues. When venous blood ceases to accumulate, the heart slows down, for it no longer has to send the dark, impure venous blood into the lungs to be purified.

When the heart is not given the work of pumping blood, the energy that ordinarily is engaged in keeping the heart pumping slows down and begins to flow back toward the brain, instead of outward into the five sense-telephones. When this happens, the life force automatically withdraws itself, as in sleep, from the muscles and the five sense-telephones and retires toward the brain. The life force is then switched off from the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch; sensations are unable to attract the attention of the brain.

Thus freed from disturbances of sensations and thoughts, the attention becomes ready to be focused wholly on whatever material or spiritual object of thought one chooses.

Every night in sleep we unconsciously practice concentration by quieting the heart. The yogi learns, in addition, to practice concentration by quieting the heart consciously, as you have been taught in the technique of watching the breath, the SRF Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration.

Do not be frightened about quieting the heart, for by the conscious technique one uses the calmness of meditation as a brake to slow down the heart. Entertain no fear when the heart slows down. To quiet the heart is natural. The hearts of elderly people are quieted by nature after passing through periods of restless childhood and turbulent youth and active middle age.

It takes long practice to quiet the heart **consciously**. So long as one depends on food to sustain the body, he cannot calm the heart permanently. Meditation is the conscious way of switching the life force in the body on or off. The **Self-Realization Fellowship Hong-Sau Technique** teaches concentration, not by diversion of the mind from the senses to God, but by withdrawal not only of the mind but also of the life force, which is the medium of sense disturbances, from the five sense-telephones. Then the soul, being individualized Spirit, can manifest

all the fulfillment and satisfaction of the Spirit

Spirit is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The one light under the perforated gas burner can be compared to the Spirit behind the pores of human consciousness. The little lights running through the pores can be compared to human souls, which are emanations of the one Spirit.

LESSON NO. 21 Life force is the power that directly sustains the body.

Oxygen and food are converted into energy by life force, and are powers that indirectly support the body. If life force fails to digest food and convert it into energy, then the body cannot live. When electricity is missing from your automobile battery, adding more distilled water to it will not help. You must send it to be recharged. So also when your vitality is low and your health fails in spite of all health and dietetic precautions, then you must know how to recharge your body with life force by will power and the inner way, instead of simply eating good food and going to health resorts for a cure. Breathlessness is deathlessness. Breath is the cord which ties the soul to the body. Conquer it and you will be free.

HONG-SAU TECHNIQUE 1. Face East, sitting on a blanket spread over a straight armless chair.

2. Sit upright, chest out, shoulder **blader** together. hands resting **palms** upward at the juncture of thighs and abdominal region.
3. With eyelids closed, or half-closed, focus your gaze and attention at the point between the eyebrows.
4. Expel breath quickly three times. Then wait for breath to come in.
5. Watch breath as it flows in. Let it come naturally. Do not draw it in or force it out by any act of will.
6. As often as the breath flows in, mentally chant "Hong" for the duration of that inhalation. Whether inhalation comes quickly or slowly, and whether it is long or short, follow the foregoing procedure of chanting "Hong" mentally, making no sound or movement of the tongue.
7. If the breath "stays in" and there is no desire to exhale, wait, enjoying the feeling of peace; as soon as the breath flows out, naturally, of its own accord, mentally chant "Sau," making no sound or use of the lips or tongue.
8. If the breath stays out, wait until there is desire for inhalation, enjoying meanwhile the peace of the breathless state. When it flows in again, **men-**tally chant "Hong" for the duration of the in-flowing breath. And when the breath goes out again, of its own accord, without force or act of will, mentally chant "Sau" until it is fully out.

Continue repeating the foregoing as long as you wish. By keeping his attention riveted to one thing at a time--the breath--the yogi is able to separate himself from the breath; then he realizes that he is neither the body nor the breath, but the consciousness and intelligence in the body. Ha beholds himself as a soul.

THE MEANING OF HONG-SAU "Hong" is the vibration of the ingoing breath. "Sau" is the vibration of the outgoing breath. Just as the word 'peace' produces calmness in the mind and body, and as the word "anger" vibrates wrath, so the chanting of "Hong" and "Sau" calms the breath quickly, as that is its astral vibration.

WHAT IS SLEEP? Sleep is unconscious sensory-motor relaxation, in which the life force and consciousness are unconsciously switched off from the lamp of the muscles and senses. To die daily, as mentioned in the Bible, is to switch the life energy in the bodily lamp off and on again consciously and at will. The switched off energy in the yogi's body-lamp retires to the dynamo of Spirit, from whence he summons it again at will.

BEST TIMES TO MEDITATE Meditate between 5 and 6 a. m. ; 11 and 12 a. m. ; 5 and 6 p. m. ; 10 and 12 p. m. ; or between 11 and 12 p. m. Naturally if one's schedule does not permit meditating at exactly these hours, select the nearest time to these periods that is possible. Also, if one cannot meditate four times a day, then he should try to meditate twice in the morning, and once before going to bed at night, and during any leisure hours.

LESSON NO. 22 Control of the vital essence is conducive to physical and mental well-being. To have good character and control over the sex urge is extremely important to one who seeks communion with the Supreme Being. God created the divine ecstasy of meditation. Satanic ignorance created pseudo substitutes for them--sex temptation and wine. Sex should be used only for creative purposes; hence wine is the greatest tool of the evil force, as it obliterates wisdom and discrimination and encourages the misuse of sex. Wine and all drugs should be completely forsaken. You must have moderation first and then renunciation if you are gripped by the sex habit, or the dope or wine habit. "When wealth is lost, little is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost. "

Control your mind. Don't do anything against the dictates of your conscience and discrimination, just because you wish to do it. Learn to resist evil by will power. Do everything that it is your duty to do. Calm the breath and creative force by the power of your mind. Mind is the operator of all your powers.

The person who tries to concentrate by harmonizing breath, life force and vital essence gets quicker results than the person who meditates without disciplining breath by technique, or without controlling character and sex life by strong will power and reason.

Please remember that without an erect spine during concentration and meditation you will lose half the good result in attaining control and peace. This is very important.

Read the instructions for practice of the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration again and again. It is very important to follow the instructions. Remember, whether the breath comes in slowly or quickly during a natural inhalation, mentally (without whisper or tremor of tongue, or sound from the lips) chant "Hong" for the duration of the inhalation. If the breath does not come out, wait, and when it comes out of itself, quickly or slowly, mentally chant "Sau" as an accompaniment. If the breath does not go in at once, wait until it does go in of itself. Keep on repeating this.

POSITION OF EYES Try to practice the concentration technique with the eyes half open, gently focused at the point between the eyebrows. In the subconscious state of sleep the eyes are closed. During the wakeful or conscious state you keep your eyes open. In superconsciousness (consciously enjoying an ever-increasing joyous state, as in sleep) the eyes should be half open, fixed at the point between the eyebrows. This is the center of Christ Consciousness, and the eyes of sleeping children, and those of dying people usually turn up to it. Since meditation and concentration consist in switching the consciousness and nerve force toward God through the medulla oblongata (mouth of God), ~~one should learn to concentrate the eyes~~ at the point between the eyebrows (Christ-consciousness center), which is the reflection of the light of the medulla, during meditation.

As you like to close your eyes in order to be in the subconscious, or to open them in order to be consciously working through the eyes, you will love infinitely more to look up into the spiritual eye, situated at the point between the eyebrows, when you get used to it. Practice without straining the eyes, but practice you should, always concentrating at the point between the eyebrows.

LESSON NO. 23 Study the delicate art of breathing and breath-control. Our purpose is to teach proper breathing (as long as we have to breathe some way!). Remember the following important points:

- (a) The purpose of watching the breath is to increase naturally the intervals when breath does not flow. Watch breath in order to do away with it.
- (b) Mentally chant "Hong-Sau" with the ingoing and outgoing breath as it naturally flows, without using will power. Concentrate on, enjoy, and identify yourself with the state when the breath does not flow, as a result of practicing the technique of watching the breath.
- (c) The more you watch the breath (as taught in the technique, with deep

attention) the less you will breathe, remaining breathless more of the time. This will calm the heart and consequently increase longevity.

- (d) By watching breath, you learn how to separate your watching soul metaphysically from body, breath, and the processes of consciousness.

Learn to live directly by Cosmic Energy coming through the medulla oblongata, and not by breath only or food only. Prevent oxygen starvation by practicing the special breathing exercise given in this Lesson.

LESSON NO. 24 Nervousness implies that one has been tampering with the nerve wires and the electricity of life which runs the entire body factory. Hence you cannot afford to be nervous. Avoid the psychological and physical causes of nervousness described in this Lesson. Calm company, inner calmness achieved through meditation and eating plenty of fruit are the best antidotes for nervousness.

LESSON NO. 25 Be inwardly happy always, retaining and remembering the happiness born of meditation. This will make you outwardly happy too. Guard your happiness from the robbers of cranky, crabby, sorrow-loving, nervous people. Remember, no one can make you unhappy if you refuse to allow him to do so. Happiness can be achieved by meditating long and regularly, above all else, and by adopting those actions that generate happiness. Ignorant people, like animals, do not quickly remove the causes that make unhappiness. Avoid gossiping as you would avoid poison. Cultivate the habit of discussing the good in people with those whom you love. Good thoughts attract the good in people. Evil thoughts attract evil.

Judge not others, only yourself. It is easy to gossip about others, but try gossiping about yourself for a while and see how you like it. Whenever you feel like talking about others, try talking loudly about your own secret weaknesses and faults before your enemies and friends. You won't like this. Correct yourself first. Make your home a valley of smiles, blossoming with happiness. The breeze of your constant divine smile can keep the lives of those you love throbbing with joy and filled with blessings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP ONE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 20

1. What is the difference between the sleep state and the state produced by concentration ?
2. What must be done if one would switch off the life force from the five senses, scientifically and consciously ?
3. What did St. Paul mean when he said "I die daily" ?
4. What is the soul ?
5. What makes the heart restless? What quiets it?
6. Describe the various stages of body and mind when decay is consciously removed from the ou'ter and inner body.

Lesson 21

1. Describe in detail the technique of concentration.
2. Why does watching the breath produce concentration?

Lesson 22

1. Why is it beneficial to gain control over the creative urge?
2. What breathing exercise should be practiced before Hong-Sau?
3. What keeps sensations from reaching the brain after deep practice of this technique?

Lesson 23

1. In practicing Hong-Sau is it important to concentrate on the intervals when breath does not flow, or simply watch breath?
2. Should you in any way control breath during this practice?
3. What is the effect of a quiet mind upon the heart?
4. What is the cord that ties the soul to the flesh?

Lesson 24

1. Define nervousness.
2. What causes nervousness?

Lesson 25

1. Upon what does happiness chiefly depend ?
2. When should you give your acquaintances your advice ?



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE BLUE-RAYED LOTUS OF THY FEET

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Divine Mother, the bee of my mind
is engrossed in the blue-rayed lotus of Thy
feet. I drink the nectar of Thy tender love.
This royal bee of Thine sips only from the
blossom that exudes Thy perfume.

Denying myself the honey of sense
pleasures, flying far above ephemeral
gardens of idle fancy, at last I have found
Thine ambrosial lotus of light.

I was Thy busy bee, wandering in the
fields of incarnations, attracted by odors
from flowers of countless experiences.
I roam no more, for Thy fragrance has
quenched the perfume thirst of my soul.

--From "**Whispers from Eternity**"

PRAYER

I shall drink the everlasting nectar of joy found in the fountain of meditation. O Father, from joy I come; for joy I live; in joy dost Thou melt me!

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 1

DEFINITION Meditation is that specific form of concentration which is applied only in connection with consciously tuning in with Cosmic Consciousness--the home of cosmic supply. By this method, the proficient student can not only finally attain everything that the power of attention can and should accomplish, but can also develop the power to control his destiny, and prevent failure and disease. This method teaches one how to reinforce, revitalize, and strengthen the human faculty with the faculty of superconsciousness, through faithful, persevering practice.

Meditation is the pickax that pries up all the covers of consciousness, and brings forth the fountain of God's ever new joy. Meditation--complete relaxation or conscious withdrawal of the mind from the restless senses--is the only way to know God. Even though you may be able to do everything else but meditate, you will never find joy to equal that which comes when the thoughts are silent and your mind is tuned to the peace of God. If you ask, "How do I know there is such joy as you describe?" this is my testimony: if you practice meditation every day, deeply and consistently, you will find that ever existing, ever conscious, ever new joy, ever increasingly manifest within you. And with practice it will stay with you in activity and in silence alike--even in sleep. It is a joy that will constantly guide you to right action in everything and will respond to your prayers. You have to demonstrate that for yourself. And this is my further testimony: that, once God's joy has been found, all desires for other gain will dwindle in comparison. Your consciousness will expand. You will be able to stand unshaken amidst jarring trials. The whole world will not be able to lure you to forsake the bliss that you will find in meditation. You will enjoy all other things in that divine joy. Because Jesus had experienced this he could say: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" The satanic temptation of material desires fell dead before his joy in God.

MEDITATE BY THE RIGHT METHOD Completeness in God is by no means negation of ordinary life and its responsibilities and joys; finding God is positive attainment that elevates and beautifies all life.

Human existence, however pleasant, is only a bubble of laughter; in God it becomes the sea of mirth. "Thou, O God, art the ocean, and I, a tiny bubble of laughter, have become the sea of mirth!"

You can find this joyous perception of the Divine only by the right method of concentration and meditation. If you are looking at the ceiling of your room for the door, you could seek for years and years but you would never find it until you adopted the right method and looked for it in the wall.

When your desire for God is sincere, He sends a right vehicle: a spiritual

teacher or guru preceptor through whom He teaches you the art of meditation or divine communion that leads to realization of and oneness with Him. When Jesus said. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," he was speaking of the Christ **Consciousness** within. The joy that comes in meditation is proof of the existence of that ever newly joyous God. Since I learned this, oftentimes when sleep steals over me, I say: "Go away from me, you gross intoxicant! I do not want to lose this joy in your unconsciousness. "

Your whole body changes when you practice meditation frequently, because when you really contact God, all things become harmonious; all things melt into an ocean of peace. But you have to practice meditation earnestly, consistently, and continually, in order to have the full consciousness of that supreme force.

FORM THE HABIT OF MEDITATING Your engagement with business is important; but your appointment to serve others is **more** important; and your engagement with meditation, home, God, and truth is most important. Don't say that you are too busy with worry, and the care of keeping the wolf from the door, to find time for the culture of heavenly qualities.

Break your self-satisfied, doggedly immovable, old bad habits of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the most important engagement: your engagement with meditation and God. No one else will answer for your actions, although others often become instruments in keeping you **enmeshed** in useless frivolities and so-called important engagements.

○ sleeping image of God, wake up! Make the determination and the effort to know the right law which will enable you to keep your most important engagement with yourself--to know yourself, your own Soul.

Do not say: "I will meditate on the Cosmic **Being** tomorrow. " That tomorrow **may** never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate deeper tomorrow, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Meditate today deeper than you did yesterday, and tomorrow meditate deeper than you do today. Meditate during most of your leisure hours. **Instead** of being absentminded, think of God. Seek God as the ever increasing bliss of meditation; and feel Him as boundless joy throbbing in your heart. Do not be lured by bad habits and paltry, useless vanity-engagements into crowding out God-contact. Seek to know God first, last, and all the time. Finding Him first, you will find all things that you crave through Him.

PRACTICE LONG AND DEEP MEDITATION It is good to start meditation at an early age, or, failing in that, to start **meditation** as soon as the mental discriminative inclination is receptive. It is very difficult for the occult soldiers of the mind to reclaim the kingdom of peace after it has fallen into the hands of restlessness and material desire. Therefore, make spiritual hay while the sun of willingness to meditate shines.

The longer and deeper you meditate and affirm, the deeper will you feel

and be conscious of the ever increasing joy in your heart. Then you will know without doubt that there is a God and that He is ever existing, ever conscious, omnipresent, ever new joy. Then you may demand: "Father, now, today, all days, all tomorrows, every instant, in sleep, in wakefulness, in life, in death, in this world, and in the beyond, remain with me as the consciously responding joy of my heart. "

Do not jump up after only one or two mental broadcasts, but with continuous personal zeal keep on consciously with the ever increasing hunger of your heart, incessantly, mentally uttering the foregoing affirmation for regaining and holding on to the lost unity with God, until you feel the ever increasing thrill of joy bursting in your whole body. This increasing joy after meditation is the only proof that God has answered through the devotion-tuned radio of your heart.

During deep meditation, when the breath becomes calm, a very enjoyable state of peace is produced; but owing to the strong ego-consciousness, the thought of the body returns, and the fickle loud breath revives, rousing material desires and sense distractions. The devotee should not be discouraged at this but should by deeper meditation learn to calm the breath and the senses for a longer period.

When King Material Desire does not get support from past bad habits, the ego comes to cheer and strengthen him. Those who equally enjoy sense pleasures and pleasures of meditation will not get anywhere for a long time. It should be remembered that even if one cannot conquer the flesh, he must meditate just the same, for then there will be a sense of comparison between the lesser pleasures of the senses and the greater pleasures of the soul. Those who fail to conquer the senses and who give up meditation too, become almost hopeless cases of spiritual decay.

If after deep meditation the devotee is thrown into a state of restlessness owing to the memory of sense joys, he feels greater inner discomfort and bewilderment as he suddenly finds that he feels neither inner joy nor the passing pleasure of the senses. At such times he is tempted to declare: "O Great Soul, I wish neither inner happiness born of self-control and spiritual adeptship, nor the pleasure of the senses." This mental state should be overcome, and can be overcome, by regular, deep meditation and by picturing the ever new blessed bliss felt in the deep caves of contemplation.

HOW TO ENTER REAL SILENCE

The scientific method of entering real silence was taught in the Lesson on concentration. And in this series of three Lessons on meditation is taught what to do after attaining silence, and how to use the freed attention to direct it toward God. In real silence both your muscles and your thoughts are quiet. You can silence the body easily, but it is difficult to silence your thoughts. They still run wild, jumping from one thing to another with miraculous speed. But by using scientific methods, you can effectively silence the thoughts too. As long as there is motion in a pond of water, so long will you be unable to see the clear reflection of the

moon in it. Remember, as long as a restless thought or a bodily motion remains, you cannot hear the Inner Voice, or see with the Inner Eye. In other words, God will not enter your temple. In an inwardly and outwardly quiet body temple, illuminated by devotion, love, and inspiration, God may be coaxed to come, which means that real vision and real intuition will be awakened.

**BE FREE FROM
THE DELUSION
OF MATTER**

Meditation is the real panacea through which you can **per-**manently cure yourself of the daydream of matter and all its evils, and realize yourself as pure Spirit. Until you have built the temple of silence within yourself, until you have broken down the ramparts of habits with which environment has surrounded you, you will never see the glory of God; you will never have real peace and lasting joy. When you meet the Great One, darkness will pass away forever. The power of truth is **here** in these teachings, and if you will but **make** a determined effort, you will no longer walk nervously in fear and uncertainty on the pathway of life. (To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

What is meditation? It is becoming one with the soul; it is dropping your relation with the muscles and with human limitations and remembering that you are a soul. When you begin to relate yourself to the soul, then you will be aware of more of your past experiences, and you will know that you have come down from the **bosom** of God.

In God lie all the memory and experiences of your life. In your inner contact the forgotten times and powers will come back into your consciousness. Meditation leads you to remember that you are not a mortal, but that you are one with God. During the daytime, when you are not meditating, you remember that you are a mortal, but in meditation the reverse is true. Meditation means dropping the consciousness of the body, remembering who you are, and then coming back and ruling the body.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 1

The loving Lord of the Universe has always visited ardent devotees. Sometimes before doing so He sends messengers to find out those devotees who are worthy of darshan (a vision or sight of the Lord). In India they tell a story about the time God sent Narada back to earth. In the West, Narada might be described as an archangel. He was a glorious being, freed from birth and death, and ever **close** to the Lord. During a former incarnation on earth he had been a great devotee of God, and so it seemed that he should be easily able to discover others who were pursuing the Lord with will and ardor.

Narada the archangel now came to earth incognito, garbed as an ascetic. In mountains and valleys and jungles all over India he sought out the hermits and renunciants whose thoughts were centered on God and who performed all actions

only for Him. While ambling through a dark woodland one day, he spied a hoary anchorite practicing different kinds of postures and undergoing penances under the cool shade of a huge umbrella-like tamarind tree. As if he were merely a leisurely wanderer, Narada approached and greeted the ascetic, inquiring curiously, "Who are you, and what are you doing?"

"My name is Bhadraka," the hermit replied. "I am an old anchorite. I have been practicing rigorous physical discipline for eighty years." He added disconsolately, "Without achieving any marked results." Narada then introduced himself: "I am a special messenger sent by the Lord of the Universe to seek out His true devotees."

Realizing that at last his opportunity had come, the anchorite pompously assured Narada of his **worthiness** to be honored by the Lord. "Esteemed Emissary," he said, "surely your eyes are now beholding the greatest devotee of the Lord on this earth. Think of it, for eighty years, rain or shine I have practiced every imaginable technique of torturous mental and physical self-discipline to attain knowledge, and to find merit in the Lord's eyes."

Narada was impressed, "Even though I am from those higher planes where greater **accomplishments** are possible, I am very much touched by your **persistence**," he assured the old man. Bhadraka had been brooding on his grievances while talking to Narada, and instead of being comforted by Narada's words, he spoke angrily. "Well then, since you are so close to the Lord, please find out why He has kept away from me for so long. When next you meet Him, do ask why He has not responded to my disciplinary exercises. Will you promise me that?"

Narada agreed to the old **man's** request, and then resumed his search for earnest devotees of God. In one place he paused to watch a most amusing incident taking place at the roadside. A very handsome and determined young man was trying to build a fence. Unfortunately he was dead drunk, and his senses kept deceiving him. He had dug a series of holes for fence posts, and was trying in vain to fit an unwieldy bamboo pole into one of these elusive holes. He would thump the pole on the ground all around, but he could not get it in the hole. Several times he stumbled forward and almost tripped himself. (To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Saturated with devotion, O Heavenly Father, I will enter the heaven of Thy presence. Blindly groping, the urge of my devotion suddenly flings open the soul's secret door, and oh, what bliss I feel at the sight of Thy Light!

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS-- Volume 2

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WE WILL LIVE IN THE GARDEN OF HAPPINESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Beneath the glimmer of Thy great light we offer the prayer of our souls. Thou art our Father, we are Thy children. Receive the humble offerings of our hearts. Take away the nemesis of dark gloom, behold us through the pores of the sky and through **the** windows of our hearts and feelings, and sit enthroned on the altar of our love for Thee.

Teach us to behold only what is good, to think only what is good, to associate only with those who are good, and teach us to meditate upon Thee, the fountain of all goodness.

Bless us all that we be not tempted by the serpent force, but that we may above all extol Thy glory, the glories of Thy heaven and paradise within us, that we may live in the garden of happiness and noble thoughts, that we may be filled with the aroma of Thy love, and that we may be saturated with Thy love evermore. Bless us, that we may always remain in the land of paradise.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me in meditation to drop my consciousness of human limitations and try to remember that I am a soul.

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 2

Meditate as much as possible, and try to hold on to the quiet and peaceful aftereffect. As soon as the breath is quiet, your plane of consciousness is lifted. Meditation is the only way to keep yourself filled with the power of Spirit. Words without soul-force are like guns without ammunition; therefore while meditating do not think merely of words, but of their meaning, and with intensity mentally offer the thought behind them to God. On the throne of silent thoughts, the God of Peace will direct your actions.

Open the door of your calmness and let the footsteps of silence gently enter the temple of all your activities. Perform all duties serenely, saturated with peace. Behind the throb of your heart, you shall feel the throb of God's peace. Fill your heart with the peace of meditation.

Learn how to plunge into introspection about every experience, whether it concerns good books, problems, religions, philosophy, or inner happiness. Retire within the cell of your deep thoughts, and enjoy the peace oozing out of the fountain of silence.

CONTROLLING THE
SENSE TELEPHONES

During real meditation, all of the five sense telephones must be shut off. Silence is what the whole world needs, particularly those who are on the path of meditation and are striving to progress toward greater spirituality. Any attempt at silence is better than the ineffective prayer that is commonly practiced; because in such prayer, while the movements of the body may be stilled, the thoughts go on with their dance of restlessness.

As a result of closing the eyes in meditation, the sensations of sight are prevented from reaching the brain; and by sitting in a quiet place one can keep the extremely busy auditory phone quiet as there are no sounds to reach the brain. If, then, the two most important sense telephones of sight and hearing are disconnected in meditation, the other telephones of smell, taste, and touch become disconnected also, because the operator is then relaxed, and free from constant attention to the reports of the two busiest telephones--optical and auditory--in the body house.

YOUR SOUL'S
OMNIPRESENT
NATURE

Just as from a seed planted in proper soil there springs forth a tree, so from proper meditation instilled in the soul the consciousness of Omnipresence will manifest.

Because of long concentration upon the physical body and its necessities, the soul has forgotten its omnipresent nature. God is omnipresent. The cosmos is His body. Man's soul, made in His image, has in it the seed experience of omnipresence. This consciousness of omnipresence is hidden in the soul, as a tree is secreted in a seed.

Looking at the body constantly causes the mind to think of itself as confined in the flesh. As meditation upon the Infinite grows deeper, it makes the meditator, meditation, and the object of meditation one. Then the mind becomes convinced that it is not encased in the body, but that it is in everything in the body of the cosmos. The mind thinking constantly about the body becomes limited by it. The mind meditating upon the Infinite becomes unlimited. Meditation is the art of transferring the attention from finite things — the little body and the portions of space in which mortals live — to the Infinite.

Men and women aspiring to expand their consciousness into the all-pervading God-consciousness should learn to meditate upon the cosmos. Meditation means constant thinking of the vastness within and without, so that the soul may forget its attachment to the limited physical body and remember its vast body as God. The ocean is the wave, the wave is the ocean; the ocean must know that it is the wave and the wave must know that it is the ocean. The Spirit Ocean knows that it has become the soul waves; but the soul waves need to recall, by meditation, that they are the Spirit Ocean. The little soul wave must forget its smallness, which is only a mental concept born of concentration upon the body, and must concentrate upon the universe as its own big body, of which the physical body is just a tiny part.

A mundane personality is busy with looking after the body and its cramped relations with a few other human beings. Such a person's consciousness does not extend beyond the gates of its own home. The spiritual man, through the spreading light of sympathy and meditation, learns to feel the woes and pains of others. He feels that the world, or cosmos, is his home. This is why the meditating aspirant must do away with little body attachments. He must learn to be proof against too warm or too cold climates. He must learn to overcome hunger and pain. He must learn to conquer all the appetites and attachments that govern the little body, for as long as the mind is focused on the body and its relations, the soul cannot remember its omnipresent nature.

HOW TO ATTAIN COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

There are three ways of attaining Cosmic Consciousness:

- 1) The social way
- 2) The way of discipline
- 3) The spiritual way

SOCIAL WAY The social way consists in expanding the germ of divine love within the soul. Too much love of self confines the soul

to the ego-boundaries of the flesh. The soul is an omnipresent reflection of the all-pervading Spirit. The ego is the body-bound consciousness of the soul. The soul, as ego, forgets its etheric omnipresence and considers itself limited to the body.

Every human ego can imagine itself spread out in space, but can feel itself only as the body. It is when the ego begins to feel itself in other bodies, through practical sympathy, that it begins to regain its forgotten omnipresence. Unlike the shortsighted worldly man, the divine man works not only for himself as one body, but also for his greater Self, which he beholds embodied in all others. Similarly, you should not only feel hungry, desire to be prosperous, wish to be healed, or long for wisdom for yourself in one body; you should learn to feel for yourself in all bodies, in all minds, in all lives, in all souls.

Hence, the social way of developing cosmic consciousness is to love your family, neighbors, country, the whole world as yourself. Include the world in your love, and call yourself a cosmic citizen. You are the king; and in the kingdom of your love, include not only all human beings--but also animals, flowers, the flocks of stars pasturing on the long savannahs of the blue--all living creatures. Love all men as your brothers; love all women as your sisters; love all elderly men and women as your parents; and love all human beings--the black, white, brown, yellow, red, and olive-colored races--as your friends and brothers. This is the social way of attaining cosmic consciousness.

WAY OF DISCIPLINE By mental and physical discipline rise above the consciousness of caste, color, dogmatic creed, family, race, nationality, and poverty. Make it a rule to be pleasant and to exercise self-control. Be kind, abstemious, and moderate. Do things that give you lasting happiness. Speak no untruth. Abhor stealing, overindulgence, worry, fear, anger, greed, jealousy, and restlessness. Learn to withstand heat and cold, and to endure happiness without mental excitement. Rise above sensations even though you are still subject to them.

Meditate, by withdrawing your attention from objects of sense and from muscles, lungs, breath, and heart, and concentrating that freed attention upon the spine. Then go out through the medulla oblongata into infinite space.

SPIRITUAL WAY The inner way of developing cosmic consciousness lies in practicing the art of living on the sense plane without making sense contacts: that is, the art of controlling the senses--operating them or switching them off at will in the various sense organs.

1. Learn to switch the consciousness and lifecurrent on and off from the heart, breath, and lungs.
2. Put life force in all the muscles and then relax.

3. Switch the consciousness and will power on and off from the spine.
4. Switch the consciousness on and off from the six plexuses--coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, dorsal, cervical, and medullary--and from the cerebrum and cerebellum.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Why is **meditation** the only way to God? Because the only way that He can be known is by following His laws of righteousness and by deep contemplation **upon** Him until you become one with Him. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). He will look in your heart and see whether you have utilized the powers that He has given you and whether you know Him or not. Why waste time? Meditation is the only way to know God.

Remember, if you forget God, it will not be God who will punish you; you will create your own misery. If you know God, He will reveal to you that this life is only a drama and that you are immortal, that you were never sick, that you were never dead, and you were never unhappy. It was all a dream. There is no other way to find God except through meditation practiced in the way the masters teach it. Follow that method. Veils will fall from your mind and **every** thought and every thing will be a window through which you will behold the face of the King.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 2

At first Narada thought this spectacle was very funny. But the young man began to call upon the Lord to come and help him, and when this brought no results, he became angry and began to threaten God with curses and shouts: "You unfeeling, lazy God, what a fine friend You are! Come here now and help me to fix my pole in this hole, or I'll thruet the bamboo right through Your hard heart."

Just then the young man's wandering gaze fastened on Narada, standing shocked and agape at the drunken one's temerity. His wrath diverted, the young man exclaimed, "You good-for-nothing idler. how dare you just stand there, staring at me like that?" Taken aback, Narada said meekly: "Shall I help you to set your pole?"

"No," growled the young man, "I will accept no help but that of my Divine Friend, that sly Eluder who **has** been playing hide-and-seek with me, who is even now hiding behind the clouds, trying to evade working with me."

"You drunken fool," said Narada, "aren't you afraid to curse the omnipresent Lord?"

"Oh no, He understands me better than you do," was the instant reply. "And who are you anyway?" demanded the swaying young man, trying to keep his eyes focused on the visitor.

Narada answered truthfully: "I am a messenger from the all-powerful Lord, and I am searching out His true devotees on earth. "

"Oh!" the young man exclaimed eagerly. "In that case I ask you to please put in a good word for me when you see the Divine Friend. Even though I behave badly now and then, and **abuse** the powers He gave me, please do remind Him about me. And ask Him why He has been delaying His visit to me, and when He is coming, for I have been waiting and waiting and always expecting Him. " Narada felt sorry for the fellow, and so, half reluctantly, he agreed to the man's request, although he was privately thinking that this drunkard would have very little chance of meeting the Lord!

After Narada had traveled all over, and noted the names and accomplishments of many devotees, he suddenly felt so lonely for the Lord's loving smile that he discarded his earthly form and rushed straight to the heavenly abode, as swiftly as thought could carry him. In an instant he was there before the Beloved One, surrounded by a warm glow of divine love.

"Welcome, dear Narada, " said the Lord gently, and the light from His lotus eyes melted the last vestige of earthly tension that clung to His messenger's aura. "Tell Me about your earthly excursions. " Narada gave a full report, ending with descriptions of the two devotees who seemed to exemplify opposite ends of the scale of virtue--the pious old anchorite and the intoxicated young man with the pole.

"You know, Beloved Lord, sometimes I think you are too hard to please, and even cruel, " Narada said seriously. "**Think** how you treated that anchorite, Bhadraka, who has been waiting for eighty years for You, under a tamarind tree. You know whom I **mean!**" The Lord thought for a moment, and even sought a response from His all-recording heart, but He answered, "No, I don't remember him. "

"**Why** how can that be possible?" Narada exclaimed. "That devoted man has been practicing all sorts of harsh disciplines these eighty years just to attract Your attention. " But the Lord only shrugged indifferently. "No matter what the anchorite has been practicing, he has not yet touched My heart. What next? "

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Through the transparency of my deepest meditation, I will consciously receive the light of the omnipresent Father constantly passing through me; and I shall be a son of God even as Jesus was, by receiving God fully, through my sacred, meditation-expanded consciousness.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DIVINE MOTHER

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, I heard Thy voice in the speaking fragrance of the rose. I heard Thy voice in the lispings whispers of my devotion. I heard Thy voice beneath the din of my noisiest thoughts. It was Thy love that spoke through ~~the~~ voice ~~of~~ friendship. I touched Thy **tender-**ness in the softness of the lily.

O Divine Mother, break the dawn and show Thy face of light! Break the sun and show Thy face of power! Break the night and show Thy mooned face! Break my thoughts and show Thy face of wisdom! Break my feelings **and** show Thy face of love! Break my pride and show Thy face of humbleness! Break my wisdom and show Thy face of perfection!

As I called to Thee in the wilderness of my loneliness, Thou **didst** burst through the dawn to greet me with Thy joy. Thou **didst** emerge from the molten door of the sun to pour Thy power into the pores of my life. Thou **didst** tear away the night of my ignorance to reveal Thy silver rays of speaking silence!

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, may the magic wand of meditation touch all sounds and melt them into the One Cosmic Sound of Om.

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 3

(Based upon the truths revealed in St. John's Revelation, Patanjali's Raja Yoga, and upon basic principles discovered by modern science.)

Now you are eager to know the method by which you can contact God through meditation. It is necessary to achieve attunement with Spirit or Divine Consciousness before one can realize Divine Consciousness. In meditation you learn to contact Spirit, or the Creator, in reality. Words cannot convey to you the wonderful realizations and intuitions that the technique of meditation presented in this Lesson will bring you; it would be impossible even to name them all here. If you practice regularly, faithfully, and reverently, you will get them all finally. You will be able to hear the vibrations of the astral centers of consciousness and life in the spine, and in time you will be intuitively in tune with the Cosmic Vibration. Continued right practice of this technique will give you an unparalleled command over your mind, enabling you to focus it in the most intense way on any object of thought--intellectual, physical, or spiritual. This is as true as the statement that the sun rises in the east. The technique will also help you tremendously to increase your power for the accomplishment of great work in life. Above all, it will enable you to contact the superconsciousness of the soul and through that the cosmic consciousness of Spirit, giving you the wonderful peace, harmony, and poise of mind inherent in the higher life. It helps to soothe and rest the nerves and to bring about the most desirable bodily conditions.

Pray to the Great Spirit with a reverent, loving attitude: "O Great Spirit, help me to gather my inner powers and realize Thee through Thy Cosmic Vibration. The universe is projected from Thee through vibration. It is sustained by Thee through vibration. Vibrations pervade everywhere. Thou art transcendently omnipresent with the Cosmic Vibration. Through vibrations in me help me to realize Thee inwardly and outwardly. Awaken my sleeping powers. Rouse my infinite energy. Lead me to the vision of Thy glorious light of peace."

OM VIBRATION
EXPLAINED

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In the beginning of Creation was the Word of God or the Cosmic Vibration --OM (Aum, or Amen)--manifesting as sound, impregnated with Christ Consciousness. This projected creative power of God is the God that can be known through contacting **Om**.

"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (Revelation 22:4-5). St. John makes reference here to the third eye in the forehead, with its divine light.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock (sound through Om vibration): if any man hear my voice (listen to Om), and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20). Patanjali (a great Hindu Raja Yogi) wrote: "Meditate on Om to actually contact Iswara (God). Om is His symbol (manifestation of creation)."

"I was in the Spirit (spiritual consciousness) on the Lord's day (the day of contacting the divine realms of truth), and heard behind me (in the medulla oblongata, 'behind' or in the back of the head) a great voice, as of a trumpet (the great blissful sound of Om)" (Revelation 1:10).

"These things saith the Amen (Om), the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14). St. John here speaks of the Cosmic Om sound as the faithful witness or proof of the running of the Cosmic Motor, the force which projected creation, and the vibration of its sound as it upholds creation.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Revelation 14:2). These different sounds are vibratory variations of the one Cosmic Sound. Each has its own particular rate of vibration (and hence its own particular sound) which is required to create a particular element in the cosmos.

To love or to meditate upon God, one must definitely know Him. By right practice of this Lesson He can be known, manifesting as intelligent, ever-conscious, ever-new, joyous Cosmic Vibratory Sound, or Om, reverberating all over the universe. By properly listening to and feeling this Cosmic Sound, one's human consciousness gradually becomes enlarged, its territory extended beyond the body to include the universe.

SCIENTIFIC TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

HAVE YOU A
SPIRITUAL
TEMPLE

The following Om Technique of Meditation--and every other meditation technique that is given in these Lessons--should be practiced in your spiritual temple, the room or corner of a room that you have set aside for meditation and spiritual study. If by chance you have not yet established such a place, make it a point to do so now. Every location reflects the vibrations of the occupation for which it is used; therefore you should set aside some place that may become permeated with spiritual vibrations of prayer and God-contemplation. Thus its atmosphere will be especially conducive to meditation.

Go to your spiritual temple and prepare to practice the Om Technique of Meditation. You will need a small table, about as high as your chest when you are seated, and a straight chair covered with a woolen blanket that extends down under your feet (to insulate you from earth currents). Lay a pillow on the table. Then seat yourself and place your elbows on the pillow. The elbows should be just high enough so that you have no difficulty in reaching the ears with the thumbs; the spine and head must be held straight at the same time. This matter of position is very important, as the spine must be erect. You will have to experiment, adding more pillows to the table if necessary, until the right height is reached for maintaining the proper position in comfort.

METHOD OF PRACTICE God has enabled you, by means of your eyelids, to close your eyes and shut off distractions during meditation; He has also given you "**earlids**" to shut off mind-diverting sounds during deep concentration. These are the cartilaginous flaps (called tragi) at the external ear openings. With your thumbs push them gently in so that they close the ear holes, serving as stoppers to shut out outer sounds. During meditation the thumbs tend to loosen their pressure, so at the outset press firmly enough with the thumbs to close the tragi comfortably tight over the ear openings and thus shut out external sounds as much as possible. Cotton may be used if you have sensitive ears.

When you have placed your thumbs gently over the ear openings, place your little fingers over the lowered eyelids, at the outer corners. Very gently press against the eyeballs so that they do not move restlessly. Place the other fingers of both hands on the forehead. Turning the eyeballs upward and inward, converge your gaze at the central point in your forehead above and between the eyebrows. Practice will make it easy. This practice is beneficial to the eyesight when rightly done as described in this Lesson.

Keep your eyes fixed at this Christ Consciousness center for longer and longer periods when you practice. This will train the optic nerves and eyeballs to adjust easily to the position and thus permit the free focusing of the optical currents of the two physical eyes into the one spiritual eye. At first you may be satisfied with trying to keep your eyes fixed at the point between the eyebrows. After practice, however, you will be able to do this so that the eyelids don't quiver, and the eyeballs do not move. Then you may see a few lights occasionally. If you do see any light, concentrate on it.

By learning to focus your eyes in this way and by concentrating on any light that you see, you are preparing to see the astral light of the spiritual eye--a luminous sun, with a dark round spot inside it and a star inside the dark spot. This third eye--the door to the Infinite--is mentioned in Matthew 6:22. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Many other lights will come, but no matter how long you have to practice do not be satisfied until you get the one mentioned above. Should you be bothered with hallucinations, keep the eyes open, turned upward, and fixed on the point between the eyebrows.

With your eyes fixed in this position--or on the astral light that will appear through practice--mentally chant, "Om, Om" (making no **sound**, nor any movement of the tongue). Keep listening in the inside of the right ear to any vibratory sound you hear. Reverently be one with the vibration. You may hear in the beginning the purely physical vibratory sounds caused by the heart, lungs, diaphragm movement, circulation, and so forth. Go deeper. As you continue to listen, your concentration will deepen of itself and you will begin to hear the musical vibratory sounds of the subtle astral centers in the spine.

Concentrate with the greatest intensity of mental effort on any sound vibration that comes to you, and be one with it. Immerse your mind in it. Let the mental chanting of Om and the holding of the eyes in the upturned position be done automatically--without mental effort. All your concentration should be on listening to the different vibrations you will hear, first the physical and then, as you listen more deeply, the astral. There will come a time when you can hear the Om sound--which is like the roar of the ocean. If by chance you hear the ocean-roar sound first, you won't have to concentrate on any other sound. Listen intently to Om and feel your consciousness expanding with its vibrations, like an ever enlarging sphere, into eternity. You may be content that you are making progress toward hearing the real Om sound when you hear in the right ear the sound of a great gong or bell emanating from the dorsal center in the spine, opposite the heart.

Variations of the **Om** sound emanate from the **various cerebrospinal centers**. All of these sounds will come to you by and by, through regular, deep practice of the Om Technique of Meditation. The four lower centers in the cerebrospinal axis control the elements in man of earth, water, fire, and air. The vibratory activities of each center produce a characteristic sound. **In** meditation the yogi may hear first the hum, as of a bumblebee, emitted by the earth or coccygeal center at the base of the spine. The water or sacral center has a flutelike sound; the fire or lumbar center a **harplike** sound; and the air or dorsal center a bell-like sound. The etheric or cervical center, at the base of the neck where it joins the spine, emanates a sound as of rushing waters; and at the medulla oblongata the deeply meditating yogi hears the symphony of all sounds together--the oceanic roar of the Cosmic Om Vibration. It is this symphony of sound that you are striving to hear, above all, when you practice the Self-Realization Fellowship Om Technique of Meditation.

After you have practiced listening for the Om, you may put forth active mental effort once or twice to see the light of the spiritual eye in the forehead. By practicing faithfully you will be able always to see the light with closed eyes, while hearing the vibrations with closed ears. It takes long practice to be able to see the light at will with open eyes. When one can do that, it shows distinct spiritual advancement. However, listening for **Om** is the most important, more important than seeing the light. This cosmic sound, expression of the Cause of creation, is omnipresent; hence by being one with it, one acquires the same quality of consciousness.

Listen to the various sounds with ears closed, employing the techniques described in this Lesson. As you develop, you will be able to hear the Cosmic Sound of Om with open ears in a quiet or even a noisy place, by the use of a little concentration. However, even though you can hear the Cosmic Sound with open ears, do not forget to practice the technique regularly with ears closed, as you have been taught in this Lesson.

Practice this technique for ten to fifteen minutes during your meditation in the morning; twenty to thirty minutes or longer when you meditate before bed. Bow mentally to God when you are through. Both intensity of mental effort while practicing and duration of practice are needed to reach higher and higher states of concentration.

If time allows, listen for the **Om** sound longer than the period suggested. Aside from the inner experiences of astral sounds, there also arises a great calmness. Hold to that calm during and after meditation as long as it is possible for you to do so. Apply that calmness in the practical situations of **life--** in dealing with people, in studying, in business, in thinking, in controlling yourself, in getting rid of any fixed mental or physiological habit or condition that you consider unnecessary or harmful, and so forth. Whenever situations demand discrimination and wise action, recall immediately the calmness felt during and after concentration; fall right into that mood, and meet situations from that calm center.

While practicing concentration, deep intensity of mind is necessary, but there should be no feeling of physical or mental strain. Practice with reverence and feel that in calmness, and in listening to the vibration, you are contacting the Great Spirit who is present within you as Soul, and whose expression is Cosmic Vibratory Sound--the vibration of Bliss. You will positively feel results after faithful practice. Even in the beginning the earnest student will get the valuable results of calmness and joy. Calmness you will certainly have. Deep intuitions come after prolonged practice.

Further, this technique will put you, by and by, in touch with the unexplored reservoir of soul power. Do not be impatient. Keep on! Make study and application of the SRF Lessons a part of your regular routine, as much a part of your day as eating or sleeping. The most beneficial effects flow silently over the whole mental and physiological constitution. As in everything else, highest results cannot be attained in one day. Practice--practice and apply! This Lesson is founded on tried and proven experience, from the time of India's Golden Age down to the present day. Self-Realization Fellowship students all over the world write to us, telling about their contact with the One Spirit as a result of their faithful practice of this technique. Everyone can have the same glorious experience if he perseveres. Without regular practice, which brings these changes in the inner consciousness, the student will not realize his goal. But with faithfulness in daily meditation, the bliss of **Om** will come.

Say your prayers after contacting God through Om. Fill yourself with Om, or the Holy Ghost, "the Great Comforter," and diverse spiritual powers will manifest through you. In Om-Christ-Bliss the abode of all healing powers will be found. Filled with God, go about helping others to overcome their physical, mental and spiritual troubles. Without serving God in the temple of the afflicted bodies and souls, you will never know Him. Help others every day, as cheerfully and eagerly as you would help yourself. The whole world is your bigger Self.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

By meditating upon **Om**, the pure cosmic vibratory aspect of God in creation, and on God the Absolute Spirit beyond vibration, one can develop soul magnetism and spiritual vibratory magnetism. This magnetic force has limitless range and power. If morning, noon, and night you keep yourself dreaming, feeling, and intuiting the all-attracting divine magnetism, you will develop a spiritual power that can draw desired objects from a distance, that can uplift others by the mere contact of sight, or even by your simple wish or your powerfully directed uplifting concentration. By this power you can draw friends from afar--those who have been real friends before. By this power you can make the elements bow to your wishes. By the invitation of the divine magnetism you can draw angels, the luminous creative forces, sages and saints of bygone eras on earth to come to you and dance in your inner temple of joy. By this divine magnetism you can draw the rays of all knowledge to come and sparkle and scintillate around your being.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 3

"Well," Narada began hesitantly, "by the roadside I met--" "Oh, yes," the Divine One broke in, "you met a drunken young man."

"Now how do You happen to remember him?" Narada asked complainingly. "Perhaps because the sacrilegious young fool was trying to poke You with a bamboo pole?"

The Lord laughed heartily, and seemed to be thinking about the impudent young man for some time before He turned His attention to the sulky-faced Narada. "O My Narada," He said lovingly, "don't be angry and sarcastic with Me, for I shall prove to you which of these two men you have just told Me about is My true devotee." Having captured Narada's interest in the experiment, the Lord continued: "This is really very simple. Go back to earth again, and first repair to the anchorite Bhadraka under the tamarind tree and say: 'I gave your message to the Lord of the Universe, but He is very busy now, passing millions of elephants through the eye of a needle. When He gets through doing this, He will visit you.' After you get the anchorite's reaction to that, then go and tell the same thing to the drunken young man and watch his reaction. Then you will understand."

Although Narada was baffled by the Lord's instructions, he had long since learned unquestioning faith in the commands of the Lord, so he thought himself back to earth, and was at once standing under the tamarind tree, face to face with the long-suffering anchorite. The ancient one looked up at him expectantly, but when the strange message had been delivered, he flew into a rage and began to shout. "Get out, you mocking messenger, and your lying Lord, and all the rest of your crazy crowd. Who ever heard of anyone passing elephants through the eye of a needle? What it means is that He'll never come. Maybe there isn't any Lord to come anyway." He was now trembling with fury and brandishing his pilgrim's staff. "I've wasted my life! This eighty years of discipline was nothing but folly! I'm through, do you hear? through trying to please a crazy non-existent God. Now I am sane again. For what little is left of life I am going to resume my long-neglected earthly pursuits."

Narada was too horrified to say a word, so he just disappeared. But the second part of his mission was not yet fulfilled; dubiously he came again to the roadside where he had met the noisy young man. The fellow was still there, and if possible, more drunk than ever. The fence was not yet completed, and he was laboring to bring the holes and bamboo poles together. But no sooner had Narada appeared on the scene than the youth's earthly intoxication seemed to leave him. In its place, the premonition of great joy caused a divine intoxication which lighted his features as he came running and crying, "Hey there, Narada, what is my Friend's reply to my message? What is His answer? When is He coming?"

When he heard the Lord's strange message he was not at all disconcerted, but began to dance around and around with joy, half speaking, half chanting: "He who can send worlds through the eye of a needle in an instant if He desires, has already finished passing those elephants through the eye of a needle. Now, any minute, He will be with me, and when He comes He shall touch me but once and I shall change. All my evil actions and bad habits will be drowned in my overwhelming love for Him."

So the young man danced in heavenly ecstasy, as do many devotees in India when divine joy becomes too great for their bodies, The feeble flesh cannot hold such immense bliss and--lest the very atoms fly apart and release their energy to the Divine Source which calls them--this bliss spills over into tears or into rhythmic movements of kirtana, into singing and dancing as an expression of this joy. And now as the young man danced blissfully, Narada joined him; and soon they found the laughing, lotus-eyed Lord was dancing with them. (To be concluded)

AFFIRMATION

I am the Cosmic Ocean of sound and the little wave of the body vibration in it.

A NOTE TO THE STUDENT

Now that you have firmly set forth on the Self-Realization Fellowship path, we would urge you to concentrate your spiritual effort on those techniques you are now being taught. For greatest benefit to yourself, and to avoid possible difficulties, do not mix other techniques' and practices -- particularly those of a spiritualistic nature -- with the Self-Realization techniques.

The physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines of this path were established by our God-enlightened Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, for man's complete and harmonious development. No other techniques are necessary. The experience of students has confirmed the value of our Guru's teaching, and shown that other practices, such as spiritualistic ones, may prove harmful. Also, continuing with other practices dilutes the student's efforts with the Self-Realization techniques, and consequently the results. The serious student will find so much to study and practice in these Lessons that he will have no time for other techniques.

Remember that spiritual development can be properly gauged only by the increasing interior peace and joy the student feels, and by the beneficial changes that he notices in his nature and in his daily behavior toward others -- ~~not~~ by the number or unusualness of his inner experiences. The Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship guide and protect the spiritual life of all Self-Realization students who follow faithfully their directions, which bring exact and known results. If you have any questions about this matter, please write to the Self-Realization Fellowship Mother Center for counsel.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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OM

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Whence Om, this soundless roar, doth come,
When drowseth matter's dreary drum?
On Shores of Bliss, Om, booming breaks;
All earth, all heav'n, all body shakes!

The bumblebee now hums along;
Baby Om doth softly sing his song.
From Krishna's flute the call is sweet;
'Tis time the watery God to meet.

Cords bound to flesh are broken all.
Vibrations burst and meteors fall!
The hustling heart, the boasting breath,
No more shall cause the Yogi's death.

The God of Fire with fervor sings:
"Om! Om!" His joyous harp now rings.
Prana-God with power sounds
The wondrous bells; the soul resounds.

All Nature lies in darkness soft;
The star divine is seen aloft.
Subconscious dreams have gone to bed;
'Tis then that one doth hear Om's tread.

Oh, upward climb the Living Tree!
Hark to the cosmic symphony.
From Om, the soundless roar; from **Om**
The call for light o'er dark to roam.

From Om, the music of the spheres;
From Om, the mist of Nature's tears.
All things of earth and heav'n declare
Om! Om! resounding everywhere.

PRAYER

Teach me to dive again and again in meditation, deeper and deeper, until I find Thine immortal pearls of wisdom and divine joy.

THE VALUE OF MEDITATION

JOY--AIM OF LIFE Do material things bring real joy? No, they bring a little pleasure for a while, but sorrow always follows. They **promise** joy, but they do not keep their promise. Those who amuse themselves too much with material, earthly pleasures will lose their happiness; those who overindulge in sex life lose their vitality; those who eat too much **lose** their health, and the satisfaction in eating. Everywhere you go, people are reaping the harvest of wild oats sown earlier in life. "The wages of sin is death." Sin is ignorance--ignorance of God's cosmic laws of life. Only by living in harmony with His laws do we accomplish the noble purpose of human existence. God never punishes us; we punish ourselves, according to the law of cause and effect. If we sow good deeds, we reap happiness; if we sow the opposite, we reap troubles of many different kinds and degrees. Old age, worries, disease, and death are only a few of the effects of sin, or ignorance of the universal law.

It seems a very futile aim for this life merely to live and die at the end of it. We all hope that the end of our lives will be good and pleasant. Down the trail you must go to the very end; if you have followed the right path, you cannot help but meet God there. Avoid the path of material desire that leads only to an abyss of discontent.

Every good action that you perform digs like a pickax into the soil of consciousness and brings forth a little spray from the fountain of God's joy. But the pickax of meditation, which is the highest form of good action, opens the inner surface of consciousness and lets all the joy of life spout forth. Through the orifice of silence, the whole geyser of Bliss perpetually shoots up and flows over the soul.

GOD IS EVER NEW JOY You will find, by continued practice of meditation, that you will gain perceptions of an ever new, ever increasing joy, a joy that is not just an abstract mental state of short-lived mortal pleasure, but the God-joy of meditation that will receive and respond to your prayers. Then you will hear the Cosmic Sound coming out from Spirit, and in that Sound you will have the joy of Spirit for your very own, and the answer to all things will be yours for the asking when you listen to that Sound. We are all seeking happiness, a happiness that does not come and go. We want lasting happiness. We do not want the kind of happiness that will grow stale. We want ever new joy. Once you **really** experience in your souls what ever new joy is, then automatically you will realize in it

all that you have ever wanted, and you will know that it is what you have been seeking for aeons.

Did you ever entertain the thought that you might have eternal joy without having eternal existence? No! Such a thought would be self-contradictory, absurd. The love of existence, however, is not our supreme desire. If it were, there would be no suicides; no one would ever have the thought of ending all his troubles by killing himself.

We do not wish for further existence when it has become sorrowful. We want it joyful. Nor do we want joyful existence in an unconscious state. We want to enjoy our happiness and our existence consciously. Then what is the link between ever new joy and eternal existence? Eternal consciousness. That is what God is--ever-expanding, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy. It is this Joy that all people are seeking, either directly through the soul, or indirectly through false sense pleasures. When satiety, boredom, disappointment, and pain arise from our error in seeking joy through the senses, we finally turn our attention to God and thus find the only source of true joy.

PURPOSE OF HEARING THE OM SOUND All vibrations produce sound. The gentlest and the loudest sounds proceeding from creation are unheard by the human ear, which cannot catch sounds ranging below 16 or above 20,000 cycles (approx.) per second. This Lesson teaches you how to hear, through the ear of intuition, the Cosmic Sound, the symphony of all the sounds in the universe. In deep meditation, when the physical sounds (heartthrob, circulation, and other organic activity) and the astral music (bell, harp, flute, and so on, emanating from the electric activity of the astral body) die down, the meditating devotee hears the sound of Om, the Cosmic Vibration.

We already know that physical sounds are silently roaming in the ether, detectable only by radio. The finer vibrations of the all-pervading cosmic sound of Om similarly roam the universe. These vibrations are more subtle than the ether. They are hidden beneath the cosmic forces, and beneath intelligence and thought. This Cosmic Sound can be caught only when the heart-radio of the deeply meditating devotee is tuned to Om's rate of vibration.

When you shut off your auditory sense telephone completely, you will hear that great sound of Om hidden beneath the screen of bodily and astral sounds. The most important of the five sense telephones is the ear telephone. First we learn how to shut it off completely; then we can learn how to shut off the fainter sounds in the inner parts of the body. Last of all, the sounds of the astral body must be shut off. When you have learned to do this, your body will vibrate like the sound of a drum or the ocean roar, with a great musical rhythm. When you actually hear this sound, and feel the cosmic music spread through every particle of space, then you will know God. And you will know that you know God.

Once you have learned the method you must practice it faithfully, earnestly, assiduously, consistently, and continuously; then you will find that you can really contact God. There is no limit to the heights that you can attain. SRF is giving you the technique; by using it, you can attune your consciousness to the Infinite Consciousness. Oneness with God is not mental chloroform. **Oneness** with God is the expansion of your consciousness from the limits of the mortal frame to the **utmost** bounds of eternity. It is interesting to note that the church bells had their origin in the temple bells of India. Their sound is an attempt to copy the great cosmic sound of **Om**; as are also the sounds of the many different kinds of drums that supply the rhythms peculiar to various races. Why do such things as bells and drums stir your blood? It is because they appeal to that hidden knowledge within you of the great cosmic Om.

The Cosmic Sound is omnipresent. Anyone tuning in with it will find his consciousness expanded into omnipresence. Momentarily detached from identification with your personality in your expanded consciousness of **Om**, you will behold the cosmic ocean of God's consciousness and the wave of your consciousness existing together as one. As saltwater sealed in a bottle does not contact the ocean even though it floats in the ocean, so the soul-reflection of Spirit- sealed in the body-bottle by the cork of ignorance--cannot contact God even though it lives in the ocean of His presence. **When** the jar is opened, the saltwater in it becomes one with the sea; so the contact of Om pulls out the cork of ignorance from the bottle of human consciousness, releasing the **body-imprisoned** soul to merge in the sea of Cosmic Consciousness.

If you were to hear a conch shell blown in a room, you would hear the sound in every part of the room, for sound vibration travels like an expanding sphere. Om is the special vibration of the Cosmos, and if you tune in with it, your consciousness begins to expand until it takes in the consciousness of every atom of space in the entire sphere of vibration. Om is the bridge between human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

Just listening to the sound once or twice in a few years is not enough. By practice of this and higher lessons, and with the help of your Guru, you should apply yourself until you learn to reach the Cosmic Sound in space. In the beginning, Om is just a comforting sound; but to the advanced student the Om sound is felt as all life. You can feel Om **in huge** land continents, and in vast spheres of space. You can feel the rotating of the earth and other planets in the sky, or millions of feet walking on your brown earth body; or myriad stellar systems glittering like diamonds on your cosmic body of infinite space.

TIME TO PRAY Closing the ears with the thumbs, shut off all outer sounds. Then do three things:

1. keep your vision mentally focused on the Third Eye center located between your eyebrows;
2. mentally chant Om; and

3. listen intently in the right ear, where the flow of energy is strong and where you are used to catching sounds.

The right side is usually more sensitive than the left, unless you are left-handed. When the eyes become calm and quiet, you should be able to see a light, but it is more important that you hear the astral sounds of the cerebro-spinal centers, or the Om sound. When you have closed your ears and shut off all the sounds of outside matter (auto traffic, people talking, and so on), then you will hear the mighty beat of your heart. Listen to it until you hear it no longer; then listen to the different sounds that come, one by one, concentrating upon only one sound at a time. After you find the heartbeat or sound of the circulation stopped, then you will probably hear astral music of the spinal centers. First you may hear the buzzing of a bee, then a flute, then a harp seemingly playing beautifully far off in the distance. This is the harp of heavenly astral music. Then you may hear a sound as of a huge gong-bell; and finally will follow the great rolling sound of **Om** like a bursting sea--like the sound of many waters.

If you can hear the **Om** sound first, do not listen for any other sounds, but concentrate upon that; be one with that. But if you cannot hear **Om**, listen to one sound at a time in the right ear no matter whether it is a physical or an astral sound, until you get the **Om** sound. **When** you get that, it is unnecessary **to hear** the astral sounds. God is that Cosmic Sound. **When** you hear the **great** sound of the universe, that is the time to pray. Then ask God for your heart-felt desires.

Your mind is a broadcasting microphone, but it is out of order, broken by the hammers of restlessness. Self-Realization Fellowship concentration and meditation techniques help you to tune your threefold radio of body, mind, and soul with God permanently, so that you may receive physical, financial, mental, and spiritual healing vibrations from Him. When you learn to repair your restless microphone of mind by meditation, you can broadcast your SOS to God until you find conscious response from Him.

You must keep flashing your soul's demand for an audience continuously and unceasingly until you get a reply from God in the form of spiritual ecstasy and an ever-increasing thrill of joy. Then you will know that God is waiting in your heart as joy to hear your petition. **Whatever** good desires you have, pray for them then, and you will know that God has answered the prayer of your soul.

Most people have fitful inspiration, derived from the subconscious; but those who contact **Om** derive their inspiration from the unlimited, God-guided superconsciousness. Before writing, or before undertaking any important material or spiritual venture, be sure to listen to the cosmic sound of Om, and merge in it. When filled with the joy of this cosmic guidance, pray: "I will reason, I will will, I will act; but, Cosmic Sound, guide Thou my reason, **will, and** activity, to the right thing that I should do."

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Start meditating more intensely today. After long and intense meditations, held regularly, the time will come when God will talk to you, perhaps in the form of a saint; or He may come to you as a great all-solacing Light. Do not find fault with the Lesson or the technique when you do not obtain results. Find fault with your distracted meditation. You only grow by deep meditation and intelligent, controlled activity. The deeper you meditate and the more willingly you serve, the happier you will be. And remember, every wrong that you do others, you do to yourself first in thought and deed. Let your mind and soul be cleansed. Every day happier than yesterday; that is the standard of spiritual life; and if you find that you are not growing happier and happier, you are going backwards.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD (conclusion)

MORAL If you ever feel smug about practicing the techniques, I hope you will think of this story and be jolted into seeing things again in their true perspective. Practice of technique is not enough. Intellectual attainments are not enough. Going to church regularly or performing good actions in a mechanical way because "it is the thing to do" will never bring Self-realization.

Students who resemble the anchorite may strive for years, only to turn aside from the path in a moment if faulty reasoning misleads them. Like the anchorite who "knew" that elephants cannot pass through the eye of a needle, they try to limit God's powers and manifestations to conform to their own small comprehension. But devotees who resemble the young man know that even if they have not been able to give up bad habits they can bring God closer and closer by constantly calling upon Him and expecting Him to be present at all times -- to take part in their daily lives as well as to respond to them in their moments of prayer. They know that all things are possible to God, and that most understanding lies beyond the intellect. When the devotee insistently demands the assistance and presence of God, lovingly visualizing Him and believing in His Omnipresence, then the Lord will reveal Himself in some form. With the dawning of the light of His revelation, the darkness of evil habits will automatically be banished to reveal the untainted soul.

AFFIRMATION

I am the captain of the ship of my judgment, will, and activity. I will guide my ship of life, ever beholding the pole-star of His peace shining in the firmament of my deep meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



STEP 2
LESSON 30-A

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SRF OM TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

"O Holy Ghost, sacred Om vibration, enlarge my consciousness as I listen to Thine omnipresent sound. Make me feel that I am both the cosmic ocean and the little wave of body-vibration in it."

- -Paramahansa Yogananda

TECHNIQUE

1. Sit erect. Rest the elbows on some support high enough so that you can easily put the thumbs on the ears without leaning the body forward or slumping.
2. Press the thumbs comfortably tight on each tragus (the prominence in front of the opening or hole in the ear).
3. Place the little fingers on the eyelids near the outer corners to hold them down, and press lightly to prevent restless movements of the eyeballs.
4. Rest the other fingers on the forehead.
5. With closed or half-closed eyes converge the gaze on the point between the eyebrows and keep the gaze fixed there.
6. Mentally chant "Om, Om." Make no sound, whisper, nor movement of the tongue.
7. Listen intently inside the right ear, where the flow of energy is strong and where one is accustomed to catching sounds.
8. Concentrate on whichever sound is loudest (you may hear a conglomeration of sounds of varying intensity).

9. Concentrate on only one sound at a time--the loudest. As you listen, other sounds will come to the fore. One by one, listen to these different sounds as each one becomes prominent.
10. Let the mental chanting of Om and the looking at the Christ-consciousness center be done automatically, without mental effort. When the eyes become calm and quiet, you should be able to see a light at the Christ-consciousness center; but during practice of this technique it is more important to concentrate on the astral sounds, or the Om sound. (Try to see the spiritual eye at the Christ-consciousness center after practice of this technique.) All mental effort should be given over completely to listening to the sound inside the right ear.
11. If you can hear the Om sound at once--a great rolling sound like a mighty sea--do not listen for any other sounds, but concentrate upon Om; be one with that, for God is manifesting to you as that cosmic sound of Om

KEY POINTS

1. Always precede your practice with a prayer to God and the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship.
2. If possible, obtain an arm rest for practicing this technique of meditation (see leaflet enclosed) or construct such a T-shaped elbow prop **yourself**, padding the crossbar with any suitable soft material. By affording support to the elbows during practice of the Om Technique of Meditation, the prop assists the student in maintaining the correct erect posture. The foot of the prop rests between the legs on the floor or on the meditation seat. Women may find that their mode of dress interferes with standing the prop between the legs. If so, they may attach a flat cross-piece at the bottom as well as at the top of the prop. The lower cross-piece will then rest comfortably upon the thighs.

An elbow prop is a convenient as well as helpful device, because it can be easily carried about. In lieu of a prop, simply rest the elbows on several pillows piled up to the proper height on a table top.

3. Don't lean on the hands. Sit erect, with arms relaxed; otherwise the hands and forearms soon become tired and the meditator finds himself more concentrated on his physical discomfort than on the Om sound.

4. Practice the Technique of Concentration (Hong-Sau) before practicing this Om Technique of Meditation; become calm, interiorized. The sounds flowing from Om will then be much easier to hear.
5. Be one with whatever vibration you hear--with reverence, and without any feeling of strain.
6. Intensity of mental effort) Both are needed to reach higher
) and higher states 'of at-one-ment
7. Long periods of practice) with Om.

TUNE IN WITH THE COSMIC SOUND

(From "Metaphysical Meditations" by Paramahansa Yogananda)

Listen to the cosmic sound on the sensitive right side of your head. Feel it spreading through the brain. Hear its continuous pounding roar. Now hear and feel it spreading over the spine and bursting open the doors of the heart. Feel it resounding through every tissue, every feeling, every cord of your nerves. Every blood cell, every thought, is dancing on the sea of roaring vibration. - -

Observe the spread of the volume of the cosmic sound. It sweeps through the body and mind into the earth and the surrounding atmosphere, into the airless ether, and into millions of universes of matter.

Meditate on the marching spread of the cosmic sound. It has passed through the physical universes to the subtle veins of rays that hold all matter in manifestation.

The cosmic sound is commingling with millions of multicolored rays. The cosmic sound has entered the realm of cosmic rays. Listen to, behold, and feel the embrace of the cosmic sound and the eternal light. The cosmic sound now pierces through the heart-fires of cosmic energy and they both melt into the bosom of cosmic consciousness and cosmic joy. The body melts into the universe. The universe melts into the soundless voice. The sound melts into the all-shining light. And the light enters the bosom of infinite joy.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I AM BUILDING A RAINBOW BRIDGE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

An age-old gulf has lain between Thee and me, ever widening with the rush of the waters of my obliviousness of Thee.

Now I stand on the rocky strand of matter and look longingly for Thy distant shores of etheric beauty.

I have summoned divine inner architects that are building across the gulf a rainbow bridge of my constant remembrance of Thee. The strong girders of self-control are being riveted. Soon I shall be able to reach Thee!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to carry my love of Thee deep in my heart before I sleep. Help me to cradle it there, so that when I dream I may dream of Thee resting on the fragrant altar of sleep.

SUPERCONSCIOUS VISIONS

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DREAMS AND VISIONS

The conscious mind works with the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. It is operative during wakefulness, but inactive during sleep. The subconscious mind, on the other hand, never sleeps. During the daytime it is awake and at work with the conscious mind, making memory records for it. At night, while the conscious mind is asleep and the body is at rest, the subconscious mind remains awake looking after the functions of the heart, lungs, and other vital organs, tending the human body-house like a faithful janitor. In addition, the subconscious mind is the manager-operator of mental dream-movies in dreamland.

The conscious and subconscious minds are identified with mortal ego consciousness. The superconscious mind expresses the pure intuitive consciousness of the immortal soul. The superconscious mind works first through the subconscious mind, then through the conscious mind, without becoming entangled with either.

Dreams do not come to us from some outside source. They originate in the consciousness of the dreamer. One's own conscious, subconscious, or superconscious mind can create any dream imaginable and project it on the screen of subconsciousness. Since dreams are produced only during sleep (when the subconscious mind alone is operative) or in other states wherein pure subconsciousness is manifest, it is apparent that subconsciousness is the screen on which all dream films are projected, whether they originate in the conscious, the subconscious, or the superconscious mind.

In sleep the life force withdraws from the sensory nerves, and partially from the heart, and accumulates in the brain. True dream films of comic and tragic happenings of the past lie hidden in the grooves of the brain, all

ready to be projected. These films stored in the subconscious mind become vivified and magnified by the accumulated life force in the brain during the deep relaxation of sleep. The stored-up life force percolates through the brain grooves containing the various kinds of dream films or memories, and by strange combinations produces different kinds of motion pictures, which are then projected on the screen of subconsciousness.

The subconscious mind is a multiple personality. In addition to serving as a screen on which the inner dream films are shown, it acts sometimes as a cameraman, sometimes as a director, and sometimes as the operator who projects the inner films. Thought films made by the cameraman of the conscious and the superconscious minds collect in the chamber of the subconscious. Sometimes the subconscious mind, acting as a projectionist, is superconsciously guided to forecast coming events: The cameraman of the all-seeing superconscious mind may photograph a true happening that is taking place elsewhere, or that is about to take place in the life of the dreamer, and drop the film in the movie house of the subconscious, to be played for the guidance of the erring ego. Superconscious films thus dropped into the subconscious chamber and projected on the screen of subconsciousness are true dreams or visions. Films dropped by the conscious-mind cameraman into the memory chamber of the subconscious mind are often mixed up and projected as various kinds of false or imaginative dreams, but sometimes they may be true dreams. Unless consciously (that is, at will) or superconsciously induced, dreams are generally meaningless and false. Only dreams that are true visions are those consciously produced in the spiritual eye.

As in real motion pictures, the subjects of the interior movies are various. There are newsreels, tragedies, comedies, and so on. These may be dream re-enactments of actual happenings, or purely imaginary original productions. A dream, being a visual image, is more real than ordinary thought or imagination.

A developed yogi can concentrate upon a single thought, at the same time completely relaxing the body as in sleep, and produce consciously a true dream or vision. A vision consists of the filming, by the all-seeing superconsciousness or soul intuition, of a future event.

When you are able to shift the searchlight of your attention and energy from conscious to superconscious dreaming, enjoying peace at will, you will feel complete freedom from the troubles of this mundane world. At will, you will fly from the planet of physical sensations to the planet of dream sensations, or astral consciousness; or to the superconscious sphere of eternal peace. In order to shift your consciousness from the conscious to the subconscious, your body must also manifest all the signs of sleep; the life force and energy must be switched off from the lamps of billion-celled muscles, and from the optic, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, and tactual nerves.

TRUE DREAMS OR VISIONS Visions during the wakeful state are created by the all-seeing, all-powerful superconscious mind. The superconscious uses brain energy to materialize thoughts about a true event which is to happen in the near or far future, and shows it to the yogi during the wakeful state with the eyes closed. When a true vision is seen with open eyes, the life force has been projected from the brain into the ether. In this case the persons and scenes in the brain may not be true to touch, though they are true to sight, and will be true to all five senses, in time, if spiritual development is continuous.

Visions can be had only by going deep into meditation and then wishing to see the real state of things. Visions are real, whether seen during the waking state or as dreams during sleep. Ordinary dreams, however, are only imaginary images. One who is able to dream at will is more likely to be able to have a real vision. To be able to dream at will signifies that your will can materialize thoughts, and that you are becoming prepared to produce guiding visions. Visions of true future happenings are very useful in guiding and molding your life, when you can produce them by superconsciousness or by Christ Consciousness. The enlightened man seldom dreams any false dreams, whereas the ordinary man seldom has any true dreams,

It is better not to dream unintentionally at all, but to be able to produce at will true dreams and visions, Why be imposed upon by dreams? You don't want your movie-house of dreams fully working when you are trying to rest, When dreams do come too often, you should meditate and calm yourself; then this condition will disappear. The more calm you become, the less you will dream, You should be able, by deep meditation and advancement on the path, to dream true dreams at will, or to produce visions of distant events by the all-seeing power of the superconsciousness within you.

In superconscious dreams, the superconscious mind photographs future happenings and drops them into the dream-movie house, to be filmed there for the guidance of the ego, These dreams, good or bad, always come true, The superconscious mind is especially interested in dropping messages that will awaken the ego to its true soul-nature and thus keep it from wallowing in the mire of sense attachments. In addition to occasionally producing dreams to lead the ego to return to its real home of happiness in God, the superconscious mind also produces dream hints of spiritual progress, and of the call of God.

VISIONS ANALYZED Whenever you dream calmly about big fires, the ocean, rivers; boats, angels, scriptures, saints, temples, churches, altars, flowers; cloudless skies, sunny light, auroras, or the moon, or a feeling of expansion in space, you may be sure that, owing to the cumulative power generated by your good actions in this life, you are nearing that time in your spiritual development when the karmic consequences of prenatal or postnatal bad actions will finally have been worked out.

Altars represent communion with God, or marriage with an evolved person. The real marriage, and the happiest one, consists in the union of the human soul (considered as feminine, or negative, whether in a male or female body) with the only masculine, positive Soul or God.

Cloudless skies represent a serene, pure path of communion with God, spiritual development without trouble, and an abundance of clear spiritual perceptions.

Flowers represent the budding of blossoms of creative wisdom in the garden of thought. By the magic wand of mere willingness the spiritual devotee will find the right thought arising at the right time.

Sunny lights signify astral visions illuminating vast spaces during meditation.

Auroras represent cosmic astral light--in which one can see all the astral planets, large and small, glittering in space--and the visitation of Cosmic Consciousness during deepest meditation.

The moon indicates that one should combine devotion with astral visions perceived in meditation, in order to progress on the spiritual path.

Fire represents the burning of past karma.

Light and the ocean represent vast perceptions of Self-realization in meditation.

Water represents the divine perceptions attainable by meditation.

A boat indicates that one should seek the right guru (human vehicle-- messenger of God), whose voice, intelligence, and spiritual perception the Divine Being uses to redeem the disciple completely in one or (as the case may be) many incarnations. The guru is the boat or vehicle of salvation; or he might be called a spiritual mariner, who takes the disciple across oceans of past karma to the shores of God. A boat also represents Self-realization received through the practice of a spiritual technique of salvation given by a guru.

Angels represent saints and divine friends from past lives who remember us and try to redeem us through silent suggestions of their presence.

Any of the foregoing types of dream visions are hints that the dreamer has shown development in this kind of spiritual accomplishment, either in his past life or in this life; and that it would be easy for him to develop further along these lines.

THE LION WHO BECAME A SHEEP

Once there was a huge lioness, pregnant and half-starved. As the days passed and the baby lion grew heavier within her, she had a hard time moving around in quest of prey. Even when the lioness successfully stalked some creature she wasn't quick enough to pounce, and so failed every time to capture her prey.

Roaring with sadness, heavy with the baby lion, and pining with hunger, the lioness roamed through the forest and finally fell asleep in the shade of a grove of trees bordering a pasture. As she was dozing, she dreamed that she saw a flock of sheep grazing. Trying to pounce upon one of the dream sheep, she jerked and woke up to behold in reality a large flock of sheep grazing nearby.

Overwhelmed with joy, forgetful of the baby lion she was carrying inside her, and impelled by the madness of unappeased hunger, the lioness pounced upon a young lamb and disappeared into the depths of the jungle. The lioness did not even realize that, owing to the severe exertion of her mad leap for the lamb she had given birth to her cub.

The sheep were paralyzed with fear at the attack, but when the lioness departed and the panic was over, they wakened from their stupor and noticed the loss of the lamb. As the flock bleated out lamentations in sheep language they noticed, to their great astonishment, the helpless baby lion mewling in their midst. One of the ewes took pity on the cub and adopted it as her own.

Several years passed; the orphan lion, now a mature beast with long mane and tail, roamed with the flock behaving exactly like a sheep. Bleating instead of roaring, and eating grass instead of meat, this strictly vegetarian lion had perfected himself in the weakness and meekness of a lamb.

It so happened that one day another lion strolled out of the nearby forest which opened into the green pasture and to his delight beheld the flock of sheep. Thrilled with joy and whipped by hunger, the strong lion pursued the fleeing flock of sheep, when, to his great amazement, he noticed the husky sheep-lion, tail high in the air, also fleeing at top speed ahead of the sheep.

The pursuing lion paused for a moment, switching his tail in astonishment and pondering within himself: "I can understand sheep flying away from me, but I cannot imagine why a stalwart lion should run too. This runaway lion interests me." Spurred by determination to get to the fleeing lion, he raced hard and pounced upon the escaping beast. The sheep-lion fainted with fear. The other lion was more puzzled than ever. Slapping the sheep-lion out of his swoon, he rebuked him in a hoarse voice: "Wake up! What's the matter? Why do you, a brother lion, fly away from me?"

The sheep-lion closed his eyes and bleated out in sheep language: "Please

let me go. Don't kill me! I am just a sheep from yonder flock that fled away and left me." "Aha! Now I see why you are bleating," said his captor. He pondered a moment, then seized the mane of the sheep-lion with his mighty jaws, and dragged him toward a lake at the end of the pasture land. When they reached the shore of the lake, he pushed the deluded creature's head over the water so that it was reflected there, and began to shake him violently, for the sheep-lion still had his eyes tightly closed. "What's the matter with you?" asked his captor. "Open your eyes and see that you are not a sheep."

"Bleat, bleat, bleat! Please don't kill me. Let me go! I am not a lion, but only a poor meek sheep," wailed the silly beast. The other lion, angry now, gave his captive a terrible shake. Under the impact of it, the sheep-lion opened his eyes and was astonished to see in the water a reflection, not of a sheep's head, as he expected, but a lion's head, like that of the one who was shaking him with his paw. Then the big creature said in lion language: "Look at my face and your face reflected in the water. They are the same; and this voice of mine roars. It does not bleat. You must roar instead of bleating."

The sheep-lion, convinced, tried to roar, but at first succeeded only in producing bleat-mingled roars. But under the slapping paws and exhortation of his new friend, he at last succeeded in roaring effectively. Then both lions leaped across the fields, and together pursued the flock of sheep, finally returning to live together in the den of the older lion.

The foregoing story fittingly illustrates how most of us, though made in the all-powerful image of the Divine Lion of the Universe, remember only being born and brought up in the sheepfold of mortal weakness. So we bleat with fear at the predators of sickness, lack, sorrow, and death, instead of roaring with immortality and power and preying on mortal delusion and ignorance.

Self-Realization Fellowship teachings are the powerful lion that will drag you to the crystal pool of meditation and give you such a hard shaking that you will open the closed eyes of your wisdom and behold yourself as a divine lion, made in the image of the Cosmic Lion. Those of you who keep trying continuously will forget your mortal bleatings of weakness and sickness and death, and will roar with the power of almighty immortality.

AFFIRMATION

I am the prince of perpetual peace playing
the drama of sad and happy dreams on the stage
of experience.



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TEACH ME TO SEEK THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Spirit, teach me to aspire each day to the best in everything.

Teach me to crave the supreme lasting joy of Thy presence in preference to passing sense-pleasures.

Teach me to perform all my duties to please only Thee.

Teach me to think of Thee until **Thou dost** become my only thought.

Teach me to call Thee until Thou breakest Thy vow of silence.

Teach me to seek Thee until I find Thy hiding place.

Teach me to beat the drum of my craving until Thou **dost** come into the temple of my heart.

Teach me to exude fragrant devotion until it lures Thee into my soul garden.

Teach me to behold the spreading radiance of Thine infinite presence.

Teach me to dig with the pickax of my peace deeper and deeper into the soil of silence, until the water of Thy presence gushes forth and I am bathed in Thy bliss.

Teach me to look for Thee in myself until I realize that it is Thou who **hast** become I.

PRAYER

○ Spirit, teach us to consider no work greater than Thy spiritual work, as no work is possible without the power to perform it being borrowed from Thee.

FINDING YOUR TRUE VOCATION IN LIFE

Every human being is an expression of the great, vast Spirit. Since you are a manifestation of Spirit, you should make an effort to express your infinite potentialities as you are intended to do. You should definitely determine your life's vocation, by analyzing your early childhood and present life, before you hastily sidetrack yourself in some incompatible pursuit or start in a wrong direction altogether. Then, after you have found out the path to which you are best suited, try to build around it all the creative money-making methods at your command. You should maintain your money-making methods, however, within the boundaries of your idealism; otherwise the result may be that you have money but not happiness. Happiness is possible only when the desire for making money cannot lure you to travel on the wrong path.

Wake up! It is never too late to reconstruct your life. Analyze what you are and what your soul-appointed tasks are, so that you can make yourself what you should be. You have talents and powers that you have not used; all the power that you need. There is nothing greater than the power of mind. Resurrect your mind from the little habits that keep you worldly. Anchor your mind in God so that you can smile that perpetual smile--that God-inspired, strong smile of balanced recklessness, that million dollar smile that no one can take from you.

Millions of children are started on the path of life **without** a specific destination. They act like little toy engines, wound up with a little power, running without a track, only to smash up against anything that comes across their path. Such aimless journeys in life are the **lot** of most people, because in early life they were not started toward the right goal, nor were they properly equipped with systematically developed powers that would enable them to keep moving on definite paths of achievement. On this stage of life most people behave like puppet-actors, manipulated by environment, prenatal instincts, and karmic destiny created in former lives. They never know what parts they can play successfully, nor do they understand how they can harmonize their own duties with the general plan of the cosmic drama. Millions are sleepwalking, so to speak, doing their duties of life as if in a somnambulistic state, unaware of any purpose; ignorant of the reason for their own behavior, and **without** any conception of its results.

WAYS THAT LEAD TO SUCCESS You cannot remain stationary. You must go either forward or backward. Isn't that a great and marvelous

truth--that in this life you cannot remain at a standstill? The law of change governs our universe. You are subject to changes that are either harmful or beneficial. In this Lesson, we are considering changes that are beneficial to you. You should never forget that where there is a will there is a way. The way best suited to your life, the way worked out after a compromise between your idealistic desires and the practical duties of life, should be the path that you follow. For instance, if you have a tendency toward gardening, and ability to do it, but you have to live and work in a city in order to make enough money to live on, do not give up your desire for the occupation. Have even a small garden in your backyard. But have your home in the country if possible, and in either case spend most of your Saturdays and Sundays, not in attending useless shows, but in finding your peace in garden work.

Perhaps someone has started you on the path of a traveling salesman. You try your utmost; you work hard, you think and plan, but you do not succeed. Analyze yourself. You may find that from childhood you have had an inclination to have a little garden of your own in which to grow vegetables; and to have a quiet home, where you could rest, enjoy, and drink peace; and where occasionally you could paint a picture or two of the landscape. Perhaps this desire to be a farmer-artist came percolating through your superconsciousness from a former existence, or it may have been strongly suggested to you by some person in this life or by the impression of early years spent on a farm. Your mind's whole enthusiasm and ambition may have been already prejudiced by the latent impulse toward a life close to nature. (Of course, gardening is only a single example. Your innate tendencies might lead you toward music, science, business, medicine, the law, etc.) The question is, why walk vocationally uphill against your own already formed tendencies toward a different occupation? Most people form their innate heart's desire between the ages of three and twelve, although they may not be aware of it. Watch yourself carefully, and you will find running under the wavelets of your many incidental desires an undercurrent of some definite desire. That ignored permanent desire, which has been always with you, coaxing you to listen to it, is the real archangel of success that you should follow.

No matter what wonderful vocation you are practicing, if it does not satisfy your heart, be certain that you are not following the right path. Whatever path your heart's deep desire tells you to follow is your royal highway in this life, the route you should travel in order to reach the abode of lasting peace and happiness. People are never happy traveling in the wrong direction. But while striving to follow the main vocation of your life, you should be practical and use your common sense. The person who follows a certain artistic path, which is paved after his heart's desire, may satisfy his aesthetic hunger, but may not be productive enough to meet his own needs and his family's physical hunger. Every man should fulfill his duties as well as foster his talents.

PLAY YOUR
PART WELL

Your small part in the Great Play, if wrongly played, would affect its success, even if the cosmic drama were perfectly played by all other souls. Find out your true part, and play

it for your own happiness, if it is in harmony with the happiness of others. Then you may sometime be chosen to play the divinely entertaining role of a savior-actor, to inspire prodigal souls to retrace their footsteps to the mansion of peace, where they may find real understanding of life and God. To provide your family with food is necessary, but to provide their minds with means for proper development of mental powers is more necessary; and to develop their souls by leading them to know the meditation ways that lead to God-contact is of paramount importance.

In order to fulfill successfully the part you were sent on earth to play, you should not only follow your innate ambition and learn how to acquire the practical necessities of life from that vocation, but you should also do something every day that will satisfy your obligation to the cosmic law and cosmic plan. Most people are unhappy because they fail to recognize the necessity of harmonizing their acquired personal earthly duties with their duties according to the demands of the cosmic plan. It is a decree of Cosmic Law that the happiness of one's own heart alone cannot satisfy the soul; one must try to include, as necessary to one's own true happiness, the happiness of others.

Every day try to help uplift, as you would help yourself or your family, whoever in your environment may be physically, mentally, or spiritually sick. If from today on, instead of living in the old misery-making selfish way, you live scientifically, according to the physical, mental, and spiritual laws of God, then no matter what your part is on the stage of life, you will know that you have been playing it right, directed by the Stage Manager of all our destinies. Your role, however small, is just as important as the biggest in contributing to the success of the entire drama of souls on the stage of creation. Resolve to make and be satisfied with a little money, by living an extremely simple life; and express your ideals, rather than work hard just to have lots of money and worries without end.

HOW TO OVERCOME TRIALS AND TROUBLES Trials do not come to destroy you, but to help you appreciate God better. God does not send those trials. They are of your own making. All you have to do to overcome them is to resurrect your consciousness from the environment of spiritual ignorance. Inner and outer troubles are born because of conscious or unconscious actions in the past, somewhere, sometime. We **must** blame ourselves for these. We should not allow ourselves, however, as a result of this realization, to develop an inferiority complex. You should ever affirm: "Heavenly Father, I know that Thou art guiding me! In this tumultuous sea of trial Thou art the polestar of my shipwrecked thoughts." Why are you afraid? You are an immortal being. You are neither a man nor a woman, as you may think, but a soul, joyous, eternal.

Even as Jesus could manifest his love and say, when sorely tested: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," so should you become able to forgive others, even in the midst of exacting trials, and say: "My soul is resurrected. My power to overcome is greater than all the destructive

force of my trials, because I am a child of God." Thus your mental powers will expand, and your cup of realization will become big enough to hold the ocean of knowledge. Your forever hungry desires must be attended to; destroy those that are useless, and nourish with proper environment and activity those that are worthwhile. Then you will be happy and prosperous.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Use your creative thinking ability to gain success in every worthwhile project you undertake. Help yourself that you may bring into proper use all your God-given powers. Make mental blueprints of little things, and keep on making them materialize until you can make your big dreams also come true. Be happy in the definite accomplishment of the little objects of your desire; then you can materialize the big dreams of your life.

Unhappiness is caused by failure. You can make permanent happiness for yourself by not letting anything ever disturb you on your forward journey to success. God will help you if you help yourself and, at the same time, pray to Him to help you bring your efforts to a successful issue.

WE ARE ALL A LITTLE BIT CRAZY AND DON'T KNOW IT

The noisy hooves of the iron horse "Chief" were racing over the tracks. I was seated in my assigned section of the Pullman car, peering through the window watching the mountains, trees, and landscape flit by. Opposite me sat a man whom I recognized as a movie actor. He gave me an indirect look of distaste, mingled with pity, as if "condescending" to sit opposite me, a Hindu with long flowing hair and an orange robe. I was looking at him with unperturbed gaze.

After a time I softly asked him: "Sir, will you please tell me why you have assumed such a harried expression?" "It is no business of yours," he replied angrily, and would have left then and there; but like a mother curbing a wayward child, I caught hold of his hand and persuaded him to keep his seat.

He sat back with the helpless air of one who knows he is trapped. "You are the most audacious person I have ever met during my travels." As I paid no attention to his remark, he sulkily added: "Anyhow, it's none of your business what kind of an expression I have." This was my opportunity.

"Of course it is my business, sir, to tell you about your self-distorted face, as I have to look at it steadily for many hours. Won't you please paint a smile over your gloomy countenance?" At this remark my movie friend showed his well-formed, well-polished teeth in a smile, signifying: "Hostilities have ceased; now state your intention quickly and in as few words as possible."

Seeing him now in a fairly receptive mood, I began: "My friend, it was an

accident that you were born an American and that I was born a Hindu. But I know that both you and I are children of God. When we leave this earth, we shall have to drop our mortal titles and racial cloaks and know ourselves only as God's children. "

"Yes, I know all that," was the bland, dry reply. In spite of his cold blanket of indifference that he had just cast over me, I continued with unabated warm enthusiasm: "Brother, do you know that in this world we are all a little bit crazy and don't know it?" "Why, what do you mean?" my new acquaintance countered cautiously, apparently not ready to agree that he was crazy too.

I added quickly, "Do you know why people can't see their own craziness?" "No, Why don't they?"

"People don't detect their own craziness because crazy people of the same feather flock together. If I were a movie actor, then we would have at least tolerated each other; and if I had met another Hindu with my tastes, instead of meeting you, then we would perhaps have had a jolly good time. But as it is, our different types of craziness make us seem strange to each other. I have the advantage, however, because I know about your craziness as a movie actor, but you don't know anything about my craziness. This is an interesting occasion because you have the chance of a lifetime to prove the truth that when people who are differently crazy come together they find out about their own craziness. "

My movie-actor friend burst out laughing. "That is well said!" he exclaimed.

But I wasn't through with him yet! "Here is one chance in eternity to learn the details concerning my form of craziness and then decide whether mine will afford more real happiness than yours, or vice versa. " The actor raised no protest. "If I can convince you by logic that my God craziness is better than your movie craziness, then you must follow me; but if you can talk me into believing that your craziness is better than mine, then I will be a movie actor. "

Well, I am not a movie actor yet! My friend followed me instead.

The fact is, we must not dislike people because they are different from us, or because their opinions differ from ours. We are almost crazily determined to believe in our own pet self-formulated convictions. Since people of the East and the West know very little about each other's particular craziness, it is best that we come together and point out to each other our specific beliefs. When in a friendly way the East remarks on the West's craziness for material possessions, and the West points out the spiritual one-sidedness of the East, then each will want to remove its one-sidedness; and if both will constructively exchange experiences, they can pave the way for a balanced,

harmonious civilization after the pattern of God's plan.

AFFIRMATION

I will try to please everyone by kind, considerate actions, and always try to remove the cause of any misunderstanding that arises.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE MELODY OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Spirit, we are traveling by many right roads to Thine abode of light. Guide us onto the highway of Self-knowledge, to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead.

The diverse **religions** are branches of Thy **one** immeasurable tree of truth. May we enjoy the luscious fruits of soul realization that hang from the boughs of scriptures of every clime and time.

Teach us to chant **in** harmony the countless expressions of our supreme devotion. In Thy temple of the earth, in a chorus of many-accented voices, we are singing only to Thee.

O Divine Mother, lift us on Thy lap of universal love. Break Thy vow of silence and sing to us the heart-melting melody of human brotherhood.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

○ Divine Mother, let every sound that I make have the vibration of Thy voice. Let my every thought be saturated with the consciousness of Thy presence. Let my every feeling glow with Thy love.

THE CHEMISTRY OF FEELINGS

Chemistry shows us that a combination of two elements with different characteristics may produce a third substance manifesting an altogether different quality. Similarly, two or more different kinds of feelings may combine to produce a wholly new feeling, expressing an entirely new quality. And, just as the chemical combination of two elements generates heat, and, conversely, their union may be brought about by heat, so the union of different feelings may be accomplished by stimulation of warmth-producing heart qualities, or emotions.

EMOTIONAL COMBINATIONS Attachment to material objects produces misery. Attachment to spiritual inclinations produces realization. Spiritual attachment plus the peace found in meditation creates bliss. Selfishness plus egotism makes miserliness and material attachment. But selfishness plus consciousness of the higher Self, which sees Itself in all, brings breadth of vision and spiritual perception.

Ambition plus the money-making desire creates selfishness and dissatisfaction. But ambition plus sympathy for others produces a higher form of selfishness that brings lasting joy; a selfishness that is really selflessness, taking pleasure in service to others as to oneself.

Anger may be violent, or tempered by reason. It is usually awakened when one's own or another's interest is hurt. The chemical combination of violent anger plus self-interest or selfishness causes a psychological explosion ending in hysterics or some dangerous act. Anger plus greed and dissipation makes for recklessness, satiety, and indifference. Anger plus devotion to a righteous cause--if tempered with reason--produces some definite result for good in the world.

Hatred of sin (error) plus scorn equals indifference and hurts oneself and others. But hatred of sin plus sensitiveness that seeks to avoid actions that will bring suffering to others produces self-control. Hate the sinner and you yourself fall in the estimation of divine law. Deep peace plus wisdom-guided sense enjoyment makes for self-control. Craving for pleasure plus sense enjoyment creates insatiable desire.

By itself, a particular feeling produces a particular, limited result; but when rightly combined with certain other qualities, it may produce infinite results in spiritual realization. Higher feelings may be developed only by exercising them. Alone, ordinary feelings produce the dualities and relativities of human experiences--likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, etc.--serving certain isolated purposes. But when correctly and spiritually united, they produce the higher emotions, which serve to awaken inner realization.

GOOD AND EVIL TENDENCIES Generally speaking, we can say that all the people in the world fall into one or another of two opposite **classifications**: good or evil, meditative or restless, wise or ignorant, happy or sad. What is more, they mentally "**fix**" themselves in certain categories. Tell an evil person to be good, or the restless one to be meditative, and both will make you feel that either they do not like to, or **they** cannot. Their attitudes are due to previous habit, and not to a true desire of the heart. Once our habits are strongly established it is extremely difficult for us to change. The feeling that we cannot change is only a delusion, but it is very hard to overcome that delusion. Therefore do not willfully or carelessly put aside good habits, but cultivate them, and develop a taste for the superior, lasting happiness they bring. Otherwise you may lapse into weak habits and find yourself unable to change when you wish to.

A man may have either very good or very evil tendencies, or somewhat good or somewhat evil tendencies. **An** exact balance of good and evil qualities is rarely to be found in anyone. There is always a little more tendency to good than to evil, or vice versa. It is a law of nature that if you are a little less evil than good, your evil gradually will be taken away by the greater power of good; and if you have a little less good than evil, your few good habits will gradually be absorbed by the greater number of evil tendencies. The dominant quality, by its very preponderance, tends to attract more of the same quality. "For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he **hath**" (Mark 4:25).

It is just as difficult for some people to be evil as it is for others to be good. But man cannot remain under the influence of error forever, because he is made in the image of God. The beginning spiritual aspirant finds his soldiers of discrimination guided only by the desire to be good. Later, as he meditates longer and prays ardently for inner help, he finds that the calm conviction of latent intuition--awakening inner light--a veteran occult general, emerges from the superconsciousness to guide the forces of discrimination.

Take away the compelling instincts of anger, fear, sense temptation, selfishness, and greed that are planted in man by the unseen cosmic satanic force, and the world would be entirely free from evil. If these evil mental traits did not exist, man's reason, or will, could not be influenced to evil thoughts and actions. People who are easily influenced by evil usually are

found to have had predominantly evil instincts from early childhood.

When persons accustomed to anger slavery are drunk with excitement, they become emotional firebugs; at the slightest provocation they light matches of wrathful words and set fire to others' inner peace. A forest fire causes millions of dollars of loss to the Government; emotional firebugs, by destroying the happiness of others, similarly cause millions of dollars of loss in creative thinking, and incalculable waste of human nerve-energy.

PUNISHMENTS AND REWARDS People seeking **happiness** should shun bad habits, which lead to evil actions that sooner or later produce misery. Like a silently burning acid, misery corrodes body, mind, and soul, and cannot be endured long. It should be strictly avoided by exercising wisdom and discrimination.

Remember that the repetition of a few weak actions produces habits of weakness. Most people allow self-created habits of weakness or failure to enslave them. You can save yourself from weak slavery if you have made up your mind to live differently, but your resolution to fight bad habits should be persistent, until success is reached. Whatever your position now, it is you who have put yourself there. Whatever you are now, you have made yourself in the distant or near past. The secret, invisible traces of your own past actions exercise a controlling power over present actions initiated by free choice.

Thus it is you--through the law of cause and effect that governs all human actions--who now order yourself to be punished or rewarded. In past years you probably have suffered enough; now it is time for you to parole yourself from the prison of your own past undesirable habits. Since you are the judge, no jail of suffering, poverty, or ignorance can hold you if you really want to liberate yourself.

The kind omnipresent God has never punished or rewarded you, for from the beginning He has given you the power to reward or punish yourself by the right use or misuse of your own reason and will. If you have transgressed laws of health, prosperity, or wisdom, you punish yourself accordingly with ill health, poverty, or ignorance. Live wisely, cultivating good habits that will bring happiness. Then, when evil material desire tries to exercise the power of habit to destroy the power of good, it will be amazed to find that the offspring of past good habits are ready to give resistance. It is very consoling to know that no matter how strong the powers of evil habit and material desire are, there are soldiers of good habits of this life and past incarnations ready at any moment to give battle. Each person must ascertain for himself whether habits born of his good actions of the past and present are gaining ascendancy in his bodily kingdom.

SEEK HAPPINESS IN GOD. To be good is more charming and beneficial
NOT IN MATERIAL THINGS than to be evil, yet even a few good people--

by their qualitative worthwhileness--counterbalance the quantitative influence of evil. One moon gives more light than all the stars. The sun drives away the darkness from a space millions of times larger than itself. One good man, whether he preaches or not, by his very presence in the world sets in motion invisible good vibrations; their power is sufficient to counteract even vast volumes of inharmonious vibrations emanating from the wrong thoughts and actions of evil persons.

We are usually born into life rich with smiles, youth, health, and mystic aspirations. As we grow ever older, we begin to lose these riches, and our swelling, thrilling hopes die out. Why do we grow warm with riches only to be frozen suddenly by the chill of poverty? Does happiness come only to vanish? There is a lesson for us in the evanescence of youth and its joys.

If one has lost a diamond and tries to satisfy himself by replacing it with little pieces of broken glass that he finds shining in the sunlight, he is bound to be disillusioned. He cannot find the lost diamond in a pile of broken glass; he is seeking in the wrong place. In the same way, man tries to regain his lost soul-happiness by pursuing momentarily glittering sense pleasures; but when he has had enough of sense happiness he becomes disgusted and tries to find peace and joy where alone they may be found--in the soul.

It is foolish to expect true happiness from material things, for they are powerless to give it; yet many millions of people die of broken hearts trying vainly to find in material things the comfort that only God can impart.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Thou **hast** issued the commandments of righteousness, O Lord, to safeguard our **happiness**. May we shun the path of wrongdoing, which always leads to suffering. Let us see that virtue is infinitely more charming than vice. Help us to understand that evil, which at first may seem delightful, gradually acts as poison; and that good, in the beginning often bitter to our taste, eventually becomes nectar-sweet.

ROAST THE SEEDS OF EVIL TENDENCIES

Pat and Mat hated each other. They quarreled when they were boys in school, and when they grew up they were bitter rivals in competing **shoe-stores**. They even fought one day for the hand of the same fair maiden; and Pat, being slightly stronger, gave Mat a sound beating. Pat walked away with the girl, leaving Mat senseless on the sidewalk. When he "came to," Mat was filled with shame, sorrow, and disgust. Determining to get even

with Pat sometime, Mat shifted his interest and his business from Philadelphia to Miami.

Although Pat soon forgot all about the insult, hurt, and inconvenience that he had caused Mat, the latter, being the maltreated party, could not wipe from his memory the grievance against Pat. Every night before going to bed Mat would affirm: "Day by day, in every way, I am forgiving Pat more and more." But after several months he realized that during his daily affirmation of forgiveness he had actually been hatching the egg of revengefulness, and that in the background of his mind he had really been praying for an opportunity to straighten out his old grudge.

After a time, Pat went to Miami for a vacation, unwittingly drawn there by the strangely attractive power of mutual hatred. Not suspecting any trouble, he guilelessly went for a stroll one evening, although it was dark and drizzly. As he walked along a lonely road, he passed under the tiled roof of an open shed adjoining a warehouse. Unbeknownst to him, Mat, having found out that his old enemy was in town, was silently dogging his steps in rubber-soled shoes. Mat was ready to pay back with compound interest what Pat had done to him in Philadelphia.

Pitter-patter! the drizzle changed into raindrops. Under cover of their sound, Mat pursued his quarry more closely. He was delighted to behold on the ground ahead a large tile that had evidently loosened and fallen, unbroken, from the roof of the warehouse shed. Just after Pat stepped over this fallen tile, Mat knocked him senseless.

Pat lay on the cold, muddy sod beneath the shed much longer than Mat had lain on the sidewalk after the thrashing at his hands in Philadelphia, long ago. Two hours passed. The sky had ceased to weep, and was smiling with moonbeams when he regained consciousness, puzzled to find himself lying in a pool of blood on the cold earth beneath the shed. By the moonlight peeping through the shed roof where the tile had loosened, Pat could see all around him. He saw then the fallen tile, mutely yet eloquently lying near his head. Looking up at the square opening in the tile roof overhead, he thought to himself, "What bad luck! Evidently the tile loosened itself under the cumulative pelting of the rain and I ran under the shed to escape the rain just in time for the tile to fall on my head."

Pat's reasoning is an illustration of how we tend to forget our misdeeds, though the self-created results of such actions never forget us. The consequences of our good or bad actions silently pursue us through the darkness of our ignorance. Just as the cow can find its calf amidst a thousand other calves, so the results of our actions in this life and past lives pursue us doggedly and find us wherever we happen to be. If Pat had weighed the consequences of his action after beating Mat, and had made up with Mat, no

injurious result would have germinated for him in the dark womb of the future.

The moral is, increase the power of wisdom and meditation in order to burn up the ungerminated seeds of evil tendencies latent within your mind. Judge well before you act, for after you have acted you must reap a specific result of that action. Remember that every action leaves traces that are stored up as tendencies in your mind. Unless you counteract latent evil tendencies by becoming better and better every day, there is no telling what you may become in the future, should the germination of seeds of evil tendencies suddenly come about under favorable evil influences.

A man can be sure of himself only if he meditates more and more deeply, and in the fire of Self-realization and calmness consumes all the seeds of evil tendencies that lie ungerminated in his subconscious. Those weed seeds which secrete themselves in the subconscious mind can be roasted during the contact of the conscious and subconscious minds with the **superconsciousness** of deep meditation. Seeds of evil tendencies thus roasted in the fire of wisdom cannot germinate. So do not sit idle, no matter how great you are. Keep on burning out the latent evil of forgotten incarnations by kindling greater fires of goodness in meditation. All the crowding seeds of worries that infest the tracts of the conscious and the subconscious minds burn into a blaze of bliss when they touch the fiery superconscious peace of meditation.

AFFIRMATION

I am thinking with the minds of all. I am feeling through all feelings. The flowers of joy blooming on all heart-soils are mine. I am eternal laughter. My smiles are dancing through all faces. I am the wave of enthusiasm in all hearts. I am the King of Silence sitting on the throne of emotion.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TEACH ME TO SPEND FOR GOD'S WORK

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Give me holy health,
 But give my brothers more,
That I may enjoy my greater health
 In the greater myself.
Give me power,
 But to my dear ones give it more abundantly,
That I may wield the strength of all minds
 United in my mind.
Give me wisdom,
 That I may make my loved ones more wise,
And that I may feel its rays spreading
 On the vast tract of merged brother-souls.

Teach me to behold through all eyes,
 Work through all hands,
 And feel my heartthrobs in all.
Teach me to feel, act, strive, earn,
 And especially to spend, for all--
 As I do for myself.

I want health, to be a model for others' health
 As well as for my own.
I want to be efficient,
 To turn inefficiency away from earth's door.
I want wisdom's freedom,
 That I may enjoy my liberty only
In the universal freedom of all--
 In the spiritual emancipation of all!

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to remember that enthusiasm and willingness go hand in hand with fresh supplies of energy.

IMPORTANT ENERGIZATION AND HEALING EXERCISES

We know that a dead man cannot inhale oxygen or absorb sunshine or digest food, because life force is absent. Life force is therefore the first direct condition governing our physical and mental strength. Our thoughts, will, feeling, and muscular power; the action of heart, brain, and lungs; the pancreas, liver, spleen, and other digestive organs; and the glands--all depend for their existence upon the vital principle. Life force is the inner electricity that runs the brain factory that, in turn, produces and exports creative ideas and imports new impressions, and that looks after the management of the entire body.

The heart is the factory that cleanses the system and distributes food to billions of hungry living body cells. The stomach and intestines remove from food the right nutritive elements for the repair and replenishment of osseous, nervous, epithelial, adipose, and muscular tissues. They are a grand "kitchen factory" that prepares the right food for the various tissues. Yet the billions of bodily cells, the internal organs, and the sensory nerves are really kept alive and properly working through one vital power. Although the physical body appears to be maintained entirely by food from the outside, the truth is that externally supplied food would be useless to the body if it were not converted into vitality by the secret Cosmic Life Energy.

When you practice the SRF Recharging Exercises, you employ this inner life force to heal and revivify the body parts. The recharging and energization exercises (Lesson 8-A) are all to be done slowly, gently; and rhythmically; never jerkily. Every movement should be harmonious. If any part of the body is especially weak, send the energy there very slowly and gently as you exercise, and the part will be gradually strengthened. By intensity of effort you can very soon heal yourself of weakness in a body part, since by your concentrated practice of the Recharging Exercises you bring the true source of curative power, the Cosmic Life Energy, into the diseased tissues. You can feel the actual current of energy being switched on in your body and direct it wherever you want it. The vibration that you feel is not voluntary movement; it is caused by the charge of energy entering the body. Do the exercises willingly and gladly. Except in those that call for bending, keep the spine straight and the body upright. The exercises will give you **grace and** freedom of movement. More than that, as you perfect your practice you will realize that you are not the body: that

the body is only your servant, and you are the immortal life energy that lights the bulb of flesh.

After graduation from school, the days of healthful regular exercise are usually over, and the days of overeating and resulting sickness begin. Many people do not realize that uniformly good health depends upon:

- (1) proper eating, less eating, and occasional fasting;
- (2) proper elimination;
- (3) proper exercise, fresh air, and sun baths;
- (4) conservation of vital energy by self-control;
- (5) good thoughts and cheerfulness;
- (6) calm meditation.

Wrong habits, overindulgence, and lack of exercise constitute abuses of the senses and should be avoided.

Take sun baths as often as you can, from ten minutes to half an hour a day, if possible, depending on the sensitivity of **one's** skin and the strength of the **sun's** rays.

Six times a day breathe deeply at least three times in the fresh air:

- (1) First, exhale quickly through mouth and nostrils.
- (2) Inhale slowly through the nostrils only, counting 1 to 12.
- (3) Hold breath, counting 1 to 6.
- (4) Exhale, counting 1 to 6.

Try to establish the habit of doing this whenever you are walking outdoors. Let the count during inhalation, holding the breath, and exhalation be modified if necessary for comfort; but maintain the ratio. If you inhale to a count of 8, for example, hold the breath to a count of 4, and exhale to a count of 4. A person of average health and lung capacity should have no difficulty in maintaining the 12-6-6 ratio, however.

The exercise routine given in Lesson 8-A should be a basic daily practice of all Self-Realizationists. However, there are many other exercises given from time to time that may be practiced for specific purposes, or as a short supplementary routine to be practiced at any time during the day you feel a need for it. Some of these exercises are variations or abbreviated forms, of exercises with which you have already become familiar through those given in Lesson 8-A.

STOMACH EXERCISES The following stomach exercises will aid digestion and peristaltic movement, thus helping to eliminate constipation and reduce obesity. The exercises should be practiced daily, preferably in the morning after leaving bed, or at any other time when the stomach is comparatively empty (not sooner than one hour after meals).

1. (a) Standing in front of an armchair, lean forward, and with your arms held out straight, grasp the arms of the chair.
- (b) Exhale quickly and completely.
- (c) Keeping the breath out, slowly draw in the abdomen as far as possible; then push **it** out as far as possible.
- (d) Repeat three times, without inhaling (or breathing in) during that time.
- (e) Inhale.

Repeat the entire exercise five times. In case of indigestion or constipation, repeat **it** ten times.

2. (a) Stand erect, with eyes closed.
- (b) Place both hands on abdomen, one above the other, with slight pressure.
- (c) Contract and tense lower portion of abdomen.
- (d) While holding tension in lower section, contract and tense the upper abdomen.
- (e) Relax both upper and lower abdomen.

Repeat this exercise six times.

WALKING AND RUNNING EXERCISES Practice of "in place" walking and running exercises twice daily in the fresh air will do much to keep the body fit. (People who have weak hearts, however, should omit the running exercise.) Even though you may feel tired, a short practice of the walking and running exercises and a few or all of the Recharging Exercises helps greatly to relieve fatigue.

To perform the walking exercise, take off your shoes and stand about four feet away from a wide-open window indoors or, better still, on an open porch. While standing in one place, go through the motions of walking, but exaggerate the upward motion of the legs: instead of raising your left foot only a few inches from the floor, raise **it** high, bending the knee, so the knee is even with the buttock. At the same time bend the right forearm upward, keeping the elbow by your side. Then drop left foot to the ground, and lower the right forearm. Next raise right foot, until knee is even with the buttock, and bend left forearm up, keeping elbow at side. Then go on alternating left and right, walking in place. If you count each "step" as "one," walk from 25 to 100 "steps."

The running exercise is performed by standing in one place and going through the motions of running. The knees should be bent so that the heel is brought up in back as if to strike the buttock. Arms are held stationary at the sides, elbows bent. One should run on the toes, lightly. A count of 50 "steps" is good.

OTHER
VALUABLE
EXERCISES

Whenever you want to relax any body part, gently tense it, hold tension, counting 1 to 3, then relax quickly and feel the vibration of the energy as it retires from that part. Keep the relaxed part still--forget it.

Now stand up and with eyes closed tense the whole body--all parts at once--and then let go, throwing your breath out forcefully and relaxing all parts at once. Do not move. After a few moments again tense the whole body quickly, and let go, throwing the breath out and relaxing. You will then be perfectly relaxed (except for the muscles employed in maintaining a standing position). This exercise may also be practiced in a reclining position, thus affording complete relaxation. When energy is withdrawn by practice of this technique, all parts of the body are relaxed and the body is calm.

Any time you are tired or worried, tense the whole body, then relax, throwing your breath out, and you will become calm. When only low or partial tensing precedes release of tension, not all tension is removed; but when you tense high, so that you are vibrating with energy, and then quickly relax or "let go," you achieve perfect relaxation. Practice the following any time a need is felt for relaxation or for healing of the body part involved.

1. (a) Tense the right arm until it vibrates.
(b) Keeping the elbow at the side, lift the forearm until the fist is at the shoulder, as if lifting a weight of 5 to 25 pounds.
(c) Relax and let the arm down.
(d) Repeat the exercise with the left forearm, and then continue, alternating the right and left arms. Then practice lifting and lowering both arms simultaneously.
2. (a) With the arms outstretched at the sides so that they are parallel to the ground, and with the palms of the closed fists turned upward, tense both arms until they vibrate.
(b) Bending the arms at the elbows, bring the fists toward the shoulder. Pull with enough tension to vibrate, as if you were pulling a heavy weight from both sides.
(c) Relax, dropping the arms at the sides.

Repeat.

3. (a) With the arms outstretched sideways, parallel to the ground, exhale and bring the arms forward until the palms touch, at the same time relaxing all the body parts.
(b) Inhale, tensing all of the twenty body parts and outstretching the arms to the starting position.
(c) Relax, dropping the arms and exhaling slowly.

Repeat.

4. (a) From a standing position, grasp the arms of a chair.
- (b) Exhale, relaxing and dropping quickly to a squatting position, with the buttocks resting on the heels.
- (c) Inhale and tense the body, counting 1 to 20.
- (d) Still holding the tension, stand up and vibrate with tension.
- (e) Exhale, relaxing and dropping once more to the squatting position.

Repeat.

HEALING EXERCISES Proper eating is a vital factor in overcoming all problems concerning health, beauty, youthfulness, and reducing or increasing weight; but very often a problem remains for the vital force to solve definitely and quickly, by effecting a healing. Hence the following exercises, which involve conscious application of the vital force in the body, will be found to be immensely beneficial to any weak tissues or body organs.

To remove pain from an arm or a leg, or to strengthen a limb, or to rejuvenate tired muscles, practice the following technique on the affected muscle or body part:

- (a) Contract the muscle (or muscles) gently with deep attention while exhaling the breath to a count of 1 to 20.
- (b) Release contraction of muscles and inhale.

Repeat six times, practicing in the morning and whenever else it may be necessary. Weak calves or thighs may be strengthened by the practice of this technique.

EXERCISE FOR THE KNEES

- (a) Squat down, sitting on the heels, and exhale.
- (b) Quickly stand up and inhale.
- (c) Holding the breath, gently contract or tense the muscles of the whole body.
- (d) Exhale and relax.

Repeat 10 times, morning and night.

TWO EXERCISES FOR THE SPINE

1. (a) Sitting erect on a chair, rotate the head counterclockwise 5 times.
- (b) Rotate the head clockwise 5 times.
2. (a) Sit erect, on a chair, and put interlocked hands at the back of the head.
- (b) Quickly jerk the head and spine back.

- (c) Release the hands and bend over, touching the toes with the hands.

Repeat 6 times, morning and evening.

FOR DIGESTIVE POWER

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) While the breath is out, contract abdomen and stomach, concentrating deeply upon the navel. Count 1 to 20.
- (c) Release contraction of stomach and abdomen and inhale.

Repeat 6 to 12 times, morning and night. Practice only when stomach is empty.

FOR HEADACHES

- (a) Press the palm of one hand against the back of the head and press the other palm very lightly on the forehead.
- (b) Inhale, and hold breath, while with deepest attention gently contracting the muscles at the top of the head.
- (c) Exhale and release contraction.

Repeat 4 to 6 times during headaches.

FOR BRAIN POWER

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) Contract the muscles of the head gently, holding full concentration there and counting 1 to 15.
- (c) Inhale, releasing the contraction of the muscles.

Repeat 6 times.

FOR THE NERVES

- (a) Inhale, holding the breath.
- (b) Gently contract the entire body, all muscles at once.
- (c) Hold the contraction for a count of 1 to 20, with deep attention on the entire body.
- (d) Exhale, releasing the contraction.

Repeat 3 times, at any time you feel weak and nervous.

FOR THE EYES

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) With the eyes closed, contract the eyelids and brows very lightly.

- (c) Hold the contraction of the eyes with deep concentration, counting 1 to 20.
- (d) Release the contraction and inhale.

Repeat 7 times, morning and night.

AFFIRMATION

I will eat wisely, exercise properly, keep good company, perform good deeds, keep a clear conscience, and live in healthful surroundings. I will learn to smile, especially when things go wrong, and thus--learning to smile always--I will instill new life into my body cells, which are the builders and sustainers of my fleshly mansion.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DIVINE JOY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Father, bless us with Thine intoxicating, ever-new, joyous, supremely satisfying communion. Teach us to drink Thee, that every blood cell, every thought, and every feeling may become saturated with Thy joy and have their pleasure-~~thirst~~ quenched forever.

After we have tasted Thee, lead us to temptation, if Thou wilt. After we are sure of Thy most tempting everlasting gift of Thyself, then test us with all Thy temptations, if Thou wilt.

But bless us first with the light of godly habits, so that whenever the darkness of bad habits approaches it will be spontaneously driven away. Teach us to be so attached to Thee that we cannot be at all attracted to material pleasures.

Millions love matter because they meet it first. Millions do not love Thee because they know not of Thine alluring love. Teach us by Thy love to conquer all love for worldly life.

Divine Beloved, why **dost** Thou not come first in human life? O Father, how **canst** Thou expect frail souls, ignorant of Thee and burdened with bad habits, to know Thine all-healing joy?

Of all Thy punishments, the greatest is forgetfulness of Thee.

PRAYER

○ God, Thou Holy, Creative, Vibratory Force, teach me to make a bouquet of the variously hued flowers of filial, conjugal, friendly, and parental loves, and to lay it on the altar of my heart where Thou reignest.

SPIRITUALIZING THE CREATIVE FORCE

To help the propagation of the species, Nature has implanted in the human body the creative impulse. It is therefore one of the strongest instincts and impelling forces in man, and Nature takes a silent and awful revenge on those that misuse or trifle with her holy method of creation. The "fig leaf" consciousness of evil that tries to throw a veil of unholiness on this creative principle has brought a great deal of moral and material suffering into the world. The creative principle has a twofold purpose. When it is directed toward the nerves embedded in the generative area, man feels an instinctive desire to create physically. When it is lifted up through the spine to the brain, it frees man of the desire for sex creation and confers on him divine illumination and power. Misuse of this creative power for sense pleasure makes one matter-bound, groveling in the mud of the senses.

HOW TO REGULATE
CREATIVE IMPULSE

Man is not culpable for the creative impulse, which is nature-born. Persons who are unable to control **this--nature's** most powerful force for propagating the human species--are blamed by society; yet they are not taught how to govern this instinct instead of being governed by it. Not even lifelong intellectual or medical study will enable the student to control this instinct. The practical method of controlling it should be taught. Daily exercise and proper diet are important aids to self-control. Eat little or no meat; have nuts and other proper substitutes for it, and an abundance of raw vegetables and fruits.

One should know that during physical passion there are five courses open to the individual:

1. Dissipation of creative energy--the usual practice--which is unnecessary, weakening, and a cause of disease and premature old age.
2. Using the creative energy for the physical creation of a child.
3. Using the energy for creating "**spiritual** brain children," i. e. ,

converting the creative energy into thought power by sublimation and transmutation. It is not necessary (as some imagine) to dissipate the creative energy; rather, at the moment of passion, one should immediately engage his mind in creative work: artistic, literary, inventive, or business work--whichever is the most interesting to him. To follow this plan is to divert the creative energy into brain channels and to convert it into higher forms of intellectual and spiritual expression.

4. Using the creative energy in sports or strenuous physical exercise; for example, the running exercise in Lesson 34.
5. Withdrawing the energy, through breath, from the creative organs upward into the region of the medulla oblongata. Put your mind on the area in the body where the generative organs are located and draw a deep breath slowly, thinking of the breath as starting from that particular area. Imagine that with the inhaling breath you are reversing the downward flow of the life energy, drawing it from the coccyx, upward through the spine to the spot between the eyebrows. Hold breath and mind in between the eyebrows, mentally counting one to twenty-five or more (or as long as you can hold breath comfortably), and think of yourself as absorbing the passion and life current into the reservoir of life energy present between the eyebrows and medulla oblongata. Then exhale and relax, freeing yourself from the bondage of passion. Repeat the foregoing method three times with closed eyes. During relaxation, always think of the physical instinct as having been expelled from the body. Do not seek solitude. This is the teaching of the great scriptures of India.

SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE A husband and wife should be loyal to each other and try to make each other happy in every way. The spiritual wife should not forsake the unspiritual husband, nor should the spiritual husband forsake the unspiritual wife--they should try to influence and help each other as long as it is possible to do so. This lesson is written for the sole purpose of helping those who wish to develop moral character and self-control; those who are seeking to restore harmony in unhappy marriages; and those wishing to prevent wrong marriages and divorces.

To trifle with physical passion is to gamble away untold joys of life. The million candles of happiness in the hall of life are burned all at once by indiscretion in marriage. The evanescent excitement in physical communion is nothing compared to the bliss that follows by the regulating and the withdrawing of this creative impulse up into the brain region for the procreation of spiritual and intellectual qualities of love, consideration, divine patience, sympathy, determination, keenness, calmness, realization, and knowledge

of the art of spiritual procreation which enables one to perform revolutionizing work in spiritual or material life.

In married life, respect for and tolerance of each other's views lead to happiness. Married people should refrain from contradicting each other before others and from quarreling between themselves over little things. Husbands and wives should never discuss their troubles with others (excepting of course a qualified spiritual teacher or marriage counselor).

Love is superior to weakness or strength in body or mind, and as such should be unconditioned. Love cannot be wrested from another; it may only be received as a spontaneous gift. Love grows and thrives in an atmosphere of tolerance, forgiveness, and trust; it is marred by jealousy. In distant closeness love lives. In wrong familiarity it dies.

The ratio between love and physical indulgence is that the greater the love, the less the physical craving, and vice versa. Husband and wife should feel love whenever they see each other, and not the physical instinct, otherwise they will march toward the pitfalls of boredom, dislike, and separation. A husband should consider his wife to be a clean temple for creating and caring for a new soul. The wife should keep her body-temple free from unclean thoughts. The specific nature of the mental state of parents during this period of creation is the magnetic force that draws a particular type of disembodied soul into the mother's body-temple. Thoughts concentrated upon the physical invite sensually inclined souls. Souls with a more highly developed nature refuse the invitation of degrading physical attraction.

The Hindu scriptures say that during this period a current of life force is generated, which serves as a door through which disembodied astral souls may enter. Good souls do not enter through this door of life current if it has vibrations of low passionate mentality. They turn away at a distance. They prefer to wait rather than to take a hasty rebirth in an undesirable place. So all husbands and wives should remember to cooperate spiritually, mentally, and physically in order to invite a sacred soul into the cell temple of sperm and ovum that they create. Married people should invoke good souls to come and live with them.

Parents should prepare their minds months in advance in order to create a spiritual child. During the specific period of creation, thoughts of invoking a noble soul into a temple of uniting sperm and ovum cells must predominate. At this time, thought should remain between the eyebrows, directing the holy work of creation; it should never be allowed to run down and become identified with passion. In married life, adultery is committed by those living wholly on the physical plane. Such persons are punished by boredom, mutual hatred, and final separation. The creative instinct is nature's means of continuing creation and should not be converted into a play with the senses. **If** the creative instinct is withdrawn from the coccygeal region and sent through

the spine to the spot in the middle of the forehead and brain, it begins to create offspring of spiritual realization. Married people, after creating one or two children, should learn how to thus spiritually ~~commune~~ and procreate. Husband and wife should consider their union as a union of Nature and Spirit, of feeling and knowledge. Marriage is meant principally for spiritual union, and incidentally for material union. Elderly parents should commune only on the spiritual plane, intoxicated with mutual love, satisfying physical cravings by mental loving.

ADVICE TO MARRIED AND UNMARRIED PEOPLE

1. Realize the mind's power over the body. Undesirable physical consciousness should be banished by diverting the mind to a subject or some work that is deeply interesting to you.
2. Undesirable creative impulse should be regulated first psychologically and then physiologically. The attack to gain control of this impulse must be from within and without.
3. Avoid anything that stimulates the creative impulse through the medium of the sense of sight, touch, and so forth. Married people would be wise to dance only with each other.
4. ~~Avoid dwelling upon and~~ discussing undesirable stories that unconsciously feed your creative instinct with degrading thoughts.
5. Try to understand the physiology of vital parts through the study of some standard medical book.
6. Boys and girls, men and women, should play or talk or see one another, not with a physical consciousness, but with the thought of purity and holy friendship.
7. Remember, overindulgence in the physical relation in married life is a sin. Marriage is meant for spiritual reunion of souls and not for a physical license. Moderation mixed with self-discipline and complete mastery over the creative impulse awakens the powers of spiritual perception, and demonstrates the highest virtue.
8. Those unmarried people who never break the law of celibacy create in themselves a powerful magnetism that will draw to each one a true soul companion, if they desire to marry. Others attract wrong companions through the misuse and misguidance of the creative instinct. Spiritual magnetism, if lost in wrong marriage, or in unmarried life through indiscretion, can be revived by the right practice of the Self-Realization Fellowship

system of charging the body with vital energy, and by right meditation.

Lastly, unmarried people can unite the creative nature-force with the soul-force within them spiritually, by learning the right method of meditation and its application to physical life. Such people may not have to go through the experience of material marriage. They may learn to marry their feminine physical impulse to the masculine soul within. Unmarried people, in seeking a life companion should not wholly depend upon their own inclinations, but should consult their parents, and above all, persons with true inner vision. The law of cause and effect (karma), if properly applied, will help a great deal as a guide to the right union of the opposite sexes. In India, in most cases, the marriages are happy, permanent, successful, and highly spiritual because the persons concerned live according to the above principles. Above all, remember that marriage is the reunion in the Absolute Spirit, of the divided feeling- and knowledge-nature of God.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Spirit, through its force of universal attraction, is gradually absorbing all objects created out of Itself by the misguided force of satanic delusion. Through the influence of the creative force projected by God all living beings and human souls have allowed themselves to be lured away from God and have become attached to matter.

Yet no soul can be completely lost, because of the tremendous attractive force of God's love, which is ever calling His truant children back to Himself. Those who do not heed His call may be delayed, but none can resist forever the call of the eternal bliss-pipings of Spirit.

BUDDHA AND THE COURTESAN--Part 1

In India, Buddha is considered one of the incarnations of God. He lived about five hundred years before Christ and was the son of a king of India. The royal father of Gautama (who was later to become known as Buddha) had surrounded the young prince with every conceivable luxury and beauty, and arranged an idyllic marriage for his son. Gautama thus grew into manhood thinking of the world as a place of endless happy events.

However, Prince Gautama was curious about the world outside the palace gardens, and one day secretly went out with his charioteer to see for himself. The handsome youth was shocked to the very depths of his being to see for the first time in his life a shriveled-looking old man, a dying man, and a corpse. He looked at his celestially beautiful, healthy body and asked

the charioteer if his body too would grow old and decay. Reluctantly the charioteer said: "O Prince, all human flesh is subject to sickness, decrepitude, and death." After hearing this, the young prince began to brood over the delusion of earthly life. One night, while his wife and child slept, Gautama took a last look at them with tear-bedimmed eyes and left in quest of Truth which would free mankind forever from sorrow and suffering and which would give him complete understanding of the mystery of life and death.

The prince practiced many austerities prescribed by Hindu yogis. He is said to have spent seven years in fasting and other spiritual disciplines. At last, while meditating under a banyan tree in Bodh Gaya, India, he found illumination. Then he ate, and nourished his body, and began to preach in India his gospel of mercy and equal love for all creatures, man and animal alike. He taught complete renunciation; the goal: attainment of nirvana (the state of desirelessness or freedom from reincarnation). Later, his missionaries spread the gospel of Buddha all over India, Japan, China, and other parts of the world.

The state of nirvana, or cessation of dualistic existence, is often misinterpreted as annihilation of the self. Buddha, however, meant annihilation of the deluded ego, or pseudo self; the little self must be overcome in order that the real, eternal Self may achieve liberation from human incarnation. Buddha's doctrine, with its emphasis on a negative state of-being (annihilation of the ego or little self) as the goal of ultimate attainment, was later supplanted in India by the doctrine of Swami Shankara, founder of the great monastic Swami Order, who taught that the goal of life is the positive attainment of the "ever-conscious, ever-existing, ever-newly blissful state of oneness with Spirit."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Teach me to discipline my senses,
and to substitute for flesh temptation the
greater temptation of soul happiness.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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INVINCIBLE LION OF THE SELF

By Paramahansa Yogananda

A cub of the Divine Lion, somehow I found myself confined in a sheepfold of frailties and limitations. Fear-filled, living long with sheep, day after day I bleated. I forgot my affrighting bellow that banishes all enemy sorrows.

O Invincible Lion of the Self! Thou **didst** drag **me** to the water hole of meditation, saying: "Thou **art** a lion, not a sheep! Open thine eyes, and roar!"

After Thy hard shakings of spiritual urge, I gazed into the crystal pool of peace. Lo, I saw my face like unto Thine!

I know now that I am a lion of cosmic power. Bleating no more, I shake the error forest with reverberations of Thine almighty voice. In divine freedom I bound through the jungle of earthly delusions, devouring the little creatures of vexing worries and timidities, and the wild hyenas of disbelief.

O Lion of Liberation, ever send through me Thy roar of all-conquering courage!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

As Thy freeborn offspring, I want to train and use my own will; but only with Thy guidance, O Father! May all my activities lead me closer to Thy paradise of all-fulfillment.

I would be Thy happy child of Infinitude, realizing that in the divine plan Thy sons were not meant to live in a desolation of fruitless aspirations and withered hopes.

Teach me to break the shameful cords of lethargy. May I blaze my way tirelessly through the wilderness of limitations into the Fair New Land.

WHY YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AS YOU WISHED

Almost everyone feels at times that he is not making any inner progress; that he is not changing or improving, in spite of his efforts. Various factors may hold us back. We have to analyze life to determine what those factors may be. It is necessary first to think back over one's childhood, to the time when first began to dawn the consciousness that this life is a series of changing conditions imposed on us. Very early in life we become aware that certain changes, certain environments into which we have been thrown, are congenial; they tally with our inner ideas of comfort and pleasure, and we like them. We also discover that certain other conditions arising from time to time thwart our desires and cause us discomfort and unhappiness. One naturally wants to eliminate those conditions that he finds uncongenial, and to bring about those that make him happy. With the growing realization that life is a series of changes, we also become aware that we have to go either backward or forward as we adapt ourselves to each new change. It is impossible to remain stationary. A man immersed in the ocean has to keep moving; otherwise he will drown. To avoid drowning in the ocean of life also necessitates constant change on our part.

Any change in oneself that promotes happiness and well-being is good, whereas changes that bring unhappiness are not good. Anything that is painful--mentally, physically, or spiritually--ought to be eliminated. However, much as a person wants to avoid unsavory experiences in life, often he does not know how to prevent such changes--he does not realize that his own previous actions and attitudes have invited them. From the very beginning of life one may have suffered from fear, or sensitivity, or nervousness, or anger or some such weakness without being particularly aware of the extent of it. Then suddenly there arises a situation that brings forth the realization that one has an uncontrollable temper, or a strong sexual nature, or a tendency to be greedy, or to fight with people all the time; or to be moody, touchy, too frivolous, or too serious.

Some people do learn that every human being has free choice, but they often find that their free choice is overruled by habits created by past actions in this life and in former lives. For instance, a person who was constantly ill-tempered in his past life will be born with that strong tendency in this life; to overcome that trait and its effects on his life he will have to change, by persistently employing thoughts and actions to cultivate the opposite quality of evenness.

But even though one may have found out these things about himself fairly early in life, he may nevertheless find himself unable to change. Looking back he realizes that whenever any of his wrong habits have tortured him he has wanted to get away from them. Why has he not done so? Man's habits trail him down the years and are his greatest tormentors. Why does he not rid himself of the causes of his unhappiness?

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
LAZINESS RETARD
SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Negligence is the first cause. We tend to say to ourselves, even when suffering from the ill effects of wrong habits, "As long as I can get along somehow it doesn't matter." Such mental and physical laziness is the root cause of failure to improve. We have no idea how much we have to pay for mental and physical laziness! Who has not passed up opportunities--perhaps to make money, or to change for the better an unsuitable environment, or to overcome an old habit, or to make himself and others more comfortable--because of lack of effort. Most people are too lazy to try as hard as would be necessary to rid themselves of evil habits, or inharmonious environment, or whatever the cause of their unhappiness may be. They weakly allow wrong tendencies to take a terrible toll of their life happiness.

Those who have failed to change as they wish, therefore, may simply have been mentally and physically lazy. Physical laziness is forgivable, because sometimes a person needs rest, but mental laziness is inexcusable. Most people are extremely lazy about thinking and reasoning! Yet in thought lies freedom. As soon as man thinks he will find a way out of difficulties.

In dreams a thin person can make himself fat by thinking he is fat. Such is the power of thought. It is the greatest power we have. Thought controls the physical, financial, moral, spiritual, in fact, all the conditions of life. Since man has such a great power at his disposal, why does he not change as he wishes? Because of concentrating too much on the limited sources of sustenance of body and mind, and because of not fully using the greater power of thought.

ANALYZE
YOURSELF

The person who sincerely desires to change should analyze himself. One who has not kept a mental diary should begin this salutary practice. The knowledge of just how much and in what way he fails in the daily experiences of life may stimulate him to more effort to be what he should be. By keeping such a journal and by using discrimination to destroy the bad habits that create pain and suffering for ourselves and others, we will get rid of them. Every night we should ask ourselves: "How long have I

been with God today?" We should analyze also how much we have deeply thought, how much we have accomplished in our duties, how much we have done for others, how we have governed ourselves in the various situations of the day.

Analysis will reveal how much or how little power we have over our emotions and habits. Whenever a person makes up his mind in the morning that he will not that day allow himself to be carried away by mechanical habits, he should stick to that resolution. To be free, one must snatch himself from the stream of mechanical habits on which he floats like a leaf toward the falls of delusion and destruction. Most people don't seem to care; they let themselves drift. But the wise person makes this resolve: "As long as I have to live, I am going to do what I must to improve, not what I am led to do through habits I mistakenly formed in the past." Then he carries out that resolution.

KEEP GOOD COMPANY Bad company frequently inhibits one's intentions to change for the better. We are certain to be influenced by the people we have around us. Why be with people who are suspicious, or who like to gossip, or who will try to make one indulge in other petty and hurtful actions of which he doesn't really approve? Even a person who is sufficiently developed to be safe from such influences should avoid them.

A man must carefully watch his company. He who surrounds himself with flatterers who encourage him in his weaknesses will stifle his ability to analyze himself. In time he will be afraid to mix with people who might correct him. Remember, the power exerted by good or bad company is greater than will power. Those who have a nervous or an angry temperament should mix with calm, soothing persons who act as emotional shock-absorbers; thus the flighty ones may be inspired to be calm like their friends, and so improve. But if easily angered persons mix with others who are as hot-tempered as they are, someone may come to actual physical harm. Even a fairly calm and self-controlled person who mixes with emotional, excitable types will tend to lose his own poise and self-control.

Most people are just like animals in the zoo. They are always howling with emotions. Man is meant to control himself. As human beings we have been divinely endowed with self-control. We are not wholly free, but we have been given the key to freedom. In spite of this, many people live an animal-like existence, not fully using their free will and intelligence to gain self-mastery. The tiger is controlled by the instinct to kill. He cannot help himself. But man has been endowed with free choice and intelligence, that he may steadily improve his human status instead of remaining instinct-bound like the animals.

ATTACHMENT TO POSSESSIONS Attachment to material possessions is always a deterrent to spiritual progress. Some people work hard and save money for some worldly goal, and then suddenly something unforeseen happens. Everything is gone and they are desolate. Why? Because they placed their faith in and conditioned their happiness by material acquisitions

instead of depending on the Infinite Source. Who can be happy constantly thinking of his material comfort, or always fearing what will happen to his possessions when he dies, or trying to decide to whom he will leave his money! Furniture and other material possessions are really burdens.

St. Francis lived in a shed; he existed solely on scraps of food given to him. Yet he did not suffer, for the splendor of God was within and around him because he had refused to anchor his happiness on material conditions. St. Anthony lived in a tomb for many years; sometimes he had bread and sometimes he didn't. We too live by God's grace and not by bread; the more we concentrate on this truth and the less we think about the body, the more the Divine Friend will help us.

Once when I went to visit one of my students I saw that there were only three people living on a very big estate, so I said: "Here you are keeping up this huge place for the comfort of only three people. Why not give it up?" But they were bound to their possessions; that attachment held them back from changing their inner lives for the better. Yet furniture doesn't mean a thing to real happiness! A yogi sitting on a little blanket under a tree can be one with all creation! He has the furniture of God--the mountains, moon, and stars--to decorate his earth-home. In that consciousness lies freedom and happiness. A yogi who is inwardly one with the Creator can go anywhere and feel that everything is his; he can enjoy everything without taking on the burden of ownership. Nothing is really ours; it is the consciousness of possession that makes us attached to things. Man ~~is meant to live for God in this world.~~ As long as he lives in it for himself he does not evolve to a higher consciousness; instead, being subject to the law of change, he gradually changes for the worse.

One should not give too much importance to the home and its furnishings. It is all right to have and to enjoy possessions, but it is harmful to be possessed by them. Whether living in luxury or in simple surroundings, the yogi is free. Simple living does not mean being dirty or lazy. We should give attention to the body that we love so much only enough to take care of it as best we can. It is only a useful beast to carry the soul through life. St. Francis used to call his body "Brother Donkey." He knew its true purpose, just as he knew that in the simplicities of life lie the riches of renunciation; and that even poverty need not be slavery but, rightly considered, freedom from the enslavement and serfdom of possessions. One should be a free man wherever he is placed.

How much time people spend in thinking of the things they want! And after they get them they are not happy--they want something else. We should learn to be happy now, by thinking of God and renouncing in our minds the desire for anything else. One does not have to retire to the jungle to do this. It takes more courage to live in the jungle of civilization and be serviceful to others. But wherever our duties lie, we should be free men. The cobwebs and dust of delusion and habits that accumulate in our minds must all be cleaned away. Anyone can be free, today, by changing his consciousness from that of a mortal to that of a divine being. Every night we are freed from the consciousness of the body, of

possessions. The Lord takes us into that state where we are free from all burdens of existence and are neither man nor woman, rich nor poor, diseased nor healthy. In that consciousness lies happiness and freedom. Man subconsciously knows that he is made in the image of God, but realization of this truth is latent because he has not concentrated on that side of life. Man tends to concentrate on the "show" that his soul is seeing through the senses of the physical body. His body and this earth are a part of that show. God has already shown me how this film is going to continue. When you see it beforehand you can understand that it is only in fun; but just the same, when the events really happen it is very hard to remember that it is only a show. Even Jesus said, on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). The delusion of the reality of this show is very strong, but he overcame it. And Christ taught that all men may overcome it.

The Lord as Krishna said to his disciple Arjuna: "My delusion is very hard to conquer, yet it is very easy for those who persevere." No matter how many times one may fall down or fail, he should never stop trying to overcome delusion. We have limitless power within ourselves with which to be conquerors in the greatest tests that God can give us. Saint Teresa prayed to the Lord, "Don't lessen my sufferings. Let me serve fully my term." Yet the average person dreads disease, and becomes rebellious toward God whenever he suffers. That rebellion comes because we are not in tune with the Infinite. He who is in tune with God can overcome the greatest sufferings in life. Though this cosmic dream is often a terrible nightmare, when we become one with the Lord we will see that we are free from it.

**UNSELFISH
ACTIVITY** Constantly thinking of oneself is another root cause of suffering and failure to progress. We should think of others; and especially of God's work. If for a certain time each day we commune with God, it is good; but we should also work for Him. The Lord says, in the Bhagavad Gita, "I have attained all things, yet I work on. And those who would be free must work, not for themselves, but for Me." What a difference that makes in life! Why seek only one's own comfort? It is so much better to take away somebody else's suffering. To the spiritual man, giving is so much more satisfying than doing for oneself. The average worldly man, on the other hand, thinks nothing of spending for himself; but when he gives a dollar to charity he is all puffed up over his generosity.

Those who desire to increase the comforts of others, who feel happiness in making others happy, will change for the better. He who ceases to live selfishly and, rather, lives for others, may escape all those mental tyrants of wrong habits that he has been feeding in his brain. He will be able to overthrow the feudal kings of habit that have dominated his reactions. We must dethrone wrong habits and become free, one with the Lord. Why should we seek possession of things that don't belong to us? It is better to seek more balance, more self-control, more calmness. Once we have acquired these qualities, we shall be able to take them with us when we leave this earth, to help us in future

existences. We are all children of God and we are going to win eventually. Meanwhile it is better to live, if necessary with a crippled body--diseased, dumb, forsaken by all--and know that one is in tune with God, than to be healthy and wealthy and without any thought of the divine goal of life.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Why live an aimless life, without recognizing your powers, without understanding how you can develop those powers? In order to know God, you must live a full life.

Try to please God in everything you do and you will live rightly. The best way to please God is to satisfy both your logical reasoning and your conscience. We have been gifted with reason, and when we do wrong, our reason or our hearts will tell us so. Whether you think you believe in God or not, if you have reasoning power and a conscience, there will be at least a subconscious belief in God.

BUDDHA AND THE COURTESAN--Part 2

Lord Buddha and his disciples were all vowed to celibacy and renunciation of carnal love for the opposite sex. In the course of their missionary travels with Buddha, a curious incident extremely puzzled his disciples as to the character of their master. The great Buddha was resting with them beneath the cool shade of a tree when a courtesan, attracted by the glowing body and face of the master, drew near. No sooner had she beheld the celestial face of Lord Buddha than she fell in love with him, and in an ecstasy of overwhelming emotion ran with open arms to embrace and kiss him, loudly exclaiming: "O Beautiful Shining One, I love thee!"

The celibate disciples were extremely astonished when they heard Buddha say to the courtesan: "Beloved, I love thee too, but do not touch me now--not yet."

She replied: "Thou dost call me beloved and I love thee, why dost thou object to my touching thee?"

The great Buddha replied: "Beloved, I tell thee again, I will touch thee later, but not now. I will prove my true love for thee." As Buddha saw that she was still not satisfied with his answer, he explained further: "Have faith, beloved! Do not doubt my words. Later when those that now love thee have deserted thee I will come." The disciples were extremely shocked, and some thought that the master had fallen in love with the courtesan.

Years later, as Buddha was meditating with his disciples, he suddenly cried out: "I must go! My beloved, the courtesan, is calling me. She needs me now and I must fulfill my promise to her." As he spoke he rose and hurried off. The disciples ran pell-mell after their master, in the vague hope of rescuing him from the temptress.

The great master and his worried disciples came at last to the same tree where long ago they had met the courtesan; and what do you think they saw? She lay there, her once beautiful body honeycombed with putrefying, odorous small-pox sores. The disciples cringed and kept some distance from her, but Lord Buddha sat down beside her. Lifting her decaying body on his lap he whispered in her ear: "Beloved, I have come to prove my love for thee, and to fulfill my promise to touch thee. I have waited a long time to demonstrate my true love, but I love thee when everyone else has ceased loving thee; I touch thee when all thy summer friends do not want to touch thee any more." Saying this, Buddha healed the courtesan and asked her to join his family of disciples.

Personal love is limiting, selfish, and considers its own comforts, usually at the cost of everyone else's. Divine love is unselfish and seeks the happiness of the object of love, and is not limited or partial. God loves the wicked and the good alike, for they are His children; so all those who aspire to know Him must prove to Him that their love is like His love. When a devotee proves to the Heavenly Father that he loves his good and evil brothers equally, then the Divine Father will say: "My noble son, thy love I accept, for thou dost love all with My love." To love those who love you is natural, but to love those who do not love you is to be supernatural and to know God in all.

AFFIRMATION

I will be calmly active, actively calm. I will not be lazy and become mentally ossified. Nor will I be overactive, becoming like a machine; able to earn money, but unable to enjoy life. I will meditate regularly to gain balance.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MANIFEST THYSELF IN THE STRENGTH OF THY LIGHT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Eternal Light, pour down through our thoughts, through our feelings, and through our emotions. Eternal Love, pour down through our love and make us feel Thy presence. Eternal Power, pour down through our wisdom and inflame us with Thy Consciousness. Purify the dross in us and banish disease and poverty from the world evermore. Banish ignorance from the shores of our souls. Lead us from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, from sorrow to bliss, from insincerity to sincerity.

May the spirit of the dawn, the spirit of the Infinite Light, abide with us, saturating our souls with the Infinite Consciousness: and may His glory pour into our beings. May His presence be felt on every altar of consciousness. May the glory of the Infinite be with us. On the day of the sun, may the sunlight of wisdom burst forth from behind the darkness of our minds, and may that great outpouring of light, that great outpouring of power, that great outpouring of peace and happiness, that great outpouring of joy, abide with us.

O living Christ, present in the body of Jesus and in all of us, manifest Thyself in the essence of Thy glory, in the strength of Thy light, and in the power of Thy wisdom. Come into the cradle of our consciousness, that we may worship Thee in the light of wisdom and in understanding and truth.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to remember Thee in sickness or in health. Teach me to open my closed eyes of unbelief and behold Thy instantaneously healing light.

THE LAW OF DIVINE HEALING--Part 1

Perfect health is given by God as part of man's divine birthright. Disease is man-made. A baby who is born blind, or who is in any way mentally or physically handicapped, brings from a former existence the mental seed-cause of such a condition. All disease tendencies, whether carried over from a past life or newly created through transgressions of natural laws in this life, are results of human error. God wants all His children to enjoy health and happiness, but man creates disease and sorrow for himself by breaking God's laws.

Suppose that after having enjoyed good health for fifty years you have now been sick for three years, unable to obtain healing by any method. Probably you have forgotten about the length of time that you enjoyed good health and laughed at the idea of sickness. Now the situation is exactly opposite. Just because you have been sick for three years, you probably have come to think that you will never be well again. So is the mental attitude affected by temporary physical conditions.

There are diseases of bacterial invasion that result from breaking laws of physical hygiene. There are maladies of mental bacterial invasion--of fear, anger, worry, greed, temptation, and lack of self-control--that result from disobeying the mental laws of being; and there are diseases that arise from spiritual ignorance. Do not forget that ignorance of God is the mother of all physical, mental, and spiritual diseases. Abolish ignorance by contacting God and forthwith body, mind, and soul will be healed of all maladies.

Disease results when the brittle, inharmonious manifestations of objective life collide with the stone wall of divine soul harmony within. God is harmony; and when man, who is made in His image, tries to lead an inharmonious life, he hurts himself. A stone wall does not willfully hurt the knuckles of a man who strikes it. The man hurts himself through his failure to understand the effect of striking his knuckles on the wall. So God is not punishing man. Man punishes himself whenever he reaps the results of self-created wrong actions. Peaceful actions attune the mind with the peace of God found in the silence of deep meditation, and the result is happiness.

HUMAN METHODS OF
CURE NOT PERMANENT

The necessity of seeking a sure method of permanently curing physical, mental, and spiritual ills

becomes apparent. Permanent cure of all troubles means complete nonrecurrence of bacterial disease, of physical harm through accidents, or of any difficulty arising from a mental or spiritual cause. As repeated visualization of a table laden with good food neither materializes the food nor satisfies one's hunger (unless he be a highly advanced yogi!), so also the visualization of health, although it may encourage the mind or offer temporary relief, does not bring permanent health, which is possible only when we behold God in the body-temple. Then, instead of simply feeling that God is in the body, we actually perceive the soul, mind, and body to be a perfect manifestation of God Himself. It is only after such realization, which may be brought about by deep practice of these Lessons, that the body remains permanently healed.

No doubt some medicines have healing power, since God gave herbs and minerals power to affect the body of man. Only a man who can drink a bottle of potassium cyanide without any ill effect may speak with authority of the delusive nature of medicine or matter. We know from experience that medicine has power to heal, as is demonstrated by the wonderful healings effected by good drugs and the treatment administered by good doctors; but it should be remembered that medicine and doctors have limits to their powers, and confess their helplessness when confronted with some chronic diseases. Therefore, to put your entire trust in medicine rather than in God's unlimited healing power is sure to bring disillusionment.

Medical science cannot guarantee the nonrecurrence of physical disease, nor can it promise complete healing of mental disease and the spiritual disease of ignorance. Nor does the layman's search for a mental or spiritual cure through reading books or by following the advice of friends insure permanent healing of mental and soul troubles. To drink all the medicines, undergo all the operations, or to read all the holy books in the world would still give only temporary relief, for none of these methods actually destroys the possibility of recurrence of man's threefold suffering of body, mind and soul. What is that universal panacea that will destroy pain, accidents, and ignorance--forever--so that body, mind, and soul may reappear as a perfect image of Spirit?

HEALING
THROUGH
PRAYER

Just as the thought of swallowing medicine does not heal a bodily disease, so just the imaginary contact of God through blind prayers does not produce the desired healing; but as darkness cannot remain where light is, so the darkness of disease is driven away when the light of God's perfect presence is actually felt and perceived in the body. Few people realize this truth. Most people are merely making wishes when they think they feel an overpowering desire for healing. They pray with disbelief in their hearts, or with a sense of hopelessness, thinking that God will not listen to prayers; or they pray and do not wait to find out if their prayer has reached God.

Convince the mind first that all human methods of cure are limited in

their healing power, and that only God's all-permeating, all-healing power is unlimited. While sitting in silence in the morning and evening, and whenever you have time during the day, mentally affirm: "Father, Thine unlimited and all-healing power is in me. Manifest Thy light through the darkness of my ignorance."

Continuous personal zeal should be put forth. Whether God seems to respond or not, one should never cease broadcasting loving thoughts to Him. The beginner in devotion should not be discouraged if God does not respond to his immediate intense demands. God never fails to listen to all soul-calls, but He does not always respond in the way that we want Him to respond. He has His own mysterious ways. Besides, He consciously responds only when He is sure that the devotee wants Him and Him alone. That is why some saints have been tested with disease, or extreme poverty, or temptation. When found to prefer God to health, life, abundance, or temptation, they passed the test; then God came. If one persists long enough in seeking, one will surely find God at the end of the trail.

Pray intelligently, with a bursting soul, seldom loudly, mostly mentally, without displaying to anyone what is happening within. Pray with the utmost devotion, knowing that God is listening to everything you are mentally affirming. Pray until He replies to you through the intelligible voice of boundless bursting joy tingling through every body cell and every thought; or through true visions depicting what you should do. Pray unceasingly until you are absolutely sure of the divine contact, then claim your physical, mental, or spiritual needs from the Most High as your divine birthright.

Never mind if you cannot see God or hear His knock at the gate of your heart. For a long time you have been running away from Him, hiding in the marshes of the senses. It is the noise of your own rowdy passions and the flight of your heavy footsteps in the material world that have made you unable to hear His call within. Stop, be calm, pray steadfastly, and out of the silence will loom the divine Presence.

Before going to bed, and upon awakening, mentally and deeply try to broadcast your message: "I and my Father are One," or "Father, receive me as Thy son," until your mind microphone, broken by hammers of restlessness, is divinely repaired and able to transmit your demand to God. As a broken microphone cannot broadcast a message, so a restless mind cannot transmit prayers to God. Your prayers are not answered because you have become a prodigal son, roaming in the land of material limitations, and you pray as a beggar instead of demanding what is yours as a son of God, Owner of the universe.

Some persons might protest, saying, "I know my prayers are answered, for I hear God talking to me. I have demonstrated His response to my prayers." The thing is, are you sure that your prayers actually reached God, and

that He consciously responded to them? What is the proof? Suppose you have prayed for healing and that you have become well. Do you know whether your cure is due to natural causes, or to medicine, or to your own or another's prayers that brought help from God? Sometimes there is no causal relation between the prayer and the cure. You might have been healed even if you had not prayed. This is the reason why we should find out whether we may scientifically employ the law of cause and effect through prayer. The sages of India found that God responds to law. Those who have experienced this response have said that all people who conform to the law may test and experience it for themselves. Physical laws have to be interpreted by the physical senses and judged by the understanding. Divine laws have to be comprehended by concentration, meditation, and awakened intuition.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Disease signifies discomfort; therefore we dislike it. Physical disease comes to us because of our conscious or unconscious transgression of the laws of health and hygiene, and we desire to be free of its pain and discomfort. Prevention is better than cure because every disease leaves its mark in some form, and it is only by following the laws of physical, mental, and spiritual health that man can be happy. Without health, happiness is almost impossible. Therefore, learn how to live, and then act upon that knowledge if you would be healthy and happy.

No one is more willing to send to you vibratory healing for your health, for your financial condition, for your peace of mind, and for your spiritual development than your own Father, God. But when you use your God-given independence unwisely you fail to receive God's healing messages. Most people tend to be overconfident in limited man-made methods of healing, of achieving prosperity, or of getting to know God, and so cut themselves off from His help.

When wealth only is lost, nothing of real value is lost, for if one has health and skill one can still be happy and can make more money; but if health is lost, then most happiness is also lost; and when contact with the Principle of life is lost, all happiness and all health are lost.

THE MAN WHO BECAME A BUFFALO

On the side of a mountain in India, overlooking a beautiful flower-decked valley, was a cosy hermitage. This hermitage was actually a cave, carved out of a rocky ledge of the mountain. Here dwelt a great master and a devoted disciple. When dawn wiped away the darkness from the face of the hills,

their slopes smiled brightly with many-colored blossoms. The master and the disciple sang hymns together with the rising sun--which reminded them of the awakening of wisdom after a long sleep of ignorance. They smiled when nature smiled after her silence of the night.

While dawn still lingered over the valley, the master would ask the disciple to sit upright in the perfect meditating posture and to listen to his teachings with absorbed attention. Every day the disciple eagerly devoured the lessons falling from the lips of his master. One day, however, the master noticed that his young disciple was absent-minded and restless, so he gently said to him: "Son, today your mind is not on my words, and it seems to be wandering over the hills elsewhere. Pray tell me, what it is that causes your absent-mindedness?" The disciple respectfully replied: "Honored Master, I cannot concentrate on your lesson today, for my mind is helplessly thinking about our newly acquired tame buffalo which is grazing on the green verdure of the valley."

The guru, instead of scolding the disciple, calmly asked him to retire into the silence chamber, close the door, and think of nothing but the buffalo. One day passed, and the next morning the master looked through the little window in the silence chamber. The disciple was still concentrating upon the buffalo. So the master asked: "Son, what are you doing?" The disciple answered: "Sir, I am grazing with the buffalo. Shall I come to you?" The master replied: "No, son, not yet; go on grazing with your buffalo."

On the third morning the master again looked through the window of the silence chamber and inquired, "Beloved child, what are you doing?" To which the disciple, in the state of ecstasy, replied: "Heavenly Master, I behold the buffalo in my room, and I am feeding it. Shall I come to you with my buffalo?" "Not yet, my son, go on with the vision of the buffalo, and of feeding it."

On the fifth day, the master questioned, "Pray tell me, my son, what you are doing now?" The disciple bellowed, in a buffalo-like voice: "What do you mean? I am not your son. I am the buffalo!" To this the master smilingly retorted: "All right, Mr. Buffalo, you had better come out of the silence room. The disciple would not come out. "How can I get out through that narrow door?" he rumbled. "My horns are too big!" Then the master went into the silence chamber and brought the erstwhile "buffalo" out of his trance. The disciple smiled to find himself walking on all fours, trying to imitate the object of his concentration.

Then the disciple, after a light repast, went to listen to the words of his guru. He was asked many deep, spiritual questions, all of which he answered correctly, as never before. At last the guru remarked: "Now your concentration has reached the perfect state, when you and your mind can be one with the object of study."

You can begin, now, to try to make yourself one with the object of your concentration. Practice constantly. Whether you are thinking of a great businessman and his ability, or thinking about God, think deeply; concentrate deeply, until you feel that you have become that businessman or have become one with God.

AFFIRMATION

O Heavenly Father, Thou art in my affected body part.
It is well--for Thou art there. O Heavenly Father, Thou
art perfect. I am made in Thine image. I am perfect.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAKE ME LOVE WITH THY LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, make me feel
That Thou art working through my hands
And walking through my feet.
Heavenly Spirit, make me realize
That Thou art the power of assimilation in my body,
And the power
Of elimination of all bodily poisons.
Thou art circulating in my veins and arteries,
And throbbing in my heart.

May Thy wisdom work through my brain.
May Thy reason guide my reason.
May Thy will sing forth the direction to my stubborn will.
May Thy feelings softly lead my feelings.
May Thy desires determine my ambitions.
May Thy mercy inspire my kindness.
May Thy sympathy breathe forth my sympathy.

May Thy thoughts be my wisps of thoughts.
May Thine intuition permeate my intuition
And make it faultless.
May Thy determinations point the way
To my resolutions.
May Thine omnipresence vibrate in my being.
May Thy joy be my joy,
And Thy happiness, my thrill.
May Thine ever new Bliss be my Bliss,
And may Thy love conjure my love
To love all with Thy love.

PRAYER

Father, Thou art the fountain of all power, which flows like a silent river through various methods of healing. Bless all who are using Thy physical, mental, and spiritual laws to bring healing to themselves and to others. May they manifest Thy healing power, justly giving to Thee all credit and glory.

THE LAW OF DIVINE HEALING--Part 2

If you continually employ your mental initiative and maintain a willing-to-work attitude all the time, you will find that your blood will be charged with life current, making it immune against the invasion of bacteria. Keep smiling within, pulsating with deep joy, ever ready to act, and spiritually ambitious to help others. These attitudes are not only good exercises for the mind; they also keep the body constantly supplied with fresh Cosmic Energy, which descends into the body through the door of the medulla oblongata.

Strong will power pulls energy from the surrounding conscious cosmic rays into the body through the door of the medulla. Hence you should strengthen your will power and determination in every worthwhile activity, so that your body may be constantly filled and vibrant with life current. By the highly vibrating current of his mind, a man with strong will power can shake out the thought seeds of disease, failure, and ignorance. But the will vibration must be stronger than the vibration of physical disease or mental inharmony. The more chronic a disease is, the stronger, steadier, and more unflinching should be the determination, faith, and effort of the will to get well. "Man shall not live by bread (food chemicals) alone, but by every word (vibration of life energy) that proceedeth (which flows into the body of man) out of the mouth of God (that is, the opening of the medulla oblongata through which the conscious cosmic Life Principle enters the body of man)."

KEEP WINDOWS
OF LIFE OPEN

Human life may be compared to a house fitted with three windows: body, mind, and soul. Through these openings come pouring into the body three divergent rays of the one perfect light of God: health rays, faculty rays, and wisdom rays. These triune rays are responsible for the perfect health, mental equanimity, and soul enlightenment of man. As a triune manifestation of God's perfect light, man is truly created in the image of God. But then arises the question: If man is made after God's likeness, why does he suffer in so many ways? The answer is: Man as a divine child shares the independence of the Divine Being. Since he is essentially a god, created in the image of the Father, man has the privilege of free choice even as the great God. He may exercise that free choice, if he so wills, either to obscure with error the divine soul image or to keep it dazzling with rays of health, power, and peace.

Man has the peculiar independence and power to live in the house of life with the health-, strength-, and light-giving windows either open or closed. When he closes the windows of life, he shuts out the conscious cosmic ultra-violet rays and lives in the darkness of physical disease, mental disquietude, or abysmal soul ignorance. Most people have had one or more of their windows of life shut and jammed for years. That is why they suffer from chronic maladies. Their rescue lies in the knowledge and application of the law by which they may open the windows of body, mind, and soul, and bask once more in the all-healing conscious cosmic rays.

When he becomes ill, man instinctively wants instantaneous healing by God's power. What he fails to understand is that the power to bring about healing lies within himself, and it is up to him to put that power to work. God is not responsible for man's sickness, nor for his healing, because God originally gave man the privilege of free choice to receive His all-healing rays or to shut them out. The results of man's choice are governed by the cosmic law. God may not be bribed by special ceremonies to make arbitrary changes in His law. Nor does He respond to blind prayer, or out of partiality. He may be moved only by man's cooperation with the law and by love. Love is law. When man has kept the windows of his life closed indefinitely to the light of God, it is man who should make the effort to open those windows again to let in the freely-willing-to-help, knocking-to-enter, healing light of God.

All physical diseases, psychological inharmonies, and spiritual maladies born of ignorance come from man's own fault of shutting out the rays of God. And the logical, lawful conclusion is: whether he shuts the health-giving windows of life knowingly or unknowingly, he must by self-effort open them again. Ignorance of the law may not be used as an excuse for escaping the effects of breaking the law. There are many ways of opening the three jammed windows of life. All may be generally classified as "healing" --physical healing; psychological healing of worries, fears, nervousness, and so forth; and spiritual healing of soul-ignorance.

SPIRITUAL DISEASE Spiritual disease results from ignorance of the art of preserving the perfect image of God within us. It manifests itself in lack of soul peace, want of poise, discontentment, restlessness, unbalance, inharmony, unkindness, unwillingness to meditate, and the habit of putting off meditation.

REMOVE SPIRITUAL DISEASE BY:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Moderation | 6. Self-control |
| 2. Hygienic living | 7. Control of life force |
| 3. Right posture | 8. Withdrawal from senses |
| 4. Proper breathing | 9. Self-perception |
| 5. Spiritual and physical exercises | 10. Transcendental ecstasy |
| | 11. Meditation and reversing life force |

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASE Psychological diseases are caused by ignorance, lack of good company, lack of good judgment, bad karma, bad heredity, and wrong instincts. Psychological disease consists of susceptibility to temptation, fear, anger, greed, jealousy, worry, revengefulness, avarice, hate, gossiping, unkindness, mental and physical laziness, discontent, absentmindedness, untrustfulness, melancholia, bigotry, lack of introspection, and lack of self-analysis.

HEALING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASE

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Concentration | 5. Power of creating or dislodging habits at will |
| 2. Self-control | 6. Introspective judgment |
| 3. Good company | |
| 4. Will power | |

The Self-Realization Fellowship Energization Exercises, described in Lessons 5, 6, 7, 8, 8-A, 9, and 34, when practiced regularly and perfectly, will automatically dislodge psychological and physical diseases.

PHYSICAL DISEASE Physical diseases are many and are caused principally by the weakening of the life force. Learn to absorb the vital electric current from your brain battery by self-control and by freeing the mind from temptation.

OTHER CAUSES OF PHYSICAL DISEASE

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Lack of self-control and resulting loss of vitality | 4. Overeating |
| 2. Want of proper exercise | 5. Lack of mental peace |
| 3. Want of proper eating | 6. Lack of proper meditation |

VITAL HEALING EXERCISE

Practice of the SRF Energization Exercises helps to concentrate the mind and energy principally on exercising and healing. All methods of healing are limited in their effectiveness unless one knows that their potency comes from the sole unlimited power of God that is working behind them, and that His Power of healing is almighty and is sufficient in itself.

To send vital healing power to any body part, first inhale, holding the breath in the lungs and visualizing it as being converted into energy. Visualize that energy as reinforcing the energy in the medulla oblongata. Then concentrate at the point between the eyebrows and centralize the energy there, feeling it as a warm force; direct the energy from the point between the eyebrows to the diseased part, feeling its power burning up disease. Exhale.

When performing exercises with instruments, one is principally conscious of the instruments; whereas the consciousness of the muscles is secondary.

Furthermore, one is almost unconscious of the vital and mental parts of the exercises, as when doing "the daily dozen" with dumbbells while the mind is concentrated upon toast and coffee.

In muscular exercises, that is, when the muscles control the action, the consciousness is in the muscular movement. Energy is brought into play only as a secondary factor, and the mind is used in the background.

In mental exercises, a slight amount of vital force may be injected, principally through the power of will and imagination into the muscles or bodily parts. Sick people, invalids, or those who want to develop concentration, should practice mental healing exercises.

MENTAL HEALING EXERCISE

Concentrate on both feet and imagine a warm electric force trickling all over the soles. Do the same with the calves, thighs, hips, abdomen, intestines, navel, stomach, liver, kidneys, spine, heart, left and right lungs, each of the fingers, palms, forearms, upper arms, throat, eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, back of head, and top of head (in the middle). Feel the tingling, vitalizing sensation in every part of your body, and especially wherever there is disease or weakness. After you have concentrated on all the body parts, then concentrate the mind on the weak or diseased part again and mentally chant "Om." Try to feel that a warm electric force is being generated by the mental chanting of "Om." Chant Om fifteen times as you concentrate on each weak place or bodily part.

When the law is fulfilled; as when one is completely willing and unflinching in his enthusiastic practice on the foregoing methods, and has full faith in God, then healing can be instantaneous; it will germinate and grow like a seed that has been planted in properly prepared soil. Plough your mind with concentration and put the seeds of spiritual exercises therein; water them regularly with faith; then you may harvest spiritual abundance.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

There are three kinds of healing: physical, mental, and spiritual. Physical healing is required when the body is in a state of disease; mental healing is needed when the mind is in a state of inharmony; spiritual healing is necessary when the soul is in a state of ignorance. Physical illness can be banished only by right living; mental inharmony can be destroyed only by consciously attaining the state of peace; and spiritual ignorance can be healed only by wisdom.

WANDERINGS OF THE PRODIGAL SOUL

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The prodigal soul wandered away from the bosom of Spirit. It roamed on tracts of incarnations, gathering many hard experiences. It slept in the heart of minerals, buried deep in the soil; slumbered and moved in the deep sea spaces where perpetual winter and darkness reign. Crushed and pounded out of the metals, it fled into the corridors of plant life, wandering through labyrinthine veins of tender leaves and fragrant blossoms, emerging at last in the living halls of birds and animals. Finally, it tore off its animal garments and put on robes of human flesh.

Hypnotized by human experiences, the prodigal soul became self-exiled, imprisoning its omnipresence in the poverty and limitation of the physical body. At last the soul awakened to the dreariness of its experiences of countless incarnations--the endless repetition of the wild dance with death and the subsequent ejection from the mansions of minerals, clay, star dust, dreaming blossoms, sentient animals, and the unique human body.

Now the prodigal soul is back in his Father's mansion of omnipresence and omniscience. He remembers the nightmares of his wanderings through incarnations, the horrid dance with death that crushed him and made him think he existed no longer.

Now he sees that no matter how he was treated, his immortality was evident. He realizes that it isn't necessary to go through any more nightmares of experiences, wandering in tattered robes of incarnations, or going naked in Spirit.

Now the prodigal soul wants to travel of his own volition in the dream-land of incarnations, working with the souls of minerals, blossoms, animals, and men, to guide them from their wanderings back to their real home--the mansion of omnipresence. The prodigal soul now wants to reincarnate in the slums of material existence until all wandering brothers of minerals, plants, beasts, and men are brought back to their Father's Home of complete freedom.

AFFIRMATION

O Father, Thou art in my mind--I am
Thou. O Father, Thou art strength; Thou
art in me--I am strength.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE REBEL KING, IGNORANCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Transcendent Teacher, in the chamber of soul stillness I asked Thee:

What is sin?

Thine essential silence became secret articulations of my intuition; I understood Thine answer:

Sin is the rebel king, Ignorance.

The originator and pioneer of all suffering, Ignorance is the mysterious root of the tree of ill-health, the source of every type of mental inefficiency, and the primal cause of man's soul blindness.

Stealthily reigning within unenlightened minds, the evil Emperor maintains sinister courtiers: inertia, greed, false convictions, selfish ambitions, ignoble thoughts.

They destroy all crops of nourishing spirituality. In many men the harvest of faith, ripe for the reaping, has been cruelly trampled down by the dragoons of doubt.

May we dethrone Darkness by witnessing within us Thy triumphal coronation, O Eternal Sovereign of Light!

-- From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Father, Thine unlimited and all-healing power is in me.
Manifest Thy light through the darkness of my ignorance.

THE DIVINE LAW OF HEALING -- Part 3

The life of all matter and of all living creatures depends principally upon the immanent cosmic life energy and on the sunlight coming from without. Diseases start when these two great energies fail to enter the system in sufficient force to maintain good health. Hence one should know the various avenues through which these energies may most effectively penetrate the body. In addition to the individual potencies of the life force and sunlight, there is a great deal of reaction between them. It is the reaction between the commingling forces of the sunlight and life force that helps to support the human body.

Doubt, mental fatigue, worry, indifference, boredom, fear, restlessness, timidity, mental and physical laziness, overindulgence in anything, unmethodical life, lack of interest, and lack of creative initiative are counteracting static agents that make it impossible for cosmic energy to tune in with man. Working with interest and desire to help others, creative spiritual ambition, calmness, courage, an unconquerable attitude, tolerance, patience, and peace are avenues through which cosmic energy can help you.

This great law some know, but few put into actual practice:

If you continuously persist in thinking that your body is full of vitality, especially at times when it is weak, you will have started to open up a new, secret, invisible means of vitalizing yourself.

The Bible and other world scriptures tell us: "Man is made in God's image." Realize by meditation, which develops intuition and bestows on the devotee direct experience of Reality, that the life and vitality in your body, mind, and soul remain ever undiminished. Realize that only thought and consciousness exist as permanent realities. Matter may be cognized only through ideas; strive to realize, therefore, that in working you are not using up energy, but using up thoughts of energy or materialized ideas; hence, you would never feel physical weakness if you were continually to draw energy and enthusiasm from your own thoughts.

PERFORM ALL DUTIES WITH ATTENTION AND CHEERFULNESS Always perform small as well as important duties with deep attention, remembering that God is guiding and stimulating every worthwhile effort you are making to achieve a noble ambition. With the consciousness of God in your actions, and with the performance of noble actions, God's ceaseless cosmic energy will enter your body. His

power invisibly stimulates your circulation and creative activity.

Life force enters the body through the agency of an interested, joyous attitude -- it doesn't respond to a half-dead will! Learn to perform all your duties with a courageous cheerfulness welling up from within you. Then, as you perform your daily activities, you will see that a flood of vitality will move through all your muscles and through your entire body. Perform your daily duties with deepest happiness, thinking that you are not working for yourself alone but also for God and His children, all as a part of humanity and not apart from humanity. If you do this, undreamed-of power and happiness will come to you.

While the muscles and limbs of your body are busily engaged in performing your duties, visualize a halo of God's cosmic energy surrounding your body, and feel that you can never become tired again because your tissues are being renewed, supplied with current from that energy and not merely from food or oxygen. Hold fast to the thought that no matter how much physical energy you use up, you can bring it back by peace-born smiles. Try to remain peaceful under all circumstances, and let the peace "plant" blossom forth into flowers of smiles. Give smiles to others as you expect others to smile with you.

HELIOTROPIC METHOD OF SELF-HEALING

[Please review precautions in leaflet "Sunlight and Good Health" sent with Lesson 5.]

It should be noted that the life force in the body must be kept alert, for it is this force that vitalizes and chemicalizes the most important of all energies, that of the sun. Ultraviolet rays are ineffective on a dead man. The method of simultaneously using life force and sunlight for healing is called the heliotropic or heliotherapeutic method. Each one of the following methods is intended to quicken the life force by combining it with the sun's rays, creating a great force for the healing of different body parts. Ordinary sunbaths are partially effective, but much is yet to be learned about harnessing sunlight to life force for therapeutic purposes.

Practice the following methods in the morning or late afternoon hours. Depending on the intensity of the sun's rays and the sensitivity of one's skin, it is best for some persons to avoid the midday sun.

FOR COLDS: Every day lie flat on your back on a woolen blanket in the sunlight. Expose chest, thighs, and feet. Open mouth wide and turn head up so that sunlight can penetrate your mouth and nostrils. While doing this, gently quiver your head by tensing it, concentrating upon the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. Think that the energy you are sending by the vibration of quivering is absorbing and transmuting the sunlight into a hot healing force that is passing through these passages lined with mucous membrane, and helping to banish disease germs. Practice for fifteen minutes.

For Chest Colds: Let the sunlight shine on the chest while you are in a sitting or lying position. Rapidly but gently rub chest, injecting energy into it through your hands. Mentally visualize that the life force in your hands is reacting on the sunlight falling on your chest to create a new force that is very effective in destroying disease germs of the respiratory organs. This exercise should last up to half an hour. Practice both morning and afternoon, and before meals, or when your stomach is empty. It has been found effective to fast once a week on orange juice, with only fruits and nuts for dinner. This is especially beneficial for persons suffering with catarrh.

FOR HEADACHES: Let sunlight fall freely on your head and face. Keep eyes closed. Rub rapidly with your fingers the entire scalp, forehead, back part of head, and the sides of head. As you rub, think that you are mixing with the sunlight the life force flowing through your fingers, and that you are pouring this mixed solution of healing light on your head and saturating the pores with it. Do this for ten minutes and you will realize the great power of this exercise.

YOGIC EYE EXERCISE: The light from the sun has in it great healing rays, and also very destructive rays. To look at the sun at noon may blind you, because at that hour the actinic and other destructive rays overbalance the healing rays. The yogis advise that under no circumstances should one look at the sun except during the first hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset.

Early in the morning, during the first hour after sunrise, and early in the evening, during the last hour before sunset, the destructive rays of the sun are filtered out by the earth's atmosphere, and the healing rays pass through. One may then safely practice the following eye exercise taught by the yogis of India.

Stare into the sun with the eyes open and unwinking as long as you can without discomfort. Practice this a half minute to a minute at first, gradually increasing the time to not more than nine minutes.

After staring at the sun with wide open eyes as directed above, blink the eyes rapidly for one full minute.

Close eyes and turn your back to the sun.

Put the right hand over the eyes and the left hand over the right hand. You will see the image of the sun, which is still retained on the retina of the eye. Concentrate upon that image and visualize all the healing rays of the sun coming into your eyes through that sun which you see with closed eyes. That is actually what happens.

Keep the hands over the eyes. When the image of the sun begins to fade, move the eyeballs up, to the right, down, to the left, and so on, repeating this rotation with a little tension, and visualizing energy from the sun flowing into the eyes and strengthening them.

Then take the hands away and squeeze the eyes shut, holding them shut to the count of twelve; then relax. Repeat twice more, tensing to the count of twelve and relaxing, making a total of three times.

Practice this exercise only ONCE A DAY, either morning or evening.

FOR RHEUMATISM: Expose to the sunlight the part affected with rheumatism. Contract that part gently. Hold. Then, while that part is contracted, use your fingers to rub it rapidly. Do this for two minutes, thinking that the life force in the contracted body part and in your fingers, and the sunlight, are helping to eliminate your trouble. Then relax the body part. Repeat five times every day.

FOR ANEMIA AND NERVOUSNESS: Sit facing sunlight with the chest, arms, and thighs exposed. Gently tense the entire body, energizing it. Relax tension and with your palms rub forehead, throat, chest, abdomen, and thighs rapidly for two minutes. Turn so the sunlight is falling on your back. Tense the entire body, energizing it. Relax tension and briskly rub back of neck, shoulders, back, and buttocks. Repeat this entire exercise ten times. During this exercise, think that the life energy in your hands and body, and the sunlight, combine to make a powerful healing light for the body. You can also benefit from contracting the feet and rubbing the soles while exposing them to sunlight.

FOR WOUNDS, SORES, AND SKIN TROUBLE: Expose the diseased or injured part to sunlight, then gently contract and relax that part for ten minutes. During this exercise, think that the life force is healing the sore.

OBSTRUCTORS OF SUNLIGHT

- (1) Glass windows; sunlight coming through a closed window is of no value as the vitalizing rays are shut out. It is necessary to use the direct rays of the sun.
- (2) Clothing.
- (3) Clogged pores of the body -- owing to infrequent bathing, or hasty baths without rubbing; staying indoors; or going only from home to office (or other places) and back without any exercise in the fresh air en route.

SUN IS THE LIFE OF EVERYTHING The ancient Orientals worshiped the sun as the life of everything, including the body. They were real "sun worshipers." They meditated in the open with bare bodies, so that the thirsty life force could drink ultraviolet rays through the pores of the skin.

Modern man, with his indoor life and too much clothing, creates darkness in his body temple, inviting demons of bacteria to start their

dance of disease and destruction. Become a true sun worshiper, loving the Sun of Life within and outside your body.

One who follows the preceding instructions for the vitaheliotropic method of healing flushes his body pores with cheerful vitality from within, and with unobstructed sunlight from without. Such a vitalized man dwells in a temple of living energy, in which the powers of mind and wisdom love to come and remain.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Although you should take care of the body and should follow the right laws of living, do not allow your efforts in this direction to become a preoccupation that consumes all your time. Do not make health the ruling factor in your life. Healing the soul also heals both body and mind. When you have healed your soul of ignorance you have also healed your mind and your body, for the darkness of mental inharmonies and physical disease can no longer exist when the light of wisdom enters your body temple.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

Meditate with closed eyes, beholding the darkness behind your eyelids. Mentally say: "I dissolve my body in darkness." Forget the body, watching the limitless dark space of eternity spread above, beneath, in front, behind, ahead, everywhere. Now visualize a sealed balloon of rainbow light surrounding you. Throw the breath out very slowly, visualizing your breath as light that is filling and expanding the balloon. Remember, this balloon of light cannot burst, no matter how much you blow into it. Continue expanding the rainbow balloon of light with your luminous breath until it becomes big enough to contain the earth and your body; star clusters, universes, planetary and solar systems -- everything.

THAT MORAL BACKBONE

Long ago, near a rock outside a village in India, there lived a poisonous, hooded snake. This reptile killed many of the village children with its death-dealing fangs, but he was so sly that every attempt of the villagers to kill him failed. As a last resort, the villagers visited their holy man and entreated him: "Holy Master, please use your spiritual powers to prevent the snake from continuing its gruesome work of murdering our little children."

The saint agreed to comply with their request. He went near the

place where the snake lived, and by the magnetic power of his divine love coaxed the snake to come out. Then the saint commanded: "O Snake, desist from biting to death the dear people of my village. Practice nonviolence." With humbled hood the snake promised.

Soon after this incident the saint went on a pilgrimage. It was a year before he returned to the village, but as he passed by the rock where the snake lived he thought of the snake and wondered if it had kept its promise. As he looked about he was astonished to spy the snake in a pool of blood, severe wounds in its back.

When the saint asked what was the matter with him, the snake in a feeble voice replied: "Holy Preceptor, I have seven wounds in my back as a result of your teachings. Ever since the village children found out that I was harmless, they have pelted me with stones whenever they saw me go out in search of food. Although I have ducked in and out of my hole as quickly as I could, I have received these seven injuries to my spine. Master, at first they fled at the sight of me, but now, because of your teachings of nonviolence, I have to flee from them."

The Hindu master patted the snake on the back and healed him. Then he smilingly rebuked him, saying: "You little fool, I did tell you not to bite; but why didn't you hiss?"

Remember, when you are too much imposed upon by people who take advantage of you, do not spinelessly permit them to hurt you; yet do not inject the poison of injury into them either. Rather, keep such persons at a distance by the use of a few firm statements.

AFFIRMATION

Father, teach me to remember Thee equally in poverty and prosperity, in sickness and health, in ignorance and wisdom. Father, teach me to remember and be grateful for the years of health that I have enjoyed. Teach me to open my closed eyes of unbelief and behold Thine instantaneously healing light.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I SHALL GO ON LOVING THEE--Part I

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Though torn by trials,
 And mauled by misunderstandings,
 Still I shall go on loving Thee.
Whether drowned in material desires
 Or floating in the freedom of renunciation,
 I shall go on loving Thee.
Whether naughty or good, saint or sinner,
 I shall go on loving Thee.

Whether worshiped or forsaken
 Basking in adoration,
 Or left in the desert of despondency,
 I shall go on loving Thee.

Whether my errors multiply
 In spite of my effort to stop them
 Or whether virtue grows like compound interest
 Still, I shall go on loving Thee.

Whether rich or poor, healthy or ill,
 I shall go on loving Thee.

Whether married or single,
 In the pit of worry,
 Or in the light of pleasantry,
 I shall go on loving Thee.

Whether sad or joyful, wise or ignorant,
 I must go on loving Thee.

Whether regretting that I was born,
 Or weeping with joy because I am living
 I know I must love Thee.

(Continued)

PRAYER

Thou art ever at work and yet eternally smiling through countless joyous hearts. Bless me, that while I labor in the factory of life I wear, like Thee, an unfading smile.

May the waves of Thy power ever dance on the river of my daily activities.

Divine Mother, as Thou findest delight in fashioning atoms, flowers, and universes, so teach me the secret of being creatively and cheerfully busy.

YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYER--Part 1

Every employer or chief executive of a business concern looks for trustworthy, wholehearted employees who will work, not as mere mechanical robots, geared to quit at the sound of the closing bell, but as intelligent, creative assistants, with the same sustained interest in the development of the business that its founder or owner feels. For greatest success, the employer and the employee should have one common goal--the real success of the business they have undertaken together. Both are servants working for one cause.

The best way to please an employer is to be kind, obedient, and pleasant to him, and to be better qualified for advancement than anyone else in his employ. In this way it is sometimes possible for a person to work up to a high position in the business. He should not then relax on his laurels but continue to develop his resourcefulness, so that the employer will feel that without him he would be virtually blind. An employer may even give to such a valued worker a partnership in the business. Meanwhile, be sure to keep your employer pleased by intelligent, productive, hard work; by exceptional pleasantness and courtesy; and if possible by doing whatever you can to help him with his responsibilities.

You can maintain a tolerant, unruffled attitude externally toward a cranky employer by increasing your own kindness and courtesy and internally by ignoring utterly his intolerant behavior. During meditation each day, while concentrating at the point between the eyebrows, broadcast a plea for God's help:

"Father, help my employer to become inwardly and outwardly calm and happy. "

By stick-to-itiveness, by cultivating creative originality and developing your talents through the unlimited power of God that comes from communion with Him daily in deep meditation; by honest business methods, loyalty to your employer, and thinking of his business as if it were your own; and by cultivating an intuitive attunement with your immediate superior or with the owner of the

business and with your Cosmic Employer--God--you may unfailingly please your employer in the office and your Divine Employer.

Remember above all that your real employer is God. It is He who has engaged you in your occupation, under somebody else, to carry on His work. So no matter how small your duty is, perform it with the cheerful, careful attitude of doing it to please God. Anyone who works with the consciousness of performing all actions to please God, and who respects all the employers under whom he has to work as agents of the Divine, can never fail, but will succeed in any direction without limitation.

During meditation, say:

"Father, bless me that I be able to offer the best service in the business I am in. Father, bless me that I may please my employer and everyone else whom I meet."

MAKE SERVICE YOUR GOAL Service, and not money-making alone, should be the goal of business. The advertising motto should not be: "Something to tell about anything to sell," but rather: "An attractive way of telling about something worth selling."

If you can convince your employer by your dependability and resourcefulness that you can increase the profits of his company, and in a scrupulously honest way, the employer usually will be only too glad, for his own benefit, to give you a better position and more latitude in the affairs of the company. Your mind should be on what you can do to increase and perfect whatever service you render your company, rather than on how much salary you can make, or how far you can get ahead in the firm. The money will be your slave; otherwise it may become your master.

Most workers want important confidential positions, but they forget that it is necessary first that they develop the requisite qualities of responsibility and efficiency, alertness, loyalty, and unselfishness. To desire betterment of one's own position by using initiative and hard work to increase earnings for the company is not a sin; it might rather be called "unselfish selfishness." The impetus of your ambition should be unselfishly channeled for the good of your employer; your personal interests should not stand in the way of the interests of your employer.

Developing one's usefulness is the surest way of attracting notice and success. No businessman can effectively conduct his entire business alone. The largest and the smallest business concerns the world over are always looking for honest, loyal, dependable, energetic, untiring, imaginative, and enthusiastic workers.

DEVELOPING CREATIVE ABILITY In order to please your employer, you should think productively about his business every day, and equip yourself with the necessary knowledge and experience that your line of work demands for top-notch service. To cultivate originality of thought, practice two precepts:

1. Meditate deeply every day for at least half an hour.
2. Put your entire mind and concentration upon finding out how you can improve methods in your line of work and how you can make yourself fit for a better position of higher responsibility in your work.

If you find that you can make progress, or that there is a chance of promotion in the company you are working for, go on using your inventive and productive skill for the advancement of your employer's business. However, if analysis shows that your function is only mechanical and has no potential for future development, consider your present work as temporary and make up your mind to develop your aptitudes in a type of business that is suited to your abilities and that has a future. First make sure that you can secure a position in the business you like; then leave your present unsatisfactory position.

If you develop creative concentration, you can learn to enjoy any kind of work; you can develop efficiency and progress in any direction you choose. It is better, however, to try to use your creative ability in work to which you are instinctively attracted because of prenatal tendencies, rather than in work for which you have to awaken your interest anew.

If you don't like being obliged to please an employer and if you cannot endure subordination, you should learn everything necessary to become your own employer. Acquire complete knowledge and experience in one branch of an essential business; then direct your attention to gathering funds--by extra work, and by prudent borrowing, if necessary. Lead a plain life and be prepared to sacrifice some of your lesser desires to achieve your goal.

Congenital defects of a nonproductive, nonintelligent mind may be removed only by meditation and constructive thinking. Communion with God can remove all human limitations that impede success. Learn to receive success vibrations intuitively from God during meditation, and from mixing with successful men and associating with successful business firms when you are busy with worldly affairs.

The use of your soul's unlimited resourcefulness will lead you to the sphere of unlimited success. By daily thinking about your line of work and the business you are in, and by practical training and experience acquired in school or in a practical occupation, you will find your proficiency in your chosen profession increasing in manifold ways.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

There will always be a place for you if you perform life's duties with sincerity and honesty. If you put yourself into your work you will realize this. Make yourself valuable, no matter where you are or what you are doing. Always strive for the best. Think creatively and become efficient. Create something in your mind every day. Do not let your mental powers become stagnant. Your mind is the reservoir of all the power in the world!

THE PRIEST WHO JUMPED INTO THE WELL--Part 1

Once upon a time a bigoted Hindu priest presided over the prosperous temple of Sabramati. His dogmatic attitude had been instilled in him by his teacher, to whose grace he ascribed all his fortune. He had vowed to train his own disciples as he had been trained, with unreasonable, dogmatic discipline.

Every day he harangued the members of his temple with insistent instructions to be implicitly obedient to him. With flagrant imagination he pictured for them the fires of Hades that would consume all dissenters and spiritual rebels. Being an ignorant man, he did not like to be questioned about his beliefs and his statements, particularly by men of intelligence. Before the flame of their bright minds he could feel his dogmatic assertions melting like butter.

Nevertheless he somehow managed to hold a crowd of followers, chiefly by the lavish distribution of sweetmeats, which helped some of the more knowledgeable members of his congregation to stomach his oratory. For the most part the group consisted of illiterates with dogma-hardened mentalities. They always agreed with the priest and were ever ready to pelt stones of scripture at anyone who questioned the wisdom of their priest. He was really the proud leader of a band of idiots who did nothing but agree with him.

One day his students asked: "Honored priest, will you please show us the true way to pray and the absolutely certain method of contacting God?" The priest, sure of no intelligent scrutiny from his blind, unquestioning followers, replied: "My loyal children, that is easy. I can teach you, provided you do exactly as I do after I start the lesson."

"Heaven bless our great teacher-priest!" shouted his followers. "We solemnly swear to do exactly as you do until doomsday if you will only teach us." So the priest beckoned and said: "All right, my children, follow me to the temple and sit around me and after that do exactly as I do." The priest sat on a cushion in the middle of the temple, which was half-lighted by the morning sun. The students, drenched with devotion, sat around him, all ready to follow whatever the master-priest would do.

The priest braced up and said: "Sit upright." Two hundred devout followers immediately chorused: "Sit upright." At this unexpected answer the priest looked around, and the disciples, seeing the master look around, also looked around. In disgust, the priest closed his eyes and prayed: "O Spirit, benign Lord." The disciples at once prayed: "O Spirit, benign Lord."

The priest continued: "Benign Lord of the Universe, bless us with the knowledge that will make us obey our master implicitly." The students devoutly repeated these words in unison. Just then the priest became aware of a little draft coming through a temple window and began to feel an uncontrollable tickling in his throat. Before he could utter more words of prayer he coughed. The disciples coughed too. The master was dismayed at this absurd antic, resulting of course from his own training; but alas, as he coughed and sneezed again, all his disciples coughed and sneezed too. Now the priest was angry. "Quiet, you fools! Don't cough, and don't imitate me." But his well-trained disciples happily shouted back: "Quiet, you fools! Don't cough, and don't imitate me."

This was too much. The priest stood up and commanded: "This lunacy must stop!" And the matchless disciples, the best products of his training, stood up and demanded: "This lunacy must stop!"

The priest forgot the dignity of his position and forcefully swung his palm with a resounding slap on the cheek of one of his thoughtless group. Two hundred disciples at once followed suit, slapping one another, and their master, until their cheeks grew hot and fiery red. His face burning with countless slaps, the priest rushed out of the temple crying, "Water! Water!" And of course the disciples followed him shouting, "Water! Water!" and slapping one another all the while.

The priest, being able to think of no other way of escape, jumped into a well to cool his burning cheeks. You can guess what happened then! His two hundred dogma-drugged disciples jumped into the well on top of him. The priest had truly kept his promise, for they all "went to heaven" together. (An analysis of this story follows in Lesson 41.)

AFFIRMATION

I care not what I may permanently possess,
but give me the power to acquire at will whatever
I may daily need.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I SHALL GO ON LOVING THEE --Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Whether working in a factory or sitting on a throne,
I must go on loving Thee.
Whether dishonored by all or enthroned in all hearts,
I must go on loving Thee.
Whether fading with disease or thrilling with health,
I must go on loving Thee.
Whether I commit all the errors of the world,
Or practice all the virtues of the scriptures,
I must go on unconditionally loving Thee.

In the hades of misery, or in the heaven of joy,
I know that love is Thy throne.
If I go on loving Thee always,
I shall be on the throne with Thee through eternity.

Whether or not Thou dost answer my demands
and prayers,
I shall go on loving Thee.
Whether or not Thou dost love me,
I shall go on loving Thee.
It is Thou who hast planted love in me, and that is why
I shall forever go on loving Thee.
First, I must love Thee
Before I love anything or anyone else.

PRAYER

Divine Father, banish me not in silence. I stand lonely without Thee. Let me not become imprisoned in my work, so as to forget Thee. I shall go within, to bring Thee without. Where Thou hast placed me, Thou must come. Hidden in the ashes of my burnt sadness, I shall find Thy golden presence.

YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYER--Part 2

The experience one acquires in a particular business should be expanded constantly by using common sense and creative ability in performing one's work. Penetrate deeper and deeper into the region of creative thought and you will learn from A to Z about any business and will know how to carry it on in the best possible way. Use creative intelligence to cut down overhead expense and to evolve better methods of production, advertising, and distribution. Your employer will be grateful and you also will benefit. The era of autocratic employers that demand a blind obedience from their employees is passing. Employees' initiative is now encouraged. In the West particularly there is usually a more democratic relation between the employer and employee.

Business self-interest that operates at the expense of others' welfare is the metaphysical blunder that leads selfish industries to undergo the throes of periodic depressions and inflations. If all the businessmen in the world were selfish and grasping, then each such businessman would have eventually millions of inimical competitors. But if each businessman wanted to succeed by including in his efforts toward success the interests of others, then he would have millions of helping business friends. One for all and all for one must be the motto for real success and happiness in business.

**CHOOSING
A VOCATION** Select a vocation that is in accordance with your inner interests, instinctive inclinations, and intuitive meditative guidance. Do not try to seek success in a business that you dislike. A spiritually minded vegetarian obviously should not attempt to go into a business such as butchering animals or selling meat.

It is all right to take small jobs temporarily, but to allow oneself to vegetate in such positions is a great sin against the innate creative ability of the soul. After you have gathered experience in holding such jobs, let other inexperienced newcomers take over the small, insignificant jobs and shift your attention to the attainment of a superior position.

Most people spend all their lives desiring to do something perfectly--

such as playing the piano or painting--but are too lazy and careless to put forth the effort required for perfect accomplishment in the desired field. They go on for years performing inefficiently and excusing themselves by saying: "I was never able to find a good teacher, and I hadn't enough time to practice; anyway, I am not a genius." Extraordinary talent is not as necessary as unswerving purpose and unflinching application and effort. If an individual of average intelligence practices on the piano regularly for five hours a day under an expert teacher, he may become a proficient performer.

A great many people fail in attaining their material, mental, and spiritual desires because they lack a definite purpose and sustained effort. A person who wants to be a lecturer should first learn public speaking in the best school he can find; then try to improve on what he has learned by practice and exercise of his own creative intelligence. Whether one wishes to be an artist or a businessman, it is important to associate with the best artists or the best businessmen that you can find. If you give to such an association your best intelligence and attention, there will be a loving communion of interests. If you are interested in great people in order to learn their ways, they will be interested in you. If it is not possible to meet exceptional persons in the field in which you are interested, you can probably learn from reading books by such persons, or from reading about their accomplishments. In order to be a business organizer, study business organizations of the type in which you are interested, and, wherever you are, become a real organizer yourself, giving the best organized service that you can to others, for their greatest benefit.

And if you would become a deeply spiritual person, it is necessary to associate, not with an orator (who talks about God without actually knowing Him), but with a man of highest spiritual realization; and you must yourself make a daily effort to meditate deeper and deeper.

A PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION I loved philosophy and religion from my boyhood, and I made up my mind then to establish my own schools and institutions and never to hold a job under anybody. It would have been folly on my part to become a railroad man, the career my family had planned for me. I started on my own chosen path with infinite confidence that I would succeed, and I did succeed. My success was due to a strong determination and confidence in the guidance of the Heavenly Father in everything I undertook. I did not develop efficiency in my line through human agencies but through God and creative thinking, principally.

As I headed toward my goal, I tried to succeed in different lines of endeavor. When I saw that I succeeded in all the things I undertook, I fully launched myself into the greatest undertaking of my life--spiritual organization. I first started my work with three or four workers in a little mud hut in Calcutta. Later I was able to establish a large palatial school* in India,

*The work of Paramahansa Yogananda came to the attention of Sri Manindra Chandra Nundy, the Maharaja of Kasimbazar, who in 1918 gave his palace and twenty-five acres in Ranchi as headquarters for Paramahansaji's new school.

and finally a spiritual home in America, the international headquarters of SRF, with many resident workers serving thousands of SRF students.

I give this information only that you may feel a deeper conviction that my foregoing remarks pertaining to success have come from the heart of my own successful experience, and not from mere visions about success. I hope therefore that if a weak and humble person such as myself could accomplish the creation of an organization with which to serve his brethren, you, who are perhaps stronger than I was in the beginning, may surely do something to bring to yourself success that will also include the welfare of others.

YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENTS The unwelcome habits that are acquired earliest in life keep one quite busy later on, often crowding out many worthwhile pursuits. The social world moves on wheels of certain habits. Too often people fail to realize that its machinery may be headed toward the chasm of ignorance or the mire of petty engagements that halt the steady progressive activities of life. Let the secretary of your true judgment arrange the daily routine of your life. Systematize and schedule your engagements. Let nothing, especially your habits, sway or influence your wise judgment.

How many times people allow card games, dancing, parties, hunger for amusement, time-killing and progress-murdering idleness, lack of initiative and ambition, to stand in their way and persuade them to ignore their engagement with worthwhile objectives of life, even though they are fastidiously punctual in keeping daily engagements with useless doings.

When an overdose of drugging sleep makes you lazy and a late riser on Sunday morning you forget your highest engagement. Waking late, you find the delaying-to-dress habit standing in your way, influencing you not to go out of your home; and you easily forget your engagement with the spirituality-stimulating atmosphere of the temple or church.

Your business engagements are important; but you should not for their sake sacrifice your equally important engagements of daily physical exercise and of bathing the nerves and mind with showers of peace by meditation. There should be evenness of spiritual and mental development and of demonstrating prosperity. Never drug the spiritual sense with the chloroform of business madness, or of any other kind of madness that will keep your attention directed away from God.

Many persons think that unless one is "at it" day and night he is going to be left behind in the race for success in life. That is not true. The one-sidedly business-bent man, forgetful of his other duties of life, is not the truly successful man. It requires a greater skill than his to live life evenly, rightfully, and successfully. He who keeps only his engagements with money-making activities is left behind by the Lord. God does remind us very

forcefully, through the pangs of hunger, that we should get busy and make money to supply the needs of our physical bodies; but to use up most of our time and mental powers in just maintaining our physical bodies is to miss the goal of life. There is little difference between eating from a gold plate or a tin plate. The food in either case may equally satisfy hunger. Why concentrate upon acquiring what is unnecessary, and constantly multiplying self-created useless desires for more than one has? To increase such demands for meaningless luxuries is to find oneself engaged night and day, spending his lifeblood in striving to get things that he does not even need.

Your engagement with business is important, but your appointment to serve others is more important, and your engagement with meditation, God, and Truth is most important. Don't say that you are too busy with the worries and cares of keeping the wolf from the door to find time for the culture of heavenly qualities. Break your self-satisfied, doggedly immovable old bad habits of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the more important engagement with wisdom. No one else will answer for your actions, though others often become instruments in keeping you enmeshed in useless frivolities and so-called important engagements.

Engagements with Mr. Overactivity and with Mr. Idleness both lead to misery. It is high time modern man shook off drowsiness and systematized his life. He has learned to apply science, psychology, and system to his business; these are nothing but devices for his material comfort. The really astute man should apply system and science to better his health, prosperity, social and international life. In order to do that, he should avoid giving all his time to business, which pertains only to his hope of physical comfort. People forget that the increase in cost of living luxuriously means a corresponding increase in expenditure of nerve and brain energy, which curtails longevity. Most people become so engrossed in making money that they haven't time to enjoy the environment of comfort after acquiring it.

So do not say, "I will meditate on the Cosmic Being tomorrow." That tomorrow will never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate deeper tomorrow, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Do not be lured by bad habits and paltry, useless, vanity-feeding engagements into crowding out God-contact.

The world created bad habits in you, but the world will not stand responsible for your actions springing from those habits. Then why give all your time to the world? Reserve even an hour a day for actual scientific soul-exploration. Doesn't the Giver of the world itself, of your family, money, everything deserve one twenty-fourth part of your time?

Your greatest and most important engagement is with God, seeking His truth through the path of wisdom and daily discipline!

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

You must be careful not to harbor impractical ambitions in your life, and consequently spend your years wading through the mire of poverty, misery, sarcasm from family and friends--always chasing a rainbow trail. It is better to sweep the streets, with God in your heart, than to be a millionaire suffering from too much money and no time for God. Don't regret what you lack or the kind of work you do. Be satisfied and find God. After all, even the millionaire has to leave everything behind. Why shouldn't you feel that God is waiting for you? You have run away from your home. Reverse your consciousness from being a prodigal son to being a real son of God.

EXPLANATION OF THE STORY

"THE PRIEST WHO JUMPED INTO THE WELL"

The story in Lesson 40 shows that theology-stuffed dogmatists who follow untested beliefs will ultimately, like the blind following the blind, be drowned in the same pit of ignorance. Ignorant students should not cling to ignorant spiritual teachers, for they drag each other down, to sink in ignorance.

You do not help yourself to grow spiritually when you blindly follow a religion just because your forefathers followed it. To join a neighborhood church just because it is conveniently near, or to change your religion whenever you change your residence, also shows failure to exercise one's powers of discrimination and free choice.

Most people do unthinkingly whatever they are told to do by their church. Only the searching few try to understand why they should pray, and what is the meaning of prayer, and why prayer seems to be a one-sided affair. Do you know why, when you have prayed continuously without receiving any response, your prayers are not answered? Are you going to permit yourself to drown in a well of unhappiness, burning with the slaps of experiences arising from your own spiritual ignorance and the scorching mistaken ideas introduced into your mind by others lacking in spiritual wisdom? Search until you find true wisdom!

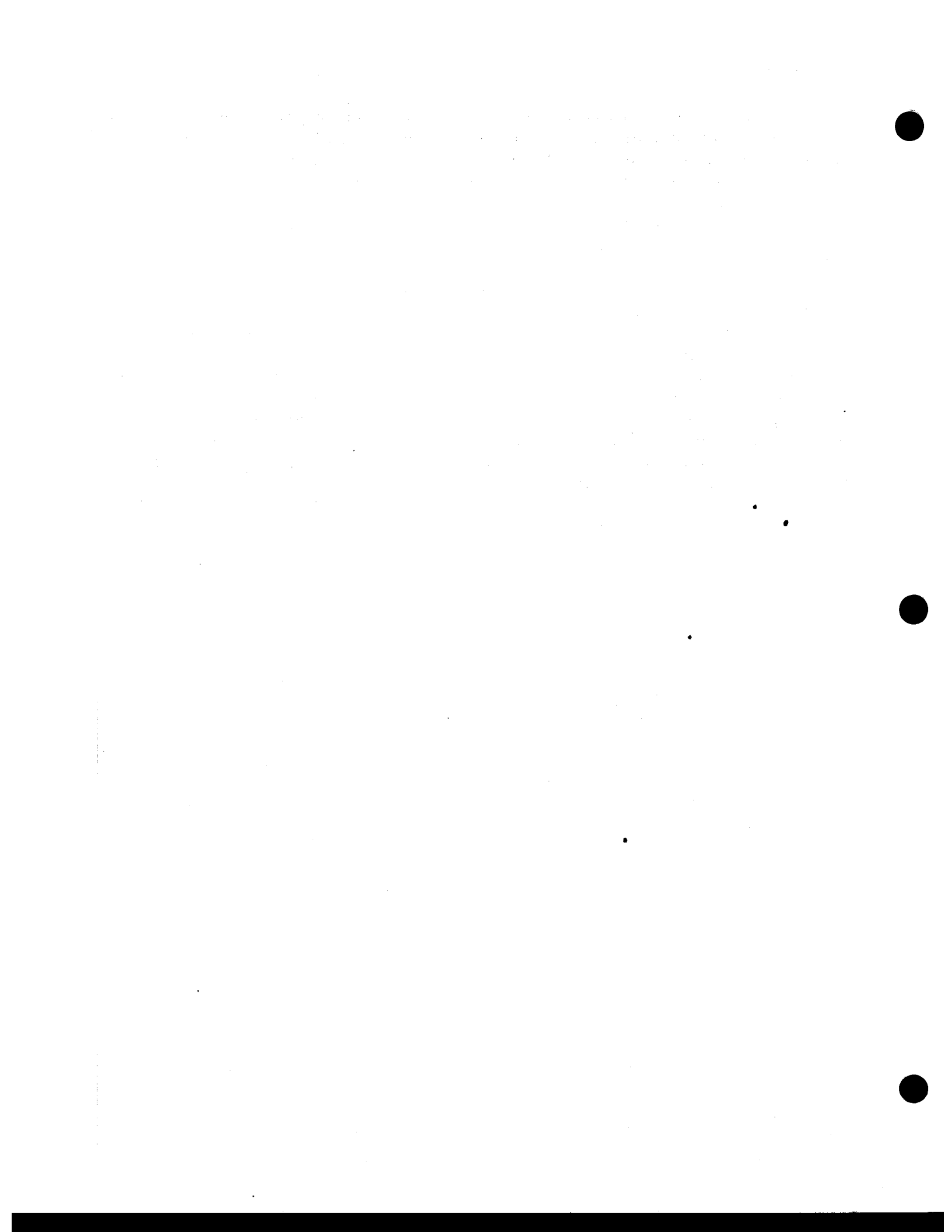
Understand the influence of the imitative subconscious mind that tortures man with so many bad habits. Subconscious habits, like the two hundred idiots in the story, blindly imitate the priest of one's wrong judgment. If by mistake you choose a wrong action, your invisible subconscious mind imitates the wrong action chosen by the conscious mind and keeps on suggesting that you repeat it until the wrong action grows into a bad habit. Your subconscious mind is the blind imitator of your conscious mind. If your conscious mind becomes dogmatic and unreasonable like the priest in the story, then your subconscious mind will do likewise.

A dogmatic subconscious mind, in turn, strengthens the dogmatic tendencies of the conscious mind, bounding it everywhere until it loses control of its discriminative powers. If the priest in the story had been a wise man, he would not have attracted ignorant, mimicking disciples, nor would he have expired so ignominiously! A wise conscious mind builds a wise subconscious mind. The subconscious mind endowed with wisdom in turn strengthens an already wise conscious mind.

Our story especially illustrates that one should be constantly watchful in training his conscious mind, for the subconscious imitator within is always ready to form either strong good or strong bad habits through the medium of the conscious mind, and to turn back then and influence it with good or bad habits. The subconscious mind is the automatic mind that repeats our acquired conscious experiences lest we forget them. Without it we would have to start out every day like babies. And yet the subconscious memory-mind may be your worst enemy, for it will stimulate your conscious mind to repeat, parrot-like, against your will, your worst habits. Good habits ensure easy performance of good actions, while bad habits compel you to do evil against your will. So be careful what you choose to do consciously, for unless your will is very strong, that is what you may have to do repeatedly and compellingly through the habit-influencing power of the subconscious mind.

AFFIRMATION

I will help myself that I may bring into proper use all my God-given powers.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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SHADOWS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Beds of flowers, or vales of tears;
Dewdrops on buds of roses,
Or miser souls, as dry as desert sands;
The little, running joys of childhood,
Or the stampede of wild passions;
The ebbing and rising of laughter,
Or the haunting melancholy of sorrow;
The will-o'-the-wisp of our desire,
Leading only from mire to mire;
The octopus grip of self-complacency,
Of time-beaten habits;
The first cry of the newborn babe,
And the last groan of death;
The bursting joy of health,
Or the ravages of cruel disease--
These, all, but shadows are,
Seen by us on the cosmic mental screen,
Shadows, and nothing but shadows!
Yet shadows have, O many shades!
Dark shadows, light ones--
Even shadows may entertain!

PRAYER

O Eternal Conqueror! teach me to train noble qualities within me--soldiers of calmness and self-control.

Be Thou their Divine General, like Krishna of yore, in the battle against dark foes: anger, ingratitude, untruthfulness.

May I raise over the realm of my life Thy flag of invincible righteousness.

TEMPTATIONS VERSUS SELF-CONTROL--Part 1

The law of action is based upon the law of cause and effect. A person born good in this life was a good person in his previous incarnation; and if he continues to behave rightly, he will attract to his nature more good qualities. Those who have very few good tendencies may lose even those they have by the invasion of powerful bad tendencies. If a person is inclined to be bad, it is an indication he has had bad tendencies before, and that he may attract more similar tendencies. Those who are only slightly inclined to wrong actions were so inclined before, but the preponderance of good qualities also acquired from past incarnations will usually crowd out whatever meager wrong tendencies that person has brought with him into this life.

This is the natural working of the law of cause and effect, or karma. However, one should not feel helplessly bound by them if he happens to have undesirable habits and wishes to be rid of them. Now is the time to begin conquering them through the development of will power and the habit of regular, right meditation. It is possible to free oneself from the clutches of wrong habits and to create right habits of thought and action that will bring the desired results.

No matter how strong one's evil habits may be, he should remember it is by his own consciousness, through repetition of a thought, and of a thought-producing action, that he has formed a specific habit. If the consciousness can think itself into bad habits, it has only to think differently to cultivate good habits. Good and bad ideas are different forms, or different dreams, of consciousness. It is better to dream beautiful phases of consciousness than to have nightmares of a wrongly imaginative consciousness. Consciousness is very imaginative and sensitive. It is pliable and can think or dream itself into any state.

The trouble with most people is that they voluntarily allow their kingdom

of consciousness to be ruled by wrong tendencies born of past habits. Their good discriminative tendencies, also born of past habits, remain ostracized; and the occult soul soldiers, the metaphysical rear guards hidden behind the armies of discrimination, remain inactive, too.

AVOID WEAK AND EVIL ACTIONS People ruled by evil habits hate the light of truth, but this is true only as long as they are intoxicated with evil thoughts and ways. When they have had enough of unsatisfying wrong living, and have suffered long enough from its consequences, they turn to the light of understanding and right living for relief. They seek the light of God, even though formidable bad habits still stand in their way. Then, if they develop good habits by practicing harmonious ways of living, they come again to understand the luminous joy of inner peace and self-control brought by good habits.

Remember that it requires only the repetition of a few weak actions to produce habits of weakness. Habits are automatic, psychological machines that help us to perform necessary actions easily. Most people allow their self-created habits of weakness or failure to enslave them. One may save himself if he has made up his mind to live differently, but his resolution to fight bad habits must then persist until success is reached.

Material desires encourage our bad habits by engendering false hopes of satisfaction and happiness. At such times one should summon his discriminative powers to reveal the truth: bad habits lead ultimately to unhappiness. Thus exposed, bad habits become impotent to hold man in their misery-making sway. When the mind is convinced by discrimination of the worthlessness of bad habits, they cease to exist.

It is important that one's freedom of action be insured. Most people live all through life simply making good resolutions without accomplishing any of them. Such persons are actually sliding down the hill of progress while they dream they are climbing up. Those who have thus weakened their wills find that the more they struggle for success, the deeper they sink into the quicksand of failure. Or they may fall into the pit of despair before they realize what is happening to them.

A man rolling downhill finds no resistance, but as soon as he tries to climb up he meets great resistance. So it is with the man who is fast sliding into habitual thoughts and actions; he does not find resistance until he tries to reverse his direction and climb the hill of virtue.

The more one improves himself, the more he will elevate others around him. The self-improving man is the increasingly happy man. The happier he becomes, the happier will be the people around him.

SEEK GOOD COMPANY Evil tendencies from prenatal existence and bad

company are the worst influences on human conduct, because they create enslaving bad habits that deprive man of his rightful independence of will and reason. Prenatal influences must be outgrown, but bad company may be avoided. A number of evil people assembled together quickly influence--consciously or unconsciously--the will of a new arrival. A company of people, the majority of whom are evil, will have a bad influence over an undisciplined child living with them. Conversely, one who lives among good people who have an inner desire to be even better will himself automatically tend to be good. Repeated good or bad actions produce good or bad habits that impel one gladly to become good or evil.

Because evil appears to promise great happiness, most people are at first attracted by the extra gloss of the spurious coin of mundane sense lures. Thoughts of dishonesty, temptation, or revengefulness that may come to mind are dark soldiers of the misery-making senses. They want to conquer the kingdom of happiness within and to keep you prisoner in the dungeon of unhappiness and misery. As soon as the soldiers of wrong thoughts rally together to attack your inner peace, wake up your soul soldiers of light, honesty, self-control, and desire for good things, and wage a furious battle.

The golden luster of the soul's potential lasting happiness becomes obscured by encrustations of temporary sense pleasures. A man whose mind is attentive also to jealousy, worry, and so forth becomes thoroughly miserable; but when he turns the same concentration of attention to thoughts and acts of love, peace, and harmony, he feels supremely happy. So the soul also regains its happiness when it turns from indulgence in spurious misery-making sense pleasures to delight in its own superior pleasure-producing soul qualities.

Many good people have allowed their soul happiness to perish by not heeding the stern behests of wisdom, yielding instead to the sweet but poisonous words of wicked associates. It would be better to live in Hades with one harsh-speaking wise man than to live in Heaven with ten sweet-mouthed poisonous beings. The latter would make Hades of Heaven, whereas justly-speaking wise friends would make Heaven of Hades.

There would be much less hypocrisy in the world if children, instead of being constantly scolded for their errors, were taught positive moral remedies such as methods of self-control, right living, and proper hygiene before they have a chance to become victims of evil through bad company.

One should make himself adamant against taking offense and freely "forgive and forget" the offenses of those who wrong him. One should never become angry, nor allow oneself to become the victim of another's anger. He who is wise does his best to overcome difficulties; but he smiles, first, last, and all the time. There is no better panacea for sorrow, no better reviving tonic, than smiles. There is no greater power with which to overcome failure than a real smile. There is no more beautiful ornament one

may wear than a genuine smile of peace and wisdom glowing on the face.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS It is easy to wish that others would behave perfectly toward you, and it is easy to see their faults, but it is very difficult to conduct oneself properly and to consider dispassionately one's own faults. If a person consistently behaves rightly, others will try to follow his example. One who can assess his own faults without developing an inferiority complex, and who keeps busy correcting himself, is using his time more profitably than if he spent it just in wishing others to be better. One's own good example will do more to change others than all his wishing, righteous wrath, or words.

Gossiping about the moral weaknesses of others is the most wicked of all spiritual crimes. It breeds hypocrisy in social and individual life. Remember what Jesus said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone" (John 8:7); and, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). One who keeps his mind occupied with an unholy interest in the weaknesses of others actually rouses and stimulates his own sleeping prenatal bad habits.

People who lie, gossip, create inharmony, and deal evil for good should be forgiven, for they are acting under the intoxication of evil. No matter how intelligent they appear to be, their will and reason have become enslaved by evil. Great criminals consciously do evil, knowing its harmful consequences, yet they cannot help it. In thinking of such persons one should say, as once said Thomas a Kempis when seeing a man condemned to death: "But for the grace of God, there goes myself." (To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Environment is of supreme importance to spiritual progress. It is greater than will power. You must surround yourself with a good environment. If you keep a little plant without a protecting hedge, animals can come and destroy it. So it is with your little plant of Self-realization; if you keep it exposed to the animals of selfishness and wrong environment, it will be destroyed. What you have studied, treat sincerely; then spiritual habits will be formed, and when the plant is watered and cared for, it will grow and blossom into beautiful flowers of wisdom and love.

ALL FOR A RAG--Part 1

In the darksome depths of a jungle in India there lived a holy master and his disciples. Away from sense-drugging environments, the haunts of iniquitous desires, these ascetics led a simple, natural life, free from the travails

of unfulfilled, ever-increasing worldly desires. The master and his disciples habitually woke with the dawn, and spread their prayers over the Divine Bosom with the scattering sunrays. They subsisted on jungle fruits and roots and slept in nature-hewn caves on the lower spur of the forested hills.

One disciple, Rama, had specially renounced the sophisticated environment of his luxurious parental home, and had joined this jungle hermitage in order to live its very simple life. Rama had an over-critical, metaphysical-meticulous spirit. As time went by, he started finding fault even with the homely disciplinary duties of the hermitage. Rama had been warned not to go to extremes, but one day he said to his master, "Honored Sir, I find I have left one family only to get into another larger one here. I used to perform duties at home, and here I have to do the same. At home we were fond of one another, we ate, we worried about food and cleanliness, dreamed and slept, and I see that we do these things here also. Master, I am fed up with the material duties of your hermitage, which are nothing but substitutes for the worldly duties I performed at home. I want to get away from all materiality and live in remote solitude in the temple of contemplation."

The master answered warningly: "Son, you may go, but beware that you don't get enmeshed in delusion by living only in the company of your own erroneous thoughts. Though you escape the association with good people, who are after all better than worldly people, it will be most difficult for you to fly from the mad concourse of your own restless thoughts, which may lead you astray."

Rama paid no heed to the warnings of the master and the entreaties of his fellow disciples. He sallied forth in search of a solitary spot. To be free from all encumbrances, he left all the simple belongings of his hermitage life and took only two pieces of rag to serve as loincloths, and a begging bowl for water. At last he found a very quiet place on the top of a hill at the outskirts of the jungle and near a village. He lived on a rocky ledge under a huge shady tree.

The first night passed in peace, even though he was lulled to sleep by the howling of the jackals, coyotes, and jungle tigers. But when dawn came the young anchorite Rama was dismayed to see that a little mouse had eaten small holes in the second piece of rag which he had hung on the tree branch above him. And his begging bowl had been stolen by a silent nocturnal thief--a monkey. Rama thought: Heavenly Father, I left all for You and now You have taken my bowl and sent a mouse to nibble on my very last possession--the piece of rag."

Just at this time a villager was passing by the rock, and, having caught a glimpse of the saint, halted to pay him respect. The villager, seeing Rama worried, inquired: "Honored saint, pray tell me what is worrying you?" On hearing the story about the chewed-up rag, the villager advised: "Your

Holiness, why don't you keep a cat to frighten away the mice?" "That is a practical idea. But where will I get a cat?" anxiously inquired the saint. "Well, that can easily be fixed, for I will bring you a cat tomorrow," replied the villager. Another kindly villager supplied him with a new begging bowl.

The next day Rama added to his possessions a silky Persian cat. And so the problem of the rag was solved, for the mice knew better than to hazard meeting the feline god of death just for a tiny tidbit of a dry rag. Every day Rama went to the village to fetch some milk for his cat.

A year went by and the villagers ungrudgingly supplied free milk for the saint and his cat, until one day the village elder said to the saint as he begged milk from him: "Holy Rama, we are tired of supplying you with milk." "But how is my cat going to live?" retorted Rama. "Why don't you keep a cow?" suggested the village headman.

"How can I get one?" queried Rama. "I will give you one right now," the village elder generously offered. Rama joyfully returned to his rustic home with a cow.

Now Rama, his cat, and the cow formed a pleasant family, cheering one another in a mutual language of affection. The cow was known as "the saint's cow." It was not, however, a saintly cow; it acted more like a freebooter, marauding the paddy fields of the villagers.

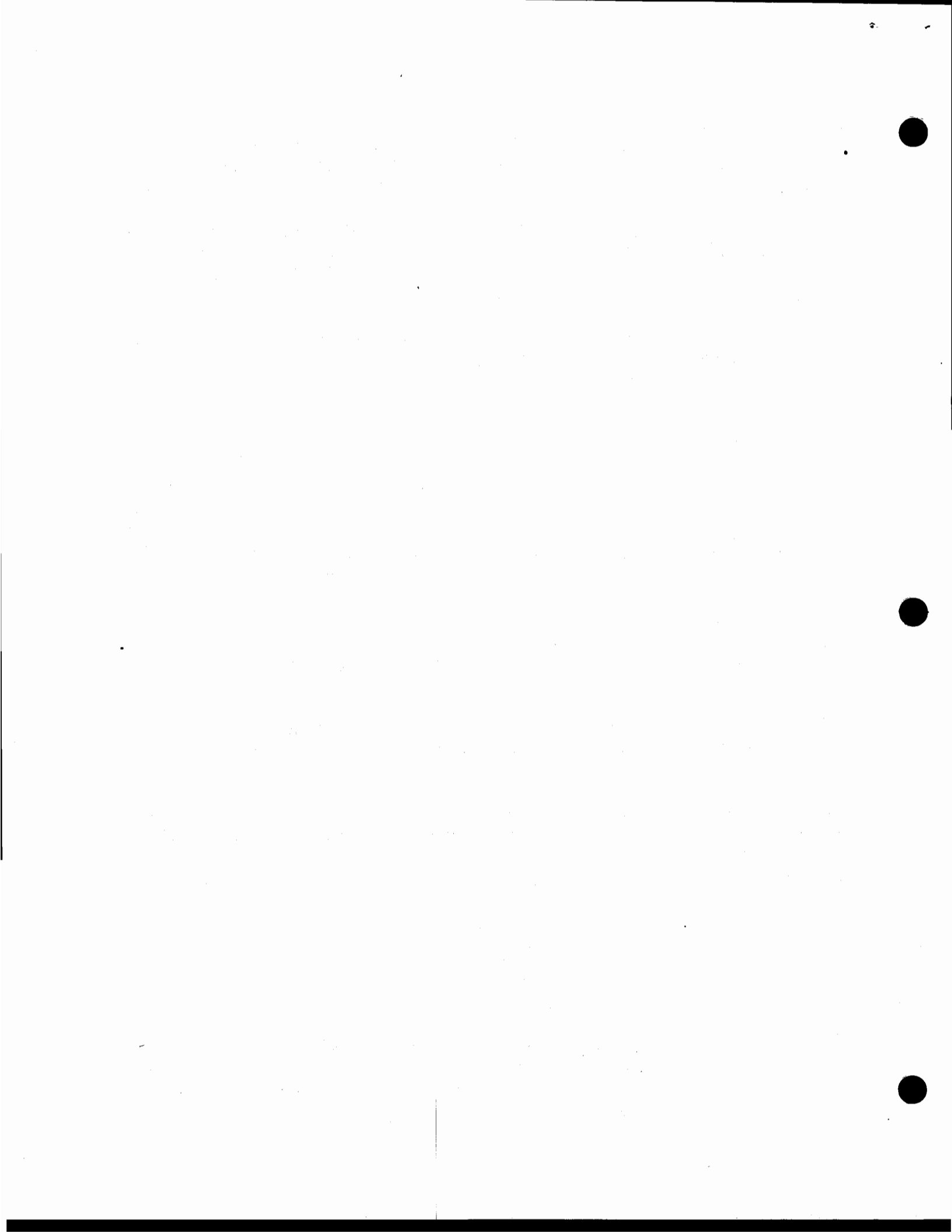
Another year passed, and many were the anguished tales of wholesale munching of paddy fields by the much-tolerated saint's cow. The tolerance and forgiveness of the villagers finally came to an end. One day they came in a body to the saint and complained about the ravages wrought by the audacious bovine. "Well, how else am I going to feed my cow?" asked Rama.

"Why don't you have your own land? We will give you twenty-five acres," the villagers said in chorus. Saint Rama was delighted with this. He gathered together the children of the village, and invoking their enthusiasm in the name of God, had them build a cottage hermitage, till his soil, feed his cat and cow, and, in short, do all the hard work required on his farm, for nothing!

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I am protected behind the battlements of my good conscience. I have burned my past darkness. I am interested only in today. Today I know I am the light of goodness. I am a lighthouse for souls tossed on the sea of sorrow.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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A BUTTERFLY OF ETERNITY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

With the sharpness of my will I tore to
shreds the stifling chrysalis of ignorance.

Now I am a butterfly of eternity, grace-
fully sweeping through the empyrean. Bspan-
gled with whirling galaxies, in joy I spread my
Nature wings. Behold my deathless beauty!

Cut the dark threads of thy shrouding fears,
O my brothers! Follow me in the flight to Him.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, make Thyself
more tempting than temptation.

TEMPTATIONS VERSUS SELF-CONTROL--Part 2

USE YOUR WILL POWER TO COMBAT TEMPTATIONS One cause of failure to improve in life lies in not accurately weighing the strength of our bad habits against the power of our will. We should correctly gauge the measure of the adversary so as to be sure that we are exerting the amount of power required for successful combat. It is necessary to determine, through daily introspection, whether we are really free--to eat, walk, move, work, and meditate, according to the dictates of will power and wisdom--or whether we are tools of bad habits that make us do miserable things in spite of the protestations of our reason and will.

To yield to bad habits merely strengthens those bad habits and weakens the will power. Fight anger, faultfinding, jealousy, fear, inertia, overeating (or whatever particular weakness one is trying to overcome) by not yielding to temptation against one's discriminative judgment and will. Once we have determined to do something of value we should not waver, but should go through with the idea to its completion. One increases his power of will over bad habits only insofar as he follows the dictates of wisdom. Banish material failure, spiritual indifference, mental and moral weaknesses, and halfheartedness about meditating, by using the will to become more prosperous and to become more spiritual, by exercising self-control, and by meditating deeply until one actually contacts God.

The greater one's will power, the less enslaving will be the influence of bad habits. One who has acquired bad habits should make up his mind that he is no longer going to be bound by them; he should resolve that henceforth he will be the sole governor of his actions, using wisdom to guide his power of free choice. Conquer all undesirable habits, that you may live as a freeborn citizen in God's kingdom of cosmic wisdom. To be able to live according to the dictates of wisdom will give you much more happiness than you could ever attain by weakly remaining bound and limited by habits, no matter how harmlessly pleasurable they may seem.

Most people do not realize the extent of the consequences of bad habits and wrong thinking until they suffer excruciating bodily pain or undergo heart-breaking sorrow. Pain and sorrow prod the ego to inquire about the cause of suffering and to act to prevent further suffering. Introspection reveals

the invisible battle going on between freewill-initiated, wisdom-guided post-natal actions and prenataally acquired karmic habits. A thief, an artist, a businessman, a dogmatist, an intellectual, a talkative do-nothing, and a man of Self-realization--all are individualistic results of the clash between prenatal tendencies or seed actions and postnatal actions initiated by wisdom-guided free choice.

**EXERCISE
SELF CONTROL
AT ALL TIMES**

Self-control is not denial of happiness but consists rather in turning the attention of the soul from temporarily pleasing but ultimately misery-making sense pleasures to the wholesome, ever-satisfying, lasting joy to be found in the Spirit in deep meditation. A man who wakes up from delusion and tries to become better, soon finds his evil habits clashing with desire for self-control. Even if the soul wins this first psychological battle through discriminative self-control, it has then to go through another and more subtle metaphysical battle: that between the soul's faculties of Self-realization and its egoistic prenatal and postnatal bad habits.

It rests with the individual whether he will allow greed, sense slavery, anger, hatred, revengefulness, worries, and other inharmonies to rule his life; or whether he will employ the divine soldiers of self-control, calmness, love, forgiveness, peace, and harmony to rule his mental kingdom.

Jesus pointed out a universal psychological error in the reasoning of persons who are enslaved by wrong habits when he said: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" (St. John 3:19, 20). Those who are addicted to bad habits are afraid of change. Just as the owl thrives in darkness and shuns the daylight, so do people cling to bad habits and shun better ways of living. They do not want to think of the greater comfort of mind and body that comes with the practice of good habits, because they fear that in giving up the temporary pleasures of the flesh they will suffer.

When the experience of bad habits precedes knowledge of the joy to be had in good habits, the ego is so influenced as to prefer "darkness," i. e., the discomfort accruing from continued bad habits, to the yield or harvest of mental and physical comfort emanating from good habits. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). People accustomed to being restless are horrified at the thought of calm meditation. People used to sex indulgence or greed in any form shudder at the thought of self-control. They erroneously believe that they would be tortured and unhappy if they deprived themselves of the bad habits that they have come to regard as necessary conditions to their happiness.

It should be remembered therefore that all consciousness of good or evil, all sensory material desires, and all intuitive spiritual tendencies are actually

relative states of one consciousness. Just as absence of light is darkness, and absence of darkness is light, so, lack of self-control is mental weakness, and the presence of self-control is lack of that weakness (i. e., darkness), or the light of strength. Good people may become evil, and evil people may become good, but the soul and God are never anything but Good. Spiritual ignorance and continuous bodily pain are both evil in relation to man because their presence keeps man from realizing the goodness of God and of his own soul.

Persons who drink find it pleasurable only because they do not know the taste of the superior wine of soul joy found in the bottle of meditation, which could make them forget all their worries. One should not be one-sided, adopting only easily acquired bad habits. The cultivation of good habits and the experience of their superior joy-yielding quality gives proper basis of comparison. Without such a comparison upon which to base actions initiated by free choice, one may easily be tempted by delusive sense attractions to become enslaved by bad habits.

SENSE PLEASURES OR SOUL JOY The devotee may wonder why he should follow austere laws of self-control and live in seeming emptiness without the instantaneously available comforts of the pleasure-yielding senses. He fails to use his imagination to picture the lasting joys of the soul, which are hard to attain when one's attention is saturated with sensory experiences. He thinks: "Well, soul joy is a matter of future speculation; I would be foolish to give up the present tangible pleasures of the senses. My life would be sunk in the sin of constant misery if I were to forgo my God-given sense pleasures, which are so easily available now."

Such persons do not realize that indulgence in these sense pleasures creates insatiable, unsatisfiable, burning desires for more sense experiences, without ever quenching the inner thirst. In this respect pleasure is like salt water: instead of quenching thirst, it creates greater thirst. Though difficult to attain, soul joy once gained may never be lost; it never ends in satiety but yields unending, ever new joy.

True devotees should resist any feeling of inner loneliness that may come as they picture the deserted battlefield of the mind, full of the corpses of wisdom-slain material desires. They should think of the slain habitual material desires rather as enemies in disguise who promised happiness when they meant to give only worries, insatiable hungers, broken hopes, disillusionments, and death. Inimical material pleasures resent the advent of lasting divine happiness and struggle to retain their hold on the devotee. He should remain firm in his knowledge that, although in the beginning it is hard to give up the happiness of material and sensory pleasures, such renunciation is the only hope of gaining permanent spiritual blessedness. He will be amply repaid when he actually experiences the superior, lasting, ever new joy of inner soul perception.

Think of Jesus and the other great masters who attained immortality and lasting happiness by renouncing the false pleasures flaunted before the mind by the satan of cosmic delusion. At that very moment when the mind feels sympathy for forsaken sense pleasures, one should remember that this very dear, sensitive, pleasure-loving body eventually will have to be laid in the grave or consumed in crematory flames. Let this thought fortify you in a stronger effort to contact God through deep meditation. Only thus may man reacquaint himself with the forgotten, deathless, indestructible, real soul that is hidden behind the false-pleasure-infested, perishable, pretending-to-be-his-own body.

MEDITATION IS THE
WAY TO FREEDOM
FROM TEMPTATION

Jesus taught that the best method of killing bad habits lies in the actual performance of God-awakening good habits of meditation. When the habit of attachment to dark delusion has settled in the ego, the only way out lies in using the will power to meditate deeply, daily, until the actual, all-alluring Bliss-contact of God is definitely achieved and can be reproduced in the consciousness at will.

Restless people are unaware of the evil-resisting power of their discriminative tendencies and of the occult faculties of the superconscious mind. Those who are prisoners in the hands of restlessness, but who are trying by meditation to calm themselves, will now and then become aware, however, that these hidden occult soldiers are trying to emerge from the superconsciousness to offer spiritual aid.

In the beginning, the spiritual aspirant finds that his soldiers of discrimination are guided by the desire to be good. Later, as he meditates longer and prays ardently for inner help, he feels a calm conviction that intuition, or awakening inner light, a veteran occult general, is emerging from the superconscious to guide his forces of discrimination. This awakening inner light is the offspring of good past habits.

The inner discrimination of the yogi sees how, by false hopes, material desires reawaken the bad habits in man, though he knows they are misery-producing. The devotee who has once felt the ever-charming soul force in deep meditation can never forget the joy of it, even though he comes down from that state for a while.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The most effective way to overcome temptation is to compare it with the joy of meditation. Temptation does not mean just doing something wrong from the material standpoint; it also means forgetting your soul by becoming too engrossed in the body and its comforts. That is temptation too.

No matter how many cords are around your feet, no matter how many sins you have committed, remember this: the minute you know in your heart that the happiness which is found in the temple of silence is most tempting, then you will be free. You must have that joy, then you will be instantaneously released. That can come only through your own determination.

One of the most impressive things my Master used to say to me was: "Learn to behave." I can never thank him enough for that. I understand, however, how difficult it is for most people to behave.

With the dawn of divine experience, with the dawn of divine joy, we behold the glimmer of beautiful thoughts and experiences within our heart. When ignorance comes within our hearts, we are filled with gloom, and in this gloom we behold the goblins of dark thoughts; but when the light of God shines within us, we behold the divine love of God. Within our souls are concealed the immortal inspiration soldiers of God, who are constantly fighting the forces of evil in order to establish within us the kingdom of the Great Deity.

ALL FOR A RAG--Part 2

The villagers mutely tolerated all these saintly privileges for fully two years until they found their children were no longer available to perform their duties at home. In a body the parents went to Saint Rama and complained: "Your Holiness, we shall have to stop loaning our children to you to do the work on your farm. Our own farms remain neglected without their help."

"Well, how am I going to manage my farm without the help of your children?" asked Rama. "Why don't you take a wife and raise your own children? Any of us will be happy to give you a marriageable daughter. It will be an honor, for you will be a wonderfully spiritual husband," cried the villagers in unison. "That is a brilliant idea," cried Rama.

In a month Rama was getting ready to be married, when his Master, called by intuition, came to the rescue. The Master, on meeting Rama, said: "I thought you left the hermitage in an effort to get rid of material duties there, and now I see you have a cat, a cow, land, home, and I hear that you are going to get married. What is the matter with you?"

"Well, Master," cried Rama, "This is all for a rag! I got the cat to save my rag, and took the cow to feed my cat, and accepted the land to supply my cow with fodder, and now I had planned to marry to have children to work my farm because the villagers refused to lend me their children."

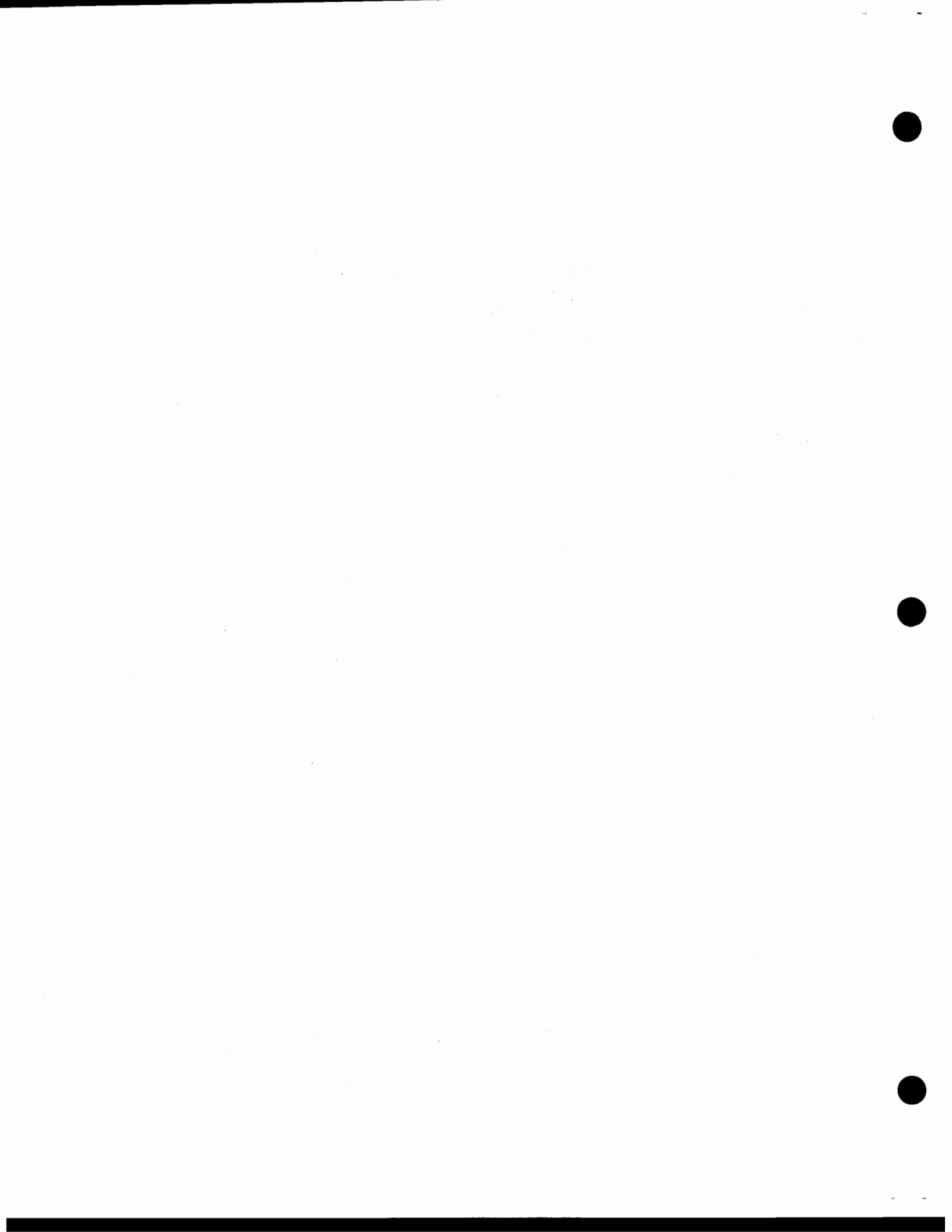
After Master and disciple had indulged in a hearty laugh, Rama left his newly acquired family and farmhouse and returned to live under the benign

wisdom-influence of the jungle hermitage.

This story illustrates that no one should live without performing some material duties. It is better to perform material duties in the company of wisdom-guided people than among materially minded relatives, or in the company of one's own mood- and habit-governed mind. One should never go to extremes in material or spiritual life, but by gradual steps conquer the sense-inclined mind. If you leave the world for God, see that you forsake worldly thoughts from within; otherwise, wherever you go your worldliness will go with you, attracting a worldly environment for you. If you are a man of renunciation, be simple and do not entangle yourself in material things gathered in the name of spiritual necessities. Do not complicate a boiled-down material existence on the pretext of salvaging a rag of material necessity.

AFFIRMATION

God is just behind my reason
today and every day and is guiding
me to do the right thing always.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



S-2 P-44

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MAY THE DOORS OF DESIRES LEAD ONLY TO THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, no more with words but with the burning flame of our hearts we worship Thee. We demand Thy presence. Destroy our ignorance, drive away our restlessness; come to us in all Thy splendor. Forsake us not, though we forsake Thee; remember us, though we remember Thee not; be with us always; be not indifferent to us though we are indifferent to Thee. Make us like little children, free from jealousy, free from insincerity; unite our hearts.

Thy glory is fragrant within us. The castle of memories is filled with doors of desires. Close them, for we want to behold Thee alone sitting on the throne of every thought and every consciousness within and about us, that we may behold Thy consciousness glimmering within us. Make us behold Thy consciousness in everything.

We were blind. We found not a door leading to Thee, but Thou hast opened our eyes and we find doors everywhere. Again the doors of desire have opened but now they lead only to Thee. And we see that Thou hast always been hiding in the hearts of blossoms, in the heart of friendship, and in all lovely experiences.

PRAYER

Father, teach me not to torture myself
and others with the ugly fires of jealousy.

HOW TO CURE THE DISEASE OF JEALOUSY--Part 1

The dictionary gives the following definition of "jealousy": "Apprehensively vigilant in care; anxious; disposed to suspect rivalry in matters of interest or affection; distrustful, intolerant of rivalry; vigilant or exact in observation." This Lesson has to do with that phase of jealousy described as "rivalry in matters of interest or affection."

BEWARE OF FALSE JUDGMENT One's individual happiness depends to a large extent upon his protecting himself and others from the hurtful results of gossip and jealousy. See no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil, think no evil, feel no evil. Most people can talk about other persons for hours; intoxicated with the wine of gossip, they never think of its poisonous effects. Is it not remarkable how some people can smoothly, joyously, for hours at a time make the most caustic criticisms about the faults of others, but cannot themselves endure for a moment any reference to their own faults!

One should not indulge in shameful talk about the mental dirt in the lives of others, but rather get busy and free his own life from weaknesses and unlovely habits. It is necessary first to silently heal oneself of the desire to criticize. Once we have freed ourselves from the tendency to condemn and gossip about others, we may teach others to be better by our sympathetic heart and good example.

Unkind words can be ruthless destroyers of lifelong friendships and of domestic harmony. We should banish unkind words from our lips forever, and make our home life safe from the invasion of sudden tempests of anger and other inharmonies. Sincere, sweet words are nectar to thirsty souls. Kind words are in demand everywhere. They create happiness in enemies as well as friends, in societies, churches, business offices--everywhere. People are glad when a sweet-voiced sincere friend appears. They also feel happy when a crabby person departs from their presence!

When drunk with the excitement of anger, people are often emotional firebugs. With the matches of wrathful words they set fire to the inner peace of others around them. Ill-spoken words, flaring up in a fit of emotion, conflagrate the forest of friendship and burn up all the little green plants of courteous dealings and sympathetic thoughts.

DRINK THE
MEDICINE OF
SWEETNESS

One who is suffering from the indigestion of unkindness or choleric crabbiness should take the soothing medicine of sweetness. Once we have made up our minds to change we should start by speaking sincere, kind words to those to whom we may have been unjustly harsh. We should make ourselves attractive by wearing the fine garment of genuinely courteous language. We should first of all be courteous to our immediate relatives. When one can do that, he will be habitually kind to all people. Real family happiness has its foundation on the altar of understanding and kind words. It is not necessary to agree on everything in order to show kindness. Calm silence, sincerity, and courteous words, whether one is agreeing or disagreeing with others, mark the person who knows how to behave.

Our intimate friends do not criticize us openly for fear of offending us; but they criticize us inwardly, as we do them. He who wants to know what his friends think about him should behave himself perfectly and keep constantly improving himself by being unselfish, wise, calm, meditative, fearless, sweet, sincere, courteous, methodical, true to his word, unafraid to be firm and just; thus his friends will be so overwhelmed by his goodness that they will not only think lovingly of him, but they will also talk freely about his lovable qualities.

The man who learns to make himself behave and be happy will influence all the people he meets to be well-behaved and happy also. I can never sufficiently thank my guru Sri Yukteswarji for his training. He frequently cautioned me: "Learn to behave." I used to resent corrections extremely, for, like a good many people, I had not thought any further improvement necessary. Whenever anyone did criticize me, I would laugh and try to argue that he was wrong about me.

However, as I grew in wisdom, I began to see myself in the mental mirrors of others' thoughts about me. I found that in them--and especially in the clear mirror of my Master's unprejudiced mind--I could see myself better than I could in the little mirror of my own hazy understanding. I began to associate then with persons of calm mind and to ask them how I appeared from their mental perceptions; for I had found out that there was a difference between what I thought others thought of me and what others actually thought of me in their inner minds.

JEALOUSY IN
MARRIED LIFE

Jealousy in married life is extremely pernicious. Those who are as yet unmarried and therefore still "on the safe side," should take their time and do everything possible to ensure a wise choice. There is no happiness in marrying an insanely jealous person that is suspicious of even the most innocent actions of his spouse. To marry a jealous woman is most unfortunate for a doctor, minister, lawyer, or anyone else whose profession involves dealings with the public. A jealous wife is more occupied with her own apprehensions and attendant

feelings of anger and resentment than with concern for her husband's business welfare or his psychological peace. Jealousy is self-love; it slowly eats out the roots of real love.

A person who is jealous of his or her mate should never show it; nor nurse it, like a boil, to a bursting point, so that it spreads over him the odorous mucus of ugliness and disharmony. To be reasonably jealous in order to guard a loved one from falling into the trap of a designing person is all right; but when jealousy makes one lose his temper and behave like a human beast, an overconfident demon that thinks he has a permanent trade-mark on another person forever, he should abhor the influence of the psychological Satan.

A woman who feels jealous because her mate tends occasionally to browse into the pastures of others' affections should give a hint of warning. If her husband doesn't listen, she should not say anything further. If that wife still thinks that her husband is a worthy peg on which to hang her life, she should not be jealous or demanding, but rather put on the best clothes of sweet behavior. She should be extra nice, extra cheerful, extra forgiving, extra lenient, extra magnetic toward him. She should express the peaceful attitude brought from meditation. She should not use physical force to draw the straying attention of her mate, but rather the superior spiritual force of offering more love.

Even if that love is rejected, she should not be unladylike. It is better to kill such a man with kindness; let him leave (if it must come to that) in kindness, ever regretting that he left, rather than force him to jump out of one's nagging, jealous presence as if from a person stricken with a mortal plague. Couples who once thought that they loved each other should never mock their feeling by allowing jealousy to instigate in them a feeling of hatred. Those whose love-experiment in matrimony is unsuccessful in spite of continual, sincere effort to make it a harmonious marriage should bid farewell to each other in a kindly, gentle way, as befits the true children of God.

When jealousy in married life is incurable by gentlemanly and ladylike behavior, by the offering of more courtesy, more trust, more kindness, and more love, couples should part in friendliness and mutual understanding, saying to each other: "We tried our utmost, but as we did not succeed, let us part."

Jealousy never cures jealousy. Love is the best panacea for this malevolent, ugly, psychological trait. If jealousy's devastating effects on the lives of others are abhorrent to us, then by all means we should refrain from contaminating ourselves with this psychological virus.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

When his mind is attentive to jealousy, worry, and so forth, a man becomes thoroughly miserable; but when he turns his attention with equal

concentration to the cultivation of love, peace, and harmony, he feels supremely happy. The soul becomes happy when it turns away from lesser misery-making material pleasures to its own superior joy-producing soul qualities. If the soul becomes completely engrossed in the lesser forms of happiness produced by the senses, it fails to be attentive to the investigation of superior happiness. The golden luster of the soul's potential lasting happiness becomes obscured with encrustations of temporary pleasures of the senses.

THE SAINT WHO ATE FIRE

Some illumined personages believe in staying in one place all the time and meditating at the lotus feet of the Infinite without the distraction of continuous travel. Other holy men maintain that it is spiritually necessary to leave each lodging place after a stay of three days at the most in order to avoid the growth of poisonous inner attachment. They say that the mind is like a blotting paper, absorbing the vibratory color of its environment.

Saint Sananda was accustomed to traveling from place to place in India, depending for his living upon the alms given by the people.

One day, with a retinue of forty disciples, Saint Sananda arrived at the welcoming home of a rich farmer. According to the then-prevailing custom, a calf was killed especially for entertaining the saint. In these ancient times, the Hindu householders used to eat beef or veal, and they used to serve veal, especially to distinguished guests. Later, beef and veal eating was condemned because of the thought that the cow played the part of mother to orphans by supplying them with milk, and because beef and veal eating was found to disturb the astral and spiritual vibrations of the human body.

While Saint Sananda accepted a veal dinner, he strictly prohibited his disciples from eating any meat. He explained that they were under training, learning how to control their passions and appetites, and should subsist only on fruits, herbs, and vegetables. He maintained that meat-eating was not good for the morally uncontrolled and mentally weak individual, whereas a vegetable diet has a calming effect upon uncontrolled, emotionally disposed novitiates.

Saint Sananda ate a hearty veal dinner and took a second helping in the presence of some of his disgruntled, greedy disciples. Dinner over, the saint ordered the disciples to take up their little bundles, which were fastened on small bamboo sticks and carried over their shoulders, and proceed on a march of fifty miles. After the tedious march started, the master was always ahead, and kept turning to the lagging disciples, urging them to walk cheerfully and with speed, because he wanted to reach the next village before nightfall. Feeling the rebellious vibrations of one of the disciples, named Markat--who was a combined doubting-Thomas and Judas--the saint especially exhorted his disciples to let their mental power predominate over the body

and dispel fatigue during their hurried march under the overzealous tropical sun.

No sooner had Saint Sananda finished his encouraging speech than the wicked disciple, Markat, began to whisper to the other disciples around him: "Look at our teacher and listen to his veal-vitalized speech. No wonder he can walk cheerfully, because of his second helping of meat! But think of us; we poor folks are walking with the energy from fruit juices only, which has already evaporated under the seething glare of the sun."

Saint Sananda, being highly advanced spiritually, was all-knowing. Through his intuition he knew telepathically about the doubt-creating, dissatisfaction-generating words of his skeptical disciple, Markat. He turned abruptly and walked back to Markat, and in front of all the disciples he casually said: "Dear Markat, would you like to eat what I eat? Can you digest what I eat?" Disciple Markat, thinking that the Master was going to offer him veal cutlets, emphatically said with assurance: "Honored Sir, just try your food on me and see how fast I can melt it with my digestive fire."

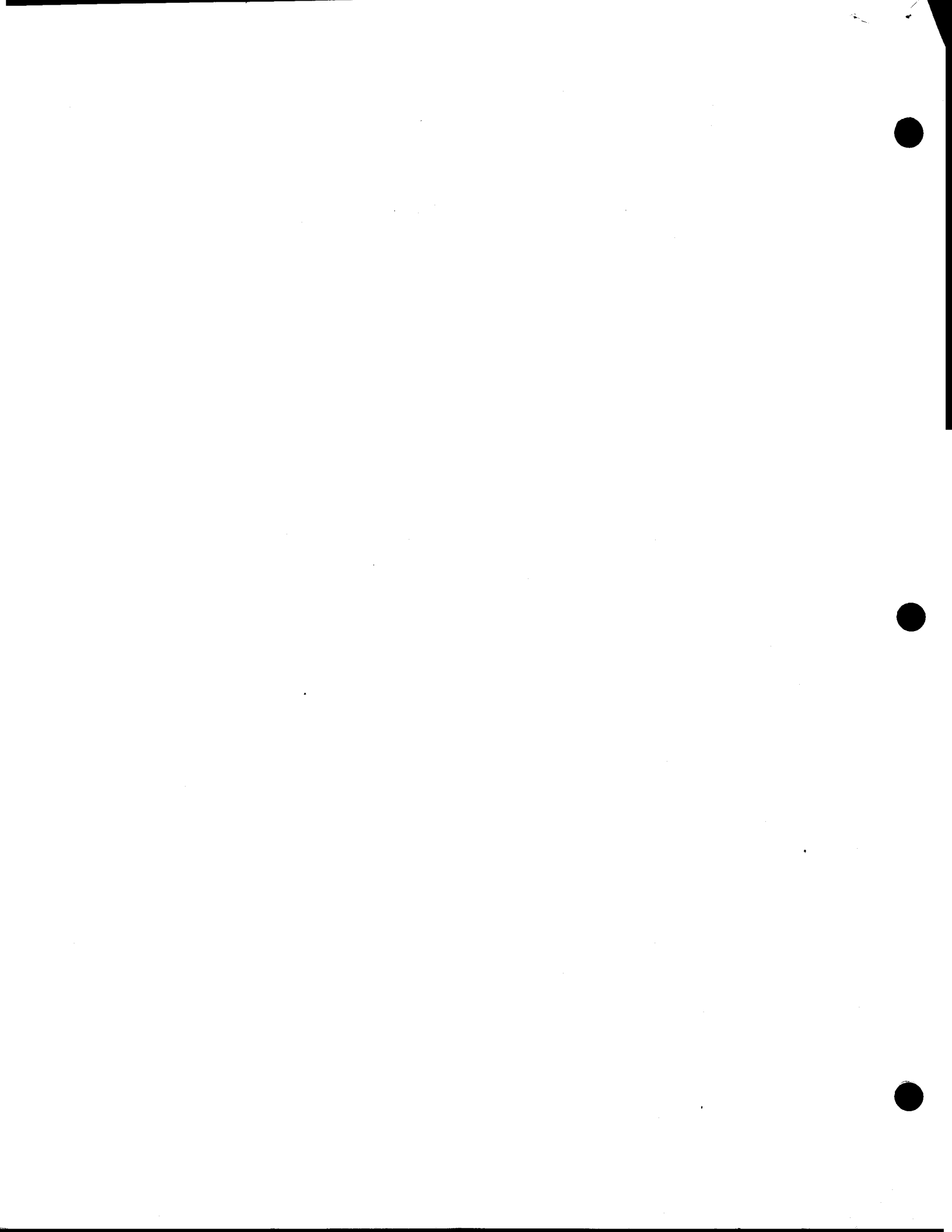
When Sananda and his disciples reached the end of their long journey, they were told to tarry a little while around a huge fiery furnace where a smith was preparing and cutting red hot nails. On the other side a big calf was being roasted. The master, being welcomed by the blacksmith, said: "Well, children, sit around this fire before entering the village, for I am going to offer you some very vitalizing food which I have prevented you from eating for a long time. But before I invite you all to eat, I want Markat to come and sit by me, for he has assured me that he will eat and digest what I eat."

The hungry Markat, beside himself with joy at the prospect of veal roast, leaped to a seat beside his master. Sananda at once put his hand into the pile of red hot embers and nails and began to swallow them as fast as he could, as if he were eating chopped veal. While the Saint was eating these fiery nails and embers calmly, he smilingly but forcefully said to his disciple Markat: "Come on, keep your promise and eat what I eat, and then we will see whether you can digest it or not." Markat, highly ashamed, hid his face and fell at the feet of his master, sincerely asking forgiveness.

This story illustrates the importance of a disciple following with faith the discipline enjoined upon him by a true master. Doubting the motives of a true master only retards progress in the disciple. Mechanical or willing obedience to the spiritually blind teacher is of little value, for it makes an automaton of an ignorant disciple, but willing obedience to the wisdom-guided will of a guru leads to freedom.

AFFIRMATION

I will use love instead of
jealousy to rouse others to do
their duty toward me.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE PEARLS OF WISDOM

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Almighty Beloved One, teach me how to wear the suit of silence and dive through the measureless cold blue ocean, piercing the cave of its mirrored stars--if Thou art hidden there. Teach me how to swim over the waves of wind and light, and waft me to Thy measureless shore. I swam through many seas of desire and dived in Thy many seas, yet I found not Thy most-sought-for treasure.

I traveled deep in Thine ocean of knowledge for the pearls of Thy power, for the pearls of Thy love; but when I did not find the pearls of Thy love and power, I blamed Thine ocean. Father, Thou hast taught me since to find fault with my diving, so I dived again and again until I found the pearls of Thy power, the pearls of Thy love.

Teach me never to say that Thine ocean of wisdom is lacking the pearls of Thy power, but teach me to find fault with my diving. Teach me to dive again and again until I find the pearls of Thy power. Decorated with the pearls of Thy power, I shall enter into the mansion of Thine understanding. As I dive through the measureless sea of the love in all things, in all hearts, I shall at last find the priceless pearl of Thy presence.

PRAYER

Help us always, O Divine Mother, to be humble, ever ready to learn from others. Teach us to use the fire of jealousy to burn up our own shortcomings, that we may perceive the inherent beauty of each other's soul.

HOW TO CURE THE DISEASE OF JEALOUSY--Part 2

If husbands and wives who are accustomed to using each other for target practice, using bullets of wrathful language and discourtesies, would try instead to entertain each other with the soul-solacing charm of kind words, they would then create a new happiness in family life. As eczema is aggravated by scratching, so unkind behavior increases under the irritation of discourteous arguments and disagreements. Married couples should strictly avoid oversexuality, unkind words, lack of courtesy, too much familiarity, and living in the same room all the time.

Unless conjugal love has a spiritual basis it cannot last. In order to live in friendship and harmony, husbands and wives must be of spiritual service to each other. Those "newlyweds" who forget that true (i. e., spiritual) love is based upon unselfish mutual service and friendship soon come to a parting of the ways. When two souls are ideally mated, they spiritualize their love, so that after death their love is registered in eternity as the one love of God.

Love will win where jealousy will surely fail. If love cannot be the savior of a wrecked marriage relationship, it is folly to bring in the demon of jealousy, which might ruin both partners. If a wife "goes wrong," and her husband bids her good-bye in sincere love, with an invitation to come back when she is able to be good, then perhaps only one soul will be lost. But if the husband, in jealous rage, kills his unfaithful, erring wife, two souls will be lost: she has already committed spiritual suicide, and he will go to the electric chair for her murder. How foolish jealousy is! It kills the very thing it professes to love. Jealousy is self-love. If a man loves a woman truly, he will not be able to bring himself to destroy her happiness and love for him by taking her life and thus letting her go to the beyond filled with loathing for him that may last for incarnations.

Love fosters trust. Jealousy breeds deceit. Jealous husbands and wives who think that by physical imprisonment they are succeeding in controlling their mates from straying into mischief do not realize that the minds of the straying ones may still go on marauding in the marshes of evil. It is better to let one's misbehaving mate try to rise gradually from his errors, with

one's knowledge, than to let him go on performing wrong actions camouflaged behind a screen of double-dealing. A wife should never try to "train" a wayward husband, for if she adopts this method of reform he always will be doing wrong surreptitiously, in spite of anything she can do.

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL BEAUTY IN WOMAN A naturally homely woman who is jealous of a beautiful woman with natural pulchritude should adopt all the reasonable beauty parlor methods she can to make herself attractive. Better still, if the body is ugly, is to decorate the soul with the richest ornaments of sincerity, magnetic personality, intoxicating, contagious smiles, rare culture, and all-round efficiency and serviceability, to suit the demands and temperament of the most fastidious person.

Remember, it is spiritual and mental decorations and habiliments that make one really beautiful. Beautiful bodies that house souls in ignorance are like smooth sepulchers of flesh hiding ugly skeletons. To live and act as if one has no soul is equal to being dead.

Anyone who is jealous of another's fleshly accouterments, should by all means carry on continuous disciplinary inner dress-rehearsals until he has bedecked himself with the all-alluring spiritual qualities of an advanced soul. One can beautify his or her countenance with an all-winning, melancholy-dissolving smile. Banish jealousy by donning the smile that comes from a clear conscience, right action, harm-to-none attitude, and from inner and outer agreeableness.

Those who are jealous of others' health should not waste time and energy in envy, but rather try their utmost to follow all the laws of health and exactness, patience and perseverance until complete health is attained.

SPEAK PLEASANT TRUTH BUT DO NOT FLATTER It is always good to speak the truth, but it is better to speak pleasant truth and to avoid unpleasant utterances. To address a crippled person: "Mr. Lame Man" may be true but it is an unpleasant and harmful truth and should be avoided. It is bad to criticize when criticism is not wanted, but it is beneficial to listen to constructive criticism, and it is admirable to be able to stand harsh but true criticism with a smile and a sense of grateful appreciation.

Flattery may be good when it encourages a person to right action, yet it can be pernicious when it serves to hide a fault or character wound, letting it fester and poison the whole soul with ignorance. We all love flattery, as all people like to eat sweet honey; but we do not know when it is poisoned. Besides sweet words of flattery from others, our own inner thoughts often excuse our harmful faults and hide big psychological tumors that may break and poison our whole spiritual life. Flattery from others and the comforting

whispers of our own thoughts strike sweetly on our sense of hearing. The blade of human wisdom is often blunted by flattering words. Many people willingly lose money, time, health, and even character for the pleasure of hearing the sweet deceptive words of parasitic so-called friends.

There was a saint who had a friend who constantly criticized him, to the great displeasure of the saint's disciples. One day a disciple came exultingly crying: "Master! your enemy, the constant faultfinder, is dead." The saint began to weep and said: "Oh, I feel helpless. My best spiritual critic is dead. My heart is broken."

Most people choose to heed flattery rather than intelligent criticism; some, out of spite, dash themselves recklessly on the rocks of folly having to prove the candid forecasts of frank spiritual teachers. Any person who sincerely wishes to improve himself should reflect, each time someone mildly or even harshly criticizes him: "Is he right? Do I fail to see it just because I have been lured by others' sweet words to allow my wisdom to be carried away a prisoner of flattery?"

BUSINESS JEALOUSY Jealousy can be constructive as well as destructive. Every disqualification, no matter how evil, is more or less relative, and thus it contains an element of good. When jealousy is constructive and a harbinger of beneficial results, then it is helpful. To be jealous of a better business rival to the point that one directs and focuses his efforts in channels of accelerated activity toward the attainment of greater success, cannot but be termed beneficial. But unless due precaution is taken, constructive jealousy may metamorphose into destructive jealousy. Destructive jealousy is mean, and it jeopardizes the interests of the jealous individual as well as of the object of his jealousy.

Destructive jealousy sometimes acts like a psychological oven, which slowly bakes the brain, nerves, and heart with the continuous heat of vexation and mean misery. The man who feels jealous of his business competitor should use that fire of jealousy to burn up the shortcomings of his own business operation.

It is wasteful to use up creative vitality, brain power, and will force in nonproductive efforts, or in evil-producing activity. To even harbor the thought of hurting a business competitor is to squander some of the reservoir of thought power. The dynamite of jealous thought must not be allowed to explode.

A jealous businessman who ignobly desires to keep his business successful by putting a monkey wrench in the business machinery of his rival debases himself. Dwarfish in his own business, he aspires to become tall, not by greater creative business activity, but by trying to lop off the heads of loftier business concerns. Anyone who uses his precious time to devise schemes

for hurting the business of another is bound to ultimate material failure through the working of God's inexorable laws.

Man should be always humble, ever ready to learn from others. Better even than constructive jealousy is the emulative spirit, which inspires us to gather the best points from our rivals and to apply them to our own activities with our own original improvements. Let desire to grow take the place of constructive jealousy. The former is a better spring of action and has not the same danger of decaying into poisonous revenge, anger, and hatred that incite us to bite our own lips in order to hurt others.

We should practice loving those who do not love us, feeling for those who do not sympathize with us, being generous to those who are magnanimous only toward themselves. If we choose the opposite course and heap hatred on our enemy, neither he nor we will be able to perceive the inherent beauty of each other's soul.

Those who want to be loved should start loving others who need their love. If we expect others to be honest with us, then we must start by being honest ourselves. If we do not want others to be wicked, then we ourselves must cease to behave wrongly. If we want others to sympathize with us, we must start showing sympathy to those around us. If we want to be respected, we must learn to be respectful to everyone, both young and old. If we want a display of peace from others, we must be peaceful ourselves. Remember, whatever we want others to be, we must first be that ourselves. Then we shall find others responding in like manner. We have to learn to be secretly happy within our hearts, in spite of all circumstances, and to cling to this truth: Happiness is man's greatest divine birthright--the buried treasure of the soul. Once we have found that, we shall be secretly rich beyond the dream of kings.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Your ever-readiness to help others without distinction of sex, creed, or caste will make your heart big enough to receive all humanity therein. Once the love of all human beings and living things enters your heart, it will be the one heart of God. Feeling all hearts as one, you will feel the one Cosmic Heart beating behind all hearts. Recognizing no individual selfish love, feeling the same love for all, you will feel the one great love which is everlasting and which ever burns as a pure white flame, dispelling all darkness.

Recognizing the God-love burning in all heart lamps, you will see and feel only God-love flowing through everything and everybody. Every time you meet a receptive human being, demonstrate by actions, and then make him feel, that you are interested in his physical, mental, and spiritual welfare as much as you are interested in your own all-round welfare. Never neglect to do what you can for yourself in the form of others. To know Spirit

you must become the Spirit and find yourself as manifested through the bodies and minds of others. Make the bubble of ego one with the ocean of Spirit. Make it big and behold all the bubbles of living beings floating in it. Break the boundaries of selfishness and include in it all living beings and universes --everything.

THE SAINT WHO WENT TO HADES SPEAKING TRUTH--Part 1

A seraphic saint who lived in a forest was wont to sit in the shade of a huge tree, immersed in deep contemplation. At the call of dawn, the saint would rouse his sleeping spirit and offer it to God. One morning, when the dewdrops were sobbing their dying farewell to the tender blades of grass, and the saint was musing on the joy of his just-finished meditation, his attention was slightly distracted by the sound of footsteps fast approaching him.

The saint was so calm that he did not even care to look around to ascertain the cause of the noise. However, in a few moments a man with an acutely fear-distorted face halted for a moment in front of him, and in an imploring voice said: "Honored Saint, supreme lover of truth and truthful actions, please do not tell my pursuing bandit enemies my hiding place in the tree above you or they will kill me." Saying this, the much frightened man almost ran up to the top of the tree and hid there within its kind sheltering leaves.

The saint remained silent, saying neither yea nor nay to the entreaty of the frightened man; so the man naturally thought that silence meant consent, and that the virtuous man, knowing that betrayal might result in the stranger's death, would not betray him. However, as the man lay hidden high in the tree, the saint began to struggle within himself as to what he could say to the man's pursuers that would be in accordance with the advice of the scriptures, which he followed very strictly and literally. Thus thinking to himself, he reasoned: the scriptures say not to speak an untruth; so I could not say, if questioned by the enemies of the pursued man, that I do not know where he is. No, I would rather cut off my tongue than indulge in lies.

Then he thought of the entreaty of the pursued man and the resulting murder if he spoke the truth. Puzzled as to how to choose between violating the scriptures by speaking an untruth, and the murderous result of speaking the truth, the saint at last determined within himself: if the bandits question me about seeing their prey, I shall say: "I know where he is but I will not tell you." Thinking this, the saint sat quietly, prepared to meet the difficult predicament.

At last the vicious bandit leader arrived with his retinue. Finding only the saint in sight, he said gruffly: "Hermit, I will not molest you if you will tell us whether you know the hiding place of the man we seek." The saint

remained silent hoping that if he did not answer, the bandit would stop questioning him. But the plan did not work, for the bandit leader meant business and began to beat him. When the severe beating did no good, the bandit leader flashed his sword from its scabbard, brandished it before the saint and gave him five minutes to make up his mind if he would speak. The bandit swore that if he did not, the saintly body would sit forever still under the tree, without a head.

A severe mental struggle ensued in the mind of the saint. When the time limit expired, he replied cautiously: "I know where your man is hiding but I won't tell you." "So!" the bandit jeeringly replied, "a beating and the flashing of a sword has made you break your silence! Now behold what I shall do and you will tell the truth to me." So saying, the bandit cut off one of the saint's hands and said tauntingly: "I will give you five minutes more in which to tell the truth, or your head too will dance on the earth."

The saint began a mental search for scriptural injunctions that would offer a clue as to what he should do. He remembered one passage: "Protect your own self above all things, for that is most important. You must live, above all, in order to achieve your highest ambition of finding God. If you die for not telling the truth--when you should tell the truth--you are a fool." So, at the end of the five minutes, when the bandit leader was about to chop off his head, the saint pointed a finger upward to show the bandit the hiding place of the doomed fugitive.

Forthwith one of the bandits clambered up the tree, dragged the unfortunate man down, and hacked him to pieces limb by limb in front of the saint. While this man was being murdered, he shouted at the saint, "You will see Hades for this!" However, the saint was not disturbed, thinking that he had done his duty in saving the vehicle of his own more advanced (and therefore more serviceable) soul rather than that of the less developed (and hence less useful) soul of the pursued man. He rejected the curse of the dying man as foolish and unlikely ever to happen to him who had followed only the truth.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Bless me, that I may find Thee in the temple of each thought and activity. Finding Thee within, I may find Thee without, in all people, and in all conditions.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LET THY GLORY BE REVEALED

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Let Thy glory be revealed; let ignorance be banished evermore from the shores of the earth; let strife and jealousy disappear. Banish the darkness of ignorance with Thy fire of wisdom; reduce to dross all disease and weakness. Divine Flame, touch our bodies, minds, and souls in a baptism of Thy light.

May we not drown in the waters of indifference and of forgetfulness of Thee. Fill our souls with Thy love and wisdom.

Heavenly Father, make us one with Thee, filled with Thy divine magnetism. And, as we pass through life, may Thy divine magnetism within us change others and bring them closer to Thee. Make us "fishers of men," that in the net of selfless divine love we may catch many of Thy divine children and bring them home to Thee.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to meditate upon Thee day and night that I may intuitively perceive Thine all-attracting divine magnetism.

INCREASING YOUR POWER OF MAGNETISM

MAGNETIC FORCE IS UNIVERSAL All things in this material universe manifest the dual force of attraction and repulsion. They have their affinities and they have their antipathies. If you bring into a magnet's field of attraction some iron filings and chips of stone you will see that the magnet attracts only the iron particles. It is evident that there is a relation between the magnet and the type of objects it attracts. The magnet's attraction does not affect stone. Apparently then there has to be some likeness in the atomic structure of a magnet and the objects that are drawn by it.

Within you that same magnetic force operates, although in a different way. You attract living objects that have a relation to your magnetic power. A human being cannot attract a stone or a building because a stone has no relation to himself, but he may try to find some individual whose appearance and qualities he has built up in his mind in the form of a mental picture. He may say to himself, "Sometime I will meet that person," and often, owing to this attractive power, he does meet that individual. Such cases show that undoubtedly some force was working in the ether that brought about the meeting of two souls who might otherwise have been kept apart by the sheer mass of the world's several hundred million people. How is it that two people (separated by the mass of humanity as well as by time and distance) are brought together, if there is not an invisible affinity, broadcasting from their hearts, to draw them nearer to each other? When the broadcasting range of the hearts becomes sufficiently powerful, they will meet.

TYPES OF MAGNETS We can learn from the ordinary magnet that every kind of magnet attracts according to the range of its power. Small magnets draw small things. Stronger magnets draw bigger objects. So the human magnet draws according to its power of attraction. And there are also various kinds of human magnets in the world. Some attract physical things and some attract mental power. Some attract spiritual qualities--those subtle qualities which are so often hidden and forgotten.

Now the first question is, what kind of a magnet do you want to be? A material or a business magnet or a spiritual magnet? Which is best? Then

the thought comes to you that you cannot be a material magnet only, and still progress spiritually. On the other hand, you cannot be completely spiritual until you have developed so much that you have outgrown all the necessities of material life. You cannot at this moment say, "I will forget the body and its needs and concentrate only on attracting spiritual blessings." Only an advanced yogi or a saint can do that. I shall tell you about one such devotee.

HOW A YOGI HAD BREAKFAST There was a certain Tibetan yogi who spent his entire time in realizing God. He lived in the jungle, where his only subsistence was fruits or leaves or grasses, which he took wherever he found them. He had tremendous powers. One day a man who was seeking God happened to be attracted there. He passed the night with this renunciant. The next morning the yogi said, "Let us have breakfast." He put some water in a crude pot and boiled some leaves. But the visitor was used to a luxurious way of life and so he anxiously asked, "Is that all you eat?" The yogi replied, "Yes." After a few minutes the man said dubiously, "But I like real food."

The yogi offered, "I will show you how to garnish this food." So he took a little bit of the leaf and said, "This is the salt." Then he took another piece of leaf and said, "This is the curry powder you like so much. And this is the butter you always add. Now--this soup has all the flavor which I gave it. You won't be able to taste it, but I will be able to do so, because I have so directed my mind."

LIMITED POWERS OF THE MATERIAL MAGNET This yogi had reduced his life to utter simplicity so that he could concentrate on being a spiritual magnet; but because you have accustomed yourself to small material necessities you think you have to attract them. The way of wisdom is to simplify your needs. Develop enough material magnetism to supply your necessities, but spend most of your effort in acquiring spiritual magnetism--for what is acquired by the lesser forms of magnetism is perishable.

If you exert all your effort to gain material magnetism you will find at the end of your life that you have wasted your time. Childish desires belong to the earth. Why should you cater to them? If you have actual needs try to fill them and take adequate care of the body, but don't waste your time attracting useless material things.

Think of the funny things that you wanted when you were a little child. Perhaps you wanted a doll, or yearned for a wagon, and so on. Now those desires seem ridiculous to you, but at that time a doll or a wagon was the greatest desire in your life. You can't reawaken that desire in yourself now. Many of the desires you are harboring in your brain at this moment are just as childish. You will outgrow some of them during this life; and if you ever visit the kingdom of wisdom in this incarnation all your present desires will suddenly seem childish.

I am not trying to make you pessimistic; but think of the time you spend in dressing up and acquiring things that you think you need. Observe those persons who have them, and see if they are happy. You will find that they are not satisfied. They are looking for something else. I didn't waste my magnetism for long in acquiring material things. I used my magnetism to attract the imperishable--the Infinite.

After attracting God, you will never desire to exert your magnetism for any other attraction: having Him, you shall have everything. Most people don't realize this. It is a fact that if you once find the imperishable God all desires for perishable things will certainly be satisfied. In differentiating between what is perishable and what is imperishable, you should consider that anything that belongs to the body is perishable; and anything belonging to the soul is imperishable. Learn to boil down your desires until only desires for necessities are left.

Money does not always indicate good taste. A lot of people who have money buy so many things that they make junk houses of their homes. It requires good taste and not necessarily a lot of money to make a home attractive. But the trouble with even this idea is that some people become so pre-occupied with making the home appealing and attractive that they lose the chance to rise above material things. I would not be able to see now how easily one can become deluded if it were not for my training in India. I know that each one of you who has to pay the bills prays for the freedom that India teaches. But that freedom will never result if you are given to laziness; nor may you gain it even by giving up everything. There was a man who said, "Oh, I lost my wealth, and I lost my wife, so I forsook everything and became a monk." He didn't forsake anything. Everything forsook him!

When, through wisdom, you can eliminate unnecessary desires, other people will envy you. Mental environment and the feeling of conviction you have are very important. After you have boiled down your wants you might say, "Well, I must have these material necessities. Not to be able to attract those necessities is weakness."

TYPES OF MAGNETISM One may develop magnetism of various kinds: to attract the highest power of God, to gain mental power, or to attract your daily necessities. God has given you a body and you have to look after it. But if you develop and use all your magnetism to acquire material things and mental power you will be disillusioned in the end. If you develop divine magnetism, that power will also look after all your material needs. That is why Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." But you must live that law! I know that law works; I have seen it work.

HOW TO DEVELOP PHYSICAL MAGNETISM First of all you must build a body that is strong and sure of itself--not to the point of vanity, but a body

that is at your command. Picture a lazy man going about his work with no ambition, no energy at all. Then visualize a race horse ready to run at the crack of a whip. That is how your body must be. We all know some old people who are very healthy and young in body, well under control, and full of magnetism. Despite age they have a wonderful personality.

Don't sit back lazily. It devitalizes you. Your body must always be at your command, even when you sit down. Notice the way people sit in their chairs. One person may be very lazy and slumped; the minute you see him you feel tired. Another sits up straight and you know he is alive. When you look at him you respond accordingly. And you must learn to stand erect; I never saw my Master slump. You will never find God if you indolently or carelessly allow your spine to be cramped by wrong posture. Learn to sit and stand straight. Some men and women walk with their bay windows going ahead of them--their shoulders drooping. Others walk with energy. When they don't keep in condition, ladies show it in the hips and men show it in the stomach. So, you must be sure to remember the importance of posture and regular exercise.

EFFECT OF DIET ON MAGNETISM Eat abundantly of fruits and vegetables, to increase magnetism. Fruits especially have a magnetic quality, and they don't clog the system. Too much protein and starchy food retain the poisons in your body.

Any organ that is defective will cause imbalance in the body. The stomach especially must be kept in perfect condition. If, for instance, you are troubled with gas in the stomach it will greatly devitalize your magnetism. Overeating is very bad. Fasting, on the other hand, develops magnetism--but that doesn't mean that you should starve yourself. People who eat meat three times a day have dull eyes, whereas those who eat plenty of fruit invariably have bright eyes. Proper diet in itself, however, is not enough; it must be backed up by your mind, ever ready to obey your will.

GAINING MENTAL MAGNETISM Always center your whole mind on whatever you may be doing, however small or seemingly unimportant it may be. Also learn to keep your mind flexible so that you can transfer your attention at a moment's notice. But above all do everything with one hundred per cent concentration. That will develop great magnetism. Most big businessmen, or men of success in any line of work, know how to use this magnetic power.

If you are a slave to any of the senses you will lose magnetism. Gaining control over them develops your magnetism. But happiest of all is he who has inward control to maintain an even mind without becoming emotional. Emotionalism must be converted into power, into strength of mind. Let your emotion be governed by wisdom--then you have magnetism. Emotional people who are also intelligent are attractive to others; those who are both intelligent and emotional have the power to attract. When Marc Antony delivered his

great speech his audience thought he was emotional, but he said, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. . . ." Then after pacifying the people he used strength. He gave them reason with emotion in order to rouse them. Intelligence combined with emotion creates magnetism. The magnetic man talks with conviction. He speaks intellectually but he invests his words with emotion. Marc Antony, while "sugar-coating" his speech, was nevertheless perfectly sincere. You must be sincere when you say anything. But to be sincere does not require that you bludgeon everyone on the head with the truth.

**EFFECT OF
MAGNETISM
ON OTHERS**

Your attention must always be objective whenever you associate with people. Absent-mindedness destroys personality more than anything else. (I don't mean, however, that absent-mindedness of great men whose minds are absorbed in one subject.) Be fully awake and conscious at all times and you will be an attractive magnet. Nobody likes to be ignored. We all want to be noticed, if for no other purpose than to get along with people--and that is most important. In order to do so you must be a "live wire." A dead man doesn't insult me, but an absent-minded man does. One might as well be in the company of a dead man as to be in the company of an absent-minded man.

When you are with others always be aware of yourself, but be careful in talking about yourself. Everyone likes to talk about himself but it's a poor policy. Let others talk about themselves so that you can be a good listener. Let others talk about their problems and their impressions, but let your magnetism talk about you. When a "live wire" comes into a room his whole vibration talks about him. So, remember, it is better to be attractive because of that silent vibration.

Not many people know that you can steal others' magnetism. When you shake hands with someone a magnet is formed. The other person's feet and your own, form one magnet; and both of your heads form a higher magnet. The one who is stronger gives his vibration to the other. The weaker person receives the vibration. The moment you even look at a person you have formed a magnetic exchange of vibrations. If you look at a sensual person, a magnet of lower or grosser vibration will be formed; and if you mix with spiritual people the exchange of magnetism will be on a higher vibratory plane. You are constantly exchanging magnetism, often unknowingly, by thinking of, by shaking hands with, or just by looking into the eyes of another person. It is strange but true that as soon as your heart is with someone you draw all the defects and good qualities of that person. Take care therefore not to concentrate on wicked individuals, for you may attract their bad qualities. It is different, of course, if you want to help those who may need it, but you must be stronger than they are, or instead of giving them something you will attract their deficiencies. If you want to be an author, think of a great writer. By concentrating on any one personality you can attract that personality. Therefore, you must place your love in true individuals.

Make sure, however, in exerting effort to develop magnetism, that you go in the right direction. Why, for instance, spend years in mental concentration, trying to turn your gray hair black again? It isn't worth centering your mind on anything that you have to lose again. That is one great foolishness most people cannot get rid of.

SPIRITUAL The greatest of all is spiritual magnetism. Most people
MAGNETISM pray for just a little while and then forget God. That is why
 they don't get any results. The lover who longs to attract
the beloved makes every effort. He doesn't give up so easily. To gain financial independence and all the material things you desire takes a lot of will power. But after acquiring all of these what do you have? So long as your material impulses dictate your behavior, you will feel the need for certain possessions; but remember, every time that you waste power in going after unnecessary material possessions you are farther away from your infinitely more desirable goal; divine magnetism that attracts God, the Giver of all.

THE SAINT WHO WENT TO HADES SPEAKING TRUTH--Part 2

Years later, the saint consciously left his physical body in the ecstasy of Cosmic Consciousness and ascended in his astral form to the kingdom of heaven. Immediately Yama, the keeper of hell, visited him in heaven and told him that before he could obtain the final decree of the Supreme Spirit to remain in heaven, he must witness the loathsome Hades. Disturbed, the saint replied: "Honored Yama, this is outrageous. I have lived a moral life, weighing each action with mathematical accuracy from the standpoint of truth. I have always followed truth and performed truthful and just actions. I am sure that I don't deserve the punishment of visiting Hades even for a short time. "

The great Yama replied: "Honored Sir, no doubt you are right about yourself in everything except one act. You say that you never did anything but what was truthful and just. Why is it then that you were foolish enough to suffer your hand to be cut off, and the head of a man to be cut off, for stating a fact? I am afraid that you are all mixed up about the difference between justice and truth, and the pronouncement of a fact. A just and truthful action always results in good; whereas your statement of a fact, which resulted in great harm to yourself and to that man, was far from ultimate truth and justice.

"Why didn't you save yourself from harm, and also save a man's life, by pointing your finger in the wrong direction? Even if you had uttered a falsehood, you would have committed a much less horrible sin than that of being the deciding factor in the murder of an innocent man who sought and believed in the safety of your shelter. By your silence, you let the hiding man think that you would protect him; hence you deprived him of the opportunity of seeking another hiding place unknown to you. "

AFFIRMATION

By the power of divine magnetism I will
attract to myself the rays of all knowledge.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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HEAVENLY FATHER, COME TO US!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, we feel Thy presence within the cave of our minds, in the nook of our feelings, in the garden of our love. Fill us with the aroma of Thy presence. Break the stars, break the blue, break the thoughts and feelings and show us Thy presence within us, around us--everywhere.

Centuries and centuries we have been searching for Thee in the pathways of ambitions. Now we know that it is Thy presence that we have been seeking. Hide no longer behind the roses and our feelings, hide no longer behind our thoughts, behind our souls.

In the glory of Nature's robe come Thou to us, decorated with all the wisdom jewels of the centuries. Waft to us the ocean breeze of Thy presence. Take away the darkness that hides Thee from us.

Thou art just behind the stars, just behind the blue heavens, just behind the atmosphere, just behind every human being. Teach us to feel Thee just behind our thoughts, just behind our feelings, just behind our love.

PRAYER

O Spirit, help me continually to live, think and dream of Thee, that I may contact Thine own magnetism and feel its ennobling influence.

HOW TO MANIFEST YOUR SECRET MAGNETISM

BEHAVIOR AT HOME SHOWS DEGREE OF MAGNETIC DEVELOPMENT The basic law of right human behavior is self-reform. The example of a truly good person will help to reform all who come into his sphere.

We should exercise extreme caution by keeping our feelings always under our command. Thus we may be able to put on at will the protective armor of self-control whenever we are involved in situations with persons whose dispositions are destructive to others' peace and well-being. Whenever any trouble occurs with our friends or dear ones, we should inwardly lay the blame on ourselves for getting into an unpleasant situation and then try to get out of it as fast and as graciously as we can. It is fruitless to increase the trouble by loudly, unkindly, discourteously blaming others, even though we find that they are to blame. We can teach quick-tempered dear ones to mend their faults a hundred times better by setting a good example than we can by harsh or self-righteous words. Sermons given unkindly to error-prejudiced mentalities are not only unappreciated, but misunderstood. Misunderstanding produces a meaningless hot exchange of words. The bitter words that we did not really mean only create more havoc, more misunderstanding. This is how people who love one another deeply in the beginning sometimes turn their love into violent hatred.

No matter what trials come, remember that the greatest test of one's spiritual aspiration lies in his control of himself in his own home environment--especially if it is a discordant one. If a person's inner peace can exhibit stability and strength at home, and if he conquers others' quarrelsome dispositions by his constant, beautiful expressions of undying love, then he will become a prince of peace.

We should try to conquer ugly, negative behavior by the power of positive, good behavior. We should always try to overcome inharmony by display of the best that is in us. Self-reformation, self-control, positive behavior, control of speech, sweet words, all these are soul powers that clothe us in robes of magnetism. In the expression of soul qualities lies the only way to live peacefully at home; the power is within us to make home a paradise or a hades.

Control of speech is one of the first laws of right behavior. Self-control

includes being able to cut off one's speech at any time, not in "speechless wrath," or as a way of showing displeasure, but through sheer discretion. The one who mistreats us often knows in his heart that he is behaving wrongly; to tell him openly about his faults will only increase wrath. People in ugly moods should be left alone and given an opportunity to seclude themselves when they are thus spiritually and mentally sick. This "quarantine" will prevent them from spreading an epidemic of inharmony.

PEACE AND HAPPINESS IN THE HOME The greatest of all happiness, next to divine happiness, is to be at peace with one's immediate relations, those with whom one must live every day in the year. When people try to handle the extremely complicated machinery of human feelings without any training whatsoever, the consequent results are often disastrous. Very few persons realize that most of our happiness lies in the art of understanding the law of human behavior. That is why so many people are often "in hot water" with their friends, and, worse yet, at constant war with their own best beloved ones at home. They do not understand others' behavior and do not see the faults in their own.

Two important aspects of right behavior are non-cooperation with the wrongdoings of loved ones, and silent resistance by opposite spiritual actions. We should not stoop to incivility, vulgarity, and physical threats in trying to prevent the erroneous doings of those whom we love. We must remember that by adding our own impatience, anger, or excitement to the ugliness expressed by them, we increase the power of discord in our dear ones. We unconsciously try to conquer inharmony by ourselves becoming inharmonious, and, as fire increases fire, so wrath increases wrath, and discourtesy stimulates others' incivility. The spiritual man conquers wrath by calmness, stops quarrels by keeping silence, dispels inharmony by being sweet of speech, and shames discourtesy by being thoughtful of others.

Those who are not mentally and emotionally strong enough to control themselves should run from the scene of trouble. Those who are sure to be subdued by others' nagging should take temporary flight, and thereby prevent their opponents from having the satisfaction of crushing them with unkindness. One should take such flights as often as necessary; indeed, he cannot take them frequently enough if anyone very dear to him constantly loosens shafts of unkindness upon him!

We should be especially careful not to talk when someone tries his utmost by ugly words to make us confess our weaknesses. To talk then is to be a stool pigeon to one's own peace. The result of such self-betrayal is that others trample on and shatter the backbone of one's peace of mind.

If we learn to respect the opinions of our dear ones, they will respect ours. Inward civility, inner heartfelt courtesy and continuous good will are the proper panaceas for all bad behavior. Remember, he who reforms him-

self by being quiet, by holding a calm disposition, by being firm in his own principles but forgiving of weaker associates when family storms blow, will inspire his persecutors or other wrongdoers to reform themselves.

CONTROL OF SPEECH AND ACTIONS Unruffled, controlled speech, innocent of malice, makes a man king over himself, and honored in his own home. By withholding speech altogether during a family outburst, or by continuously charging and holding opponents with the soothing gas of sweet words, one is sure of victory and will be considered a hero by those who are immediately around him, those from whom it is often most difficult to win admiration.

When conditions remain intolerable, however, even after repeated and lengthy efforts to heal the disease of ugliness in one's dear ones, it might be advisable to make suitable material provision for them and then take permanent flight to some other place. But under no circumstance should one behave unkindly. A person in this unfortunate position should simply realize that in going away he may give his family a chance to behold his untiring kindness in its true perspective.

We must remember to be obedient, true children of God under all circumstances. If we have been put among error-intoxicated brothers, it is to make us realize they too are our own, and to inspire them with a better example by our own magnetic, calm, divinely peaceful yogic behavior.

When a loved one is angry with us, or tries our patience beyond endurance, we should retire to a quiet place, lock the door, practice some physical exercise, and then quiet ourselves in the following way:

Sit in a straight chair, with spine erect; slowly inhale and exhale, twelve times. Then deeply affirm mentally, ten times or more: "Father, Thou art harmony. Let me reflect Thy harmony. Harmonize my error-stricken dear one."

One should affirm this until he feels, through the deep sense of peace and calm assurance falling upon him, that God has heard him and has answered.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

A negative or evil force is constantly opposing Spirit's emancipating magnetism, which expresses itself in all creation as an urge toward perfection. Each individual feels within himself the tug of war between God's attracting, divine magnetism and the opposing evil force--a magnetism that repels outward, away from the center (God). This negative or "satanic" magnetism, working through the senses and the mind, keeps man attracted to matter. At the same time, through his discriminative and intuitive faculties he feels and responds to the call of Spirit.

If you are a novice on the spiritual path you should be extremely careful with whom you mix. The influence around you becomes paramount, and so you must be on guard until you are a strong spiritual magnet yourself. If you want to become a spiritual giant you must associate with those who know God; not because of their talk, but through the silent magnetic vibration they send forth. And when you come within the range of that magnetism, you will be transformed--that is a fact.

So save all your magnetic power to attract the highest necessity of life, which is God. Why? Because He is the essence of all happiness, and having Him no other happiness or fulfillment shall you want. He is that Joy, having which, no other gain could be greater. That Joy is sufficient. God alone is sufficient. Having Him all your desires are satisfied.

DEVOTION TO TRUTH

Follow the spirit of truth. Avoid stating crude facts that may result in harm to yourself or others, if you can do so without departing from the spirit of truth. Obviously one should not go to the opposite extreme and lie to avoid stating facts that are true but painful.

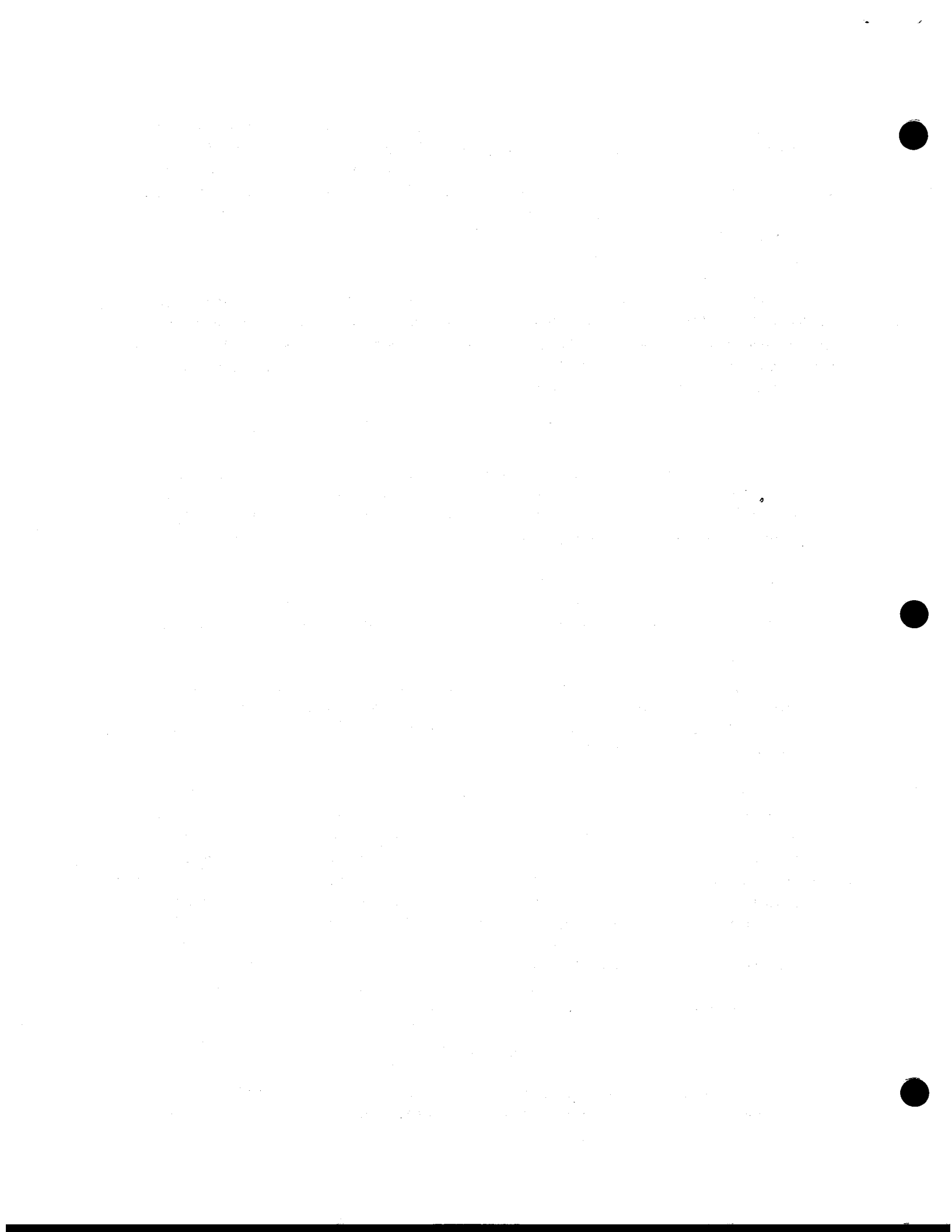
Develop the habit of speaking the truth, without saying anything more than is necessary. Speak the pleasant truth, avoiding the fact-stating habit that tempts us to say unnecessarily what may only hurt others and not serve the cause of truth.

Don't advertise all your secrets in your desire to be honest; if you tell about your own weaknesses to unscrupulous persons, they will have great times poking fun at you if some occasion arises that they wish to hurt you. Why should you supply the "ammunition"?

Speak and act in a way that will bring lasting happiness to yourself and others. State the facts when they are necessary to bring about the right result, i. e., whatever is best for all concerned. It is necessary to develop soul discrimination in order to rightly judge the difference between truth, which ultimately brings good to all concerned, and the mere statement of facts without regard to the result. It is no better to be overzealous about telling all the facts one knows than to habitually prevaricate to avoid hurting others with facts that they should know for their own good. Those whose discrimination is undeveloped should cultivate the habit of silence. Then when they speak it will be from an intuitive and hence correct perception of what the truth is: that which works for the ultimate good of all.

AFFIRMATION

I will meditate on Om and God morning and night that I may draw unto myself physical, mental, and spiritual blessings.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THY SIMPLE SONG OF JOY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Volumes of Thy savior voice pour through
the ether, available to human radios. Ears
deafened by the static of sense pleasures cannot
tune in Thy seraphic sermons.

O Blessed Broadcaster, may our mind
instruments, now unreceptive to Thee, become
attuned by our delicate adjustments of the dial
of divine discernment.

Teach us to catch Thy highest strains:
the simple song of joy.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Cosmic Creator, though the universe and my body be shattered into nothingness, yet will I find Thee dancing in my soul memory, forever and forever.

ART OF DEVELOPING MEMORY--Part 1

WHY YOU SHOULD DEVELOP MEMORY Memory is the art of recalling prenatal and postnatal experiences of the conscious, subconscious, and super-conscious minds. In order to perform important duties, recall valuable experiences for guidance in daily living, or to write, think, and feel, one must utilize the precious material recalled to the conscious mind by the power of memory.

Hence development of the memory faculty is very important. Some psychologists believe that the quality of one's memory is a congenital gift--that superior power and quality of memory cannot be developed by training. The yogis of India have shown, however, that the more you practice remembering deep experiences the more you will develop your memory--that faculty of the conscious mind which, through the help of the subconscious mind, can reproduce any past conscious human experience.

The conscious mind in the brain keeps in touch with the exterior world through the medium of sensations and perceptions--messages carried over the five sense telephones of touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing by afferent and efferent nerves. The subconscious or inly flowing mind keeps a record of all these experiences, with special emphasis on the important ones.

The semisuperconscious state is felt during deep sleep; pure superconsciousness is experienced during deep meditation. Both states have intuitive power. It is through intuition, rather than the senses (which are scarcely functioning during deep sleep), that we understand, upon awakening, how deeply or restlessly we have slept.

HOW THE SUPERCONSCIOUS, SUBCONSCIOUS, AND CONSCIOUS MINDS WORK The superconsciousness is the pure intuitive, all-seeing, ever-new blissful consciousness of the soul. This superconsciousness descends into the deep sleep state and becomes a semisuperconsciousness, marked by a semiconscious blissful state. Then this semiconsciousness, descending into the dream state and the state of imagination, becomes the subconscious mind and is marked by disturbance mixed with bliss. The subconsciousness, descending into the nervous system and muscles, becomes the conscious state. This conscious waking state is mostly a mixture of worries; very little of the joyous superconscious state is

retained... only hopes of joy.

To recapitulate: the one reigning consciousness of the soul, so long as it remains located in the brain and at the point between the eyebrows, is marked by the all-seeing power of intuitive bliss, and is called superconsciousness. When superconsciousness descends into the lower brain and the lower spinal centers and viscera, it is called subconsciousness (state of joy mixed with disturbance). When the superconsciousness comes down into the nerves, muscles, and the senses, it is called conscious mind. The subconscious mind and the conscious mind, being manifestations of the superconsciousness, both have intuitive powers. That is why dreams perceived by the subconscious mind may come true, and strong feelings or "hunches" of the conscious mind may also come true.

The superconscious, subconscious, and conscious minds all are working together. Sometimes one is more active than the other two, which nevertheless go on working in the background. When a person is calm and blissful, the superconsciousness is manifest in the conscious mind.

When one is imaginative, it is the subconscious mind that is predominantly manifest. When one is thinking fast, his conscious mind buries beneath it all calm and imaginative traits of the superconscious and subconscious faculties.

WHERE IS YOUR
CONSCIOUSNESS
CENTERED?

The conscious mind is manifest only during wakefulness. It sleeps during the hours when the subconscious mind is predominant. The subconscious mind is the memory mind. It is the mental refrigerator in which all experiences are kept in storage, fresh and ready to be used again upon instant notice. All experiences from the conscious mind enter the vault of subconsciousness and remain there; but they may come out into the conscious mind again through some new opening of thought or experience.

The superconscious mind remains buried beneath the subconscious mind, and the subconscious mind is buried beneath the conscious mind. Working like a janitor while you sleep, the subconscious mind keeps the fire going in the bodily furnace and sees that the circulatory machinery is functioning properly. During wakefulness, the subconscious mind is continuously memorizing conscious experiences. The subconscious mind is always awake, operating the involuntary organs during sleep and memorizing conscious experiences during wakefulness.

The superconsciousness, through intuition, knows everything that goes on in the subconsciousness and consciousness. It can remember all experiences, including those mislaid by the subconscious mind and forgotten by the conscious mind. The superconscious mind can be educated in the school of meditative discipline to recall all the experiences of this life and even experiences of past incarnations. Jesus, being developed in superconsciousness,

could remember his past incarnation as a disciple of John the Baptist, when John was Elijah (Elias); and Jesus was Eliseus (Elisha). ("Elias is come already, and they knew him not. . . . Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Matthew 17:12, 13.)

The subconsciousness also can be trained to perform in such a superlative way that it can correctly memorize and recall at will all conscious experiences.

The conscious mind becomes fossilized without school training or introspective creative thinking. Similarly untrained, the subconscious mind loses its powers of creative imagination and recall, and becomes forgetful. The superconscious mind, when neglected, loses its power of all-seeing intuition.

Memory is the power of recollection by which we are saved from remaining like children throughout life (as we would if we had no memory of past experiences), and it prevents us from repeating undesirable experiences every day. Through memory the identity of individual existence is maintained. For instance, a minister who lost his memory for a while thought that he was a grocer. He changed his name and opened a grocery store far away from his home town. After three months, his memory came back and he returned home again as a minister.

(Continued in next lesson)

THE MAGIC CARROT

In ancient days there lived in India a woman of extremely quarrelsome disposition. She was well-named Kalaha, which in Bengali signifies "quarrel." Kalaha not only started word battles with others at the slightest pretext; she also brooked no performance of good actions by others.

Time went by, and with the years Kalaha grew in evil disposition and wicked deeds. At last, when the burden of sin became very heavy, her legs of life gave way and Yama, the angel of death, cast her out from her bodily firmament. Then her astral body began to descend the spiral stairway of gloom--down, down, into the deepest region of Stygian darkness, until she landed with a thud on the vapor-spitting floor of Hades. In an agony of fright she saw that the angel of death was proceeding to leave her in that dismal tract where sinful shadow-beings lived in torture and despair, and she wailed for mercy.

The piercing, plaintive cry of the wicked woman somehow touched Yama, who turned back to her. "Can't you remember any good action that you might have performed during your earthly sojourn," he asked her, "that I might have at least one excuse to parole you from this awful place where you have landed

because of your self-created errors?"

The woman scratched her head thoughtfully; after a long inner search, she exclaimed, "Why yes, revered Yama, I do remember one kind act of mine. Once I had a bunch of carrots and I was about to eat them all. Then I noticed that one of them contained a worm, so I gave that defective carrot to another person on condition that he eat only the good part and throw away the rest without killing the worm."

"That will do," replied Yama. He made a conjuring motion with his hand, and the defective carrot came floating through the air toward Kalaha. Then Yama continued: "Wicked woman, grasp this carrot and hang onto it; don't loosen your hold, and you will reach heaven."

Kalaha greedily seized the carrot and started to rise from the floor of Hades. Seeing this, another sinner took hold of her legs, and a second sinner held the legs of the first, and a third hung onto the legs of the second, and so on until a chain of a hundred sinners became suspended from the feet of the wicked woman. At Yama's behest the carrot, drawing the wicked Kalaha and the chain of a hundred sinners, began to race heavenward through the sky like a zooming rocket.

The woman was overjoyed to find herself so easily freed from the hands of after-death justice. Just then she felt a tug at her feet. Looking down, she saw all those other transgressors flying heavenward with her. Unable to bear the thought of anyone else's receiving favor from Yama, she became enraged and shouted: "You undeserving sinners, let go of my feet! How dare you soar toward heaven with the aid of my charmed carrot?"

The other sinners had no sooner released their hold upon her feet than the carrot slipped from her hands. Down she plummeted through space and dropped once more on the floor of Hades. Her wicked companions, because of their faith in even a shameless wrongdoer like Kalaha, captured the carrot, which mysteriously came near the hands of the first man, and the whole chain of them raced up, up, and up to the immortal gates of heaven.

The moral is that even a small act of goodness may be a raft of salvation across the treacherous gulf of sin; but one who drinks the wine of selfishness and dances recklessly in the boat of meanness sinks in the ocean of ignorance. Selfish happiness, which ignores and cannot bear to witness the well-being of others, is bound to come to grief. If you cannot stand seeing others happy, the cosmic law will certainly arrange for you to be made unhappy by others.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Repent of your indifference to Him without whom you cannot live or speak,

much less enjoy the superficial entertainments and pastimes that engross you. Try to cultivate His acquaintance, now that you have been introduced to Him by the right preceptor.

Talk to God from your silently crying soul in the depths of the night, steadfastly, deeply, determinedly. Be like the naughty babies that are not allowed in apartment houses because they cry persistently. Cry for God and do not stop until He comes to you.

All earthly friends, who seem so real, will be unreal some day, will pass away; and the One who seems intangible will prove to be your only truly lasting Friend in this life. It is worthwhile to know God; those who strive day and night for everything except God will find that all their life's labor has been in vain.

AFFIRMATION

I will take all dusty sorrows from the attic of memory and cast them into the fires of oblivion.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WELCOME, O MAJESTIC PERSONAGE !

By Paramahansa Yogananda

From the vault of memory I removed the sacred treasure of bonds and promissory notes given to me by Thee. I cashed them into love's gold and built on spacious grounds of my soul a palace worthy of Thy throne of bliss. Now I await Thy coming.

O Majestic Personage, Thou art approaching my joy-bedecked heart! Diamond chips of my broken dreams, long darkness-hidden, glitter in the flash of Thy visit. From my rapt being, silent chants of praise flow insuppressibly.

Accept Thou the welcoming garlands I have fashioned from undying flowers of my devotion.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, teach me to make my mind garden produce the blossoms of beautiful thoughts, then in the flowering of beautiful memories, I will at last remember Thee.

ART OF DEVELOPING MEMORY--Part 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL
METHOD

Use memory only to recall noble experiences, which will come to you at your beck and call as angels of protection and inspiration. To use memory to recall evil experiences is to fill the temple of your thoughts with torturing mental demons. Don't bring whatever evil you did in the past back to your present consciousness and sow it afresh there. What is past belongs to your dead ignorant self and thus does not belong to you. Only good actions and their effects past and present should be recalled, as rich treasures which you love to retain.

See no evil, hear no evil, smell, taste, touch no evil, think and will no evil, so that you may not by remembering it desecrate the temple of heaven within you. If you now experience only good, then you will find yourself surrounded by angelic thoughts, and when the mansion of your soul contains no evil, then the essence of all goodness, God, will visit you within.

Experiencing all good things now, thinking, feeling, and willing good now, you will begin to remember all the forgotten goodness hidden in your subconscious and your superconscious minds. By recalling all goodness, you will recall the greatest goodness, God, who has been within you so long, screened off behind your mortal forgetfulness.

Perform every action, insignificant or important, with quick alert attention. Remember:

Attention is the needle that cuts the grooves in the record of memory cells.

That is why you remember your deep joys and sorrows. Hence, any excitement of feeling helps memory. A man without attention is one without the instrument that wakes memory. Absent-mindedness blunts the needle of attention.

Frequently try to memorize some short poem and to reproduce it in writing after a week or fortnight, in your leisure moments. Poems from the SRF Lessons or any other devotional poems are ideal. If you repeatedly read the most touching, the most intensely moving poems of others; and, as you read, saturate them with deep attention and feeling, you should easily be able to repeat them. But if you can't remember even these, write some verses yourself. As a general rule you will easily be able to recall your own words at

will, even though you may not be able to remember those written by someone else.

EXERCISE FOR GENERAL MEMORY DEVELOPMENT Try every night to remember in detail all the events that have happened during the preceding week. Remember with special attention the good things that have happened to you. Continue the practice and at the end of a month try to remember in detail all the principal events of the month, in connection with yourself, your city, your country, and the world. Finally, try to remember all the principal events of the preceding year. By calm recollection you can note the thought trends of the world.

An aid to memory development is to be regular in all your activities-- sleep, work, eating, service to others, and so on.

The ultimate purpose of developing memory is to awaken divine memory, the recollection of one's soul nature. The foregoing exercise has to do with the mechanical development of one's recollective powers, but in order to awaken divine memory it is important to watch the quality of the thoughts and experiences one stores in his subconscious.

Every experience is kept on a mental record that is produced in the brain by the needle of attention and deep feeling. The library of your mind has many shelves filled with a mixture of mental records, good and bad. You want only the best in your record collection. During the period of somnolence preceding sleep, and the drowsy state following sleep, command your subconscious mind to be attentive to all life's activities, and to retain all valuable ennobling experiences. These two important periods are the best for impressing affirmations upon the mind.

With closed eyes, concentrate your vision and will at the point between the eyebrows, and feel the memory of all your past flowing into you. Pulverize all mental records of accidents, fears, past physical and mental troubles, painful operations, bereavements, quarrels, depressing experiences, past sinful habits, and thoughts of unkindness to others, or hurts administered by others.

PHYSICAL METHODS OF SHARPENING MEMORY Massage the area near the medulla oblongata (at the base of the skull at the back of the head) for five minutes, before sleeping at night and upon awakening at dawn.

Insert the fingers of both hands through the hair at the medulla and rotate the scalp; move it backward and forward and to the left and the right. Gently strike the skull and forehead all over with the knuckles of the fingers of both hands for two minutes, concentrating upon each blow made by them. With eyes closed, imagine that each blow is awakening your sleeping brain cells and stimulating the convolutions of the cerebrum.

Massaging the head thoroughly with the fingers, then combing the hair, is another helpful exercise when you feel that your memory is dull.

The yogis recommend the following exercise for stimulating a dull memory: Rub a small piece of ice on top and back of the head, on the temples and closed eyes; over the openings of the ears, mouth, nostrils, genitals, and rectum; and over the navel. Also rub the hands and feet with ice. This exercise may be practiced as given by anyone with a normal constitution; otherwise, a cold compress may be substituted for ice; and the body should be warmly clothed immediately afterward.

The yogis recommend a drink of citrus fruit juice mixed with ground almonds and honey, preferably to be drunk in the morning, for improving the memory power of the brain.

Forswear pork, bacon, ham, sausage; also veal and beef; as they contain uric acid and other uremic poisons.

Persons interested in developing their memory should avoid the regular use of mild stimulants such as coffee, tea, and tobacco, which contain caffeine, theine, and nicotine, respectively. Strictly avoid using strong stimulants such as liquor and drugs. All strong stimulants intoxicate, drug, and deteriorate the intelligence and memory cells of the brain, preventing them from recording noble ideas and sense impressions in general. Memory cells that are constantly anesthetized by stimulants lose their retentive power, and become lazy and inert. Intoxication obliterates the functions of the conscious mind by harmful chemicals, hence injures the cerebral memory-organ. When the brain is affected the memory is impaired.

Isaac Newton, who had a tremendous memory, was a celibate. The vital essence is full of microscopic brain cells. Moderation in married life, and transmutation of the vital force into muscular and brain energy as taught in the SRF Lessons positively develops the strength of the brain. With increased strength of brain the power of memory also increases.

Above all, whether married or unmarried, never allow your soul-guided reason to be overruled by the creative animal impulse. And in married life, the greater your sexual discipline (restriction of sex to its sole intended purpose--procreation) the greater will be the power of your memory, intelligence, and spiritual perception.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The art of developing memory is important for remembering not only all the good things of this life, but also those of all past lives. Through it you may remember your forgotten pure Self, the true image of God and the neglected pure Spirit within you.

THE BOATMAN AND THE PHILOSOPHER

One day long ago a certain learned Hindu philosopher who was, theoretically at least, well versed in the four great Hindu Bibles (the Vedas), made arrangements with a boatman to take him across the holy Ganges River in a rowboat.

The proud philosopher, idly wondering how best to pass the time during the crossing, thought of showing off his knowledge to the boatman, so he asked: "Mr. Boatman, have you studied the first Hindu Bible?"

"No sir, I don't know anything about the first Hindu Bible," the man replied. At this the philosopher looked very wise and pityingly remarked, "Mr. Boatman, I am sorry to say that without some knowledge of the first Hindu Bible twenty-five percent of your life is as good as lost." The boatman took this insult quietly and kept on rowing his boat.

They had gone some distance across the Ganges when the arrogant philosopher made further inquiry: "Mr. Boatman, I must ask if you have studied the second Hindu Bible?" The boatman betrayed his annoyance as he replied: "Sir, I tell you definitely that I know nothing about the second Hindu Bible." With cool amusement the philosopher then declared: "I am sorry to tell you then that fifty percent of your life is as good as lost." Still holding his tongue in spite of this further affront, the boatman angrily kept to his work at the oars.

The small craft was nearing the middle of the river, and the wind had become a little strong, when for the third time the Hindu philosopher's eyes glinted with superiority. "Mr. Boatman, tell me, have you studied the third Hindu Bible?" The boatman was now in no mood to be trifled with. "I told you before," he said testily, "I don't know anything about the Hindu Bibles." The philosopher then declared in pompous tones, "Mr. Boatman, it is my duty to announce to you that seventy-five percent of your life is as good as lost." The boatman mumbled angrily to himself, and wished with all his heart that this impossible philosopher had found someone else to row him across the river.

Ten minutes had passed in silence, when a sudden storm ripped the veils of the clouds and sprang like a demon over the water of the river, lashing it into furiously excited waves. The boat began to rock like a floating leaf in the tumultuous waves. The pundit shivered and trembled, but the boatman, with a smile of assurance on his face, said: "Mr. Philosopher, you have pelted me with questions; now may I ask you one?"

Receiving an affirmative reply, the boatman went on: "Well, Mr. Philosopher, knower of the four Hindu Bibles, you established that seventy-five percent of my life is lost. Tell me--do you know how to swim?" To this the scholar tremblingly replied: "No, dear boatman, I cannot swim."

With smiling indifference the boatman replied, "I am sorry then to have to declare to you that one hundred percent of your life is soon going to be lost." As if to fulfill his prophecy, a furious gust upset the boat, and the Hindu philosopher was drowned; but the boatman, swimming with powerful strokes, overcame the waves and safely reached the shore.

No matter how prosperous or powerful one may be, unless we understand the art of right behavior and right living, we may drown in the sea of difficulty. But he who knows the art of swimming across the tumultuous river of life by initiating the right actions at the right time, can withstand the buffeting of all life's tests and swim with powerful strokes of will to the shores of complete contentment.

AFFIRMATION

I shall meditate during most of my leisure hours. Instead of being absent-minded, I shall think of Thee.

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WHEN THY SONG FLOWS THROUGH ME

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I am the child of God evermore. My power is greater than all my tests. What wrong things I did in the past, I can now undo by good actions and meditation. I will destroy them. I am an immortal evermore.

I came into the mortal school of life not to be trampled upon and crushed, but to show to others that I am a child of God, immortal and unbowed.

This mortal flesh may be taken away, many trials may come; but I know that it is owing to my wrong actions that trials come, and so I shall undo my errors.

Life is sweet, and death a dream; praise is sweet and blame a dream, when Thy song flows through me. Then health is sweet, and sickness a dream, when Thy song flows through me.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to own again my matter-sold mind and brain, that I may give them to Thee in prayer. I shall worship Thee in meditation. I shall feel Thine energy flowing through my hands in activity. Lest I lose Thee through sloth, I shall find Thee in activity. Teach me, above all, to be guided by wisdom; teach me to stay away from evil by right judgment and discrimination; teach me to adopt the good willingly, being guided by my free choice, and not compelled by habits.

MATERIAL DESIRES AND MEDITATION

POWER OF HABIT The power of habit is all supreme in the life of man. Most people go through life mentally making good resolutions, without ever succeeding in following what is wholesome. We usually do not do what we wish to do, but only what we are accustomed to do. That is why materially minded persons find it difficult to be spiritually minded even when they try hard. So also spiritual persons find it difficult to be material even when they associate with materially minded people. It is not easy for vicious men to be good and it is hard for noble men to be mean.

Habits are automatic mental machines installed by man to exercise economy in the use of initial will power and effort required in performing actions. Habit makes the performance of actions easier. Friendly habits help one to perform difficult good deeds easily. Evil habits, however sympathetic, are deadly, inasmuch as they are diehards and keep on disturbing the routine of life even when they are strongly willed not to do so. Bad habits and sin are temporary misery-making grafts on the soul. They must be thrown out sometime.

Good habits and virtues are eternal joy-making qualities. It is lamentable to be compelled to do evil against one's will, because of the strength of an evil habit, and then to have to suffer for one's actions. It is wonderful to do what is right habitually, and thus multiply goodness and happiness.

Material desire, and ego, or body consciousness, go together. In a psychological battle between the habit of yielding to temptation and the habit of self-control, the latter may easily subdue the former, but it is very hard for good habits to overcome newly created, constantly evolving material desires of the body-bound ego.

Body consciousness gives rise to material desire. Material desires are born not only owing to bad habits, present or from the past, but also owing to

the body attachment of the ego. If this body consciousness, or ego, is conquered by the consciousness of omnipresence in Spirit, then King Material Desire and all his armies of sense tendencies are instantly slain. Body attachment of the ego and its desires flees like darkness before the light of soul's consciousness of Omnipresence.

We are soldiers of God who have come with the power of love, the power of wisdom, and the power of spirituality to spread the fire of Spirit that burns all darkness from human lives.

NONATTACHMENT IS THE WAY TO HAPPINESS Nonattachment is the way to happiness. Freedom is kingship. Mental freedom is not necessarily accompanied by outer freedom. Nothing belongs to you and everything belongs to you. If you say: "This is mine," you have limited yourself to that thing only, and excluded all else. Then you are deluded. Never grieve for anything that is taken. Maybe in this life you will lose all things, and yet, when you have God, you will always have everything. There is no limitation to what you can get. It is wonderful to test yourself with whatever you have and disown all things from your heart. Enjoy them and take care of them, but just disown them from your heart--develop nonattachment.

Nonattachment does not sanction neglect of our worldly obligations. It means performance of our material duties with the sole desire to please God and serve His children without a sense of personal gain. When we perform an act, or eat, or earn money with the sole purpose of being the beneficiary of our actions we limit our consciousness and thus we do not expand.

You should analyze every thought that you have. View its positive and negative sides and determine its relative value. We are not always prepared to be nonattached. We have to understand first why we should not be attached. When something that you think you are not attached to suddenly drops and is smashed beyond repair, and you grieve for it, you may be sure that you are attached to it. You should then say that you had only been given the use of it and that you are happy to have had it for a while. We must be able to hold that attitude toward everything and everybody. It is not heartlessness. It is real expansion of the heart; but when it concerns human beings, nonattachment seems to be very difficult to conceive.

Attachment is a sort of blind feeling that tortures the soul and does not accomplish anything. Attachment is not love. It makes one miserable for his own loss. Real love is happy only in the happiness of the beloved. You say that you love your friend, a wonderful friend; you enjoy his company; you love to serve him--and then he leaves you. If, when he has gone, you forget him, you are heartless. But if you just make yourself miserable day and night thinking of your own loss, and what occurred through the death of your friend, you are foolish. That attachment will do neither you nor your friend any good at all. Rather, you should comfort yourself with the

knowledge that some day you will understand where he has gone. Wish him every happiness, wish him spirituality and upliftment, and realize that he has gone somewhere for his own betterment. Whatever is the will of God and whatever is best for him, that is your wish.

LAW OF SPIRITUAL HABITS Habits of thought are mental magnets which draw unto themselves specific objects relative to the kind and quality of their magnetism. Material habits attract material things and spiritual habits attract spiritual things. Bad habits attract bad experiences. Good habits attract good experiences.

Throughout the ages the majority of mankind has emphasized the material, overlooking for the most part the development of the spiritual. Is it not time now that the spiritual should be given its proper place in the development of the threefold nature of man? Owing to this great need, let us see if we cannot find a definite method of procedure which will aid materially in the development of a higher state of consciousness.

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matthew 25:29)

This illustrates the law of spiritual habit, and, in fact, of all kinds of habits. The material interpretation of the above Bible quotation shows that if a man develops the habit of making money, for instance, more and more prosperity will come to him, and the man who has not the habit of prosperity will lose even the prosperity consciousness that he once had. The person who has already acquired the habit of attracting abundance through the cosmic law of success will attract more prosperity, but the person who has not cultivated the habit of attracting prosperity will not be prosperous until he does acquire the habit. This is a lesson to men and women to create right habits in their daily activities.

The above biblical law depicts the law of karma (action) spoken of in the Hindu scriptures. The law of action is based upon the law of cause and effect. If you are born good now, you were good before birth in another incarnation; and if you are good, you will attract still more good. If you have very few good tendencies within you, you may lose what you have by the invasion of powerful bad habits. If you were born inclined to be bad, it is an indication that you had bad tendencies before, and you will attract more evil. If you are only slightly bad, you were so before, and the greater good within you, acquired from past incarnations, will destroy the meager evil which you now have within you.

This is the natural working of the law, but do not feel helpless if you happen to have undesirable habits that you wish to discard. Conquer them by developing will power and the habit of regular, right meditation. You have the power to free yourself from the clutches of wrong habits and to create

the habits of thought and action which will bring you the results you desire.

ALL THINGS COME THROUGH MEDITATION One who is accustomed to meditating and contacting God will like to meditate more and more in order to commune with God more frequently. Those who meditate little and only vaguely feel His presence find that their desire to meditate and contact God vanishes when the mind is invaded by the powerful habit of restlessness. Likewise, those who are accustomed to being calm attract calmness and serenity, while those who are a little calm find their calmness easily disturbed when restlessness invades. Strong unspiritual habits entirely destroy the power of weak spiritual habits.

It is a fact that in meditation the devotee finds his body consciousness resisting the consciousness of Omnipresence. He also finds that the ego consciousness often wants to make an encouraging noise by breathing fast, thus inviting the senses to destroy the breathlessness of meditation. The minute the ego breathes fast (referred to in the Gita as the blowing of the conch shell, which produces material sounds through the action of air), then the material desires of the body are awakened and cheered, and fight to drive away the vast Spirit consciousness which is born of our stillness and meditation.

During meditation any material vibration sent forth by the ego helps to awaken material desires, to revive the consciousness of the body and to dispel the consciousness of the vastness of Spirit. After the ego creates a material vibration, the senses also begin to create different vibratory sounds in order to drown out the musical astral sounds of the discriminative tendencies in the astral spinal centers.

All students of Self-Realization Fellowship can understand that during the earlier states of meditation, when ego consciousness is awake and blows the conch shell of breath, the sense organs of heart, circulation, and lungs make many peculiar thumping, throbbing, and purring sounds to drown out the astral music emanating from the astral body.

Meditation opens up all the closed inner gates in the spine and brain that bring power to your body, mind, and soul. When you meditate your body becomes filled with electricity or life energy that is ever present in the ether. Most people do not realize that. Meditation is the turning on of the inner switch that fills the body with the divine current. That is why it is so important to keep your concentration on the aftereffects of meditation every minute of one's existence. Do not neutralize that peace with disturbing thoughts. If you gather concentration in a pail of meditation, and have a leak of restlessness, your concentration will run out. You must not have any mental leaks.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Jesus said: "Hearing they hear not" (Matthew 13:13). God is talking to us through the song of intelligence in the atoms, but we do not hear.

By shutting off all physical sounds from the mind, we can hear during meditation the cosmic voice of peace and the roar of infinite atoms. X-ray, ultraviolet rays, electricity, atoms, and electrons all dance their dances of colors, but we see nothing of this with our limited physical vision; we are as if blind. To our ordinary vision the sunlight looks like a mass of white light. The spectroscope reveals it as a searchlight of seven colors. Behind the walls of sunlight a million angels and astral bodies pass, but we do not see them.

Look into the spot between the eyebrows; constantly look into the spiritual eye, until this eye is opened. Then no longer will you behold solids, liquids, and gases. No longer will they appear to hurt you, or drown you, or choke you. All their terrors, born of deluding duality, will vanish in the one perception of God's universal love. Stones, trees, water, earth, all things will embrace you and welcome you to their one heart-altar of light.

You will lose all sense of earthly odors; your consciousness will be filled with the fragrance of God as you soar in the heights of meditation. No bitter-sweets your tongue shall taste; in the festive banquet hall of meditation you shall quaff only the nectar of God's sweetness.

THE HIMALAYAN MUSK DEER

Musk is a valuable, extremely fragrant substance found in a sac under the skin of the abdomen of the male musk deer, a habitant of the highest Himalayan mountains of India. The ravishing odor of musk oozes from the navel of the musk deer when it reaches a certain age. The deer becomes excited by the attractive odor and frisks about, sniffing under the trees, and searching everywhere, sometimes for many weeks, to find the source of the fragrance. Sometimes the deer grows angry and very restless when he is unable to find the source of the musk perfume, and jumps to his death from the high cliffs into the valley, trying in a last desperate effort to reach the source of the rare fragrance. Then hunters get hold of him and tear out the pouch of musk.

An enlightened bard once sang: "O you foolish musk deer, you sought for the fragrance everywhere but in your own body. That is why you did not find it. If you only had touched your nostrils to your own navel, you would have

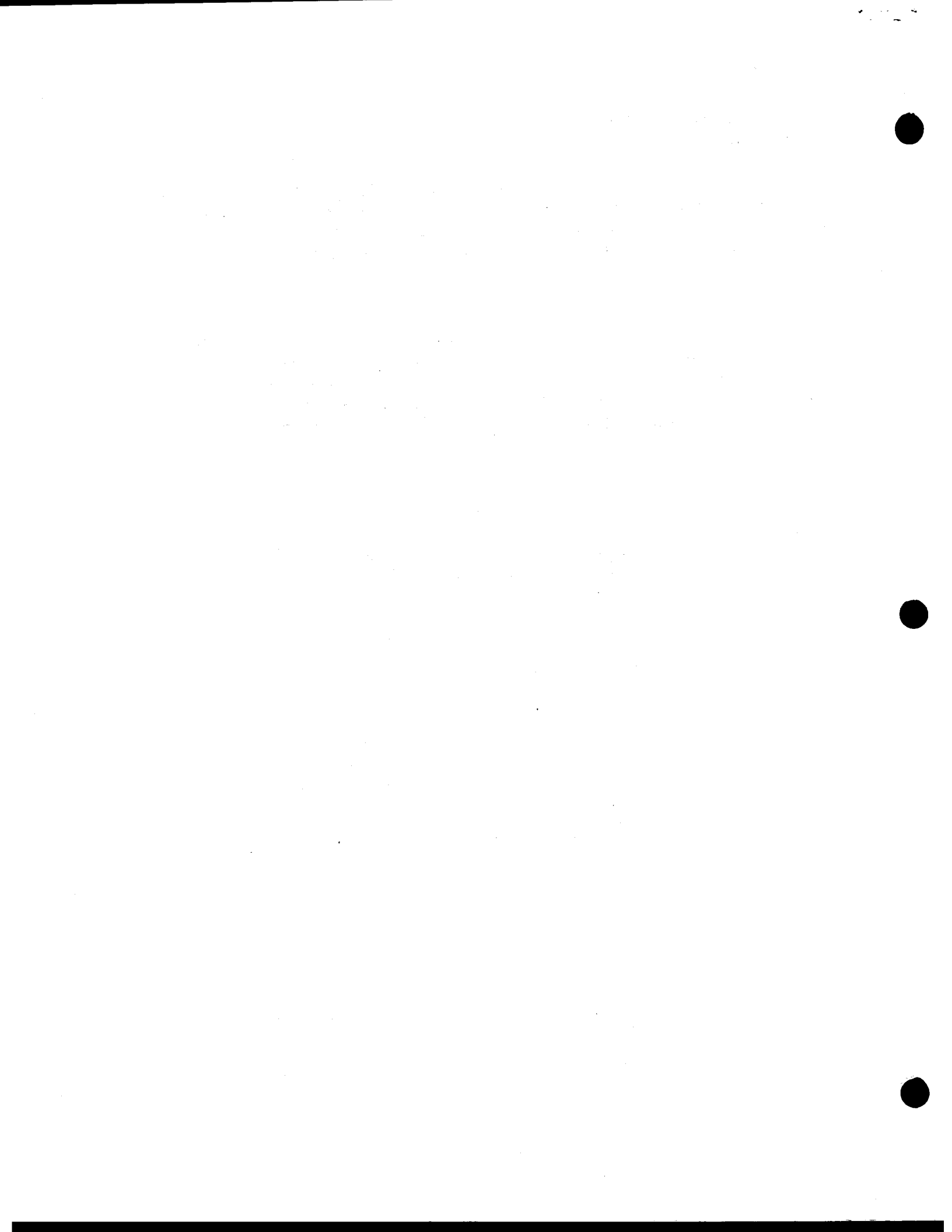
found the cherished musk and would have saved yourself from suicide on the rocks below. "

Don't most people act like the musk deer? As they grow, they seek the ever fragrant happiness everywhere outside of themselves--in play, temptation, human love, and on the slippery path of wealth--until finally they jump from the cliff of high hope onto the rocks of disillusionment when they cannot find the real happiness which lies hidden within the secret recesses of their own souls.

If only you would turn your mind inward, in deep daily meditation, you would find the source of all true, lasting happiness existing right within the innermost silence of your own soul. Beloved seekers of happiness, don't be like the musk deer and perish seeking false happiness in the wrong place. Awake! find your happiness within the cave of deep contemplation.

AFFIRMATION

Teach me to open the gate of meditation that leads to Thy blessed presence. Teach me to behold Thy face in the mirror of my inner stillness.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY GURU, SRI YUKTESWAR

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Light of my Life! thou didst spread wisdom's glow over my soul path. Centuries of darkness vanished before the luminous shafts of thy help.

As a naughty baby I had cried for my Mother Divine, and She came as thee--Swami Sri Yukteswar. At that meeting, O my Guru, a sacred spark flew from thee; and the fagots of my God-cravings, gathered through incarnations, ignited and blazed into bliss. At thy flaming, golden touch all my questions were answered.

~~As a response to my soul cries, after years of waiting I found thee. Our hearts trembled with an omnipresent thrill. Beloved Guru, we met in this life because we had met before.~~

If all the gods are wroth, and yet thou art satisfied with me, I am safe in the fortress of thy pleasure. And if all the gods protect me by the parapets of their blessings, and yet I receive not thy benediction, I am an orphan, left to pine spiritually in the ruins of thy displeasure.

O Guru, thou didst lift me out of the land of bewilderment into the paradise of peace. My slumber of sorrow is ended, and I am awake in joy.

Dissolving forever our finitude, together we shall merge in the Infinite Life.

O Immortal Teacher, I bow to thee as the speaking voice of silent God. I bow to thee as the divine door leading to the temple of salvation.

I lay flowers of devotion at thy feet; and before the altar of thy guru, Lahiri Mahasaya, harbinger of modern yoga; and of his Master, deathless omnipresent Babaji.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

With the dawn of Thy coming the buds of my devotion will burst into glorious bloom.

O Lord, hasten Thou the day when I may weave an amaranthine garland of those flowers and place it at Thy feet!

GURU AND DISCIPLE

An Exposition by Paramahansa Yogananda

Only through the guru-disciple relationship may a truant human soul retrace its footsteps to God. It is a perfect relationship of true unconditional friendship between one who makes a conscious effort to know God (the disciple) and one who actually knows God (the guru).

In the beginning of one's spiritual search it is wise to compare various spiritual paths and teachers; but when you find the real guru destined for you, the one whose teachings can lead you to the divine Goal, then restless searching should cease. A spiritually thirsty person should not go on indefinitely seeking new wells, but should rather go to the best well and drink daily of its living waters. In India we seek in many places until we find the right master and the right path for us; once the guru has been found, we remain loyal to him through death and eternity, until we become one with him and attain final emancipation.

Those who have come to Self-Realization Fellowship truly seeking inward spiritual help shall receive what they seek from God. Whether they come while I am in the body, or afterward, the power of God through the link of the SRF Gurus shall flow into the devotees just the same, and shall be the cause of their salvation.

All true gurus are "living," whether in a physical body or not. Their consciousness is attuned to their disciples, whether or not all are living on the same plane. One of the essential qualities and manifestations of a true guru is omnipresence.

St. Francis of Assisi, through his devotion to Christ, his guru (whom St. Francis had never known in the flesh), achieved a perfect oneness with Jesus, in soul, mind, and body (the wounds of Christ appearing as stigmata on the body of St. Francis). This state of perfect union occurs when the disciple makes himself perfectly receptive to the seen or unseen direction of his guru.

All devotees who are regular and faithful in their practice of SRF teachings shall find that their lives become purified and transformed. In their persistence and steadiness, true devotees of this path shall find emancipation. Implicit in

the SRF techniques and teachings are the help and blessings of the SRF line of gurus. Devotees who conduct their lives according to SRF principles will be blessed with the hidden and open direction of the SRF line of gurus. The ever-living Babaji has promised to guard and guide the progress of all sincere SRF devotees. Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswarji, who have left their physical forms, and I myself, even after I have left the body--all will ever protect and direct the sincere members of SRF-YSS.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GURU AND TEACHER

We may have many teachers in the beginning of our spiritual search, but we have only one guru. After he has been found there is no need for other teachers. Those who come to learn from a teacher may be called "students," but the spiritual aspirants who come to a guru for an eternal relationship are called "disciples." Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). All true gurus, like Jesus, manifest the universal Christ Consciousness that every man must himself experience in order to go back to the Father. And no man finds a guru unless the Heavenly Father Himself has drawn that disciple to that guru.

Most human souls are truant children of God, who have roamed away from Him and become lost in the wilderness of suffering. Impelled by the scourge of sorrow, such souls begin to yearn for and to have faint glimpses of their lost home of spiritual blessedness. When His errant children begin thus to long for God, and inwardly to pray deeply and strongly for a way out of the conundrum of life, God is touched by their pleas. The Father then sends help in the form of an enlightened (i. e., God-conscious) guru who guides Home these lost seeking souls.

Such a guru, ordained by God to help individuals in response to their deep prayers, is not an ordinary teacher; but is a human vehicle whose body, speech, mind, and spirituality God uses as a channel to attract and guide lost souls back to His home of immortality. We meet various teachers in the beginning, through our vague desire to know truth. But a guru is a living embodiment of scriptural truth and an agent of salvation appointed by God in response to a devotee's incessant petitions for release from the bondage of matter.

It is very difficult to choose the right path for oneself from among the many religious paths and varied religious opinions. Most people who wander from church to church seeking intellectual inspiration fail to find God in this life, for intellectualism is necessary only until one begins to "drink" God, that is, to commune with Him. It is not wrong to seek intellectual inspiration in order to encourage the desire for actual God-contact. But when intellectual inspiration begins to satisfy the seeker (so that he ceases striving to experience actual God-contact), it is detrimental to his progress in Self-realization.

But when a devotee becomes ready, God sends him a guru; because it is easier for the aspirant to follow a living man who embodies truth, or one whom he knows by the testimony of other disciples to have demonstrated truth, than

it is to follow only scriptural instruction. A saint who has reached the divine Goal, whether by the scientific yoga route or by the longer spiritual-prayer way, experiences actual Self-realization. Through the divine glory of his own soul he beholds God.

A scripture, no matter what records of spiritual truths it contains, is not as useful as a saint, whose life has set an example that others may beneficially follow. There is a vast difference between powerful sulfuric acid and the mere statement of its formula, H_2SO_4 . Neither the formula nor a written description of the power of sulfuric acid can describe adequately its burning vital quality. So scriptural truths that we know only by reading about them are like little insignificant-looking seeds; their power and wisdom-yielding qualities may be recognized only when we see them grown into the huge trees of saintly human lives, laden with fruits of divine love grown in the garden of Self-realization.

The path followed by a man of Self-realization may safely be followed by any spiritual aspirant. Anyone who emulates a guru's life example and his teachings certainly will reach the same goal of Self-realization, whether he follows the yoga highway or the longer way of prayer. Ordinary prayers will not evoke any conscious response from God. To be vital, prayers should be offered in deep meditation, intensely, for many hours continuously, until divine response comes.

Once the relationship of guru and disciple has been truly established, there shall be no more blind spiritual groping; therefore, there should be no further spiritual roaming, nor any parting because of some candid admonition on the part of the guru or for any other reason. Usually there is instantaneous recognition between guru and disciple if they have met before; but sometimes it takes a long time for the disciple to remember consciously that past close friendship, or to recall the forgotten memory of past incarnations together, so long buried beneath ash heaps of ignorance.

SIGNS OF A GURU Just as the state of sleep manifests in the body by certain physiological changes, so the muscles, eyes, and breath all become still during certain states of cosmic consciousness. A true guru has attained cosmic consciousness, and may be known by the following outward signs: his eyes are still and unwinking whenever he wants them to be so; by the practice of yoga, his breath is quiet without his forcibly holding it in his lungs; his mind is calm without effort. If a man's eyelids blink continuously, and his lungs heave like a bellows, and his mind is restless and unconcentrated, and still he tells you that he is in the state of cosmic consciousness, don't believe him any more than you would believe a man who is running hard if he tells you he is peacefully sleeping. A person whose eyes, breath, and mind exhibit restlessness is not in cosmic consciousness. You know better!

A god-realized guru is not developed merely by years of study in a theological seminary, which has attained its end when it has conferred upon its students various degrees in theology. Scholarly titles may be won by men of good memory, but divine character, self-control, and soul intuition are developed only by

deep meditation and knowledge of advanced psychophysical methods leading to Self-realization.

Know also that one may not become a guru just by self-choice. A true guru may be ordained only by another God-realized guru to serve and to save others; or else he must hear in reality the voice of God asking him to redeem others. Some men become self-appointed gurus after reading a few occult books and listening to the voice of their own misguided imagination or of their undisciplined subconscious mind.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GURU-- ITS MEANING AND PURPOSE My guru Sri Yukteswar said to me, when he accepted me for training: "Allow me to discipline you; for freedom of will does not consist in doing things according to the dictates of prenatal or postnatal habits or of mental whims, but in acting according to the suggestions of wisdom and free choice. If you tune in your will with mine, you will find freedom." My will had been guided formerly by habits; but when I obeyed my Guru, tuning in my will with his God-guided, wisdom-guided will, I did find freedom.

A real guru is sent by God. To tune in with the guru's will is to find true freedom of one's own will. Teachers who slavishly control their students after a dogmatic pattern destroy in them the power of free will. Such teachers want the student to see only as the teacher sees. Obedience to a true guru, however, does not produce any such spiritual blindness in the disciple. On the contrary, it develops the disciple's "single eye" of wisdom and intuition whereby he may act wisely out of his own free choice. A guru disciplines the disciple only until the latter is spiritually able to guide himself through his own unfolding soul-wisdom.

DEFINITION OF "FREEDOM OF WILL" Very few people know what it means to enjoy real freedom of will. To be compelled to do things by the dictates of one's instincts and habits is slavery. Nor is it true freedom to be good because you have been habitually good for a long time, or to refrain from evil because you are accustomed to shunning wrong actions. Real happiness comes only when your will is guided by soul-discrimination to choose good instead of evil, any time, anywhere, because you sincerely want good for its own sake. Then you will be really free.

Evil, i. e., ignorant, acts bring us only sorrow. When the influences of hereditary, prenatal, and postnatal habits; and family, social, and world environments all cease to influence your judgment; when you can act, guided solely by your highest inner intuitive discrimination; then only are you free. Until then, "the way of all righteousness" lies in tuning in your whim-guided will with the wisdom-guided will of your guru. By thus harnessing your will to his divine wisdom, you will cease to be swayed by prejudice and error; you will then be guided always by righteousness.

Such tuning in of your habit- and whim-led will with the wisdom-guided will

of your guru is far different from mechanical obedience to a spiritual guide who is not a Self-realized man; for although the latter may have been traditionally, religiously, or socially elected to his spiritual position, he may nevertheless be unknown to God! To follow the spiritually blind unthinkingly is to fall helplessly with them into a deep ditch of error. If you are spiritually blind, to follow an awakened guru is to reach the goal without danger. How can you take away the bandage from your brother's eyes if there is still one over your own?

If a disciple after following a guru for some time should spurn him, then he actually spurns the help sent by God. A guru is not a help for this life only. He makes a spiritual soul-contact with the disciple that signifies: "Let our friendship be eternal, and let us help each other through incarnations until we are both completely emancipated in Spirit." The guru-disciple relationship is not wholly one-sided; sometimes an advanced disciple may help his guru. In such friendship there is no room for selfish consideration or any conditional reservation. Divine friendship and perpetual goodwill expressed between two or more souls gives birth to ever pure, unselfish, all-emancipating, divine love. My master said to me: "I will be your friend from now through eternity, no matter whether you are on the lowest mental plane or on the highest plane of wisdom. I will be your friend even if you should err, for then you will need my friendship more than at any other time."

When I accepted my master's unconditional friendship, he said: "Will you give me the same unconditional love?" He gazed at me with childlike trust.

"I will love you eternally, Gurudeva!"

"Ordinary love is selfish, darkly rooted in desires and satisfactions. Divine love is without condition, without boundary, without change. The flux of the human heart is gone forever at the transfixing touch of pure love." He added humbly, "If ever you find me falling from a state of God-realization, please promise to put my head on your lap and help to bring me back to the Cosmic Beloved we both worship."

It was only after we had made this spiritual pact that I began to understand fully the significance of a guru to a disciple. I never found complete satisfaction, comfort, and God-contact until I attuned myself with unconditional loyalty and devotion to the divine consciousness of my guru.

HOW I FOUND GOD THROUGH MY MASTER

When I went to my master for spiritual development, I begged him to reveal God to me. A master's word cannot be falsified: it is not lightly given. An hour-long verbal tussle ensued. Then Master's consent rang out with compassionate finality: "Let your wish be my wish."

Sometime after this I became obsessed with a desire to go to the Himalayas, believing that there, in meditation, I would gain the experience of God I had so earnestly sought. I approached Sri Yukteswar for his permission. "Many hillmen live in the Himalayas, yet possess no God-perception." My guru's answer came slowly and simply. "Wisdom is better sought from a man of realization than from inert mountains."

His words proved true. I fled the hermitage. When I returned weeks later, Sri Yukteswar showed no sign of displeasure. "Master," I said, "I must have disappointed you by my abrupt departure from my duties here; I thought you might be angry with me."

"No, of course not!" he replied. "Wrath springs only from thwarted desires. I do not expect anything from others, so their actions cannot be in opposition to wishes of mine. I would not use you for my own ends; I am happy only in your own true happiness."

My master kept his promise of giving me true experience of God. One day I made my way to Master's empty sitting room. I planned to meditate, but my laudable purpose was unshared by disobedient thoughts. They scattered like birds before the hunter.

"Mukunda!" Sri Yukteswar's voice sounded from a distant balcony.

I felt as rebellious as my thoughts. "Master always urges me to meditate," I muttered to myself. "He should not disturb me when he knows why I came to his room." He summoned me again; I remained obstinately silent. The third time his tone held rebuke. "Sir, I am meditating," I shouted protestingly.

"I know how you are meditating," my guru called out, "with your mind distributed like leaves in a storm! Come here to me." Thwarted and exposed, I made my way sadly to his side. "Poor boy, mountains could not have given you what you want." Master spoke caressingly, comfortingly. His calm gaze was unfathomable. "Your heart's desire shall be fulfilled." Sri Yukteswar seldom indulged in riddles; I was bewildered. He struck gently on my chest above the heart. The experience that followed I have described in detail in my autobiography.

My breath stopped and yet I was fully conscious. My ordinary frontal vision was changed to a vast spherical sight, simultaneously all-perceptive. Through the back of my head I saw men strolling far down Rai Ghat Lane. The roots of plants and trees appeared through a dim transparency of the soil; I discerned the inward flow of their sap. An oceanic joy broke upon the calm endless shores of my soul. I felt God as exhaustless Bliss; I saw His body as countless tissues of light. Such joy! Such bliss! Many prophetic realizations that came to me during this experience actually came to pass afterward. I could penetrate the minds of others and see what they were thinking.

Suddenly the breath returned to my lungs. My guru was standing motionless before me; I started to drop at his holy feet in gratitude for the experience in Cosmic Consciousness that I had long sought. He held me upright, and spoke calmly and unpretentiously:

"You must not get overdrunk with ecstasy. Much work yet remains for you in the world. Come, let us sweep the balcony floor; then we shall walk by the Ganges."

He wouldn't let me even thank him for the realization he had given me, but with all my soul I bow to him. That sacred experience was not imagination. I knew that Master had given me the experience of actual perception of God.

The disciple who concentrates and really wants truth is the disciple who gets his desire. If a guru has one disciple who knows God, that is greater than having thousands of disciples who just talk about God. I am interested in souls who really want to drink God from the fountain of Spirit; who will be able to say, with the conviction of their own experience, that they are always happy in the consciousness of God.

GOD'S INFINITE LOVE

Try to find impersonal divine love for all through devotion to a perfect, wise, Christlike guru. He will show you how to behold, through the portals of your devotion to him, the vast territories of God's infinite love.

In the name of God many people assume an attitude of indolence, but they will never find God that way. Others avoid silence and want to work all the time. Neither will they find God. But when you tune in with the wisdom of a great teacher you will find God. Your part is to awaken your desire, then whip your will into action until it can follow the way of wisdom that is shown to you.

AFFIRMATION

I will break the limitations of restlessness, and limitlessly expand the power of my meditation until the universal Christ Consciousness may manifest through me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION As you dive more deeply into the ocean of meditation and forget the wave of your own little body, your consciousness expands, until the realization comes to you of your oneness with all nature and with God. The bliss of God consciousness merges into universal love. God is omnipresent--you are one with the Father.

In this realization you come into harmony with the unchangeable laws of God, so that you no longer injure yourself and others by transgressions against your divine nature. For whatever you do to others you do also to yourself. As water seeks its own level, so the individualized Spirit in man is always, either consciously or unconsciously, struggling to attain once again oneness with its Source. You dissolve the barriers of finiteness when you consciously tune in with the laws of the cosmos.

LESSON NO. 27 Concentration means to free the attention from objects of distraction and to focus it on one thought. One may concentrate on any subject, whether spiritual or material.

Meditation is that form of concentration by which one disengages the attention from distracting sensations and thoughts so that it may be applied unreservedly to God. One does not meditate on money, but solely on God. Withdraw the mind and energy in order to use them in meditation upon God. Deeper and deeper meditation produces more and more of the ever joyous quality of Spirit.

An advanced student who is engrossed in the ever new, ever increasing joy of meditation is always satisfied, and does not chase after the will-o'-the-wisp of false and useless desires. The experience of divine joy develops a taste for the finer pleasures that lead to happiness, and thus lessens the desire for grosser pleasures. Divine joy never produces an apathy to any right exertion; it enables one to help others in every way.

The theological way of prayer and unscientific meditation is the "bullock cart" way of reaching God, requiring many incarnations. The true meditative way, as taught in the SRF Lessons, is the airplane way--the short route to God. The entire body becomes saturated with peace and energy, owing to the contact with God in meditation.

Keep your daily engagement with Bliss-God in the temple of meditation. Form the habit of meditation by meditating a little at first, then longer, with ever increasing depth and intensity, until you can meditate automatically and willingly.

Don't use valuable time in performing trifling duties at the cost of your more important duties to God. The world is full of persons who painstakingly keep insignificant daily engagements but entirely forget their highest engagement with meditation. Individual and group meditation both are desirable. They both recharge the soul with God. In addition, group meditation also recharges the mind with the vibrations of the spiritual convictions of other souls.

Putting off meditation until tomorrow is a great delusion. By the silently talking, inwardly directing, consciously guiding, ever increasing joy in deeper and deeper meditation (as in no other activity) God is manifest; that is, if you retain the joyous aftereffects of meditation throughout the day, or part of the day, you will see that this joy will correctly guide you in everything. Saints are guided by this joy, in the consciousness of which no erroneous actions are possible. Retain the acquired joy of meditation throughout the day.

Long meditations produce a habit of meditation, and depth or intensity of meditations gives you the contact of God. Meditate intensely when you have only a little time. Meditate intensely and long in order to become an adept. In intense and long meditation you will have many wonderful spiritual experiences. Don't spill the milk of silence after gathering it in the pail of your concentration. You should remain calm and retain that silence within, ready to use it during trials and to convince God that you love Him as the only real joy.

Doubt or no doubt, restless or calm, result or no result keep meditating daily; but try to increase the depth of it, and you will get results. If you meditate deeply for eight years, you will never give it up. If you increase the depth of meditation and feel the joy more and more, unwholesome sense pleasures will gradually lose their appeal for you as you compare them to the delightful taste of meditation. After the negative state of silencing the mind is reached, meditation gives positive conscious contact with God as ever new joy, light and the cosmic sound of Aum.

Silence signifies the stilling of thoughts as well as muscles. When muscular restlessness and thoughts of wisdom-killing mental restlessness cease their danse macabre, God enters the temple of quietness. "In the temple of silence, God comes." When your mental temple is silent, free from thoughts and restlessness, then God comes. Meditation is the real panacea by which you can permanently cure yourself of the daydream of matter and all its evils, and realize yourself as pure Spirit.

LESSON NO. 28 Meditate in a secluded place if you can arrange it; but in whatever place you choose, meditate intensely. Develop introspection about every good experience. You don't have to seclude yourself in a

cell like a monk. Meditate deeply and retire within the cell of your deep thoughts --in silence.

In ordinary prayer, while many of the movements of the body are stilled, the thoughts go on with their dance of restlessness. It is important to close eyes and ears in order to prevent the optical and auditory nerves from sending disturbing sight and sound sensations to the brain.

In sleep, you shut off all the five senses: touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. That is why you sleep free from disturbances. In meditation, you consciously switch off the five sense telephones and feel eternal ever new Bliss. Keep the muscles and limbs quiet. You should use personal zeal to meditate deeply, setting aside all mental and physical resistance.

Prayer is the unscientific way of contacting God. Some people keep their bodies outwardly still, but their minds are running in all directions, owing to the distracting sensations coming through the connected sense telephones of touch, smell, and so forth. In meditation you still your muscles and limbs, and then--by deepening attention and by the concentration technique--you switch off the life energy from the five sense telephones so that sensations cannot reach the brain.

Just as the tree is hidden in the small seed, so is the divine knowledge of Omnipresence hidden in the soul. By looking at the small body through the mind, ~~the soul becomes identified with physical limitation.~~ Being identified with the appetites of the body, the soul becomes body-bound and forgets that it is the reflection of Omnipresent Spirit. By meditation, one learns the art of transferring the attention from the finite body to Infinity. The soul is withdrawn from the body and made to unite with Spirit, or Omnipresence.

There are three ways of progressing toward Cosmic Consciousness:

1. The social way of sympathizing with and learning to love your family, neighbors, country, all races--white, dark, red, yellow, brown--and the whole world as yourself.
2. The way of mental and physical discipline, learning to control the body, mind, and feelings, to maintain mental equanimity regardless of outer circumstances.
3. The spiritual way of meditation, whereby one lives in complete control of the senses and of the life force in the body, switching the consciousness and will power off and on again at will in the spine, and taking the consciousness out through the medulla oblongata to the Infinite.

Learn to switch the consciousness on and off from the body, the spine, and its six plexuses. When you realize that your soul exists without breath, then

your life force will not have to depend upon oxygen to keep you alive. The life force released from the bondage of breath can retire through the plexuses and medulla oblongata into the Spirit, without feeling the sensation of suffocation.

LESSON NO. 29 The reason for facing east during meditation is that magnetic solar currents help to recharge the body and to draw more energy into the brain with the inwardly flowing life energy during meditation. Facing east helps one to relax, to discharge life energy from the muscles and to send it into the brain. Sitting on a blanket prevents the earth current from tugging at the life force, keeping it sense-bound when the devotee is trying to relax during meditation.

Read again the quotations and explanations: "In the beginning--God" (John 1:1). "Behold...to him" (Revelation 3:20). Patanjali: "Meditate on Om... (manifestation of creation)." "I was in the Spirit... as of a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). "These things saith... God" (Revelation 3:14). "And I heard a voice... harps" (Revelation 14:2).

Science tells us that all matter is vibrating, that substances produce sound. All creation is vibrating with the intelligent vibration or energy of God, the Creator of all things. Science tells us that all vibrations produce sound; the cosmic intelligent vibration produces not only sounds that can be heard with the limited power of the ears, but also sounds of such subtle vibration that they may be heard only by intuition.

Cosmic Sound passes through everything, through every human being. By closing the ears and ignoring distracting physical sounds outside and inside the body, one may hear by intuition this omnipresent cosmic sound of Aum and may contact God as Intelligent Cosmic Vibration.

As the consciousness of the devotee rises above all physical sounds, and astral sounds (heard with closed ears), he hears the ever expanding Aum sound. His consciousness, concentrated upon this sound, gradually expands and ultimately becomes one with the Cosmic Sound or Aum, or Amen, or Holy Ghost, or Holy Vibration.

Jesus spoke of the Holy Ghost--the Holy Vibration, the God-guided sacred vibrating sound or word, or Aum--as the abode in which his Christ Intelligence was encased. Whosoever will listen to this sound--and gradually, by higher techniques and years of meditation, will persist in becoming one with it--will feel the Christ Intelligence vibrating in Cosmic Creative Sound. This is the real "Second Coming" of Christ.

The Universal Christ Intelligence manifested itself in the body of Jesus, and can come again in any devotee's consciousness, provided he expands his mind by making it one with the Cosmic Sound, or Holy Ghost (heard by practicing the Om meditation technique), in which the Christ or Universal Intelligence is hidden.

THE TECHNIQUE Facing east, sit in the correct meditation posture on a woolen blanket, close your eyes and place the little fingers over the outer corners, then close your ears with your thumbs. Keep your gaze fixed at the point between the eyebrows. Mentally chant "Om." Listen to the oceanlike roar of Om after you have deepened your concentration so that you have banished physical and astral sounds. Merge in this "word" (vibration, sound), or Holy Ghost, and bring Christ (the Kutastha Chaitanya of the Hindu Scriptures) a second time--in your own consciousness.

The above meditation should be practiced intensely upon waking in the morning and before going to bed at night, and during leisure hours. Morning, 10 to 30 minutes; night, 30 minutes to one hour; and any other time you can spare, for 15 minutes to one hour. Be regular in your practice. The more you practice, the more you will like it. Even though you may feel distracted, do not give up your effort, but go on meditating deeply and regularly, gradually increasing the time, and you will fall in love with the Cosmic Sound.

During the time that you are listening to Om you are consciously contacting God. That is the time to pray. When you pray, believe that your prayer is heard; but do not feel resentful if God does not grant an immediate answer to your prayer. If you depend entirely upon God and do not doubt because He apparently ignores your prayer, then He will mysteriously answer your prayers.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings. (Answers may all be found in Lessons or Summaries.) This is the first of four sets of review questions covering the Lessons in Step 2. The questions in this first set cover Lessons 27 through 29.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP TWO

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY: NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 27

1. What is your most important engagement?
2. How do you know in meditation that God is manifesting Himself?

Lesson 28

1. Why is seclusion the price of happiness?
2. How can the omnipresent soul become confined in a little mortal body?
3. How can one regain the knowledge of the soul's omnipresence?
4. Describe the three ways of attaining Cosmic Consciousness:
 - (a) the social way
 - (b) the way of physical and mental discipline
 - (c) the spiritual way of meditation

Lesson 29

1. Write a few of the quotations in the Christian Bible and the Hindu Scriptures that refer to the Om sound.
2. Why should you sit on a woolen blanket during meditation?
3. Describe the position that is assumed in order to practice the Om technique.
4. Describe the technique itself.
5. What is the value of group meditation?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON 30 The meaning of Om: Spirit is the Absolute (without creation)--
ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy (without vibration).
Spirit projects Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, or the activating principle of crea-
tion, out of Itself. Though transcendental, Spirit in relation to creation is
called "God the Father." God manifests first as Cosmic Intelligent Vibration.
This Cosmic Intelligent Vibration manifests Itself in three forms, as follows:

- (1) Ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy as the intelligent
guiding force of the material vibratory universe;
- (2) Intelligent cosmic energy;
- (3) Intelligent cosmic sound, or Om.

The devotee contacts God tangibly in meditation as:

- (1) Ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy;
- (2) Visible intelligent cosmic energy, which is the creator of electrons,
atoms, and molecules, and all the tissues of matter;
- (3) Cosmic energy epitomized and condensed in the spiritual eye, with
an opal blue center studded with a palpitating silver star and
surrounded by a golden ring.

These three lights are the symbols and abode of:

- (1) Cosmic Vibration (golden ring);
- (2) Christ Consciousness (opal blue);
- (3) Way to Cosmic Consciousness (silver star).

In other words, seeing the spiritual eye is not enough. Through continuous practice one must be able to hold it steady until one can finally pass through the starry door into the realm of Cosmic Consciousness.

When the devotee is not disturbed by any restless thought and is in ecstasy, his consciousness and astral body can penetrate the telescopic golden ring of the spiritual eye and behold and feel all the primal energy as it explodes into grosser forms as electrons and atoms of the material universe. To know the mystery of the golden ring is to know the mystery of all matter and enter the factory of

creation. To enter the blue telescopic eye is to be aware of Christ Consciousness, existing in every unit of Cosmic Energy.

The Om vibration is felt only when the breath is partially still. Often when Om is heard, the spiritual eye is seen at the same time if restless thoughts do not disturb the mind. Then the Cosmic Vibration appears as the different lights and different sound vibrations of the cerebrospinal plexuses. Beginning at the base of the spine, we have the coccyx (representing earth); the sacral (water); lumbar (fire); dorsal (air); and cervical (ether). Above these, at the base of the skull, is the medulla oblongata or "mouth of God," the distributing point for Cosmic Energy. Directly connected by polarity with the medulla center is the spiritual eye (Christ Consciousness center), located at the point between the eyebrows. The earth center vibrates with the sound of a bumblebee. This is the "baby Om." The water center vibrates the sound of Krishna's flute; the fire center, that of a harp; the air or vital center, a deep gong bell; the ether center, rushing waters or the sound of a distant sea. The medulla-Christ Consciousness center vibrates a symphony of all the other sounds commingled, the oceanic roar of the Cosmic Om Vibration.

When the advanced devotee easily hears the astral sounds (it may require long years of practice) he begins to see the lights of the different plexuses and to identify his consciousness with their vibrations. Then he can prove beyond a doubt, tangibly and definitely, that God is the ever-new, ever-increasing joy of meditation. There is nothing else, no experience that man can encounter, that will result in the perception of ever-new joy, except meditation. In nothing else will you truly feel God. Meditate deeper and deeper and you will contact God as ever-new joy.

The Om sound is different from ear noises or blood vibrations. It is the reflection of the sound that emanates from omnipresent vibrating creation. When you hear a sound in a room, you can hear it in every part of the space in that room, either beneath, above, on the left, or on the right. Hence, by listening to the oceanic roar of the Om sound, one gradually extends his consciousness from the body to encompass infinite space in the hall of omnipresence.

Listening to the Om once or twice isn't sufficient. One must feel and expand one's consciousness with this sound in all space. It is very important to listen regularly and daily for the Cosmic Sound in its perfect clearness. It is best to do this by closing your ears, as taught in previous lessons, even though you may also hear this sound with open ears.

One hears the Cosmic Sound when the ears are closed, either at once (if one is fortunate because of prenatal good karma), or by listening to one sound at a time in the right ear when both ears are closed by the thumbs. After you have contacted God in this way for some time as the cosmic sound and joy of meditation you should pray earnestly.

LESSON NO. 31 Concentrate upon the inner eye in order to become thoroughly acquainted with it. Keep your vision fixed there often

during the day and during all leisure periods.

REMEMBER:

- (1) The conscious mind works through intelligence operating through gross senses.
- (2) The subconscious mind works through intuition operating in dreams and inner organs.
- (3) The superconscious mind works through intuition enjoying the undiluted, undisturbed joy of meditation.

Just as films, electricity, operator, and screen are necessary to show movies, so the relaxed concentrated energy in the head, the darkness of the subconscious mind as a screen, and the mental films of experiences are necessary to produce dreams. The visibility of motion pictures depends upon the darkness of the room; similarly, the darkness of closed eyes and subconscious mind are necessary for the experience of dream movies.

Dreams are not all true; neither is all news true. There are true and false comedies, and true and false tragedies; dreams are also sad or joyous, fact or fiction. True dreams appear when one is in the passive semi-conscious or subconscious state. Visions are perceived consciously during the conscious state of superconsciousness or ecstasy of meditation. Both true dreams and visions are true to life, verified sooner or later. Reread the various significances of phenomena perceived in dreams.

LESSON NO. 32 You can find your vocation in life by analyzing your early habits and inclinations, which are uninfluenced and undistorted prenatal tendencies. Destroy the undesirable ones and feed the desirable ones, for by feeding already prenatally cultured habits, you can succeed quickly in this life. You can succeed in anything if you use your reason and will power continuously by increasing your powers through constant contact with the Absolute in meditation.

LESSON NO. 33 The meaning of "chemistry of feeling": as an ignorant man does not know how to melt crude ores and refine gold for various uses, so the unwise individual does not know how to convert crude feelings into useful powers. Become a spiritual chemist by harnessing the power of love, hate, and anger into useful, not destructive, channels. You can use hate constructively as follows: "Hate sin and you will have self-control. Hate the sinner and you will be forsaken by God and His divine law of love."

The similarities between physiological and psychological chemical combinations are as follows: Just as the former need to be combined and treated with various agents to produce certain results, so in mental chemicalization you must choose the mental ores that should be mixed together, and melt them with the fire of practice and concentration; then you will have good results. To become a

mental chemist is to be a "spiritual millionaire," who knows how to purify and use the mental ores hidden in the consciousness.

Good or bad traits are fed by attentive repetition of good or bad habits through good or bad company outside, or good or bad thoughts inside.

Seek happiness more in God than in material things, then happiness will be lasting.

LESSON NO. 34 God ceases to bestow His gifts on those who spend only for themselves, but if you spend freely for God's work, you will please the giver of all Gifts. He will see that you are never in need of anything.

Practice the stomach exercise twenty times any time the stomach is empty, but not until three or four hours after a meal. To keep well and prevent chronic digestive troubles, it is important to eliminate all impurities.

Walking and running exercises will keep you young, with a strong heart. Practice them conscientiously as long as you can do so without strain.

Avoid overeating, wrong eating, overindulgence in any sense enjoyments, and lack of exercise. Take frequent sunbaths. The sun is the physical life-giver and material viceroy of God on earth. Be sure to bask in his warm, vitalizing mercy.

Practice exercises 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Practice the exercise for strengthening the spine, healing headaches, increasing brain power, and invigorating the nerves and eyes.

LESSON NO. 35 In this Lesson you learned that the creative impulse is a natural and mighty force which can be directed into several channels, and can be used either for the highest good (by awakening the powers of spiritual perception) or can be allowed to destroy one by its wrong use.

Creative energy should not be promiscuously dissipated, when it can be used for the creation of a physical child, or for creating spiritual children of wisdom and genius by engaging the mind in lines of art, literary work, invention, or whatever one wishes to accomplish. This is what is meant by directing the creative energy into brain channels. Realize the power of the mind over the body. Because of habitual wrong thinking for generations, and through lack of correct instruction, most people do not know that the creative energy is a force that can be directed either upward or downward by the power of mind and will. This force is not to be suppressed, but directed and controlled. Both exercise and dieting are essential to the technique of control of this instinct. Very little or no meat should be eaten.

Married people should remember that their union is meant principally for spiritual reunion of souls, and not as a license for sense satisfaction. Love

flourishes in trust, forgiveness, and respect. During the moment of sperm and ovum union, when a life current is generated and a door is opened for disembodied astral souls to enter, husband and wife may invoke good souls to come to them by raising the vibration of their consciousnesses and directing the holy work of creating by keeping the thought forces focused between the eyebrows. Carefully study the techniques of sublimation and transmutation as given in this Lesson.

Through meditation, unmarried people can learn to sublimate the emotions and unite the creative nature force with the soul force, thus creating within themselves a mighty magnetism, which will draw to them their soul's companion if they wish to marry; or through which they can rise to the highest spiritual perception and achieve true genius.

LESSON NO. 36 Remember, happiness comes by living each moment, among all the struggles and problems of life, with an attitude of unshakable inner happiness, and not by helplessly seeking a happiness which is always just out of sight around a corner. Happiness depends chiefly upon the inner conditions created by one's own mind.

Pure love, peace, joy, wisdom, kindness, happiness in serving, and bliss in meditation are transmitted through the nervous system to the outer body and environment. Good health, an efficient mind, the right work, and wisdom are important to the growth of happiness. ~~Keep the secret river of joy flowing~~ beneath all the hard and rocky trials of life. (All physical pleasures are the result of outer stimuli registered through the body and the senses. These stimuli promise much, but the pleasure they give is temporary, ending in suffering and sorrow.)

Environment and the company one keeps are of paramount importance all through life, but for a child in its formative years they are of special importance. Children are born with prenatally acquired tendencies that may be either fostered or suppressed by environment. Habits are formed during the early years of life; and if you happened to cultivate the habit of indulging in sense pleasures you think that you prefer them, until you learn through meditation to understand and feel the superior joys of the inner life. It is never too late to begin cultivating the peace and bliss attained in meditation. Do not ignore the obstacles in the way of your happiness. Meet them calmly and understandingly, and strive to remove them intelligently. Meditate deeply. Do not ignore the barriers in the way of your progress. Face them fearlessly, understandingly; destroy them with the sword of divine wisdom. Meditate. Do not wait until dire calamities awaken you. Wake up now and make the effort before you crash at the bottom of the hill of life. Bathe yourself in the ocean of peace and joy, and carry that peace and joy with you in all your activities.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP TWO

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY: NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 30

1. What is the purpose of listening to the Om?

Lesson 31

1. How do the (a) consciousness, (b) subconsciousness, and (c) super-consciousness work?
2. How are dreams made?
3. What is the difference between dreams and visions?
4. What dreams are indicative of spiritual development?

Lesson 32

1. Why are trials sent to you?
2. How can you find your vocation in life?

Lesson 33

1. Give a few examples of how you can combine two or more feelings to produce new feelings.
2. What feeds good and bad habits?

Lesson 34

1. (a) What are the two stomach exercises given in the Lesson?
(b) What are their benefits?
2. What is the walking exercise?
3. Describe some of the healing exercises that you have found helpful.
4. What is the value of sunbaths?

Lesson 35

1. (a) What are the rules one should follow in order to regulate the creative impulse?
(b) Describe the specific technique given for transmuting the creative impulse.
2. What is the true purpose of marriage?
3. How may married people invoke good souls to be born to them as their children?

Lesson 36

1. (a) What is the source of true happiness?
(b) of false, temporary happiness?
2. Can one be happy in the midst of failures and difficulties?
3. Why is good environment important?
4. Why must one work for God?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 37 Remember, God wants His children to enjoy health and happiness, but because they disobey the first law, which is to live in harmony with God's laws, they keep on suffering. People cannot escape the effects of their transgressions by pleading ignorance of the law.

Stop breaking the hygienic and mental laws of well-being; sorrow and disease are caused by such transgressions against spiritual laws. Only an adept who has risen above material law, one who exists in such a high state of consciousness that he can drink deadly poison without any ill effect, can afford to disregard the hygienic and other natural laws of this plane of existence.

Divine laws have to be comprehended by concentration, meditation, and intuition. The light of God's presence felt in the body drives away dark ignorance. Wake up and tune in with God's laws.

All human curative methods are limited. God's is the only unlimited healing power. By realizing, "I and my Father are one," through conscious contact with God; by praying with utmost devotion and a bursting soul until you actually feel His presence and are absolutely sure He replies to you, you can banish all disease. But do not give up if He does not seem to respond to you at once. Seek God persistently and unceasingly, with intelligence and devotion, knowing that He will not fail to listen to your soul-calls. Pray until you feel your oneness with the light of the Divine Presence; then claim your divine birthright of perfect health and happiness.

LESSON NO. 38 "Man shall not live by bread (good food chemicals) alone, but by every word (life energy) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (flows into the body of man through the medulla oblongata)" (Matthew 4:4).

Strong will is an essential factor in pulling energy into the body from the conscious cosmic rays surrounding it. These rays of God's perfect light are threefold--health rays, faculty rays, and wisdom rays, which affect respectively the physical health, mental equanimity, and soul enlightenment of man.

Man must open the channels by self-effort, for he is an independent child of God with the privilege of free choice to enjoy his sonship in health, power, and peace, or to close the windows against the light. No one would willingly choose suffering and misery in preference to peace and happiness. Therefore, ignorance is the barrier which must be destroyed. Ignorance is the weed that grows rank in the garden of most human lives, crowding out the good seed. It must be overcome by the stronger vibrations of unflinching will power and determination. Plow your mind with concentration, and water the good seed with faith. Then, warmed by the vital light of love and by your efforts to fulfill the law, all disease will vanish. Darkness cannot exist where light is.

The unlimited power of God is working behind all methods of healing, whether physical, mental, or vital. This fact must never be forgotten, for if one depends upon the method and not upon God, he automatically hinders and limits the free flow of the healing power.

Practice regularly the Recharging Exercises. They have an automatic effect in dislodging physiological and spiritual diseases.

Study carefully the technique of vital healing in this Lesson; also the technique of mental healing. Learn the techniques and practice them. Live in harmony with God's laws so that you may experience and know for yourself that the law fulfilled gives you freedom.

Practice self-control, meditate, and receive God's gift of health and happiness, which God wants all His children to enjoy.

LESSON NO. 39 Modern man can learn a great lesson from the ancient sun worshipers who recognized the great healing power and life-giving rays of the sunlight. The sun is the vitality of the atmosphere and the earth forces.

The life force in the body must be kept alive and alert. We must keep open the channels through which the two great stimulants of the life force operate. Sunlight is an outward agent of stimulation, and thought is the inner, mental, secret key that opens the avenues of vitality and stimulates the life force. Keep the way clear for the sunlight to unite with and chemically react upon the life force, by keeping open the pores of the skin with frequent bathing and rubbing, by wearing loose clothing, exercising out of doors, and by frequent exposure of the body parts to the direct rays of the sun.

The secret, invisible means of vitalizing your body by thought is persistence in thinking that vitality is flowing into your body, especially when it is weak. By joyousness and interested attention, courageous cheerfulness and strong will, you will find that a flood of vitality will move through your actions and body, for metaphysically it is true that only thought and consciousness exist as permanent realities, and you are made in God's image.

Study the method of heliotropic healing for eye trouble given in this Lesson. In the healing of various afflictions, you will notice that a certain procedure is common to most of them: exposure of the affected part to the direct rays of the sun, gentle contraction and relaxation of the part, and, except in cases of wounds, sores, and skin troubles, rubbing the part with the fingers or palms of the hands, while visualizing and thinking that the life energy is flowing through the hands and the affected part.

LESSON NO. 40 No matter how small or humble your duty is, remember that you are working first of all for your Cosmic Employer-God. God works through your employer, and through others with whom you associate in the course of your daily duties, to teach you to overcome your human limitations; only then will you be fitted to move on into another and better life, where you may learn more advanced lessons in the art of living.

You will please both God and your employer by developing your usefulness, loyalty (which includes thinking of the business and tuning in with your employer to carry out his wishes), honesty in all your methods, creative ability, and concentration. Contact God daily in deep meditation. Always be courteous, kind, energetic, and obedient in carrying out your employer's wishes.

Making more money for yourself should never be your first objective, though it has its proper place. Increased personal gain should never come before the best interests of your employer, or before honesty. To be unselfishly selfish is to put forth your very best efforts and to use all your creative ability to advance both the interests of yourself and your employer in honorable service. Your employer cannot be everywhere to see that the work is rightly done. Learn to be his eyes and ears, hands and feet, so that he cannot do without you. To be selfishly selfish for your own interests alone will defeat your own desire for advancement, for if your methods are not helpful to the final good of your employer and his business, the foundation is weakened and you may find yourself with no position at all. Unselfish selfishness is always the better policy.

Meditation, and real effort in creative thinking, and concentration, can overcome even congenital defects of nonproductive and nonintelligent minds. Fan the spark of intelligence into a bright, steady, revealing light, by daily contacting God in meditation.

LESSON NO. 41 Though business engagements are important, always remember that your engagements with God, meditation, home, truth, and service to others, are more important. If you neglect God, you are neglecting the very source of all success. Your life should be built on a balanced scientific basis. Physical comfort is only a small part of real success, and success should never be purchased at the price of harm to others. You are now building your future peace and happiness, or future troubles and difficult position in life; for the law of cause and effect cannot be cheated even

though it is forgotten. You must make money to take care of yourself and those who are dependent upon you, but use your creative ability and God-guided activity to make it by the right methods. You are now reaping the harvest of your actions committed in the dim and distant past. See that you pay the right price now to assure for yourself the happiness that should be yours both now and in the future.

Whether you are in the position of employer or employee, the same principles are necessary for attaining success. First and most important are concentration and meditation. If you are ever to grow out of a small job into a better one, you must develop creative intelligence. Apply persistence and sustained effort, systematize your activities, and live simply. Strive for success for others as well as for yourself. Keep your first engagement with God and ask Him to lead you to your right success.

In business there should be, not competition and cutthroat methods, but cooperation. The wrong methods have been used. Selfishness is the metaphysical blunder that leads all self-seeking industries to undergo periods of depression and false inflation. It automatically defeats its own purpose. A real foundation for lasting success and happiness in business will be made when business takes and applies the motto: "Each for all and all for each."

LESSON NO. 42 Now is the time to wake up and choose between good and evil. You do not need to be ruled by the tendencies with which you were born. You came into this life with either good or evil tendencies predominating, as a result of your past incarnations. It is up to you now to see that you build good karma by cultivating your good tendencies and getting rid of your bad habits.

Do not produce habits of weakness by the repetition of weak actions. Good resolutions do not help you unless you use will power in connection with them to manifest them in good actions. Good habits must be produced in your thought and consciousness by discrimination. Through true discrimination you learn the worthlessness of misery-producing bad habits, and you turn hungrily to happiness-producing right living, initiated by free choice in the light of understanding.

Next to prenatal tendencies, the company you keep is the greatest influence in your life. Either consciously or unconsciously your discrimination and will power are influenced by the predominating qualities of either good or evil in your associates. This is true of persons of all ages without exception, but good example and environment are of supreme importance with children especially. Much future suffering would be avoided if children were first of all taught methods of self-control, right living, and proper hygiene before they can become victims of evil through bad company.

Tongue persecutions may cause antagonism. Your good example will do more to change others than many words, wrath, or just wishing. As you

improve yourself, you will elevate the consciousness of others around you. And as you become happier, so will those near you become happier.

Self-control goes hand in hand with discrimination and will power. Train your soul soldiers, the metaphysical rear guards, to come quickly to your aid whenever King Material Desire tries to lead you away with false hopes.

Seek and contact God in the temple of meditation. As you become permeated with God Consciousness, the smile of peace and wisdom will glow on your face. Then the encrusted layer of sense attachment will crumble and fall away into nothingness.

LESSON NO. 43 You should take a careful inventory of your actions and find out whether you are as free as you think you are. If you perform actions because of habit, against your reason and will and wisdom, then you are in bondage. You should immediately rally your forces, choose your weapons, and proceed to overcome your evil habits. Habits are like parasites. They cling tenaciously and hamper true spontaneity of action. Their tentacles spread and grow deep in, until you are strongly bound by their vitality-sapping strength.

The only true freedom lies in wisdom-guided free choice, aided by reason and a "do or die" will power. You will not have to fight alone. As soon as you have roused your will power, determination, and awareness, the hidden occult soldiers who are always trying to emerge from the superconsciousness to show you, through intuition, the right way to well-being and happiness, will come staunchly to your aid.

Through daily meditation and actual God-contact, bad habits will loosen their seemingly inescapable grip. Meditation is the surest way of counteracting the power of temptation and of burning the prenatal seeds of actions, for darkness cannot exist where there is light.

By self-control you free yourself, so that you can assume your rightful place as a freeborn citizen of God's kingdom of cosmic wisdom.

LESSON NO. 44 Travel your own path and do not be jealous because others have things that you do not have. Each soul should sing to God its own song, which is different from any other song. Do not desire to have what others have. Seek to do brave and lovely things which are left undone by the majority of people. Give gifts of love and peace to those whom others pass by.

Free your own life from weakness and unlovely qualities. Never indulge in gossip and false judgment of others, but teach others by your good example and sympathetic heart. Never use ill-chosen words under stress of emotion. Sincere kindness and sweet, courteous words accomplish much good and bring

happiness and peace, where unkind words would start up a conflagration of confusion and resentment; and besides they are a great waste of your nerve energy. Always be sincere and kind and sweet. You will know by the reaction of those about you what they think of you. Especially try to see yourself in the minds of calm, unprejudiced persons. Your reflection may look very different from what you had fondly imagined in your own hazy understanding. See yourself in the mirror of other minds, and then set earnestly to work to correct the flaws of your own nature.

Family happiness has its foundation on the altar of understanding and kind words. Always be as kind and courteous to your immediate family and relatives as you would be to a business associate in whom you wished to find favor. It is in everyday family life that the true measure of a man is taken. Learn to behave with kindness and self-control in every situation.

Jealousy is not a proof of love of its object. It shows self-love and a selfish, possessive spirit. It is an insidious poison that slowly eats out the roots of real love, and so destroys that which it tries to grasp and hold.

If you feel that you are losing the love of someone, do not hasten the process by adopting an ugly, suspicious behavior. Give out more love, understanding, and kindness. If you cannot keep the love that you desire, do not make a mockery of it by letting the emotion change to hatred and bitterness. Broaden the circle of your love to include all God's children. Find the supreme answer to the human heart's longing for love by loving God and by immersing yourself in divine love through meditation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP TWO

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 37

1. Are human methods of healing adequate?
2. Name the sources of all diseases.
3. Should one disregard all material methods of healing?

Lesson 38

1. If man is made in God's image, why does he suffer in so many ways?
2. How may he find release from his suffering?
3. Describe the technique of vital healing; of mental healing.

Lesson 39

1. Name two great sources of stimulation to the life force.
2. How may you be sure of receiving unobstructed ray of sunlight into your body?
3. What technique is common to the curing of colds, headaches, rheumatism, anemia, and nervousness?

Lesson 40

1. Who is your real employer?
2. Name the essential qualities of a good employee.
3. What is the goal of good business, besides making money?
4. How can you overcome the human limitations which impede your success?

Lesson 41

1. What should be the motto of every businessman?

Lesson 42

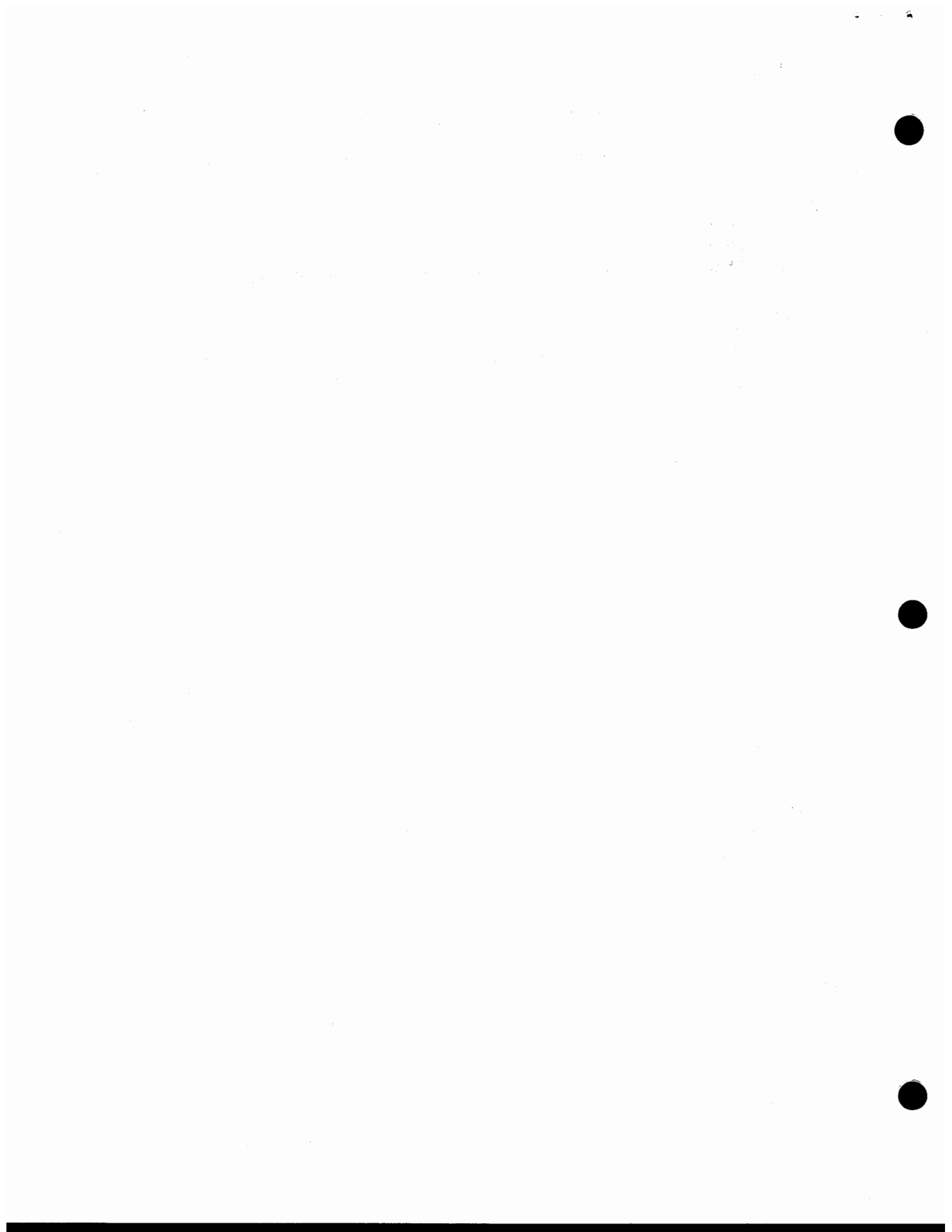
1. Explain the law of karma in relation to habit tendencies.
2. What is the best way of influencing other people?

Lesson 43

1. Does self-control mean only denial?
2. Name the surest method of combating temptation.

Lesson 44

1. What is the best mirror in which to see your own shortcomings?
2. What is the best cure for jealousy?



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 45 Rather than be striving always for personal happiness, try to make others happy. In being of spiritual, mental, and material service to others, you will find your own needs fulfilled. As you forget self in service to others, you will find that without seeking it your own cup of happiness will be full.

If conjugal love is to survive the many pitfalls and rocky paths of life, it must have a spiritual basis. Unselfish mutual service and friendship must be a very part of that love. Always remember, God's divine love is the fountain in which all love has its source. It is only because of wrong thoughts, selfishness, and sense lure, that human love presents a tarnished appearance. You could never let yourself harm one for whom you have a true, pure, unselfish love. If one you love is straying into wrong paths, you should give him, or her, help and understanding; never display jealousy and suspicion, thereby driving the loved one farther from you and most likely into deceit. Love and understanding foster trust.

If you recognize in yourself jealousy resulting from a lack of certain personal qualities or material advantages, there is a way to turn that jealousy to good account: cultivate those qualities you admire in others, or which will offset your lack of some particular quality. If you desire physical beauty, use reasonable aids toward acquiring it, but remember that by developing rare inner soul qualities, your countenance will so radiate with the reflection of inner beauty that people will be conscious only of your contagious smile and magnetic personality. Rare culture, clear conscience, right action, and inner and outer agreeableness will win far more genuine admiration than mere physical pulchritude ever can.

In business, the fire of jealousy might be used constructively to burn up shortcomings in the management of your own business, but never for a moment harbor the thought of bringing harm to your competitors, for in doing so you will squander your thought power. A better way is to consider business success from the standpoint of service to your fellowman. Apply the very best methods you know of from experience and observation, then apply your creative ability to continue to grow and improve. Deal with others as you want others to deal

with you. If you expect others to be honest with you, then be honest with others.

LESSON NO. 46 All things in creation have magnetic force. But like the magnet, man can attract only that which has relation to himself.

To acquire material necessities man must develop physical magnetism. This requires a sound body. Exercise, diet, and correct posture are very important, not only for the sake of health but for the purpose of building a body that is fully alive and ready to obey your command at a moment's notice.

When you hold yourself erect while seated, the effect on others is favorable. Slumping creates a negative impression. Exercise regularly to keep in condition and to prevent the accumulation of useless weight. A diet predominant in fresh fruits and vegetables increases magnetism. Too much protein and carbohydrate clogs the system, thereby causing poisons to be retained in the body. A liquid and fruit juice diet for a period at regular intervals is helpful in developing magnetism. Any defective organ will cause imbalance in the body. The stomach especially must be kept in good condition. Important as a proper diet may be, however, remember that it must be reinforced by a keen mind, ever ready to respond.

An even mind and inward control under all circumstances are requisites for mental magnetism. Acquire control over the senses. When you learn to convert emotionalism into power and strength of mind, you will gain the power to attract others.

The magnetic man talks with self-assurance and conviction. He is always sincere in his dealings with others. It is important to center your whole mind on whatever you do, and to keep it flexible so that you can, if need be, shift your attention quickly. All successful people and big business men know how to use this magnetic power.

Remember, too, that you can "steal" others' magnetism. By shaking hands or even by looking into the eyes of another person, an exchange of magnetism takes place. But the weaker individual receives the vibration. Take care, therefore, not to concentrate on people with negative traits. The same principle holds true if you aspire to become great in any chosen field, for you attract the qualities of the people with whom you mix.

If you are a novice on the spiritual path, you should strengthen yourself by associating with those of like determination--or those who have gone farther along the path--until you yourself become a powerful spiritual magnet. Their words may inspire you but, more important, their spiritual vibrations can actually change you so that you will be a little nearer to your goal. So strive to exert all your magnetism to fulfill your greatest need--the realization of God.

LESSON NO. 47 Human behavior and magnetic development are closely

related. It is by exercising right behavior in all situations that your secret magnetism is unleashed. Therefore, you should abide by the basic law of good behavior: self-reform. Control your speech by using discretion and silently resist the wrong doings of others by your own spiritual actions.

Remember that the greatest test of your spiritual development is in your home environment, in your everyday contact with your family and dear ones. Self-control, continuous goodwill, inner heartfelt courtesy, calmness, kind sweet words, firmness in your own principles--these are the powers that clothe the soul in magnetism. You can teach your dear ones and daily associates far more effectively by your example, than by sermons and many words, which so often create more misunderstanding. You must exhibit positive good behavior, clothed in graciousness.

Associate with persons who have the strongly positive good qualities you desire. Avoid those of strongly positive evil qualities. In developing and exchanging magnetism between two persons, the stronger magnetism will predominate. If both are equally strong, each will be absorbed to some extent by the other, resulting in good to each if the qualities are good. If one is good and one is evil, either has a chance of predominating. Choose well, both your associates and the qualities of magnetism you desire to develop.

Meditate and contact God, so that your eye of wisdom may be opened. Then, by your discriminating and intuitive faculties, you will feel and respond to the call of Spirit, attracting by this divine magnetism all rays of knowledge and protection.

LESSON NO. 48 In order to perform daily duties and acts of life, one should have good memory, which is the art of recalling conscious, subconscious, and superconscious experiences; also prenatal experiences. The more you practice remembering deep experiences, the more you will develop your memory.

In reality there is only one mind, the pure, intuitive, all-seeing, ever new, blissful consciousness of the soul. So long as it is located in the brain and in the point between the eyebrows, and is marked by the all-seeing power of intuitive bliss, it is called superconsciousness. When it comes down into the nerves, muscles, and senses, it is called consciousness. In lower brain and spinal centers it is called subconsciousness. All three divisions of the mind work together, though sometimes one is uppermost in activity.

When superconsciousness is manifest, one is calm and blissful, and highly intuitive. The superconscious is the conscience and "guardian angel." It is always trying to get through to guide you toward your highest good. It is always awake, watching both the subconscious and conscious minds.

When subconsciousness is uppermost, one is imaginative, and the actions and words are guided by habit and imagination rather than by reason. The

subconscious mind is the mental refrigerator wherein all past experiences and thoughts are stored, ready for recall and use again at an instant's notice. The subconscious is continually memorizing and storing away experiences. Always awake, it acts as the janitor of the body when the conscious mind sleeps, and keeps the organs and circulatory system on their round of duties. It can be trained to correctly memorize and recall at will all conscious experiences.

The conscious mind is manifest only during wakefulness. It is the thinking, reasoning mind, and acts as a sentry at the gate of subconsciousness. In order to rightly train the subconscious, the conscious mind must be trained in introspective, creative thinking, and the channel opened for superconsciousness to manifest its blissful state and all-seeing power of intuition. It is through memory that the identity of individual existence is maintained.

LESSON NO. 49 Through meditation, delve into the infinite mind, where all thoughts of past, present, and future are unveiled. Learn to know yourself as one with infinite intelligence and all-seeing wisdom.

Memory should be used and trained to recall only noble and uplifting experiences. Only the good which is gleaned from any experience should be stored in this reservoir of memory. If any slimy thoughts find their way into it, those same thoughts will work their way out into words and acts at some unexpected time. If only the good is present, then only the good can come forth. Guard well the gate of your mind.

Deep, alert attention with feeling is the needle that cuts the grooves in the record of memory cells. All life is rhythmical, hence regularity in activities and studies is a great aid to memory. During the periods of semiwakefulness just before and just after sleep, the subconscious is especially retentive and attentive. Then is the time to impress upon it those things you wish it to retain.

There are also certain physical methods of stimulating and developing memory. Massage the region of the medulla oblongata. Massage the scalp in a rotary direction with the fingers. Gently strike the skull and forehead with the knuckles of the hands, with concentration, to awaken the sleeping brain cells. Application of ice water to certain parts of the head and body also helps to liven up a dull memory. Care in the diet is also essential. Abstain from the use of stimulants and intoxicants.

LESSON NO. 50 Attachment to persons and to things causes you to act from a selfish center. Nonattachment is freedom. When you are nonattached, you can see situations in their proper perspective, which makes it easier to determine and perform the right action. It means expansion of consciousness and greater realization of your oneness with God. Attachment is limiting; when you are nonattached, all good is yours, all love is divine love, all service is for God. When you are nonattached in your love for a friend, you want what is best for his happiness and spiritual upliftment, without thought of

personal loss or gain to yourself. If he is taken away by death, you hurt and limit both him and yourself by selfish grief.

Whatever you have, regard it as being given into your care by God. Perform material duties with the sense of serving God and God's children, using your wisdom-guided efforts and intelligence in so doing.

Body consciousness gives rise to material desire. The ego, or body consciousness, must be conquered by expanding the consciousness to that of omnipresence. Cultivation of this habit of thinking leads to freedom from the bondage of the body.

Habits of thought are mental magnets, drawing unto themselves their kind. It is good to install good habits to use as an economy of initial will power and effort in the performance of good actions. Above all, cultivate the habit of meditation, so that by the mighty power of strong spiritual habits, material sense habits will be destroyed. In meditation your body becomes a dynamo of electricity, because all your forces are focused in one direction. This is the inner switch which you turn on to connect you with the Infinite. Hold the after-effects of meditation by your attention. You will then find that you are a reservoir of power in body, mind, and soul.

LESSON NO. 51 Briefly, a guru is indeed the spoken voice of silent God--
~~a vehicle, an agent appointed by God in response to a~~
devotee's demands to know God and be released from the bondage of matter. He is one whose body, speech, mind, and spirituality, God Himself uses to bring the lost souls back to the home of immortality. He is a man of Self-realization, one who lives the life he preaches; he is veritably a walking, talking, and living scripture.

The relationship of guru and disciple is unique. It is one of unconditional friendship, never ending through many lifetimes, until emancipation is gained.

Signs of a guru:

- 1) A guru is one who has been ordained, either by another guru or by the direct voice of God, to serve and save others.
- 2) He is one whose eyes are still and unwinking when he wants them to be so.
- 3) By the practice of yoga, his breath is quiet and his mind calm without effort.
- 4) He is wisdom-guided and lives a saintly life.
- 5) Usually there is instantaneous recognition between guru and disciple,

though sometimes it takes time for the disciple to recall their association of past incarnations.

To give mechanical, blind obedience to teachers without God-realization is to fall into the pit of ignorance and limitation, but to tune in with the wisdom-guided soul of a guru leads to the development of the third eye of wisdom and intuition. A guru disciplines the disciple only until the disciple can guide himself through wisdom. Such tuning in dissolves your habit-led and whim-guided will, and frees you.

As long as your acts are dictated by blind instincts and habits, influences of heredity, family, social, and worldly environments, you are not free. You are free only when you can act spontaneously through intuitive discrimination. When your will is perfectly free to choose through wisdom, that is freedom. To tune in with a soul whose will is guided by wisdom is to find freedom of will.

My Master kept his promise of giving me God. I never found complete satisfaction, comfort, and God Consciousness until I tuned myself in with the divine consciousness of my Master. Try to find impersonal divine devotion in a perfect, wise, Christlike guru; then he will show you how to behold, through the portals of your devotion for him, the vast territory of God's infinite love.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP TWO

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 45

1. Can jealousy ever be constructive?
2. What is the best way to change people?

Lesson 46

1. How can we develop spiritual magnetism?
2. Explain how to attract the magnetism of others.
3. Is immediate contact necessary in order to exchange magnetism?

Lesson 47

1. How should one act toward one's loved ones when they act wrongly?
2. Why is meditation on Om important in the development of spiritual magnetism?

Lesson 48

1. Why should one develop his memory?
2. What are the functions of the three divisions of the mind :
 - a) the subconscious
 - b) the conscious
 - c) the superconscious?
3. How are these three divisions related?

Lesson 49

1. Name the principal rules in the art of developing memory:
 - a) psychological
 - b) physical.

Lesson 50

1. Does nonattachment imply neglect of material duties?
2. What is the meaning of the passage from the Bible:
"For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance..." (Matthew 25:29)?

Lesson 51

1. Define guru.
2. What are the signs of a guru?
3. Explain the difference between mechanical obedience and acceptance of discipline from a true guru.
4. What is true freedom?





Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR KRIYA YOGA

Students who have completed Steps I and II of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons; who have practiced regularly the basic techniques therein (Energization Exercises, Hong-Sau, and Aum); who revere the Gurus of this Society as their eternal link with the Infinite Father and sincerely desire to embrace the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship as the religion they live by; are now eligible to apply for instruction in the greatest of the Self-Realization techniques: Kriya Yoga.

This spiritual "pearl of great price," once known only to great rishis and ascetics, and inaccessible for centuries during subsequent materialistic ages, was rediscovered by Mahavatar Babaji, and in the nineteenth century was brought within reach of all truth seekers through the instrumentality of the Self-Realization Fellowship line of Gurus: Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda.

The reappearance of the ancient science of Kriya Yoga is a definite response from God to the intense spiritual hunger within men's hearts today. Those who practice Kriya Yoga with devotion will quicken their spiritual evolution and eventually free themselves forever from the threefold sufferings of man: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance. Quoting from the Bhagavad-Gita (Chapter II:40), Babaji said, of Kriya: "Even a little practice of this religious rite will save you from great fear."

When a master accepts a disciple, he gives the disciple diksha or initiation, usually a mantra or a spiritual technique of some kind. In applying for the sacred Kriya Yoga Technique, students should understand that it is the diksha or spiritual initiation of the Self-Realization Fellowship Gurus, and that to accept it signifies entering the guru-disciple relationship with Paramahansa Yogananda and his line of God-realized Masters.

A sacred bond of mutual love and loyalty is established between guru and disciple. It means that the disciple recognizes the guru as the agent sent by God to liberate the disciple from the toilsome path of incarnations and to introduce him to God. It means that the guru, through his diksha, gives the disciple a spiritual key with which to unlock the cerebrospinal doors behind which the soul consciousness has long remained hidden, and thus prepare himself, with the guru's ever-present inner help and guidance, to meet his Heavenly Father-Creator.

The solemn promise of our Guru to introduce the Kriyaban (Kriya Yogi) to God is an eternal bond, a divine responsibility; and according to the spiritual law, must be reciprocated by the equally solemn promise of the disciple to follow faithfully the precepts of his Guru. The applicant for Kriya Yoga therefore pledges his unconditional love and loyalty to our Guru Paramahansa Yogananda, and accepts the spiritual discipline of steadfast daily practice of Kriya Yoga and of the Guru's other teachings in the SRF Lessons.

Chapter 26 of Yoganandaji's Autobiography of a Yogi, which tells about Kriya Yoga and the role of the Self-Realization Fellowship Gurus; and Lesson 51, which further explains the guru-disciple relationship, should be thoughtfully reviewed by all students desiring to become Kriya Yoga disciples of our Guru.

TO RECEIVE THE KRIYA YOGA LESSONS

So that the Mother Center can determine your eligibility for Kriya Yoga, we ask that you send us your answers to the attached Personal Report. In addition, please sign and return the Application and Pledge for Kriya Yoga.

As soon as your application has been approved, you will be sent the series of nine Lessons on Kriya Yoga (temporarily interrupting the regular Lessons). You will also be eligible to attend a Kriya Yoga initiation ceremony.

KRIYA YOGA INITIATIONS

Kriya Yoga initiation is given several times a year at the Mother Center; invitations are sent periodically to students receiving the Lessons. Those who are unable to come to the Mother Center may have an opportunity to receive initiation at a ceremony conducted by a visiting minister. Announcements of such initiations in other cities are sent to all students in surrounding areas. With the exception of the annual announcements sent out in January (which go to graduate as well as active students), these notices are mailed only to students currently receiving the Lessons. Pledges and Personal Reports of those wishing to attend Kriya Yoga initiation ceremonies must be received and approved by the Mother Center several weeks before initiation.

Although attendance at a Kriya Yoga initiation ceremony is certainly of great spiritual benefit, and we urge all eligible students to attend if they possibly can, there are nevertheless many students who cannot come. To these devotees we want to say that the complete Technique of Kriya Yoga is given in the Kriya Lessons, and the link with the SRF Gurus is fully established by the signing of the Kriya Pledge and by faithful practice of the Kriya Technique.

No circumstance of time or place can deprive you of the blessings and divine aid of our omnipresent Gurus. They know what is in your heart, and you can attain the highest goal of union with God if you tune in with them by devotion and faithfully follow the teachings they have given.

Please do not feel that you are required to apply for Kriya Yoga at this time, as that course remains open to you at any time you so decide in the future. But if you feel you are ready to take this important step now, we invite you to fill in the attached application and pledge and mail it to us, together with your personal report. If you wish to wait before applying for Kriya Yoga, you may still submit your personal report to the Mother Center now so that you may receive guidance in your practice of the techniques.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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GOD IS EVERYTHING--PART 1

By Paramahansa Yogananda

God is written all over the azure hills.
The blades of grass tremble
With the dewdrop tears of God.

God is woven into the cloth
Of the golden blue sky.
God is knitted into the stems of blossoms.

God is being written all over the blue waters
By the fingers of wavelets.
God is fragrant in my love.
God is pattering in raindrops on the pavement,
Making watery daisies.

God is the light constantly extinguishing
The darkness of ignorance.
God is sleeping on the bosom of the grim rocks.
He has trickled tears of light
Into the gems in the prison of hidden mines.

God bestows His smiles on all appreciative souls.
He is the sacred smile on rosy lips.
He is the river of life
Inundating the soil of all souls.

I saw Him woven into the burning stars,
And patterned in the designs
Of icicles and snowflakes.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

I care not if I have to endure all pains and relinquish every earthly desire, if in the end I find Thee!

Lord, tell me Thou wilt surely be mine! Then, realizing the immensity of Thy gift of Thyself and the littleness of any gift or sacrifice I could make in return, I shall patiently pass through a hundred thousand years as though they were but a day.

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT FIND GOD, AND HOW TO SURELY FIND HIM--Part 1

Do you often wonder why you do not find yourself progressing in every way? It is because

- 1) you feel that you are a helpless victim of your already formed habits and circumstances, no matter how you try to be otherwise;
- 2) you do not know the technique of psychological victory;
- 3) you do not put forth the continued effort necessary for perfect success.

Do you ask yourself at the end of each day whether you have progressed more than you did the day before? Tomorrow must find you better than today.

The worst pests that attack our plant of happiness are lack of desire to progress, self-satisfaction, and skepticism. The chill of inertia, or lack of definite, constant effort to know the truth, is the greatest ill from which our happiness plant suffers. Very few people, except those with master minds, are able to use their powers of free choice exclusively to make themselves what they want to be in life. The majority of people passively allow themselves to grow desultorily, undirected, according to the good or sinister influences of their prenatal and postnatal habits, or according to the patterns of passing moods engendered by specific environments.

If you grow fat or thin, you can tell that by weighing yourself. If you grow weaker or stronger physically, you can tell that by tensing the muscles of your body or lifting a weight; but it is very difficult to measure your intellectual progress each day, each week, or at the end of each year. Of course, intellectual progress is more or less imperfectly measured by the degrees obtained at the end of one's college career. The high school graduate, the Bachelor of Arts college graduate, or the Master of Arts or the Doctor of Philosophy, all acquired a definite degree of intellectual progress in order

to attain these degrees. Yet one may be a Doctor of Philosophy and lack common sense or real progressive intelligence or cultivated heart qualities. But spiritual progress, unlike the intellectual accomplishments, is so subtle that it is very hard to ascertain its exact development in people.

EVERYONE IS A CHILD OF GOD God is equally present in everyone, and those who make themselves pure and transparent enough to receive and give forth His light are surely "children" of God. Jesus, the man, by discipline, made himself pure and became Godlike, a Son of God. A self-made Christ such as Jesus is an ideal example from which ordinary beings may take hope.

The Hindu scriptures speak of the body as a machine fraught with six delusive deficiencies: "It exists; it is born; it grows; it changes; it decays; and it is completely annihilated." Yet most human beings expect permanent happiness from this impermanent body. The devotee should remember that divine joy is much superior to and more engrossing than material pleasures; but because of the precedence of material pleasures in our experiences, the ego is unwilling and unable to picture any other happiness superior to them.

Many persons have dived in the ocean of God's abundance again and again to seek the pearls of divine opulence, power, and wisdom, but only a few divers have found them. These few persons have praised the wondrous riches of God's sea because they dived well and found the secret treasure-nook. Those who dived in the wrong places blamed God's blue brine of abundance as devoid of the most desired treasures. Many other divers are attacked by monsters of selfishness, greed, faithlessness, doubt, idleness, or skepticism; and so perish.

"For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matthew 25:29).

This illustrates the law of spiritual habit and, in fact, of all kinds of habits. The material interpretation of the foregoing Bible quotation shows that if a man develops the habit of making money, for instance, more and more prosperity will come to him; and the man who has not created the habit of prosperity will lose even the prosperity consciousness that he has. The person who has already acquired the habit of attracting abundance through the cosmic law of success will attract prosperity, and the person who has not cultivated the habit of attracting prosperity will not be prosperous. This is a lesson to men and women to create right habits by their daily activities.

PUT YOURSELF TO THE TEST Arrange to come in contact with persons who ridicule you, or enter into unreasonable arguments with you, or insult you. Find out if you can tolerate the naggings of your husband or wife or children without being inwardly ruffled or without talking back in carping, harsh language. Every day in every circumstance you must

first learn to control your speech and manner whenever you are mistreated by people. You must first control your outer behavior, and then assume an inner calmness whenever you are the victim of a provocation.

It is all right not to become a doormat, letting others trample upon you. It is good to be firm, silently resisting ill treatment, but at no time should you lose your inner calm attitude of forgiveness and your unruffled mentality, especially when you are the target of criticism.

Few people can control their outer behavior. Fewer can control their inner balance during a bombardment of unkindness from others. As a student of Self-realization, you should learn to control your outer and inner behavior. A storm of anger extinguishes the flame of peace, in whose light alone you can behold the Spirit.

Selfish anger is bad, but righteous indignation may be good, in the proper circumstances. Greed for gold is selfish and creates universal poverty by taking money away from unwary people who may need it. Greed for constant meditation, or God-communion, is good. To fear evil actions or the influence of bad habits is good, and to fear to do wrong is good. Therefore, we see that sometimes what is really bad appears to be good, and what is really good appears to be bad.

Overeating, wrong eating, and being under the spell of greed should be avoided. Overeating destroys mental freedom and keeps the soul body-conscious during meditation. You should try to be prosperous financially without being greedy for money to the extent that you forget the honest way of living.

You should have perfect control over your sex life, so that your reason and will power may guide this most powerful instinct, instead of the sex impulse enslaving your volition and judgment. Sex experience in married life for propagating noble children is a proper use of sex, but sex temptation without self-control completely wrecks peace and destroys inner harmony.

Your body is like an obstinate dog. Leash your mind and body with will power, and hold them to the direction in which you want them to move. Do not allow them to pull you in the wrong direction and thereby fall into the ditch of misery; whip them when they disobey, for the more you whip them the better they will respond to your commands. Your mind and body have become rebels, constantly protesting to you about the impossibilities in your path; but if you whip them hard, they will hurdle those barriers. So if you know that you are progressing spiritually, mentally, and physically every day, you can be happy; but if you find that you are becoming touchy, finicky, or gossipy, you may know that you are going backward. The best test is to analyze yourself and find out whether you are happier today than you were yesterday. If you feel that you are happier today, then you are progressing; and this feeling of happiness must continue.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Reading the various scriptures, we find different descriptions of God. We are told of His existence, and we hear His praise in the sermons of professional religious men and in the voices of saints. We imagine His presence behind the veil of beautiful nature. We think about His existence through the logic within us. All these windows through which we try to look into God are fitted with opaque glass of uncertain inferences drawn from untested, unscrutinized data.

The surest sign that God exists is the increasing heartbursting joy felt in meditation. When your mind is free from prejudice; when little narrow-mindedness vanishes; when you unreservedly sympathize with others and your tears flow when they weep; when you hear the one voice of God in the chorus of churches, tabernacles, temples, and mosques; when you realize that life is a joyous battle of duty and at the same time a passing dream or a temporary motion-picture performance; and, above all, when you become increasingly intoxicated with the joy of meditation and in making others happy by giving them God-peace, you will know that God is with you always and that you are in Him.

Find Him in the grotto of your heart's silent craving, and you will be able to find Him whether you are in the jungles of Hindustan or in the jungles of a modern city where roaring, man-eating tigers of automobiles and fierce trucks prowl.

THE SON WHO LOVED MIRACLES MORE THAN GOD--Part 1

A profound sage lived incognito with his family--a wife, a daughter, and a spiritually inclined son. This sage lived in the world, but his consciousness was not of the world; however, he kept his spiritual attainments very well hidden behind a veneer of make-believe worldliness.

The son, having inherited the exalted qualities of his parent, began spontaneously to develop a craving for spirituality. The father helped his son only indirectly to develop himself, and was careful not to reveal his own real nature to the boy. Some spiritual people, who deem God's love as their highest and most sacred possession, keep that love concealed not only from skeptical worldly minds, but even from their closest earthly companions.

The son had no idea that his father was a spiritual master; and this was partially because the saint was so near to him and happened to be playing the mundane role of a father. In spite of many entreaties to stay home and find God, the son left his family homestead and repaired into the jungly depths of the Himalayas in search of a preceptor. He found a Tibetan miracle-man, and remained under his tutelage for twenty years. The ascetic son became versed in the art of performing psychic wonders; and, all puffed up with the thought

that he had miraculous power, returned to his native village. The little village hummed with excitement at the advent of the psychical wonder-maker.

The son freely displayed his miraculous feats. Exaggerated rumors ran riot about his performances until they finally reached the ears of his father. Curious, he sent for his son. They met and greeted each other warmly, but the son could not conceal his superiority complex. In a little while he commenced boasting to his father about his miracles. His saintly parent listened stolidly.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Habit can no longer make me do things against my will. I am a freeborn child of God. I am made in His image. I will use my divinely bestowed wisdom and free will to do the right thing that I should do in everything.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS--Volume 3

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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GOD IS EVERYTHING--Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

His tenderness glances at me
Through the loving eyes of all mothers.
He is the friendship of all hearts;
The creative inspiration of all worthy minds.

His hand is working through all hands.
His are the feet walking through all feet.
He is the reason behind our discrimination,
And the roseate hidden glory behind all our loves.

He is the light in all our eyes,
And the luster of the moon.
He is the most hidden,
And yet He is the key to all mysteries.

I saw Him hiding
In the dark chambers of my consciousness.
I beheld Him
Watching my progress through eternity.

God is the last gate of my life.
He is the Cosmic Carpenter
Who shapes and chisels life
Into all its forms.

God is spread over everything;
God is shaped into everything;
God is written all over everything.
God throbs in my heart.
God is Everything!

PRAYER

Thou art walking through my feet, wielding my arms of activity, throbbing in my heart, flowing through my breath, and weaving thoughts in my brain. It is Thy meteoric will that courses daily through the skies of my human will.

Let me feel it is Thou that ~~has~~ become I. Oh, make me one with Thyself, that I behold the little bubble of me, floating in Thee!

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT FIND GOD, AND HOW SURELY TO FIND HIM (2)

LIVE BY GOD'S POWER Why should any of God's children go hungry? Man is dependent on food because of the sin of ignorance. The soul identified with the ignorance-deseccated body feels hunger and, in turning to earth products for nourishment, becomes earthbound. Thus the soul forgets that it really lives, like God, by God's cosmic energy.

It is necessary to correct the wrong thinking of incarnations in order to escape the delusions of ignorance and to reclaim our heritage as children of God. Everyone should ask himself each day, as did the blind king in the Bhagavad-Gita: "Gathered together in the bodily kingdom, the warriors of prenatal and postnatal good actions are arrayed against the army of prenatal and postnatal evil actions. What have they done? Which side has won?"

Evil on earth was not all created by man's wrong actions accumulated during many incarnations. Evil existed from the time the cosmic satanic force (Satan) first misused the cosmic energy of God to create imperfect creatures and objects.

Satan had been an archangel to whom God gave independent power to create perfect finite things, even as He did. Satan misused his God-given independence. As a rebellious general might turn against his king, Satan turned against God by creating ugly counterparts for all the beautiful creations of God, both in the microcosm of man's body, mind, and soul, and in the macrocosm of the physical, astral, and causal worlds.

There was no evil in God. Satan precipitated evil by his misuse of God-given free choice and the power of creating finite things. Satan foresaw that if Adam and Eve remained perfect in their thoughts and actions while on earth, they would follow God's plan and be dematerialized and drawn back into Him. If Adam and Eve (who symbolically stand for the entire race of perfect human beings originally created by God) could not be tempted to transgress God's perfect laws and thus become earthbound, there would be nothing further for Satan to do; he would lose his independent power to create because everything would melt back into Spirit.

God might have anticipated through His omniscience the origin of evil by Satan; but He organized this cosmic play in order to enjoy Himself through His many selves, knowing that His goodness would ultimately attract all things back unto Himself. The Lord has arranged it so that the souls He has created can never be really happy until they are reunited with Him.

God created a beautiful human body that was meant to be charged by cosmic energy and to live in a free, unconditioned, divine state; Satan counteracted by creating hunger, and the lures of the other physical senses. To usurp man's mental power Satan substituted mental temptations. To combat the soul's wisdom Satan invented delusive ignorance. To offset all that is beautiful in nature Satan creates ugly warfare, disease germs, earthquakes, cataclysms, floods, and other disasters.

If there were no individual greed, selfishness, false ambition, or sex addiction, this earth would be free from physical and moral crimes and war. By precipitating these misfortunes, Satan is systematically fighting God's perfect plans of unselfishness, international cooperation, self-control, and true ambition--ambition that seeks, above all, to please God, and then includes the happiness of other people in one's own happiness.

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION The undeveloped spiritual aspirant may think of heaven as a place of glorified earthly enjoyments. When such a devotee sits quietly meditating, peering into the darkness of closed eyes, he begins to wonder if it is not foolish to relinquish the tangible pleasures of the senses for the invisible pleasures of the Spirit. But the consciousness of the spiritual aspirant who sleeplessly meditates, becomes reidentified with the soul and is saturated with bliss. According to the quality of his advancement, such a devotee is able to centralize his spiritual perception on any plane.

In the chariot of his spiritual perception he is able to flee the wilderness of the misery-flaming senses. Passing through the oases of the various centers of consciousness in the spine, he ultimately reaches the highest plane of consciousness in the brain. He beholds his chariot of spiritual perception situated exactly between the crooked sense tendencies and the straight and narrow road of discriminative tendencies.

A superficially happy but restless man, working and worrying daily to make money, does not know of the superior joy of meditation, so he does not like to meditate. He would rather consume precious hours to no purpose than to give any time to seeking superior, ever-new joy in meditation.

Most people, not knowing the positive side of renouncing habitual restlessness in order to find higher happiness, give up meditating after a few trials; they plunge back into the eddies of ordinary habits of living and are drowned in ignorance.

But men and women of deep spiritual aspiration should refuse to yield to insistent memories of restless habits that urge: "Mr. Mind, it is no use meditating in the dark. Go out and have a good time. Do not do away with pleasures that everyone enjoys, to sit in fruitless meditation." Sincere aspirants should use spiritual imagination to realize the value of meditation.

Discouraged devotees should remember that no matter how many times one suffers from powerful attacks of sense habits and restlessness-producing desires, the meditation-born occult soldiers of his present and past lives will come to the aid of him who keeps on meditating with faith. A man who is always restless and never meditates imagines that he is getting along all right because he has become accustomed to being a slave of restlessness. However, as soon as he tries to meditate and be calm, he finds resistance from his bad habits of mental fickleness. Even so, occult soldiers of his good spiritual habits of past lives come to his aid.

PRAY UNCEASINGLY UNTIL GOD ANSWERS YOU Do away with the mockery of loud, mechanical praying. Shake off the false satisfaction of just believing "something" about God. You must know God. You must know how to rouse Him, consciously and tangibly, to answer your soul yearning. Do not rest until you have heard His voice consciously. You can ease your conscience by claiming that pressure of business prevents you from praying and meditating, but you can have no excuses for not offering Him deep mental whispers at any time, in the temple of activity, or on the altar of silence. No matter what you may be doing, you are always free to whisper your love to God, until you consciously receive His response. This is the surest way to contact Him in the mad rush of present-day life.

Whenever you want something very much, no matter what you may be doing or where you may happen to be, a mentally whispering desire for the object constantly revolves in the background of your mind. Far from being parroted prayers, such mental whispers are spontaneous and secretly work themselves into a dynamic power.

Never be satisfied until you see unmistakable signs of divine response. Without being discouraged, keep on meditating and praying ever increasingly. God will come to you as Jesus, or Lahiri Mahasaya, or any other of the Great Masters, as they actually appeared when they lived on earth. While praying, remember that no matter if God does not answer you, He is listening to you; and if you can convince Him that you want Him above all else--as badly as you may have wanted money, love, or power--then He will talk to you.

Remember, a mother does not come in answer to the cry of the child who is easily consoled by toys, but she comes to the incessantly crying, naughty baby. Become the naughty baby of the Divine One. Do not be satisfied with a "demonstration" of earthly toys in answer to your prayer cries. Pray silently, cry silently, for God; unheard by any, in the language of your heart, without stopping, cry until He answers you. It is helpful to meditate, pray, and offer

that cry of your soul before Christ's picture or a picture of Lahiri Mahasaya or any other SRF Guru, until you see or feel that one of them responds.

You must consciously contact God; and finding Him first, you will have attained dominion over yourself and over all limiting conditions. Your greatest and most important engagement is with God, seeking His truth through the eyes of wisdom and daily discipline.

THE DRAMA OF LIFE

The superconsciousness of man is made of God and is painproof. All physical and mental sufferings come by identification, imagination, and wrong human habits of thinking. The Great Director of the drama of life is made of joy. We, as His children, are made in His image of joy. From joy we came, in joy we live, in joy we melt. He brought out this cosmic drama to keep Himself entertained. We, having come out of His Being, are endowed with the quality of superconsciousness that He has, by which we can watch the pictures of life, birth, death, and world events with the same divinely enjoying spirit.

So must you be able to look upon the pictures of the trials of your own life and say: "Oh, my life is interesting with troubles and difficulties to be overcome. These are all my stimulants, to show me my errors and help me to assume the right mental attitude, by which I can watch with joy the fascinating spectacle of life."

Our troubles spring mostly from not knowing what parts we are to play in the great drama of life. This results from not developing our innate intuitive soul faculties. You must rouse the all-feeling, all-seeing wisdom by regular meditation, and find your part in life. Then life and death will be watched with an unchangeable joyous consciousness. You will then find your consciousness to be one with Cosmic Consciousness; and with Cosmic Consciousness, unchanged by the human waking of birth or the sleep of death, you will watch the cosmic drama with perennial, ever-new joy.

THE SON WHO LOVED MIRACLES MORE THAN GOD -- Part 2

Humbly, the father inquired: "Son, what can you do?"

"What can I do?" retorted the son with a smile of superiority. He led his quiet father to the bank of the River Ganges, and exclaimed: "Father, behold what wonder I can accomplish right in front of your eyes!"

The miracle-performing son quickly walked across the boisterous River Ganges to the other shore without even wetting his feet, and came back to where

his father was standing.

"There, father, isn't that wonderful?"

The father, who had been smiling until now, puckered up his lips. With a look of spiritual gravity on his face, he gently admonished: "Son, for a long time I have been filled with awe because I thought that you had accomplished something real, but now I am very much disappointed."

"How dare you ridicule my world-applauded miracles?" the son snapped. His father firmly reiterated: "O son, I am very much disappointed. I see that you have wasted twenty precious years in learning a miraculous way to cross the Ganges, a feat which we accomplish simply by paying a ferryman four cents. Pray tell me, why did you throw away twenty years just to save four cents?"

The son suddenly woke from his dream of pride, and stood with bowed head before his wisdom-emanating father who spoke thus: "Son, love not miracles nor terrestrial power more than the Fountain of all miraculous accomplishments. If you are passing through the garden of silence to the exotic charms of the beautiful palace of the Infinite, encompassed by the lights of the aurora, then do not be sidetracked by the star blossoms and the byways of nature's beauties. If you would reach the palace of Infinitude, do not lose yourself by loving the beauties of finitude. If you are on your way to the palace, and you become engrossed in the beauties and enchantment of the garden surrounding that palace, you will never reach your destination."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I shall seek Thee as the ever-increasing bliss of meditation. I shall feel Thee as the boundless joy, throbbing in my heart.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I BEHELD THEE HIDING IN A FLOWER

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I looked at a flower and prayed. Suddenly, O Spirit, I beheld Thee hiding there. It exhaled the perfume of Thy presence. The blush of Thine innocence colored its petals; the gold of Thy wisdom shone in its heart.

The slender stem and delicate green calyx were upheld by Thine omnipresent power. Thy mystery of life and immortality lay in the pollen; and Thine infinite touch transfigured the breast of the bee tasting Thy sweetness.

Oh, reveal to me the wonders of creation, Thine endless secrets that even the tiniest roadside weed bears in its bosom!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Fathomless Ocean of Treasure! may I dive deep in seas of meditation for Thy wisdom pearls....

By my sacred perseverance, guide me to discover in the most secret waters of consciousness the Pearl of Great Price.

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT FIND GOD, AND HOW TO SURELY FIND HIM (3)

RIGHT METHOD OF MEDITATION You can never have a truly happy inner and outer life unless you use the God-given power of meditation to reclaim the forgotten image of God within you. Only then can you control destiny and unravel the frustrating mysteries of life. Through the art of meditation one learns how to actually contact the Divine Bliss--which is God--by the faithful application of the science of spiritual law.

The right method of meditation is the only way to all-round freedom and success. To go from New York to Los Angeles by foot would be a long, tiresome hike, taking months, but the journey could be made with ease by airplane in a few hours. Are you not tired of prayer-hiking to God through the unexplored, tortuous theological jungle? Why not take the airplane of high meditation and follow yoga--the shortest route to God?

The soul of the devotee during meditation remains unperturbed by any misery-making material desire that dares try to lure him and his spiritual perceptions from their superior, lasting, blissful state. The offer of cheap temporary pleasures, filled with latent poisons and ultimate suffering, both mental and physical, cannot tempt the soul that is awake in God's bliss.

Upon awakening in the morning, most people begin to think immediately of breakfast, or of unsolved problems, instead of following the good spiritual habit of first meditating and then starting the day's activities in God-inspired happiness. Most people, accustomed to living in dark ignorance of their blissful soul-nature, abhor the light of eternal comfort found in meditation. They will continue to feel this way until they deliberately uproot the bad habit of forgetting God by performing the good action of meditating daily.

Whether you eat, ride, drink, play, picnic, fish, go to the movies, tour around the world, earn a million dollars, meet the finest friend, become the healthiest man, or king of an earthly empire, these things will never give you that tangible ever increasing joy born of the ever increasing depth of meditation.

You must know God. It doesn't matter how you learn about Him. It is

easier to know God if you intensely (not half-heartedly) practice the techniques of meditation you have been taught in these Lessons. Religiously follow the spirit of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons, and, after each period of meditation, especially at night, constantly whisper to God: "Reveal Thyself," or pray to Him in the language of your heart to come to you. Forget time. Pray until you are lost in the thought of God. It is better to know God and enter heaven maimed of sleep, than for the sake of a few hours' rest to suffer in a hades of misery without knowing God.

MEDITATION MUST BECOME DEEPER AND DEEPER Your meditation must not be mechanical. Every day's meditation must be deeper, more enjoyable than that of the previous day. If you can keep on increasing this joy, you arrive at the limitless joy of samadhi meditation: the state of the ultimate, fearless, all-knowing, all-satisfying, sorrowless, ever-newly joyous, imperishable Cosmic Consciousness.

This joy cannot be had by any other means, so do not deceive yourself into thinking that you can know God solely through charitable works, church-going, and reading the Bible. Meditate at home alone and also in church in a group, whenever you find the opportunity. Greater than one month's mechanical churchgoing is one hour's deep contact with the Heavenly Father in the church of your meditation.

Remember, scientists do not work out inventions through blind prayer, but by deep concentration and practical application of God's laws in nature. Centuries of churchgoers have not been able to find Him through blind prayer alone. But they will find Him when they use the psychophysical and spiritual laws of meditation, intuition, and devotion. The Lord yields only to unconditional devotion and wisdom-operated law.

Why should God freely give spiritual realization in response to blind prayer, when man does not use the Father's gifts of scientific, psychological, and spiritual laws for knowing truth? The scientist studies Nature's laws and experiments with them in order to find out Her secrets, and the spiritual man ought to learn how to use the spiritual laws of concentration and meditation to awaken intuition and understand the secrets of God.

PRACTICE IN COMPLETE SILENCE You cannot meditate effectively until you have quieted, by watching the breath, the noises of the heart and the lungs. These organs, like a noisy vacuum cleaner, keep the air and blood swirling and surging in your body with a steady rhythm as they clear away the dirt of impurities in the venous blood.

Keep your concentration on the blissful aftereffects of meditation every minute of your existence, and do not neutralize that peace with disturbing thoughts. If you gather concentration in the pail of meditation and have a leak of restlessness, your concentration will run out. You must not have any

mental leaks. If you let a bagful of mustard seed be scattered on the ground, it is hard to collect them again in the bag. The mind is a bag of consciousness filled with mustard seeds of thoughts, and if you recklessly slash the bag with the dagger of restlessness, then all the thoughts, like mustard seeds, will scatter, and it will be hard to get them together again. As the oil is taken out of the mustard seeds by grinding, so by collecting the thoughts and grinding them with the power of concentration, you can bring out the oil of Self-realization.

The silence that you experience while practicing the Hong-Sau and Om Techniques, taught by Self-Realization Fellowship, should be complete silence. Keep at it; practice continually and there is no end to what you can do. You begin to feel peaceful as soon as you grow silent, and you are inclined to think that is all there is to it, but it is only the veriest beginning. Right at the start, some people see behind the darkness of closed eyes a light in the spiritual (third) eye. A few even hear at once the great Cosmic Sound of Om in the silence, before they hear any other astral sound.

Cling to the consciousness of peace, which is the aftereffect of meditation, and go on increasing that peace by increasing the length and depth of your meditations and by performing actions that bring you true happiness, and you will find that you are fast approaching God. If you do not make a conscious effort in this life, several incarnations may slip by without your reaching the goal. But if you make the effort from now on, from this minute, and try to keep your concentration on the inward peace of meditation continuously, then you can be one with God in this life.

The yogi always tries to keep his meditation-born peace enthroned in his mind, in every activity and in all dealings with others. If you are a god of peace immediately after meditation, only to change into a devil of inharmony at the slightest provocation, then your meditations are of little use. In meditation you recollect your forgotten peace nature. You must hold on to that peace and with it subdue your mortally acquired mental graftings of disquietude.

Meditation is the one portal through which every seeker of every religion must pass in order to find, see, contact, or know God. Meditation is the only door to God. Forsake intellectual speculations and orthodox dogmatism. Do not be satisfied unless you know from the lips of your Heavenly Father, in the temple of meditation, that He is, He was, and He will be with you evermore.

RESPONSE TO YOUR PRAYERS To receive God's response to your prayer demands, ask only for that which you really need. The desire for superfluous material possessions ultimately brings misery and retards spiritual progress.

God does not wish us to pray like beggars, wheedling Him to give us what we want. Like any other loving father, He delights in fulfilling our worthy

wishes. Therefore, first establish your identity with Him through meditation. Then you may ask what you need of your Father with a child's loving expectation, knowing that your request will be granted.

When you meet a friend after a long absence, you do not consult books on friendship in order to know how to express your love for him. Yet many prayers to God, who is our closest Friend, are repeated absentmindedly, and consist only of empty words imported from some outer source. Let your prayer requests to Him be spontaneous outpourings, welling up from the depths of your heart.

Whenever you have a real need, the thought of it is in your mind all the time, no matter where you are or what you are doing. Developing such deep, dynamic, inner whispers is sure to bring a response from Him. Constantly, unceasingly, whisper to Him of your eternal love, of your burning desire to contact Him.

Offer deep mental whispers in the temple of scientific meditation until you hear, audibly and distinctly, His answering whispers everywhere.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

God is infinite omnipresence. He is present in everything equally. His light shines not only in wisdom-sparkling diamond souls but also in charcoal mentalities dark with ignorance. Because God has given us independence to choose between error and truth, we can keep our minds transparent with purity of knowledge and love, or dark with dogma and inharmony. God has endowed man with His own power of liberty. Thus man can shut God out by indifference or receive Him through meditation, logic, and right actions in the struggle of life. That some people know less than others is not due to God's limiting the flow of His power through certain men, but to their not allowing God's light to pass through their consciousness. Such ignorance-stricken people may be healed of delusion's diseases by contacting the Christ Consciousness through meditation and faith.

THE SON WHO LOVED MIRACLES MORE THAN GOD--Part 3

"To covet miraculous powers more than God, the Fountainhead of all powers, discloses ignorance. To prefer the garden of prickly wild desires to the palace of all-fulfillment is folly. To delight in pseudo pleasures in preference to real Soul Bliss is regression. To cling to false evanescent power in lieu of permanent, unending power is defective judgment. To love God-created things more than God is not wisdom. To be satisfied with short-lasting miracles in preference to the everlasting miracle of God-contact is folly." So saying, the father was silent; and the son was humble before him.

The same idea is illustrated in both the Christian and the Hindu scriptures. Jesus forsook the evaporating kingdom of matter for the everlasting kingdom of Spirit. Krishna, the great Hindu prophet, said that property-attached people love materially useful things, which they imagine they possess, whereas in reality they are only given the use of those things, and have to leave them at death. Even the richest man will die poor. Jesus was poor in earthly goods, but died rich with immortality and universal knowledge. Lord Krishna said that to perform worldly duties conscientiously is to earn temporary material reward even though you neglect God, but it will never bring the eternal reward of God's bliss.

To seek God only, first and last, giving up all material ambitions to live a contemplative life as many anchorites do is all right, since no duty can be greater than the duty of seeking God. No other duty could be performed if we had not already received the all-accomplishing power from God. But for those of you who have to fulfill worldly obligations, to perform those duties well and at the same time meditate constantly on God is the very best activity. To forsake your duty to God is the worst sin. To neglect thinking of God while performing minor duties is immeasurably sinful, but to forget smaller duties for God is pardonable.

God says: "If, while really loving Me and claiming Me, your only real possession, you forget to attend to minor duties, I will free you from the sin accruing from their nonperformance. But remember, those people are far away from Me who perform neither their material duties, nor their greatest duty of keeping in interior contact with Me. They also are far removed from Me who run away from material duties on the pretext of following the spiritual path, and accept the earnings of other dutiful men for their livelihood."

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, in the temple of silence I found
Thine altar of peace. On the altar of peace I found Thine
ever new joy.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I HEARD THY GENTLE VOICE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

In many lives I heard Thy gentle whisper, "Come Home," but it was drowned in the noise of unhallowed **cravings.**

I have forsaken the jostling crowd of desires; I would invite Thee to the virgin solitudes of my heart.

In my meditations mayest Thou banish the earth-calling lures that yet lurk in my memory. I yearn to hear again in the soul silence Thy quiet voice.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Technician, with the soft touch of intuition, tune my soul radio. Rid my mind of static restlessness that I may hear Thy voice of cosmic vibration in the music of atoms, and the melody of love vibrating in my superconsciousness.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MENTAL RADIO -- Part 1

MIND IS IN EVERYTHING Because of long engrossment with the body and its necessities, the soul forgets its omnipresent nature. God, the Supreme Soul, is omnipresent, and the cosmos is His body. Man's soul, made in God's image, has in it the seed experience of omnipresence. This consciousness of omnipresence is hidden in the soul just as the consciousness that creates a tree is secreted in a small seed. That seed planted in proper soil brings forth a tree, and, similarly, the soulseed of intuitive realization planted in the soil of proper meditation will manifest the omnipresent consciousness.

A man whose consciousness is on the mundane plane is preoccupied with physical wants and needs; in this cramped environment his consciousness does not extend beyond the gates of his own bodily home. The spiritual man, through the spreading light of meditation-born sympathy, learns to feel the woes and pains of others; he realizes that the world, indeed, the cosmos, is his home.

The constant sight of the body causes the mind to think of itself as confined in the flesh. Meditation upon the Infinite, as it grows deeper, makes the meditator, meditation, and the object of meditation One. This experience convinces the mind that it is not circumscribed by the body, but is in everything. The mind, meditating upon the Infinite, becomes unlimited. Meditation is the art of transferring the attention from the finite (the little body and the relatively small portion of space in which mortals live) to the Infinite.

BRAIN IS THE STOREHOUSE OF LIFE FORCE Every human brain is a storehouse of life force. Through it dance radiant waves of energy, electric in character. Just as water in a cup that is suddenly jolted spills over, so the energy waves in the brain tend to splash out if the head sustains a hard blow. At such times one may see sparks of light or "stars," which are simply flashes of energy.

This brain energy is constantly being used up in muscular movements; in the working of the heart, lungs, and diaphragm; in cellular metabolism and chemicalization of the blood; and in the activity of the telephonic sensory-motor system of the nerves. Besides this, a tremendous amount of brain energy is required in thinking, feeling, and willing.

As a result, the brain often becomes depleted of energy. Just as a radio with a run-down battery fails to work, so the brain, if lacking in energy, also fails to work as a thought-receiving and thought-transmitting radio. The human brain equipped with the energy of life force is meant to transmit or receive thoughts in the same way that messages are exchanged by radio. The time is approaching when radiotelegraphy will be put into the discard, for man will be able to communicate instantaneously through the radio of his brain.

All of us have at times had "hunches"--that is, our mind radio becomes mysteriously tuned in with the thoughts of others, or with the vibratory pattern of an impending event floating in the ether of Cosmic Consciousness. Occasionally, when we continuously and very deeply want others to know certain of our wishes, those persons do become aware of them: their brain radios "receive" our messages.

Now the question is: If occasionally the human mind can receive thoughts from or transmit them to another mind without the medium of ordinary communication methods, why could not human mental radios be so tuned as to receive or broadcast thought messages at will?

KEEP YOUR
MENTAL RADIO
IN ORDER

A radio broadcasting or receiving mechanism cannot conduct messages when out of order. Similarly, the human mental broadcasting and receiving apparatus that is out of order ~~cannot work the miracle of telepathy; your brain~~ cannot then serve you as a radio.

When the mind microphone has been damaged by hammers of restlessness wielded by noisy passions, it must be repaired by deep silence, or by practice of physical and mental discipline--the Recharging Exercises and the Technique of Concentration. When you feel calm, your mind microphone is again in repair; then is the time to broadcast your first and foremost loving demand: "Father, make me realize again that Thou and I are One."

Do not jump up after one or two mental broadcasts, but with continuous zeal, with ever-increasing hunger in your heart keep on consciously and incessantly appealing mentally to the Father to restore your lost unity with Him. When you feel a bursting thrill of joy expanding in your heart and your whole body, and it continues to increase even after meditation, you have received the one sure proof that God has answered through the devotion-tuned radio of your heart. The heart, which is the center of feeling, and the mind, which is the center of reason, must be one-pointedly concentrated in order for your mind-radio message to reach God, and for you to receive His answer.

The longer and deeper you meditate and pray to Him, the more deeply you will feel and be conscious of the expanding joy in your heart. Then you will know without doubt that there is a God and that He is ever-existing, ever-conscious, omnipresent, ever-new Joy. That is the time to ask Him: "Father,

now, today, all day, all tomorrows, every instant, in sleep, in wakefulness, in life, in death, in this world and in the beyond, remain Thou with me as the consciously responding Joy of my heart. "

After praying, ask if you wish for healing of the body, for prosperity, or whatever other temporal aid your discriminative wisdom indicates is needed. But never cease asking Him: "Father, let me know that Thou art mine always, as Thou hast ever been mine, but I knew it not. May Thy love be the only king reigning on the throne of all my desires and ambitions. "

When you are calm and concentrated, and your mind battery has become potent with accumulated energy, raise your hands and try to feel the vibrations of your distantly situated loved ones, or the vibrations of distant homes and cities. Remember, your hands lifted up in the air and held poised while you concentrate deeply will act as antennae to receive the thoughts of others or to broadcast your thoughts to others. As sounds pass through ether, our thoughts pass through Cosmic Consciousness, which pervades all our souls and all material substances.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SENSES

Our sense radios can intercept only vibratory messages of a certain rate--the qualities, the appearance of a thing; not the substance, the thing in itself. Our senses give a report of phenomena, not of noumena. For example, a certain combination of visual, auditory, tactual, and olfactory perceptions is called an orange; no one knows what an orange is in essence. It is not the color, nor the taste, nor the softness, but the intelligent force that combines these qualities harmoniously to produce the effect of an orange. Even if one were able to reproduce synthetically the properties of the orange--its color, taste, softness, etc., -- well enough to fool the senses, one would still not have produced a real orange, and one would still not know what an orange really is. Although our senses do not tell us what the real orange is, our reason suggests that perhaps it is an intelligent combination of certain differently vibrating atoms representing color, taste, solidity, and smell, around one nucleus.

The vast material universe is nothing but an ocean of energy lying about us: high overhead as rivers of milky ways, twinkling stars, solar systems; beneath our feet as solid earth. The physical body with its ethereal thoughts, the sparkling lakes, heaving oceans, sky, air, and fire--all are but vibrations of one Cosmic Energy.

Yet the senses differentiate and tell us the delusive story that solids hurt us, liquids drown us, fire burns us, air will not support us, and gas chokes us. As the solid substance we call ice appears from water, steam, or hydrogen-oxygen gas, so the solid earth with its oceans and vapors appears out of the universe of Cosmic Energy. All are manifestations of one and the same substance. All the elements of which the cosmos is comprised are made of one electronic energy, which in turn is composed of conscious Cosmic Energy.

Our senses tell us only of the most superficial aspects of matter, causing us to behold ice as cold, heavy, and solid; and steam as hot and fluid; whereas the atoms in both ice and steam are composed of one luminous electricity. Our senses cannot tell us truths such as that the energy of electrons latent in a small pencil could blow up a skyscraper, and that the energy released from the electrons that make up a human body could shatter a part of Mount Everest. If our senses spoke the truth, we would see the earth as rivers and glaciers of electrons. Each speck of dust would appear as a rolling mass of light.

It is true that, though our senses deceive us, our power of reason can help us to discover the truth about various things. But it is well to remember that knowledge derived from experiments carried on with the help of mathematics, microscopes, and so on has to come through the senses; and that the senses tell only a tiny part of the truth about the nature of matter; hence reason working on the testimony of the senses can be led astray. Only yesterday atoms were considered ultimate--now they have been further analyzed and found to contain finer materials; electrons and protons, neutrons, and so on. Therefore neither the senses nor the power of inference that builds knowledge on sense testimony can be trusted to tell us the truth about the universe, our earth, the human body, or the mind. (To be continued)

CALMNESS IS THE BREATH OF IMMORTALITY

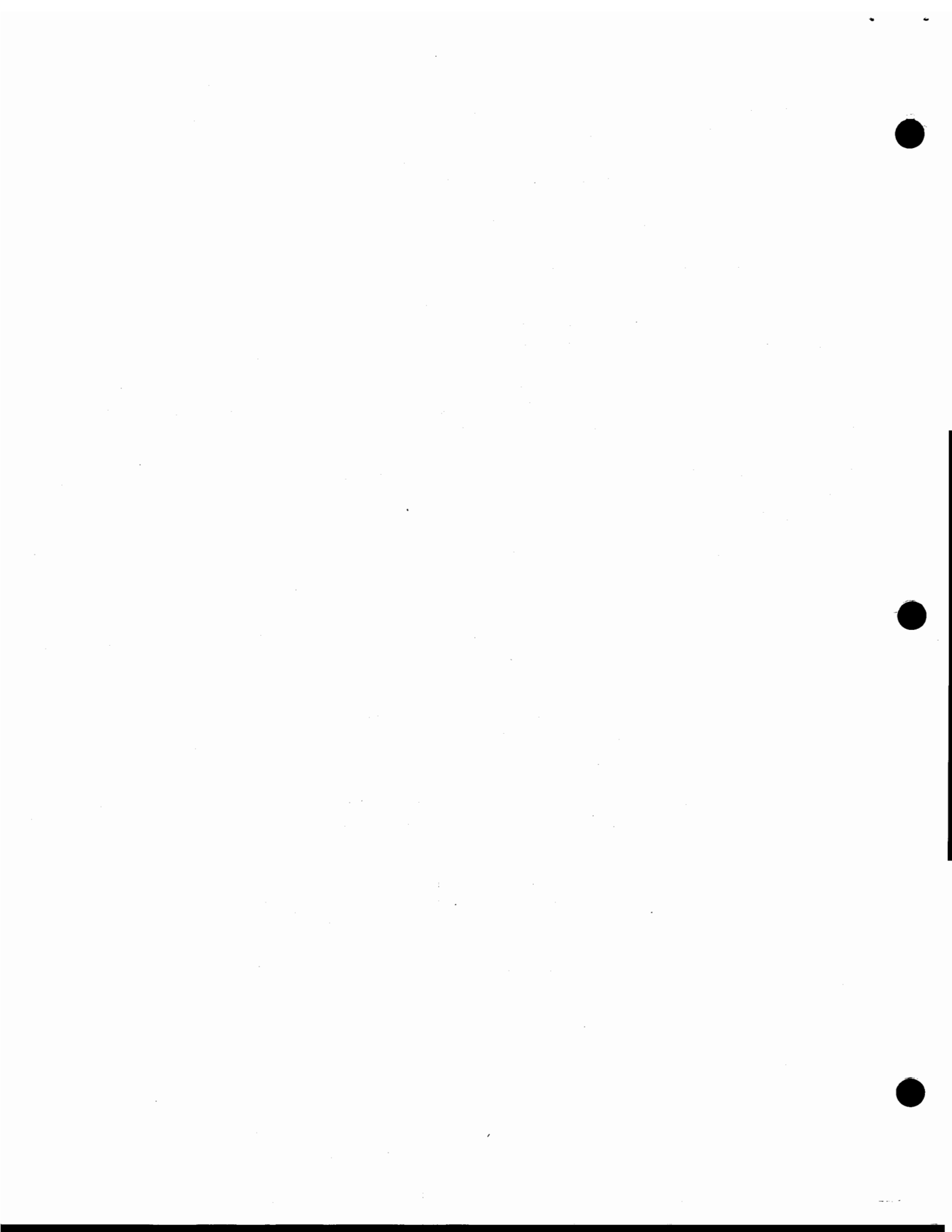
Retain your calmness. Ordinary life is like a pendulum, ceaselessly swinging back and forth. ~~The peaceful person remains calm until he is ready to work; then he swings into action. As soon as he is through, he swings back to the center of calmness.~~ You should always be calm, like the pendulum that is still, but ready to swing into steady action whenever necessary.

Activity should be under the control of your calmness. If instead your calmness is at the mercy of your activity, you may make your mark in the world, but you may also find that you are unable to use that success or prosperity. It is best to be calmly active and actively calm, a Prince of Peace sitting on a throne of poise, directing the kingdom of your activity. Calmness should not act as an opiate to dull your activity. Always be ready to be active, but carry calmness with you into your activity.

Calmness is one of the attributes of the immortality within you. You are a prodigal son when you worry; there is static coming through your mind radio. God's song is the song of calmness. Nervousness is the static; calmness is the voice of God speaking to you through the radio of your soul. Nervousness is the handmaiden of change and death; when you are calm, even death cannot frighten you, for you know you are a god. Calmness is the living breath of God's immortality in you.

AFFIRMATION

From today on, I will broadcast my soul call into the ether,
and Thou must respond through the receiver of my silence.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THINE EAGLE OF SOUL PROGRESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Make me Thine eagle of soul progress,
soaring far above dusty lanes of narrowness
and bigotry. Call me higher and higher,
beyond earth vibrations and sun-obscuring
clouds.

May I mount on the balanced wings of
right living to the rarefied regions of clear
perceptions of Thee. Above all storms of
trials I shall climb to the heights of Thy
heavenly eyrie.

Oh, make me Thine eagle of soul prog-
ress!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, bless me that I may easily find and hold onto my inner soul-happiness, instead of becoming worried at every test and difficulty.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MENTAL RADIO--Part 2

HOW TO RID THE MIND OF WORRY POISONS A health-giving worry fast will clear the mind and rid it of accumulated mental poisons resulting from a careless, faulty mental diet. First of all seek to remove the cause of anxiety without permitting the situation to distress you. Do not daily feed your mind with fresh poisonous fears that you yourself create.

Certain types of worries are the result of attempting to do too many things hurriedly. You should not "bolt" your mental duties of thinking out the right solution to life's various problems; they should be thoroughly masticated, one at a time, with the sharp teeth of keen attention, and saturated with the saliva of good judgment. Thus you may avoid worry indigestion. Consult a specialist in spirituality. If the disease of spiritual ignorance is found to be chronically present, be guided entirely by him. The teachings of a true guru will help you to cure yourself of spiritual ignorance, which is the root cause of all other ills. One's judgment may be affected by a state of mental ill health, so the guidance of such a spiritual specialist is needed to effect a permanent healing.

GO ON A "WORRY FAST" Whenever you make up your mind not to worry, but to go instead on a fast from worry, stick to your resolution. You can stop worrying entirely. You can calmly solve your most difficult problems by putting forth your greatest effort, and at the same time absolutely refusing to be disturbed. Say to yourself:

"I can do only my best; no more. I am satisfied and happy that I am doing my best to solve my problem; there is absolutely no reason why I should worry myself to death."

When you are fasting from worry, you need not be in a negative mental state. Drink copiously of the fresh waters of peace flowing from the springs of every good circumstance, vitalized by your determination to take a positive attitude. If you have made up your mind to be cheerful, nothing can make you unhappy. If you do not choose to destroy your own peace of mind by accepting the suggestion of unhappy circumstances, no one can make you dejected. You are concerned only with the untiring performance of right actions for right results; but your whole attention must be on the actions and not on their results. Leave the latter to God, saying: "I am happy in the knowledge

that I have done my best under the circumstances. "

Until you have learned not to worry, make a deliberate effort three times a day to shake off all worries. At 7 o'clock in the morning say to yourself: "All my worries of the night are cast out, and from 7 to 8 a. m. I refuse to worry, no matter how troublesome are the duties ahead of me. I am going to fast until 8 o'clock without worry. " From 12 to 1 p. m. say: "I am cheerful, I will not worry. "

In the evening, between 6 and 9 o'clock, particularly if you must be in the company of hard-to-get-along-with relatives or friends, mentally make a strong resolution and say: "Within these three hours I will not worry; I refuse to become vexed, even if my patience is tried. No matter how tempting it is to indulge in a worry feast, I will resist. I have allowed worries to make me upset and sick and now my heart of peace has suffered from worry attacks. Why should I paralyze and perhaps kill my peace-heart by shocks of worries? I cannot afford to worry. I resolve to fast from worry. "

After you succeed in carrying out such fasts during certain hours of the day, try it for a week or two weeks at a time, and then try to prevent the accumulation of worry poisons in your system entirely. Whenever you find yourself indulging in a worry feast, go on a partial or complete fast from worry for a day or a week.

HOPE AND JOY--

CURE FOR WORRY

Hope is the eternal light held aloft by the soul as man travels the pathway of incarnations to reach God.

Never relinquish hope; for you would then have to wait miserably in darkness, unable to resume your journey toward the Divine until you chose to raise once again your searchlight of hope.

Most people hope and try for a while, but if they fail more than a few times they cease to hope and become despondent. The divine man never ceases to hope, for he knows that he has all eternity in which to materialize his dreams.

To kill hope and be despondent is to put on a mask of animal limitation and to hide your divine identity with the Almighty. Hope for the highest and the best, for nothing is too good for a child of God. Keep on hoping. Move in that light of hope until you finish your travels through pathways of incarnations and reach your luminous home in God. Hope comes from the intuitive consciousness of the soul that some time or other we shall remember it as our true identity--the forgotten image of God within us.

Abstaining from worry is a negative method of overcoming worry poisoning; there are also positive methods. If you are infected with the germs of worry you should go on a strict mental diet. You should feast regularly on the society of joyful minds. Every day you should associate, if only for a little while, with joy-instilled persons--those who meditate and feel the joy

of God as a reality. Seek them out and feast with them on this most vitalizing food of joy. Feast on laughter in the company of these really joyful people. Steadfastly continue your laughter diet once you have begun it, and at the end of a month or two you will see the change--your mind will be filled with sunshine. Remember, specific habits can be cultivated only by specific habit-forming actions.

COURAGE DIET Once you have practiced and felt the benefits of fasting to eliminate worry, try going on a courage diet for certain hours, days, or weeks, to rid the mind of fear. Assimilate all you can of thoughts of your soul invincibility.

WISDOM DIET In order to destroy ignorance, go on a wisdom diet. Drink the tonic of wisdom with the lips of intuition. You can learn from the intuition of your soul whenever you seek her out in the chamber of deep meditation. Read good books of a devotional and spiritual nature, taking from them what wisdom you need. You must live a pure life to become spiritually impregnated with your true soul qualities of wisdom, fearlessness, peace, and love.

**HOW TO ROUSE
GOD AND RECEIVE
HIS RESPONSE** The minutes are more important than the years. If you do not fill in the minutes of your life with thoughts of God, the years will slip by and when you need Him most you will not be able to feel His presence. But if you do fill in the minutes of your life with the thoughts of God, you will find that the years of your life automatically will be saturated with the consciousness of God. Never think of tomorrow. Take care of today and all the tomorrows will take care of themselves. Do not wait until tomorrow to meditate. Do not wait until tomorrow to be good. Be good now! Be calm now! It will be the turning point of your life.

The man who aspires to expand himself into the all-pervading God Consciousness must learn to meditate upon God's omnipresence in the Cosmos. Meditation means constant thinking of God's presence within and without, so that the soul may lose its attachment to the human body and remember its vast body--the Cosmos. The Spirit ocean knows that it has become the soul waves, but the soul waves need to recall by meditation that they are the Spirit ocean. The little soul wave must forget its mental idea of smallness, born of concentrating upon the body, and must concentrate upon the Cosmic Spirit as its own big body, in which the little human body is just a part.

Like the great yogis of India, Jesus not only could foretell through telepathic vibrations, or thought, the actions of people and the course of events from a distance; he also knew about all the happenings on the earth's surface or within it, or in any portion of space, or in any planet of vibratory creation--through his omnipresent feeling. That is how Jesus foretold the early death of Lazarus; he felt it in his own omnipresent Christ Consciousness.

To rouse God, to receive His response, you must offer Him your mental-whisper songs unceasingly. No matter what you are doing, offer deep, mental-whisper prayer demands such as any of the following thoughts:

1. Father, reveal Thyself.
2. Beloved Divine Mother, hide no more. Destroy the wall of my ignorance, and appear unto me in all Thy splendor.
3. Divine Mother, lift the veil of darkness which hangs before me whenever I sit with closed eyes to meditate on Thee.
4. Divine Mother, show Thyself in the light of my flaming love for Thee.
5. Divine Friend, with my little arms I want to clasp Thine omnipresence. Come! I can wait no longer. Come!
6. Beloved Spirit, burst through the opaque firmament of my selfishness-clouded love and embrace me with Thine omnipresent light.
7. I will burn the door of silence with the fires of my ever-working, dynamic inner whispers. O ever burning Love, show Thyself in my flaming devotion.
8. May the memory of Thy presence shine forever on the shrine of my whispering devotion.
9. May Thy love burn forever on the altar of my heart, and may I be able to kindle love for Thee on all heart altars.

FINAL ANALYSIS

In converting the human brain into a thought-receiving radio, one must concentrate deeply, withdrawing all energy into the brain.

1. Relax the body.
2. Withdraw the energy from the motor nerves and muscles.
3. Concentrate on the brain deeply while all energy is withdrawn from the sensory nerves and the five senses.
4. Expel the breath several times, or breathe less often. Then your brain will become charged with life force withdrawn from all your body parts.

Now keep your mind tuned to restfulness. Keep your mind tuned to peace. Tune in with calmness, constantly dispelling the static of restless thoughts. After this, grasp firmly the wrists of the person whose thoughts you want to read. Then ask the person to concentrate upon one subject. Then try to feel that the thought impulse of your friend is flowing through his nerves into your nerves, then into your brain. Keep practicing this and you will be able to read the thought of a person just by thinking of him.

In order to broadcast a message, do the same as above described; only instead of receiving a thought try to broadcast a thought to your friend, through your nerves and his nerves into his brain. When you are able to do this, try another method. Concentrate in the front of the head between the eyebrows. Deeply meditate there, then try to visualize your message and

broadcast it through your all-seeing third eye into the spiritual eye of another.

GOD'S PRESENCE DRIVES AWAY DISEASE

Just as the thought of swallowing drugs does not heal a bodily disease, so the imaginary contact of God through blind prayer does not produce the desired healing. Doctors are needed to teach busy people the laws of right living, and thus show them how to prevent sickness to the end of their days, that they may fall like ripe fruit from the tree of physical existence, and not be blown down in the freshness of youth by the storm of disease.

To know God is the most important way to heal all disease--physical, mental, spiritual. As darkness cannot remain where light is, so also the darkness of disease is driven away by the light of God's perfect presence when it enters the body. But just as the vibrations of songs in the ether cannot be heard with a broken radio, so your mind radio, when broken by worries, fear, restlessness, skepticism, or stubborn or chronic sickness is unable to "catch" the health and power and wisdom vibrations of God.

AFFIRMATION

With the sword of peace, O
Lord, let me bravely fight through
the thick skirmish of trials.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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IN THE TEMPLE OF UNITED HEARTS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, may I feel in my heart Thy heartthrobs; in my happiness, Thy joy; in my activity, Thy power of direction; in my soul, Thy Spirit.

Divine Mother, I lay all the flowers of my love at Thy feet of eternity.

Divine Mother, open wide the bud of my devotion and release Thy fragrance, that it may spread from my soul to the souls of others, ever whispering of Thee.

May I behold my love in the love of others, and in the light of that greater love, may I behold Thine unveiled face of peace.

May I behold myself in others, and may I ever perceive Thee enthroned in our united hearts.

In the heart of my whispers, I feel the stir of Thy whispers. In the light of my burning love for Thee, I behold Thy sacred face of silence at last.

O Divine Mother, unite our hearts as one heart, that on the sacred altar of united hearts we may find Thine Omnipresence enthroned forever.

PRAYER

Teach me, O Spirit, to distinguish between the soul's lasting happiness and the temporary pleasures of the senses.

HOW TO SELECT YOUR LIFE COMPANION--Part 1

In India, a Hindu priest would give such advice as this to a lover: "My son, in choosing a wife, you should select a maiden who is loyal like the dog, wise like the elephant, pure like the dove, affectionate and home-loving like the pigeon, and sweet of voice like the nightingale."

And to the maiden he would say: "My daughter, in selecting your mate, choose one who is strong and bravehearted like the lion, faithful like the dog, home-loving like the pigeon, and wise like the elephant."

If the priest were asked to give advice as to the suitability of the match from the standpoint of character analysis, he would talk in a friendly way with both the boy and the girl, and then talk intimately with each of them alone. After that he would meditate many times about the matter. And finally, he would give his conclusions to the parents. And these conclusions would have a substantial foundation, for he would judge not only by the physical appearance and expression, but also by the aura, which only a spiritual adept can distinguish clearly enough to read without making mistakes. This kind of analysis is an art and must be learned scientifically, just as arithmetic must be studied and practiced if one wishes to become a mathematician.

In the West, people prefer to make an independent choice in seeking a marriage partner. Before deciding on a life companion, however, one should understand the different impulses that may affect and influence one's selection.

FORCES OF ATTRACTION

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Call of physical attraction. | 6. Call of idealism. |
| 2. Call of aesthetic attraction. | 7. Call of emotional liking. |
| 3. Call of mental unity. | 8. Call of material greed. |
| 4. Call of vocational likeness. | 9. Call of social position. |
| 5. Call of moral inclination. | 10. Call of the soul. |

Many young couples marry because they are drawn together by a certain similarity of mental traits. While mental harmony is one of the indications of proper mating in matrimony, it is not everything. Mental unity may wear off if there is no inner unity of mutual soul harmony.

One young man says of his fiancée: "I like her because she enjoys watching

football games as I do. She also is fond of smoking, and of drinking and dining luxuriously, just as I am." Or: "I love her because she dotes on movies and hair-raising detective stories, as I do." Another says: "I love her because she shares my love for music and poetry."

Some couples marry because they like the same kind of work. He says: "I like to act and I love her because she is a movie actress." Or, "I love her because she understands the banking business, which is my chief interest and vocation."

"I love her because she is a perfect businessmate," says another. In modern times it is extremely helpful to have a wife who is interested in the development of one's profession or business and a wrong choice can be detrimental to one's profession. For instance, doctors and lawyers should not wed suspicious persons who would be jealous of their patients and clients.

For the most part, youthful couples marry because they are attracted by good looks, but as a rule those who have married only for beauty have soon parted. After the infatuation produced by beauty wanes, a beautiful face may even appear ugly. What people get, they often do not want; what they want, they often do not get. Of course, personal beauty has its place in the plan of life, but greater than physical beauty is mental beauty. Men and women who are adorned with the soul qualities of purity, sweet speech, wisdom, and unending, unconditional love, exercise a lasting magnetic hold on their mates.

Some men would like to marry a rich widow and some poor girls or widows would like to choose a rich bachelor or widower; but marriage for money alone never lasts and usually ends in the merited accusation: "You married me for my money." Those who want money should go into business and earn it; they should never try to "get rich quick" through marriage. There is a long life of humiliation in store for the man who marries a woman for her money, and women do not find the gratification they expect from marrying for wealth. One such wife told me: "I married a rich man all right, but he is the worst husband; he beats me whenever I spend money, even for bare necessities."

Not a few persons marry for social position. Some American girls go to Europe primarily to meet and marry sophisticated dukes, counts, or princes, but most of these marriages are failures. Don't try to climb into society through marriage. Gain money and fame by developing your usefulness and you will automatically attract social prominence. Don't try to become famous by sharing the halo of somebody else's fame.

DO NOT MARRY
UNDER THE STRESS
OF GREAT EMOTION

Frequently young couples marry on impulse, because they love to do things while in an excited state. They indulge in meteoric marriages and meteoric divorces, usually ending in violent quarrels and curses. Under the influence of emotion, some couples not only elope, but want to add to the intoxicating excitement by getting married in an airplane or in some other unusual manner. High school boys and girls often marry under the influence of such emotions. Others want to get married just for the thrill of tasting forbidden fruit. One rich girl I know of ran away with the family chauffeur. But the attraction was based solely on the excitement of a clandestine romance, and right after the honeymoon, when the thrill of resisting her father's will was over, the heiress fled from her husband.

Two American couples once seriously suggested that I marry them while we all plummeted down in parachutes from 15,000 feet above sea level. These couples wanted to marry only for the thrill of publicity, and intended to get a divorce after the stunt and the thrill were over. "We'll spend anything for a thrill, and for front-page publicity," they told me. I declined the proposition.

MISTAKING SENSE
PLEASURES FOR LOVE

What has been said here about the various sense attractions and desires that are not a good basis for marital success brings us to the subject of ever present temptations. Not only do the senses mislead the romantically inclined; they also beset the path of every seeker of Self-realization. For the devotee, in trying to delve deep into soul happiness, is often suddenly possessed by his subconscious habitual love for sense pleasures. At such times all the golden hope of eternal happiness pictured by the inner wisdom seems suddenly lackluster and useless, and the devotee thinks: "If I have to forsake tangible earthly happiness now, there is no use in gaining anything spiritually, no matter how beautiful the promise for the future." The devotee, in extreme sympathy with sense pleasures, then begins to think: "I would rather go unarmed--without self-control and the power of resisting evil--and let my spiritual happiness be slain by the weapons of temptation, than be involved in a devastating battle between the discriminative forces and sense pleasures." That was Arjuna's temptation, about which he sought the advice of Sri Krishna, as described in the Bhagavad-Gita.

No devotee should hide behind the mask of false reasoning and try to deceive and intimidate his soul by the foolish fear of renouncing first-arrived, tangible, inferior sense-pleasures for superior, to-be-achieved, but yet-to-be-acquired soul bliss. Every devotee, instead of being despondent, should be glad to consign inferior pleasures to limbo in order to gain the unending joy of the soul.

The devotee who has learned the techniques of salvation from his guru, or divine preceptor, no longer wishes to be attached to worldliness and thus remain a slave of destiny, continuously experiencing the dualistic fluctuations of

karma. He realizes that procrastination, disease, idleness, fickleness, and their opposites result in the disturbance of primal feeling, which in turn gives birth to the sensations of cold, heat, pleasure, sorrow, and all the other inner psychological dualities. To rid himself of these dualistic ailments, the devotee should seek ecstatic communion with the all-powerful, omniscient, unceasingly joyous Spirit.

(To be continued)

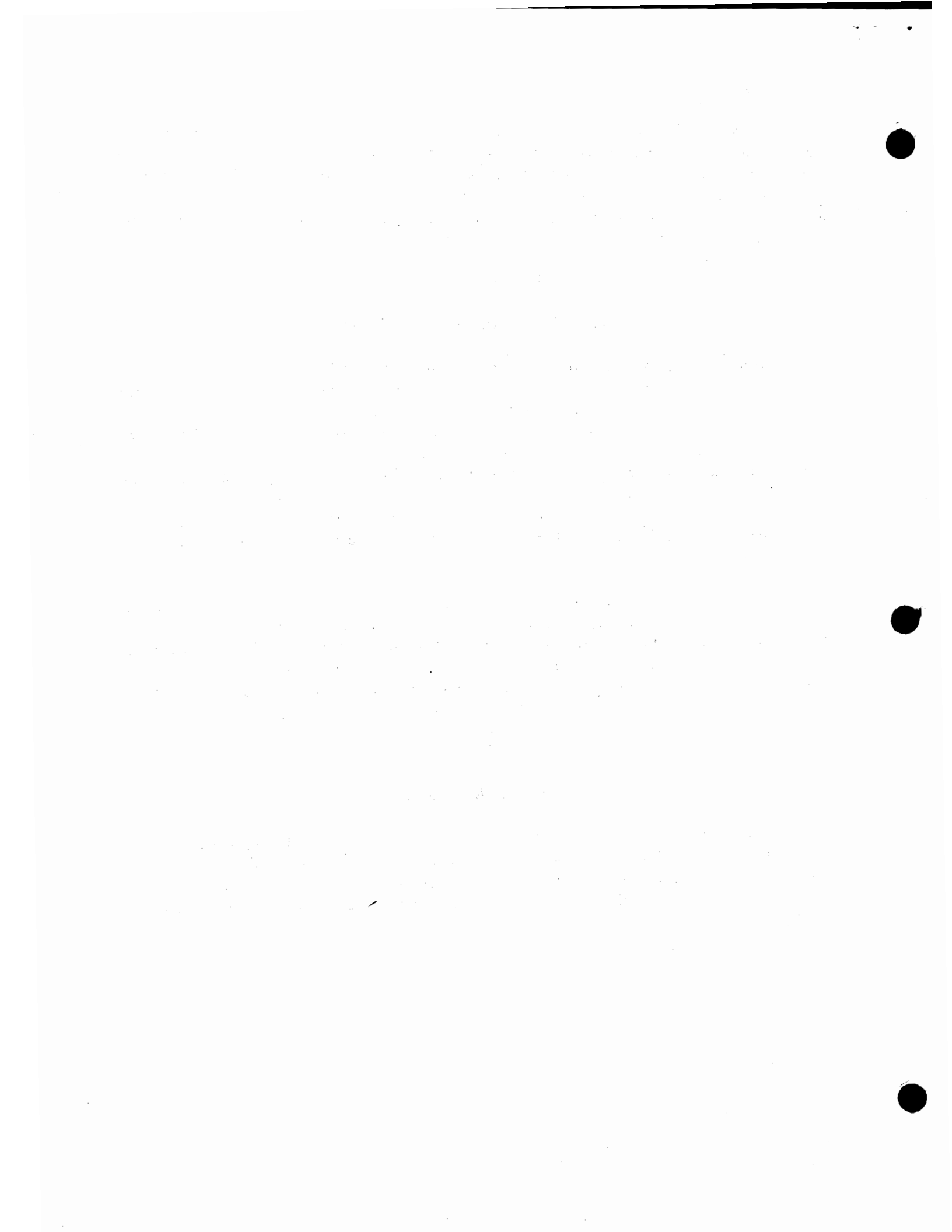
THE MEANING OF PURE LOVE

There is no greater tonic than pure love, which beautifies the body and mind of man. It cannot be described; it can only be felt. The greatest love is born of utility. We do not love anything that is useless or harmful, or that causes us permanent suffering. If you serve another with deeds of kindness, or good advice, or protection--that is "usefulness." Even our love of God is born of usefulness. Saints and prophets have begged people to love God because He can be useful to them in a way that no one else can be. We want Him because He is the Redeemer of all forms of mortal ills and suffering and the Giver of eternal joy. One who does not love his fellow beings cannot love God, or feel divine love.

Although love is born in human relations and thrives on the law of mutual usefulness, yet the quality of pure love transcends all human relations; it is free from all conditions, or the law of mutual usefulness. When superlove beams in one's soul, one is clothed with the ever attracting universal beauty of God. Pure divine love will invest you with beauty that will attract toward you the attention and everlasting love of the Supreme Being.

AFFIRMATION

There is only One, in whom all that is, exists. Everything is that One. That One is God. I will unify everything in God--my family, my friends, all human relations, material possessions, and my natural environment. I will unify everything in Spirit and realize Spirit in everything.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THOU AND I ARE ONE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Thy Cosmic Life and I are one.
Thou art the Spirit, and I am all nature;
 We are one.
Thou art the Ocean, and I am the wave;
 We are one.
Thou art the Ocean, and I am the drop;
 We are one.
Thou art the Flame, and I am the spark;
 We are one.
Thou art the Flower, and I am the fragrance;
 We are one.
Thou art the Song, and I am the music;
 We are one.

Thou art the Father, and I am Thy child;
 We are one.
Thou art my Mother, and I am Thy son;
 We are one.
Thou art my Friend, I am Thy friend;
 We are one.
Thou art the Beloved, and I am the lover;
 We are one.
Thou art the Lover, and I am the beloved;
 We are one.
Thou art the Master, and I am Thy servant;
 We are one.
Thou art my Guru, I am Thy disciple;
 We are one.

Thou art all Laughter, I am a smile;
 We are one.
 Thou art the Light, and I am the atom;
 We are one.
 Thou art Consciousness, I am the thought;
 We are one.
 Thou art Eternal Power, and I am strength;
 We are one.

Thy Peace and I are one.
 Thy Joy and I are one.
 Thy Wisdom and I are one.
 Thy Love and I are one.
 That is why Thou and I are one.
 Thou and I were one, and Thou and I
 will be one evermore.

-- From "Songs of the Soul"

PRAYER

Teach us, O Spirit, to regard virtue not with dread but
 with love. May we realize that obedience to the rules of
 Thine ethical code will crown us with the laurel of Thy grace.

HOW TO SELECT YOUR LIFE COMPANION--Part 2

Before deciding to marry, give serious thought to this step that involves a lifetime relationship with another individual. You want to be sure that your marriage will be happy and enduring. Physical attraction alone is not a true basis for such assurance. Many youthful couples, blinded by physical attraction, fall in love and marry. Later, when the fire of emotion has died down and they are able to see each other's true personality dispassionately, they are frequently disillusioned and seek divorce. Those who do not learn from such an experience may even make the same kind of mistake all over again with another mate. Wisdom and discrimination are necessary in choosing marriage partners. Those who rely on physical attraction alone as a guide usually end up flying back and forth like shuttlecocks between the marriage bureau and the divorce court.

When husbands and wives, owing to deterioration of moral standards, lose mutual respect, they cease to love each other. Moral turpitude crumbles away the cementing bond of love between them. Young people who continuously strengthen and develop their moral standards after marriage will most likely remain married. Mutual regard will develop out of such moral emulation and will strengthen the bond between them.

DEVELOP LOVE FOR TRUE IDEALS Sometimes couples with lofty spiritual ideals marry with the thought that together they will preach, teach, and reform other people. And it sometimes happens that one gains more prestige with followers than the other, and the mate becomes jealous. Such unhappiness may be avoided if both partners concentrate on manifesting their common ideals, rather than on comparing the results of their work.

Married couples that strive to develop their love for true ideals equally in everything will find their love for each other increasing more and more, until it burns in their hearts as a single divine flame. The husband or wife who desecrates his own ideals may lose the love of an idealistic mate. The spring of idealism on which love feeds must not be allowed to dry up. Married couples should never cease striving to be more idealistic in their thoughts and actions toward family, society, country, and the world. Thus will they find their love ever growing and changing and expanding, until it becomes purified into unconditional divine love.

SEEK COMPLETE UNITY Young people planning marriage should pray deeply to God to be guided aright. Meditation and sincere prayers will bring divine response in major and minor ways, developing the relationship between the girl and boy by creating various circumstances and incidents that will afford them an opportunity to judge whether or not their spiritual unity is sufficient to justify a lifelong association. ~~Elopesments, or marriages hastily decided upon, are less likely to be successful~~ than those marriages that have been preceded by a waiting period of at least one year. To enter marriage without due thought is an indication of recklessness and lack of judgment; it invites disaster. Any important step in life is worth long consideration; it is worth testing in the fires of daily experiences under varying circumstances.

The first and most essential requirement for a happy marriage is soul unity--similarity of spiritual ideals and goals, implemented by a practical willingness to attain those goals by study, effort, and self-discipline. Couples who possess soul unity will be able to make a success of marriage even if no other desirable basis is present.

The second requirement for a happy marriage is similarity of interest--intellectual, social, environmental, and so on.

The third, and last in importance (though usually given first place by unenlightened people), is physical attraction. That bond soon loses its attractive power if the first requirement, or the first and second requirements, are not also present.

A successful marriage is usually owing to the efforts of the wife. By showering love on her husband, by ceaseless service to him, and by daily thought for his comfort, convenience, health, and general welfare a woman can make herself indispensable to, and beloved by, the most cantankerous husband. At the same time she will be hastening her own spiritual evolution, transmuting unlovely egotism into consideration for others--a quality possessed by all truly attractive people.

Real soul marriage consists in an inborn, undying, unconditional, united, mutual liking, which may be felt at first sight, or may be the result of protracted divinely harmonious companionship and courtship. In soul union, unconditional love between married couples grows deeper and deeper.

There is a supernatural affinity between kindred souls. A positive and negative current join to light an incandescent lamp; so also a preponderantly positive (aggressive) soul combined with a preponderantly negative (yielding) soul are fused into the light of ever-growing love. Soul love must take the place of animal love if marriage is to endure. Soul harmony must be the spring of action in marriage if the partners hope to achieve true happiness.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKES The spiritual way of avoiding mistakes in choosing the right companion is to affirm deeply after deep meditation:

"Heavenly Father, bless me that I choose my life companion according to Thy law of perfect soul union."

Practice this affirmation for at least six months, with deep faith. If you have established a real attunement with God through meditation and continuous affirmation of this prayer request, you will marry a suitable companion; or, if you have been drawn toward one who is fundamentally inharmonious, the Divine Father will bring about circumstances that will prevent your making a wrong marriage.

DIVINE LOVE IN HUMAN EXPRESSION Ideal marriages are made only by people who conscientiously strive to express divine love through human love. The ideal is difficult to achieve, for most marriages are preceded by only a little true love; physical passion is usually the predominating factor. In such marriages sex attraction takes the place of true unconditional love, which unless cultivated, quickly slips away from the heart. If, on the other hand, true love between marriage partners is increased by their constant efforts to spiritualize each thought and action, physical consciousness will decrease, and human love become transformed into divine love. An ideally married husband and wife do not love each other as physical beings, but share a mutual love for God alone. Thus they come to realize that behind their expressions of love for each other is the purifying divine love of Spirit.

Human love in marriage (or in any other relationship) does not last unless it expresses itself divinely. Without the magnetizing power of divine love, married couples fail eventually to entertain or to respect one another; and when that happens marriage goes "on the rocks." Sex charm, intellectuality, beauty, money, culture, and personal magnetism are not sufficient to keep two persons together in happy marriage if divine love is not present. Every married man or woman seeks perfect love in his or her mate; but it may not be found until divine love is expressed by both partners in all their motives, actions, and life ambitions.

The greatest happiness is not to be found in human marriage, which all too frequently is an ineffectual attempt at welding souls that are not suited to each other. Man's greatest happiness lies in spiritual marriage, union between the soul and God. All souls may be said to be negative in relation to God, the positive source of all joy. The soul of man, undergoing the process of human evolution in the material world, misses its blissful relationship with Spirit; hence the more man seeks to find happiness in the world of matter, the more he feels inharmony and unhappiness. When engrossed in its experiences in the physical world, the soul is actually racing away from the sole source of eternal happiness--God. But when the love-starved, joy-starved, perfection-starved, complete-satisfaction-starved negative soul rejoins the positive, all-perfect, all-loving, all-joyful, all-complete, ever-newly blissful God, there results a real spiritual marriage. God is the Bridegroom, and each soul is His bride.

POWER OF MAGNETISM Real magnetism is a drawing, uplifting, expanding power--a quality of the Spirit. Perhaps at some time you have met a person so magnetic that he inspired you and expanded your consciousness. That magnetic power we all want to enjoy, for it is of the Spirit. The consciousness is stupefied by hypnosis or animal magnetism, but spiritual magnetism expands the consciousness in a divine way. Mothers who have marriageable daughters should teach them to radiate divinely joyous smiles, and to wear on their cheeks the rouge of sincerity and true love. ~~Mothers should teach their daughters to attract others by spiritual magnetism~~ only, and to be fully and beautifully dressed with all the genuinely magnetic qualities of wisdom, understanding, thoughtfulness, consideration, presence of mind, true learning, and all-round efficiency. Spiritual magnetism will draw spiritual persons.

WHEN MARRIAGE IS UNNECESSARY Earthly marriage is unnecessary to those who are wedded to the ever-intoxicating Bliss-God. Jesus, St. Francis, Swami Shankaracharya, and Babaji never married because they had found perfect love, perfect joy, in the complete and only perfect mate--God. Hence they had no desire to marry.

Trying to find the divine love of God through spiritualizing the earthly marriage relationship is a delusive and extremely difficult way of seeking Him. Lovers in the moonlight, under the intoxicating influence of passion and emotion, promise each other eternal love. And when they die, the moon smiles at their skeletons in their graves, and at all the impossible promises they made and failed to keep.

God's promise to bestow His love on the true devotee is a truly eternal vow. God, being immortal, is the only one who can fulfill such a promise. Hence union with the Cosmic Lord, the only true Beloved, should be the goal of each soul. Free from the disappointments that human matrimony may yield, union with God brings perfect love and eternal fulfillment.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Human love, when it is charged with the Divine, becomes perfect. When you cut off the little brook from the spring, it is lost. When you cut off human love from divine love, then it is imperfect. Remember, you are your own judge. Will you doom yourself to suffering and ignorance or will you say: "I shall free myself!" If restlessness troubles you, meditate. The greatest of all temptations is restlessness. When restlessness comes it causes evil by turning our thoughts away from God, the source of all good. If you meditate regularly, you will be with God all the time. Peace, love, and joy will be yours eternally.

GOD IS THE POWER BEHIND EVERYTHING

God can be reached. If He remains remote it is only because you are not earnest enough. When other interests are in your heart, why should God come to you? Some people think that marriage is the greatest ideal. But God is the power behind friendship, and God is the love behind marriage; without Him you can't love anyone. Why not think of the Force that expresses itself in your love and friendship? Why not think of that great Spirit? If you can be kings and emperors, why be beggars? Find God! You must contact God; nothing else is as important. Can you sit for hours lost in God? You can sit for two or three hours absorbed in a superficial play; why can't you be lost in God for that many hours? You can't do it because your mind is on the body. You are not with God in your mind and heart. If you want a lesser thing than God, you deny your identity as an immortal child.

The Bhagavad-Gita says:

"You are your own greatest enemy and you are your own greatest friend; if you are the enemy of your soul, your soul will act as your enemy; if you are your soul's friend, your soul will be your friend."

AFFIRMATION

All desire for love I will purify and
satisfy in the sacred divine love of God.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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SMILE FOREVER

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Smile when the roses are budding,
Smile when the petals of pleasure are falling,
Smile when vigor is throbbing in your breast;
Smile when you have dreaming-wrinkles in
your brow.
Smile because you find happiness in peace
And not in passing possessions.
Smile because you are fearless,
Smile because fear is ashamed to cause you
apprehension and failure.
Smile when trials burst upon you;
Smile when the goblin of poverty stalks,
Smile when all hope threatens to leave you,
Smile when you are crying
And smile when you are laughing,
Smile when you are losing
And smile when you are winning,
Smile when you are good
And smile when you are bad.
Smile at the sad past, for it is no more;
Smile, thinking of the joy of yesteryears.
Smile at the past, smile today,
Smile tomorrow, and you will qualify
to smile forever and forever.
Smile newly with the ever-new smile of God
every second, every minute.
Smile every day in the year,
And keep smiling in God--forever.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to love others and to serve others. Teach me to be true to my word, even as I want others to be true to me. Teach me to love others as I wish them to love me. Teach me, O Mother, to make others happy--to make others smile. Teach me, O Mother, to find my happiness in the joy of others.

LAWS IDEAL FOR MARRIED LIFE

Before considering marriage, introduce your prospective husband or wife in your field of business and social activity; thus you may to some extent find out whether or not the prospective partner is in harmony with your habits and ideals--and whether you can fit in with his or her ambitions, temperament, and ideals. Such experiments should be carried on under conditions conducive to natural behavior. Pretense is likely if a person is aware of being "tested," and judgment on this basis is of no value.

CREATIVE-IMPULSE PLANE

Each human being draws friends according to the sum total of his or her mental tendencies accumulated as effects of present and past actions. If a man has been living primarily on the creative-impulse plane in the present and in the past, it is likely that he will draw a woman of similar vibration and vice versa. Like attracts like. Man should never build around any woman the vibrations of his lower desires, nor should a woman do so around a man. One should be able to transmute the creative impulse into love, and to express that pure love toward his prospective life companion. If one does not learn how to transmute this impulse, he cannot create spiritual vibrations in a companion. Your life companion is given to you not merely that you may create on the physical plane, but also that you may create by mind-and-soul-fusions the spiritual children of ideal love, friendship, purity, ideal exemplary character, noble ambitions, and creative inventions.

LAW OF THE
CREATIVE PLANE

One secret of preserving matrimonial life lies in the ability to exercise self-control. Instead of constantly living and thinking only on the physical plane learn to love your wife or husband more on the spiritual plane and associate as close friends. If you can do that, you will win a great battle in keeping your mate inwardly loyal, respectful, and loving toward you. When you come together, feel it a privilege to do so; feel during the meeting that you have met your companion after ages of separation. Then mingle with your whole heart, attention, and respect.

MORAL PLAN OF BEHAVIOR FOR HUSBAND

The man who aspires to be an ideal husband and to keep his wife loyal and

loving should strive to live by the following ideals:

Always be chivalrous to your wife, addressing her sweetly, with dignity and attention, and thanking her for all courtesies.

Remember her birthday and frequently offer presents of things that she needs and trifles that prove your thoughtfulness, rather than what would create a consciousness of luxury.

Help to lighten her kitchen work as much as possible by the right kinds of equipment so that she can better serve as a wife, mother and companion.

Develop mutual interests so that you can share a richer, fuller life with your wife and children. Go out often with her alone, and frequently with your children.

Engage in uplifting discussion about literature, music, the arts, and the higher spiritual truths.

Make your life with your wife one of constant daily progress in material, mental, and spiritual ways, one of increasing rather than decreasing happiness.

Make your mutual home life simple and your spiritual life deep. Encourage your wife to keep busy with higher things and remain busy with higher things yourself. Do not be with your wife all the time so that you wear out your welcome.

Exercise all the moral laws with your wife.

Give her financial responsibilities; then she will spend wisely. Encourage her to save your money for you, for her, and for your children. Live a plain, inexpensive life and inspire her to live the same. Save more, do not spend too much for luxuries.

Give her freedom to choose her women friends. Learn to respect and appreciate her friends.

Meditate together every morning, and especially at night. Offer devotion to God by chanting or singing together. Read your Lessons, the scriptures, and other spiritual books together.

Have a little family altar where both husband and wife, and children, gather to offer deep devotion unto God and unite their souls forever in ever-joyous Cosmic Consciousness.

Keep your body like the body of an athlete; eat healthful foods.

Do not try to make your wife think that you own her and that she is trade-marked as your possession. Just make her feel that you are glad to have whatever she gives you from her soul.

Do not be jealous of your wife and make her life miserable by nagging. If you can't hold your wife's attention by love, nothing else can keep it.

Never lie to your wife.

Never use vulgar language.

Never insult her parents.

Never use harsh language, but always use sweet language instead.

Do not argue with your wife, especially before others.

Do not insult or be sarcastic to your wife at any time.

Try not to disturb your wife unnecessarily when she is busy with some important work or with her personal friends.

Every individual needs a period of aloneness or solitude in order to cope with the increasing pressures of life. Do not remain in the same room with your wife all the time. Do not encroach upon each other's independence.

PLAN OF BEHAVIOR FOR WIFE

The wife should also remember the foregoing rules and should strive as well to live by the following ideals that husband and wife may fulfill their desires for marital happiness:

- Try to make love the predominant factor in your intimate relationship; and live with him on a high moral plane, learned through spiritual studies. The more you meditate together, the deeper your love for one another will grow. Win him by your ideal life, by your example.
- Be a spiritual companion, when he is at home, by reading, writing, singing, chanting, or meditating with him. Try to make yourself more and more useful and interesting, living more on the spiritual plane of love than the sex plane.
- Keep yourself neat, clean, attractive, and well-dressed--just as you were when you first met him.
- Try your utmost to spend your husband's earnings with thoughtful economy. Make him feel that you are doing this. Show him the ways you try to save money and he will be encouraged to give you greater responsibility with the income he brings home.
- Try to make him comfortable.
- Give him the right foods to eat: more balanced meals which include raw food, less pastries and sweets. Make his meals attractive and tasteful. Food has much to do with matrimonial happiness.
- Don't nag or use harsh speech.
- Never speak ill of him to your women friends. Never ridicule him, or find fault with him before his children, either in private or in public. Influence him only through silence and love. Never be sarcastic to him.
- If your husband wanders away morally, do not fight him with sarcasm, nag him, or be bitter. Exercise great love and kind attention, and reform him by your love.
- After meditation, deeply affirm this daily:
 "Father, keep me and my husband perfectly united on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes. May we live in a state of ever-increasing happiness by following Thy perfect laws."

The ideal husband and wife who find unity and love more and more on the mental and spiritual planes will move day by day toward emancipation in God.

In Him their souls will be united in the bond of ever-increasing joy, never to part again. Mentally united for the purpose of finding God in their souls, they will be one with God.

CONTINUOUSLY STRIVE
FOR HAPPINESS IN
MARRIED LIFE

Don't make unhappiness a chronic habit, for it is anything but pleasant to be moody, and it is blessedness for yourself and others if you are happy.

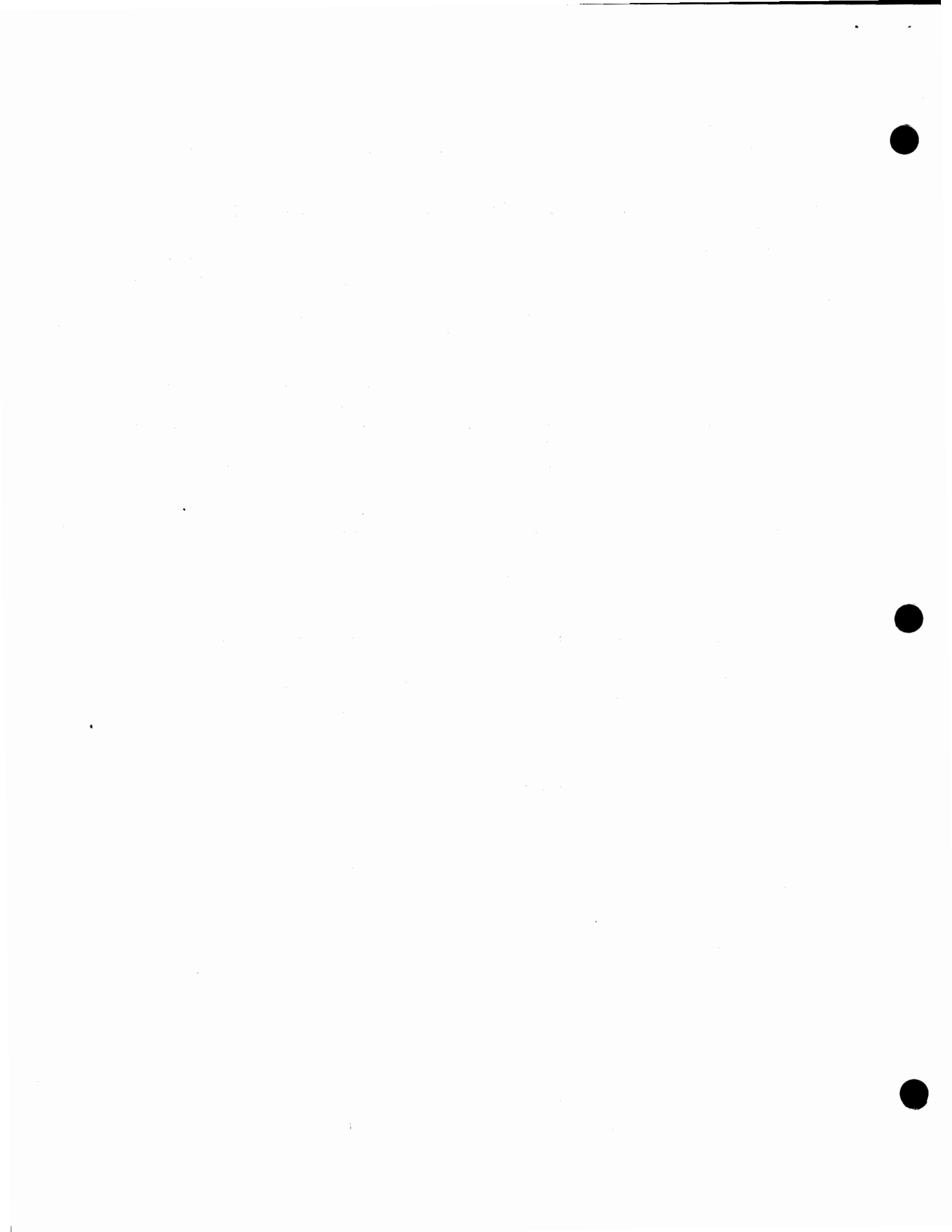
It is easy to wear a cheerful smile or pour sweet happiness through your voice. Then why be grouchy and scatter unhappiness around you? It is never too late to learn. You are as old as your chronic thoughts, and you are as young as you feel now, in spite of your age.

Self-control in itself, in the first or negative state, can seem to produce unhappiness because of the separation from the pleasure-yielding senses, but after self-control ripens, the soul begins to experience the finer, happier mental and spiritual perceptions and enjoy itself far more than when it lived identified solely with sense pleasures.

No matter how much you are accustomed to being unhappy, you must adopt the antidote of happiness. Each act of being happy now will help you to cultivate the habit of always being happy and will spread its cheer to your marriage partner and children as well. Pay no attention if your mind tells you that you can never be happy. Just remember to start being cheerful now, and every moment, every day, say: "I am happy now!" If you can continuously do that, then, when you look back, you can say: "I have been very happy," and when you look at yourself you will say: "I am happy," and when you look ahead you will say: "I know I shall be happy." Since all of your future happiness depends upon building the right attitude now, begin today being happy.

AFFIRMATION

I will seek to make others truly happy,
as I strive to make myself divinely happy.





Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

MUST MARRIAGE BE CONTINENT TO BE SPIRITUAL?

"I note that yoga treatises often stress the value of continence and I understand that the renunciants of Self-Realization Fellowship take vows of celibacy. I am a married man; should my wife and I practice continence in order to progress spiritually on this path?"

Self-Realization Fellowship respects the holy vows of matrimony and upholds the ideal of union in body, mind, and soul for those who enter this partnership. It is true that no sensually uncontrolled person has ever realized God, and this pertains to all the senses, not sex only. Promiscuity or overindulgence in married life is debilitating physically, mentally, and spiritually, and is one of the greatest destroyers of true feelings and love. But the wise and controlled use of Nature's creative force -- for the propagation of children or the expression of love, one for the other, in the marital relationship -- can be a beautiful expression of divine love.

The purpose of Yoga is to bring body, mind, and senses under the control of the Self, or soul. Because the sexual instinct is one of the strongest instincts in man, second only to self-preservation, it is the force that most tenaciously ties man to body-consciousness. The yogis recognized this and therefore urged control -- sublimation, not suppression -- as one means of attaining soul-freedom. Celibacy, therefore, should be practiced by the single person, for the sexual urge should not be abused for mere sense gratification.

Moderation, with the cultivation of love uppermost in the consciousness, should be the goal of those who unite themselves before God in the holy vows of marriage. While Self-Realization Fellowship does not teach that one should practice continence in marriage, a gradually decreasing need for sensual gratification may come naturally to married couples on this path. As the love between husband and wife deepens in a common love for God, the Source of all love, the fulfillment they feel in their relationship toward one another becomes all-satisfying and outgrows baser expressions. In this regard the most important thing is the sacredness of the marital vows taken, and the duty therein of each partner to make the marriage a life of fulfillment, one for the other. Any move toward greater self-control or abstinence should only be made with the natural readiness and consent of both partners.

There are many things taught in the scriptures that express ways to find God more quickly. Christ said, "Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor." We do not believe, however, that God has shut the gates of heaven upon

....over

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The Reverend Mother Daya Mata, President In India: Yogoda Satsanga Society of India

all who have not literally observed this injunction. The real secret of Christ's counsel lies in inner renunciation, being nonpossessed by possessions which keep the consciousness tied to this world. In the same way, some yoga treatises stress continence as a means for liberating the soul from body-consciousness. But here again, it is a matter of inner attitude. Meditation, as taught in the Self-Realization Fellowship yoga techniques, so uplifts the consciousness that man ceases to be a purely sensual being; he does not cease to use and enjoy his senses, but he does cease to abuse them. Sexual abuse is that which is to be avoided.

* * * *

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE MYRRH OF REVERENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I come to Thee with folded hands,
bowed head, and heart laden with the
myrrh of reverence.

From the hearts of all Thine other
lovers I have distilled a fragrant essence
of devotion and mixed the drops with my
tears. In those sacred waters may I
bathe Thy lotus feet.

Thou art my Parents; I am Thy child.
Thou art the Master; I will obey the silent
command of Thy voice.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Teach me to be like the ripe orange which, though crushed and bitten, fails not to impart its innate sweetness.

Battered by unkindness, lashed by cruel criticism, or wounded by misunderstanding, may I unceasingly exude only the fragrance of love.

HOW TO LIVE HARMONIOUSLY WITH A DISTURBED WIFE OR HUSBAND

Marriage is nature's law for procreation, not only on the physical but also on the mental and spiritual planes. Unless married couples keep in mind the true high purpose of marriage, they may never enjoy a really happy life together. Oversexuality, too much familiarity, lack of courtesy, suspiciousness, insulting speech or acts, arguing before children or guests, crankiness, and unloading of troubles or anger on one's mate should be disallowed if marriage is to be ideal. True marriage is a laboratory in which poisons of selfishness, bad temper, and bad behavior may be poured into the test tube of patience and neutralized and changed by the catalytic power of love and constant effort to behave nobly.

An indifferent husband chills the warm affection of the wife, and an inattentive wife makes the husband callous. Courtesy in remembering birthdays and other important days and in reviving old reminiscences of affection should be continued throughout life. A small flower presented with love, or a word fragrant with kindness, can do much to patch up old wounds. Put on your best dress-suit of kindness and proper behavior with your mate and children first, at home. Eventually you will win everybody you meet by your magnetic aura of kindness.

It is not necessary to agree about everything in order to be kind; but when disagreeing, one should always remain calm and courteous. To become angry and scold is a human weakness. But the man or woman who is able to hold the reins over the wild steeds of temper and speech shows divine strength. No matter what may be the provocation to anger and harsh words, behave yourself. By calm silence or by genuine kind words, show that your kindness is more powerful than the other person's ugliness. In the mellow light of divine forgiveness the cumulative darkness even of years of hatred will melt away.

WHAT TO DO IF MISMATED If you are already married, but mismated, try to make the best of the situation if possible. If for the sake of children, or for some other reason, you and your partner want to remain together, try to overcome your mental shortcomings and differences, and let your understanding triumph. Those who can do so will have learned the best lesson in the art of right behavior and the magnetic way of getting

along with others. A man who can conquer a nagging wife by diplomacy, without becoming "henpecked," can win anyone to his side. A woman who can conquer an unfaithful husband by forgiving, unfailing, silent love and by continuing demonstrations of kind, firm activity, can remain always in an impregnable castle of happiness.

If a woman loves her husband, she must forgive all his faults, even unfaithfulness, and should give him sufficient time to recover from his inner weakness by unceasingly pouring out the balm of her unwavering love. Most wives add the chili sauce of burning words and unkind acts to the remorse-wounds of the inwardly penitent, erring husband. Open rebellion results. Misunderstandings should not be allowed to grow to the point of bursting into poisonous ugliness. A wronged wife should mentally hint, by her increasingly loving attitude, that she wants her husband to be healed. When a man is wrong, and he knows that he is wrong, he hates to be told that he is wrong; he resents being labeled, so he rebels.

AVOID HARSH SPEECH Those who would get along peaceably with their mates should refrain from harsh speech; a husband who wants his wife to stop using unpleasant language should control his own tongue first. Harsh words never stop harsh words. Do not make the one that you have to live with hate you. Ungoverned emotion results in divorce and sometimes even in violent death. The way of wisdom lies in silently correcting one's own faults and in removing all the causes that give rise to unkind words, quarrels, and hateful feelings between marriage partners.

Those unhappily married persons who want the Heavenly Father to show them the way out of their difficulties should by all means make up their minds to be kind in thought, word, and deed, even though they may have decided to separate. Above all, each marriage partner should make up his mind not to be ugly and hateful and rough in speech just because his or her mate is so. Whoever abhors ugliness in his mate should not allow a similar mental squallor to soil his own words, actions, or thoughts. Why should two who have to live together annoy each other with increasing misunderstandings? It is better to seal one's lips; stop unkindness in thought, action, and speech; and win over one's mate by silently offering abiding kindness, and by showing sincere courtesy in every action.

Those who must part should do so in kindness; a wronged wife, for example should let an erring mate inwardly acknowledge and repent of his faults rather than openly denounce him. She should write a loving letter expressing the following ideas: "Very dear one, we loved each other once. Let us remember that love again; and since we entered into a marriage partnership in goodwill and with good intentions, and since we failed to make our marriage a success, let us part in kindness and in the memory of that old love. I am leaving in order to preserve my kind thoughts of you forever, for, in the vault of memory, I shall ever hold our past love as deeply sacred."

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE After deep meditation, practicing the techniques you have been taught in former Lessons, remain for a long time with the joy of the Father; then concentrate at the point between the eyebrows and mentally repeat before going to bed or upon waking:

"Father, we came together in love; teach us to live together in love or if it is Thy will, teach us to part in love and understanding."

DO NOT BE OVERSENSITIVE OR "TOUCHY" Sensitiveness is due to lack of control over the nervous system. Sometimes a thought runs in the mind and the nerves rebel against it. Even if there is good reason for being excited, one should not be touchy or become emotional. He who controls himself in such a situation is master of himself. If we are to grow, we must not be touchy or harbor self-pity. Such moods only increase the psychology of being sensitive. An oversensitive person frequently suffers in vain: generally nobody has any idea that he has a grievance, much less what it is. It is best therefore to remove by self-mastery the cause that produces such sensitiveness.

One should be able to control his moods instantly. To let the fire of sensitiveness eat into one's heart, and to keep it smoldering there, will burn away the fibers of inner peace. A wise person controls his sensitivity, knowing that it is nothing but an agency of metaphysical Satan trying to destroy the soul's peace. Whenever a mood of sensitiveness visits the heart, its static prevents you from hearing the divine song of healing peace that plays within through the radio of the soul. Whenever sensitiveness appears, one should try to conquer the emotion. The person of extreme sensitivity often foolishly blames others for the hurt he feels; he should try to understand that his hurt is self-inflicted. It is better to blame oneself for being oversensitive than to be angry with others. That is the way to rid oneself of oversensitivity.

CONSTRUCTIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE CRITICISM There are two kinds of criticism: constructive and destructive. When criticism is administered to those who resent correction, it may be called "destructive criticism." Constructive criticism consists in giving soul-awakening advice to friends who want our help. Constructive criticism is given in a loving way. It is not easy to criticize others rightly, accurately, and kindly until one can first accurately criticize himself. The art of criticism consists in picturing clearly the faults of others, and in looking at those faults with a sympathetic attitude, as if they belonged to oneself; only then is one's criticism justifiable.

Mental criticism is worse than criticism by words. It is futile and self-harming to be inwardly critical of others. One should cleanse the mind of inwardly disturbing adverse thoughts of others. If they want your criticism, use a look or a hint to criticize lovingly; but use as few words as possible. A criticism should not be repeated more than twice. Loving criticism should

be left as a seed to germinate in the soil of recipient souls. If they want to cultivate the seed, it is their privilege. We can't force others to do what we want them to do, but sometimes by correct and just criticism, by doing or saying the right thing at the right time, we can help people to a great extent.

It is when the scales of ignorance fall away from our inner eyes that we are able to measure exactly the good points and the weak points of others. Then we learn not only to be tolerant, to worship only what is good, but to be indifferent to what is psychologically unwholesome. Many persons think that they should pity themselves when criticized, and that sensitiveness brings a little relief. But such people are like the opium addict; every time he takes opium he becomes more steeped in the habit. Be as firm as steel against sensitiveness.

We forgive ourselves under all circumstances. Why should we not forgive others under all circumstances? When we are mistaken, we do not like to advertise our faults; but when anyone else is mistaken, we like to point out his or her faults publicly right away. Only when divine love possesses the heart may one become a divine critic. Such a one is really a divine healer who courageously undertakes the unpleasant responsibility of correcting the spiritual children God sends to him, with only one object in view: to make them better, and hence happy.

~~Criticism is harmful when it brings resentment and excites the emotions,~~ blinding the person who is criticized. On the other hand, a person who becomes blind with emotion just because he is criticized only shows that he is a weak individual. It would take a long time for such a person to see what is right. We should not resent the criticism of true friends. We should prefer to be criticized by those who love us, rather than to continue in error and thus invite the merciless carping criticism of those who may dislike us. It is better to have one's faults corrected by friends than to let them be discovered by one's enemies. It is a blessing to be corrected by a friend, for he means to heal.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Through gravitational magnetic pulls, Divine Love is coaxing all matter to melt into Its bosom of space. Divine Love is flooding through the sluice gates of hearts to inundate and destroy all ignorance-erected boundaries of individual, social, patriotic, and human-love attachments. Then Cosmic Love draws all hearts back to rest and be rejuvenated in Its bosom of healing, silent, eternal love.

When human love is constantly diverted by new faces, it breaks itself on rocks of attachment. Man should seek satisfaction in drinking divine love from the well of one heart alone. Finding in one true heart the ever-increas-

ing love divine, the human heart quenches its thirst. Drinking divine love in one heart, the soul then learns to drink divine love through all hearts. Divine love finally tastes its own nectar everywhere in everything through its sweet lips of omnipresence.

THE STRANGE MUSICIAN

In the heart of Calcutta, India, there once lived an eminent musician. Music-loving students from far and near came to take lessons from him. This famous man had keen psychological perception, and treated his students according to their individual moods, character, and previous training.

One day two young men, John and Jelico, visited him at his studio. John was the son of a very rich man, while Jelico came from a comparatively poor family. The master happened to know the financial status of both these students. After greeting them, he inquired: "John, have you ever studied any music?" "Not at all, sir," said John, "but I would like to study; pray tell me, what would be the charge per lesson?" The music master replied: "I shall accept you as a student at ten dollars per lesson."

Then the teacher turned to Jelico and said: "Pray tell me, have you ever studied music?" "Yes, sir," he answered, "I have dabbled in quite a little music, but I don't seem to get any musical selection right. I applied myself only absentmindedly, however, and became discouraged. Now I am willing to learn. How much will you charge me, please?"

After a considerable period of silence, the master said, "I can take you, but I shall have to charge you twenty dollars per lesson." Jelico protested the injustice of charging him more than the rich man's son, but the master remained firm.

"Son," the maestro explained, "I shall have to charge you ten dollars for training you to forget the incorrect musical knowledge you have now, and ten dollars more for teaching you what I know."

AFFIRMATION

I will always hold the unfading torchlight of continuous kindness, in the hope that I may warm the hearts of those who misunderstand me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE SPLINTERS OF THY LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The splinters of Thy love
Lie strewn in many a heart:
The little fragments of Thy love,
Descended from far above,
I find spread here and there;
 and charmed I start
To seize all and with care collect.
I feel as I reflect
That I have certes seen somewhere
Thy whole unbroken love
 that's everywhere;
And with devotion strong
I weld my varied collection
Of tiny bits of parental
 and friendly love in one
To match it with Thine own.

PRAYER

With the love of all human loves, I have come to love Thee, Thou God of all loves. Thou art the protecting father. Thou art the little child, lisping to his parents. Thou art the mother, showering infinite kindnesses. Teach me to love Thee with all pure love, for Thou art the fountain of love, heavenly and earthly. Bathe me in the spray of all loves.

HOW TO DEVELOP CHILD AND PARENTAL LOVE

God is perfect love. Man, who is patterned after Him, is reflected divine love. Human beings were propelled out of God, but He kept His matter-attracted children tied to Him with long invisible strings of love, so that He could gradually pull them to Him again. When man is selfish and wicked, forgetful of his true love nature, he runs away from God. When he truly and purely loves, he automatically and willingly follows the invisible tugging strings of divine love toward God. Though God sent His mortal children far away from Him, still He kept the gates of love open so that they might return to His home of perfection.

Through His ever-watchfulness and prophetic sagacity, God foresaw that His freedom-drunk naughty little children would misuse their liberty; but God so loved the world, that He insisted upon becoming the wise father to protect helpless or erring children. Not satisfied with His fatherly calculating reason He became the mother to love the erring child unconditionally, in the hope of making the child use his own free will to repent and return home through the avenue of divine love. He became the child to purify the conjugal love of man and woman and expand it beyond the boundaries of two selfish hearts. Human love expands when it flows from two parental hearts into the third heart of the child.

This does not mean, however, that it is necessary to marry in order to perfect human love into God's unconditional divine love. Human love may be changed into divine love by the superior way of soul wedlock with the Spirit in the temple of meditation. The soul loves to meditate, for in that lies its greatest joy: communion with the loving Spirit. Hence, all persons who meditate devoutly come to manifest pure love.

RELATION BETWEEN
PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The relation between parents and children is not adventitious, nor merely domestic, nor instinctive; it is a metaphysical, inexorable ordinance of God. He is love; He created man through love of two souls, and through love alone can man find his way back to God. Parental and filial love is the laboratory in which human love must be metamorphosed into the perfect

love: the invisible silent God begins first to manifest in conjugal love, and this feeling then becomes purified in the sacrificing, expanding love for the child.

If parents and children will remember that their relation is not fortuitous, but is due to a divine plan, then they will understand why they should foster, by their mutual kindness, the expansion of divine love in their hearts during their earthly training. Mutual regard is the altar of unitedness upon which God's love is manifested.

Parents and children should always avoid undue familiarity. They should base their relation not upon force or authority, but upon love. Those who fill their hearts with unkindness can never learn to love God, for God is love, and true unselfish love is developed at the parental-filial altar of love. The echo of God's love is drowned out when harshness of speech, unkindness, wrath, selfishness and distrust vibrate in the body temple.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN Ideally, parents should look upon each child of theirs as an honored temple wherein their conjugal love will be purified and expanded into filial love. They should feel that they are serving a little god residing in the infant-temple, and the child should be able to look upon his parents as the visible representatives of God on earth.

Parents should not angrily scold their children in the presence of others. Mothers and fathers who are harsh or unkind to their children, owing to a lack of self-control, or to bad habits, are hindering God from expanding His love from the parental heart to the heart of the child. Continuous harsh treatment to make an unruly child submissive, may precipitate in him ugliness and malevolent behavior. Give strong, loving suggestions to an erring little one. And give only necessities, not luxuries, to children. Do not make them slaves of "things" or of bad habits. Every father, as well as every mother, is responsible for the way he disciplines his children. Parents' discipline should be firm, but kind, and parents should not hesitate to discipline the child if it is wrong. Discrimination is necessary, to understand what is best for the child. Children need to learn how to behave in all situations.

Do not become too seriously attached to any thing or any one. A mother should strive to consider every child as God's loaned to her to care for; then, if bereaved, she will be able to say: "My child is taken away from me that God may glorify him. I am happy for his sake." When the mother can withdraw personal feeling, or attachment, then she understands what true love is. Attachment never fosters love. It destroys love. Attachment is the source of our misery. You can be in just as much misery over losing a hut as in losing a palace; you might even be more miserable losing a hut, if your attachment to it is strong.

CHILDREN'S DUTY TO THEIR PARENTS

Children should consider their parents as the gates through which God's love first flows in to them.

Those who disobey and dishonor their parents are rebels against the progress of divine love. Even if thoughtlessly scolded by his parents before others, a child should never be disrespectful and resentful. Parents and children who thus torment each other persecute the meek, though almighty, God within themselves.

The child's outer environment in early life is especially important in that it can either stimulate or stifle his inner instinctive environment. A child is born with prenataally determined mental tendencies. These are stimulated if the outer environment is like the one that created his inner tendencies; but if the outer environment is different, the inner tendencies are likely to be suppressed. For example, an instinctively bad child may be influenced and made good by good company, whereas an instinctively good child placed in good company would, no doubt, increase his goodness. Your outer environment, in conjunction with your inner tendencies created by old habits of past lives, controls your life and molds your tastes and new habits.

CHARACTER BUILDING

Children may have either very good or very evil tendencies, or they may evince only a slight preponderance of good or a slight preponderance of evil tendencies. There are very few children who have good and evil tendencies exactly balanced. There is always a little less evil than good, or vice versa. The law of nature is that if you are a little less evil than good, your evil will be taken away by the greater power of good; if you have a little less good than evil, your little good will gradually be absorbed by the greater number of evil tendencies, unless you use your will power to counteract these tendencies. If you have more evil than good, then you will accumulate still more evil; if you have more good than evil, you will attract still more good by the greater power of good. If you have many evil habits, you will strengthen them by attracting evil unto yourself; and if you have very little evil within you, then that little evil will be taken away by the power of your stronger good habits.

Through reaction to our outer environment from early childhood on, our inner mental environment is formed. This inner mental environment of thought and mental habits forms the tendencies which almost automatically guide our actions. If a boy lives where people abhor drink, he forms a dislike of drink; even if he later goes to live where people drink a great deal, he will remain uninfluenced by it.

Wherever you are, remain awake and alert, like good photographers, with your thought, will, perception, and intuition ever ready to take pictures of exemplary conduct and to ignore bad behavior. Your highest happiness lies in being ever ready in your desire to learn, and in your desire to behave properly.

Selfishness is an evil that does great harm. It must be strictly avoided. It cramps the omnipresent soul in the prison of limitation. Selfishness defeats its own purpose. Instead of producing happiness, it produces misery, and often--with the fog of desire for imperfect, limited happiness--it shuts out the desire for the perfect unlimited happiness in God's omnipresence.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Forget your family tree and nationality; acknowledge only your membership in the human family. Remember and always feel that you are one of God's children, as all others are. Your duty on earth is to live like a vast-minded child of God and show other deluded sleeping brethren that they also are God's children.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WILL POWER IN CHILDREN

The baby's will is called physiological will. When a baby cries, it usually means that he wants something. He cries because of some physical discomfort. And so the first expression of will is the physiological will. The will that is aroused as a result of a physiological condition is called "physiological will." ~~When the baby grows older and obediently acts upon the mother's requests, it is exhibiting mechanical or unthinking will. The baby's will is guided by the mother's will.~~

I shall tell you of an experience when I was a child. When I was in the stage of mechanical will I always did just as Mother told me and I was labeled "an angel." But one day when I was taken in my carriage to a drugstore I saw there some little orange-colored candies. I was very much attracted to them and asked my nurse to buy some for me. He wouldn't do it. For the time being I remained quiet and he took me home.

I had my dinner and afterward I told my mother I wanted some orange-colored candy. She said: "No, go to bed." Then after a little while I repeated: "Mother, I want the little orange-colored candies." Mother's answer was a little more emphatic: "No! Go to sleep!" I cried louder: "I want my orange-colored candies!" I kept up my adamant demand until finally Mother had to go and wake up the drugstore owner and get those candies for me. I was supremely happy. I enjoyed a most wonderful feeling, because I had for the first time used my own will to accomplish a desire. But I remember I was branded the next morning as a naughty baby because I had insisted on having my own way instead of acceding to my parents' wishes.

Mothers, don't break the will of your children by denying them all the time just because they are babies. When I made up my mind that I wanted

something that I knew could do me no harm, the members of my family gave in. But to this day I have always listened to reason; when I was wrong, I was willing to be corrected. But when I was right, even if the whole family stood against me, I remained firm. Mothers, remember to train the will of your children. When they become self-willed about something that is right, don't call them bad. Don't curtail their freedom when it is not really necessary, but give suggestions with love and understanding of their own little desires. If you try to save time by severely punishing them, you will lose time. Reason with the child whenever possible and then say nothing. Let him get his own little hard knocks and he will then understand and will learn much sooner.

Parents often impose their own will on children. When I was a child I didn't like to pray as I was taught, because I didn't understand it. But when I learned how to pray with my soul, my family listened respectfully to what I said. Give freedom to your child and only suggest with love what you think is right, because the will power of a child should be developed. The best way to do this is to teach the child to meditate. In that way he begins to attune his will to the divine will, and so his will power develops in the right way, by self-control.

After the manifestation of mechanical will power in the child, the blind will power of youth begins to manifest. This will power is like a gun that is shot off in mid-air. It gives no result except a loud noise. Very young people blindly waste the dynamite of will. Then comes the exploding will, when the youth deliberately explodes his will on passions and reckless acts. After he gets a few knocks, he learns again.

Parents should help their children to learn from their experiences that happiness is to be found only in self-control--in being the master of one's emotions and actions, not their slave. Youth needs to know that true freedom means the capacity to control oneself in any situation, not indulgence in explosive acts of passion and recklessness that hurt others and often destroy the doer.

The example of self-discipline, wisdom, and love in the parents helps the child to shape an ideal by which he may live happily and constructively. Parents should meditate regularly, that the love they express towards their children may be a true expression of the unconditional forgiving love of the Divine Mother, and that the discipline they give their children may be a true expression of the protective wisdom of the Heavenly Father.

AFFIRMATION

I shall behold God Himself bestowing on me His divine love through the love of all those who love me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE MIRROR OF SILENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

God is the fountain of wisdom and of
radiant inspiration flowing through all souls.
He is the fragrance oozing from the incense
vase of all hearts. He is a garden of celes-
tial blossoms and bright thought-flowers.
He is the love that inspires our love-dreams.

I feel Him percolating through my heart,
as through all hearts, through the pores of the
earth, through the sky, through all created
things. He is the eternal motion of joy. He
is the mirror of silence in which all creation
is reflected.

--From "Metaphysical Meditations"

PRAYER

O Lord, let every thought, every expression, every ambition, be ornamented by Thee.

HOW TO OVERCOME THE NEUROSIS OF STAGE FRIGHT

Stage fright is a form of fear which in many people causes such nervousness that they are not able to act naturally. If you are shy and have stage fright, get your mind quiet and remember that all the power you need is within you-- all the power to convince people, all the power to give the direct truth. The particular kind of truth you want to give is in the Infinite Spirit, which functions through you.

Even the dramatically inarticulate person can learn to talk or play well by constant practice. If one thoroughly rehearses his part and meticulously remembers it, he should be able to play well on the stage. Even actors with exceptional ability feel a sort of heart-choking fright immediately before their entrance on the stage, not only at the opening performance of a play, but every night of its run. However, when an actor plays a part over and over again, every day for months, he feels at home on the stage and loses stage fright completely as soon as he begins to speak. Confidence that you would not and you could not even dream of making a fool of yourself before an audience should bring to you that self-assurance by which you manage somehow to act well on the stage.

The quality of your audience and the enthusiasm of your friends can be compared to calves at the udder of the mother cow: the better the calf, the more milk it extracts; the better the audience, the greater the response from the actor. As the milk comes out more and more when the calf pulls harder at the udder, so also an appreciative large audience brings out the best in the artist. But just as a diseased cow does not give any milk no matter how the calf pulls, so also defective actors cannot produce a worthwhile performance even though they may have an appreciative audience.

CAUSES OF STAGE FRIGHT Stage fright is caused primarily by inexperience; secondarily it is due to the lack of mastery over one's own dramatic technique, or to nervousness, or an inferiority complex.

Stage fright often arises when you are not convinced of your own ability, and when your dramatic skill is not stimulated by public appreciation. Great artists consider that half the success of the battle is due to perfect technique; the rest is won because of the confidence of the people in the ability of the artist.

Remove the causes which generate stage fright. They are:

1. Lack of frequency in your performances.
2. Timidity.
3. Nervousness
4. Inferiority complex.
5. Lack of complete mastery over your technique of acting.
6. Overeating before a performance.
7. Drinking, or using narcotics.

HOW TO OVERCOME STAGE FRIGHT To let your stage fright get the best of you is ridiculous. Just feel you value your honor before your audience so much that you will not succumb to the influence of stage fright. Conceal every sign of it; act as if you never had it, and do your best.

There are several ways of overcoming stage fright when entering upon the stage. For instance, if you are making a speech, try to imagine you are talking to those who know less about the subject than you do, and hence cannot criticize. Think of them as a group of children or naive adults. Or if you are on the dramatic stage, imagine you are addressing an empty hall, and just rehearsing your act before an imaginary audience. If you use the above hints, you are bound to get some good results. Success comes by grasping it, and ~~not by just waiting for it.~~

You should repeatedly rehearse the dramatic part you are to play until you can act your part automatically without effort, as oil flows out of a barrel. Don't make a great deal of fuss about your acting. Try to play naturally many times before your own people, at small clubs, in private homes, or wherever there is a chance for you to display your dramatic qualifications, until perfection is reached. Then, after you gain the applause of many small groups of people, make your big debut.

SPECIAL EXERCISES FOR OVERCOMING STAGE FRIGHT Stage fright and timidity come in some degree even to the great artists immediately before a performance, owing to protracted expectation. "I am going to have to impress all those people," one thinks. Then that feeling wears off as the artist merges his ego in the acting. Stage fright and timidity should be supplanted by deep attention, concentration, and calmness just before appearing on the stage. Practice the following:

1. Deep breathing: Breathe deeply a few times, concentrating at the point between the eyebrows, just before the performance. This will remove timidity and insure self-confidence.
2. Mentally rehearse very clearly how masterfully, joyously, and eagerly you are going to perform and how you are going to enthrall your audience.

3. Nervousness can be removed by tensing and relaxing. Take a bath a few hours before the performance. If time is limited, wash all the body openings with cold water in lieu of a bath.
4. Humbleness is good and magnetic and will draw kind attention and sympathy from your audience, whereas pride will cause sneers and apathy. An inferiority complex will cause pity, increase any disbelief in your ability, and draw a lack of hearty response. It will put a lid on your powers and prevent their manifesting and doing their duty; it will cause you to underestimate your real ability and will destroy whatever dramatic faculty you may possess. So, down with an inferiority complex! You should always keep happy and contented just before your debut by maintaining cool confidence in your ability and a conviction that the outcome of your performance will be good, owing to God's working with you. Before your entrance, make up your mind to do your very utmost to make people appreciate your performance.
5. Get the best teacher to acquaint you with the best technique of acting or speaking or singing; and then, with all your inspiration and attention, master the technique as your own. Then keep on practicing and improving your technique in rehearsals before a critical teacher, in small clubs, and so forth. Don't take criticism to heart and become discouraged. Use criticism as a stimulant to your art, removing all the faults in your performance for which you are criticized.
6. Eat very sparingly, say at 2 p.m. for an 8 o'clock performance. A stomach loaded with food absorbs some of the power of attention that should be used fully in the performance. An artist over-gorged with food is conscious of food all through his performance, and cannot do justice to his acting. Speaking, singing, or acting on a full stomach also causes indigestion; it inhibits the vocal cords and breath control. The energy and mind, instead of fully working in the vocal cords, become diverted to the stomach nerves to perform the work of digestion.

That is why even in deep meditation a food-loaded stomach interferes with the attention. In meditation, the energy and mind should be relaxed and sent toward God, and this becomes difficult when part of the energy begins to flow toward the stomach to perform digestion.

Sleeping when the stomach is full is bad, for some subconscious attention and energy try to work on the undigested food. A disturbed or dream-tortured sleep is the result. The mind and energy want to rest, and at the same time they are conscious of their duty

to the food in the stomach. Hence, rest is disturbed and digestion does not proceed properly.

7. Drinking or using narcotics drugs the mind, the very machine that operates the will, reason, and emotion necessary for good performances. One should be drunk with inspiration instead of intoxicants. Inspiration consciously stimulates feeling, will, reason, and all the senses to do their best willingly, with the feeling of joy. Intoxicants obliterate consciousness and are disastrous to real artistic development. Inspiration is very expanding. It is a better motivating force for artistic work than intellectual watchfulness and meticulous carefulness for an exact technical performance. One should be watchful first and then intoxicated with inspiration, before he performs. To such an artist stage fright is a myth.

But remember, even if you are a great artist, you should practice your technique with intelligence, inspiration, and God intoxication every day. No matter what you can do, remember that God is the Source and the Flood flowing through all the channels of your powers. Knowing this, try to feel, in whatever good work you do, that God is working through you.

THINK OF GOD WHILE ACHIEVING

If a wave suddenly discovered that it is really the ocean, it would see that the ocean temporarily had become its small self, and many other waves as well. So, when you perform every activity with the thought of God, He will come to you and you will realize that He is the Ocean of life which has become the tiny wave of your life, and that you are one with the Ocean. That is the active way of knowing God. Think of God before you achieve, while you are achieving, and after you have achieved. Then God will reveal Himself.

Let God work through you. That is the best part of devotion. If He is walking through your feet, working through your hands, and feet, and will, then you will know Him. But you must work. You must prefer good activity to bad activity, and you must prefer God-reminding activity to any activity without the thought of Him.

Remember, you are a child of God, one with the Supreme, and when you know that, all things will be added unto you. That is the highest law of God.

"I made thee free long ago, but thou dost not think so. Dance of death or dance of life, know that these dualities come from Me, and rejoice. What more dost thou want than that thou hast Me?"

AFFIRMATION

On the throne of silent thoughts the God
of Peace is directing my actions today.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE WANT TO BEHOLD THEE AS THOU ART

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, open the windows of the stars, open the windows of the blue sky, open the windows of scenic beauties, open the windows of minds and hearts, open the windows of our souls, and show us Thy face hiding behind all windows of nature and within all human minds.

How long wilt Thou remain hidden, only partly revealing Thyself through the twinkling stars, through the winds and mighty sunshine and through our reason? Divine Father, no longer are we satisfied merely with suggestions of Thy presence. We want to behold Thee as Thou art.

Burst the bonds of our souls; take away the veils of the sky and of our delusion-clouded minds. All the homage of our beings, the homage of our souls, we lay at Thy feet. We worship Thee in the portals of morning, and in the tabernacle of the night.

Father, as we sit quietly, one by one we close all the doors of our senses lest the aroma of the rose or the song of the nightingale distract our attention from Thee. Come into the temple to fulfill our hopes. Thou art the salve for our lacerated hopes. Heal us of our woes. Make us whole in Thee.

PRAYER

Make us little children, O Father, even as Thy kingdom contains such. Thy love in us is perfection. Even as Thou art whole, so are we whole. In body and mind we are healthy, even as Thou art. Thou art perfect. We are Thy children.

THE EVOLUTION OF HEALING METHODS--Part 1

Diseases may be classified as physical, mental, or spiritual. Maladies that affect the blood, bones, brain, nerves, and tissues are physical. Mental disease springs from the invasion of the mental bacteria of fear, worry, anger, dissipation, greed, and bad habits. Ignorance of God, or our relationship with Him, is the cause of spiritual disease. It is the sin of all sins, according to the Hindu scriptures, because it is the root from which all other miseries spring. Lack of inner peace, want of harmony with one's fellow beings, and bewilderment about the meaning and purpose of life are some of the spiritual diseases.

But our concern here is with methods of physical healing. All methods of healing are conditional, and incidental to the existence of disease. Prevention rather than cure of diseases should be the desire of humanity. Remember the old story of the Chinese who paid their doctors to keep them well and made the doctors pay the bills if they became sick. A worldwide adoption of this rule would insure great progress in the prevention and healing of physical and mental disease.

DEPENDENCE OF MAN'S BODY UPON COSMIC FORCES What is it that heals? Is it medicine, X ray, massage, or the mind? If it is any of these, why don't they heal all diseases? Can medicine or mind heal a dead man of disease? Why not? Because life force is the only supreme, invariable power by which any or all methods of healing can be made effective. A method of healing is inferior or superior insofar as it is capable of rousing or stimulating the inactive life force in any diseased body part, thus "electrocuting" the disease. All methods of healing are really indirect ways of rousing the life energy, which is the true and direct healer of all diseases.

The conception of man as a battery that is recharged by an electrical force or prana, as the Hindus call it, is in line with the facts expounded centuries ago by the sages of India, and is confirmed today by modern scientific research. It is the life energy, the cosmic electrical force, which cures in all cases. An understanding of this point is of far-reaching significance, for while it will not make a natural diet seem any the less important, it does establish a consciousness in man's mind of the identity of his own life with a

cosmic life or undying all-embracing force, and destroys the false belief that life is solely dependent upon outward sources, such as food.

It may thus be seen that the modus operandi of man is not solely by means of nerves, muscles, and bones--a dead man has these too. The difference between a dead body and a living one is the absence or presence of this cosmic life force. Living man is so because life energy sparkles in the bulb of the body--in ears, eyes, all the senses and in all the organs such as the stomach, liver, and brain.

That method which can directly and quickly rouse the life energy to effect physical healing I term "life therapy," or direct healing by the rays of the inner life force. In all forms of muscular exercise the concentration is on the muscles and not on the force that moves in the muscles. What is this force moving through the motor nerves into the muscles? What is the force in the sensory nerves, carrying sensations of touch, smell, and so forth, into the brain? What is the force that works the pump of the heart, moves the diaphragm, and carries on the process of digestion through the release of the digestive juices in the stomach and the peristaltic action of the intestines? Life energy. It is by concentration on and direction of this dynamic life force, by will, to any part of the body, that healing of disease can be effected, and not by concentration on the passive agents upon which the life force acts.

ALL MATTER
CHARGED WITH
LIFE BY CONSCIOUS
COSMIC RAYS

Hindu scriptures and ancient Aryan scientist-sages of India long ago promulgated the theory that all matter was charged with life by conscious cosmic rays. In accordance with this reasoning I maintain that the human body is similar to an automobile battery. Its twenty-seven thousand billion cells are all little batteries, depending upon the principal batteries of the brain, which in turn are recharged from the medulla oblongata.

Just as an automobile battery depends for its life upon two sources, chemicals and an electrical charge, so the body battery depends for its existence upon two sources:

1. The "chemicals" of food, water, sunshine, and oxygen.
2. The "charge" of life force and consciousness.

The latter constitute the primary indispensable condition of life, while the former are secondary.

Adding chemicals and water to a dead battery will not revive it. Similarly, if you put a dead man out in the sunshine, stuff his stomach with good food, and inflate his lungs with oxygen, still he will not revive. His body battery is dead. Although food is one of the essentials of physical existence, life

itself is directly charged into the sperm from some unknown cosmic source.

It is when this life electricity begins to get low that food is of little value. Some people say: "I follow every hygienic and dietary rule possible, yet my health is failing." Such a person has never learned to recharge his body battery from within, and has depended only upon external sources for his health.

Chemicals cannot help a dying battery; it cannot function without being electrically recharged. It is electricity reacting on the chemicals that constitutes the life of a battery. Similarly, a cosmic electrical force is the direct source of life in man. This power converts food, oxygen, and sunshine into living energy. This force has tremendous intelligence that enables it to convert food materials into different forms of bodily tissue: osseous, nervous, adipose, epithelial, and others. Minus life force, food is powerless to support life. As mankind advances spiritually and mentally, he will no longer have to rely upon this indirect method of receiving energy by transmutation of food elements. The future food of man will be rays absorbed directly from within or from nature.

Electricity and rays are finer in nature than solids or liquids, and therefore a more subtle force for healing. These finer forces affect the electronic constituency of the body and harmonize wrong vibratory conditions, which medicines are too gross to reach. Rays of life energy can penetrate into the germ-disturbed atomic composition of affected cells, where medicinal and body liquids cannot.

When Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me" (Luke 8:46), he meant by "virtue" in this instance the life force. Life energy had gone out of Jesus and electrocuted the disease of the person who touched him. Then he said, to the woman who was healed, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 8:48). That is, she had healed herself by autosuggestion. There are various healing methods that can be used, and different techniques are given from time to time in these Lessons. In one form of healing you will be able to feel the life force in your arms, and learn how to project the current consciously, and with feeling, through your arms and hands (Lesson 139). If you can feel the life current in your body when you are directing it toward someone else, naturally you will have greater faith in that healing power.

Another method of healing follows. First, wrinkle your eyebrows together a little, then close your eyes. Think of any person to whom you want to send healing power. Concentrate at the point between your eyebrows and mentally say: "Heavenly Father, I will with Thy will. My will is Thy will. With Thine omnipresent will, O Father, I will with all my heart, with all my soul, that this person be healed." While saying this, think that a current is going through the point between your eyebrows into the point between the eyebrows of the person you are trying to help. Feel that you are sending a current from your spiritual eye into the spiritual eye of the person you wish to be healed.

Concentrate deeper and you will feel heat at the point between the eyebrows. Feeling this heat is proof that your will power is developing. Concentrate still deeper. Mentally say: "With Thy will I send a flash of Cosmic Energy. Father, it is there." This should be practiced from fifteen to twenty minutes. While you are doing this, your will power develops; and this developed will power will be with you continuously, no matter what happens, to aid yourself and others when needed.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Change your thoughts if you wish to change your circumstances. Since you alone are responsible for your thoughts, only you can change them. You will want to change them when you realize that each thought creates according to its own nature. Remember that the law works at all times and that you are always demonstrating according to the kind of thoughts you habitually entertain. Therefore, start now to think only those thoughts that will bring you health and happiness.

Thinking, reading, and repeating statements of truth with deep attention will help to clear away negation and to establish a positive attitude in your mind. Repeat your prayers and affirmations with deep concentration until you establish a habit of thought, until it becomes as natural for you to think in the right way as it previously was for you to think negatively.

Thoughts of fatigue shut off the supply of energy. Cosmic energy, through the will, feeds the medulla oblongata, which in turn feeds the five spinal plexuses. The life force in the plexuses carries on the telephonic work of the five senses through the sensory nerves, and the work of the muscles and joints through the motor nerves. The same life principle charges the circulation, vitalizes each blood cell, and feeds every nerve, all of which in turn recharge the other cells of the body. As the cells are but condensed will and energy, they can be instantaneously renewed by the power of your strong unflinching will. Therefore, you should never say or think that you are tired; by so doing you become twice as tired and paralyze your will power, the very instrument that must be active in order to draw cosmic energy into your body.

THE ROSE PLANT OF LIFE

Can we make a half-dead rose plant of life bloom again? The rose usually dies on the bed of beauty, yet some become worm-eaten and encounter a premature ugly death. We want our lives to bloom with good actions, to be fragrant with happiness, and to live forever in the memories of those who appreciate us. Man's rose plant of happiness does not have to die, devoured by poverty, sickness, or sorrow.

To guard a rose plant, we must attend to it properly with much digging, watering, feeding, and guarding of it from pests and chill. The rose plant of happiness can grow only in the deep fertile soil of peace. It cannot thrive in the hard stony soil of an unfeeling human mentality. We must constantly dig into peace with the spade of good actions. We must keep our happiness plant well watered with our spirit of love and service. We can only be happy by making others happy.

The real food for our rose tree of happiness can be supplied only through meditation and actual contact with God in daily life. Without contact with the Infinite Source, from which all our human faculties and inspirations spring, we can never grow perfectly and completely.

AFFIRMATION

I shall recognize all disease as the result of my transgressions against health laws and I shall try to undo the evil by following the right diet, by eating less, by fasting, by exercising more, and by right thinking.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DEATH'S REPLY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Thine astral airplane of earthly parting
came to take my soul away. I wondered through
what starry vaults I was to soar, to what strange
lands I was to travel.

I questioned the mystic emissary of cosmic
law. Soundlessly he answered:

"I am the pilot of ever evolving life--often
mistakenly called Terrible Death. I am thy
brother, uplifter, redeemer, friend--unloader
of thy gross burden of body troubles. I come to
fetch thee away from the valley of thy broken
dreams to a wondrous highland of light, to which
poison vapors of sorrow cannot climb.

"I have removed thy soul bird from the cage
of flesh attachment. Long imprisonment behind
bars of bones madest thee used to the cage, but
unwillingly; thou didst always yearn for liberty.
Now, cast away fear; thou hast won thine astral
freedom!

"O transitory visitor to Earth, re-enter the
beauteous skies! Explore once more thine eternal
home!"

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Conscious, Cosmic Life! Let me feel that Thou art the electricity of my life, which moves the machinery of my bones, nerves, and muscles. In every heartthrob, every breath, every outburst of vital activity, teach me to feel Thy power.

THE EVOLUTION OF HEALING METHODS--Part 2

MENTAL HEALING Mental power is of paramount importance as a method of healing because mind is the governor of all living cells. Without mind the cells could not exist, just as they could not live without food. A man kept unconscious, even though artificially fed and exercised, could not live. So we may say that ordinarily man cannot live (1) without food and (2) without consciousness. Of course there are exceptional cases, for example that of Giri Bala and other saints who live without food; and it is known that yogis can live for long periods in sabikalpa samadhi, in which no outward consciousness is present. But it is true that the average man cannot live without food and without exercising his conscious mind. (On this plane the employment of the conscious mind means "living" or working out the lessons we come on earth to learn. A man in unconsciousness cannot be said to be "living.")

If an average man lapses into a coma and remains in a coma for some time, his doctor knows that person's end is near. In occasional exceptional cases in which there has been some damage to certain parts of the brain, the person remains in a coma for years; this is because the disease has not affected any vital area in the brain (the life force is still strong; but the areas ruling the conscious mind have been damaged). But such cases are rare; generally a prolonged lapse into unconsciousness means death.

The intelligent mind has directed the manufacture of every part of the body--the organs and their involuntary functions, the brain and its activity, and so on. Each tissue was made from cells that obeyed the dictates of the instinctive and intelligent mind.

Naturalists have found that crabs and many other forms of life grow anew, after loss, their claws, or other parts of their bodies. But in man we find that the basic cells form their own specialized habits and refuse to obey the mind. Yet, if nature can grow two sets of teeth for a human being, why not a third? Why does not a man's arm grow back again after he loses it? It is owing to generations of wrong mental habits, which have allowed the obstinate basic cells to rule the mind, that body hurts become permanent. The mind has the innate power to heal them all but fails to exert its sovereignty

over the cells that it has developed. In time, science should show us how to convert basic cells back into a plastic condition in which they obey the dictates of the mind for effecting various changes in the body.

Therefore, the mind, which is the creator, designer, architect, and supreme builder in the body, is the ultimate power to effect healing. The materials and parts that make up an automobile are manufactured outside and brought together, but our body parts are all grown from within. The repair of an automobile may be accomplished with parts made and purchased elsewhere. The repair of an injured body part is brought about almost wholly within.

Mental healing may be classified according to four methods: healing by autosuggestion or imagination, by reasoning, by feeling, and by will. The number of mental healers in the West has increased considerably, and they enjoy much success. However, they rarely know their subject--the mind--in the scientific way that a modern and progressive medical man knows his subject--the physical body. The work of Freud, Jung, and other psychotherapists has been a step toward making mental healing more scientific. A thorough knowledge of both mind and body, and their interdependence, is necessary.

Different kinds of mental healing need to be applied to various types of persons. Autosuggestion, for instance, has little effect on the logical and reasoning type of mind. However, all the methods of healing here described may be profitably used according to the faith and mental and physical habits of the patient. There is an order of superiority in the methods. Healing by medicine and surgery has its occasional uses, but habitual dependence on these means enslaves the body to drugs and surgical operations; then it will always demand them, instead of relying upon Nature, or God, who is the real Healer, and who has established the laws of Nature.

Some persons can rid themselves of disease by reasoning thus: a physical sensation can produce pain or a sense of illness only if there is mental acceptance of that sensation. For example, a knife cannot produce sensations of hurt to the body if the mind is "absent" owing to the administration of chloroform; hence that knife-wound pain exists only in the mind. This thought is sufficient to heal disease in those who are strong in mind and discriminative reason.

Healing through feeling is accomplished when deep emotion overpowers habit and subconscious suggestions of disease. Many cases have been reported of dumb persons suddenly bursting into speech when their emotions were highly aroused, such as when fire or other danger suddenly confronted them. The stimulation of feeling can override disease consciousness in certain types of persons.

Mental unwillingness to work is accompanied by listlessness and lack of

energy. Enthusiasm and willingness go hand in hand with fresh supplies of energy. From these facts, we can see the subtle relationship between will and energy. The greater the will, the more inexhaustible the energy. Without willing, we cannot make any motor movement, or even think, for before we think we must will to think. Total unwillingness to work or move or think would cause death very soon. Similarly, death cannot ensue as long as the "will to live" is present. It is only when man, after an exhausting struggle with disease, relaxes the hold of his will on life, that death can conquer. So omnipotent is the will of man! Will can be trained and developed to draw continuous supplies of life energy into the body to renew it indefinitely.

HEALING THROUGH SPIRITUAL AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations remind the soul of what it already has, and what it has temporarily lost because of forgetfulness. Affirmations are statements of Truth, and are different from begging prayers. Beggars seldom get what they want from the Father, but a reformed son, trying to remember that he is a "son of God," can, by means of affirmations, have anything through the proper application of the vibratory law. First, affirm for wisdom and bliss, then for harmony, then for health, then for true happiness and success for all mankind.

When affirming for any desired end, you must free yourself again and again of all devastating negative thoughts. Thought is the force that runs the complicated cellular machinery of the body as well as the machinery of human destiny and of the entire cosmos. Thoughts carry on all the chemical, psychological, and metabolic functions of the body, just as the thoughts of the general public, and of the politicians especially, shape the destiny of the national machinery.

The perfect thoughts of God keep the cosmos in balance and rhythm. The right thoughts of man expressed in rightly uttered words also set up rhythmic etheric vibrations that initiate proper actions on his part and harmonize all circumstances connected with attainment of the desired result. When you utter "God" again and again, forgetting time and with ever increasing devotion, until your consciousness forgets itself in affirming, at that point you will feel the presence of God.

Words are vibrations of thought. Thoughts are vibrations of power and energy. Even strong words or commands, such as "Wake up," are meaningless if spoken feebly and without a background of latent, vigorous mental force.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR SPECIAL CURES

If you have a tendency to become angry at slight provocation, find the affirmation which has the most meaning for you and repeat it to yourself until your subconscious mind is clear of all tendency to anger and harsh speech. Live a godly life yourself and everyone who crosses your path will be helped just by

association with you. Criticize and reform yourself; that is where your greatest problem lies. Affirm divine calmness and peace, and send out only thoughts of love and goodwill if you want to live in peace and harmony. Never get angry, for anger poisons your system. Try to understand people who cross you, and whenever anybody tries to inflame you, mentally say: "I am too comfortable to be angry. I don't want to be sick with anger." If you are upset, and affirm with anger in your heart: "I am peace, I am peace," your parroting cries will mean nothing; instead of cultivating peace you will develop more anger.

If you affirm: "I am rich," with a belief that you will never be rich, you will remain poor, for your negative thoughts will keep your will paralyzed, making it impotent, unable to initiate the right modus operandi that would yield you the desired result. If you mechanically affirm, thinking, "What is the use of prosperity affirmations anyway?" then of course no positive results will be forthcoming.

For individual practice of affirmations it is better to start in a whisper, or to utter them only mentally, but with deep, ever increasing mental power and conviction. Group affirmations may be started loudly or softly, but at the end should be chanted mentally only for some time, until the words change into vibratory messengers of thought sent forth in the ether to execute their errands on your behalf. In group affirmations it is best for one person to take a single sentence, repeat it and if necessary explain its meaning, cautioning the group ~~about the inefficacy of mechanically uttering words without one-pointed attention to their corresponding meaning.~~

Whether they realize it or not, the members of a church choir generally sing with their concentration mostly on the music and on the pleasure of captivating their listeners. They are not really thinking deeply of God, to whom the song or anthem is addressed. Hence in group singing the leader should see to it that the gathering does not mechanically grind out a song louder and louder, unthinkingly simulating emotion with volume. The words in a song to God should never be sung without devotion. Rather, the devotional thought in a song must be predominant in the singer's consciousness while the sound of the words meekly, gently, softly follows his increasingly warm thought of love for the Lord.

To practice an affirmation, first sit calmly with spine held straight. Stop the conscious mind from being restless. Quiet the fanciful subconscious mind. Invoke the all-powerful superconsciousness by meditating deeply. Then make your affirmation firmly and aloud, or in whispers, or mentally. All affirmations, whether repeated aloud or in whispers or mentally, must be impregnated with ever increasing devotion and concentration. To be thinking of going to a movie while you are again and again uttering "God," is to take the name of the Lord in vain. To say "God" once, with devotion, and increase the devotion with each repetition of His name, is to dive deeper and deeper in the ocean of mind power until you reach a plumbless depth of God perception.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The mind harried by constant worries ages swiftly and makes the body appear old and unhealthy. A smile that cannot be extinguished by any adverse social, financial, or physical condition helps to keep the body looking young, with firm flesh, even if it becomes aged. You should depend more and more upon the limitless supply of the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness and less and less upon the other sources of the body energy. Overeating too will make your body grow old more quickly. The only way to really keep the body rejuvenated is to unite human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation.

THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED BY SUGGESTION

One day a farmer, deep in an interesting conversation with a friend, suddenly looked at the clock and began to foam at the mouth. To the alarmed inquiries of his friend, the farmer said excitedly: "I feel deathly sick. I forgot to bring my opium pills, which I take daily at this hour."

His friend, sensing the seriousness of the situation, quickly assured the farmer that he had some very special opium, which he immediately began in great secrecy to prepare, and soon gave to the grateful man, who, after deeply studying its effect for a few minutes, declared he liked it so much that he wished to use that preparation always. His friend encouraged him to come to his house for the opium from time to time. At the end of a month of interesting experimentation, the friend revealed to the farmer that the pills were not opium, but just simple clay and dark-colored water. His slavery to opium was only imagination-born. Similar instances can be brought to mind of people who are slaves to imaginary diseases and ailments.

AFFIRMATION

God's perfect light is perfectly present in all my body parts. Wherever that healing light is manifest, there is perfection. I am well, for perfection is in me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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O MYSTIC ELECTRICIAN!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Come Thou, O Mystic Electrician! My little soul cottage by the brook of life is in need of repairs.

The nerve wiring has been shaken and torn by the winds of the years. The multi-hued lamps of my senses are no longer effulgent.

O Builder of Bodies, O Divine Dynamo of all cosmic currents of life force! resurrect the deadened wires of my wrecked nerves and infuse them with Thy power, that my senses gleam again with Thy glory.

I am the bulb and Thou art the light within it. The truth and the miracle is this:
Thou art the Bulb and the Light.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to open the eyes of my inner perceptions so that I may behold Thy healing light shining within me, around me.

THE EVOLUTION OF HEALING METHODS -- Part 3

SUBCONSCIOUS METHOD OF HEALING Just before retiring at night, and in the morning immediately after sleep, empty your mind of all restless thoughts. Then, choosing whichever of the following affirmations is suitable, with closed eyes concentrate as instructed and repeat the affirmation, aloud at first, then mentally.

1. Concentrate your vision and feeling in between the eyebrows, and repeat the following three times: "I will, with my own will, which flows from the divine will, to be healthy, to be well, to be prosperous and spiritual, to be well, to be well."
2. Concentrate upon the heartthrob and repeat with devotion and feeling: "Thou art love, Thou art love; I am Thine, Thou art mine, I am Thine, Thou art mine; I am love, I am love; love is healthy, love is perfect; I am healthy, I am love; I am whole, I am perfect."
3. Concentrate upon the navel and imagine a luminous energy there. While sensing this life in the navel, repeat with imagination and devotion: "Thou art life, Thou art strength, Thou art mind and imagination, Thou art thought, Thou art fancy; I am thought, I am fancy. In every way, in every way, I am like Thee, I am like Thee; I am whole, I am like Thee."
4. Concentrate upon the medulla oblongata, and feeling or visualizing the light there, repeat: "Thy cosmic current flows in me, flows in me; through my medulla flows in me, flows in me. I think and will the current to flow, in all my body the current to flow. I am charged, I am cured; I am charged, I am cured. Lightning flash goes through me. I am cured, I am cured!"

CONSCIOUS METHOD OF HEALING

1. Repeat any of the above affirmations during the day or night, before or after meditation. In "Scientific Healing Affirmations" the student will find additional helpful instruction and useful affirmations.
2. By the power of will, send life energy very slowly to the affected part; do this again and again, and feel the healing energy scientifically restoring health. The principle of sending life energy to the various body parts you have learned in Lessons 5 to 9 inclusive which describe the Art of

Energization and the Recharging Exercises.

SUPERCONSCIOUS METHOD OF HEALING Practice Hong-Sau until you rise above breath awareness; then tune yourself to the cosmic vibration of Aum and with increasing intensity of will and highest devotion, concentrating at the point between the eye-brows, float the following convictions to the Cosmic Vibration with a prayer for conscious realization of them. Mentally appeal to the Cosmic Vibration just as you might to your own father.

1. "O Holy Vibration, Thou art I, Thou art I, my soul is Thine, Thy Spirit is mine. Thou art perfect. Thou hast all, I am Thy child, I have all, I have all, I have all. My bouquet of sweetest devotion, my love and highest adoration, I lay before Thee, I lay before Thee. What is mine, that is Thine. What is Thine, that is mine. I pray, with love I pray. Be Thou mine, be Thou mine."
2. "Thou art I, Thou art I; Thou art bliss, I am bliss; Thou art peace, I am peace; Thou art whole, I am whole; Thou art perfect, perfection is mine; Thou art bliss, I am bliss, I am bliss, I am bliss."
3. "Thou art power; I am power. Thou art ever well; I am well, I am well. I am Thy son; I am wise. Father, Thou hast everything; I am Thy child; I have everything. Thou art happy; I am Thy child, therefore I am a happy child. We are Thy children; I wish all to be happy."

Place absolute faith in the Deity of all deities, the Spirit of all spirits. Always undoubtingly believe that His power is working in you, just behind your thoughts, prayers, and convictions, to give infinite strength to heal yourself and others. Acknowledge His working within you in everything, and you will have Him always with you.

HEALING THROUGH CHANTING There are many kinds of healing, each of which can be used in healing physical, mental, or spiritual diseases. Of the different kinds of healing--by medicine, injection, massage, nerve or vertebrae adjustment; by affirmation, imagination, will, or faith--vibratory healing is of the greatest importance. Vibratory healing consists in creating and sending vibrations of life energy to diseased individuals. This may be done internally by mentally projecting energy charged with will power, or externally by the vibrations of chants, intonations of the human voice, and enlivening words, phrases, and affirmations impregnated with superconsciousness.

In connection with singing, chanting, or intoning away physical disease or worry or spiritual ignorance, one must know the law of intonation from high to low, to whisper, to mental, to subconscious, to superconscious chanting. This is the method of converting loud words full of meaning, into realized experiences, of assimilating the truth of a word or words by chanting

aloud and mentally until they become a part of the soul's realization. Better still is to induce the peaceful superconscious state first, and from that state chant mentally or in a whisper, or aloud, as one pleases. Mental chanting is best for individuals. Audible chanting, ranging from low to high, or vice versa, is good in congregations.

Noise affects the human nervous system, weakening this medium through which vital energy is supplied to all the principal organs of the body, the circulatory system, brain, and so forth. With the deterioration of the nervous system, the energy and thermal supply of the blood becomes low, leaving the bodily home open to disease bacteria. On the other hand, harmonious, soul-inspiring and soul-solacing sounds, chants impregnated with superconscious soul force, will power, and faith, awaken the drooping tissues of the nervous system by rousing vital energy in them. Hence the external method of vibrating the voice according to the aforesaid methods can heal all inharmonious conditions of body, mind, and soul. A sincere kind word, an inspired song, a soul-solacing voice of wisdom, have dispelled many sorrows and illumined receptive persons with the light of lasting joy.

The law of repetition should be understood in order to derive the most benefit from chanting. Some Westerners fail to grasp the changing depths of conviction in Hindu chanting and hear in it only a monotonous repetition of words. Of course, repetition of words without understanding their meaning and without deepening feeling and realization is useless. It is all right to repeat just one phrase, such as: "O Father, heal me," or "I am well, for Thou art in me" extemporaneously--as it comes. Repeat it vigorously from low voice to loud, from loud to whisper, and lastly from a whisper to mental affirmations, until one feels that he is repeating the phrase with varying depth of soul feeling--that is, until one finally realizes the meaning of his utterance in every fiber of his being. This is at-one-ment with one's own affirmations through audible and mental chanting. The moment the phrase reaches the superconsciousness and the inner intuitive conviction of the soul, a volley of energy will shoot down through the spine and into the body; the vibration of that current will heal body, mind, and soul, electrocuting physical disease germs, paralyzing mental fears, and conflagrating soul ignorance into ashes.

In the Hindu tantra (Hymnal) scriptures we find the advice that all mystic incantations and seed words have to be revived in the soul of the chanter, vitalized and precisely intoned or chanted in order to produce the desired results. Mere repetition of mantras or incantations without deep feeling does not produce results. Healing affirmations such as: "The Father is in thee, be thou well," in order to be effective must be uttered by one who has felt the Father in himself.

**HEALER AND PATIENT MUST
BE IN PERFECT HARMONY**

Before trying to heal anyone else, consider your power to heal. It is necessary first to develop your power of mental

healing as well as to learn how to obtain a good response to your healing

vibrations in the person whom you wish to help. Sometimes a person says only a word, and the sick one is healed. In that case the receptivity of the patient and the power of the healer were perfectly balanced, which is necessary for success in healing. Although healing power, which is the power of God, may be within you, without the response of the patient it cannot function. A God-realized master can produce healing in an unresponsive person, but it is much more difficult; and only a master would be aware of the karmic circumstances that would make such a healing possible.

Mind is the master-creator of the body, but a rebellious body will not obey the mind. When a person has already enslaved his mind to physical processes, that enslaved mind cannot heal; it must be made cognizant once more of its own power by one who is not enslaved. When you plow the mind of such a person with your conviction and Self-realization, you make that person ready. Then introduce your healing power.

UPON WHAT DOES
THE POWER OF
HEALING DEPEND?

The power of healing depends upon the awakening of life force. In mental suggestion, the will of the healer is forced upon the imagination of the patient, which arouses the sick person from his mental stupor, and excites his life force; that aroused life force produces healing. Different mental healing processes arouse different degrees of life force in the body. Mental power that can awaken the life force instantaneously will produce instantaneous healing; but usually it takes a long time to disabuse a patient's mind of a wrong mental habit born of a chronic consciousness of disease. When it is finally erased from the mind, then healing does come instantaneously. But until the chronic thought of disease is vanquished, mental healing cannot be instantaneous.

If you want to heal others, you must first conquer your own physical body. If you can still be overpowered by the trials and tribulations of bodily illness or injury, you have yet to learn to mentally rise above them while trying at the same time to heal yourself. It is necessary to have a very strong mind, impervious to the trials of unpleasant or painful sensations and muscular or nervous debilities. Your consciousness must be impregnated with the truth that you are living by Spirit, but happen to be occupying a body. Feel that you are just favoring the body by staying there. You are Infinite Spirit. You cannot be caught in the cage of the body and never will be. Your knowledge is omnipresent; you are part of paradise. Your wings of eternity are spread over all space. You are only dreaming that you are caged in a body. You were never really in the cage--you are not in it now nor will you ever be. How did you happen to think that you are this little body? When the soul identifies itself with a physical body, it becomes subjected to processes of delusion. But when you close your eyes you no longer see the little body; you are Infinite. Nothing is so important to you as to know this truth.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Self-Realization Fellowship students who are desirous of giving healing help to others should confine themselves to the practice of healing by prayer. No one except an M.D. (Doctor of Medicine) or other legally authorized medical practitioner is permitted by law to make diagnoses and to prescribe medicines or other forms of treatment.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

While we know that material foods supply the body with energy, we must also remember that good thoughts are nourishing food for the mind, and thoughts of any other nature are poisonous to the health of the body and mind. Have you ever analyzed your mental diet? It consists usually of the thoughts which you are thinking as well as the thoughts that you are receiving from the close thought contact with your friends. Peaceful thoughts and peaceful friends always produce healthy, magnetic minds. It is easy to tell whether a person feeds on a quarrelsome or a peaceful environment.

Peace is the salve for all mental maladies. Only those who have self-control in eating, behaving, in matrimonial relations, and in being honest and economical are really peaceful. Peace is found in surrender to good through devotion. People who are loving, who practice stillness and delight in meditation and good actions, are really peaceful. Peace is the altar of God, the condition in which happiness exists.

There can be no greater method of healing than scientifically uniting your soul with God. Everything beautiful is found in God: health of body; peace of mind; and the ever new joy of the soul. Are you going to spend your entire life merely studying methods of diet, making obeisance at the feet of medicine? Or are you going to be one with your Maker and say: "I am above all disease--physical, mental, and spiritual--for I am a child of God!"

You are living by the power of God. Can man make the fruit and the other food that you eat? Remember we are all living directly by the power of God. When you know that, the whole world will be at your command. Claim your divinity first. Unite yourself with God. Receive your blessings from the hand of God first. Open your bankbook with God, that you may realize that all power and blessings and wealth and health come from that Source.

AFFIRMATION

I will plunge the gaze of my faith through the window of the spiritual eye and baptize my body in the healing light of Christ Consciousness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I AM THY BIRD OF PARADISE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I am a bird of paradise, fashioned
by Thee. Thou hast costumed me in
grace, color, and beauty: soft down of
tenderness and golden plumes of soul
unfoldment.

Ever seeking the Eden of bliss, I
have winged my way through life's
somber skies. Streaks of dark despond-
ency have blurred my brightness.

Come Thou, O Lord, and bathe Thy
sullied bird of paradise in the sunrays
of wisdom and the sweet-singing waters
of peace.

-- From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, let all the power of will that I use be impregnated with Thy divine vitality.

THE EVOLUTION OF HEALING METHODS -- Part 4

WILL POWER Different forms of consciousness have the power to
A VITAL FACTOR arouse different forms of energy. A person who wishes
IN HEALING to exert healing power to help another person must recognize the particular nature of that person before employing, for the purpose of healing, autosuggestion, imagination, or will power. If the sick person is the will type, use will power to heal. If he is the imaginative type, use imagination to heal. If you use imagination to help a reasoning type, he will laugh at you; it is necessary to reason with such a person. Use reason, autosuggestion, or will power, whichever is suitable, until you can convince the sick person of his own mental healing power, or of the healing power flowing through you. You must have in your mind a picture of the complete healing of that person, and impress him with it.

A healer who strongly introduces his mental suggestion or will power will soon see in the patient a quickening response, and that idea of healing will grow to harvest. He will also find, after he has several times given healing suggestions to a person who is responsive to these forces, that the person being treated will begin to realize that healing actually comes from within. The patient sees that the mind of someone else can heal his body, and begins to realize the truth: "If someone else's mind can heal me, then I can heal myself." Such a one is on the way to regaining self-mastery over the body.

Everything we do is guided by our will. Every time you move a muscle, you are using will. If you did not use your will, you would cease to think or live. God's will is not autocratic; it is guided by wisdom. If you tune in your will with God's will, His wisdom will guide your will. Human will, when guided by infinite wisdom, becomes one with God's will.

You must feel a strong will to heal the patient. Your will, feeling, and interest must be aroused to the same degree they would be if the dearest one you love were dying. Feel that same degree of interest in someone else. A mother's desire to heal her sick child is usually strong, but if she meets some adverse condition in healing she is likely, because of her anxiety, to give up and let doubt creep in. The spiritual man has the same will to heal as a mother, but he is never discouraged by adverse conditions arising in the patient.

One who is seeking to give healing aid to others should always remember

to sustain his own will so that he does not feel any discouragement over a possible worsening of the condition in the sick person. The healer should steadily will that healing shall come, no matter what may be the condition of the person, nor how many doctors and other healers have given him up. Even if such a patient fails to respond to any kind of treatment and dies, one should say, "My will was not strong enough." When you have indomitable will, you can heal.

SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY Spiritual sensitivity is the consciousness of omniscience, which everyone should try to develop. As your spiritual sensitivity increases your consciousness projects into space, into the hearts of other human beings. First try to have more feeling for human beings, then for plants and all of God's animal creatures. It is easy to love trees and plants because they do not talk back, but it is hard to love human beings, who often misunderstand even the best things we do. It is always good to project that spiritual sensitivity in order to feel for others as you do for yourself. Do not let it hurt you, however. A person who wishes to offer healing help to others must be able to feel and understand others' viewpoints and needs, but he should also be able to project his spiritual response without being emotionally affected. If the spiritually sensitive man puts on the conditions of others, he needs healing himself and should not be trying to heal others.

Nevertheless, spiritual sensitivity is essential in healing. Those who are spiritually advanced can throw the searchlight of their sensitivity on others, diagnose their troubles, then prescribe a remedy. Lahiri Mahasaya helped many persons in this way. That diagnosis which comes through spiritual awareness is much more wonderful and accurate than any scientific determination by physicians who can only judge from certain outwardly discernible conditions of the body, and who therefore may sometimes be led to draw wrong conclusions. Those who are spiritually in tune with the sick person can intuitively feel where the trouble lies. One who wishes to diagnose others' ailments must have keen spiritual sensitivity. Otherwise he will be making pronouncements about the patient's condition without really knowing the nature of the trouble.

He must also understand which cases he can help quickly, and which ones he cannot help. It is necessary to find out what specific disease that person has. Suppose he complains of headache, spinal pains, an ache in some other part of the body--these can usually be healed very easily; but one must first make sure whether the pain is caused by nerves or some organic trouble. In cases of organic trouble it sometimes happens that the healer is able to take the patient's pain away by suggestion, while the disease is actually spreading. To try to heal others is to undertake a great responsibility, and if one fails, either through lack of power or lack of responsiveness from the patient, then it is better to send him or her to someone else for healing. Do not suggest where he shall go; but it is permissible to say: "I believe in this or that form of therapy."

RELATION OF FOOD TO HEALTH One point that should be explained here is the relationship between food and health. If the stimulation of life energy alone is responsible for man's life and well-being, why is food so important? The answer is that all cells, including those of the food we eat, have latent intelligence, and can influence our minds and brain cells. For persons who can assimilate them without difficulty, natural foods such as raw fruit, vegetables, and nuts have a harmonious and strengthening effect on the mind, and permit the life energy to flow unimpeded through the body. Foods such as meat, which retain the vibrations of pain, fear, and anger of the dying animal, and denatured foods, which have had their natural properties destroyed through improper methods of cooking, are irritating and disturbing to the equilibrium of the mind and rob it of its birth-right: the power to awaken and direct the life energy to heal any part of the body. Whereas food itself cannot heal, natural foods indirectly produce health by keeping the mind calm, thus permitting the normal flow of life energy to proceed unobstructed. Unnatural, improperly prepared, and gross foods have the opposite effect.

The first persons who felt dis-ease or discomfort in the body probably desisted at once from eating, as we find the animals doing. Therefore, the first method of healing was fasting, or giving rest to the human machinery. Originally, sick persons must have been instinctively led to eliminate certain hard-to-digest foods from their diet and to seek easy-to-digest foods such as certain roots and herbs. This led to the discovery of the specific uses of the different herbs as medicine. The Chinese and the Hindus have specialized in the knowledge of this second method of healing. Later on, owing to migration, change of climate, and difficulty in finding the required herbs on demand, man discovered he could make concentrated extracts and medicine from herbs. Thus the third method was to induce chemical changes in the blood through herbal medicines.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Disease is due to the shutting out of life force, the healing rays of God. No matter what you are suffering from, you must remember that you should assist God in helping you. His willingness to help you is not lacking; it is your wrong behavior that prevents you from receiving help. First of all, you should try to make amends for any wrong you have done that has shut out God's healing powers.

HOW A SAINT CONVERTED A THIEF -- Part 1

A pious saint, Tulsidas, used to worship an image of Rama, the epic prophet of India. Some princely devotees of Tulsidas, themselves enraptured by his intense devotion to Rama, gave him many gold utensils to be used in

connection with his sacerdotal duties. Saint Tulsidas always left the temple open, even at night, when it was his custom to meditate under a bower of fragrant flowers about a hundred yards away from the building. Even while he meditated deeply on Rama, Tulsidas felt intuitive premonitions that his gold utensils would be stolen.

His fear was not unfounded. A thief who had learned about the gold utensils in Tulsidas' unlocked temple had been secretly watching every night for an opportunity to steal them. Yet on seven successive nights when he approached the temple he beheld a living image of the prophet Rama, armed with bow and arrows, guarding the entrance. This puzzled the thief, for during the day he had noted that there was no sentry at the door, and he knew that it could not be Tulsidas dressed as Rama, because each night he had taken the precaution to make sure, before trying to enter the temple, that Tulsidas was steeped in deep meditation under his favorite flowery bower.

The bewildered thief tried a new tactic. Dressing one morning as a gentleman, he went to Tulsidas and said: "Honored Sir, I have heard that you do not lock the temple door, even at night, so that true devotees may ever avail themselves of the opportunity to enter and meditate. For seven nights I have deeply desired to enter your temple to meditate and receive the holy vibrations there, yet I have not dared to enter because I beheld your hired sentry, dressed as the prophet Rama and holding a bow and arrows, menacingly guarding the temple door. ~~I am disappointed not to be able to get in.~~"

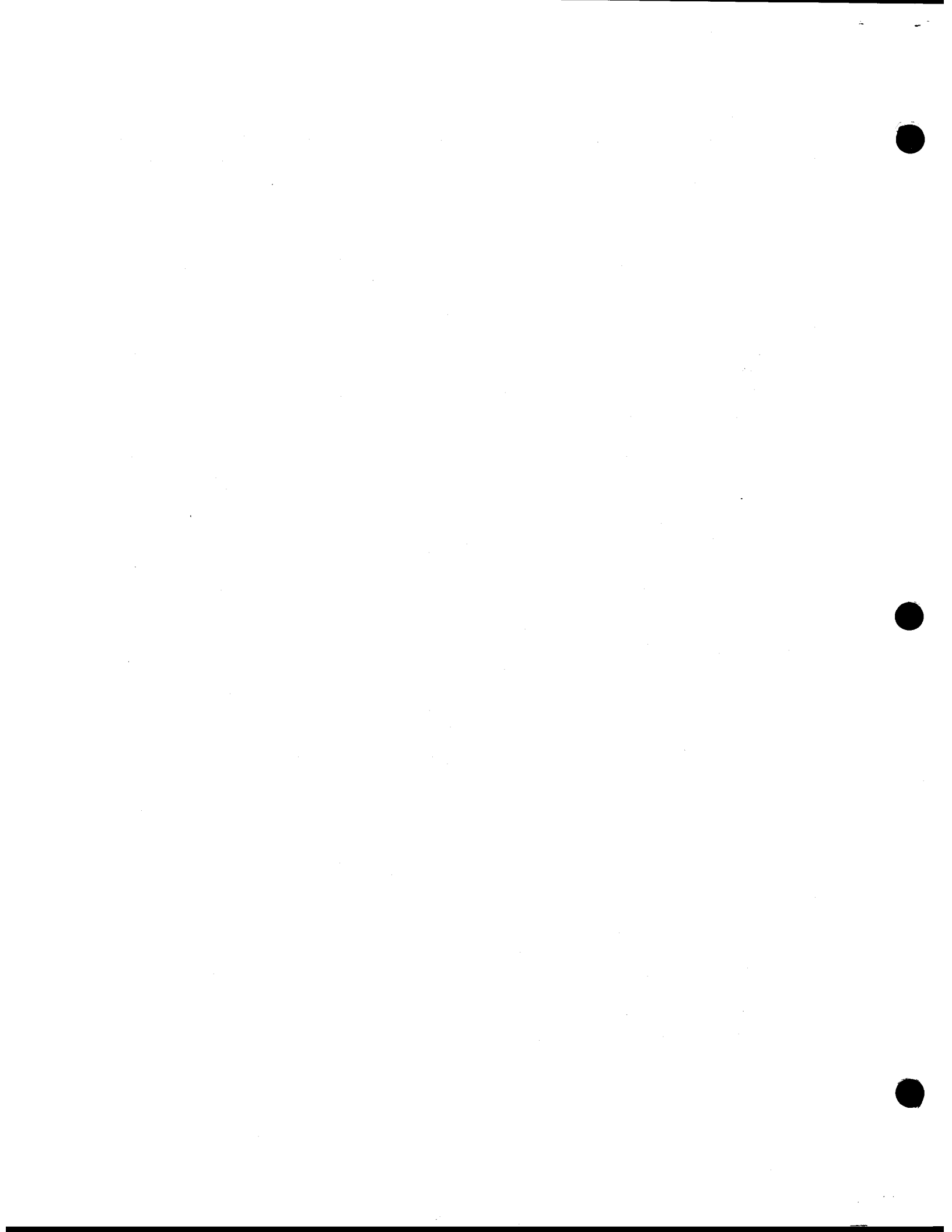
Tears came to Tulsidas' eyes, and he asked the "gentleman": "Is it true that you saw Rama guarding the temple door? I am sorry. I will ask my sentry not to guard the temple door again, so that you may enjoy your visit at any time."

Saint Tulsidas understood intuitively that his fear of the loss of the temple's gold utensils had caused the prophet Rama to take the trouble to materialize himself and guard the temple treasures. Tulsidas also knew, although he told no one, that the man in gentlemanly garb was a thief.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, Thou art present in every atom, every cell, every corpuscle, in every particle of nerve, brain, and tissue. I am well, for Thou art in all my body parts.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THY HEEDLESS CHILDREN

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The fascinating fire of wrong pleasures attracts Thy children. The silent voice of conscience warns them of the scorching, scarring consequences; but men often blindly seize the flames of temporary exhilarations. Many plunge greedy hands into the devouring blaze and are badly injured. They wail for Thy help.

O Patient Physician, Thou art always near with the unguent of forgiveness and love. Teach us to heed Thine inward admonitions, that we give to Thee gladsome songs, instead of helpless cries as we writhe in unnecessary pain.

We are Thy heedless children, and the fiery excitements of the world allure us. Teach us to play only with the searless flames of Thy Spirit.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, teach me to wipe the dream fears of disease, sadness, and ignorance from my soul's face of silence, with the veil of Thy peace.

AFFIRMATION

I shall recognize all disease as the result of my transgressions against health laws, and try to undo the wrong by right eating, less eating, by fasting, by more exercise, and by right thinking.

YOGA METHODS OF DIET

The following menus and dishes are given for general health, expulsion of hidden poisons from the body, growing or reducing tissue, and help in healing diseases through proper dietary measures. Judiciously applied, they will aid in eliminating poisons from the body and thus help to promote perfect health, strength, and vitality.

Try out the various breakfast, lunch, and dinner recipes and follow whatever best suits your individual health needs. One should not go in for radical changes but eat like a normal person, respecting, but gradually remodeling, special hereditary eating habits that are not in harmony with present knowledge about maintaining health.

All SRF students who are serious about improving health and advancing on the spiritual path are urged to stop eating beef and pork products in any form. Do not make a habit of eating any kind of meat, but gradually get accustomed to using more ground nuts, eggs, bananas, cheese, milk, and soy and other beans in the diet in place of meat.

People who habitually follow a vegetarian diet, or who are vegetarian by hereditary custom, will have no difficulty in doing without meat or fish or chicken, eating instead plenty of avocados, nuts, cheese, milk, and eggs. Gluten products are also helpful as occasional substitutes for meat.

Eating boiled vegetables for dinner with no uncooked food is devitalizing and weakening. Be sure to eat more "nature-cooked" raw vegetables, fruits, dates, and nuts. Eat right, think right, and above all meditate and live in divine joy night and day. Remember, it is not always what goes into you but what comes out of you that makes you what you are. Some people who eat meat may nevertheless be holy and self-controlled, and some who eat only vegetables and fruits may nevertheless be far from holy and controlled in their speech and actions. "Whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into

the draught. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." (Matthew 15:17, 18)

IDEAL BREAKFASTS

1. Orange or grapefruit or watermelon juice with ground nuts.
2. Two hard-boiled egg yolks in orange juice, or with tomato juice.
3. For a laxative effect: bran, milk, honey, and ground nuts.
4. Cantaloupe, bran, milk, and ground nuts.
5. Berries, ground nuts, cream, and honey.
6. Pineapple juice, cream, honey, ground nuts, and chopped pineapple.
7. Glass of milk and honey.
8. Ground almonds and honey mixed in a glass of water.

Breakfasts for Thin People

1. Pint of raw milk (certified). (Two tablespoons of honey may be added.)
2. One big glass of orange juice with four tablespoons ground pecans.
3. Three yolks of hard-boiled eggs in a drinking-glass of orange juice.
4. Oatmeal with cream and two bananas, and a tablespoon of honey.
5. Glass of cream with two bananas and a tablespoon of honey.
6. Handful of soaked unsulphured raisins and a glass of cream mixed with a tablespoon of ground pecans.

Drink a glass of water with breakfast.

TWO IDEAL LUNCHES

1. Salad made of sixteen leaves of spinach and one other chopped raw vegetable, with three ounces of ground pecans, and dressing.
2. Salad of one half head of lettuce, ground carrots, and dressing.

Lunch for Thin People

Large raw vegetable salad with a dressing of cream, orange juice, and four tablespoons of ground pecans or other nuts.

One good portion of cooked food.

Ten figs or ten prunes or ten dates, or a handful of raisins (preferably unsulphured).

Large portion of cottage cheese.

Two slices whole-wheat bread, or bran muffins, plenty of butter.

One tablespoon of olive oil between meals, or cod-liver oil after each meal.

Glass of cream or milk between lunch and dinner.

Lunch for Fat People

Large salad of any ground vegetable well mixed with orange-juice dressing.

Ten leaves of spinach with a little Thousand Island dressing.
Six water-soaked dried unsulphured prunes (or figs or dates).

Eat your biggest meal at lunchtime, but do not overeat. Have a different vegetable salad every day. Eat few or no boiled vegetables. Do not eat eggs, bread, or butter; do not drink water with meals.

DINNER SUGGESTIONS (Meat substitutes)

1. One tablespoon ground raw pine nuts or cashews (or any other nuts) with one glass of orange juice.
2. Boiled eggs with half a head of lettuce.
3. Cottage cheese with half a head of lettuce.
4. Nut loaves, nut products in general.
5. Gluten products.
6. Cheese dishes.
7. Beans or lentils.
8. Avocados or bananas.

Diet for Vital Strength

Eat four tablespoons of thoroughly ground almonds and two oranges, or eat three slices of fresh pineapple plus a handful of pecans ground. Or drink a glass of milk with a handful of soaked raisins. Or eat one banana with one tablespoon of ground nuts, or six unsulphured prunes (water-soaked), one tablespoon of nuts may be added. Eat one orange and one raw carrot every day. Chew the carrot well, as this is good for the teeth.

Regular Fasting

Fasting is necessary in connection with eating. You should have a thorough bodily house-cleaning every week, or twice a month at least. Fast one day each week on orange juice or milk and take a suitable laxative. Once a month it is good to fast three consecutive days on orange juice, using a suitable laxative. Or fast three days, drinking a large quantity of water and eating raw foods (if your system is adapted to them).

Try partial fasting, cutting out breakfast and lunch; you will find that after fasting you will eat less.

Sleep six hours every night. Breakfast alone or in peaceful company after meditation. Eat very lightly of starches and cereals. Do not overeat at any time. Sometimes omit breakfasts. Briskly walk a mile a day. Keep company with cheerful people.

For the Stomach

To one glass of water add a teaspoon of white sugar and seven or fourteen

drops of lime juice. This drink has a wonderful spiritual vibration and gives a fine tone to the stomach. Do not make it too sweet or too sour.

For acidity, if one cannot stand orange juice, use water with a little almond in it. Watermelon juice is also acceptable.

A yogic drink that is beneficial for the stomach is one quarter glass of sour milk with a little salt and the juice of one quarter of a lime.

A glass of water with one tablespoon of ground pistachio nuts mixed in it is good for the nerves and general vitality, and in any kind of sex trouble.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Almonds give vital strength; pistachio nuts make fat; pine and cashew nuts contribute toward harmonious development of all parts of the body; peanuts are good for elimination and general strength.

You can prepare gravy with whole-wheat flour, using ground cashew or pine nuts. Make it just the way you make ordinary gravy.

These dietary rules and menus are those recommended by ancient and modern yogis of India. Many eminent physicians and health authorities in modern India and in the West also endorse similar rules for health.

Although a diet of raw food has been found to be beneficial to normal persons both for reducing and for maintaining a state of good health, one should not switch abruptly from cooked to raw food. A person who is used to cooked food should introduce raw food gradually into his diet, thus enabling his digestive system to become accustomed to digesting raw food without any trouble. Start by taking one meal a day of raw food, and the other one or two meals a day of cooked food. As Sri Yukteswar recommended, find the diet best suited to your needs and follow that.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Persecution, gossip, commands, and taboos cannot remedy moral errors. Temptation is not only the result of metaphysical inheritance from Adam and Eve; it is also a result of prenatal habits, which tend to influence heredity because of their influence on the formation of the individual's postnatal habits. That is why most children are born with overstimulated appetites. Overeating, lack of personal hygiene, unwholesome suggestions, unscientific instructions, immoral books, and lack of exercise reinforce bad prenatal habits.

Probably the strongest factor in entrenching further the prenatal tendencies of a child is wrong environment. Undesirable habits once formed lead him helplessly on to overindulgence in married life, which, invading the territory of

self-control, drives away the good habit of moderation and brings in pestilences of premature old age, disease, and loss of ambition and happiness in the kingdom of the body and mind.

The youth and the adult alike should always introspect upon waking and before sleeping: "What did my self-control and moderate habits do, while engaged in battle with my prenatal physical appetites and my postnatal desires? What has been the result of their conflict? Has the right side won today?"

HOW A SAINT CONVERTED A THIEF -- Part 2

The saint retired to the temple and meditated all day long, praying to Rama: "Lord, take away my gold utensils and desist from assuming the part of my sentry, all night sleeplessly guarding the temple utensils. I am ashamed to have bothered you with my fears." Rama appeared in a vision and acceded to the prayer.

Believing in Tulsidas's assurance of an unguarded temple, and making sure that Tulsidas was deeply meditating that night under his favorite tree, the thief stalked across the garden toward the temple to steal the golden utensils. There was no god guarding the temple door in the deep stillness of the night. On tiptoe, the thief softly went to the door and gently pushed it wide open so that he could pass through. He beheld no one in the temple, so he hurriedly gathered together most of the golden utensils, put them in a gunny sack and briskly walked out. On the way out he met a stray dog who began to bark at him and chase him. The thief, with the gold utensils clinking on his back, increased his pace to a run and raced for safety.

Tulsidas had finished his meditation and was resting under the tree, expecting the return of the thief, when he heard the bark of a dog, the padding of racing feet, and a tinkling sound. Rising, he went into the temple and discovered the loss of almost all of the gold utensils.

The saint gathered together the remaining few gold pieces hurriedly, tied them in a napkin, and sped in the direction from which he heard the barking of the dog. Being a healthy devotee, Tulsidas ran like a stag and quickly overtook the thief. The latter, now filled with fear and remorse, fell at the feet of Tulsidas and cried: "Gracious Saint, please take back your gold utensils. I don't want them. I beg of you not to turn me over to the police, for I have a family to support."

Saint Tulsidas laughed merrily and, patting the thief on the back, handed him the rest of the gold utensils, saying: "Son, I did not overtake you to arrest you, but to give you the rest of the utensils, which you had missed, being in such a hurry. I am glad to be relieved of them, for they distracted me from my

meditation on my beloved Rama. Son, you need them more than I do; take them all with my blessing. However, I would ask that the next time you want anything from the temple, you do not steal it, thus poisoning your spiritual life. Rather, ask me for it. "

The thief was dumbfounded at the nonattachment, devotion, forgiveness, and generosity of Tulsidas. Kneeling, he held the saint's feet tightly as he bowed his head above them, protesting loudly amidst sobs: "Honored Saint, I am a thief by profession, but I have never seen a greater thief than you are. Today you have stolen everything from me--my body, mind, desires, aspirations, heart, my very soul. I don't want to be a thief of perishable articles any longer; I want to be a thief of souls like you, so that I may steal them for God. "

The thief became Tulsidas's disciple and followed the master to the temple. There ever after they walked, dreamed, and loved God together until their bodies dropped off, as a serpent shed its skin, and their souls, renewed and quickened, were secreted in the bosom of the Rock of Eternity.

The foregoing story illustrates the fact that to find God the love of God must be supreme. As long as even a single material desire remains supreme on the throne of your heart, so long will the Cosmic Deity remain hidden from you in the universe. You must discard all desires for perishable things. This will not make you negative and joyless; instead it will mean positive attainment of the undeceiving, imperishable, ever new, ever increasing joy of God throughout eternity. Your mind should not entertain desires for bright but brittle material pleasures. What the world values most you must forsake, if you want to receive the indestructible, ever new happiness of God.

Even if you gain the whole world in this life, your grief will be great if you lose God; for, on the last day, as you leave the shores of the earth, you will have nothing you can take with you to the great beyond. Grieve not if, although you may have gained nothing material here, you have found God by utmost effort in meditation; for then, although you have been poor in the world's eyes, you have been rich in God's eyes. When you leave the shores of the earth, you should be able to take with you a meditation-acquired, imperishable God-treasure of unending peace to the beyond, to enjoy it there forever and forever.

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, Thou art present in every atom, every cell, every corpuscle; in every particle of nerve, brain, and tissue. I am well, for Thou art in all my body parts.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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ILLUMINATE US WITH THY WISDOM

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, Giver of life, we are floating on Thy cosmic bosom, we are dancing on the waves of life and death, but behind them art Thou--the motion of immortality. Teach us to behold the Ocean of eternal life. Take our consciousness away from earthly change to the Changeless; take our consciousness away from the passing joys of life to Thine eternal, ever new Joy.

O Thou Beloved Spirit, hiding behind the blue waves of the sky, behind the waves of light, behind the waves of human and every other kind of life, behind the waves of changing scenery--O Infinite Beauty of all beauties, O Joy of all happiness, O Immortality--reveal Thyself unto our consciousness.

Make us feel that we are Thine immortal children come here just to play and demonstrate our immortality that comes from Thee. Rejuvenate our bodies, minds, and souls with Thine eternal light; electrify us with Thy message of immortality; illuminate us with Thy message of wisdom.

PRAYER

O Cosmic Mother, feed me forever with Spirit sustenance! The brain, the heart, the cells will no longer decay but with transcendent life will be immortalized.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL METHODS FOR REJUVENATION

POWER OF MIND OVER BODY Man needs to understand that his own intelligence controls the atoms of his body. He should not live in a closed chamber of mental narrowness. Breathe in the fresh air of vital thoughts and views of other people. Expel poisonous thoughts of discouragement, discontentment, hopelessness. Drink vitality and receive mental nourishment from materially and spiritually progressive minds. Feast unstintingly on the creative thinking within yourself and others. Take long mental walks on the path of self-confidence. Exercise with the instruments of judgment, introspection, and initiative.

Seek wisdom from the teaching of a spiritual specialist--a God-realized guru. If your disease of spiritual ignorance is chronic, be guided entirely by the guru's wisdom-teachings. The spiritually ignorant patient who depends solely upon his own judgment, which may be affected by his state of spiritual and mental ill health, cannot be cured. Go on ignorance fasts. Reject enslavement to ignorance-born habits and thoughtless actions. Take up intensive spiritual study and an intensive spiritual diet; refuse to suffer any longer from ignorance infection.

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY CHANGE When we see that the cosmos is rippling with change, it is difficult to conceive of anything that does not change. The restless sea, whirlpools of solar systems, eddies of cosmic forces, and icebergs of floating planets are dancing on the breast of eternal motion. Every atom of matter is undergoing transformation; more than three hundred people per second and fifteen hundred million people every one hundred years are spirited away after their tangible sojourn on earth; childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age are all transient. Protoplasm, blood cells, circulation, nerves, flesh, bones, and marrow are part of the surging ocean of constant change. Whence stems man's seemingly preposterous desire for youth and a changeless body? Is it an idle dream?

Being accustomed to a life of change, man appreciates and enjoys his constantly changing environment. Even our thoughts are never the same. They well up from an unknown fountain, silently enthrall us with the innumerable changing sprays, and then drop on the earth of subconscious oblivion and become absorbed there, to vanish perhaps forever. Human births, health, deaths, dreams, aspirations, sensations, perceptions, bodily cognitions, all

are subject to the laws of change; how foolish it seems to dream of lasting youth! How could youth--which is only the crest of a wave of change, beginning relatively in the surge of helpless infancy and apparently ending in the decline of death--be made everlasting? Is not the expectation of everlasting physical youth a mad hope of the human brain? Or is there some basis for it?

MENTAL BASIS OF YOUTH

Let us see if everlasting youth is possible from a psychological standpoint. First of all, the psychological basis of youthfulness is a vigorous, internally smiling mind that externalizes itself in a smiling countenance. Then comes the question: if youthfulness is entirely a mental state, why does it not last? Mental youthfulness changes, owing to the mind's own variability, its unstable moods. Observing changes everywhere in the world, and especially in its own dwelling--the physical body--the mind develops the consciousness of change. Through its identification with outward experiences of constant change, the mind fails to register the changeless quality of the soul, the silent overlord of the bodily temple. That which itself is constantly changing cannot act as an intelligent observer. Only that which does not change--i. e., the soul--can cognize with proper perspective the changing phenomena of the mind, the body, and the world about us.

The ocean changes its aspect constantly, but in essence it remains the same; so also the Spirit spins forth this dream of cosmos in which It swims in the ocean of change, yet remains essentially the same unaffected Spirit. A man passing through childhood, adolescence, youth, and old age finds his thoughts generally and correspondingly changing; he too is swimming in God's sea of change. And like Spirit, man's soul never changes, even though, as it swims about in the ocean of change, it undergoes outwardly the physical and mental transitions from youth to adulthood to old age. The soul remains without change or motion, just as a man watching the dancing, changing waves of the ocean remains himself unchanged. The spiritually unenlightened man may not be conscious of his soul, but he is aware of its reflection--the ego. And even the ego is relatively permanent. That is, man's ego continues to exist from life to life, even though it does not retain the memory of what happens when the bodily machine disintegrates with the change called death.

Man is not like an automobile engine, whose life ends with the disintegration of its component parts; man is the maker of his own mental and physical machinery. The destruction of the machine does not mean the destruction of the maker of the machine. A central ego exists in man during the period of his existence in the mother's body, even though the memory of that prenatal state does not remain in his consciousness after physical birth. Remembrance is not the proof of existence. A madman, or a forgetful man, or a sleeping man, or a man under hypnosis or anesthetic exists without knowing it. The relatively unchangeable ego of man, which outlasts all mental changes of childhood, adolescence, youth, and the aged state, existed in prenatal periods and survives in postnatal periods. The mind watches the bodily changes and the ego watches

the mental changes occasioned by the body's activity and the sensations aroused by it. Behind them both is the unchangeable soul, which observes all mental changes, itself remaining unchanged. In the eternal consciousness of the immortal soul is the germ of man's desire for eternal youth. It is because he attributes to youth the qualities that are really found only in the soul-- eternal consciousness, eternal existence, eternal joy--that man seeks eternal "youth."

Throughout the span of conscious existence, from the birth of the ego or "I-ness," man finds that there is something which is stable, as compared to all the furious changes that go on in his environment. Hence it is reasonable to expect that if the ego could at all times detach itself from its mental and physical environment of alternating happiness and sorrow, health and disease, good fortune and ill fortune, its consciousness would be stable, unchanged by environmental influences. The real "youth" man is seeking is this unchangeable consciousness of immortality and invulnerability against the buffeting waves of the phenomenal sea of change.

The teaching of Yoga is designed to blow up the bridge of feeling that connects our various experiences with the ego. It is feeling that causes us to regard happiness or pain as affecting us; it is feeling that creates mental attachment to certain things or people, causing us pain when we are separated from them. The destruction of this bridge of feeling does not mean that we attain a state of heartlessness, apathy, want of ambition, or indifference, as if we were merely moving fossils. It means that we take joy or sorrow calmly and experience everything willingly, without being inwardly affected by the paltry desires, likes or dislikes, and whims of the ego. To be able cheerfully to experience health or disease (while sensibly seeking a remedy), sudden intensive pleasure or pain, is the way to attain mental stability. This stability is the real fountain of lasting mental youthfulness.

The man who establishes himself in the everlasting consciousness of the soul may retain physical youth if he so desires. But God seldom permits His great devotees to make such spectacular demonstrations openly, lest ignorant men seek after youth only instead of seeking to become one with Him, the Source of youth, of life itself.

DO NOT BUILD YOUR HOPES UPON THIS LIFE

What is death? When you close your eyes, it is dark; but when you open them again, it is light. Death is similar to that state. God is everywhere, but your eyes are so tightly closed that you do not behold the beauty of the Beloved. Remove the blindfold of spiritual ignorance.

This earth is not meant for the experience of heavenly manifestations,

but to prompt us to look into the futility of life without God. Gloom after gloom, delusion after delusion--these mirages on the desert of our consciousness must be banished. We must find our true Selves beneath the veil of materiality.

Do not try to base your hopes upon this life. Where is your safety? You are safe only when you are castled in the realization of God. Oceans cannot put out the fire of your realization of God. You are the spark of Spirit that shall become the flame of Spirit. There is no death, but only life.

Jesus Christ was the product of his own efforts. The testimony of his life is evidence of man's eternal existence. That is the consolation before man: that he too may one day reach the shores of eternal freedom from death--ly earth--changes if, like Christ, every moment of life is filled with the consciousness of God.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND NATIONS--Part 1

In a little kingdom by the sea there lived a queen with her ten sons. The king had worked himself to death, fighting hard battles in order to amass a fortune. Before he died, he told his children that he had buried his wealth, consisting of gold coins, in various places on the grounds of his estate.

He left a strange will, with instructions that each of his sons should search for the treasure by digging in the gardens for one whole night. Whatever each one found he would have to share equally with the other nine. After ten nights, the entire area was to be dug up. If any further fortune were found, half of it was to be given to the queen and half to the people of the kingdom. The will stated that, in all, a sum of twelve million dollars in gold coin was hidden in the royal gardens.

Of the ten brothers, the eldest was saintly and the eighth and ninth brothers were very wicked. The others were fairly good. The most wicked eighth prince was very greedy and ambitious and insisted on digging for the treasure on the first night. As he was digging, under the surveillance of the other nine brothers, he suddenly struck a box of gold containing one million dollars.

He promised that later, on a little mound in the garden, he would distribute the money equally among them. The brothers did not know that previously he had secretly hired men to dig a ten-foot-wide and twenty-foot-deep moat around the mound, which he then had covered with thin sticks and loose earth, with a little concealed bridge of solid planks leading to the middle of the mound.

He asked his brothers to stand in a certain spot near the brink of the moat while he went to the mound via the secret bridge. The night was only dimly

lighted by a waning moon. Then the wicked brother sang a hymn, giving thanks for the finding of the treasure which was soon to be divided into ten equal parts. Then, cunningly, the prince said to his brothers: "I want to hold a little competition in celebration of our new-found treasure. I want each of you to jump with all your might, and he who jumps the farthest will be awarded a thousand dollars extra."

They leaped, and landing on the deceptive surface of the trap, plunged through it and into the icy water of the moat. The ninth brother, who had prudently waited behind a tree, now came out. Unsheathing his sword, stealthily he crept behind the wicked eighth brother--who was going round and round the ditch in merriment watching his drowning brothers floundering in the water--and slew him at one stroke.

Then he rather reluctantly rescued the other princes from the moat and as a "savior" received their thanks. With his sword still dripping blood, he strutted into the queen's presence and exclaimed: "Royal Mother, see what I have done! I have slain your eighth son who plotted to kill us all."

The mother rejoiced upon hearing how eight sons had been saved from drowning. But then her joy was smothered by the dark realization that one of her loved ones was lost, and with sobs she cried out: "O Prince, my heart is bursting with grief, for you have killed your brother." To which the astonished murderer replied: "What do you mean, Mother? Would you rather have seen your wicked eighth son alive and the rest killed?"

"No, no," the distraught mother protested, "but I wish you could have saved your wicked brother too, for he was my son also, and, being wicked, needed my protecting love all the more."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I am the bulb and Thou art the holy
Light gleaming within it.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE BELLS OF DESIRES HAVE BEEN RINGING--Part 1

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Beloved, slumbering beneath the drooping petals
of forgotten aeons
Thou hast remained beyond the reach of the ever
pursuing footsteps of my adoration.
Roaming endlessly, gliding through endlessness, I have
lost myself in the thought of Thee.
Under the spell of Thy love, I swooned and slept until
Thy kindly light
Knocked at the closed gates of my vision,
And as I awoke, I caught a glimpse of Thy vanishing
luminosity.

Beloved, if Thou wert sleeping beneath the quilt of
time, how couldst Thou rouse me?
Thou didst feign sleep, while Thou wert always awake.
Thou wert ever watchful, but Thou didst not want me
to know of Thy wakefulness.
Thou didst listen to my entreaties, and meant
to respond,
But Thou didst not want me to know Thou hadst
reserved a surprise in Thy visit to me,
In the moment that I was expecting Thee.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, breathe Thine immortality through this mortal frame of mine. Speak through my voice. Help others through my hands. Use my mind to inspire others. Breathe through my breath. For on this broken viol Thou alone canst play Thy complete, eternal song.

HOW TO REJUVENATE YOURSELF

BY PHYSICAL AND MENTAL RELAXATION

Like water, which does not retain any impression of the waves that play on its bosom, the mind should manifest calmness at all times.

FIRST, RELAX AND CALM YOURSELF Physical culturists, health enthusiasts, and spiritual teachers all talk on the subject of relaxation; nevertheless, few persons understand what perfect relaxation of body and mind really is, or how to achieve such relaxation. Some persons have learned how to relax physically, but not mentally. And even mental relaxation is only one of the first states of metaphysical or super relaxation, in which there is complete, voluntary withdrawal of consciousness and energy from the entire body, and full absorption in one's true identity: Spirit. This release of consciousness from the delusion of duality affords the highest kind of mental relaxation. Before the mind can be free of all distractions--those induced by sensory impressions from without and within, and those created by restlessly wandering thoughts--some degree of physical relaxation is necessary. Those who are very strong-minded may be able to overcome physical distractions by the command of mind alone; but usually the beginner yogi finds that it is easier first to overcome physical restlessness by some physical method.

METHOD OF RELAXING A PARTICULAR BODY PART When you want to relax any one of the twenty body parts (as categorized in the lessons on the Recharging Exercises), gently tense that part low, medium, and high, and relax; then keep it still. This is the scientific way to remove any possible tension in a particular body part and to relax it completely.

BEST WAY TO RELAX ENTIRE BODY QUICKLY For complete relaxation of the whole body, first tense the entire body and then "let go." It is possible to withdraw the energy from muscles and limbs in this way, so that your body will feel like a mass of lifeless flesh and bones--like a helpless jellyfish. Remember that if you are holding one arm even slightly apart from the body, you are tensed--you are burning energy in that part and hence you are not completely relaxed.

When you want to relax the entire body, quickly and simultaneously tense to low, medium, and high all the twenty body parts from the feet to the neck, clenching the fists; then quickly relax and remain still. You can relax the whole body this way while standing, sitting, or lying down. Repeat twice, to insure relaxation by removing all tension from all body parts.

This is conscious muscular or motor relaxation. The purpose of this method of relaxation is to withdraw consciousness and energy from the muscles at will. The complete absence of motion and tension from the muscles and limbs is "relaxation." If the body seems jellylike, as if without bones or muscles, you have attained perfect muscular relaxation.

There is also unconscious muscular relaxation, an imperfect method that consists in moving the limbs about vigorously and then being quiet. Those who try this generally do not succeed in keeping more than half the muscles relaxed. Some people remain completely tensed, only imagining that they are relaxed.

Passive Sensory Relaxation or Sleep In muscular relaxation as described above, the mind and energy are relaxed or withdrawn from the muscles but not from the sensory nerves or from the sense seats in the mind that receive perceptions via the optic, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory nerves.

When the soul becomes satiated with the material experiences of the day, it passively switches off the life force and mind from the senses to create the state of sleep. During deep sleep, the mind and energy are passively and unconsciously withdrawn from both the motor and sensory nerves, and even thoughts are banished.

Sleep can be induced at will also. Lie down on the back, quickly relaxing the whole body, closing the eyes and quieting the thought processes. Try this until you learn to sleep at will.

Dreams can be induced in the following manner: With closed eyes, visualize a different room from the one in which you are resting, and fall asleep thinking of it.

SUPER SILENCE METHODS

That which can be done passively and unconsciously--i. e., the practice of silence by going to sleep at will--can also be attained consciously. Through long and devotional practice of the SRF techniques of meditation, one can achieve complete calmness in the heart, lungs, and other organs. When the muscles and inner organs are freed from constant motion by relaxation, the breaking down of bodily tissues and the accumulation of wastes is temporarily inhibited. This helps to keep the bloodstream pure, and hence is important to higher states of mental and metaphysical relaxation.

The cellular composition of the bodily tissues is constantly undergoing the dual process of growth and decay, old cells breaking down and being replaced by new ones. When this process can be stopped, even momentarily, an exceptional degree of physical rest is attained.

First of all, with the cessation of ordinary cellular activities of growth, assimilation, and elimination, there is no need for food and oxygen, which are brought to the cells by the bloodstream or for carrying off impurities of waste materials, which are borne away by the bloodstream also. The heart is thus relieved of its immense burden of pumping blood. (From the standpoint of actual weight moved, the heart pumps twelve tons of blood in a day.)

The cells and tissues then live directly by subtle life energy. Bloodborne food and oxygen being no longer required by the cells, there is a temporary cessation of activity on the part of the heart and also on the part of the lungs, which releases to the rest of the body an enormous quantity of life current ordinarily used by these two great engines. The trillions of cells, the organs, the muscles--the whole physical machinery--rest, sustained by pure energy.

The yogi who enters and remains in this state is practicing the art of living by the "Word of God," i. e., by the inner energy coming down from the medulla oblongata. In this state it becomes possible to disengage the attention and energy from their identification with the world of sensations as experienced in the muscles, heart, spine, and so on.

Thus physical relaxation opens the way to the higher states of mental and metaphysical relaxation. Those who can enter a high state of mental relaxation, at will, find that physical relaxation comes automatically. Students who have advanced in the practice of Hong-Sau, for example, will be able to apply the following method of inducing deep physical relaxation, the cessation of all restless activity of the physical machinery.

Mental Method of
Inducing Relaxation

First, close the eyes; expel the breath; switch off the attention and energy from the senses. Then feel inwardly the heartbeat and movement of the blood circulation; mentally watch and calm them by the command of will, as you might stop a watch by gently touching its spring. With deep calmness you can arrest the activities of the entire physical machinery, consciously and voluntarily.

Every morning, after practicing physical relaxation, enter into absolute silence, and banish thoughts for several minutes each time. (There is an important difference between banishing thoughts from the mind--a conscious act of control of the thought processes--and in relinquishing control of the thoughts in order to enter a passive, unconscious state of mental blankness. Always be the master of your consciousness. Never let the mind "go blank.") After entering the silence and keeping the thoughts stilled for several minutes, think of some

happy incident in your life; dwell on it and visualize it; mentally go through the same pleasant experience over and over again until you forget any worries entirely. Sit quietly and meditate on the joy of silence. Think of that joy as communion with God. The more you meditate, the more you will realize that nothing else can give you that refined joy but the increasing practice of deep silence. That joy contact in meditation is the contact of God. Pray deeply, with devotion, first for God's love, then for wisdom, happiness, health, prosperity, and then for the fulfillment of any specific legitimate wish.

SOME OTHER RECIPES FOR REJUVENATION

TO AWAKEN ENERGY Electricity passing through a rod made of a conductive substance electrifies it. Similarly, the body battery becomes fully charged with life force derived from oxygen through proper breathing exercises. When you are tired and hungry, take a sunbath and you will find yourself recharged and revived with ultraviolet rays; or inhale and exhale several times outdoors or near an open window, and your fatigue will be gone. A fasting person who inhales and exhales deeply twelve times, three times a day, recharges his body with electrons and free energy from air and ether. The life force can assimilate oxygen more quickly than it can assimilate solids or liquids.

People who practice breathing exercises always have shining, magnetic eyes. Practice the following exercise three times a day: Exhale slowly, counting from 1 to 6. Now, while the lungs are empty, mentally count from 1 to 6. Inhale slowly, counting from 1 to 6. Then hold the breath, counting from 1 to 6. Repeat eleven times. Do not hold the breath longer than it takes to count slowly from 1 to 6, or, at most, from 1 to 12. The proportions should be the same regardless of the count.

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1. Stand erect with arms stretched straight above head. Relax while holding this position. Throw breath out and keep breath out for the duration of 12 counts. Inhale and feel that you are drawing energy through the fingertips into the medulla oblongata and body parts.
 2. Put chin on chest, tightening muscles of the throat. Slowly inhale, lifting head up and bending it backward. Relax, drop chin on chest, and exhale.
 3. Swing your hands as if you were swinging a rope and jump over the imaginary rope.
 4. Exhale, and squat on the haunches, sitting on heels. Stand, inhale,

- and hold breath, counting 1 to 10. Then exhale and drop to squatting position again while exhaling. Knees should not touch the ground and back should remain erect through the whole exercise. Repeat five times.
5. Raise arms straight out sideways from shoulders. Swing them forward, touching palms in front; then swing back to side position. Repeat ten times.
 6. Close eyes. Very gently contract the muscles on both sides of the chest, putting the whole attention there. Hold contraction, counting 1 to 30. Then release contraction. Repeat six times, morning, noon, and night.
 7. Exposing the chest to direct sunlight has been found to be beneficial. Slowly walk two miles a day. Remain outdoors as much as possible. Eat plenty of raw green vegetables and thoroughly ground pecans. Clearing throat and nose with mixture of one-half teaspoonful of salt and a glassful of water in the early morning, at noontime, and just before going to bed has been found to be effective in cleansing and toning up these tissues.

THE BEST RECIPE FOR REJUVENATION

Drink happiness from minds saturated with joy, and from the fountain of a daily meditation period, both morning and night. This is the best recipe for rejuvenation and for the maintenance of lasting youth.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND NATIONS--Part 2

Each succeeding night another million dollars was found. The ninth brother meanwhile plotted to be the sole owner of all the money which, according to his advice, was being stored in a vault, to be distributed on the eleventh night.

On the appointed evening he entered the dimly lighted chamber, armed with a dagger and a pistol. After the other eight brothers entered, he securely locked the door, keeping the key in his hand. Suddenly whipping out his pistol, he told them: "This is your finish! Better say your prayers quickly, for I am going to slay you one by one. I intend to own all the treasure, and I am going to become king by dethroning the queen. I will shoot at once anyone who dares to resist."

In the shocked hush that followed, the firm voice of the saintly eldest prince was heard: "Brother, it is wrong for you to kill us. I dare to tell you

that if you do this your conscience will continually remind you during every minute of your existence that you are a great criminal; and all because you wanted extra luxuries and to be king. I am not afraid of you." Then he turned to the seven other brothers, who were ready to jump at the wicked one: "Let no one stir! Do not use physical force to punish this wicked brother of ours. Instead, give him our blessing and love while he slays us, with our permission. We still love him as our brother, for we know that he is murdering us only under the intoxication of evil. But let us all dare to warn him: 'You are wrong! You will regret your deeds forever!'"

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I will always behold the perfect,
healthy, all-wise, all-blissful image
of God in my life.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE BELLS OF DESIRES HAVE BEEN RINGING--Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The sleeping memories of millenniums opened their eyes
And they met Thy long lost, ever familiar, ever receding
countenance.

Open Thy heart; elude me no longer after my sorrowful search
of centuries.

The bells of my desires have been ever ringing in the expectancy
of Thy coming.

The temple of my meditation has long been silently waiting.
My thoughts have remained quiet without uttering a whisper,
Eagerly straining to catch Thy soft homecoming footsteps.
The candles of peace have been ever burning, oozing drops
of warm tears,

Ever ready to offer Thee a bright welcome.

The frankincense of devotion has been scattering wisps of
fragrance in preparation for the festivity of Thy coming.

My senses and perceptions are madly drinking the liquor of
love pangs from the bottle of my heart,

Ever celebrating the nearness of Thine approach.

My soul, having caught a glimpse of Thee, as Thou didst
speed away,

Is now shedding, and will ever shed, tears of happiness,
Being convinced of the certainty that sooner or later

Thou shalt come,

Ever to stay with me in the mansion of endlessness.

PRAYER

O Infinite Alchemist! Transform our dark ignorance into golden wisdom. Transmute all base ores of worldly disqualifications into liquid streams of spiritual gold, steadily rushing for Thy shore.

TRANSMUTATION OF CREATIVE ENERGY INTO SPIRITUAL ENERGY

CREATIVE LIFE FORCE Protoplasm is the medium through which life force creates living bodies by cellular division and multiplication. Protoplasm is the clay, and the secret intelligent life force residing in it is the potter. Of course life can create specific varieties only when it receives specific forms of protoplasm under specific conditions for its own experiments.

Life force is the subtle intelligent energy that builds insect, animal, and human bodies from different kinds of protoplasm. The human spermatozoon and some animal spermatozoa look like tadpoles floating in protoplasm when viewed under a microscope. If the life force were not an intelligent energy, it could not build the different bodies of animals and human beings from spermatozoa that are almost alike. Hence this life force is an intelligent magnetic energy imbued with instinctive powers for creating different bodily designs out of different kinds of protoplasm, and for creating the different mental patterns of living beings.

The intelligent life force works through the sexual creative impulse in animals and human beings to express itself, giving birth to desire-inflicted, tendency-guided animal and human beings in animal and human bodies. Every human being should be thoroughly cognizant of the earth-binding nature of the impulses of the sex creative force. Until man frees himself from the compulsion of this sex force he cannot liberate his soul from the revolving wheel of reincarnation and plunge it into its Infinite Life.

Sex impulse in man, no matter how pure, always contains within it the subtle earth-binding desire to create more body-attached human beings. It is therefore extremely necessary to transmute this physical-creation-desirous impulse into a spiritually productive impulse. Sex creative force consists of a mental tendency to reproduce one's own kind, plus the intelligent life force that stimulates the sex nerves to release from the male and female sex organs the spermatozoa and ovum from whose union earthbound human bodies can be grown.

CONTROLLING SEX IMPULSES Outward control of sex without banishment of the instinctive creative idea that rouses sex thoughts and sex energy leads to hypocrisy and repression. Control of sex should

be based on wisdom, i. e. , inner self-control. Then only can it be productive of happiness, wisdom, and ultimate liberation. Men and women who have not spiritualized their creative sex impulses always tend to draw unto themselves wrong mates, and evil environment within and without: evil thoughts within and evil companions without. Evil thoughts are the most powerful of man's interior enemies. Remember that control of the sex impulse should begin with its spiritual transmutation within.

First of all, depraved thoughts and morbid curiosity in connection with sex impulses should be destroyed in childhood or youth by teaching people all about the true function of sex life. Just as eating is for nutrition and taste, but not for taste alone at the cost of nutritive value, so also the sex impulse was given by nature to create spiritual children and spiritual inspirations, not to be expended by body- and mind-debilitating sense gratification.

After understanding the physiological functions of sex, one should learn how to train the earthbound sex thought and sex energy to create on the spiritual plane. The sex instinct of parents becomes depraved owing to ungoverned prenatal tendencies and ungoverned sex impulses of this life. These uncontrolled impulses are born in children who also had ungoverned sex appetites in their last incarnations. Such children attract specific parents who, like them, have undisciplined sex appetites.

Social persecution and admonitions cannot correct evil habits of sex in children, youths, and adults; only the knowledge of how to destroy the deep-seated prenatal and postnatal causes that make sex impulses ungovernable can correct them. It is a shame that people unable to control sex impulses are not psychophysically and spiritually treated instead of being gossiplashed and socially persecuted.

Gossipmongers who talk about the moral weaknesses of others usually are themselves not free from sex weakness; they have to persecute others just to feed their own secret sex weakness indirectly, thereby mentally bringing others to their own low moral levels. Such people think that they themselves are all right because their weakness is not discovered.

Character detectives deliberately searching for moral weakness in others, and gossipmongers who enjoy advertising the moral weaknesses of others, are not true reformers capable of giving real spiritual uplift. A spiritual uplifter never talks about another's moral weakness; he never rejoices at his shortcomings. Instead, he pictures himself in the other person's position and feels sorry for him and tries to lift him up, if that help is wanted. When he sees somebody morally sick, he says: "But for the grace of God, there goes myself."

The man who has attained to the all-encompassing cosmic consciousness of the soul is not satisfied merely to spiritually transmute his own physical

and mental impulses; he constantly wants to spiritualize the earthbound impulses of others whom he beholds as his many selves still suffering in delusion. When one is illumined, he sees himself as the one Spirit throbbing within all minds and bodies. Such a person, after liberating his own body, tries to liberate spiritually all other bodies belonging to his own Self; that is, Spirit.

HOW TO TRANSMUTE THE SEX IMPULSE The best way to transmute sex impulses is to inhale and exhale deeply during sex excitement until the sex energy is transmuted into oxygen in the lungs.

While transmuting this sex consciousness, and during inhalation and exhalation, the mind should be kept busy affirming: "I want to transmute sex energy into spiritual energy. I want to turn it Godward to create spiritually."

Immediately after the sex impulse has been dissipated by inhalation and exhalation, read some holy scripture or begin to meditate on the joy of the Spirit within. Whenever the sex impulse revisits you, continuously inhale and exhale deeply. By inhalation and exhalation, tremendous energy is concentrated in the heart and lungs. Then the heart and lungs become magnets of living currents pulling energy away from all other parts of the body, especially the sex region. Then when the mind becomes engrossed in the deep God-peace of meditation, or busy with deep spiritual thoughts, the brain becomes a spiritual magnet pulling all the transmuted energy accumulated in the heart and lungs into the cerebral spiritual reservoir.

The more one indulges in sex life, the more the intelligence and life force go downward into the sex nerves and compel the deluded soul to live more and more on the sex plane. Now the spiritual law is that the more you try--by the foregoing yogic method--to send the life current back into the heart and unite the heart current with the brain current, the more you will overcome the sex temptation and be able to redirect sex impulses to create beautiful spiritual children of joy, peace, and happiness in the soul.

Last of all, by deeper meditation you will be able to connect the consciousness and energy that have been withdrawn from the sex region into the brain with Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy. When Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy become trapped in the body by the snare of physically creative tendencies, these tendencies strive to keep the soul tied to a series of incarnated bodies, busily creating vehicles for earthbound souls. But when the soul's attention is directed more and more toward Spirit, by disengaging its attention from the powerful creative sex impulses, it eventually becomes liberated from creating earthbound beings and hence from remaining on the plane of reincarnations.

If you deeply and regularly practice the foregoing method, striving continuously and consciously to live on the spiritual plane--not by imagination but by actually transmuting sex impulses into creative activity on the heart, brain, and spirit plane--you will attract a true life companion who can help

you to evolve on the spiritual plane. If you live on this higher plane, then you will also attract beautiful and harmonious environments, which will help to lift you higher and higher toward final liberation. This is the ideal of a truly spiritual marriage: to help one another spiritually, and by perfecting the marriage relationship on the highest plane, to become worthy of the perfect union--that of the human soul with the Cosmic Beloved.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The creative urge in man marks his mental inheritance from the original psychological defeat of our ancestors when their desire to create by divine will power was overpowered by the desire to create by flesh. Ever since, physical creation has taken the place of creating by will power. An original error in creating by flesh has thus become the present law of creation. Because of this, imperfect and sometimes undesirable children may be imposed upon man by the protoplasmic law of heredity.

In mental or immaculate conception children could be created "to order" even as God originally created perfect beings endowed with free choice. Adam and Eve, being divine children, inherited from the Father this free choice; but they misused that freedom and wandered away from God's perfect laws. Everyone who finds his self-control waning should remember that yielding will hasten his flight toward the pitfalls of disease, premature old age, mental dissatisfaction, loss of ambition, boredom, unhappiness, and premature unhappy death.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND NATIONS--Part 3

The ninth brother jeeringly replied: "It doesn't matter what you say. If any of you advance, I will shoot." But the eldest brother, unafraid, asked all to stand still and keep thinking: "We welcome you to kill us, while we keep blessing you with our love, now and hereafter, so that you will change your ways."

The eldest brother, in spite of the warning, began to advance steadily toward the menacing pistol, while the others remained quiet. A shot rang through the silence. The eldest prince was now bleeding from a wound and yet he advanced, saying: "Brother, you may give me death, but I will give you love instead. Kill me first. Shoot again and find out how wrong you are. For my life, spare the others."

At this, the ninth brother threw his gun and dagger away and fell at the feet of the eldest prince. The other brothers jumped on the wicked prince, for a moment losing the self-control invoked in them by the eldest brother. They would have choked the wicked prince to death, but their saintly brother,

who was only wounded on the left arm, fought with his right hand and rescued him. Finally, all the nine princes returned to the Queen. The eldest spoke: "Mother Queen, by my blood I saved my seven brothers, and also my repentant brother who is thy son too; and I have made him willingly cast away his wickedness and his weapons."

The Mother Queen cried out in joy: "My dear sons, that is the mode of action I love most. Whether you are good or whether you are murderers, you are my children. No matter what you do, you can't take my motherly love away, for I love you all equally and will ever do so. Naughty or good, you are my children, and ever will be. I hope that henceforth you will all live in amity and never again rejoice in hurting one another. I cannot take sides with you whether you are wrong or right. You must fight your own battles. But when you fight I cannot rejoice with the victorious son, for my heart bleeds for the vanquished son. I wish you would not fight, but would live in amity. That is the only behavior that pleases me."

The foregoing story furnishes the nations of the earth with a great lesson in ethics and principle. During the two World Wars, every nation was declaring that God was especially concerned with its success, but the Cosmic Mother did not take sides. Rather, the heart of the Cosmic Mother broke when one child-nation fought against another and rejoiced in doing so.

The Cosmic Mother, like the mother in the story, says: "Naughty or good, all of you are My children. It does not please Me to see one nation-child victorious and another downtrodden. I hope that all of you, as My children, will live in peace instead of killing each other. If you want My cooperation, make an altar of a League of United National Hearts. Thereon I shall come with My light of truth and peace to dwell eternally."

(The end)

AFFIRMATION

A thrilling fountain spray of joy spreads throughout each cell of my body and through each mind opening of my love for Thee.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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ETERNAL BLESSEDNESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Spirit in the sky, in the blossoms, teach us to seek Thee in Thy temple of nature, in the temple of mind, and in the temple of great souls. Unite our souls in Thee. Unite our hearts into one heart, on one great altar. We are all Thy children. Dispel the shadow walls of caste, race, and color so that the sunlight of Thy presence may shine within us in the fullness of Thy glory. May Thy light be established evermore.

O Spirit, in the fragrance of the flowers, in the perfume of minds, show us that Thou art on the altar of nature and in our souls. Teach us to worship Thee as the true object of all our desires, all our pursuits, for Thou art the only reality. Without Thee nothing exists. O Light of Lights, O Nectar of Nectars, O Joy of Joys, permeate us within and without; dispel the gloom and inharmony in our bodies, minds, and souls.

Heavenly Father, lift our consciousness from the senses and matter to the supernal Bliss within. Make our superconsciousness predominant, that we may always live in Eternal Blessedness.

PRAYER

Beloved Infinite, the kingdom of my mind is begrimed with ignorance. By steady rains of diligence in self-discipline may I remove from my cities of spiritual carelessness the ancient debris of delusion. Let the deluge wash away the disfiguring slums of narrow-mindedness and race-and-creed prejudice. O Lord, may the soiled, untidy thought-children of my realm bathe in Thy waters of purity and orderliness.

ANALYSIS OF THE MIND--Part 1

Dogmatism limits man's mind if a little knowledge prevents him from seeing beyond the wall of his own ideas. Such a person may try to see other viewpoints, but anything that is beyond his intellectual conception he is inclined to doubt, or even to consider untrue. A man once came to me preaching the superiority of the mind, but when I analyzed him I found that his mind was concentrated on his body. The vulture soars high but its mind is on the creatures in the canyon below. Similarly an intelligent person's mind may be roaming in the realm of ideas and yet be centered on the body and the attachments to which the body is subject. He whose concentration is on his person--on the exertions of the body, the muscular activity produced by the nervous system, is a material being. Rising above body consciousness does not mean neglect of the body nor of one's work. One should care for the body and perform one's work with his mind on the divine purpose to be fulfilled by attending to these duties. He who can keep his concentration centered on his inner Self even while he is busy with his work is a spiritual being.

Realize that when you can reverse the searchlight of your concentration from the senses to the inner Self, you change from sense attachment to self-control, from restlessness to calmness, from consciousness of the body to consciousness of soul peace; the searchlight of your attention is reversed--turned toward Spirit. Ordinarily that searchlight in man is pouring its beam outward through the senses, illumining the world of matter. When man's attention is thus constantly engaged in the observation and enjoyment of the outer material world, he naturally becomes materially attached. When he seeks to withdraw his consciousness and life force from its preoccupation with the material world, he should begin by concentrating on peace, the quality of the soul that is felt when there is an absence of any disturbance of thought waves in the ocean of mind stuff.

AVOID MENTAL AND
PHYSICAL LAZINESS

Peace should not be mistaken, however, for mental and physical laziness, which are extremely detrimental to spiritual realization. Occasional physical idleness may be necessary for relaxation from overwork but no one should allow

himself to become mentally stagnant. The lazy person's whole being becomes "ossified" when he delays his spiritual progress. Laziness in body or mind must be driven away before the spiritual aspirant can emerge from the dark clouds of ignorance into the bright kingdom of God. As soldiers who are getting ready for battle are not allowed to indulge in idleness, so a spiritual warrior should not countenance mental lethargy in himself, nor should he disregard his rightful material duties. Most people are unsuccessful in life owing largely to mental and physical indolence. Physical idleness may be excused sometimes, but mental idleness should not be tolerated, because mental laziness is due to the enervation of thought that results when there is insufficient contact with the super-conscious mind. Never let yourself think that work is too much for you. Remember that God is creating universes and He is never tired. You are made in His image, and if you want to be like Him you should emulate His tremendous capacity for activity. Our capacity grows as we become more aware, through ever-increasing contact with superconsciousness, of the unlimited nature of our being.

Whatever duties you are performing, act always with the thought that you are doing God's work. Each day say to yourself, "What can I do for God today?" A spiritual leader has to have a vision of the future, but he should never be worried about it. God will take care of everything. Do your best today and forget tomorrow. Do not harass the soul with petty worries. Every day create something in your mind. In that way you will reproduce your spiritual experiences in your conscious life. You should have a constant flow of spiritual experiences, no matter what you are doing. Always be superconsciously active, engaged inwardly in divine communion. "In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping, serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving, my soul constantly hums, unheard by any: 'God! God! God!'"

The spiritual man does not even let himself go to sleep at night until he has meditated. He says: "I have something better than sleep. My body is too much used to the habit of sleep." Let your body sleep awhile each night, but be awake in God while you are asleep. When you can do that you will be in the superconscious. That is the deeper meaning of overcoming mental inactivity.

HOW YOU CAN FULLY WITHDRAW
ENERGY AND CONSCIOUSNESS
FROM THE PHYSICAL BODY AND
CONCENTRATE IT IN THE SPINE

By complete relaxation man can withdraw his consciousness and life force at will from the physical body. It is necessary to detach oneself from all motion, because motion brings about the death

of spiritual consciousness. Spirit is that vast stillness which is behind all created things. In creation, everything is in motion, in flux. You can sit still, but are you relaxed? By the slightest movement that you make you send energy into the muscles, and you are then not relaxed; you are using life force and energy in those limbs and muscles.

When trying various ways of relaxing by withdrawing energy from the muscles and directing the conscious mind away from the material world, it is

necessary to realize that mental effort alone is not enough to withdraw thought. You cannot withdraw your thought successfully from any object unless you also withdraw your energy. That is, wherever our muscles and bones are working, wherever we perform activities, there our minds are engrossed. That is why we must not only withdraw our thoughts but also our energy from the body in order to concentrate fully on God. Motion sprang from God, but God is not motion. "Beyond the trackless track, beyond all motion's motion, there--in the land of perennial peace--I am." Motion, plus Spirit, is projected in the ether, but pure Spirit is entirely without motion. Only one part of space manifests motion; another part has none. We cannot say "space and time" in describing motionless Spirit, for that phrase is meaningful only to the material consciousness.

So, the first step toward withdrawing the consciousness and energy from the body into the spine is to withdraw the consciousness from all the muscles. And the best way to accomplish that is to relax the muscles: tense the whole body and let go quickly. If you do not practice this method of relaxation, there are often many little places in the body where waves of energy continue to dance. Even in the act of relaxation you move some parts of your body; and in moving even a finger you are being active--conscious energy is active in that part of your body. Wherever you keep your mind and energy engaged, there your consciousness will be tied. Little knots of energy and consciousness in the muscles keep the mind tied to those parts of the body. When the body is in motion, the conscious life energy is tied to the entire body. Relax: untie the knots. I believe it was Socrates who said that a human being is a knot of consciousness and matter. A tangle of knots, actually! The first knot to untie, in order to release the Spirit within, is the knot of muscular consciousness. It is necessary to remove all tension and send relaxation to the knots--big and small-- in the muscles. When you move involuntarily without willing to move, you are a slave to the muscles, you are bound with the knot of muscular consciousness.

It is vitally necessary to release one's consciousness from muscular motion, because the soul as ego has become so used to the muscular activity of the physical vehicle that it thinks it is involved and identified with it. You will see that when you are absolutely still, and relaxing your consciousness from the body, you can still feel the weight of your body within yourself. You can feel that weight when you jump. What makes you feel weight? Consciousness and energy. The yogi can feel the weight of his body even in a perfectly motionless posture. Remember that muscular relaxation, though it is not easy, is extremely important for spiritual development. Muscular relaxation means withdrawing energy and consciousness from the wave of muscular motions; it is not a simple thing.

Always meditate in a sitting posture; if you lie down, your body has a tendency to fall asleep. Habit centers your mind on the subconsciousness, and you drowse and dream. But when you meditate in a sitting posture, it is easier to keep awake and ready; and when the divine energy comes--released

by relaxation from the muscles and retiring into the spine--your body will be so balanced that it will remain perfectly still.

Always remember this: seclusion is the price of greatness. In this tremendously busy life, unless you are often by yourself, you can never succeed. Walk in silence; go about your rightful duties quietly; develop spirituality. We should not allow noise and sensory activities to tear down the ladder of our inner attention, because we are listening for the footsteps of God to come into our body temple.

RELAXING CONSCIOUSNESS FROM BODY IDENTIFICATION

Following are different forms of identification of life force and consciousness with the muscles:

1. Identification of the optical energy and the vision with eyeballs and eyelids.
2. Identification of energy and consciousness with facial muscles.
3. Identification of energy and consciousness with the fingers, hands, and arms. Sometimes even when the rest of the body is quiet, the energy is moving through the fingers down to the nerve ends.
4. Identification of energy and consciousness with lungs, diaphragm, and breath.
5. Identification of energy and consciousness with abdominal muscles.
6. Identification of energy and consciousness with muscles in thighs and feet.

The identification of consciousness and energy with the eyes can be remedied by holding the eyes and mind motionless. Identification with the hands, feet, and other body parts can be removed by practicing tension and relaxation. But consciousness and energy can be relaxed from the viscera and lungs only by practicing the SRF technique of breathlessness.

EXERCISES

Tense and relax the top of the head. Close eyes and relax. Tense face and relax. Tense arms and relax. Tense thighs and feet and relax. Now you see that your diaphragm and chest are last. Tense them and relax. Throw the breath out--now you should be relaxed. Do you see how much there is to it? The more you repeat, year after year, the more responsive your muscles will be. Practice faithfully what has been taught you about muscular relaxation, and the path of Self-realization will open before you.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Thoughts are like words in that they send out vibrations, both good and bad, according to the caliber of the thought. When you can dismiss unwanted thoughts as long as you wish, when your mind is always undisturbed, when you can remain without breath and be calm as long as you wish, and when you are happy in the consciousness of God, then you will have perfect self-control.

You think you are just a mortal, your life destined to be shattered by the hammer of death. Pluck that weed-thought of death from your mind and realize your immortality. The easiest and the best way of experiencing resurrection is by doing good and meditating regularly every day.

Most people are spiritually idle. Filled with the consciousness that spiritual imponderables are too big to be solved, they therefore leave them entirely alone. However, if you are in earnest with God, He will surely answer you. Just be persistent, sincere, un baffled in your demands to learn.

If you live for God alone--if money, or health, or wealth is not your goal, but God alone is your goal--then all else will come to you. Contact God first in the temple of silence; then health, prosperity, and wisdom will be added unto you.

THE BANDIT AND THE BULL -- Part 1

Once upon a time, in a cave hidden in the dark breast of the hills of northern India, there lived a vicious bandit named Rakusha and his band. This rapacious robber lived by pillage, murder, and plunder. It is said that the tiger--even though it may be gorged to the throat with meat-- will go on killing animals just for the thrill of killing. Similarly the tiger-bandit Rakusha excelled in the art of cruelty. Flouting and ridiculing every spiritual law, he was truly an incarnation of wickedness. The following incident is but a sample of his supreme perversity.

Rukusha had started with his band to plunder a poor little village at the outskirts of a forest. As he passed through the woods he carried on an orgy of killing songbirds just for the thrill of it. When he arrived at the end of the forest he perceived a mile-long dirt road leading into the village. This road was lined by tall trees. One of the bandit gang remarked that the trees must afford travelers welcome shade from the sultry heat of the Oriental sun "Well," said the bandit leader, "all of you get busy and circle those trees, cutting their bark so that they will die. No longer shall they be liberal with their shade to the villagers." His orders were obeyed.

As the band of robbers were about to enter the village, they found that they had to walk over some loose bricks laid down as steppingstones in a muddy puddle of water. After they had crossed the puddle, the bandit king thought: "Let me remove the bricks, lest anyone else have the comfort of walking over them and thus miss an unpleasant contact with the mud." However, on second thought he remembered that he himself would have to cross the puddle again, on his way back to his den beyond the forest. He therefore refrained from removing the bricks.

As the bandit and his followers were entering the village, several holy men happened to be leaving it, and they were delighted to walk on the bricks in the mud puddle, thus avoiding soiling their sandals.

The bandits plundered the village, slaughtering men, women, and children, and started on the return journey to their cave. Again the bandit king had to walk on the bricks over the mud puddle; but, after he and his ruffians were through using the bricks, the leader pushed them with his long spear into the deepest holes of the mud puddle, lest any one else use them.

Shortly after this, Rakusha was treacherously killed by one of his subordinates, who wanted to rule the robber group. It is said in the Hindu scriptures that every man has two angels, each with a recording book; one resides invisibly at his left shoulder and the other at his right. The angel on the left writes in his book all a man's misdeeds, and the angel on the right records all his virtuous actions. When Rakusha's soul was being escorted to a particularly dark and hideous part of Hades, the leader in charge of Heaven and Hades, to make sure that no injustice be done, asked the robber's two angels to look in their records and say what they found. The angel on the left said, "Honored Sir, the book of sin is so full of this man's wicked deeds that I had to write all around the margins of all the pages."

The angel on the right said: "All the pages of my book are blank. I cannot find a single record of a good action performed by this cruel bandit."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I feel God as a bursting voice, leading,
guiding, teaching secretly in the soul temples
of all men and of all created beings.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the tools used for data collection.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, including a comparison of the different methods and techniques used. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each method and provides a summary of the findings.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the study and provides recommendations for future research. It highlights the need for further investigation into the effectiveness of the different methods and techniques used.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and a summary of the key findings. It reiterates the importance of maintaining accurate records and the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

6. The sixth part of the document provides a list of references and a bibliography. It includes a list of all the sources used in the study and provides a detailed description of each source.

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8. The eighth part of the document provides a list of figures and a bibliography. It includes a list of all the figures used in the study and provides a detailed description of each figure.

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE INFINITE RHYTHM

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I disconnected the rays of my mind
From the little territory of the senses
And switched them on
In the land of the Infinite.
The aurora of my attention
Spread in all directions,
Embracing Infinity.

When thus I delved into the Infinite,
Thought was no longer hidden
Behind flesh and appearances;
I stood in a land unveiled,
And found streams
Of rushing, glistening thoughts,
Felt rippling thoughts of millenniums--
Of born and unborn civilizations.
All futurity danced in me
The Infinite Rhythm!

PRAYER

I am lost, Father, in the wastelands of wrong beliefs; I cannot find my home. Rise on my darkness, and be the polestar of my groping mind. Lead me to Thyself, who art my home!

THE ANALYSIS OF THE MIND--Part 2

As soon as you withdraw your consciousness and energy from the conscious plane, you reach the subconscious; then subconsciously induced dreams and hallucinations, somnambulism, psychic states, semisuperconscious dreams, consciously induced dreams, and superconsciously induced dreams may be experienced. All these stand in your way just as you are passing from the motion picture house of material or waking consciousness into the motion picture house of the subconscious. You should not keep the searchlight of your attention and your life force centered on the subconscious motion picture house, because hallucinations and dreams hold your attention and they will keep you concentrated there.

Visions are different. The soul may use its intuition together with life force released from bodily activities during the relaxation of sleep to project true visions on the screen of the subconscious. Visions may show events to come, as the soul can use its intuitive power to "photograph" future happenings. But a vision does not appear until sufficient energy has been relaxed from the heart and from the ordinary waking consciousness (as in sleep) to project it.

Sleep brings a state of muscular-sensory relaxation. The subconscious mind, working with the ego and a few subconscious films of past experiences, can then produce a dream. The thought film of certain events that has been lodged in your brain is vivified by the energy relaxed from the rest of the body during sleep and is used to produce a subconsciously induced dream.

Clairaudience comes when your mind is able to concentrate so powerfully on listening that the tympanum catches vibrations not only from sounds around your body, of which you are normally aware according to the capacity of your tympanum, but also sounds you would not ordinarily be able to hear with the physical ears. Those extraordinary sounds come from far off; hence clairaudience is sometimes called intuitive hearing.

The powers of all our senses can be stimulated by the governing power of the mind. It is not the physical eye that sees. It is the mind that uses energy to photograph objects through the eye. That energy in the eye is powerful, like an X ray. Well, you may say, the X ray can photograph bones in the body; why then, if the eyes are powerful as Xrays, cannot we see the bones inside the body with the unaided eye? We do have the power to see thus; but we do not

enjoy that kind of vision because we haven't developed the high rate of vibration or energy needed to pierce visually certain forms of matter. The power in the eye is more powerful than the X ray, but the sense of sight in the average person has become limited, owing to hereditary limitations of the mental processes that govern it.

LIFE FORCE The life force is the source of all the rays of sensory perceptions. The difference between the life force in the body and
IS SOURCE the X ray is simply a difference in rate of vibration. Life
OF ALL RAYS force is semiconscious. The electricity in a bulb does not produce the bulb, but the life force in a little sperm, when united with an ovum, develops the human body. Since the life force is responsible for making the entire body, and is the source of all rays, there is a strong relationship between the life force in the body and all the rays around the body.

We could not eat a stone and derive nourishment therefrom. Why? Not because the stone is not food--for it may contain elements found in some foods--but because its vibration is not akin to that in the body. Vegetables, water, and air are on a vibratory scale that is more or less harmonious to the vibration of the body; hence their rays are more quickly absorbed by the body. Rays are the first emanations of life force. Gases, chemicals, salts, and minerals are but different kinds of rays, each with its own vibration. The Lord has given us four forms of vibration: solids are the densest; liquids are finer; air is still finer; and energy itself is the finest of all.

God is the Supreme Intelligence. The Word is intelligent vibration, or the intelligent Cosmic Energy that has produced protons, electrons, atoms, and so on. All these are actually rays, and include X ray, electricity, ultraviolet, and infrared rays. Rays, according to their rate of vibration, become gases, liquids, or solids. A solid might be defined as "frozen" liquid; liquid as "frozen" gas; and gas as "frozen" rays; rays are "frozen" electricity; and electricity is "frozen" energy. What is solid is actually material vibration or energy; liquid is simply liquid energy, and gas is gaseous energy. All are forms of energy. All matter is energy in different forms, or different rates of vibration.

CLAIRVOYANCE Clairvoyance is made possible when the life force in the power of sight has been attuned to certain vibrations of matter which are finer than those ordinarily perceived with the physical eyes. Persons who understand how to make the vibratory power of vision more powerful will find that just as an X ray "sees" through a wall, so the power of sight may be developed to see through solid matter. Those who have developed that vision are called clairvoyant. You can be clairvoyant when you increase the intuitive faculty of the eyes, or when you increase the vibration of the life force in the eyes. That vibratory power can penetrate into anything, and you can see into the astral counterpart of the physical universe. The universe we see is a dream within a dream. Matter is not only "frozen" energy but also the "frozen" consciousness of God. The difference between Cosmic Energy and

the energy of consciousness is nothing more than varying rates of vibration.

OUR EYES ARE
LIKE X RAYS

Our eyes were meant to be as powerful as X rays. We were meant to be able to see with our eyes as one could see with a fluoroscope. Why then are we so "blind"?

Why must we use instruments to see through matter? If power were not in the eye, we could not see through the instruments. We have made ourselves believe that we need instruments; but in reality all the sensory powers lie in the soul. "They seeing see not; and hearing they hear not" (Matthew 13:13). We think that we cannot see behind the scenes without the aid of scientific appliances. Yet if we were only to develop our own visual powers we would be able to see that the world is absolutely different from what it now appears to be to our limited material vision. What fine rays are dancing! What color there is in the sunshine! The spectrum that we see has only seven colors; it is nothing compared to the colors of the astral sphere. Do you know why leaves turn to a more or less orange color when they are dying? They are retiring to the Infinite. Color is a certain rate of vibration. Anything that goes toward Spirit changes to certain colors in the process. By clairvoyance we may see the astral counterparts of matter, if we are developed enough; but in true visions we have the spiritual X-ray power that can penetrate through the astral world and see even the saints. Saints are sometimes hidden behind the astral world and it requires great concentration to receive their vibratory projections.

It is possible in two ways to see people who have passed on: If you love someone very deeply, you may project from within yourself the concept of that person. Or if you think of a person very strongly you may force his astral body to project so that you may see him. By the law of attraction his astral body may be projected, either with or without his knowledge.

Those who are able to see spiritually or clairvoyantly can photograph on their mental screen the images of real saints that move in the ether. Clairvoyance in itself is not detrimental to spiritual progress; actually in that state your consciousness is reversed from the plane of matter to the plane of Spirit. But certain subconscious pictures or astral images of a lower rate of vibration may intrude upon your mental screen and these may be detrimental to soul progress.

Relax your consciousness and energy from preoccupation with the motion picture of the material world; and then relax consciousness and energy from the subconscious, which perceives the astral world. That is the way to the Infinite. The first process is to withdraw the energy and life force from the plane of the senses; then from the subconscious movie house. As you are withdrawing your consciousness from the motion picture of matter, you can forget completely the subconscious, and become aware of a higher plane. Do not let yourself dally in the chamber of subconscious dreams. You do not have to dream in order to relax in the subconscious. Avoid dreams, that you be not detained in the movie house of the subconscious but pass beyond into

the calm sphere of the superconscious state.

SELF-ANALYSIS AS AN AID TO SUCCESS

Under all circumstances you should be calm and self-possessed. No one should be able to excite you. No matter what happens, even if storms of trials come, you must be able to steer the ship of concentration calmly to the shores of blessedness.

The ordinary person is influenced by his worldly environment. The man of concentration shapes his own life. The man of concentration plans his day and finds at the end of the day that his plans are carried out; he finds himself nearer to God and his goal. A weak man plans many wonderful things, but finds at the end of the day that he has been a victim of circumstances and bad habits. Such a person usually blames everyone but himself.

Remember, you should blame no one but yourself for your troubles. If you make up your mind that you are going to control your circumstances according to law, your circumstances will adjust themselves accordingly. Eventually you must learn to lead a controlled existence.

Every morning make up your mind that you are going to be better, you are going to be kind to your friends and enemies alike, you are going to meditate more deeply than you did the day before, you are going to know something about good books, and so forth. In other words, you are going to go on improving. Analyze yourself and find out whether you are the same person that you were a few years ago or not, and whether you have overcome any of your past bad habits. This will tell you whether you have been progressing or not. You must not lead a stagnant existence. Every day spur yourself on to greater achievements.

THE BANDIT AND THE BULL--Part 2

The angel on the right was asked to re-examine his book thoroughly. Finally he exclaimed: "Ah! I find on the last page a single, indirect virtuous action. Rakusha once left a few bricks in a puddle of mud so that he might recross over them, although he hated to think that anyone else might benefit from the use of them too. However, he has a reward coming to him because a few holy men did happen to use those bricks to cross the puddle."

Then the angel in charge of Heaven and Hades said to the bandit soul: "You have two hours of complete freedom in Heaven or Hades. Pray let me know your last wish." The bandit thought it over and replied: "Get me a flying bull

from Hades with long, sharp-pointed horns." A ferocious flying bull arrived. The bandit got on the animal's back and, upon being assured that it would do just as he commanded, he said: "Mr. Bull, charge all the keepers of Hades." Hades had never before been in such an uproar.

Hearing the confusion, the angel in charge of both Heaven and Hades together with his flying assistants, hastened to the scene to try to save their colleagues in Hades. The bandit soul, in great glee, at once ordered the bull to drive his long horns into the body of the angel leader. Seeing his doom approaching, the angel with his assistants began to race through space to find shelter behind Heaven's safe gates, fiercely pursued by the bandit. The keepers in Hades sent telepathic broadcasts to Heaven about this terrible outrage. Archangels flocked to the rescue, but according to the decree, none could withstand the attack of the flying bull under the command of the wicked bandit.

The bull entered the pearly gates hot on the heels of the fleeing angels. Then Heaven was in an uproar! At last, just as Rakusha on the flying bull reached the golden throne of His Majesty, the Lord, the bandit's two hours of freedom were up; the bull suddenly stopped his unbridled goring. The angels folded their wings and rested. But the keeper of Heaven and Hades approached the now powerless bandit and shouted: "So! even in this other world you had to follow your wicked way. We will give you and your flying bull overtime work in the worst part of Hades. Heaven is too good for you."

But the Heavenly Father exclaimed, "No! You will not throw the wicked bandit and his bull back into Hades. They are already free, for they have reached Heaven. It doesn't matter how one gets here, even if it is by a very little goodness. Once a soul reaches Heaven, it shall never go to Hades again."

And so, dear friend, by its audacity this story is intended to help you to realize that no matter what wrong you may have done in the past, if you sin no more and cultivate even a little goodness, that good may be the portal to the heaven of eternal joy and freedom. The idea is, do not keep brooding over the distance between you and Truth, but keep walking toward it by doing some good every day, and you will finally reach your Goal.

AFFIRMATION

O Father of Light, my shipwrecked
soul rejoicingly beholds Thy shores of
Bliss.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE CANDLE OF PEACE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Take the bowl of my mind and fill it with Thine understanding wisdom. Take the bottle of my emotion and fill it with Thy mercy. Take the empty basket of my soul and fill it with Thy fragrant wisdom. Use my life's vessel to dip cupfuls of Thy love and pour them into the desire-parched throats of others. Break the walls of my love and flood me with Thine omnipresence.

It is the streak of love's dawn, peeping through the little opening fissures of my heart, which bespeaks the sunlight of Thy love spreading over the dark dungeon of my indifference. The darkness of my love is lit by the gentle luminosity of Thy love. The empty hall of my soul is illumined by the light of Thy spirit.

Thou art the life behind my body, the intelligence behind my mind, the love behind my feeling, the wisdom behind my ignorance.

With the little taper of my love I may read Thy golden book which lay agelong hidden in me. Thy love has been the invisible candle of peace dispelling my darkness and showing me Thy secret messages written on the pages of all hearts.

PRAYER

O Father, if Thou wakest me, how can I ever sleep again?
 But if sleep should steal over me, wilt Thou wake me again?
 The terrors of the dreamland of life are forgotten now. My
 sorrow Thou hast changed into tears of joy. My joys are blaz-
 ing into bliss.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE MIND--Part 3

DREAM STATE Waking consciousness is the state experienced during one's waking hours; the subconscious mind works then as memory. When we are using the conscious mind, the ego orders the senses and the muscular processes and the thought processes in the body to produce certain activity. At the same time, just behind the thought processes of the conscious mind, the subconscious is working through memory. The conscious mind sleeps at night, but the subconscious is always awake--in the daytime as memory, at night as dreams or as the feeling of peace accompanying deep sleep.

When you do not dream, but sleep peacefully, you are in a state called "semisuperconsciousness." When you can consciously retain this dreamless state of subconsciousness, it is called "superconsciousness." The soul manifests superconsciousness through its intuitive process. Dwelling behind the conscious mind are the subconscious and superconscious minds.

The average person uses the conscious mind most of the time. In dreams he passively experiences the activity of the subconscious mind; and in deep sleep he has a glimpse of the semisuperconscious and the superconscious states. One can willfully operate the subconscious mind to produce conscious hallucinations; and by meditation one can consciously operate the superconscious mind to perceive true spiritual visions.

The ego is the false consciousness of material limitation that the soul assumes upon entering the body and becoming engrossed in sense perceptions. Ego has many names: "my body," "my name," "my nationality," and so on. Its perceptions extend upward into the realm of the subconscious--at the utmost to the semisuperconscious. Ego perception cannot go beyond into the realm of superconsciousness, because ego is the delusive consciousness of identification with the physical body; whereas superconsciousness is the direct intuitive perception of the soul when it beholds itself as a reflection of Spirit.

VISIONS Superconsciousness and intuition are the same. Intuition is the direct perception of the soul, and is different from reason, which is dependent upon sense perception. When the soul uses intuition, and intuition only, plus the energy that accumulates in the brain during sensory and

muscular relaxation, it can focus upon and materialize certain actual experiences. These are called visions.

Semivision occurs when the soul uses a mixture of waking consciousness, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness to produce certain half-true visions. They are called "semivisions" because during the vision you may also dream. You may be seeing a vision, but you are not able to concentrate on it exclusively because your attention is partially deflected into the subconscious or conscious state. Part is true and part is untrue. The conglomerate experiences of conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds, plus relaxed energy of the body processes, produce semivisions. Generally speaking, all hallucinations may be classified as subconscious experiences; they are detrimental to higher spiritual attainment and the experience of true visions.

SUBCONSCIOUSLY INDUCED DREAMS When the ego retires from the chamber of waking consciousness into the chamber of subconsciousness, it utilizes relaxed energy produced by sensory relaxation, and also certain stored-up comedy or tragedy films of experiences lodged in the subconscious mind, to produce dreams.

CONSCIOUSLY INDUCED DREAMS At times, perhaps just as you have fallen asleep after viewing a harrowing war film, or perhaps a ghost story film that greatly impressed your mind, you have seen these things again, with certain little changes, in a dream. The conscious stimuli became mixed with certain subconscious experiences, then you projected them into a dream.

All experiences that are filmed by the conscious mind through the lenses of the senses are stored in the subconscious mind where they may later be projected into that kind of picture or dream. The only difference between consciously and subconsciously induced dreams is that the consciously induced dream immediately follows the conscious experience, whereas, in the subconsciously induced dream, the record of the experience may have been stored for some time, even years, before it is projected in the form of a dream.

Not all consciously induced dreams are the outcome of certain experiences before the state of sleep, however. Dreams may also be consciously produced in the following way: before you retire at night, make the light dim and begin to behold or visualize the area of the room that is lighted, with all the things in it. Concentrate with open eyes with the whole attention, but with complete relaxation. Keep on visualizing the room and if you fall asleep doing so, you will find that you have converted this visualization into a conscious dream.

Pressure on certain parts of the brain produces certain mental pictures. Once I was sleeping on my side and certain dream-pictures came. I turned on the other side and immediately the pictures vanished. Then I sat up in the meditation posture, saw superconscious visions, and again slept. It was wonderful to experience so many states of consciousness in such a short time.

**SUPERCONSCIOUSLY
INDUCED DREAMS**

Superconscious dreams are those in which the soul's consciousness with its camera of intuition photographs certain future events and drops them into the subconscious mind and projects them on the screen of dreams. Or such visions may be from the past. A great many dreams are true: for instance, one that depicts a certain experience of past lives. Superconscious experiences are projected as semiconscious dreams or visions. You can see a vision with either open or closed eyes, in daylight or at night; it makes no difference. When you meditate for a long time you behold creation as an insubstantial dream projection of the Infinite Intelligence.

**IMPORTANT MENTAL STATES
DESCRIBED AND CLASSIFIED**

Semisuperconscious dreams or superconsciously induced dreams of future happenings generally come true. They are almost like visions, only not consciously induced. The superconsciousness of the soul uses the subconscious to produce a semidream or semisuperconscious dream; the difference between these superconsciously induced dreams and real visions is as follows:

A real vision is induced consciously--consciously you reach the state of superconsciousness, and then produce a vision; but a semisuperconscious dream is produced while you are sleeping. The soul arouses itself, and using intuition undergoes an experience so that the ego, when it wakes up and remembers the dream experience, may be warned or entertained.

Hallucinations are produced by the subconscious mind, using certain energy released by the relaxed body to produce a mental picture which you can see with open or closed eyes, but which has no corresponding reality.

Somnambulism includes motion of the limbs and other strong muscular activity, accompanied by hallucinations.

During unconscious trance you remain outwardly inert, physically unconscious, but inwardly you stay on the borderland of semisubconsciousness or semisuperconsciousness. The internal experience is peace, plus certain semisuperconsciousness, and sometimes superconscious dreams.

During unconsciousness you are unconscious outside, and you may or may not be conscious inside. The last stage is to be unconscious inside and outside at the same time. (To be continued)

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T BE KING

Long ago there lived a few saints in a retreat on a mountain slope adjoining a jungle valley. Here blew the zephyr of ceaseless peace. The saints ate fruits from the trees, and drank, from the cup of their hands, 'the living water

of the sparkling mountain springs. Their diamond-bright eyes glittered with celestial smiles; joy throbbed in their bosoms, giving perpetual solace.

And yet one day one of the saints thought he had had too much of spiritual happiness, and wanted a taste of earthly happiness. He wanted to be a king for a day. With this desire burning in his heart, he set out in quest of royal pleasure.

On the way he thought: "Heavenly Father, I am Thy child, surely Thou wilt guide me to the place where I can enjoy kingly happiness for a day." Soon his eye fell upon a stately, palatial mansion. "Ah, I see the Heavenly Father has made my dream come true," he exclaimed, and began hurrying toward the mansion.

No guard stopped him, so he passed through the gates. He walked all over the flower-bedecked garden, but met no one. He went into the dining room of the palace and found steaming hot, delicious food invitingly awaiting him on the table, but no trace of waiters or servants. He thought: "The Lord is good to me; He has materialized this palace, and wonderful food, fit for a king, just for me. It is just as I wanted it. My dreams of kingly happiness have come true."

Being sentimentally convinced, he proceeded to enjoy the preliminaries of being a God-made king for a day. He took a bath, dressed in fresh clothes, and then sat down for dinner. Just at this moment the servants of the palace, who had been out gambling, rushed in and in great excitement shouted: "Who are you, eating the food of our king who is out hunting and is expected to arrive any minute?" The saint, thinking that it was a test of the Lord, replied in a calm, loving tone: "I am a friend of the Great King; I have come here at His command to enjoy royal happiness for a day."

The servants, noting his cosmopolitan air of assurance, took the saint to be truly an august guest of their king, and let him finish the royal dinner. Then they ushered him to sleep in the royal chamber, not dreaming that the "Great King" the saint referred to was not their earthly ruler, but the Lord.

Two hours passed. The herald of the king arrived with a message from His Highness, stating that he was detained and would arrive at the end of three hours and would like to have a hot dinner ready. The servants anxiously asked: "Didn't His Highness send a guest to enjoy his dinner and bed?" Thus the king's herald learned that an unknown guest, without invitation, had devoured the king's food and was now snoring on the royal bed. Enraged at this audacity, he urged the servants to run and bring sticks with which to drive out the interloper.

The saint was rudely awakened from his dream of royal happiness by sticks mercilessly falling upon him; but the more the servants beat and reviled him, the more he laughed. Infuriated, they continued to beat him until he lost consciousness, then threw him out beyond the palace gates.

A passing brother saint took him back to the hermitage. The brother forced milk into the mouth of the unconscious saint, and after a while, by way of testing his recovery of consciousness, asked: "Do you know who is feeding you milk?" The beaten saint laughingly replied: "The same God who beat me for trying to be a king for a day--that same God is feeding me milk." The other hermits were glad to see their brother's faith in God unchanged. This saint wasn't like those who worship God during prosperity and disbelieve in God during adversity.

Meanwhile, the king of the palace returned and demanded the hot food he had ordered. Although he was momentarily wrathful to learn of the intruder who had eaten his food and who had laughed when he was being beaten, the king had a whimsical turn of mind and ordered his servants to find the audacious impostor. They searched high and low until, turning homeward in despair, they galloped past the saint's retreat and were amazed to hear his loud laughter. They dismounted, seized the saint, and took him before the king.

When the king and the saint met, the saint began to laugh louder than ever, as if unable to hold his merriment within the cup of his heart. The king repeatedly asked him, under threat of dire punishment, to tell the reason for his laughter. When threats failed, the king used entreaty, and finally offered his throne if only the saint would explain how he could laugh so sincerely while being beaten.

The saint replied: "Listen well! I was thrashed by God for craving the delusive enjoyment of kingly material comfort for a day; my laughter increased because I 'got off easy.' I thought: 'If I merit so much beating for just one day of being a king, think how much punishment is coming to a king who indulges in material happiness for years.' I was beaten for forgetting God for just one day; so, no, thank you, I would not be king! I have ever-fresh happiness in God, which does not end with lashing worries."

AFFIRMATION

My body temple is filled with light. The rays of Thy light will keep the eyes of my wisdom from dropping. I thank Thee, my Father, for keeping me always awake and ready.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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IN MY HEART'S PATCH OF FLOWERS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The bee of my mind makes its way
to my heart's secluded garden, fanned by
the breeze of my devotion and pearled with
the dew of Thy sweetness.

I have grown for Thee stately lilies of
discrimination, buttercup receptacles of
my repentant tears, shy violets, dreaming
of humility, and immense chrysanthemums
of soul perceptions. To Thee my thought
trees proffer on humble branch hands their
fragrant fruit of prayer.

In my heart's patch of flowers my play-
ful mind bee daily hovers, reveling among
the nectared offerings to Thee.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Infinite Alchemist! Spiritualize our weakness into strength, our wrong thoughts into right thoughts. Grow Thou a flower of Thine understanding out of every seed of activity. With Thy magic wand of foresight, teach us to transmute our ugly demons of selfish ambitions into fairies of all-serving, noble aspirations.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE MIND--Part 4

INTUITION Upon the sensitive plate of mind or human consciousness
AND SOUL the ego cameraman photographs the objective world through
 the lens of the senses by means of the rays of life flowing
in them and in the brain. The ego has limited power, and so it cannot photograph distant events. But when the soul banishes its ego consciousness, by dissolving its identification with the body, it becomes the pure, true reflection of Spirit, the exalted soul cameraman who can photograph the operations of the law of causation in the objective world in the light of energy relaxed from the senses and concentrated in the brain.

Intuition or superconsciousness can project these films of future events as visions--glimpses of the fourth dimensional world--that can be seen in the dark spacial movie house behind closed eyes, or even with open eyes in daylight or at night. The power of intuition, using the secret inner liferay withdrawn from the senses, can photograph any subjective dream scene or any objective worldly scene, even though it is not present before the physical eyes, and can project it on the screen of human consciousness as an objective vision any time, anywhere, as a true vision (in the human wakeful state), or as a true dream (in the subconscious dream state).

The illusory motion picture of worldly objects is produced by God's power of cosmic delusion in conjunction with human consciousness and human life. The motion picture of true dreams (dreams which come true) is caused by God's power of cosmic intuition operating in conjunction with the soul's power of pure intuition or superconsciousness, and pure life, withdrawn from the senses and concentrated in the brain, reflected from Spirit in ego-less soul.

Superconsciously induced dreams are those in which the soul takes a real intuitive experience and from that intuition projects a dream. Such dreams are projected by the soul operator on the screen of subconsciousness in the passive state of sleep. In this case the soul does not take film from the subconscious (as in ordinary dreams) but photographs events from the ether by intuition, and projects them as superconscious dreams in the dark chamber of subconsciousness.

Between subconscious false dreams and true dreams there is a great deal of similarity, as shown above. When the human consciousness and energy are concentrated in the brain during the relaxation of sleep, the blind ego produces untrue motion pictures of dreams, whereas the pure soul, by concentrating pure consciousness and energy during the relaxation of sleep can produce true dreams. When one liberates the soul by practicing meditation during the wakeful state one can learn to project true dreams in the subconscious state. An advanced yogi finds his soul able to withdraw life and energy from the senses consciously, and to photograph future events or distant scenes and film them as superconscious visions, which may then be viewed with closed or open eyes in the wakeful state also.

COMPOSITION OF DREAMS Your usual habit of sleep indicates your usual state of mind. There is a way to distinguish all these different states. These are the fine things that you should know, because they are all roads to Self-realization.

Never forget that there is the element of energy in dreams--energy combined with imagination. Without energy you cannot see. Energy materializes the thought. God's thought, combined with Cosmic Energy, was materialized to produce this universe. He shows us that if we have control over energy and consciousness even as He does, we can create just as He does. In a passive state, with energy relaxed from the senses and concentrated in the brain, we can create miniature dream pictures.

Behind nature is Cosmic Intelligence, plus energy. Energy is the missing link between matter and consciousness. Energy and consciousness are everything. Likewise, God shows us in dreamland that we can create a replica of this world, provided we have the necessary concentration of consciousness and energy. It is also true that if energy could somehow be kept away from the brain, you would have no hallucinations. If you are peaceful and calm every day, you will not have dreams. But by consciously inducing energy in the brain and controlling it properly, you may see visions.

When by self-control during meditation the devotee astrally disconnects the life force from the sensory nerves, it begins to flow inward and becomes focused into an opalescent light at the point between the eyebrows. This inward astral flow, and the inner light, are the oblations of human wisdom to its ancestors of soul, ego, and intuition. The human wisdom must offer these vitalities to the soul faculties with the oblations of inwardly flowing spiritual perceptions and the light of the spiritual eye, or the soul faculties will remain dormant, degradingly undeveloped.

Dreams are made of consciousness, relaxed energy, and an idea. The idea is the film, the relaxed energy is the current and the ego is the projector. For example: In the projection of a dream, the subconsciousness is the screen; the relaxed energy from the nerves gathers in the brain, and the film

is the experience impinged on the brain cells. And what is the projector? The ego. The medulla oblongata serves as the projection booth. So when a person is dreaming his energy has relaxed into the brain; the ego is taking the current of relaxed energy and passing it and its ego consciousness through the experiences in the brain cells, and these are being projected as subconscious dreams; i. e., the ego, plus relaxed energy, plus experiences located in the brain, produce images.

Nightmare dreams come under the heading of subconsciously induced dreams. During a nightmare, more energy will be used by the heart and the circulation, and the breath will be more excited than in superconsciously induced dreams, which have a rather peaceful effect on the body. During a superconscious dream your breath, heart, and all physical and vital processes will be decidedly less active than when you have a nightmare.

VISIONS--DREAMS Sleep is unconscious sensory and muscular relaxation.

You do not know how the energy retires, for it has been passively, or unconsciously, relaxed by you. When your mind becomes passive and your energy relaxes from the brain, the relaxed energy passes through grooves of the subconscious, where the experiences that you see in the ordinary dream are stored.

Visions are produced when you are able consciously to withdraw the energy from the muscles and heart region and direct it to the spiritual eye as taught in preceding Lessons on concentration and meditation. As soon as superconscious vision comes, your breath and heart will be still. Semivisions are those that are not consciously induced but have a touch of the superconscious. A superconscious dream is materialized like a vision, but in it the superconsciousness is not directly active, operating only through subconsciousness.

HYPNOSIS--SOMNAMBULISM Some students confuse hypnotism with somnambulism. The two are quite different.

In somnambulism ego not only uses certain subconscious films to produce a picture, but also employs the muscles and limbs to act out the movie. It is subconscious control of the conscious processes. When you are consciously walking, you know that you are consciously willing yourself to do so. In somnambulism such movement is controlled by the subconscious; it is very dangerous. Certain subconscious experiences take hold of the conscious processes and the body works out that subconscious impulse.

In hypnosis, however, by certain suggestions someone else arouses your subconscious mind and makes it control the conscious mind. This state usually lasts only a little while. If you are fully under the spell of hypnotism, the hypnotizer is able to make you think and say what he is suggesting. The yogis of India claim that hypnosis takes away mental freedom. Hypnosis makes use of the subconscious; the danger lies in the repeated overpowering of the

conscious mind by the subconscious, which in time may endanger the brain.

Spirit hypnosis occurs when a disembodied soul takes hold of the conscious and subconscious minds and uses them as it wishes. "Tramp" souls are always moving in the ether, seeking passive mentalities through which they can express. Hence the danger in "letting the mind go blank." This is quite a different process from that employed in meditation, in which a conscious, controlled effort of will and attention are employed to stop the flow of restless (i. e., uncontrolled) thoughts and to concentrate instead on some idea of God which the devotee desires to meditate upon and intuitively realize. A true guru is able to point out step-by-step methods (such as the Self-Realization Fellowship Hong-Sau and Om meditation techniques) by which the God-seeking devotee may safely attain his goal.

Saints and seers of all times have described the result of correct meditation as a state of exalted awareness, of blissful consciousness--not mental blankness. Indeed the blissful state of superconsciousness cannot be reached by passively blanking the mind; the devotee must needs marshal all his inner forces of mind and life energy and concentrate them on the sole thought of God.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Sleep is sensory relaxation of energy. Where does the energy go? into the brain; and it passes through the grooves of the brain and is projected as a dream. A dream is a mental movie. You are not resting when you dream; you are looking at your own movies. Visualize a thing as you fall asleep, and you will often dream about it. God has given you the power to create, so create with your mind the things you want most.

While you are dreaming everything is real to you. The only difference between this world and the dreamland is that the world is a more sustaining dream. God is suggesting a universe to us and we cannot get rid of that thought because it is so powerful. God is dreaming through us. When your thought becomes elevated enough to be in tune with God's thought, then you will be able to realize that this life is but a dream. You must first lift your consciousness to the plane of God. Then you will wake up in the Infinite. You will know that only God is real.

After bathing yourself in the ocean of peace in the dreamland, as you awake with happiness say: "In the sleepland I found myself free from mortal worries. I was a king of peace. Now, as I work in the daytime and carry on my diurnal battle of duties, I will no longer be defeated by insurgent worries of the kingdom of wakefulness."

AFFIRMATION

I am a king of peace in the sleep-land, and I shall continue to be such a king in the land of wakefulness. As I come out of my kingdom of peace in the sleep-land, I will spread that same peace in my land of waking dreams.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE GAZE OF TRUTH

By Paramahansa Yogananda

My human eyes are enthralled, O Lord,
with the changeful panorama of life and the gay
prodigality of Nature--the multicolored flowers
and the silent sailing clouds.

Open in me the divine eye that beholds
in all beauty only Thy sovereign beauty. With
the gaze of truth may I perceive in the universe
nothing but Thee.

PRAYER

Lord, Thine outer world is filled with vigor. Express through me Thy vitality and creativeness. In the heat of the day's activities may I drink from Thy fountain of joy.

HOW TO SELECT YOUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

To work out a desire according to a scientific systematic plan involving self-employment and/or the help of others is called "business." To lecture, to run a religious organization, to earn money, or to sell something, requires the application of business principles.

The true and ultimate success of any business depends upon its having an efficient head and capable associates. Sometimes a man tries to operate his business alone in order to keep expenses down, but most large successful concerns are of necessity run by a group of qualified men. When a business run by a single individual begins expanding, the owner has to employ others in order to conduct it adequately; but no matter who his business associates are, the owner of a business should always keep the controlling interest in his own hands.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATES SHOULD PRODUCE BEST OF REFERENCES

Since many companies that fail do so owing to a lack of qualified business associates, it is necessary that prospective employees and members of the firm be judged by their previous record of success and their present demonstration of creative intelligence. Silken-tongued, sleek, but inefficient employees are abundant and easy to find, but such may ruin you completely. Avoid also as business associates those persons who foolishly "rush in where angels fear to tread." Such people will retard the progress of your business, if they do not entirely ruin it.

In order to select administrative employees with superior qualities you should depend not only on references but use also keen vision, careful observation, intelligence, and open-mindedness to support your own judgment and intuition.

TEST ABILITY AND CHARACTER OF APPLICANTS

To attract honest, loyal, friendly, intelligent employees who will make your business their business, and your ambition their ambition, is the real way to conduct a business successfully. Look for creative ability, intelligence, and above all trustworthiness in your business associates. It is good to take young men into partnership with you and teach them your business if they will agree to cooperate fully with you.

Don't take for granted the integrity of a business associate. Be sure to test him out directly or indirectly through other friends, former business associates, or even detectives, if his duties are to involve the handling of money. Subject him to temptation and see how he reacts. Try through mutual friends to ascertain whether your business associates ever talk against you, and find out what their intentions are. Forgive every minor fault twice or thrice, but never overlook treachery. A business associate who is treacherous toward you once will repeat the same act when you are least expecting it, and may do irreparable damage. If a business associate drinks too much, or otherwise dissipates, and shows no shame when criticized for his conduct, excuse him several times, giving him a chance to repent and reform. If he still fails to show signs of contriteness and improvement, discharge him.

HONESTY AND LOYALTY IN BUSINESS RELATIONS

Don't employ a slow-to-understand person or a mentally and physically lazy person. A mentally lazy person is one who grunts and moans, and considers it a terrible expenditure of energy if he takes any time to create, plan, or think about your business success.

Do not keep a dishonest person in your employ. You never can tell what such a person might do to your business. Be sure to find out confidentially from the previous employer about the character, ability, and honesty of the man you are going to engage. On the other hand, if you are an employee and you repeatedly hear something very detrimental about your employer, then try to find another position so that you can stay away from him altogether.

Never let a friend take advantage of you just because you are his friend. Business must be conducted strictly on business principles. Those business associates who stand by you in your troubles and business depressions are your best friends. Never take into business with you a friend who is inclined to be too familiar, and who probably would capitalize on that intimacy and not take necessary orders from you or follow your advice.

READ CHARACTER THROUGH THE EYES

The Intuitive Way: Remember, the whole history of a man is in his brain, and the contents of the brain are reflected in the eyes. The eyes are the index of the mind, character, habits, and soul of a person. Beware of shifting, untrustworthy eyes, cruel eyes, and crafty, sarcastic, revengeful eyes. Beware of hate-projecting eyes, and lack of straight-forwardness in the eyes. If you feel an automatic, intuitive shrinking after looking fully in the eyes of an individual, then beware of that person. Leave him or her alone.

The Spiritual Way: After deep meditation--while concentrating your attention at the point between the eyebrows--with closed eyes visualize the eyes of your prospective employee or partner and study the feeling that arises in your heart. If you notice the sensation of doubt or fear, don't employ

such a person as a business associate.

The First Impression: Keep your mind unprejudiced and look penetratingly into the eyes of the person you are studying, the first time you meet him. Your impression at first sight will be correct if you remain calm and receptive.

The Magnetic Way: After deep meditation, affirm: "Father, let my spiritual magnetism be so increased through Thy grace that it will draw to me my proper business associates."

After all, remember that the biggest responsibility of your business lies with yourself, and in the awakening of your creative ability. All difficulties can be overcome, but only by your continued planning and pertinacity. Refuse to acknowledge defeat and you will win. If you don't succeed in the business you are trying for some time, then try something else, and keep on trying until you succeed in something. Try to make good in the line of business that you have some knowledge of, or in which you have had some experience.

A GREAT FAILURE WHO MADE SUCCESS HIS SLAVE

(The following true story is about a man who was a perennial failure, but who, by pursuing Self-Realization Fellowship teachings, was able ultimately to remove the real cause of his failures and to make success his slave. For obvious reasons his real name is not given here.

--Paramahansa Yogananda)

Just as there are naturally successful people, so there are habitual failures. My friend and student John was such a "born" failure. He was young, intelligent, diligent, and painstaking in his pursuit of moneymaking, but it seemed that no matter what job or business he gave his attention to, the result was always complete failure. Penniless and harassed by creditors, deserted by his other friends, he sought the shelter of my advice.

I questioned John as to the cause of his troubles. He replied: "Sir, I am a great failure. For some mysterious reason, not only do I lose my job whenever I am employed, but usually my employer loses his business too after employing me. I have come to dread seeking a job for fear of destroying the business of my new employer through the deadly influence of my failure vibration. I figure that I would lose the job ultimately in any case, for if the business goes bankrupt after employing me, they would have to let me go. I have no right to cause the business failures of other men merely because of my connection with them. I am labeled a failure by all my friends, and as a result of my experiences I myself am thoroughly convinced that I can never succeed. I am indeed the greatest of failures."

I was able to help John to get a job in a small business concern, and I advised him to affirm every night before going to bed, and again upon waking: "Day by day, in every way, I am succeeding more and more in my work."

A month passed and John warned me: "Honored Sir, the business concern you persuaded to employ me is getting in worse and worse condition. Please take me out before it goes on the rocks completely. I shall lose my job anyway when it fails. Perhaps my resignation now will save the business from destruction through my unlucky vibration."

I laughed and paid no attention to what John said, but told him to continue his affirmation of success and to hold on to his job. After a fortnight John came to me one evening, and with a sigh of relief exclaimed: "It happened!" "What happened?" I asked. "Well, the business concern I was in collapsed, as I told you it would."

I remonstrated: "Every night and every morning, when you have been saying the affirmation, 'Day by day I am getting better and better,' you have only been parroting the words, because in the background of your mind a little octopus of obstinate doubt has kept on mentally saying: 'You little simpleton, day by day, in every way, you know that you are getting worse and worse, no matter how much you repeat that you are getting better.' Isn't that true?" He admitted that I was right.

I advised John to be sure to cast out all strong negative vibrations as soon as they visited his mind, especially during a positive affirmation, because a convinced conscious mind influences the subconsciousness, which in turn--through the law of inner psychological reciprocity--influences the conscious mind by the power of habit.

"However," I said, "the repeated affirmation of a positive mental habit until it is established in the subconscious mind only removes the subconscious mental barrier created by discouragement from repeated failure; it cannot create a new cause of success. Success is conditioned by creative ability, environment, and prenatal and postnatal habits and tendencies; only if you contact the all powerful, unlimited superconscious mind can you create a new cause to bring about the success that has thus far eluded you."

Well, I succeeded in getting John into another, bigger, business concern. After six months (the longest period he had ever held a job) he said to me one evening: "Sir, get me out quick. Business is getting pretty bad."

I paid no attention to John's misgivings and relentlessly told him to go on with his job. One day a few weeks later John, smiling wryly, told me: "Sir, the second position you got me into has evaporated also. "I pretended to feel sorrowful at his plight, but did not look puzzled; and I calmly said: "Never mind, John, I will get you another job."

"Well, Sir," he said, "if you can bear the sin of causing still another firm to collapse through association with me, then find me another job."

By continuous effort and influence, I at last secured for John a very good job in a very big concern. A year passed and nothing happened, although almost every week John wanted to give up his job, expecting that he would cause the collapse of the third and biggest concern in which I had placed him.

Finally, I asked John to invest his money in a business of his own. He was at once overwhelmed by fear and remonstrated with me: "There you go again! If I invest the money I have saved I am sure to lose it." I firmly assured him, "Of course you must invest your money and energy in some good project, like the order supplying of stationery, which requires no large investment nor overhead, and I am sure that you will succeed."

Well, John found himself, in the course of a few years, in possession of large capital assets, including ownership of a few chain stores.

When John was thoroughly convinced of his success, he found himself succeeding in everything that he undertook. One day he laughingly said: "Through God and you I am now changed from a great failure to a great success. I am a man who has conquered failure. But though I can understand how my own repeated failures were due to lack of understanding on my part, I cannot reason out why I succeeded in demolishing the business of other people by the power of my failure vibration."

"You did not cause the collapse of the businesses you were in," I replied. "The law of attraction, which governs people of like vibrations, operated in each case. Your being a failure attracted you to a business about to fail, and vice versa. Two lighted bombs rolling down the side of the hill together are likely to explode at the same time. You were a failure and the business was about to fail too. So by the law of inner affinity, you went down the hill of failure together to explode at the same time."

Let it be remembered, in connection with the foregoing story, that absolute success signifies "the power to create at will what you need by developing your unlimited superconscious power." This superconscious power can be awakened by knowing the definite technique of meditation, as taught by the God-realized masters of India. India has specialized in the art of controlling the mental machinery of the mind factory in order to produce prosperity, health, success, wisdom, and God contact at any time, at will, and without limitation.

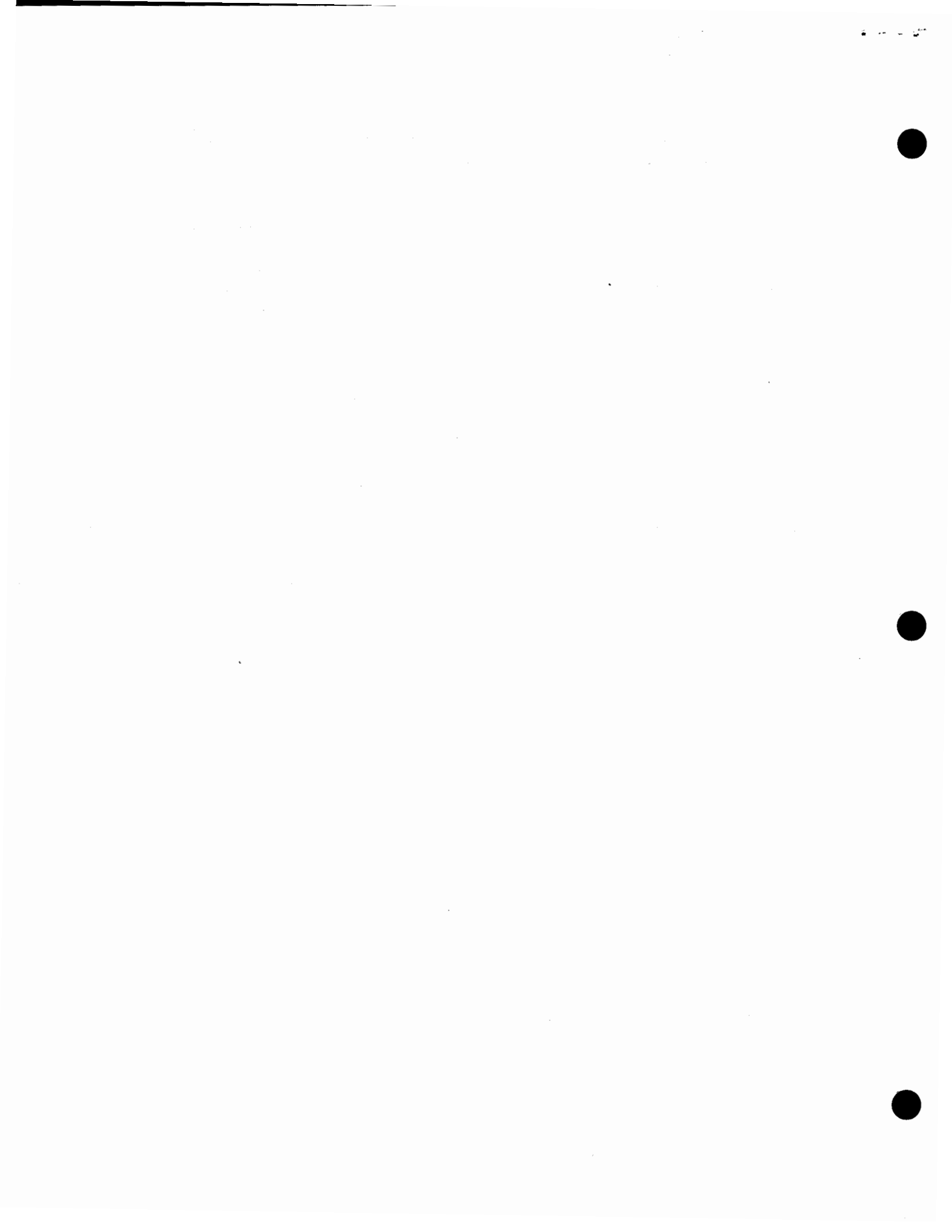
Western brothers and sisters need to learn that the mind is greater than its inventions. More time should be given to the art of controlling the mind in order to scientifically achieve all-round success. Less time should be given

to acquiring products of the mind at the cost of neglecting the cultivation of the all-accomplishing, all-powerful mind itself.

Ideally, if you work one hour, you should read two hours, write three hours, think four hours, and meditate most of the time. Through meditation learn that money without health and peace is not success, and that peace and health without money for necessities do not make a complete or successful life. Follow the way taught by India: acquire superconsciousness and absolute control over the mind; then you can create at will whatever you need.

AFFIRMATION

Since all business is connected
with Thy laws, directly or indirectly,
I will bring Thy presence into my mind
consciously through meditation, in
order to solve my God-given problems.





Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

Dear Ones:

After participating for some time in the services of an SRF group, a member wrote to the Mother Center in Los Angeles, California: "Studying the SRF Lessons and meditating alone is quite different from having an opportunity to practice the techniques and to meditate in company with other devotees. I have seen through my own experience the great spiritual value of group effort."

Many benefits may be received through regular participation in group meditation. Spiritual strength is subtly infused into each participant, helping him to deepen his private meditations at home and to meet calmly the daily tests of life.

If you are interested in group meditation, please write to Self-Realization Fellowship (c/o Center Department) to learn if an SRF Meditation Group is meeting in your area (it may not yet be listed in the Directory section of SELF-REALIZATION MAGAZINE). Should there be no group in your area, perhaps you would be qualified to help organize one.

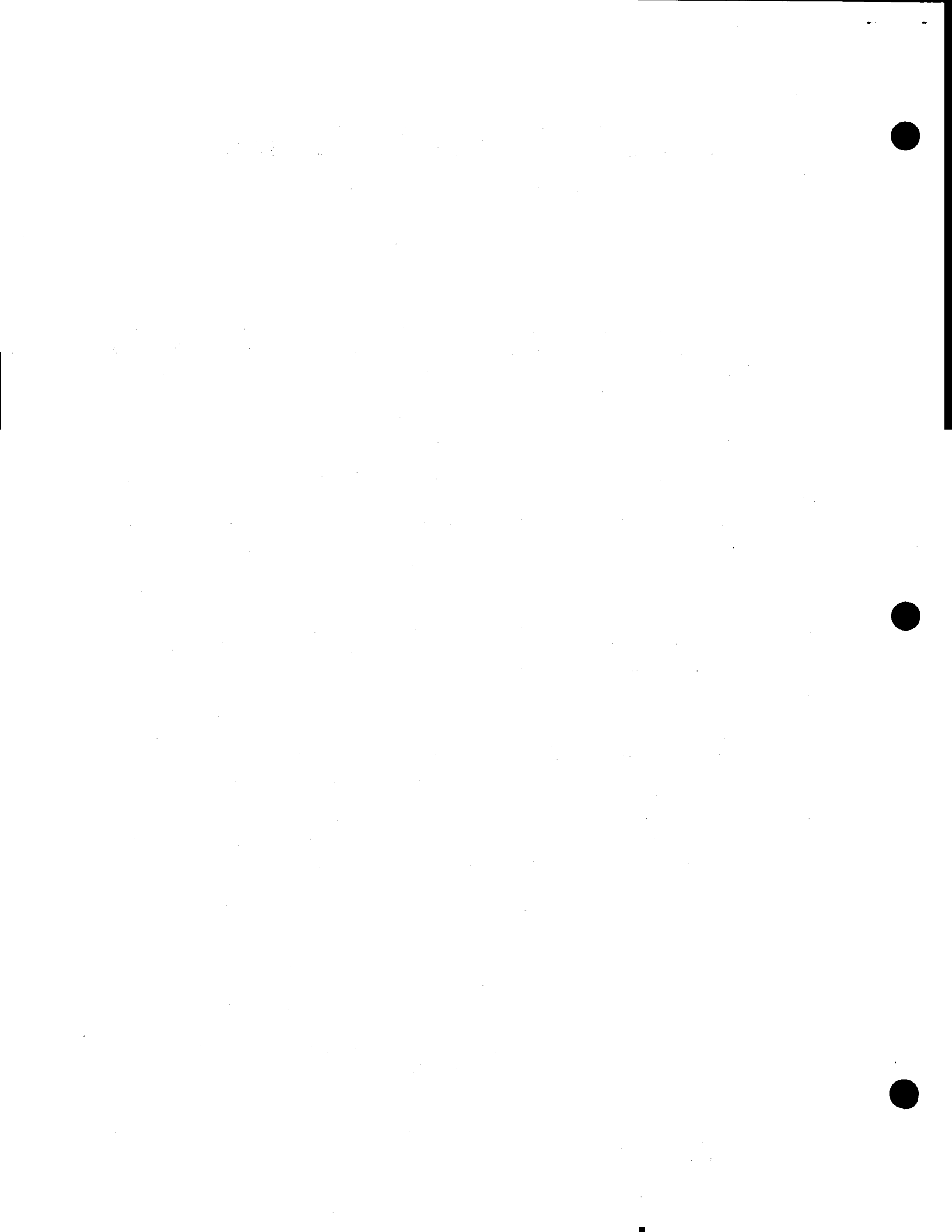
The booklet, "Meeting for Group Meditation," gives information about how to form and carry on the activities of an SRF Meditation Group. Any SRF student may request a copy of this booklet. But to be eligible to start a Group a person must be a Kriyaban member of Self-Realization Fellowship (one who has received Kriya Yoga Initiation at a formal SRF Ceremony and/or through the special Kriya Yoga section of the SRF Lessons), and he or she should be at least twenty-one years of age.

May God grant you ever deeper realization of His presence.

In divine friendship,

Center Department

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP
Center Department



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE NOBLE NEW

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Sing songs that none have sung,
Think thoughts that ne'er in brain have rung,
Walk in paths that none have trod,
Weep tears as none have shed for God,
Give peace to all to whom none other gave,
Claim him your own who's everywhere disclaimed.
Love all with love that none have felt, and brave
The battle of life with strength unchained.

PRAYER

O spiritual eye, show me the solution of all my problems. Remain always open before me, that I avoid the pitfalls in the path of life and keep to the highway that leads to Thy palace of peace.

HOW TO DEVELOP CREATIVE INTUITION

Intuition is that directly perceiving faculty of the soul which at once knows the truth about everything. Intuitive perception requires no medium of sense experience or reason. Intuition connects true reason with the ego and soul. Like many of his other divine powers, man's intuitional faculty remains undeveloped in the average person. Without exercise, no faculty can be developed. The nature of intuition should be better understood, and methods of developing it considered.

Everyone demonstrates the power of intuition more or less. It peeps forth through the loopholes of calmness produced in the interwoven materials of thoughts and sensory perceptions. Intuition gives knowledge of things without requiring any objective or inferential data. We all know this from examples in our own lives.

True intuition comes to you as a calm, haunting feeling, as distinguished from disturbed emotional obsessions. This intuition comes to you as an inner voice, or whispering. You must be careful to distinguish that inner guidance from the delusive fanciful voices of the subconscious mind. Real intuition can never be wrong. It does not consist merely in believing a thing firmly or doggedly, but in knowing it directly and unmistakably. Intuition does not contradict but is always supported by a right sense of perception, reason, and inference. All things known by intuition are invariably true, both materially and intellectually; but the opposite is not always true.

SEMI-INTUITION Depending upon an undeveloped intuitional faculty is dangerous. Errors are made by people who fail to distinguish between a real intuitional feeling and their convictions born of intellectual experience, superstition, partial uniformity of events seeming to justify the same prediction, habits, shrewdness, or the delusion of "because it happened many times before it must happen again."

Men of keen understanding and women of pure, undisturbed feeling usually have semi-developed intuition as a result of an unconscious but proper development of reason and feeling. Pure reason and calm feeling lead to intuition. Distorted, skeptical reason and emotional feeling overcloud intuition. Therefore, the first requisite in developing intuition is to calmly reason and calmly feel everything. Never be skeptical; never be excited or emotional.

You have probably had the experience of not having received any information about some friend, or of not knowing when he was coming to see you; yet you strongly felt all day long that he was coming, and when evening arrived, he did come. Or sometimes you feel all day long that something good or bad is going to happen; then, when it happens, you are astonished that your premonition proved valid. These are examples of the sudden uncontrolled appearance and working of the all-knowing power of intuition buried within.

MAN MUST DEVELOP THE POWER OF THE SENSES

In order to live rightly and have a successful life, it is necessary to develop the powers of the five senses of touch, smell, hearing, sight, and taste, by stimulating them with concentration. Most important is the development of the all-knowing faculty of intuition. Just as there are several windows in a house, so there are five windows of outer physical senses and three inner windows of consciousness fitted in the house of life. Through these the soul contacts the outer world. If the windows in a house are frosted, visibility becomes poor. In the same way, if the sense and mind windows are befogged with ignorance and sensual and mental weaknesses, human understanding becomes clouded.

The average person blunders in his search for knowledge because he uses his undeveloped sensory perceptions and the power of inference, which is built on the data furnished by the senses. If the data is wrong, the inference is bound to be wrong. For instance, seeing a cloud of dust on a hill in the distance, one may take it to be a fire, although it is not a fire. The power of the senses depends upon the sense organs, and the power of inference depends upon the senses for information; but intuition is knowledge from within, and does not depend upon any data offered by the senses or the mind.

Most people, equipped with poor senses and an undeveloped mind, make mistakes in everything--from the study of health and business up to the study of philosophy and religion. Thousands of persons make wrong investments because their thinking is distorted by greed-befogged concentration instead of being scientifically guided by intuition. Some people follow a hunch once in a while. Supermen--those who live in the superconscious state--use their intuition in everything they do.

TRAIN YOUR INTUITION TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Sense perception, inferential reasoning, and agama (intuition) constitute the whole proof about the nature of anything. The word agama is supposed by many to mean "authority of scriptures," but this interpretation is not correct because authoritative statements, from however sacred a source, have to be received through the medium of sense perception (hearing, seeing), or through studying or inferential reasoning. Hence, agama really means "soul-perception." This intuition may awaken memories in you through a certain taste or smell associated with some event that you have experienced.

When you are absolutely sure of this intuition--as differentiated from self-sufficient "feelings" and hallucinations--then put it to work in solving small problems. When you are successful in doing that, then employ your intuition in the solution of big problems.

The angels of heaven, roaming in the hall of Cosmic Consciousness, have neither eyes, nor ears, yet they can see, hear, and so forth. They can do everything by means of intuition, which is their all-seeing eye, all-hearing ears, all-tasting mouth, all-smelling nostrils, and all-space-feeling touch. In the hall of Cosmic Consciousness no one sees, hears, smells, tastes, or touches, for everyone feels and does everything through intuition. When you too are able to feel everything this way, you will understand that intuitive feeling constitutes the body, eyes, ears, intelligence and consciousness of the invisible angels.

Meditate regularly for at least half an hour every morning and before going to bed at night. Then sit quietly after meditation, feeling a calm peace. The feeling that makes you enjoy peace immediately after or during deep meditation is called intuition. If you keep exercising this power daily, it will develop itself and will be ready for your service every day. Sometimes during the day, this intuition will seize your attention, even when you are not thinking about it, and will foretell future events. An intuitional forecast about a given object may be seen in a vision. But to tune in with the real intuition of the soul, first be sure to rid yourself of all hallucinations born of negative silence--or imaginary silence, which is different from the positive silence enjoyed by those who practice real techniques of meditation, such as are taught by Self-Realization Fellowship.

ALL-SEEING POWER OF INTUITION

Those persons who seek any kind of success, no matter what it is, should first practice for several months the method suggested in this Lesson. When they feel that their intuition is well developed, they should sit still and be calm, and feel that power of intuition immediately before they seek to solve any important business, social, or spiritual problems.

Remember, even the most intelligent man and the most poised woman can make mistakes in investments, or in choosing the right vocation, the right business associates, the right companions in their lives. This shows that reason and feeling, no matter how pure, are not intuition. That is why self-sufficient business men, and semi-intuitive, feeling-guided women should beware. In order to know the truth about a business, it is necessary to see, hear, and judge the problems. Even then you may arrive at wrong conclusions. But if you use the all-seeing power of intuition, you will not have to investigate anything, for you will know about it instantly. God has no eyes, ears, or mind that depend upon any senses. He has the all-knowing power of intuition. By this power He knows instantly anything that He wants to know. That is why, through this omnipresent power, God has the power to see, hear, smell, taste, or touch anything, anywhere. Man being made in the image of God, has this

same potential power within himself.

Whenever you want to solve a problem intuitively, first go into deep meditation or silence, as you have been taught in the Lessons. Don't think of your problems during meditation. Meditate until you feel that a sense of calmness fills the inner recesses of your body--until a divine happiness fills the inner recesses of soul--and breath becomes calm and quiet. Then concentrate simultaneously at the point between the eyebrows (Christ Consciousness Center) and the heart. Lastly, ask God to direct your intuition, so that you may know what you should do about your problems.

Usually, persons who want educational, business, or spiritual success think that they can gain their objective through the study of books, or by attending business college or theological seminaries. Most Western professors think that education lies in pumping ideas into the brains of students. The Eastern masters first evaluate the receptive faculties of an individual before they consider teaching him anything. They say that, just as you cannot pour an ocean into a cup, so you cannot instill specific knowledge into deficient minds that have only a limited power of sensibility and understanding.

Many books and courses of study are prescribed for students in Western schools, but nothing is taught them about concentration and the development of the sixth sense--intuition. The boy leaving school and college goes out ~~with unassimilated information and tries this and that vocation; often, after~~ years of experimenting, he wakes up to find that he has been wrong in his choice of a vocation, wrong in his investments, wrong in his religious belief, and wrong in his choice of a life companion.

INTUITION CLASSIFIED

- a) Latent intuition.
- b) Semi-developed intuition, which develops through frequent but unconscious exercise in business or anything else.
- c) Consciously developed intuition, won by meditation.

Intuition is developed by:

- 1) Exercising and applying common sense.
- 2) Daily introspection and analysis.
- 3) Depth of thought and continued activity in one direction.
- 4) Calmness.
- 5) Meditation, which is best of all, and holding to the calm after-effects of meditation.

By the development of intuition, one can outgrow subjection to the law of cause and effect in his own life. In the calm, neutralized intuitive mind all events of the future appear vividly. Intuition tunes the mental radio so that it

can intercept all vibrations of future happenings, which otherwise are deflected by diverse currents. Convert every experience into intuitive feeling, by infinite faith.

USE INTUITION TO TUNE IN WITH COSMIC POWER

Have you ever done anything really new in life, or have you merely tried to improve upon the ideas of other people? You have a spark of divinity within yourself and you should try conscientiously to adapt yourself to its dictates. You have the power if you will use it. If your faith is strong enough and there is something you desire which does not exist, it will be created for you and through you. Step out from the crowd and discover how much power you really have. Be untiring in your zeal, disregard the negative opinions of the world, and with unflinching steadiness march on your path, believing that the infinite creative Power is behind you. Get yourself in conscious contact with that infinite Power through deep meditation and then when you contact the supreme Intelligence, your subconscious mind will become super-powerful, impregnated with truths from the superconscious.

Speak to the Father within and ask for guidance and inspiration. Try to do little things in an extraordinary way. Strive to be the best one in your line of work. Release the power that you already have and more will come. Show the world that God's creative principle works through you. Move on your path with unflinching determination. Tune in with cosmic power, and whether in the factory, in the business or professional world, or in the social world, always remember that the infinite creative Power is within you and that you are a God-man. You have the creative power of Spirit. You are in contact with infinite Intelligence, which is able to guide you and to solve any and all problems. Power from the dynamic Source of your being flows through you and you are able to create revelations in the world of business, in the world of thought, or in the world of spiritual wisdom. You and your Father are one. His power and intelligence are yours. Meditate and work!

AFFIRMATION

Open Thy lips of silence and whisper constant guiding thoughts to my soul. All demoniac noisy thoughts are taking flight that Thy silent song whispers of guidance may be audible to my forgetful soul.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION Realization comes to you through meditation. The divine consciousness of joy felt in meditation should be maintained while you are performing all daily activities. By realization you can know that God is behind all human relationships, and behind the mind's intelligence. It is His perfection trying to manifest in and through all methods of rejuvenation and healing, and in your efforts to attune your life with divine law.

All time, all space contains the essence of His Being. In the conscious realization of this, you unlock the floodgates of the soul and let His glory expand in and through you, and in all situations in which you find yourself. There is always God's way, the perfect, harmonious way--the answer to His call to return to His house of Oneness.

LESSON NO. 53 Love is not merely an emotion. It is a very real substance. When it is consciously directed, it finds its way unerringly to its mark, and is the one "weapon" that cannot be withstood. You may try many ways to find God, but He will elude you until you pour forth great love to Him from your heart.

If you feel that you are not making the spiritual progress that you should, the first thing to do is to introspect. Take stock of yourself and your habits, and find out what is standing in your way. Often it is inertia, or lack of definite, undivided effort and attention. Sometimes there are habits that need to be weeded out of the garden of your life, so that true happiness may become more firmly rooted.

You should gain complete dominion over yourself and all your activities by self-discipline and by deeper and deeper meditation. If you can hold your peace and be calmly active and actively calm in all you do, you have identified yourself with your real Self that dwells always in the inner chamber of peace. No matter what happens, through all experiences and seeming disturbances, your eyes and your whole attitude should always reflect restfulness and poise. Neither great failure nor great success should ruffle you. These accomplishments are the outward signs by which you can know that you have attained inner peace.

LESSON NO. 54 Long ago, man forgot his essential oneness with the divine Source of his being, and allowed his soul to become identified with his body. The body became a slave to sense attachments, thus allowing the evil force to gain entrance to his life. As the body becomes like that upon which it feeds and to which it gives attention, it has become gross and dependent upon outward sources for sustenance, instead of upon God's cosmic energy. The beautiful body that God created to be charged by cosmic energy, and to live in an unlimited divine state, has become caged within the bars of the senses, and so is subject to suffering if the senses are not gratified.

In order to throw off the shackles that bind and limit the immortal soul, and to identify yourself once more with your glorious heritage as a son of God, two things are of vital importance: 1. You must consciously still all outer activities of mind and body, and give recognition to God by contacting Him in meditation. 2. Then hold that consciousness of divine identity, that presence of God, in your body temple, and subjugate all outer activities to that inner consciousness. By daily discipline and eternal vigilance, train your mind and body to obey instantly your God-identified consciousness. You are not the body; you are not the mind. "Thou art That."

Whenever you want something with great intensity of desire and feeling, it is constantly in the background of your mind, no matter what you are doing or where you are. By unceasingly revolving in your mind, the thought of this desire gains momentum and dynamic power. This "mental whisper" is far more effective than a mechanical prayer, which is no deeper than lip movement.

Mentally whisper your love to God constantly, all through the day's activities. You are never too busy for this. When your desire for God and your love for Him become sufficiently deep and intense, He can no longer withhold Himself from you. Then you will realize, "I and my Father are One"; and the Bliss that no tongue can describe will be yours.

LESSON NO. 55 God is the hidden perfection behind every outward expression of man or nature. He is the intelligence, and the energy, and the ever new joy ever seeking to manifest in our lives.

Belief in God is necessary, of course, because it turns the tide of thought toward God; but mere belief is not sufficient for knowing Him. This is evident from the fact that so many people have been unsuccessful in seeking Him through the tortuous jungles of theology and blind prayer. Many have believed in His existence without ever knowing Him. Some have even fought terrible wars in the name of religion on the basis of their belief; but these people could not have known God, for the Lord manifests in peace and bliss and harmony.

The only way actually to contact God is through faithful application of the science of spiritual law. The art of right meditation is scientific, and it is the airplane route to God. Devotion is the secret key, for God cannot resist the

outpourings of great love from a true devotee's heart. Follow faithfully the techniques of meditation taught you in these Lessons. Practice with great intensity and devotion. Also follow the rules for right human behavior and self-discipline, for this is the way to bring your outer self into complete control. Then you can reclaim the "lost" image of God hidden within you. By heeding His intuitional responses to your mental questions, you can control your destiny.

LESSON NO. 56 As electricity is stored in a battery, so life force is stored in the human brain. And the similarity does not end there, for the radiant energy stored in the brain is electrical in nature. Brain energy is constantly being used in every movement and thought, whether thoughts are consciously willed or created by so-called involuntary or automatic running of the human machinery. Hence a great amount of energy is needed. Through practice of the Self-Realization Fellowship Energization Exercises, energy may be consciously drawn from its limitless Source.

The brain is also a mental "radio," since it has the power both to receive and to broadcast messages. In order to use this power, one must keep his mental "radio" properly attuned and in good condition. Now and then our mind radio gets mysteriously tuned in with the thoughts of others, and we have what we call "hunches." Occasionally, when we think intensely of others, and of certain things we wish them to know, they do receive our thoughts. But this is not the usual thing.

However, by keeping the mental radio in good order, you may consciously broadcast and receive at will. Restlessness, noisy passions, and sense-rule are very harmful to the mental radio. Deep calmness and silence, the Technique of Concentration, and physical discipline are essential to perfect attunement. When the hands are lifted up in the air, the sensitive fingers act as antennae to receive or broadcast thoughts. Try to feel the vibrations through your hands. As sounds pass through ether, our thoughts pass through Cosmic Consciousness, which pervades our souls and all material substances. Your first attunement should be with God, and your first broadcast: "Father, make me realize again that Thou and I are One."

LESSON NO. 57 Worry thoughts are a habit. They act like a poisonous drug on the mind. It is a good plan to go on short worry fasts to begin with, taking an hour in the morning and at noon, and three hours in the evening. Absolutely refuse to allow a single worry thought to enter your mind during these periods. Then extend the period to a whole day, then to a week, a month. Soon you will have broken the insidious hold of these habitual worry thoughts, and you will discard them forever.

Then you should have good mental food for the convalescing mind. First you should have laughter and joy. Associate with joyous persons, for joy and laughter are contagious. Add courage and wisdom to this diet. Masticate these thoroughly with the teeth of your attention. Remember, habits can be

cultivated only by repeatedly performing habit-forming acts with attention.

Practice of the following technique is one way to receive the thoughts of another person. Remember, all energy must be concentrated in the brain.

- a) Relax the body.
- b) Withdraw energy from motor nerves and muscles.
- c) While energy is withdrawn from the sensory nerves, concentrate deeply upon the brain.
- d) Expel the breath several times; breathe lightly.
- e) Tune the mind to restfulness.
- f) Grasp firmly the wrists of the person whose thoughts you want to read. Ask that person to concentrate upon one subject. Try to feel thought impulses flowing through his nerves into your nerves, then into your brain.

When broadcasting, use the same procedure, only reverse the flow of thought from your brain and nerves into the nerves and brain of the other person.

LESSON NO. 58 People who marry are subject to the following influences:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Physical attraction | 6. Idealism |
| 2. Aesthetic attraction | 7. Emotional liking |
| 3. Mental unity | 8. Material greed |
| 4. Vocational likeness | 9. Social position |
| 5. Moral inclination | 10. Call of the soul |

Persons who plan to marry should give careful study to, and understand, the basis of their impulses with regard to each other. They should be certain that their desire to marry is based upon those good influences which grow and strengthen as the years pass, and which cement a relationship into true unity in the love of God. They should unsparingly pull out of their garden of love all such weeds as mere physical attraction, material greed, and any selfish desire for the material possessions or advantages that the marriage might bring.

Common likes and dislikes should be taken into consideration, but these might change in time. Physical beauty changes; so if love is based chiefly upon admiration for a beautiful face and body, some day love may fade. Money, social position, emotional excitement are poor foundations for a continued, happy married life. Unless there is true inner beauty, and the call of soul to soul, it is far better for one to wait and seek further for a life mate.

LESSON NO. 59 Real love of the heart and soul is divine love. It channels its way through human hearts to teach and express divine love to others. We must receive lessons through the medium of relativity. That is, we cannot understand a thing that we know nothing about unless we

have something with which to compare it. And so God teaches divine love through the medium of idealized human love.

If the human marriage relation is fettered by mere sex attraction, it may never rise to the heights of pure happiness and lasting love; and it will soon disintegrate. Physical harmony is necessary in the marriage relation, but it takes third place in importance.

Mental unity is second in importance. It requires mental breadth and understanding, and must include common interests and liking in activities. Every woman should learn to emanate sincere smiles and wear the rouge of sincerity and true love on her face. She should learn to attract others by spiritual magnetism only, for this will draw spiritual souls. She should acquire the real magnetic qualities of wisdom, understanding, consideration, true learning and all-round efficiency.

Soul unity must be foremost. In this is embodied the urge for mutual spiritual progress and perfection, toward ultimate, complete union in God. In real soul marriage, love is undying and unconditional. As real love increases, physical consciousness decreases; and then human love changes into divine love, all-complete love, in which souls are wedded to God.

Some souls do not need to pass through the fusing flame of human love. They have already attained oneness with God. Human ties are not necessary to them, for they know, "I and my Father are One." Such a soul was Jesus.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to help you in your review of the Lessons. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP 3--FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE

Lesson 53

1. What can you offer to God that will most surely bring His response?
2. What is an outward proof that one has made spiritual progress?

Lesson 54

1. Did all evil on earth originate with man's wrong actions?

Lesson 55

1. Is it enough to believe in God?
2. How should your meditation influence your state of mind during other activities?
3. What is a mental whisper? In what way does it differ from mechanical prayer?

Lesson 56

1. Where is the life force stored?
2. Name the rules which should be observed in order to keep the mind "radio" in good condition.

Lesson 57

1. Describe the "worry fast."
2. What mental food must you have after the worry fast?
3. Describe the technique of converting the human brain into a thought-receiving "radio."
4. Must activity be slow to be calm?

Lesson 58

1. Name some impulses that influence people to marry.
2. What are some of the attractions to be avoided in seeking a mate?

Lesson 59

1. What is the supreme purpose of human love?
2. When is marriage unnecessary?

Note: Self-Realization Fellowship does not request a Personal Report on Step III. However, please let us know if there is anything in the material received thus far that is not clear to you, or if we may be of help to you in your practice of the techniques.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 60 The great secret of preserving harmony in matrimonial life is self-control. A marriage should begin on a sound foundation of real cooperation around common ideals. The next step is to carefully nurture and tend the heaven-born plant of love, that it may fulfill its true purpose of uniting two souls in God. Your life companion is given to you, not merely to share in the creation of children on the physical plane, but to share in the creation by mind- and soul-fusions of spiritual children of ideal love, noble ambitions, and creative inventions. Transmutation of the creative impulse into higher channels of expression is of extreme importance in building up creative spiritual vibrations.

One usually draws to himself as a companion someone of like vibrations. It is the duty of husband and wife to regard the union as a sacred trust for the purpose of mutual progress. Each should be a mountain of strength and high example for the other.

Study carefully the rules of moral behavior. If you are married, watch yourself in little ways as well as in those that are seemingly more important, so that you may learn to be pleasing to your companion. Marriage partners should:

1. Refrain from display of a possessive attitude.
Avoid intrusion on each other's privacy.
2. Recognize each other's independence.
3. Be chivalrous and kind always.
4. Let the home life be simple and the spiritual life deep.
Meditate together.
5. Enjoy simple pleasures in each other's company.
6. Guard the tongue and the actions in all ways.
7. Live a healthful life; the right kind of food is important.

Make happiness a habit. One who is happy now will be happy always.

LESSON NO. 61 Marriage is a laboratory in which poisons of disposition and behavior should be neutralized and changed by the

power of love and continuous good behavior. If there is a habit or quality in your mate that rouses unlovely traits in your disposition, you should realize the purpose of this circumstance: to bring to the surface those hidden poisons, so that you may eliminate them and thus purify your nature.

Avoid self-pity and oversensitiveness, and learn to control your moods. Nursed grievances eat like acid into the fibers of your peace.

Beware of criticism. Cleanse your mind of all adverse criticism of others. Use a look or a hint to correct lovingly a receptive person, but do not force correction, and do not continue to hold critical thoughts, even though you remain silent. Your own right actions are the best example, but beware of holding a self-righteous attitude. Loving kindness must always be foremost.

In all disturbances let your understanding triumph. Conquer a situation by diplomacy, continuous silent love, and demonstration of kind, firm activity. No one likes to be told that he or she is wrong. Banish forever all harsh or unkind words. Forgiveness and forgetfulness of all errors must be the rule. Silently correct your own faults, and remove their cause from within yourself. If your mate displays unbecoming speech or action, refrain from indulging in like behavior, for in so doing you only soil yourself in the squalor of undisciplined feelings.

If it is necessary to part company, do so in kindness and understanding, and seal your lips forever from unkind recriminations.

Meditate deeply and always remain in the impregnable castle of happiness.

LESSON NO. 62 It is only through love that man may find his way back to God. God is the pure essence of love in father, mother, and child. Love is always pure, divine, but it becomes colored by the personality of the outer human self--as clear water appears colored if placed in a colored glass vessel; the vessel itself must be crystal clear in order to reflect the purity of its contents. A pure mountain stream flowing down through a clay river bed or through contaminated soil takes on impurities. Remember that although the water itself is pure, it must then be filtered to remove the sediment and contamination. Conjugal love, passing through the filter of parental love, expands and expresses more of its divine qualities as it flows into a third heart--that of a child.

The relation between parents and children is a metaphysical inexorable ordinance of God. It is in accordance with a divine plan. Mutual regard is the altar of unity through which God's love is manifested.

Parents should look upon their child as the honored temple wherein their conjugal love will be purified and expanded. Kindness and strong loving guidance should always prevail--never harsh treatment. Children should consider

their parents as the gates through which God's love first flows to them. Obedience and respect should activate their behavior.

Family life is a character-building corporation. God is the president, and divine love is the product. However, it is not necessary for everyone to marry to perfect human love. Human love may be changed into divine love by the superior way of wedlock of the individualized soul with the Spirit in the temple of meditation.

LESSON NO. 63 In order to overcome stage fright, it is a good thing to understand the causes of it, and then take care to eliminate them. Fear is the all-inclusive reason. The causes which generate fear are:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Infrequent performance. | 5. Lack of mastery of technique. |
| 2. Timidity. | 6. Overeating before a performance. |
| 3. Nervousness. | 7. Drinking or using narcotics. |
| 4. Inferiority complex. | |

Master the best techniques that you know; then study and practice the following special exercises and methods for overcoming stage fright:

- 1) Deep breathing, while concentrating at the point between the eyebrows, just before a performance.
- 2) Mentally visualize yourself giving a masterful performance before an enthralled audience.
- 3) Take a bath about two hours before your performance.
- 4) Be humble.
- 5) Study the best technique with the best teacher available.
- 6) Eat sparingly several hours before a performance, else the energy will be diverted from the brain to the work of digestion.
- 7) Avoid drink or narcotics. Become intoxicated with inspiration.

Inspiration consciously stimulates feeling, will, reason, and all the senses to do their best willingly, with the feeling of joy.

Above all things, get your mind quiet, and remember that all the power you need is within you. No matter what you do, remember that God is the flood that fills all the channels of your powers. God is working through you.

LESSON NO. 64 An understanding of what actually takes place in healing is a great aid in establishing a consciousness in man's mind of the identity of his own life with a Cosmic Life.

Any method of healing is effective according to its power to arouse or stimulate the life force. Medicines and physical manipulations are relatively gross methods, whereas electricity and rays are of a finer nature and affect

more directly the electronic constituency of the body, harmonizing the discordant vibratory condition. The cosmic electric force is the direct source of life. And here the body of man may well be compared to an automobile battery, which depends for its life upon two sources, chemicals, and an electrical recharge. In man the cosmic electrical force is the direct source of life, and converts the food, oxygen, and sunlight into living energy.

An extremely important point to recognize and remember is that the life with which you are charged is a conscious, intelligent cosmic ray. It comes to you as pure life energy. What you do with it, how you direct or misdirect it, whether you allow its flow to manifest in health and happiness, or thwart it into inactivity, causing distress and disease, is up to you. Ignorance is the root-cause of all disease and so-called sin. Refusal to listen to the silent Voice within, which is ever trying to make itself heard above the willful clamor of the senses, is the cause of badly scorched fingers.

Build a temple of silence within yourself. There you will find God on the altar of your love, and there you will hear His voice. For, though all else may fail to reach Him, love will never fail.

LESSON NO. 65 While physical methods, medicines, and rays all have their place in the evolution of healing methods by their lesser or greater power to stimulate the life force, the supreme factor is the mind. The mind is the builder of the body from its creation. Remember here that the mind with its three divisions, is only one mind, in reality. Only according to the plane of mind on which an individual functions may a certain method of mental healing be effective. For instance, the imaginative type, in whom the subconscious is predominant, will find autosuggestion most effective; the logical, reasoning person, through an understanding knowledge of the interdependence of mind and body, will refuse to accept pain and disease, in the realization that if the mind refuses to accept it, it cannot exist.

Remember also you can make little headway with listlessness and half-hearted efforts. Will is a potent factor in any undertaking. Enthusiasm and will draw in fresh supplies of energy.

Using spiritual affirmations with attention and understanding makes direct connection with the ever watchful and all-knowing superconsciousness, and reminds the soul of its perfection and oneness with the Father. Spiritual affirmations are statements of truth; all conditions of "dis-ease" are but creations of the outer human self, and a forgetting of true sonship. When these miscreations of the conscious mind and its imitator, the subconscious, are deprived of the sustenance given them through thought and attention, they simply cease to exist. When a true balance and rhythm are established, God's light shines undimmed in the body temple.

Throw off sickening thoughts of failure with the tonic of success consciousness. Smooth away rough inharmony with the chisel of harmony.

Discourage worries by indifference to them. Cast sorrows into the flames of happiness. Shame unkindness with kindness. Humiliate discourtesy by courtesy. Dethrone sick thoughts and place King Vitality on the throne of right living. Banish restlessness and ignorance from the shores of your mind. Establish the kingdom of silence within and the God of Happiness will enter without prayer, invitation, or coaxing.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP THREE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 60

1. Name one great general rule for preserving matrimonial happiness.
2. List as many of the rules as you can recall under the moral plan of behavior for the ideal husband.
3. List rules of behavior for the ideal wife.

Lesson 61

1. Give a few rules for harmonizing with a disturbed companion.
2. There are two kinds of criticism. What are they?
What is the difference between them?

Lesson 62

1. Explain the true relationship between parents and children.

Lesson 63

1. What are some of the most common causes of stage fright?
2. Name several exercises and methods of overcoming stage fright before a performance.
3. What is the principal point to remember in giving a performance?

Lesson 64

1. In any method of healing, what actually happens to cause the healing to take place?

Lesson 65

1. What is the most powerful and direct factor in healing?
2. How would one heal, using affirmations?



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 66 In subconscious, conscious, and superconscious methods of healing, the use of affirmations is extremely beneficial. It is a way of tuning in with the Cosmic Vibration.

Choose from this Lesson, or from the book "Scientific Healing Affirmations," certain affirmations that seem most suitable to you and your needs. Memorize these sufficiently so that you need not search for words when you talk to your Heavenly Father. But never repeat them without having your full attention upon them. Absorb the full meaning of each word; then float the affirmation into the ether, charged with deep realization and feeling. In your absolute faith in, and acknowledgement of God, you open the channel for His healing power to flow through you.

In line with vibratory healing, of which the use of affirmations is one phase, it should be remembered that sound of any kind has its effects upon the human nervous system. As inharmonious sounds irritate the nerves, so harmonious yet stimulating sounds awaken the drooping tissues of the nervous system by arousing vital energy in them. Hence, a gentle, kind word, an inspired song, a soul-solacing voice of wisdom, have deeper, more far-reaching effects than are ordinarily recognized. Many a sorrow has been dispelled, and many a pain lessened by them. Scientifically understood and applied, vibratory healing through chanting and affirmation has the effect of sending a volley of energy down through the nervous system, healing diseased tissues of the body, mind, and soul. This is attunement, or at-one-ment, with the superconsciousness. Chanting may thus be used both in self-healing and in healing others.

Briefly, the power of healing depends upon the awakening of soul-force. The receptivity of the person and the power of the healer must be evenly balanced. It is always the arousing of the life force within a person that produces healing. A rebellious body and a mind enslaved by wrong mental habits have to be dealt with by mental suggestion, reason, and by exciting the imagination of the patient, until the sick person is roused from this mental stupor, and the life force is stimulated. In order to heal others, you must first have realization yourself. Then you are one with Infinite Spirit; your knowledge is omnipresent.

LESSON NO. 67 You must use your own indomitable will power to rouse the sleeping will of your patient. Wisdom-guided will is God's will. A true spiritual healer knows this, and therefore his vision is not beclouded by doubt and fear, as might be that of one whose emotions allowed fear of failure to creep in and undermine the healing power. In healing others, both will and feeling must be roused to a high degree--the will and feeling of knowing God's omnipresent healing power. There must also be the strong desire to bring that realization into the minds and bodies of the ignorance-afflicted children of God. It is the arousing of this will power and realization in a person that brings about the healing. Everything we do is guided by our will and feeling. Therefore, see that these are tuned in with infinite wisdom and divine love.

Spiritual sensitivity is a consciousness of omniscience. The projection of it is similar to throwing a searchlight into the hearts of others, and in this way gaining a true diagnosis of their troubles. A true diagnosis is extremely necessary in healing, for the source of the dis-ease must be healed. Merely to allay pain, without eliminating the cause of it, would be to allow the disease to increase without warning, because pain is the "trouble signal," not the trouble itself. An exception of course is imaginative pain, and that is caused by mental disease, which must be understood and dissolved at its source. Your spiritual sensitivity must reveal, but not receive, the conditions of others, else you yourself will need healing and your usefulness will wane.

LESSON NO. 68 Study carefully the menu suggestions given in this Lesson. Choose the ones particularly suitable for you, and incorporate them into your daily diet. It is necessary to mold correct eating habits gradually.

You will notice that nuts are used extensively in most of the menus. They are one of the best substitutes for meat. Almonds are especially strength-giving. Ground nuts should be used in combination with various fruits, for breakfast and other meals. Fruits and vegetables, alone, are not sufficient for strength and vitality. Eggs, dates, nuts, and dairy products should also be used.

Note carefully the special menus for reducing, for building up, and the special blood-cleansing menus, and those for laxative and eliminative purposes. The secrets of diet for the bringing about of poison elimination, and the building of perfect health, have long been known and practiced by students of Yoga.

In the future, people will learn to take the different rays from cosmic energy, cosmic rays, electrons, atoms, and air directly into the body without the medium of food. You can begin to learn to do this to some extent if you will practice the methods given in this Lesson.

Remember that the sun's rays contain great vital energy and the power of

stimulating the life force within you. In sun bathing, always give attention to, and concentrate deeply upon, the sun's rays. This will give far greater results than the same thing done absent-mindedly.

If one constantly keeps his mind concentrated upon the point between the eyebrows (at the Christ Consciousness center), and sees there the spiritual eye, and commands it to recharge the body with strength, it will do so.

The secret is to do these things regularly and not to give up when results are not obtained at once. It usually takes time to change the vibratory action of the body and to develop receptivity of mind and body to the vibratory healing power of God.

LESSON NO. 69 Rejuvenation is a process of renewing, of continually making new, or retaining a state of perfection, instead of allowing disintegration to take place. It may be said that to retain a state of changelessness, constant change is necessary; but the rebuilding and breaking down process must be evenly balanced. If the breaking down process exceeds that of the renewing, then bodily old age results.

The physical requirements for rejuvenation of the body are: keeping it supplied with the sixteen elements of the food chemicals that it needs, plus sunshine and regular proper breathing.

Practice the following breathing exercise every day: While walking, inhale, counting 1 to 12. Hold the breath 12 counts, then exhale while counting 1 to 12. Do that up to twenty-four times whenever you take a walk.

From the mental standpoint, man should understand how his intelligence controls and directs the intelligence of the atoms of his body. When he realizes that his intelligence is a ray of Divine Intelligence, he will know that his body is sustained principally by God's cosmic energy, and that he must purify his body and his mind so that this clear light of Directing Intelligence may shine through.

The mind should never have suggested to it, nor should it accept, human thoughts of limitation. It should be kept vitalized and nourished by contact with spiritually progressive minds. Exercise with the instruments of judgment, introspection, and initiative. Feast on the creative thinking of yourself and others. Cauterize the disease of ignorance by intensive spiritual study.

It sums up to this: The state of consciousness is the supreme factor in rejuvenation. The "stepping up" of the consciousness brings about a "stepping up" of the physical body to such an extent that the soul may become freed of its limitations of body consciousness. When this consciousness becomes strong enough, the soul does not need to discard the old body and weave another

garment of flesh through rebirth, but can remake the body by raising the vibratory rate of the atomic structure.

Through the door of meditation man may become conscious of the unchanging "I-ness" of his being, and thus be unaffected by environmental influences and paltry desires. He will realize that he is not isolated from Spirit, but that his body is a number of rising, falling waves of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness.

LESSON NO. 70 The first step in rejuvenation is relaxation, both physical and mental. If you are tensed even slightly in any part, you are burning up energy in that part. The burning of energy results in a breaking down of bodily tissues and in decay. The waste products are thrown into the venous blood. This necessitates the blood's being pumped through the heart and lungs for purification. When the muscles and inner organs are freed from motion by relaxation, this process is slowed down.

Super-relaxation, which is complete voluntary withdrawal of consciousness and energy from the entire body, leads to the release of the enormous quantity of life current that otherwise would have been needed in the task of pumping tons of blood through the system. The neutralized, electrified tissues do not require blood and oxygen. Thus the billions of cells rest and learn to depend upon this released inner sustaining current, and the life energy (Word of God), coming down from the medulla oblongata. Thus it may be seen why the art of relaxation is of paramount importance, and why the learning of and practice of the techniques are continually stressed in these Lessons.

Contact of food and oxygen with the inner bodily system is necessary if the life force is to convert the food and oxygen into energy. The life force can assimilate oxygen more quickly than it can assimilate solids or liquids. Even a person who is fasting can recharge his body with electrons and free energy from the air and ether by practicing certain breathing exercises.

Practice daily the one to six counting exercise. Study the other breathing exercises in this Lesson and practice them frequently, especially when in need of energy quickly. Practice absolute silence and banishment of all mundane thoughts every morning for several minutes. Meditate on the joy of silence; realize that this joy-contact is God-contact.

LESSON NO. 71 Sex impulse in man, no matter how pure, always has within it earthbound desires to multiply more body-attached human beings. It is extremely necessary to each human being to transmute this physical, creation-desirous sexual creative force into a spiritual impulse, so that his soul may be liberated from the revolving wheel of reincarnations and plunge into its Infinite Life.

Self-control of sex should be based upon wisdom. Outward self-control

without destruction of the instinctive thought that rouses sex thoughts and sex energy, leads to hypocrisy and harmful repression. Therefore, the creative sex impulses must be spiritualized--that is, the energy drawn into the spiritual cerebral reservoir.

1. All evil thoughts and morbid curiosities in connection with sex impulses should be destroyed by correct education that leads to a true understanding of the physiological functions of sex.
2. Learn to train earthbound sex thought and sex energy to create on the spiritual plane. Only the knowledge of how to destroy the prenatal and postnatal deep-seated causes may correct them.
3. Never talk of another's moral weakness. Strive toward the upliftment and liberation of all bodies the same as for your own. When one is illumined, then he sees himself as the one Spirit throbbing within all minds and bodies.
4. Transmute sex impulses:
 - a) Inhale and exhale deeply during sex excitement, until sex energy is transmuted into oxygen in the lungs. In this way tremendous energy is concentrated in the heart and lungs. The heart and the lungs become magnets of living currents, pulling energy away from all parts of the body, especially the sex region.
 - b) Affirm: "I am transmuting sex energy into spiritual energy. I am turning it Godward to create spiritually."
 - c) Immediately after the sex impulse disappears, occupy the brain with some deep spiritual thought, or meditate on the spirit of joy within. As the brain is thus occupied, it becomes a spiritual magnet pulling all the transmuted energy accumulated in the heart and lungs into the spiritual cerebral reservoir.

Last of all, by deeper meditation, you will be able to transmute the withdrawn sex consciousness and sex energy into the brain, back into Cosmic Consciousness and Cosmic Energy. When the soul's attention is so directed toward the Spirit, it then becomes liberated from creating earthbound souls and remaining on the plane of reincarnation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP THREE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 66

1. What is the method of subconscious healing?
2. Of conscious healing?
3. Of superconscious healing?
4. Explain the value of chanting in healing.

Lesson 67

1. Why is spiritual sensitivity necessary in healing others?
2. If the stimulation of life energy alone is responsible for man's life and well being, why is food important?

Lesson 68

1. What are the best meat substitutes?
2. What meats ought positively to be avoided?
3. What will be the food of the future?
4. There are five methods of obtaining this food. Can you remember what they are?

Lesson 69

1. Name the essential physical requirements for rejuvenation.
2. Name the mental requirements.

Lesson 70

1. What is the best way to relax the whole body quickly?
2. Why do breathing exercises awaken energy in the body?
3. What are some of the breathing exercises that the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons teach? (A number are given in this Lesson.)

Lesson 71

1. Why is it important to transmute the sex impulse?
2. What is the best way to transmute sex impulses when they come?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 72 The metaphysical purpose in relaxation--the withdrawal of all consciousness and energy from the physical body-- is to free the spiritual consciousness, the I-ness, to realize its identification with God the Father. Spirit is that vast stillness which is behind everything. As long as there is motion or tension anywhere in the body, there is body consciousness--you are not relaxed. Reverse the searchlight of your attention to Spirit. When all the outer activity of body and mind is completely stilled, then you know that you are not only the little wave of the soul, but the ocean of Spirit as well.

Carry this realization with you into activity. You should never be either physically or mentally lazy, but always keep busy doing God's work. Laziness is stagnation. The mind should be ever awake in God, even during the sleep of the body. This is being superconsciously active, as you should be every moment of your existence.

Practice the exercises as given in this Lesson. Before meditation, tense the whole body and then let go quickly, to untie all the little knots of energy in the body. These exercises are for the purpose of removing identification of life force and energy from the muscles and withdrawing it to the spine. Through faithful practice, the path of Self-realization will open up for you.

LESSON NO. 73 It is possible to develop "ears that hear" and "eyes that see." The world is actually so different from what one ordinarily sees. The only sounds one hears are those within the range of his vibrational attunement. Clairaudience is sometimes called intuitive hearing, for sounds may be heard that are not ordinarily heard by the ear.

In reality all the power of seeing lies in the soul. The power of all our senses may be stimulated by the power of the mind. It is not the eye that sees; energy and mind "photograph" things. Our eyes are as powerful as X rays, but we do not see the things that an X ray photographs because we have not developed a response to that rate of vibration. Our sensory perceptions are curtailed owing to self-imposed limitations of our mental processes.

Clairvoyance occurs when the life force has been sensitized to certain

subtle vibrations of matter. As X rays see through walls, so may the human eye. That kind of vision is called "clairvoyance." You may see with the power of clairvoyance when you increase the intuitive quality of the eyes, or increase the vibration of life force, which can penetrate anything. Clairvoyance is not detrimental to your progress in reversing your consciousness from the plane of matter to the plane of Spirit, but subconscious pictures or images are detrimental if allowed to hold the attention. Pass them by. Go right through these phenomena. You do not need to dream, even during relaxation and sleep.

All matter is energy in different rates of vibration.

The kingdom of God is within you, but you must uncover it through your own self-conscious effort. Let nothing retard your progress. Perfect yourself by cultivation of your character, and meditate deeply. God never fails to listen to all soul-calls, but He has His own mysterious ways of responding. If one persists long enough in seeking, he will surely find God at last.

LESSON NO. 74 When the soul assumes the material limitations of the body, it is called "ego." When it beholds itself as a reflection of Spirit, it is called "soul." The ego is the false consciousness the soul acquires when it becomes entangled with sense perceptions. The egoic consciousness is active in the conscious and subconscious states, and extends at the utmost to semi-superconsciousness. Beyond that is the perception of the soul.

In all types of dreams the energy is relaxed from sensory and muscular activity and is accumulated in the brain.

Intuition and superconsciousness are the same. Superconscious visions occur when the soul uses its intuition plus the energy accumulated in the brain to focus its thoughts upon certain actual experiences and then materialize them.

Superconscious dreams are true. They may be visions of the future or even certain experiences of past lives. A real vision is induced consciously --consciously you reach the state of superconsciousness, and then produce a vision; but a semiconscious dream is produced while sleeping.

All hallucinations, which are detrimental to visions and higher spiritual attainment, come from the subconscious mind. Hallucinations may be seen with open or closed eyes, but they have no corresponding reality. They are mental pictures produced by the subconscious mind using certain relaxed energy of the body to project a picture. Hysteria and somnambulism are other detrimental subconscious states.

Do not get sidetracked in the subconscious movieland of dreams. That

is just as bad as being entangled in the senses during waking consciousness. Put the searchlight of your attention on the Infinite Spirit, and keep it there, and pass by all else. Know that: 'Volumes of Thy savior voice plunge through the microphone of loving hearts. The voice of Thy wisdom is roaming through the ether of minds, searching for ecstasy-tuned hearts.'

LESSON NO. 75 Through reaction to outer environment from early childhood on, our inner mental environment is formed. This inner mental environment of thought and mental habits almost automatically guides our actions. That is why mental habits, if not good, have to be cauterized at their source; otherwise they keep coming to the surface of consciousness at unexpected times, just when you think you have them conquered. Their roots have to be burned in the fires of meditation and new seeds of realization planted in their place.

When by self-control during meditation the devotee astrally disconnects the life force from the sensory nerves, it begins to flow inward and becomes focused at the point between the eyebrows as an opalescent light. This inward astral flow and the inner light are the offerings of human wisdom to the soul, ego, and intuition. These vitalities, with their inwardly flowing spiritual perceptions, and the light of the spiritual eye, are necessary to the development of the latent soul faculties.

Your usual habit of sleep indicates your usual state of mind. It is possible to distinguish all these different states, and the ability to distinguish them helps you to know where you need self-correction.

In superconscious dreams the soul, as the operator, projects pictures on the screen of intuition. It does not take a film from the subconscious, but photographs events from the ether by using the lens of intuition, and the relaxed energy from the body to project them as superconscious dreams.

There is always the element of energy in dreams. Without energy you cannot see. Energy materializes thought. God's thought combined with energy produced this universe. He shows us that if we have control over energy we can create even as He does. Energy is the link between matter and consciousness.

Dreams are made of consciousness, relaxed energy, and an idea. The idea is the film, relaxed energy is the current, and consciousness is the projector.

Nightmare dreams come under "subconsciously induced dreams." They use more energy. In superconscious dreams the breath and heart will be calmer.

Visions are produced by consciously withdrawing the energy from the

muscles and heart region, and directing it between the eyebrows. In dreams the ego plays no conscious part.

Hypnosis and somnambulism are opposites. Somnambulism is subconscious control of the conscious process, using of the muscles and limbs to act out a subconscious film. Hypnosis occurs when the will of someone else works through your subconscious to control your conscious mind. Hypnosis takes away mental freedom and will endanger the brain. Never allow the mind to remain blank, for there are tramp souls moving in the ether that may induce spirit hypnosis.

LESSON NO. 76 The true and ultimate success of any business depends upon the right business head and proper associates; and on right business management plus the right business environment.

Other vital points in the success of a business are:

1. Keep the controlling interest of your business in your own hands.
2. Choose intelligent business associates.
3. Conduct business strictly according to business principles, never allowing anyone to take advantage of you because of friendship.
4. Remember that the biggest responsibility of the business lies with yourself and your awakened creative ability.

When choosing business associates, the following should be given consideration in regard to the applicant:

1. Previous record of success--testimonials.
2. Use intuition and your own keen vision, observation, intelligence, and open-mindedness to supplement judgment.
3. Look for creative ability, loyalty, intelligence, friendliness, and above all--trustworthiness.
4. Make tests to ascertain their integrity.

Things to avoid in business associates:

1. Silken-tongued, sleek persons of questionable integrity, even though efficient.
2. Moral laxness, and failure to reform when criticized and given another chance.
3. Don't employ a mentally slow, or physically lazy person.
4. Never keep a dishonest person in your employ. On the other hand, never become an employee of a dishonest employer.
5. Do not employ friends who, owing to wrong familiarity, would not implicitly obey orders from you.

Attract to yourself the right associates:

- (a) through the eyes,
- (b) the spiritual way,
- (c) first-impressions study,
- (d) the magnetic way.

Study carefully the four ways of reading character that are given in this Lesson.

All difficulties may be overcome by continued planning and pertinacity. Refuse to accept defeat and you will win.

Under all circumstances be calm and self-possessed. Calmly steer the ship of concentration to the shores of blessedness. A man of concentration shapes his own life. He plans his day, and at the end of the day finds his plans carried out--he is thus nearer to God and his goal. Lead a controlled existence. Blame no one but yourself for your troubles. Analyze yourself, use self-correction, and meditate more and more deeply.

LESSON NO. 77 Intuition is that directly perceiving faculty of the soul that at once knows the truth about anything, requiring no medium of sense experience or reason. It does not consist in believing a thing, but in knowing it directly and unmistakably. It does not contradict. It is always supported by a right sense of perception, reason, and inference, although it does not depend upon any data whatsoever offered by the senses or the mind. A real intuition can never be wrong.

Everyone possesses this quality more or less. Like any other faculty, it must be cultivated. To rely upon an undeveloped intuitional faculty is dangerous. Distorted, skeptical reason and emotional feeling overcloud intuition. If the sense and mind windows are befogged with ignorance and sensual and mental weaknesses, human understanding becomes clouded. Reason and feeling, no matter how pure, are not intuition.

A highly developed power of the five senses stimulated with concentration plus a highly developed all-knowing faculty of intuition, are essential to success.

The power of the senses depends upon the sense organs, and the mind power of inference depends upon the senses for information. Therefore, if the data given by the senses is incorrect, the inference is incorrect.

Intuition may be classed as:

- (1) crude,
- (2) semideveloped through frequent but unconscious exercise,
- (3) consciously developed through use and meditation.

Intuition is developed by:

- (1) applying and exercising common sense;
- (2) daily introspection and analysis;
- (3) depth of thought and continued activity in one direction;
- (4) calmness;
- (5) meditation, and holding to its calm aftereffects.

Practice using intuition in solving small problems. When it successfully does that, then employ it in the solution of big problems.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP THREE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 72

1. What is the metaphysical purpose of relaxation?
2. Why is seclusion the "price of greatness"?

Lesson 73

1. What is the difference between clairvoyance and subconscious pictures?
2. What is matter?

Lesson 74

1. What is the difference between soul and ego?
2. What are visions?
3. Are subconscious dreams desirable or not? Why?
4. How can dreams be induced consciously?

Lesson 75

1. What are dreams?
2. What is the difference between dreams and visions?
3. Is it all right to let the mind remain blank? Give reasons.
4. How is inner mental environment formed? How does it affect our actions?

Lesson 76

1. Upon what principles does the true and ultimate success of business depend?
2. Name several points to be considered in choosing business associates.
3. What is the way of reading character through the eyes?
4. What is the spiritual way of reading character?

Lesson 77

1. What is intuition?
2. How may intuition be developed?
3. How can human reason or feeling become intuitive?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I WILL WAIT FOR THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

In the center of my heart I have a mystic throne for Thee. The candles of my joys are dimly lighted in the hope of Thy coming. They will burn brighter when Thou appearest. Whether Thou comest or not, I will wait for Thee until my tears melt away all material grossness.

To please Thee my love-perfumed tears will wash Thy feet of silence. The altar of my soul will be kept empty until Thou comest.

I will talk not; I will ask naught of Thee. I will realize that Thou knowest the pangs of my heart while I wait for Thee.

Thou dost know that I am praying; Thou dost know that I love no other. Yet whether Thou dost come to me or not, I will wait for Thee, though it be for eternity.

--From "Metaphysical Meditations"

PRAYER

Father, Thou didst make us in Thine image. We pray to Thee not as beggars but as Thine offspring, co-heirs to Thy kingdom. Lovingly we demand our immortal heritage: wisdom, health, happiness, salvation, eternal joy.

Naughty or good, we are Thy children. Inspire us to seek and find Thine infallible guidance within us. May we attune our human will (that Thou gavest us to use freely) with Thy divine will.

SUCCESS THROUGH WILL POWER

The purpose of human life consists in finding out what we really are. We can inquire what human life is because we are endowed with the faculty of reason. The distinctive difference between man and animal is that man has the ability to reason and inquire into the source and meaning of his existence, and of the existence of other forms of life. Yet many human beings behave more blindly than animals, going sheeplike to the slaughterhouse of death without ever having sought the answer to the mystery of life. Whence did reason come? What is its source?

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "WISH" AND "WILL" In the zoological garden of life roam all kinds of animals of desires. But remember this: to have a desire fulfilled, you must first have the power to fulfill it. A wish is a desire that you think cannot "come true." Stronger than "wish" is "intention--intention to do a thing or to satisfy some wish or desire. But "will" means a motivating desire plus application of energy to bring that desire to fruition. It means continuous, concentrated action until that desire is fulfilled. How few persons actually "will"! Of course one should not use will power to perform wrong actions: that is a violation of the purpose of will within us, and brings us harm. Man's will should be guided by wisdom. Right desires, and will guided by wisdom, lead man to ultimate fulfillment in God.

To wish and to will are different things. We see that people are following many different paths to one common goal; all are seeking happiness. Some want money, some want health, others want fame, hoping that through these they will find happiness. Varied are the desires, but few persons have the will power to accomplish them. And how desires come and go in the mind! Do you realize how many of them have found a place in your heart? Within every man lies a great graveyard of unfulfilled desires. Desires that you feel cannot be fulfilled corrode the heart, and are really just "wishes." Sometimes you hear someone say "I wish I were a king," or something equally unlikely. These are wishes that you know may not be fulfilled. Not all people have the same desires; what may interest one doesn't necessarily have any attraction for someone else.

Many people think they should not use their own will power to accomplish what they desire, lest they "interfere" with the scheme of life in some way. But in order not to use will power one would have to lie down and not move at all. If you move even a finger, you are using your will power. You must use will power even to eat. The only time your will power is inactive is when you are under chloroform or are otherwise rendered unconscious. When the power to will leaves the body entirely, man dies.

WHY DO PEOPLE FAIL IN LIFE? Do you know why people fail? It is because they give up. I often say that if I had no job, I would shake up the whole world so that it would be glad to give me a job to keep me quiet. You must exercise your will power. If you make up your mind and go forth like a flame, every obstacle in your path will be consumed. The man of realization walks safely even where bullets fly, for the divine will is behind him.

Rouse this will power from the sleep of ignorance. How can you develop it? Choose some objective that you think you cannot accomplish, and then try with all your might to do that one thing. When you have achieved success, go on to something bigger and keep on exercising your will power in this way. If your difficulty is great, deeply pray: "Lord, give me the power to conquer all my difficulties." You must use your will power, no matter what you are, or who you are. You must make up your mind. Use this will power both in business and in meditation.

Such will power lies within you that if you really put it to use there is nothing you could not accomplish. Will power has created everything--even your body. It is the will that leads you from one desire to another until with all your might you try to succeed in accomplishing your greatest desires. Rarely do people develop the true potentiality of will power! The will develops in man by normal evolutionary progress, but its evolution may be hastened by right thinking and acting.

Carrying a thought with dynamic will power means holding to it until that thought pattern develops dynamic force. When a thought is made dynamic by will force, it can create or rearrange the atoms into the desired pattern according to the mental blueprint you have created. When you continuously develop your will until its dynamic force manifests, you can heal others by your will power; you can say, as Jesus said to the leper, "I will; be thou clean" (Matthew 8:3). You can control your destiny by will power; you can command a mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done" (Matthew 21:21).

Human will guided by ignorance leads to error and unhappiness; but when human will is guided by wisdom to right actions, and thus tuned in with divine will, it then operates for man's highest welfare and happiness. That is what Jesus meant when he said: "Thy will be done." God wishes us to tune in with divine will, that we may be guided by His wisdom to find the real fulfillment of all our desires, in Him.

Lazy people think that just by virtue of prayer God will listen to them and fulfill their desires. But it is necessary to exercise will power, to strive to tune it with the divine will. When your will revolves continually around one definite purpose, it becomes dynamic will. This is the quality of will power possessed by Jesus and by all other great sons of God.

The power behind your will is the will of God. This is the way to develop your will:

1. Before you will to do a thing, reason as to what you should do.
2. Make sure that you are directing your will toward accomplishing something good and helpful to yourself.

Don't be passive. Your will was given to you so that you may use it and become a conqueror. Remember, in your will is the will of God. It is His power that you use. Therefore in your heart you must love nothing more than God, who is a "jealous" God. If you want God, you must have the will to cast away from your heart every desire but the desire for Him. And if you really want God, nothing wrong can touch you. Have only one desire: "May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts." That is my only prayer. I don't even pray for my body. I don't want to enjoy God alone; I want to establish the consciousness of God in the hearts of all men. So always remember that the greatest and highest use of will is to will for God alone. God is imperishable and with God everything good will come. Develop your will power. Turn your will power away from worldly desires; it is wasted on them. Look at this life as nothing but a dream. Make up your mind to will for God.

If you know that you have got to find God in order to satisfy soul-hunger within; and if you use your will power, then you will find Him. But God will not answer unless you know the law. Again and again you must fire the shells of your prayer and will power to break down the ramparts of God's silence. He is castled in silence, but if you send shell after shell of concentration and meditation, the walls will break and God's glory will burst forth.

WILL POWER TIES LIFE AND CONSCIOUSNESS TO THE BODY

There is enough life-energy current in your body to last you several thousand years. Yet as soon as something happens to the body, you discard all thoughts of energy. Currents of life energy of tremendous voltage play around and within you, but because you spend a little of it through your muscles, you say: "I am tired. My back feels as if it were broken." The moment you say "tired," the mind gives up! You should eliminate this word from your vocabulary.

If you lose your will power and ambition, you are as good as dead already. That is why you should never lose interest in life. If you tamper with will power by utilizing it wrongly, you lose your connection with the cosmic energy; but if you exercise that will power, you contact that tremendous life force. We must

keep our will power alive. You know what happens to persons near death when their will falters. They become so tortured by pain that they say: "All right, let me go, I cannot stand any more." And they give up. If you never let your will go, you would never die, for it is will power that ties the life and consciousness to the body. There is nothing more powerful than will. Everything in this universe is produced by will.

Physiological changes may even be made to occur in the body by will power. There is no time element involved; place a thought in the mind and hold it there, and think that the thing is done and your whole body and mind will respond to it.

Nor does it take time to acquire or discard a habit if you exercise sufficient will power. It is all in your mind.

When Lord Buddha sought illumination, he sat under a banyan tree and said:

"Beneath the banyan bough
On sacred seat I take this vow:
'Until life's mystery I solve,
Until I gain the Priceless Lore,
Though bones and fleeting flesh dissolve,
I'll leave this posture nevermore.'"

Buddha succeeded in his divine quest. Such a will becomes one with the Divine Will.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

An unceasing demand for anything, mentally whispered with unflagging zeal and unflinching courage and faith, develops into a dynamic power that so influences the entire behavior of the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious powers of man that the desired object is gained. The inner performance of mental whispers must be unceasing, undaunted by reverses. Then the desired-for object will materialize. The highest desire is to seek the contact of the all-satisfying, all-desire-quenching Bliss of God.

THE "MEEK" MAN AND THE BANDIT

One day when I was seated in meditation in a public park a rough-looking man came up to me and said, "Give me ten cents." I gave him the money without any protest. He started to walk away, but quickly turned round and came a few steps nearer. "Give me another ten cents," he said, and I again obliged. I could see he was thinking he had met the meekest man on earth, and that he would press his luck further. "Give me twenty-five cents," he demanded, and kept on increasing

the amount. All the while I was meekly handing over whatever he asked for. Finally he said, "Give me a dollar!" Then with all the force and power at my command, I jumped up suddenly and shouted. "Get out!"

He was so surprised, he dropped all the money and ran like a streak of lightning. I picked up my coins and walked away.

A policeman who had observed the man's flight stopped me and asked, "What did you do to that man to make him run away? He is a dangerous character." "Oh, nothing," I replied offhandedly. "We just came to a little understanding."

Remember that if you remain inwardly calm under all circumstances you can conquer anything or anyone. True calmness means that God is with you. If you become restless, you will irritate people and they will be angry with you. Then you will be miserable.

Never be afraid of anything. Fear is a form of nervousness. As long as you are not dead, you are alive; so why should you fear? And once you are dead it is all over and you cannot remember; so why worry?

If someone is trying to get you in trouble, affirm continuously, "I am peace, I am calm," and say it deeply. No matter how others may try to shake you, hold on to that peace. Your nerves will then be calm.

If anyone can make you angry, you have not yet attained perfect calmness; but maintaining calmness does not mean that you should let others make a door mat out of you. Sometimes it is necessary to make others understand that you mean business; but you are a child of God and you should never be angry. The more often you lose your temper, the longer you will remain in the delusory mortal consciousness; but if you remain inwardly calm, you are demonstrating the poise of a true child of God.

AFFIRMATION

Nothing shall blight my smiles. Grim death, disease, or failure will only make me smile at disaster. I know that they cannot really touch me, for I am one with the unconquerable, unchangeable, ever new bliss of silence.

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TEACH US TO DEMAND THY LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, tear away the veil of our ignorance, of our delusion. Be Thou the only ambition on the throne of our desires. Be Thou the only love at the heart of our craving. Father, Mother, Beloved Spirit, reveal Thyself unto us. Destroy our indifference. Let endless thrills of Thy joy visit our souls. Intoxicate our hearts with the wine of Thy love. O Love of Ages, O Creator of our hearts, may the restless dreams of our desires melt in Thy holy ocean. Let us find eternal fulfillment and satisfaction in Thee.

Father, twinkle through the stars, vibrate through the atoms, whisper through our thoughts, and love us through our love. Teach us not only to pray, but also to demand Thy love, for it is our privilege to love Thee. We are a reflection of Thee. Father, wake with us in the dawn, vitalize us in the sunlight, and as we enter the portals of the evening, receive the love of our heart's devotion-flowers that bloom in the garden of the soul.

Come out of the blossoms, come out of the valley, come out through the windows of flowers and the souls of men, come out through our secret silence in the cave of the soul. Come, Father, shatter the veils of space and mind and show Thyself to us in all Thy glory. Father, forget us not, though we forget Thee; remember us, though we remember Thee not. Be not indifferent unto us, though we are indifferent unto Thee. Teach us to receive wisdom from Thy lips and power from Thy concentration, and strength from Thy cosmic energy.

PRAYER

O Spirit, help me to bring into proper use all my God-given powers.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR TALENTS

If you consciously contact God first, then all things else will follow. You are blessed children of God, sent on earth to demonstrate the perfection of your Father, but instead you go from this earth shattered and scarred. Jesus told you the truth when he said that you are made in the image of God. What is it then that you are now displaying? Is it an image that has been desecrated by the hand of ignorance?

We are immortal, perfect children of God, sent on earth by our Father. But because we misuse our independence, we suffer from disease and sorrows. Remember, no matter what you want, if you seek it from this illusive world you will never find it. Hence life is an amazing paradox, because we are trying to find fulfillment of our dreams through our lives here. We were sent here as immortals, but instead we have started begging, forgetting our divine heritage within.

The sunlight shines equally on the charcoal and the diamond, but only the diamond reflects its light. So, although God's light shines equally on everything and in everyone, "diamond" souls, by their own creative quality, receive and reflect the light of God; "charcoal" souls, whose divine intelligence is beclouded by worldly delusion, do not allow God's brilliance to pass through them. Although God made us in His image, it still rests with us whether we veil that image with ignorance or let it shine forth freely. The great point is that although God made us all--the yellow, white, black, and olive-colored--in His image, some do nevertheless receive and reflect His rays more than others. The great ones who have expressed the light of God are the diamonds among souls. Those who want God, and long for His guidance, will find that His light is sent into their lives.

PEACE AND ACCOMPLISHMENT
THROUGH MEDITATION

One should start meditating at an early age or, failing that, start as soon as the mental discriminative inclination becomes receptive. It is very difficult for the occult soldiers of spirituality to help reclaim the kingdom of peace after it has fallen into the hands of restlessness and material desire.

Joy born of meditation is the indication that God has replied to the devotion and concentration-tuned radio of your mind in response to your unceasing prayer broadcastings. You should pray until you receive the divine answer. Many

people try to talk to God through a broken mental microphone. Their prayers never reach Him. Repair and adjust your mind microphone first by deep practice of concentration and meditation as taught in earlier Lessons; then inwardly "broadcast" your demand. Thus your message will reach God. But do not stop there. Go on affirming: "I and my Father are One," until His joy fills your heart and mind. When you let God control you, He awakens you from the nightmare fears and sorrows of mortal delusion, and causes His ocean of wisdom to flow through the little channel of your mind, expanding it with His omnipresence and immortality.

To grow the flower of God-peace and divine inner accomplishment through daily meditation is more enjoyable and lasting than all the wealth of the universe. There is nothing more joyous than God's presence. Once recognized, it is an eternal possession. Wealth can only be used; it cannot be held forever. But God's bliss discovered in meditation is ever new, undying. Meditation is the missing link between religion and realization.

EFFORT AND ENERGY Most people who fail and are not prosperous have
DEVELOP TALENTS come to this pass because they hypnotized themselves with the consciousness of their failures, and they did not make repeated, steady efforts to succeed. Creative mental effort should also accompany repeated efforts of will and activity. That is, energy and effort should not be wasted on a wrong venture, but instead should be expended on the right business suited to you; what is right for you has to be found out or created by your thinking, penetrating Self. The world is full of imitators; there are few creative workers. The one who creates does not wait for an opportunity, blaming circumstances, the fates, and the gods. He seizes opportunities or creates them with the magic wand of his will, effort and searching discrimination. It is not the person who is overeager for success who succeeds. Many want success, a few strive for it, and a very few perseveringly and wisely act to find it. Mental laziness, lack of initiative, and lack of perseverance are the greatest enemies of success. The poor wish they had money; and the rich, who feel completely safe in their prosperity, may die poor.

Most people spend all their lives desiring to do something perfectly, such as playing the piano or painting, but are too lazy and careless to put forth the effort required to reach perfection in the chosen activity. They go on for years performing inefficiently and excusing themselves by saying: "I had no time to practice or to find a good teacher; anyway, I'm not a genius." They fail to realize that extraordinary talent is not as necessary as unswerving purpose and unfailing application and effort according to a given spiritual law. Most people fail in attaining their material, mental, and spiritual desires because of their lack of definite purpose and sustained effort.

Fear destroys business initiative. It paralyzes the desire to repeat success-producing efforts. Fear eclipses the almighty power of the soul. Fear nothing else, but try to fear fear. A mental indulgence in fear will create a subconscious

habit of fear, so that when a real cause of fear comes, the cultivated subconscious fear will assert itself and will paralyze the will-to-fight-fear faculty of the conscious mind. Since you are made in the image of God, you have all the powers and potentialities of God. Since you are made in God's image, to believe that your tests are more difficult than your divinity is powerful to overcome them is to believe in an untruth. Remember, no matter what your tests are, you are not too weak to fight. God will not suffer you to be tempted more than you are able to bear.

A little story will make this point clear. A and B were fighting. After a long time A said to himself: "I cannot go on any longer." But B thought: "Just one more punch," and he gave it, and down went A. You must be like that; give a last punch. Use the unconquerable power of will to overcome all difficulties in life.

**INFERIORITY AND
SUPERIORITY
COMPLEXES ARE
BOTH BAD**

An inferiority complex is just as bad as a superiority complex because if you feel inferior, then you cannot manifest that in you which truly is superior. So remember, inherently you are children of God, so it is wrong and hurtful to think that you are inferior; and to think egotistically that you are superior is to behave in an inferior way. When you bring in your own ego, you hide God within you. So avoid having either an inferiority or a superiority complex; they both retard the progress of the soul. You should feel that God is with you, guiding you, and that God is your greatest love and your greatest superior. When you are one with Him you regard yourself as the servant of all; therefore you cannot think of yourself as superior. And because He is within you, it would be untrue to God in you to think of yourself as inferior.

An inferiority complex is born of mixing with weak-minded persons, and from having an innately weak subconscious mind. A superiority complex is born of false pride and the upstart ego. Both complexes are destructive to Self-development. Both live on imagination and ignore the realm of real facts. Neither disqualification belongs to the true, all-powerful nature of soul. Develop self-confidence by conquering your weaknesses. Found your self-confidence upon real growing achievements, and you will be free from all inferiority and superiority complexes.

**WHAT READING
CAN DO FOR YOU**

Intellectuality is improved by introspecting and mentally assimilating the subjects that you study. Always be sure first that you understand what you have read; then assimilate what you feel is right and reject what is incompatible with your reason. But do not pass hasty judgments. You should aim to know everything about some definite line of study, and have some general information regarding a number of other worthwhile subjects.

Good books are your perpetual silent friends. When you are worried or

grieved, take a book and concentrate deeply upon it. Listen to the comforting and inspiring words of the great minds of all ages. Read books after meditation. Criticize books with intuitive perception. Keep your mind busy most of your leisure time with good books unless you are meditating. Good books will keep your mind safe from the company of so-called friends and from idle thoughts that create boredom and dissatisfaction.

Read, mark, and inwardly digest selected passages from great books. Discuss important topics with intelligent people. Thinking over logically a given idea is the best way to develop originality in your ideas. When thinking, keep your eyes closed and your mind wholly concentrated on the subject of your study. Do nothing with only half attention or halfheartedly. Read spiritual books that contain the thought-fruits of others' Self-realization. Such books as the Bhagavad-Gita (the Hindu Bible) and the Christian Bible should not be read as you would read a novel. Read a passage, think about its meaning, then meditate upon its truth. Then try to live that truth. There are two kinds of learned men. One is a "moving library," always collecting books on the shelf of memory. The other is always busy expanding his powers of introspection, assimilating ideas. You should never read without assimilation. If you can assimilate, you will know much with little reading.

THE STORY OF A BAD BOY WHO BECAME A SAINT

The word "truth" has been so misused as to have almost lost its real meaning. Truth is the consciousness that is guided by spiritual wisdom to perform certain actions--not because everybody else says so but because they are right. Truth is eternal, yet ever new. It cannot be monopolized by anyone. It will keep on expressing eternally through the soul of man. Every human being has a right and a duty to express it in his or her own life.

Sin cannot be thrown away, like dynamite, to explode itself; its temptations have to be stilled by the power of your soul within. If you try to hurt others, you will only succeed in hurting yourself. You should not feel any resentment; do not be mean in anything. Certain sinners may be preferable to certain so-called good people. To be spiritual is to be broad, to understand, to forgive; and if you make people feel that you are their friend, ever ready to help them, you can count on the power of that attitude for good results.

The man or woman sliding down the path of evil finds no resistance; but as soon as he or she tries to oppose evil habits by following spiritual laws of discipline, countless instincts of temptations are roused to fight and foil these noble efforts:

Keep busy cleansing your soul of the original temptation inherited from Adam and Eve. Wipe away your own mental dirt before you waste time talking about the moral uncleanness of other people. Either let a stricken individual alone

to find his own spiritual remedy; or, if you are victorious over yourself, try to help him by showing a better example, or by wise counsel if your advice is asked.

Once when I was conducting my school in India a boy who was much older than the average among our pupils was brought in by his parents. I told them that I took only children under twelve years, but that the boy in question could stay if he were willing to be good.

Then I had a private heart-to-heart talk with the boy. "You have made up your mind to smoke," I said, "but your parents do not want you to smoke. You have succeeded in defeating your parents, but you have not succeeded in overcoming your unhappiness. You will be very miserable if you continue in this habit." My arrow had struck home, and he began to weep. "They are always beating me," he said.

"Think of what you have done to yourself!" I replied. "But I will take you on one condition--that I shall be your friend and not a detective. As long as you are willing to correct your mistakes, I shall be your helper, but if you tell lies, I shall do nothing for you. Lying destroys friendship. You may withhold truth, but don't lie." I accepted the boy and said: "Anytime you want to smoke, I will get you the cigarettes."

One day he came to me and said: "I feel a terrible desire to smoke." I offered him money and he could scarcely believe his eyes. "Keep the money," he said. He really did not want it. I pushed him gently, to make him go, but he would not. In spite of my repeated urging, he said, "You won't believe me, but I really don't want to smoke now."

The result of all this (and much more) teaching and discipline was that he finally became a truly saintly person. I had succeeded in the end in rousing his spiritual consciousness. The greatest evidence of spiritual consciousness is seen in a person's real inner effort to go upstream against old wrong habits toward real, lasting happiness. You sometimes read or hear of a person who follows one course until he achieves his goal; but very few people make that kind of effort. However, you can make a constant effort to become good, no matter if your sins be as deep as the ocean. Through eternity you have been a child of God, and only for a few incarnations have you been a mortal being. The greatest enemy you have is yourself. A feeling of great, ever-increasing joy is absolute proof that God has accepted your demand to be recognized as His prodigal son come home.

HOW TO ACQUIRE INITIATIVE

To have initiative is to possess the power of original conception, the power to create something that no one else has ever created. It means to try to do things in new ways. Everyone is born with this God-given power, but few use it or try to develop it. The person with initiative is like a shooting star. He or she creates something from nothing and makes the impossible possible by the great

inventive power of Spirit. You have superior powers and precious talents lying dormant within your being. You may possess burning fires of ambition as yet unrealized. Have you permitted your life to become warped by forces seemingly stronger than your own? Is your life under your control? Do not sink into the rut of mediocrity. Rise above the crowd. Step out of the choking monotony of ordinary existence into a finer, more colorful life of achievement and ever new peace.

Open your eyes and see the good that you now have, and then keep alert and alive to recognize each new manifestation as it comes to you. Speak with devotion to the Father and thank Him for all the good things of life. He is with you always, and nothing can interfere with success if you acknowledge the divine Power within you.

AFFIRMATION

I will use my creative ability to gain success in every worthwhile project that I undertake.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DANCING TO THE BLISS PIPINGS--Part 1

By Paramahansa Yogananda

From the pure-white scroll of life
I want to erase all dark blots of groan-producing sensations.
On this milk-white sheet of life
God wrote the blameless words and messages of bliss,
But Satan came and took the pen of destiny
And dipped it in the ink of gloom
And splashed the ink of sensitiveness
All over the clean sheet of perception.

I will take the neutralizing acid of intuition
And dissolve the misery-producing blotches of sensations.
O sweet enslaving home of flesh!
In thee dwells the charming venomous snake of sensibility.
Some day I will destroy this serpent of sensitiveness
And make this flesh the temple of deathless experiences.

From the flesh I will remove all pain-making sensitiveness
And death-producing sensibilities.
I will kill the flesh frailty, that it no more delude me
With its cries of cold and heat, pain and pleasure.
I will make this flesh dumb forever, that it may never
Speak again of its delusions of pain.
But I will resurrect each cell of this fleshly frame
In the life of indestructibility.

Each cell of my body shall dance in the flames
Without being scorched or burned,
And each cell of my body shall dive into the bosom of mortal fire
Without being hurt,
And all these children body-cells,
Pierced a trillion times with points of sharp daggers,
Shall not be scratched.
And these body cells,
Scorched a thousand times by the scalding sun,
Shall not thirst for a taste of water. (Continued)

PRAYER

Divine Mother, bless all who are using Thy physical, mental, and spiritual laws to bring healing to themselves and to others. May they manifest Thy healing power, just giving to Thee all credit and glory.

HOW TO REJUVENATE YOURSELF

Proper foods in the right combinations are necessary for the sustenance of the body; they exert also a definite influence upon the mind. The sattvic or spiritual quality, the rajasic or active quality, and the tamasic or material quality of the mind are all affected by the food we eat. The activating rajasic quality may dominate or combine with the other two qualities to form different mental tendencies in man: spiritually active, intellectually active, or materially active.

Everything we eat produces a sensation on the palate, as well as certain chemical effects on the body and brain. The sensations created by the food determine a specific mentality. Meat eating produces gross material reactions that develop the material or animal mental tendencies, whereas eating raw fruits and vegetables helps to reinforce and develop the spiritual qualities.

The quality of the food's taste and color is reported to the brain through the nerves of taste and sight, and is experienced as specific pleasant or unpleasant sensations. These are elaborated by the mind into perceptions and conceptions. Dwelling mentally on certain conceptions about foods forms definite mental habits that manifest as material, active, or spiritual qualities of thought and behavior.

FASTING AND SPECIAL DIETS

The ancient yogis claimed that most diseases can be cured by judicious fasting. The following diets and fasts, undertaken under proper medical supervision, will be found helpful.

Fasting may be complete or partial. Partial fasting falls into the following four broad subdivisions:

- 1) Limiting the diet to certain foods.
- 2) Abstaining from certain foods.
- 3) Limiting the food intake as to quantity.
- 4) Limiting the number of meals to one or two per day.

Some of these forms of fasting may be combined. For instance, to cure disease or reduce weight, a person may abstain from certain foods altogether, and limit the intake of other foods, and so on.

LIQUID DIET: Many persons feel that they benefit by a liquid diet. For one or two days a week, and whenever one does not feel hungry, the food intake may be confined to any one of the following: milk, orange juice, or any other unsweetened fruit juice.

RESTRICTED DIET: This type of partial fast is confined to: raw fruits and vegetables, lightly cooked vegetables, including juice in which they were steamed.

On this diet no bread or other starchy foods or sugar should be taken; no meat, eggs, or fish; nothing but the foods mentioned above, and these in one meal per day, to be taken at noon.

Remember to drink plenty of water while on this diet.

NINE DAY DIET: A nine day cleansing and vitalizing diet has proven an effective method for ridding the system of poisons. It consists of the following foods, to be taken daily:

- 1-1/2 grapefruit
- 1-1/2 lemons
- 5 oranges
- 1 cooked vegetable with juice (amount optional)
- 3 cups vitality beverage (1 cup at each meal; recipe below)
- 1 raw vegetable salad
- 1 glass orange juice with herbal laxative at bedtime (for best results take 1/2 teaspoon of laxative at first, later increase amount to 1 teaspoon).

Vitality Beverage

- 2 stalks celery, freshly ground
- 5 carrots, ground
- 1 bunch parsley, chopped
- 1/2 quart dandelion or turnip greens, or spinach, chopped
- 1 quart water (no salt or seasoning of any kind)

The vitality beverage may be prepared in two ways, as follows, the first way being preferable:

- 1) After putting the celery and carrots through a food chopper, boil them lightly in the water for ten minutes. Then add selected greens and parsley and boil ten minutes longer. Then strain the mixture.
- 2) Use the same ingredients, but do not cook them. Put them in a liquifier if you have one. Or put them through a food grinder. Drink one cup of the beverage, prepared by either method, at each of the three meals.

This beverage has been found to be a very effective tonic in cases of

rheumatism, various stomach disorders (including acute indigestion), chronic catarrh, bronchitis, and nervous breakdown. While on the cleansing diet, strictly abstain from all spices, candy, pastry, meat, eggs, fish, cheese, milk, butter, bread, fried foods, oil, beans, in fact, all foods not mentioned above. If one at times feels the need of additional nourishment, one may take one tablespoon of thoroughly ground nuts in half a glass of orange juice.

Following the nine day diet, one should be especially careful in the selection and quantity of the food taken for the first few days, and should resume a normal diet gradually. Begin by adding a portion of cottage cheese to the meal. Almonds, egg yolk, baked potato are among the next foods to be added. Don't overeat, but gradually increase the amount and variety until you have returned to a normal diet, which should take about four days.

If you are not successful in ridding the body of all poisons during the initial attempt, you may repeat the cleansing diet after an interval of two or three weeks.

While on the cleansing diet, it has been found beneficial to soak twenty minutes in a tub half-filled with warm water in which five cups of Epsom salts have been dissolved. It is helpful also to take a salts bath every now and then for several weeks after finishing the cleansing diet.

COMPLETE FASTING: A period of complete fasting should not, as a rule, exceed ten days at a time. Fasting should never be attempted for more than three days unless it is under proper medical supervision. However, abstaining from food for one day each week or for three consecutive days each month, is a beneficial practice. Water should be taken in abundance during complete fasting, to replace the fluid lost by evaporation through the pores and eliminated in other ways.

OXYGEN DIET: Inhale and exhale deeply from 6 to 12 times every hour, filling the lungs down to the lower lobes with fresh air. This method may be practiced outdoors, while alternately walking slowly and resting. When weather conditions necessitate indoor practice, the windows should be kept wide open. Of course, warm clothing should be worn during the winter season as a protection against the cold. This aids spiritual growth. This practice should not be undertaken by weak persons or invalids.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Come out of your closed chamber of mental narrowness. Drink in the fresh air of the vital thoughts and views of other people. Drink vitality; receive mental nourishment from materially and spiritually progressive minds. Feast unstintingly on the creative thinking within yourself and others. Take long mental walks on the paths of self-confidence. Exercise with the instruments of judgment, introspection, and initiative. Exhale poisonous thoughts of discouragement, discontentment, and hopelessness. Go on ignorance-

elimination fasts. Refuse to be enslaved by ignorant habits and thoughtless actions. Take up intensive spiritual study and intensive spiritual dieting, and refuse to suffer any longer from the infection of ignorance.

THE DEVOTEE WHO COULD NOT FIND A HIDING PLACE

Sequestered in the foothills of the Himalayas there lived a practical saint named Ramaka. He was often visited by a wealthy worldly man who showed great devotion outwardly. But this rich man--who had at one time been a great sinner, but who had apparently reformed--kept company with this great saint mostly for the purpose of covering up his old traits and to make it appear that he was becoming religious.

By way of pretending his great devotion to the saint, this hypocritical worldly man asked to take spiritual instruction from him. Accompanied by his wife and two servants, he came to request sacred initiation.

The saint greeted the rich man and then said: "First of all, I want you and your companions to know that I make disciples only of those who pass my spiritual tests."

The rich man and the two servants spoke up at once: "~~Of course! We shall be glad to go through your tests; we are sure we can pass them.~~" But the humble wife meekly said: "Only if God blesses my efforts to go through your tests may I be successful."

The saint then left them and went to his banana grove. Soon he returned with eight bananas. He handed two bananas to each of the four persons--the husband, the wife, and the two servants. Then the saint said: "Will you please, each of you, go out singly to the loneliest spot that you can find and secretly eat the fruit; then come back to me. Remember, if you aspire to pass my test, you must not be seen at all while you are eating the bananas, and you must surely return by evening."

The husband confidently sequestered himself in a dark, windowless closet in a friend's house. There he brought forth the fruit, which he had hidden in his pocket, and hastily ate them. He returned quickly to the saint and said: "Honored Sir, it is done."

Ramaka only smiled as he commented: "It is strange that within such a short time you could find a really lonely place free from the presence of anyone."

The two servants, after a long search, finally went deep into a forest. Entering different caves, they ate their fruit and returned to the saint. Ramaka, on seeing them, said: "I am astonished that you think that you found the best hiding places and ate the bananas without being secretly watched by anyone. How do you know that no one was watching you?"

The servants replied: "Sir, nobody could even take a peep into the caves wherein we ate the bananas. Even we could not see the fruit while we were eating it."

The saint enigmatically smiled and gently remarked: "Just the same, you never can tell who might have been watching you."

At last, when evening came, the humble wife of the rich man returned. She was tired out and depressed. Placing the two bananas in front of the saint, she spoke: "Honored sage, I am sorry to admit that I cannot pass your test. All day long I have tried to find a secret place--in closed rooms, and in man-forsaken wild gardens of nature, in deep valleys, forests, ravines, dark mountain caves, and in the secret temple of my mind. But I could not find any such place where I could eat the bananas. When I went into the vast fields, I saw a Silent Being nodding in the blades of grass. I tried the garden of wild flowers, and there I saw Somebody smiling at me through the opened lips of petals, mocking at my fruitless attempt to find a lonely place. I tried the valleys and ravines, and Somebody's tall stony mountain neck quivered, and I knew I was being watched.

"Then, desperate, I tried the mountain caves. But as I started to eat the bananas, I felt an Invisible Presence. I seemed to hear laughter and Someone saying: 'Look, I am the light that shineth even in the midst of utmost darkness and in the gloom of mountain breasts.' I ignored the laughing Voice, and yet, as I tried to eat the fruit, the darkness shivered and threw a streak of light on it.

"I closed my eyes and made up my mind to eat the bananas without paying any attention to the light that fell on them. Suddenly I saw all my thoughts awakened in the dark temple of my mind, and they rebuked me, seeming to say: 'You can't eat the bananas alone. We are all watching you, and our Supreme Father, who gave us our birth, is ever within us, invisible yet tangibly watching you lest you be deluded into thinking that you can find a spot where He does not live and which is free from His all-pervading gaze.' So I gave up, and now, Holy Sire, I am at your feet."

The saint, with gleaming eyes, spoke: "Sacred Lady, it is you alone who have really understood the purpose of my test, and by your humbleness and calmness you have most honorably and admirably succeeded in the test." Turning to the proud husband and his servants, he commanded: "Behold, she is your guru-preceptor. You should take lessons from her; that is the first lesson I give you, since you came to me for instruction."

AFFIRMATION

O Father, in the zest of sustaining food lies hidden
the essence of Thy Being.... Thine eternal sweetness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DANCING TO THE BLISS-PIPINGS--Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Good and bad are as odors.
They shall not disturb the calmness
Of the transmuted immortal cells.
Nor shall sound vibrations
Burst the eardrums of the truth-baptized cells.
Nor shall the cruelest sights
Disturb the vision of the God-entranced body cells.

I will smear the acid of wisdom
Over the eyes to destroy meager mortal sight,
And implant there the penetrating telescopic eye of wisdom.
I will seal the eardrums with the deafness of ecstasy,
That mortal hearing no more dances
Puppet-like when strings
Of praise or blame are pulled.

Then my inner ears,
Free from the noise of maddening material sounds,
Shall register the music of the spheres;
And the living tunnel of my nostrils
No longer be enthralled by the sirens of odors.

I will dislodge the tyrant greed
Sitting on the throne of taste.
There I will enthrone
The king of self-control.
From the secret cave of sensibility
I will dislodge the grizzly bear of pain
And there invite the hermits of bliss-perceptions,
Free from delusions of dualities and relativities.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, invite me to indulge in wholesome tastes of soul-nourishing food. Train all my senses to enjoy only that which reminds me of Thee.

HOW TO REJUVENATE YOURSELF (2)

The following diets and fasts, undertaken under proper medical supervision, will be found helpful in the conditions described.

REDUCING DIET:

Practice the Energization Exercises in Lesson 34 six times, twice a day; and the stomach exercises (also in Lesson 34) twenty times each. Command your will, while tensing the muscles during exercise, to burn up the superfluous tissues. Practice the running exercise fifty to two-hundred times a day. Eat mostly raw vegetables and one boiled yolk of an egg a day. Abstain from starchy food, fried foods, and sweets. Do not drink water with meals. Every three days fast one day on orange juice.

Extremely stout people can derive much benefit from fasting on orange juice seven days and then going on the nine-day cleansing diet, a normal diet being resumed gradually thereafter. If there should be need for further reduction of weight, this procedure may be repeated after an interval of two weeks.

FATTENING DIET:

The following foods are of high nutritive value and have been found beneficial for those who wish to gain weight. Some of them should be added to the usual diet each day.

Bananas with cream	2 eggs
Oatmeal with cream	1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 glass cream	3 1/2 ounces butter
2 slices whole-wheat bread	

Weight has also been gained by eating bananas in abundance, and, for one month, drinking two glasses of water (moderately hot or cold, not iced) with each meal.

GENERAL RULES:

To have faith in God's healing power through the mind, and yet obey dietary laws, is better than just to have faith in God and mind and disregard dietary laws. Every day, for beneficial results, eat green-leafed vegetables including

a carrot, and drink a glass of orange juice (including pulp) with a tablespoonful of finely ground nuts. Mix good salad dressings made of thoroughly ground nuts, cream, a few drops of lemon juice, orange juice and honey with all salads. Thousand Island dressing is good. A little curry sauce with boiled eggs or vegetables, once in a while, is a good salivary stimulant.

FOOD COMBINATIONS:

For best results, one should abstain from all beef and pork products. Do not make a habit of eating even chicken, lamb, or fish. Nuts, cottage cheese, avocados, eggs, milk, cream, and bananas are very good meat and fish substitutes. If you do eat chicken, lamb, or fish have a large vegetable salad with them.

Do not eat too much white sugar. Raw sugar is preferable, and honey is best of all. Eat Nature's candies, such as unsulphured figs, prunes, and raisins. The ingestion of excessive quantities of sweets causes intestinal fermentation. Remember also that frequent indulgence in fried foods and foods prepared from white flour can be injurious to one's health. Highly refined foods such as polished rice have been stripped of most of their food value; natural foods are as a rule more healthful. Try to include in your daily diet a large percentage of raw fruits and vegetables. If your diet has consisted chiefly of cooked foods, let the introduction of raw foods be a gradual one, until your ~~system becomes accustomed to the change.~~ Cooked vegetables should be eaten with the juice in which they were steamed.

Fast regularly, using your best judgment as to proper diet in accordance with the instructions given above. Eat less; follow dietary rules when you eat. Make sunshine, oxygen, and the Energization Exercises a part of your regular daily diet.

DAILY DIET:

Your daily food intake should include as many items as possible from the following list of foods that contain all the elements needed for the proper maintenance of the body. If you do not include all the fruits mentioned in a single day's diet use larger portions of those you do serve. Serve different fruit on different days.

1 apple	3 baked or steamed yellow or green
1 grapefruit	vegetables with juice
1 lemon	1 raw carrot
1 lime	6 leaves of raw spinach
1 orange	1/4 head lettuce
1 glass orange juice (with pulp)	1 teaspoon olive oil
1 tablespoon ground nuts	1 glass milk
1 slice pineapple	1 tablespoon cottage cheese

6 figs, dates, or prunes
1 handful of raisins

1 egg
1 teaspoon honey

Eat at least some of the foods listed under "Daily Diet" every day, distributing them throughout the three meals. For instance, you may take the milk at breakfast, bread and egg and vegetable salad at noon, nuts and fruits at night.

Catarrh of the alimentary canal often results from overeating at night, also from eating excessively of candy or other foodstuffs which have an irritating effect on the mucous membranes of the stomach, duodenum, and so forth.

Individual food habits may be taken into consideration, but if they are bad gradually change them. At any rate, add some of the foods in "Daily Diet" list to what you are used to eating. Omit those foods mentioned above which do not agree with you, eating only very lightly when you feel the need of nourishment, and gradually accustoming yourself to a more wholesome diet.

You may increase or decrease the quantities given in the list in accordance with your individual needs. It is, of course, obvious that the person doing strenuous muscular work requires more food than the sedentary worker.

Whenever one is hungry, he may take a large tablespoonful of thoroughly ground nuts in half a glass of water or in a glass of orange juice. When thirsty, drink a glass of orange juice or water (preferably distilled or boiled water if pure water is not available). However, nature's distilled water -- undiluted fruit juice -- is best. Do not drink too much water with your meals. Ice water should be taken very sparingly at any time, but especially during and after meals as it lowers the temperature of the stomach and dilutes the digestive juices, thus retarding digestion. Never drink ice water when you are overheated.

MAGNETIC DIET:

As a rule, the word "food" is used only in connection with physical nourishment, but there are other kinds of food, namely, mental energy, or concentration, and divine wisdom. The first (material food) recharges the body battery; the second (concentration) recharges the mind battery; the third (divine wisdom), the soul battery.

Have you ever analyzed your magnetic mental diet? It consists usually of the thoughts that you are thinking as well as thoughts you are receiving from close contact with friends. Peaceful friends always conduce to a healthy magnetic mind. It is easy to tell whether a person feeds on a quarrelsome or a peaceful environment. Inner disquietude and worries, owing to the wrong sort of friends or unappreciative immediate relatives, produce an unwholesome, gloomy mind.

The magnetic diet also consists of such food substitutes as rays and oxygen, which can be easily assimilated and converted into energy by the latent life forces. Magnetic foods give energy more quickly than solids and

liquids, which are less easily converted into life force. Vitamins are different kinds of rays. When you are eating, you are eating energy. The ultraviolet rays that one absorbs from the sun exert a beneficial vitalizing effect on the body. The healing of most sores and wounds can be enhanced by exposing them to the sunlight for up to one-half hour daily. The treatment with artificially produced ultraviolet and infrared rays also supplies the body with magnetic nourishment. Much benefit may be derived from it if it is taken under proper medical supervision. In order to receive electronic energy from the ether, expel the breath, remain calm while sitting in the erect posture, and feel the electronic energy surrounding your body and entering through your body cells; or receive energy through your fingers while your hands are lifted over your head.

Rubbing the whole naked body vigorously and rapidly with the palms before taking a bath generates life force and is very beneficial. Bathing in sunlight-heated or ultraviolet-ray-saturated water is also very beneficial. When using a sun lamp on the affected body part, concentrate your entire thought upon the feeling of warmth and know that you are absorbing the energy into the atomic composition of the body, and thus electrifying your cell batteries.

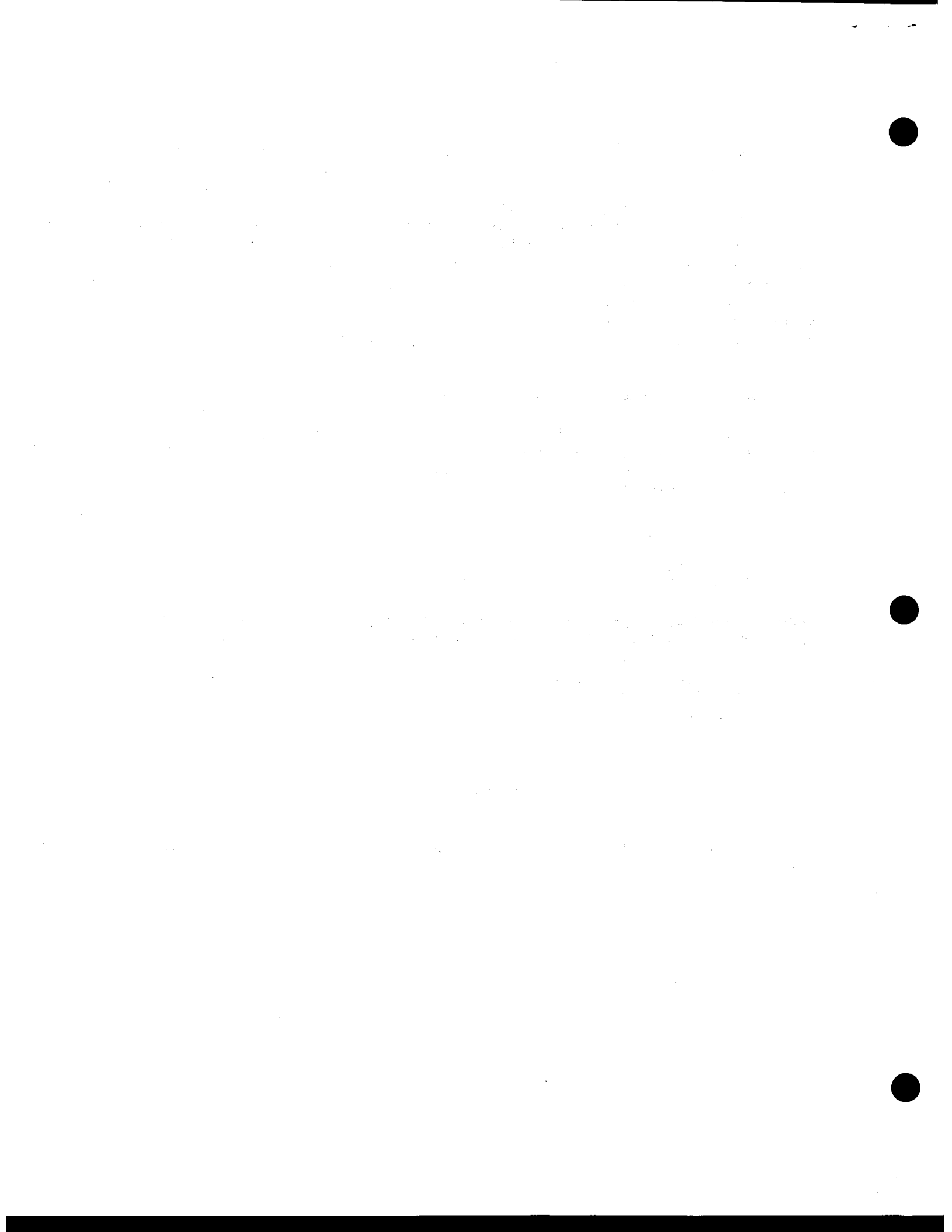
THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

If you are naturally victorious over physical greed, or if you have acquired self-control by strenuous efforts, you have nothing to worry about; but if you find yourself being carried away little by little, a prisoner of temptation, then you should try to train your armies of self-control. Seek good company. Eat less -- especially eat less meat. Fruits and vegetables should make up the greater part of your diet. Take plenty of exercise. Keep your thoughts busy with the wonder and peace of God.

* * *

AFFIRMATION

I shall behold wisdom in ignorance, joy in sorrow, health in weakness, for I know that God's perfection is the only reality.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DANCING TO THE BLISS PIPINGS--Part 3

By Paramahansa Yogananda

All body cells shall die and lose their mortal limitations,
Resurrected in the fire of infinity.
They shall see joy,
They shall hear joy,
They shall taste joy,
They shall smell joy,
And they shall feel the ever new joy
Dancing to the bliss pipings of God Infinite.
The flesh shall die to live forever.

Murder sensibilities and let them walk
As goblins of deathless peace,
Forsaking their ghoulish dance of pain and sensitive death.
Painful sensations shall change
Into eternal sensations of joy.
The boundaries of sensibility shall be broken
And the kingdom of infinite happiness shall reign.

No more the body diving into the sea,
Or swallowed by the sepulcher of volcanoes,
Shall pant for breath, or cry with pain;
All agents of destruction
Shall change into angelic servitors of eternal happiness.
The body shall cry no more with pain,
But with eternal bliss.
For body is the shadow of God--
His shadow in the body immortal. (Continued)

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, bless me that only the architects of proper, living food cells pass by the gates of my lips to help build Thy temple of health.

INFLUENCE OF DIET UPON HEALTH AND DISPOSITION

The kind of food you eat has a great effect on the development of a good or a bad disposition. It is not easy to have a good disposition if you are ill, and you are made ill mostly by eating the wrong food; so study carefully the subject of food as related to your particular needs.

The body requires certain elements for its sustenance, but a good many people omit at least some of these elements from their diet every day. That is the reason why disease has uncontrolled sway everywhere. God did not create disease. Man creates it through continued wrong living. A stucco covering on a house loses some of its constituent ingredients through the deteriorating influence of the weather. So also in the body, cells are constantly decaying, and for that reason the body house needs proper repairing with the right kind of food materials for new cell growth and maintenance.

Every day the tissues should be supplied with the right kind of body-building materials. In plastering a house, if you mix less than enough lime in the sand, or just make a plaster of sand and water and smooth it on your walls, in a short time the plaster will begin to fall off, although at first you may not have noticed anything wrong with its appearance. Similarly, our bodies decay when not "plastered" with the right kind of blood containing the correct kind and quantity of body-building elements. The body begins to lose vigor, the tissues become flabby, the skin begins to wrinkle, and the cells begin to lose their building power. So you should be extremely careful to arrange your breakfast, lunch, and dinner in such a way that you can always be sure you are giving the body the proper food substances. As it is important to introduce the right food into the system, it is still more important to develop and maintain the God-given powers of digestion, oxygenation, chemicalization, elimination, crystallization, metabolism, and assimilation.

Therefore in connection with food hygiene consider two things:

- a) selection of proper food materials;
- b) awakening of vital forces by proper exercise.

The following information is based on the finding of diet authorities and the teachings of the Hindu yogis.

All the proper food materials may be classified under the following main headings: proteins, fats, carbohydrates, water, mineral salts, and vitamins. Your food during the day should consist of adequate proportions of these elements. Examples of foods in these groups, and the foods that offer specific nutritive values, are given below:

PROTEINS consist of highly complex combinations of amino acids containing chiefly carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, and sulphur. Protein may be animal or vegetable, and is needed in the construction of all living cells. Sources of animal protein are meat, fish, milk, cheese, and eggs. Vegetable proteins are found in protein flour, legumes, and nuts.

If you are used to eating meat, fish, and poultry as your chief protein source, aim for little or no meat in the diet. If you believe your system demands it, have lamb, chicken, or fish, occasionally. The high protein value of these foods is offset by their deteriorating effect on the body; hence it is better to depend on other sources such as cheese, eggs, milk, etc., for this vitally necessary food element.

FATS are energy producing and consist of oily matter found in vegetable and animal foods. These lubricate the cells and are extremely necessary for oiling the joints and limbs to prevent wear and uncomfortable friction. Vegetable fats are found in olive oil, corn oil, nuts (nut oils), legumes (peanut and soy bean oils), and avocados; animal fats are found in butter, cream, lard, and fatty meats.

CARBOHYDRATES are used as fuel, and consist of compounds of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, including sugar, starch, and cellulose. They are found in grain products, potatoes, legumes (peas and beans), corn, winter squash, tapioca, honey, sugar, sweet fruits.

WATER is the carrier which transports food elements to the cells and carries away waste products.

MINERAL SALTS have great tissue-building powers. They are found in all fruits and vegetables, especially leafy vegetables.

VITAMINS regulate various metabolic processes and are essential to the nutrition of vertebrates. Vitamins are abundantly present in all raw fruit and vegetables. In this form all the valuable properties of the vitamins enter right into your blood without being lost. Light steaming is sometimes advisable for vegetables, but remember that Nature is the best cook. She prepares all vegetables and fruits with ultraviolet rays and distilled water.

VALUABLE FOODS FOR THE BODY Tomatoes, grapefruit, bananas, raw spinach, unsulphured figs, carrots, apples, lemons, oranges, nuts, butter, whole wheat bread, olive oil, nuts or nut butters, lettuce, dates, eggs, milk, and cream.

- BLOOD-BUILDING AND PURIFYING FOODS** Tomato juice, and lemon or lime juice. Also orange and grapefruit juice. Lemon is the best disinfectant. It kills many germs in the stomach.
- BONE-BUILDING FOODS** Milk, cottage cheese, coconut, marrow, squash, pineapple, and nuts.
- LUBRICATING FOODS** Olive oil, almond butter, nut margarine, nut butters, cream, and butter. Not more than one tablespoon of olive oil should be taken daily for lubricating the body joints. The use of too much olive oil in salads makes them greasy and indigestible.
- BRAIN FOODS** All forms of nuts, milk, and fish.
- NERVE FOODS** Almond milk--a tablespoon of finely ground almonds with a glass of water; other ground nuts, with orange juice; diluted buttermilk (half water and half buttermilk). Iced lemon or lime and sugar solution, not too sour or too sweet, as follows:
- YOGIC NERVE DRINK:** To a glass of cool water, add juice from one-half fresh lime, and sugar. The sugar and lime taste must be evenly balanced. Always add crushed ice. This is one of the favorite drinks of the yogis, and has a particular spiritual vibration.
- HEALING FOODS AND SELF-CONTROL FOR SKIN BEAUTY** Feeding the skin pores with fresh pure cream or using coconut milk (fresh from shell) on face, hands, and arms just before retiring, has been found wonderfully effective in healing facial scars brought on by measles, smallpox, and other diseases.
- Overindulgence in the use of sex energy will destroy the beauty of the skin; the greater the self-control, the greater will be the beauty of the skin and the loveliness of the face.
- PROPORTION-PRESERVING DIETARY RULE** Do not drink too much water or other liquids (6-8 glasses a day). Drink very little liquid with meals. Eating too much at one meal, followed by lack of exercise, destroys the shapeliness of the body. Avoid an excess of starch and sugar, or of greasy, fried foods. It is easy to eat, lured by taste, but it will be hard to get rid of accumulated fat, which destroys energy. The heart is known to be kept in better condition by keeping the body thin; the less flesh, the less strain on the heart.
- ORGAN-BUILDING FOODS** Drinking goat's milk or carrot juice, and eating fresh cottage cheese, or raw carrots have been found to strengthen the eyes. Eating sparingly of starchy foods, and eating raw foods almost entirely strengthens the ears. Drinking goat's milk and

eating goat's cheese are said to benefit the lungs. The stomach is sometimes helped by raw food, or slightly steamed vegetables without salt or spices. A glass of one lemon or lime diluted in warm water, without sugar, and drunk alone, is known to be very good for the liver, spleen, intestines, and kidneys. Lemon juice taken daily is known to disinfect the physical organs. The acid in the lemon destroys undesirable germs that get into the body.

POISON-EJECTING FOODS Under proper medical supervision, drinking only unsweetened fruit juice for one day a week, or drinking only juice for two or three days in succession once in two months, will eliminate much poison from the system. Use a suitable "natural" laxative during a juice fast.

Avoid foods made with white flour, as it acts like glue in the intestines and obstructs the expulsion of bodily waste materials. Rough food, such as bran, is very good to free yourself of constipation IF your intestinal tract is not easily irritated. Remember, constipation is the most dangerous disease.

VITALITY- AND MIND-STIMULATING FOODS By deriving physical energy more and more from food sources whose vital properties are pure in nature, you can help yourself to develop spiritual qualities of body and mind. Bananas, nuts, butter, milk, cream, and fresh and dried fruits are such foods. Vitality may be developed by eating tomatoes, nuts, orange juice, almonds, goat's milk, cottage cheese, whole grain products, and fresh and dried fruits.

Last of all, remember that the earlier Lessons on recharging the body battery are given to help you to awaken the life force in each organ. By practicing the stomach exercise, for example, you will stimulate the secretion of the digestive juices, and this will improve your digestion. By properly awakening the cosmic energy in each organ as taught in the Recharging Exercises, you provide the greatest opportunity for the proper food to be converted into proper energy, as befits the human body temple.

SUPPLEMENTARY THOUGHTS ON PROVIDING ENERGY FOR THE BODY

The future food of man will be various rays of cosmic energy. Cosmic rays, electrons, atoms, and air will be drawn in through different openings of the body.

If one constantly keeps his mind concentrated upon the point between the eyebrows (at the Christ Consciousness center) and sees there the spiritual eye and commands it to recharge the body with strength, it will do so. If this were practiced, we would cease to grow old.

Highly advanced yogis can draw energy from the cerebrum and medulla

oblongata by connecting the tip of the big tongue with the "little tongue" (uvula).

Energy may be drawn from the sun by covering the whole body with a piece of thick blue silk or a blanket and keeping the medulla oblongata exposed to the sun. Concentrate upon the back of the head and feel it getting warmer and warmer. Feel the energy being stored in the brain and distributed through the body.

Take a sunbath and concentrate deeply upon the sunbathed surface of the body, drinking the sunshine in through every pore. Concentration upon the sun rays gives one hundred times greater results than taking a sunbath absent-mindedly.

Sit upright in a chair. Close your eyes. Expel the breath quickly, but start inhaling very slowly through the nostrils, thinking that your brain, lungs, heart, spine, stomach, abdomen, thighs, legs, arms, and so forth, are being filled with air. You can also inhale quickly and fill the whole body with the atomic power in the oxygen.

AFFIRMATION

O Heavenly Father, O Cosmic Mother,
My body cells are made of light,
My fleshly cells are made of Thee
They are perfect, for Thou art perfect;
They are Spirit, for Thou art He;
They are immortal, for Thou art living.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DANCING TO THE BLISS PIPINGS--Part 4 (Conclusion)

By Paramahansa Yogananda

And when death shall come and make me deaf
I will listen to the voice of my Beloved.
When death shall come and congeal my breath
I shall breathe the fragrance of His presence.
And when death shall still my tongue,
I shall drink His Ambrosia,
And when death shall obliterate my sight,
I shall behold His omniscient light
Enthroned in everything.
And when death shall freeze my blood and sense of touch,
I shall embrace the warmth of His omnipresent feet everywhere.

When my eyes will not see earthly things any longer,
The light of my vision shall penetrate into the heart
Of all things and photograph their mysteries.
When my ears shall hear no longer,
I shall hear the whisperings of all things past, present, and future.
When I shall smell earthly aromas no longer,
I shall be like the Hound of Heaven
Tracing the scent of all secret things.
When I shall taste no longer,
I shall remember all things that I tasted
Through all the mouths that ever lived now, or will live hereafter.

When I shall feel no longer with this body,
I shall feel with my Cosmic body.
The secret touch of all things, here and afar--
The bubbles on the surface of all seas,
Of the feelings of the bubbles of universes
Floating on the sea of space.

PRAYER

I care not what my religion or race or nationality be, so long as I win my way to Thee!

May I not wander on labyrinthine paths of religious formalities. O Lord, set Thou my feet on the one royal highway--realization of the Self; the road that leads straight to Thee.

THE SECRET OF RELIGION--Part 1

Men hold many different opinions and beliefs about religion; but in the course of realizing Truth, or God, all will discover--whether they be Hindu, Christian, Moslem, Jew--that true religion, or the actual spiritual experience of God, is the same for all. There is only one truth, though its aspects are myriad; there cannot be two or more conflicting truths. "Mine is the only true religion, the best," is the declaration of many persons. But there should be a standard for judging what is best, just as the standard of quality of the goods determines which store is the best in town, even though all claim that distinction.

The good that formal religion has done through the ages, by reminding people of an ideal, can never be denied. Yet unscientific religion that holds people only through dogmatic reasoning, or fear, or emotion, has caused the tyranny of the caste system, for example, in the East; and of the class system, Spanish Inquisition, and the burning of martyrs in the West.

HOW TO AVOID
BIGOTRY
IN RELIGION

Like slaves of yore, religion is shackled and imprisoned in the dark house of dogma. A great war on ignorance should be launched in order to free the bond-slave religion from the hands of superstition. Primal religion was born in the womb of man's unscientific seeking for the origin of the mysteries of his being, of future life, of nature's violent phenomena, of God. A few real prophets with intuitive wisdom have risen during the ages, exhorting people to believe in their doctrines, but science failed to support their doctrines by actual investigation.

Religious bigotry based on untested beliefs, and differences between the races have kept Orientals and Occidentals, brother and brother, divided. We often concentrate upon ridiculing each other, and that is why we do not see the better qualities in each other. Ignorance is shared fifty-fifty between the East and the West. When ignorant people of the East and the West meet, they often quarrel and disagree, owing to their blind self-laudation. But when wise people of the East and the West meet, they agree that neither is everything perfect nor everything bad in their respective hemispheres. To develop a perfect

civilization, we should combine the best of the national traits in East and West. Orientals and Occidentals should remember that both are made in the image of God; that in all nationalities flow the same few types of blood; that all people are children of Adam and Eve.

Bigotry leads away from truth; wisdom is the portal through which all races may pass into the one kingdom of truth. The reason that dogmatic religion is not universally practiced either at school or at home is because it is not scientific; its principles have not been put to the acid test of universal experience. When clergies become bigoted, religion should be taken out of their hands and given over to unprejudiced scientists who would try to find the best method of living for developing a race of Christlike men--the real supermen. When dogma is sifted out, we can have a religion that will inspire us not only on Sunday mornings, but be supremely useful to us each day in rejuvenating the body, strengthening the mind, and recharging the spirit with unlimited wisdom and happiness.

PUTTING THE CHURCH ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

The method of some churches has been to hold their members by inbred churchgoing habits, or by extra lectures and musical or festive programs. Such pleasure is only outward stimulation that can better be supplied by the theaters and other pleasure agencies whose business it is. A church cannot compete with professional entertainment; nor can it long hold members merely by repeating the same untested statements in sermons, even though they are continuously presented in new, interesting ways, and accompanied by good musical programs.

The role of the church is to offer a distinct, individual, and characteristic form of social service by showing the practical, workable way to peace, enlightenment, and spiritual strength.

Instead of preaching untested dogmas and urging people to believe, the church should be a university of experimental application of spiritual laws. In India, in little secluded hermitages unidentified by any religious trademark, real spiritual teachers who live the life are experimenting with the worthwhile effects of the application of spiritual laws in the lives of true seekers. They are not interested in attracting the curiosity seekers who float from one teaching to another and practice none.

The churches, instead of arguing with one another about the infallibility of their individual dogmas, should get together and find the real meaning of life; through following psychoethical laws they should discover the universal standard of the art of living that can really uplift and help their people, daily, in every aspect of life.

Church funds, instead of being almost wholly tied up in ornamental edifices, often with heavy mortgages, could better be employed in inducing the greatest

scientists of the East and the West to make thorough investigations of practical techniques for making the body and mind of man perfect, harmonious, ever strong, more quickly evolved, better, and happier--for making each man a perfect expression of the perfect soul that dwells within him.

One moon gives more light than all the stars. Every church does some good, but all churches should meet together in universal bonds of understanding and become one "Church of God." If we love all churches the same, then we shall find God. We should have fellowship, not for self, but for Self-realization, to know in body, mind, and soul that God talks to us. A new denomination asserting new imaginary ideas about truth is not necessary; what is necessary is that all religionists meet in order to discuss the various spiritual beliefs and ideas about truth and test them by experiencing the Self. The proving ground of all religious truth is within man, in his experience of the Self.

THE HUNTER WHO BECAME A SAINT

Once upon a time a cruel hunter named Nishada marauded the jungles of Bengal in India, ruthlessly killing birds "just for fun." Since in those days there were no hunting restrictions, he gleefully littered the forest with dead and dying birds.

Those birds that managed to elude the gorgon gaze of Nishada's guns became so intuitively wise that they could hear even the faintest sound of his approach, and escape to safety. When Nishada found that he had so frightened the birds that he could no longer even approach them, he began shooting at random through the thick jungle foliage. But the wary winged ones kept out of range, and Nishada, his cartridges spent, walked dejectedly on until finally he emerged from the jungle. The sight that greeted his vision there stirred fresh hope in his breast. An orange-robed saint was standing knee-deep in a nearby lake; many kinds of game birds were perched trustfully on his head, shoulders, and hands, while others peacefully floated in a circle around him.

An idea suddenly flashed across the mind of the hunter: "If I put on an orange robe every day and pose as a harmless saint, then I can create enough trust in the birds so that they will perch on me and swarm all around me. Then, at my convenience, I can club to death quite a few. In that way I can get even with the birds for flying away at the sight of me and depriving me of the pleasure of killing them."

So Nishada stood motionless behind a tree and watched the saint feed and then sing a sermon to his feathered audience--just as Saint Francis of Assisi used to do. Awhile later, after his bath in the lake, this peaceful devotee of the Lord of Love started back to his hermitage, while many bright-winged creatures circled above and called to him.

The next day the hunter, dressed in an orange robe, concealed several clubs, knives, and guns on his person and calmly walked into the lake. To his great glee, the very same game birds who used to fly away at the sight of him now fearlessly perched all over his body and swarmed around him like little children. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

He was happy beyond dreams, but every time he made up his mind to pounce upon the birds and strangle them, he found he couldn't do it. He didn't have the heart to betray the innocent birds who so confidently sought shelter with him.

Then Nishada began to reflect: "I have been a malicious hunter, feared and shunned by the birds, but behold, the magic of the orange robe of a saint, although it covers a wolf in sheep's clothing, has nevertheless led the birds to trust even my hateful self. If the outer garb of a saint can create so much trust and confidence even in birds, how much wholesome influence and trust a real saint, plus the orange robe, could exert and create in people!"

Thinking this, the hunter threw his clubs, knives, and guns into the water and walked away, determined to become a real saint. The faithful birds, who followed him as long as they could, finally reluctantly departed.

This hunter saint was known to wade daily in the lake, feeding the birds and singing to them. He made so many friends that all the watery seats of the lake were occupied by his audience of feathery folk. He was happy to see the difference between the life of a hunter and that of a saint. After making friends with birds, he became a great teacher who attracted all kinds of human friends as well. Then he served lovingly and long with the song of truth welling from the depths of his heart.

We have seen that the wicked Nishada, even though he began merely by cloaking himself in the garb of goodness, ultimately became good. Do not forget that even though you cannot overcome your inner weakness all at once, it is all right for you to wear the garb of goodness if you are really sincerely trying to be good. It is better to imitate goodness than to imitate wickedness. Even a person who only imitates good actions gets a chance to smell the alluring fragrance of goodness; whereas one who even hypocritically imitates evil, contacts the contaminating polecat odor of evil. Of course, to deliberately try to deceive people is a great blasphemy against God and yourself; but if you are sincerely trying to improve yourself, do not be disturbed if people call you a hypocrite just because a few of your failings have been discovered.

We should not expect too much from anyone, nor should we always expect perfect results even from one who consistently does his best. Even if one falls down from the grace of goodness, he is safe if he tries his utmost to again become good. Such people are far better than those who pretend to be good in order to deceive others. Why should those who are trying to improve, even if

they make mistakes, be labeled as hypocrites?

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). To label anyone as bad or as a hypocrite when he is really doing his best in spite of his failings, is a great blasphemy against God. The Lord not only rejoices when His good children come back to His home of wisdom; it gladdens Him even more when His naughty, prodigal children return home to Him from their truant wanderings.

AFFIRMATION

I am a child of God, even as Jesus and the masters are. I shall not display an ignorant mentality. I shall sparkle with wisdom so that I may now receive His light fully, I shall appear as a child of God, which I always was inwardly, being made in His image.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE UNITE TO WORSHIP THEE, O SPIRIT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

To worship Thee, O Spirit, with a myriad living thoughts of devotion we have built a universal shrine--domeless, immeasurable. In reverence niches we place lustrous wisdom lamps from all temples, tabernacles, viharas, pagodas, mosques, and churches.

The commingled incense of our divine yearnings soars in spirals from the bowl of our hearts. In the unutterable language of love we pour out to Thee our paeans of praise.

Within our silenced beings the mighty organ of Aum plays the canticle of all aspirations, the lament of all tears, and the swelling shout of all joys.

In this wall-less soul structure we, Thy children, are united. We feel the grace of Thy pleasure, O Father of All! Amen, Hum, Amin, Aum.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Our One Father, make us feel that the diverse religions are branches of Thy one tree of truth. Bless us, that we may enjoy the intuition tested, ripe, luscious fruits of self-knowledge, hanging from all the branches of manifold scriptural teachings.

THE SECRET OF RELIGION--Part 2

SCIENCE AND
RELIGION

Science is progressive, constantly winning new inventions through the application of the laws of reason. Religion too should apply scientific methods of reasoning and experimentation, and not rely only upon beliefs. Would we not consider it unscientific of the scientists to try to gain new knowledge of Nature's secrets just by praying for it? We know that the reason the scientist gets results is because he applies the laws of impartial reasoning, and experiments, by application, with the universal laws of nature.

It is good that religious groups and individual ministers have become more scientific-minded. Churches should live abreast of the times. Their members should apply the psychology of experiment in the laboratory of the church and test the efficacy of faith and of spiritual laws on human beings. If scientists do not get new knowledge by blind prayer, how can the serious religionist expect to discover laws of life by blind supplication?

Dharma means "those immutable principles of self-discipline and right action that protect man permanently from the threefold suffering of physical disease, mental unhappiness, and spiritual ignorance." The discovery and application of these principles, which is the purpose of religion, have not yet been considered seriously by Western scientists as a subject for lifelong research and practical scientific study. Yet such a study would reveal the origin, end, and purpose of human life on earth. In India great yogis have discovered through their religious experimentations the practical means of destroying by the roots the threefold suffering of man--body, mind, and soul--so that there is no possibility of recurrence.

These same religious experimentations also have given India's yogis knowledge since ancient times of scientific truths now being "discovered" in the West by pragmatic scientific research. There is a definite need today for scientific religious experimentation through the yogic methods of India; with all the modern inventions and comforts of present-day Western civilization, man's life is still uncertain, unsafe. He does not know what is going to happen to him at any time, whether he is going to be happy or unhappy, or perchance

die without having fulfilled his desires. Unlike the yogi, he has not discovered how to destroy permanently physical disease, mental inharmonies, and soul ignorance.

UNSCIENTIFIC RELIGION

The world has seen ruthless inquisitions and burning of people at the stake for their religious convictions, all in the name of the Bible, although Jesus taught such tolerance that he said his followers should offer the other cheek if one cheek was hit. Cruel wars have been fought under the guise of religious crusades in the name of God. Unscientific religion expresses itself even today in some Hindus' calling Christians "heathen" and in some Christians' returning the "compliment"; or in an orthodox Brahmin's refusal to eat with a pariah (outcast) when his scriptures say: "He is a man of realization who looks upon an elephant, a dog, a pariah, and a Brahmin in the same way."

Yet there has seldom been, except in India, any truly scientific research on pragmatic, life-molding, universal religion. About the nature of water and electricity all scientists are agreed, because they have thoroughly investigated the constituents and properties of electricity and water; but few are sure whether Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, or Christianity, show the right solution to the problems of life and the way to ultimate salvation.

God made us angels of energy, encased in solids--currents of life dazzling through a material bulb of flesh. But through concentration on the frailties and fragility of the body bulb, we have forgotten how to feel the immortal, indestructible properties of the eternal life energy within the mutable flesh. Thought is immortal. Even protoplasm is immortal. Everything is indestructible, even in the world of matter. Then why this illusion of mortality and death?

Religious effort should be applied to the conscious conversion of the human body into its constituent element, intelligent life energy. Then we will know the meaning of this truth: "Man shall not live by bread (solids, liquids) alone, but by every word (vibratory energy) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (medulla oblongata)" (Matthew 4:4). It is not food but the energy in the human body that converts food into energy that is the direct source of life.

On that day when man will know how to dematerialize his body, or convert it into its constituent electrons and basic consciousness, and how to materialize it again into organized living physical flesh--as Christ did, and as great Hindu Yogis do-- he will be free. He will suffer no more from collisions with other forms of matter--accidents resulting in pain, disease, death, and disintegration.

Listening to the muffled cries of millions of people stricken with a consciousness of disease, mental suffering, and soul ignorance, let us cast aside

party prejudices and formalities; let us unite our hearts to fight ignorance-- the great satan of all religions. Let science, instead of devising more articles of impermanent material comfort for human beings, be engaged in making man himself invulnerable to the destruction arising from his inventions, such as death by airplane crashes, electricity, and automobile accidents. Let him become conscious of his own powers of superiority over disease, pain, drowning, unconsciousness, and tragic or premature death. Let science discover and teach the method whereby we may consciously leave our bodies, so that we pass from this world to the next consciously and without struggle and pain. Let us separate the dross of superstition from real religion by burning it in the furnace of scientific investigation and spiritual realization.

All true scriptures, such as the Christian Bible and the Bhagavad-Gita (the Hindu Bible), deal with the three factors of human existence: the material, the mental, and the spiritual. The scriptures are intended to benefit body, mind, and soul. The study and application of scriptural truth is worthwhile and helpful to all classes of people. Although both material and psychological interpretations of the scriptures are necessary, the scriptural writers point out that the spiritual interpretations are the most important. A materially, intellectually, or scientifically proficient man may not necessarily make a perfect success of his life; whereas a spiritual man who is healthy, mentally alert, contented, and truly prosperous--with all-satisfying wisdom--is really successful: he is a happy man.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The unassailable proof of the existence of God may only be found within, by deeply, daily practicing some right method of meditation suggested by a God-realized guru. Self-realization will not come through unexamined beliefs. God's light cannot shine through closed doors of blind sentiment. Through the open windows of logical seeking, God may be found. Satisfaction in a belief about God without actually experiencing Him is death to wisdom and divine acquaintanceship. Do not remain idle, hidden behind the cloak of formal religion, and thus cease making a real effort to know God in this life. Do not die in ignorance; die in wisdom--to live forever in God.

The whole-hearted practice of meditation as taught in these Lessons brings deep Bliss. This ever-new Bliss is not born of desire. It manifests itself the moment all restlessness and other undesirable qualities melt away by the magic command of your inner, intuition-born calmness. Manifest this serenity always. It is not an abstract mental state. When Bliss comes over you, you will recognize it as a conscious, intelligent, universal Being to whom you may appeal. This is the surest proof that God is eternal, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss.

INSPIRATION

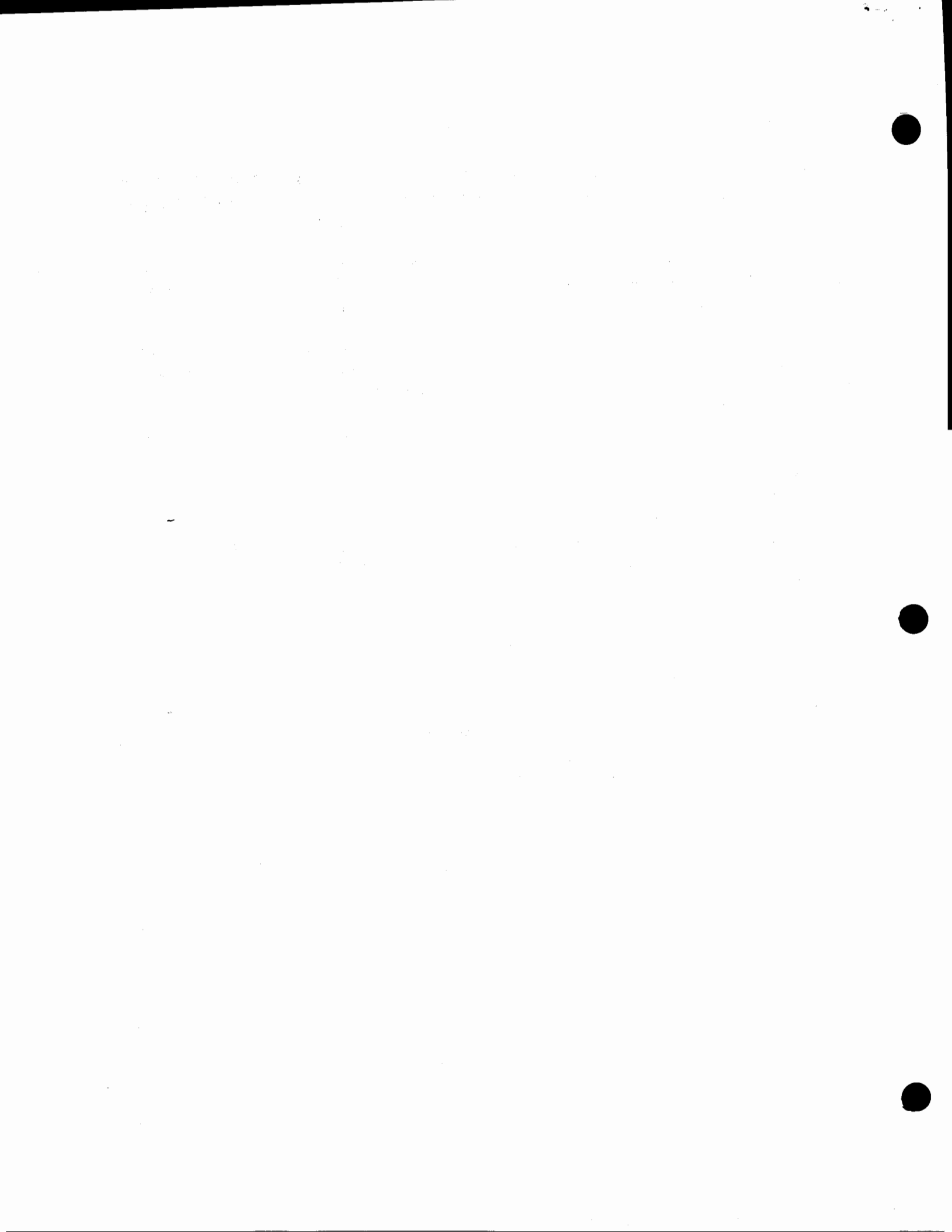
O sleeping image of God, wake up! Make the determination and the effort to know the right law that will enable you to keep your most important engagement, with yourself--to know your Self. Do not say: "I will meditate tomorrow." That tomorrow may never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate deeper tomorrow, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Do not let bad habits and paltry, useless vanity-engagements crowd out your daily appointment with God.

The world lures you into creating bad habits, but the world will not stand responsible for your wrong actions springing from those habits. Why then give all your time to the world? Reserve even an hour a day for actual God-realization. Doesn't the Giver of the world itself, of your family, possessions --everything--deserve one twenty-fourth part of your time?

Some people do all things imperfectly because of carelessness, inertia, or lack of sustained purpose. Seek knowledge from a true guru. Decide upon the best and quickest method of meditation as taught by the great saints and God-realized gurus of India, and then meditate deeper and deeper every day, praying to God with a burning heart, "Reveal Thyself!" Continue to do this day after day, month after month, and year after year, in good faith. One day you will certainly attain God-consciousness.

AFFIRMATION

My highest ambition is to
establish a temple of silence in
every soul I meet.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TASTE GOD HONEYCOMBED IN EVERYTHING

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The little centuries of human years are but days, nay, but a few hours, in God's consciousness. Awaken! Arise from dreams of littleness to the realization of the vastness within you. God is hidden in everything.

Come! I will show you, my beloved, that you are a spark of the Eternal Fire that is drinking with countless mouths the Bliss-Nectar honeycombed in the heart of all created things.

PRAYER

O Eternal Fire, Thou art shooting little individual flames of soul-consciousness through the pores of the great burner of Thy Universal Consciousness. Thou dost then appear many, limited, small, divided. Help me to realize that Thou art the One Eternal Flame.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE YOUR ONENESS WITH GOD

The vaguest of all human conceptions is man's idea of God. Researchers on food, finance, health, and family relationships have to be very definite to gain your approval. But have you ever thought how quickly you are satisfied with your idea of God? You see a little work of God in nature; you hear talk about God; you read scriptures about God; but did you ever set out with a definite aim or intention actually to verify your beliefs about God or to find out for yourself what God is?

God is invisible, yet He manifests in the visible universe. God is everything--not just one thing. One wave is not the whole sea--the sea and the waves together constitute the ocean. Thus all manifested creation and the unmanifested pure Cosmic Consciousness together constitute Spirit.

God is the ocean of infinity oscillating with waves of finitude. We are waves of human consciousness spumed from the ocean of His consciousness. The only way to destroy human imperfections is to unite the temporarily isolated human consciousness with omnipresent God's consciousness. A human wave apart from the ocean of God is miserable. Subject to Maya--the law of change--humans are born, live, and die. But when a human wave discovers by Self-realization that he is really the Sea, when he knows that the Sea has become the wave of his consciousness, he understands that he may pass through many changing conditions, but the wave of his consciousness will never be lost or annihilated.

It is by understanding that life continues after death that we can unite our consciousness with the cosmic consciousness of God and find the cord of one life, one law, one rhythm, and one wisdom uniting us all. To seek world unity just for utilitarian purposes may give us a temporary peaceful life on earth by preventing wars and other tragedies, but unless we feel that we are children of the one Father, God, and that we are to continue our march beyond the portals of the grave toward the mansion of immortality, we cannot seek real world unity. It is only when we feel that we are prodigal immortals on earth, and that our gift of discrimination must be used to find a common true art of living, that we make the effort to unite all wisdom in our hearts and to realize that all of us are world brothers marching hand in hand back to the mansion of God. It is no use seeking world unity if there is no God, no life after death, and if all men are

not brothers, bound by one cord of divine life. All persons who desire to bring about world unity should seek a mutual understanding of the meaning of life and death.

Nothing except God can satisfy you or wipe away your miseries completely. Your soul, a separate part, must find the Whole to be complete. Your longing for satisfaction must find the perfect satisfaction in God; your desire for knowledge must quench its thirst by drinking the wisdom of God; your peace can be complete only with the peace of God; your existence can be immortal only with the immortality of God; your consciousness can be unceasing only when united with Cosmic Consciousness; your joy can be unending, ever entertaining joy only when combined with the joy of God.

The goal of life of all beings consists in acquiring peace, satisfaction, safety, conscious knowledge, and immortality. In these longings for perfection that lie buried within us, lies the image of God within us. These perfect images of God are trying to manifest themselves in human life.

To know God, you must experience Him within your own consciousness. The best way to know God is to practice the quickest methods of realization found and used by the great masters and yogis of India.

DIVERSITY AND UNITY Diversity is the law of nature. Unity leads to the Infinite. By discord and diversity, we make the world a boiling pot of sorrow, wars, and death. Ideal living that unites souls with truth is the way to happiness, peace, and immortality. Individual, industrial, and political selfishness, explosive feelings of race superiority, and the excluding commercialism of religious dogmas have kept races divided and torn by wars, resulting in economic depressions, ignorance, and mass misery.

Developing a combination of the spiritually efficient qualities and the scientific or materially efficient qualities that we see represented in the lives of men is an art of living that will produce--in any nationality--the highest type of well-rounded man. By adopting principles of right thought and action that develop the physical and the spiritual side of life equally and harmoniously, man becomes superman, complete, with balanced physical, mental, moral, and spiritual qualities.

HEREDITY AND ACQUIRED TRAITS People build their aspirations and form their desires according to prenatal and postnatal influences. Not only heredity but national, social, and family characteristics, tastes, and habits mold the life of a child. In the beginning, children are about the same everywhere; but, as they grow older and family and social characteristics begin to exercise their influence, each child begins to reveal national and racial traits.

**NO NATION IS
COMPLETE
IN ITSELF**

God is trying to evolve the art of right living by expressing His truth through a combination of particular civilizations, mentalities, and nationalities. No nation is complete in itself. A collection and absorption of the best in all nationalities would supply the best information on the art of living. It is important to note that Jesus and the master minds of India not only attained the best qualities of thought and conduct expressed in all civilizations from the earliest era to the present time, but they manifested the highest ideals embodied in all religions. The art of right living can be found in a study of the best in all nationalities, plus a study of the individual lives of great saints.

FOLLOW TRUTH

Follow fearlessly the Truth whenever you perceive it. Love your family and country deeply so that you may learn to love and serve people of all nations more, and learn to find God in all men regardless of race or religion. While honoring God in all man-made temples, learn to worship and contact Him in the temple of deepest silence. Practice the highest methods of scientific concentration and meditation in the morning and at night. Do not be a slave to the senses and their temporary pleasures. Learn to make the senses serve you, and find lasting spiritual joys.

The entire process of evolution in nature and man suggests the necessity of quelling the storm of ignorance in order to effect the reunion of the delusion-projected wave of human life with the one ocean of Spirit.

**HOW TO BUILD
WORLD UNITY**

By specific but limited methods the scientists, politicians, businessmen, and social workers unconsciously and indirectly are trying to pave the path to world unity. The exponents of scientific religions, philosophy, and ethics of human conduct try consciously to garner the blossoms of truth from the gardens of all forms of wisdom, and to decorate human souls with a floral costume of superior qualities. Thus prepared they may enter the paradise of all-freeing ultimate wisdom.

Through her golden inventions, science is helping man directly by providing material comforts. Indirectly, that same science is helping man to correct some of the misconceptions of dogmatic religions and to explain scientifically the many miracles found in nature and spoken of in religion. Science observes that when the vibration of a pound of water is changed by cold, the water solidifies into ice which, instead of mixing as water would, or sinking as an ordinary solid would, floats on top of water. This phenomenon suggests to the scientific imagination that when Jesus walked on the water, he changed the rate of atomic vibration of his body, by use of psychological methods known to saints and wise men; and thus enabled his body to stay above the surface of the water instead of sinking into it.

In order to bring all humanity into the mansion of unity and universal happiness, all universally useful material, moral, and religious sciences--industrial,

political, social, metaphysical--should combine their efforts. They could establish ideal standards for international laws of hygiene, peace, prosperity, and education, and perfect moral codes and applied psychological and spiritual laws that would enable each of the fifteen hundred million human inhabitants of this earth to become an all-round, perfect world citizen.

Forgetting your little isolated life and this little body of yours, consider yourself, henceforth, a part of the human family, a wave of universal life, and meditate on the fact that you are the Ocean of Life. Close your eyes and meditate; see your consciousness spread through stars, through every part of the sky and even in minute electrons; see your consciousness as a wave of that all-pervading sea of Cosmic Consciousness; forget your family tree and nationality; acknowledge yourself as a member of the human family. Remember and always feel that you are one of God's children, and that all other souls are His children.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Man must realize that he really is not a fleshly being. Nor should we categorize ourselves as Hindus or Americans or any other conception we may have of ourselves that is limiting and sense-bound. It is wrong of us to say that we are mortals when we are essentially made of immortal stuff. It is truth that we are gods, and it is error to call ourselves weaklings. Only by realizing our oneness with God may we completely break our self-created imaginary limitations of accidents, failure, lack, disease, and death. God has everything--health, efficiency, wisdom, love, joy--and to be one with Him is to have, as His own child, access to everything that He has.

THE MOST HUMBLE GOD

Ages ago, Saint Bhrigu of India had a desire to find out the most humble form God had ever taken. He wandered all over the Himalayan mountains visiting its holy places in search of some incarnation of God whom he could accept as a guru. But, since he wished to follow an example of humility, he determined that the god must have this attribute outstandingly. He met many saints, whom he questioned as to where he could find such a guru.

After a strenuous search, he found that all the saints whom he met gave him the names of the same three forms of God--Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu, who was then incarnated as Lord Krishna--and assured him that one of them was sure to be the right one.

Saint Bhrigu heard that Brahma could create anything, Shiva could destroy anything, and Krishna (Vishnu) could preserve anything from annihilation; for they represented the creative, destructive, and preservative principles active in all creation.

Bewildered as to who was the humblest and greatest of the three, Saint Bhrigu conceived a plan to test them. He himself had great powers, gained through meditation, which he now employed to leave his body and travel on the astral plane, where he succeeded in locating God in the form of Brahma.

Without any ceremony of introduction, and in a very disrespectful manner, he began to criticize the god: "Hey, Brahma, what is the matter with you? Why don't you stand up and greet me?"

Brahma was astonished at the audacity of this mortal and retorted: "Do you know to whom you are talking?" "Yes," replied Bhrigu, "of course! I know that I am talking to that despicable god who is the creator of vermin, plagues, mosquitoes, diseases, criminals, and all ugly things in creation. Why don't you reform and create only good things?"

Brahma said threateningly: "Get back to earth before I convert you to stone by the gorgon gaze of my will." Saint Bhrigu laughed and turned to leave, saying: "Oh, no, you won't. You cannot make me into a stone, for God and I are one!" At these words, Brahma awoke from his error and apologized. Then Saint Bhrigu said: "I forgive you, Brahma, but I am disappointed not to have found in you what I wanted to see."

Then Saint Bhrigu repaired to Shiva, who was just getting ready to meditate on all the things beyond their prime that must be brought to an end. As soon as Bhrigu's gaze fell upon Shiva's form, the saint shouted rudely: "Hey, Shiva, you Cosmic Killer, why don't you stop shattering worlds, murdering innocent babies, and inventing ingenious death-dealing devices? Why don't you cease destroying the beautiful and useful things and beings of the earth and get busy annihilating all the wicked things?"

Shiva could not believe his ears--that a mortal man like Saint Bhrigu could be so reckless and free with his speech. He thundered: "Quiet! or I will reduce you to ashes with the burning magnetism of my spiritual eye." Saint Bhrigu derisively retorted: "Fine use you will make of your spiritual eye! Go ahead, I dare you to burn up the God in me!" Shiva remained speechless at the awakening words of Saint Bhrigu, who soon melted away from his sight, saying: "Oh, what a disappointment you are!"

Almost despairing, Saint Bhrigu skeptically looked up the third god, Vishnu, who controlled the preserving principle of the Cosmos. But this time he stayed on earth and sought out the prophet Krishna--in whom Vishnu's great powers were manifesting in a human incarnation. Saint Bhrigu found Lord Krishna sound asleep on a sofa in his palace. Bhrigu stood there watching the halo of peace radiating from the beautiful face of the Divine One. Then, unable to think of any other way to test him, Saint Bhrigu kicked Sri Krishna on the chest, shouting: "You sleeping fool, wake up and see who is here!" Sri Krishna awakened with the sweetest, most undismayed, loving smile. Quickly taking hold

of the kicking foot of Saint Bhrigu, he began to massage it, and said gently, "Ah, my Lord Bhrigu, is your foot hurt?"

Saint Bhrigu, beside himself with simultaneous visitations of remorse and joy, cried out: "I have found him! I have found him! O Prophet Krishna, you are the world's most humble being, even as God is humble. You are the greatest, the most humble form of God. You can teach me. I accept you as my guru. Will you accept me?" And Krishna accepted Bhrigu as his disciple.

AFFIRMATION

Being endowed with free choice, I am a son of God in reality. I have been dreaming that I am a mortal man. I am now awake. The dream of my soul imprisoned in my bodily cage has vanished. I am everything that my Heavenly Father is.



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THE WAVELET --Part 1

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Someday, when I remove the mystery cork
From this bottle of flesh,
I will slip this long-caged, wistful sigh
Of life back into the Ocean of Breath.
Yet, O Mystery, I will tear aside thy long-deluding
Veil, which has hidden from me
The liberating knowledge that the all-solacing
Bliss Sea lay just beneath my life's wave.
Long has this little wavelet been tossed
And buffeted by the storms of rebirth,
Moved from shore to shore, from clod to clod,
Hiding in phosphorescent bosoms of pearls,
Throbbing beneath the subterranean algae,
Or dancing with the amoeba and sea urchins,
Or gliding among the silver-finned flying fish.
Dashing past the bubbles of stars
In the skyey ocean,
Or dancing on the shores of planetary life.
Many times this wavelet tarried for a time
In the heart of the Great Life, and yet,
After a short slumber, mischievous and spritely,
It became truant again, and bounded out
Onto the rocks of shattering sorrow.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

Divine Mother, help me to quicken my evolution by increasing the power of my concentration that I may highly develop my receptivity to Thy divine wisdom.

QUICKENING HUMAN EVOLUTION

Man is a rational spiritual animal. In the beginning of his life he is engrossed mostly in his instinctive animal appetites. That is why children are animal-like in early life. They pass the time in eating, digging, fidgeting, and frisking here and there without any purpose, just like the animals. There are many adults too who are only human automatons; they have never grown mentally. Though they may be fifty or older, they don't have the mentality of a really intelligent child. Such people are animalistic in that they act instinctively rather than according to reason; they can hardly converse intelligently, or plan and live life according to a definite ambition.

The quickening of human evolution is caused by the development of intuition through concentration. Concentration-born intuition directly perceives truth from within. Intuition thus developed can reveal the real nature of substance, and perceive the Noumena behind all phenomena. The usual method of learning by mental conception depends on sense experience and the power of inference, which can only explain the appearance of things. That is why attaining knowledge through the intelligence alone seems an endless task. One lifetime does not provide enough time in which to learn all the mysteries of heaven and earth through the ordinary mediums of mechanical schooling, sense experience, and inferential education. The best way to discover real truth is to use the all-knowing power of intuition given to us by God.

Through intuition you can know any phase of truth correctly and directly without the medium of the senses. If you are not meditating and thus quickening your intuition, you will roam for many incarnations until you have gathered enough intuitional experience to know all truth and thereby become omniscient, as Spirit is. You were created as omniscient as Spirit; you have lost that intuitive power by depending for your knowledge entirely upon your senses and mind. In order to quicken your intuition you should start learning truth from inner meditative experience, and not depend for your knowledge solely upon books and schools.

BY DEVELOPING INTUITION YOU QUICKEN EVOLUTION

The education of one's intuition should not wait for youth or adulthood; it should begin in childhood. If children are accustomed to gaining knowledge only through so-called intellectual smartness, their inner door of intuition is closed by the hand of self-sufficiency; then God and infinite truth remain shut out of

their consciousness. Children should be taught to meditate and concentrate in the same way you have learned to do in the first lessons. As a result of practicing these techniques, children should from early life reveal intuitive faculties by which they grasp knowledge with extraordinary quickness.

Education does not consist in pumping ideas and the contents of books into the brain, but in developing intuition and bringing the hidden memory of all knowledge--already existing in the soul--back to the plane of human consciousness. The proof is that whenever a real truth is told to you for the first time, you think as you grasp its import, "This seems familiar. I feel I already knew this to be true!"

All seemingly new truths are in reality old hidden truths of the soul and of Spirit; they give us joy by becoming familiar to us again. Older people should have learned by their own errors and ought now to endeavor to save children from committing similar errors. This is the greatest way to liberate humanity, using wisdom to bring erring brothers back to the heavenly mansion of joy and final freedom.

By developing intuition, you quicken evolution. Teach children to quicken their own evolution through methods of meditation. To develop intuition within yourself is to establish the omniscient image of God within you; to teach children to develop intuition is to establish God in others, and to teach animals to develop intuition (see story: "My Pet Deer") is to find God in a vaster circle of life. Unless you have found God within yourself and in your family, country, world, in all living creatures, you have not really found Him.

Intuition can be developed in children by teaching them to walk and sit with the spine erect; by teaching them spiritual service; and by teaching them how to feel God as joy in meditation. They should be taught to meditate deeply for half an hour in the morning and again in the evening, sitting with spine erect and practicing calmness, lack of anxiety, and peaceful lovingness.

AS YOU SOW, SO SHALL YOU REAP

You have read the parable of the man who sowed some seeds. A few fell by the wayside and some fell on stones; some seeds were taken away by the birds of the air; other seeds were watered for a little while but later became neglected until lack of water finally destroyed the tiny plants they put forth. But some seeds were sown in fertile ground and were watered faithfully, and then the plants and fruits came, and great was the rejoicing.

Self-realization seeds have been strewn in the soul-soil of students of this path. I hope that these seeds have not fallen by the wayside, nor on stones. ("Stones" are those who disbelieve for the pleasure of it and who are skeptics because they want to be. The skeptic usually knows little and refuses to investigate.) Self-realization seeds have been planted in the garden of your spiritual

reciency, but beware that the birds of the air (your own doubts and bad habits) do not pick them out. If others you meet ridicule you, don't be afraid. Gain unshakable faith by basing your wisdom and spiritual understanding on your own spiritual experience.

The time will come when you will be left alone. You must go from this earth alone, and everyone else will be powerless to help you. Don't forget! Earth-life is only a caravanserai where the soul stops for a while. Don't give importance to it, for we have to leave it sooner or later and move on into the unknown. But we should go handclasped to truth, and so end our miseries and suffering. Understand what life is about. If you practice what has been given to you with utmost determination, you will understand.

When we shall be able to free our souls from all physical entanglements, we shall be like divine gypsies. The ties of civilization that exact our attention bring us nothing but sorrow. But when we shall become like divine gypsies-- free from the body and flesh--we shall live in the eternal kingdom of wisdom, wherein no disease or poverty will ever dare to break our peace, wherein all our questions will be answered. That divine freedom we are all seeking. Our feet bleed with the thorns of worries and desires, yet we walk again on the path of illusion. It is time we retrace our footsteps Home and reach finally that divine Kingdom wherein we shall be free from all suffering and heartaches.

QUICKEN YOUR EVOLUTION BY CONCENTRATION

You can quicken your evolution by increasing the power of concentration. By increasing concentration, you will highly develop your receptivity to wisdom. When you increase your capacity to grasp quickly the meaning and purpose of the problems of life, and to find their solution, then your liberation will be hastened. Do not live the unreasoning animalistic life of ordinary people who do not know anything better than eating, sleeping and multiplying. By evolution out of animalistic life, I mean evolution beyond the plane of mechanical living--of acting like automatons. For adult human automatons and ignorant children both lead unawakened, mechanical lives, almost like animals.

Nevertheless, children and animals are sleeping immortals. You should teach them rightly to quicken their evolution, otherwise they remain helpless, unable to give utterance to their sorrows or desires. The intuition of the human race can be quickly developed only through intuitive meditation, and not by the endless process of formal man-made education.

To lift children to the intuitive plane, to spiritualize human automatons, to transmute any animalistic instincts in yourself and thus quicken your own and animal evolution is a great task. You must first find God in yourself and thus be able to behold Him in all other living creatures. When you can really feel God within and without, you will know that it is God alone who has become everything, and that all created things are God-vibrations.

Expand your love from self-love to family love; then broaden family love into social love; then include in the circle of social love, national love. Then expand the circumference of national love until it becomes international love. Then include within the circle of international love the love of all God's living creatures.

Just as one moon gives more light than all the stars, so, as you develop spiritually in intuitive realization of Truth, or God, you spread more light of good and truth than many ordinary mentalities put together. One Christ was enough to counterbalance millions of evils. Intuitive realization of Truth is a more wonderful experience than all the sensations created. Truth comes only through the love of God.

DO NOT WASTE TIME

All knowledge comes from the inner source, from the limitless soul. In one short span of human life, how are you going to find out all the mysteries of the body and all the other divine mysteries of creation, if you do not tap your inner source, which is omniscient?

Do you realize how you spend your life? Very few of us know how much ~~we could put into our lives if we but used our time wisely.~~ Do not waste your days--lifetimes ebb away before we wake up. We don't realize the immortal value of the span which God has given us. Too much of it is spent in rushing, in racing, in getting nowhere. Very few of us stop, think, and find out what life can give to us.

How can you quicken your evolution? By consciously condensing all your experiences through the power of concentration. Concentration means to gather in your attention, focusing it to a point; condensation means to use that concentrated attention to do something quickly that ordinarily would take a long time. By concentration you can condense each experience and garner whatever wisdom is to be learned from it. By condensation of individual experiences you can compress all your experiences, and the wisdom they contain, into a shorter length of time and thus gain much more than if you go through life haphazardly.

The world starts the process of improvement with books and material methods. You should start by increasing the receptivity of your intuition. In you lies the seat of infinite knowledge. Calmness, concentration, and condensation of experiences by intuitional perception will make you master of all knowledge. Don't do anything in a haphazard way; do everything with full attention. Don't try to do too many things at a time. Perform the most important duties of life first and with closest attention.

In God there is no separation, but for those who have not realized the oneness of God, and their oneness with Him, death is a separation. They see in death only a blank wall behind which loved ones vanish; but the person of realization sees beyond the land of death to those planes where all souls are awake again and dancing in joy. Death should not cause sorrow. When you know God, you will see everyone in the Divine One. Then you will realize that they are really never away from you.

MY PET DEER

Once, when I was still in India, I saw a little deer being fed with a bottle and I said to myself: "How I would like to have a little deer like that one!" One day long after, as I was bathing in the river, the children came running and said, "We have found a deer." I ran out of the water and there was my deer. I knew God had given it to me. That deer used to sleep in my room and come near my bed--and how I loved it!

One day, because I was going to be away from the school, I fed the pet earlier than usual. I told the students not to feed it again, for I intuitively feared that something serious would happen if they did. Sad to relate, one boy was disobedient and gave the baby deer a large quantity of milk. When I returned, the deer was almost dead. I prayed God not to take my pet away, and began to meditate. Hours later the deer stood up and walked feebly. The boys cheered. God had given the deer back to me.

I stayed up until two o'clock, when I fell asleep. In a dream the astral form of my deer appeared to me and said: "You are holding me back. Please let me go! Let me go!" "All right," I answered in my dream. I awoke immediately and cried out, "The deer is dying!" The whole school awakened, and the boys rushed to my side. The deer made a last effort to get up, stumbled toward me, then dropped at my feet, dead.

According to the mass karma which guides and regulates the destinies of animals, the deer's life was over, and it was ready to progress into a higher form. But by my deep attachment, which I later realized was selfish, and by my fervent prayers, I had been able to hold it in the limitations of the animal form from which the soul was struggling for release. The soul of the deer made its plea in a dream because, without my loving permission, it either would not or could not go. As soon as I agreed, it departed.

God wants His children to love everything as a part of Him, and not to feel delusively that death ends all. The ignorant man sees only the unsurmountable wall of death, hiding, seemingly forever, his cherished friends. But the man of unattachment, he who loves others as expressions of the Lord, understands that at death the dear ones have only returned for a breathing space of joy in Him.

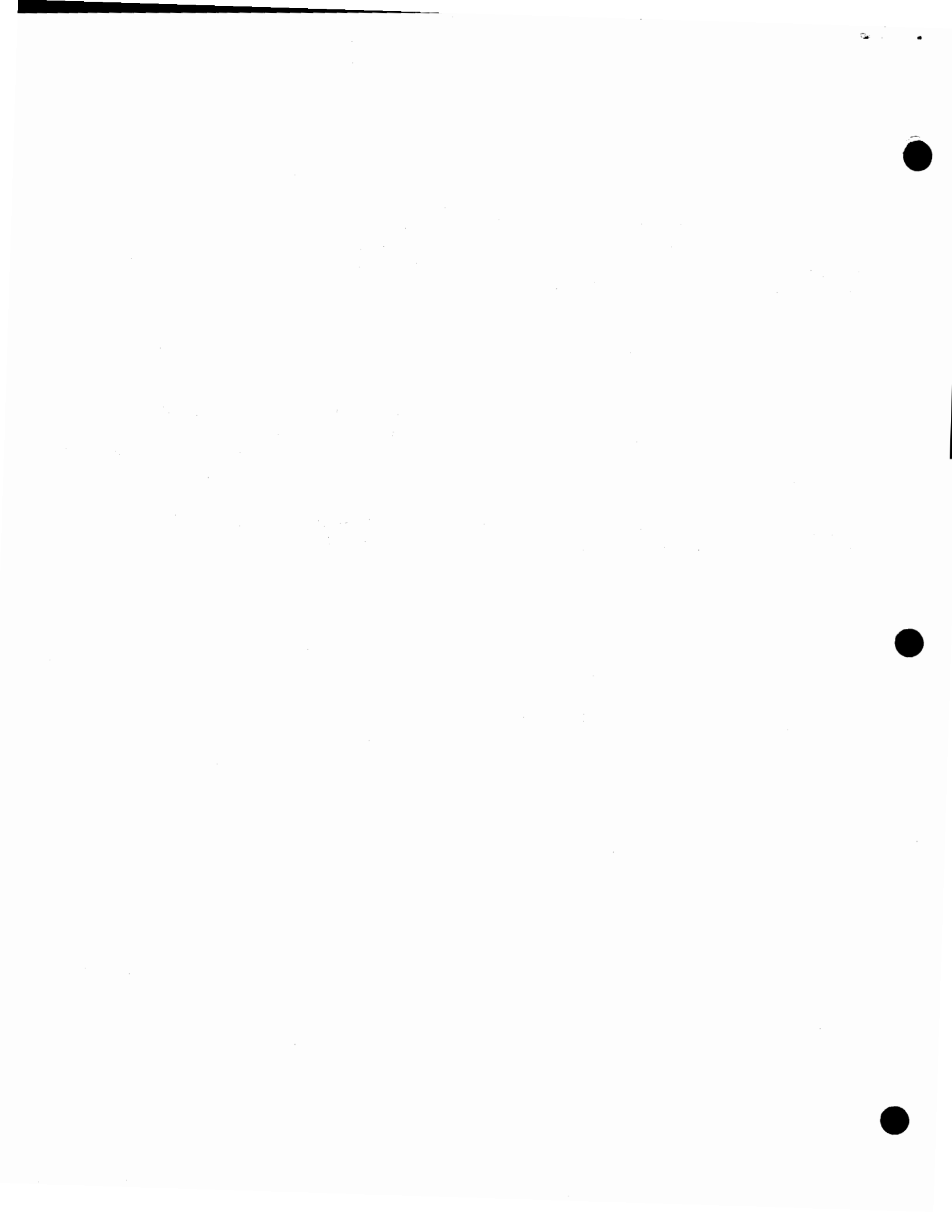
The attention, intuition, and evolution of animals can be quickened through training by an intuitive person. Beating holds back the progress of all animals.

Man can imitate all the sounds of animals: he can crow like a cock, laugh like a hyena, whine like a dog, bellow like an enraged bull, sing like a nightingale, and roar like a lion. By imitating their cries and by loving the animals, man can understand their food call, water call, mate call and other calls expressing anger, hate, jealousy, love, curiosity, and necessity. Listen to the various sounds uttered by different animals when they are happy, boisterous, or jealous; you will gradually be able to interpret them and use them, in turn, to talk to the animals and help them to quicken their evolution. Mental telepathy can, in fact, be established between man and his pets.

Quiet singing allures songbirds, and even snakes. Soft, endearing words are appreciated by cats, who never like harsh commands. They become frightened or obstinate when their feelings are hurt. Dogs like kind commands in a militaristic language. Horses love soft, firm commands and respond to your intelligent desires. Tigers can be tamed by instilling fear; lions can be tamed by love, fearlessness, and cool commanding. Human company and better methods of training can quicken the intuition of animals and thereby quicken their evolution. Remember that God is in all. He is silent in the stone, He sleeps in the plant, He dreams and cries in animals; but in man He knows that He dreams, and learns to express Himself in human speech.

AFFIRMATION

O Spirit, I worship Thee as beauty
and intelligence in the temple of Nature.
I worship Thee as power in the temple
of activity, and as peace in the temple
of silence.



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THE WAVELET -- Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

"Come back, My little prodigal baby wavelet,
Return and sleep in My cradle
Of eternal calm," said a Voice.
But I replied: "I cannot rest for so long,
And do not want to fall asleep, never
To awaken again.
I am life! I must live and not sleep only,
I must dance, I must throb,
And move over the ocean of everywhere."
Then I heard the roaring wisdom-call again,
Bounding over infinity.
"Little wavelet, you can never be happy
Without Me. Come, little wavelet,
You need not sleep all the time,
But may dance with Me, anon, the dance
Of omniscience on the sea of omnipresence,
Clasping My arms of starry rays,
Or holding My petaled hands of flowers,
Or clasping Me in the bosom of human friends.
Little wavelet, imprison yourself not
In the little tract of life,
Or in a portion of fleshly selfishness,
But dance this cosmic dance
Over all My sea of infinity."

(Conclusion)

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Guru-Preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. Free my life from all obstacles of delusion and give me material, mental, and spiritual development.

AVOIDING A MECHANICAL OR ONE-SIDED LIFE

Millions of people live a one-sided life and pass on in incompleteness. God has given each of us a soul, a mind, and a body, which we should try to develop uniformly. Most people who do not try to look into the meaning of life lead mechanical existences, doing only the kind of work that happens to come in their path. They have become slaves of the environment in which they were born, and are whipped by their own habits to run in only one direction of activity.

The world influences you to sow the seeds of useless bad habits, material desires, and God-forgetting activities; but the world does not have to answer for your poisonous harvest. You alone are held accountable for the effects of your actions. When you are about to die, the world says good-by to you, leaving you to answer to your conscience for the effects of activities that you performed under its evil influence. If you have led a life dominated by worldly influences, do not let the world impose its delusions on you any longer. You should control your own life henceforth; you should become the ruler of your own mental kingdom. Fears, worries, discontent, and unhappiness all result from a life uncontrolled by wisdom.

If you are seeking happiness, then in your own interest you should make your life as it should be--calm, confident, and joyous--not a scene of warring worries. You should understand that a balanced life consists first in acquiring supreme satisfaction through the attainment of all-conquering wisdom. When you acquire real mental poise through wisdom, you will automatically be able to acquire prosperity and health.

Now we must consider the method of attaining this end. The quickest, most scientific and sure way to gain your heart's desire is to try your utmost to develop the greatest of all powers, the unused cosmic power that lies within you: your own mind. Wake up! Arise, snatch your life away from the enslaving impositions of instinct, heredity, custom, and conventions! You must remember that no one but yourself is responsible for sowing the seeds of actions on the soil of your life; none but you will reap the just harvest, according to the kind of seed action you have sown.

SUPERCONCENTRATION The power of superconcentration calms the waves

of wrong suppositions or convictions, and brings forth from within you the steady, all-conquering faculty of divine wisdom. Perhaps you already can concentrate a little without knowing the method; but when you learn it you will be able to use fully your power of concentration for the achievement of the highest purposes in your life. It is not destiny, opportunity, or luck that creates success for you, but attunement, through concentration, with the invisible empire of cosmic laws.

As you can drink only as much as the capacity of your stomach allows, no matter how thirsty you are, so the amount of success you can attain is measured by the quality and capacity of your concentration, no matter how ambitious you are. The average man depends upon his hereditary mental faculties and chance-given opportunities to succeed. That is why only one out of four businessmen ever fully succeeds.

Then arises the question: "Where is the justice of God? Why are some people born with a silver spoon in their mouths and liveried opportunities to wait on them?" The answer is that those who are born successful have acquired success sometime, somewhere in a previous life, and so from their very birth they are crowned with success. What you have been, that you become now. The soul, saturated with a prosperity consciousness or a wisdom consciousness, attracts wealth or knowledge according to the law of cause and effect that governs all souls when they take on the mortal delusion of physical beings.

All men have been made in the image of God, and are endowed with all God-given capacities; but they have changed, or created inequalities, according to the use or misuse of their own free choice. This Lesson teaches you that no matter how you have distorted that image of God in you, still in essence it is unchanged.

HOW TO DEVELOP SUPERCONCENTRATION

How are you to develop the calming, wisdom-revealing power of superconcentration?

1. Make up your mind that henceforth you will try to perform your interesting duties with your whole heart, and your uninteresting ones with deep attention.

Eject every distracting stray thought that arises in your mind when you are concentrating upon an important problem. Most people think of other things even when they are doing important work. Judge John (to cite an imaginary example), while writing his decision on a life and death problem, is brooding over how badly his wife treats him. He is quite disturbed because his judgment is not respected at home. If such a judge should wrongly pass a death sentence because of his lack of concentration, he, in turn, would stand condemned before the Great Judge--Cosmic Law.

Many businessmen are neither good money-makers nor successful, wise husbands, because when they are in their offices they brood over the troubles with their wives, and when they are at home they ruminate on business troubles. Concentrate upon one thing at a time.

2. Perform the most important, useful, and necessary duties of life first, and concentrate upon them until they are finished.
3. By the following method, cultivate the power of concentration; apply that concentration on God and reinforce yourself with His power. Then, feeling His powerful presence through actual inner communion, go about life's duties with concentration, with one-pointed attention reinforced by God's unlimited power. This practice will ultimately secure wisdom for you, and any other form of prosperity that your heart desires.

Remember, only attunement to God's unfailing law can give you scientific success. To obtain superconcentration requires first that you develop your own concentration. It becomes superconcentration when you increase it to limitless accomplishing power by combining it with God's power.

SPECIAL EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPING CONCENTRATION

In the morning, as soon as your consciousness comes back into the brain; for fifteen minutes during the lunch hour; and also before going to bed, practice the following:

Lie motionless on your back. Keep the body relaxed. Offer a deep prayer of devotion to God in the language of your heart. Continuously offer this prayer until you feel that God has responded. Know, through the increase of your inner peace and satisfaction, that God has heard you. Forget time, or that you are busy; with your eyes closed, concentrate upon the point between the eyebrows. (Keep your inner gaze and your mind fixed there throughout the practice of this method.) Now exhale, and while the breath is out, continue to concentrate on the point between the eyebrows and mentally chant over and over, for as long as you can comfortably remain without breath: "Om-Spirit-Christ," or "Om-Spirit-Bliss. Then inhale.

Repeat the foregoing exercise--starting with exhalation, then chanting "Om-Spirit-Christ," and ending with inhalation--at least twelve times; if you have time, repeat it about twenty-four times. After that, offer a deep heartfelt prayer to God until you feel His contact through ever increasing peace. The surest sign of the presence of God within you is a strange, living, consciously responding peace looming up from within you. You can feel this only as a result of meditation (in this or a past life) and in no other way. The more you concentrate, the longer and more deeply you concentrate, the greater will be the increase of this peace, which is the language of God. Peace derived from superconcentration is the power of God within you. After you find this deep peace within you, then affirm:

"Spirit and I are one. Spirit, Thou art in me; manifest Thy wisdom fully through me. Thou art my Father; I am Thy child; what Thou hast, I have. Give me my birthright as Thy child."

THE MEANING OF "FINDING" GOD

I have told in my autobiography this story of an incident with my Guru during my spiritual training in his hermitage: I had gone to him one morning to ask: "I want to know, sir--when shall I find God?"

"You have found Him," Sri Yukteswar replied. He went on: "I am sure you aren't expecting a venerable Personage, adorning a throne in some antiseptic corner of the cosmos! I see, however, that you are imagining that possession of miraculous powers is proof that one has found God. No. One might gain the power to control the whole universe--yet find the Lord elusive still. Spiritual advancement is not to be measured by one's displays of outward powers, but solely by the depth of his bliss in meditation. Devotees like yourself who have found the way to God never dream of exchanging Him for any other happiness; He is seductive beyond thought of competition... After the mind has been cleared by Kriya Yoga of sensory obstacles, meditation furnishes a two-fold proof of God. Ever new joy is evidence of His existence, convincing to our very atoms. Also, in meditation one finds His instant guidance, His adequate response to every difficulty."

"I see, Guruji; you have solved my problem." I smiled gratefully. "I do realize now that I have found God, for whenever the joy of meditation has returned subconsciously during my active hours, I have been subtly directed to adopt the right course in everything, even in minor details."

O aged Wine of my Heart, I drink of Thee again and again, and the bottle of my consciousness is always filled. I know not the name of this wine, but I do know that it is the wine of happiness--of joy that talks to me and guides me at all times.

The greatest of all miracles is the love of God. Through His love He is always talking to you. Yet the poet Francis Thompson wrote of man's attitude toward God: "I fled Him, down the nights and down the days; I fled Him, down the arches of the years."* You are not seeking God; God is seeking you. Through your doubts you are flying away from Him; you are hiding from Him through concentration on material pleasure. If you do not find contentment in God, you will not find contentment anywhere.

Although we are very insignificant, still God is wooing us. "All which I

* "The Hound of Heaven."

took from thee I did but take, /Not for thy harms, /But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms. ****** God does not take away from us material things, or our loved ones, to punish or worry us; He is trying by these shocks to wake us up and tell us to come home; that it is in Him we shall find everlasting health, prosperity, wisdom, happiness, and love.

In order to wake up and know the laws of the universe, the glory of spiritual communion with God's ever new joy; in order to penetrate the mystery of life and death and the hereafter, you must first learn that these things are to be found only in God, and only through following God's laws.

Rouse yourself and say: "I have long wandered away. I must find God." Then seek Him, and through the study of the advanced methods in the SRF Lessons, you will be able to know the history of the stars, of the strata of the earth, and of life on earth, and you will be able to say:

"I am a child of God. I was sent here to be entertained by the drama of life, not to be caught in its meshes. If I live in an ordinary mortal way I will never find freedom. Therefore I will live in a divine way, as an immortal soul-child of God."

AFFIRMATION

I am the king of silence sitting
on the throne of eternity.

******"The Hound of Heaven."

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THOU HAST MANY NAMES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I say my prayerson beads of love, strung together with everlasting threads of devotion. I hold to no single Name--God, Spirit, Brahma, Allah, Heavenly Father, Divine Mother--for All are Thine.

I invoke Thee sometimes as Christ, Krishna, Shankaracharya, Mohammed, Buddha, Moses, and other prophets; for I know Thou has delighted, and wilt ever delight, in revealing Thyself in different forms.

In Thy cosmic play on the stage of the centuries, in Thy myriad appearances, Thou didst take many Names; but Thou hast but one Nature: Perennial Joy.

PRAYER

O Father, I pray that my storm-tossed soul may find the silver lining of Thy presence behind the clouds of my indifference, and the moon of Thy hope may gleam in my heart. Thou art slowly rising on the horizon of my mind; mists of ignorance are clearing with the coming of the moonbeams of Thy love.

THE TEST OF THE SCRIPTURES: DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF GOD

Ordinarily, a phenomenon is known by the senses, perceived by the mind and cognized by the inner ego. All human experiences depend for their data upon the testimony of the senses. The power of inference comes after and draws conclusions from the material supplied by the senses. A person seeing what appears to be smoke rising from a distant hill may conclude that the hill is on fire, because he had seen fire and smoke together before. But let us say that in this case it was not smoke but a cloud of dust on the hill. The data furnished by the senses being wrong, the conclusion is wrong. Although the power of inferential reasoning has its uses, still it is subject to error and hence is incapable of proving conclusively the ultimate nature of Reality.

The vast physical universe is in reality an ocean of energy lying about us --high overhead as rivers of the milky way, twinkling stars, and solar systems; beneath our feet as solid earth. Sparkling lakes, great mountains, heaving oceans, sky, air, and fire; man's physical body and his ethereal thoughts -- all are but vibrations of one Cosmic Energy. Yet the senses make differentiations that tell us a delusive story--that solids hurt us, liquid drowns us, fire burns us, sky does not hold us, and gas suffocates us.

As the substance we call water may appear as ice, steam, or hydrogen-oxygen gas, so the universe appears in various forms, as the solid earth, oceans, and vapors. Our senses tell us only of the most superficial aspect of matter, deceiving us into thinking that ice is cold, heavy, and solid, and that steam is hot and fluid. Yet all are manifestations of one and the same substance. All the elements of which the universe is comprised are made of one electronic energy, conscious Cosmic Energy.

Our senses do not tell us the whole truth: that the electrons in a small pencil could explode a skyscraper, for example, and that the energy released from the electrons constituting a human body could explode a part of Mount Everest. If our senses conveyed the whole truth to us, we would see the earth as rivers and glaciers of electrons, each speck of dust as a rolling mass of light.

One might reason that although our senses may deceive us, our powers of reasoning can give us new light on the truth. That is true up to a point. We have to remember that all the knowledge derived from the experiments carried on by the help of the microscope, mathematics, and fine instruments has to come through the senses; but the senses--and the reason, working on their testimony--have told only a fraction of the truth about the nature of matter and all things. Only recently atoms were considered ultimate--now upon further analysis they have been found to contain the finer materials of electrons and protons. Thus neither the senses nor the power of inference that builds knowledge on sense testimony can be trusted to tell us all the truth about the earth, the universe, the human body, or the mind.

We are controlled by something that operates like radio--active and vital energy broadcast by God! Ships can be moved by radio; similarly we are controlled by the "broadcasts" of the Infinite Spirit, which is present everywhere. But the point is this--just as the sunlight falling on the water in a cup that is kept moving becomes broken up into myriad suns, so Spirit, being reflected in each human body and mind, has become reflected there as individualized Spirit or Soul. Now, although this Soul is a reflection of Spirit, it has become identified with the body, and is trying very hard through processes of evolution to resurrect itself from the cage of the body and return to the Ocean of Spirit. If you have a cup filled with water and you hold it under a lamp, at the same time causing the water to move in the cup, you have a distorted reflection of the lamplight in the cup. Resurrecting the reflected Soul image signifies taking it away from the moving cup of restless consciousness, and reuniting it with the original all-pervading undistorted Light.

The soul, a reflection of the Spirit in the body, is caged in the body, hence it has put on all the limitations of the body and of the mind. Therefore, we must resurrect the soul from the thralldom of the body and the mind and reunite it with the Spirit.

REALIZATION AND SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS

The followers of every great religious belief claim their scriptures to be of divine origin, but how can one find out which book represents truth? The number of believers cannot be the proof. The belief of the millions of followers of the Christian Bible or the Hindu Vedas cannot establish the immutable universal nature of the principles in the scriptures. The Bible is interpreted variously according to man's own degree of development and power of reasoning. That is why there are so many cults deriving from a universal teaching such as that of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ's teachings cannot be understood merely by reading the Bible over and over; only by putting them into practice in everyday life can you know the teachings outlined in that great scripture. What you listen to, what you read in books, try to meditate on long enough to be one with the thought underlying it. Then try to manifest that realization in practice.

Realization comes from constant wide-awake meditation, with an ever busy, ever searching mind that converts theory into solid knowledge through experience and practice.

The sage Patanjali of India was the delineator of the eightfold path of Yoga. He lived several centuries before Jesus Christ, and taught that the authority of the scriptures is not proof of their truth, because, no matter who propounds them, the scriptures have to be received through the sight, hearing, limited imagination, and reasoning power of the reader. According to Patanjali, the real inner teachings of a Christ cannot be understood through the testimony of others, nor by listening to their interpretations, but can be grasped only by the power of direct intuitive perception.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Every theory and belief should be practiced and its truth verified by realization. Belief in dogma alone is not safe, for it produces false satisfaction that crumbles under the hammer of reason. On the other hand, skepticism is harmful too if it betokens only a refusal to investigate further. In such a case it leads only to the self-inflicted punishment of doubt.

The real inner meanings of the Christ teachings cannot be understood through the testimony of others, nor by listening to their interpretations, but can be grasped only by intuition. Whatever is intuitively true must be spiritually true, scientifically true, and true in all the scriptures. Anything that is wonderful is always difficult to obtain. That is the strange psychology about truths. Each one who reads the Bible thinks that he understands it all, but it is necessary to crack the shell of these truths and realize their true meanings through intuition.

SIX BLIND BOYS AND AN ELEPHANT

There are numerous legends and stories about elephants. Even the philosophers of India used the elephant to illustrate a great moral.

Our legend tells how an Indian mahout (driver) commanded his six blind sons to wash the family elephant. The six blind boys took great pride in this opportunity given them by their good father, and each one was extremely careful in the diagnosis of his first experience with the elephant. Each boy was given a certain portion of the elephant's body to wash. All were delighted to have this chance to learn something about elephants.

After an hour, when the elephant washing was over, the six blind boys

simultaneously shouted: "Now I know what an elephant is like! The first son said to the second son: "Well, what is the elephant like?" The second brother, who had been washing the sides of the elephant, declared: "Oh, the elephant is just like a huge wall." The first son, who had been washing the elephant's trunk, scornfully said: "You are talking nonsense. The elephant is just like a bamboo pole."

Listening to the quarrel between his two brothers, the third son, who had washed the elephant's ears, laughed and interrupted: "You fools, you don't know anything. The elephant is like two big banana leaves."

Hearing what he thought to be absurd remarks from his brothers, the fourth son, who had been washing the four legs of the elephant, cried out: "You are all wrong. It is ridiculous for you to fight about something you evidently know nothing about. The elephant is only a large roof of flesh supported by four fleshly pillars."

The fifth son, who has been washing the tusks of the elephant, was beside himself with laughter, and spoke up: "My blundering brothers, listen to me. I declare, as a result of personal experience, that the elephant is nothing but a couple of bones." This was too much for the sixth son, who had washed the tail of the elephant, and he said: "All of you must be crazy, or under the spell of hallucinations. The elephant is only a piece of rope hanging from heaven." He, being the youngest and quite short, could not reach to the top of the elephant's tail, hence he thought that the elephant was a "heavenly rope" suspended just above the earth by the gods.

The father, who had been cooking some rice for the elephant in a nearby place, heard in great merriment all this squabble about the animal, but he came running to his children when their argument waxed into a free-for-all fight. "You assorted young fools, stop this fighting!" he commanded. "All of you are right and yet all are wrong."

The boys cried in unison: "How can that be?" To which the father replied: "It is I who have seen the whole elephant, and I know that you are all right because you have each one described a part of the elephant. But you are all wrong because the whole elephant is neither a couple of tusks, nor four legs, nor one trunk, nor a huge wall of flesh, nor a tail, but he is an aggregate of all of these. The tail, or the trunk, separated from the elephant, could not be termed an elephant."

The story very well illustrates the condition of modern theoretical religions or "isms." Most religious denominations are more or less blind, possessing only partial knowledge of the "elephant" of truth. Bigoted religionists fly at one another's throats like the six blind brothers, each claiming to

know the whole truth or the only truth.

The time has come when people can heal their inner blindness by awakening the latent Christ-wisdom within them through meditation, and by the feeling of brotherhood, understanding, and the light of their own inner Self-realization. When the blindness of ignorance and denominational bias is healed by the Self-realization of God, then the whole "elephant" of truth will be perceived as the essence of all religions. Then interdenominational friction and religious and racial prejudice will cease. There will be one church, one brotherhood, one scientific highway of religions, one temple of truth everywhere.

INSPIRATION

Day by day, as you learn to meditate, a new awakening will come; a new, living relationship with God will be established. The mist of silence and mystery which hangs over everything will slowly vanish before the dawning light of your mental and devotional search for God. The blue sky will speak, saying: "Look! Here He is, spread all over my bosom." The flowers will say: "Behold His smile in us." The dumb stones will declare: "See! He is sleeping in us." The trees will whisper: "He is dreaming in us." The birds will sing: "He is awake and singing in us." Your soul will say: "He is throbbing in me." Your thoughts, hitherto unmindful, unconscious of Him will repeat: "He is awake in thee now, awakened by thine inner whispers. Listen! Responding to thy soul-stirring whispers, He is whispering songs of His love to thee everywhere."

AFFIRMATION

O Divine Mother,
I will take the bowl of my
mind and fill it with Thine
understanding.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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COME TO ME, O CHRIST, AS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Christ, beloved Son of God! thou didst embark on a storm-tossed sea of prejudiced minds. Their cruel thought waves lashed thy tender heart.

Thy trial on the Cross was an immortal victory of humility over force, of soul over flesh. May thine ineffable example hearten us to bear bravely our lesser crosses.

O Great Lover of Error-Torn Humanity! In myriad hearts an unseen monument has arisen to the mightiest miracle of love--thy words: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Mayest thou remove from our eyes the cataracts of ignorance, that we see the beauty of thy message: "Love even thine enemies as thyself. Sick in mind or asleep in delusion, they are still thy brothers."

O Cosmic Christ, may we, too, conquer the Satan of dividing selfishness that prevents the gathering in sweet accord of all men in the one fold of Spirit.

As Thou art Perfection, yet wert crucified, teach us not to resent the inevitable tests of life: the daily challenge to our fortitude by adversities, our self-control by temptation, and our goodwill by misunderstanding.

Purified by contemplation on thee, innumerable devotees perfume their lives with emanations from thy flower soul. O Good Shepherd! thou leadest thy countless flock to the evergreen Pastures of Peace.

Our deepest aspiration is to see the Heavenly Father with open eyes of wisdom, as thou dost; and to know like thee that we are verily His sons. Amen.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, intoxicate me with devotion's wine: I
will drink of Thee until death. My earthly desires shall die,
and I will live in Thee forever.

OVERCOMING FEAR OF DEATH

What is Life? A wave of electrons and atoms, a wave of protoplasm, a wave of power, a wave of consciousness. Life is intelligent, organized motion. It may mold itself into a clod of earth or melt itself into vapor--it may take the form of a living, moving being or that of a still corpse. Stones, animated beings, dead creatures, all are waves in the ocean of life. There is no death nor cessation of motion in anything. Everything is living.

A wave is born; it rises to its supreme height, then falls, to rise again somewhere. Like everything else in this vibratory universe, the human body is a combination of three coexisting waves--of electrons, life force, and intelligence knit together by a soul--rolling up and down the ocean of Life. The birth of the baby is the rise, youth is the crest, and death the fall of the human body wave in the infinite ocean of Life.

DEATH IS Physical pain, as in long-continued disease, and mental suffering are sometimes worse than death, which brings cessation of physical pain. Oft-dreaded death is a natural change of the body, a deep sleep earned after a long term of activity in the office of life. Death by suicide, however, is a spiritual crime, because it involves the quitting of the duties or the tests of life. The person who commits suicide is denied the privilege of peace that attends the rightly won pension of death. He who deserts this earth as a coward cannot be granted the pension of rest.

Both physical pain and mental suffering originate in the mind. A man suffers more to see his beloved wife operated upon than he would if he were to see a stranger's wife undergoing surgery. He would suffer still more if he had to see his own body being operated upon. Sensations in one's own body or in the bodies of others have to be accepted by the mind in order to produce pain or suffering. Sensitive people feel pain and suffering more than others. If a man's mind is disengaged from the body by superior means, such as meditation, or by artificial means, such as chloroform, and he is operated upon, he does not feel pain. It is absolutely true that if man's mind and feelings were rightly trained, he could watch an operation on his body without feeling pain.

CAGED BIRD As the fear, in children, of going into the dark is aggravated OF MIND by tales of ghosts and goblins, so the fear of death has become instilled in man by ignorant imaginings. One should rather be consoled at the thought of death as the necessary end of all physical

bodies, anticipating a freer existence in the subtle astral vehicle.

The fear and pain of death are self-created. If we were to acquaint ourselves with the real nature of death, we would find there is nothing to fear. The soul grows attached to the physical wave of the body, with its waves of life and intelligence, and fears to leave it; just as a bird, long used to a cage, hesitates to leave it even though the doors are opened. The bird's confinement in the cage has made it forgetful of its free flights in the open skies. The bird thinks, "Where will I go? What will happen to me beyond? Let me remain in the cage." Similarly the caged soul, accustomed to the limitations, diseases, and frailties of the body, is afraid of the safe, infinite, celestial regions of God, even when invited by death to make a change from the limited to a less limited state.

The weight and feeling in the body, the love of sensual pleasures, sunlight, voices of friends, ties of family, love of warmth or cold, dependence on oxygen for life, love for food, dress, automobiles, furniture, houses--these are the common attachments of life that keep the soul body-bound.

The baby is "dead" when it becomes a youth; similarly, when an aged man dies, he merely changes one state for another. If life is lived rightly, death is a reward and a change to a better state. Some quit life, being forced out by failures in health or as victims of the consequences of their own wrong ways of living. But even such failures cannot be permanent stigmas on the soul. Each human being has new opportunities in other schools of life, if he has to be expelled from this one by the exacting schoolmaster, Death.

ACTUAL PHENOMENON OF DEATH Many yogis in India can say with St. Paul, "Verily, I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ, I die daily." Death may be either an involuntary or a voluntary switching off of the life current from the bulb of flesh. Yogis who know how to operate the switch of the heart, and to control their heartbeats, can quit the body quickly and at will; or stay in it as long as they wish. I shall try to describe the actual phenomenon of death just as I have experienced it.

When death comes it is variously experienced by different people, according to their earthly mode of living. Just as different people enjoy sleep of various duration and quality, so different people have varying experiences of death. The good man who works hard in the factory of life goes to a deep, unconscious but restful sleep for a short while; he then wakes up again in some other region of life in the astral world. ("In my Father's house are many mansions"--John 14:2.) A man who neglects the duties of life or who causes confusion and discomfort of others often experiences something like nightmares or terrible dreams during death. The moral man often has delightful dreams at death. The wise man finds through death an infinitely better, safer haven than this mudball of earth flying through the sky.

When your leg goes to sleep you can see it, but you cannot feel it as some-

thing belonging to you, as something you can control. During death the ordinary man feels every part of the body going to sleep. The dead man may be distinctly aware of his physical body, but he cannot create motion in it. In death the power of touch goes first; then smell, then taste, then vision, and last of all, hearing. The following true incident bears out this fact.

In a hospital the much-loved sister of a Self-Realization Fellowship student lay dying. The doctor in her room was saying loudly, "No hope for her; it is only a question of a few more minutes before she passes on." Angered, her brother told everyone to leave the room. He shut the door and cried aloud: "Sister, come back!" And she did come back to life, though she had been practically dead--her heart already had stopped beating. When she was better she told how she had heard the undiplomatic doctor's depressing words. If it had not been for her brother's courage, which had stimulated her will sufficiently to energize her fast-deadening and rebellious muscles and nerves, she would have slipped away from the body. It is highly unwise to discuss the condition of a dying man within range of his hearing. His body or speech may be paralyzed, but not necessarily his hearing.

Only those who have practiced control of the heartbeat and who have learned to live without oxygen--by eating less carbonizing food and by preventing the decay of tissues in the body through definite yoga training in meditation--can consciously experience death at will. For them it is merely a rest from constant muscular activity, particularly from the involuntary activity of the heart, lungs, diaphragm, and circulation that we associate with the presence of life. That life is not dependent either on food or oxygen is proved by verified cases of men who have lived long in a state of suspended animation.

In heaven there are no crackers and soup; no breakfast, lunch, dinner; no water, oxygen, sunshine. Mortals who desire to go there should learn to live more by inner energy, unattached to the body. Those who learn in this life to live by Spirit, and who are unattached to the body, quickly realize after death the freedom of the soul from bondage of oxygen, food, and water. Death is feared only by the ignorant human animal--the wise see it as a transition to a higher state, as a promotion to higher grades in the school of life.

Even if you are not yet perfected in the art of living primarily by direct life-energy, as the great yogis of India and as developed Self-Realization Fellowship students do, you can begin your march toward freedom by ceasing to be attached to the care of the body: eating, sleeping, exercising, and so on. Perform your duty to the body with joy but with nonattachment. More and more you will realize this truth, that man is a soul, but has a body, and you will no longer dread parting with the fleshly garment. Such dread is a self-inflicted torture brought on by ignorant attachment to the body or to material possessions. The unenlightened dying man suffers through imagination even though in death he receives freedom from physical pain and leaves a minor, inferior state for a higher one, in which he is temporarily free of the mortal physical consciousness.

LITTLE BUBBLE OF LIFE

A little bubble was floating on the sea, afraid of the storm and the lightning. Someone said: "Little bubble of life, what is the matter? Don't you know that you are just a part of the sea of life?" The little bubble looked around and realized that it was so.

Human consciousness, floating like this little bubble on the sea of Cosmic Consciousness, thinks that it is a little mortal bubble, afraid of disease, hunger, and death.

O little bubble, you are afraid of the ocean! Practice meditation constantly and faithfully, then, little bubble of human consciousness, look around, and extend your vision deep into God Consciousness, until you realize that you have become the sea and the bubble, existing together in Spirit.

INSPIRATION

O God, no doubt it was You who threw us here amidst so much mystery, with so little understanding. We who think we know so much, alas, know so little!

The skies are vast mysterious shrouds, which surround our tangible earth, teeming with men engaged in a wild dance of desires, and conflicts of selfishness. Reason raps at the door of mysterious nature, and, after repeated hard knocks, hears some explanations and some truths. But, alas, with all this display of discoveries, how little man yet knows about the subtle throbs of life behind the thrumming heart.

What is this flesh, and what keeps it so sensitive with sensory perceptions, apperceptions, feelings of hatred and woe, and pleasure and pain--this carpet of flesh embossed with subtle perceptions for the mind to dance all over, in the hall of creation?

We are striving to know about this magic carpet of flesh woven with threads of nerves and tissues and cells. We know a little, perhaps better than before, but we must know endlessly about it, not only through our partially perceiving minds, but also through the all-knowing powers of our souls and that of the omniscient Spirit.

We must ask about this mystery carpet of life, wherein the name of God is written all over by mute nature, wise men, our intelligence, intuition, and our own Father--God. When, by the unceasing urges of devotion, God shall be made to speak, then we shall know about this magic life, and shall speak no more about it. We shall be lost in eternal ecstasy contemplating His eternally wonderful, magic, mysterious Being.

AFFIRMATION

Divine Mother, the power of Thy
love crucifies all my thoughts of doubt
and fear; that I may rise, triumphant
over death and ascend on wings of light
to Thee.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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EGO, THE IMPERSONATOR

By Paramahansa Yogananda

My ego may strut in pride,
saying: "I am thou!"

Ignoring the tiny boasting
masquerader, I shall seek my
soul Self, fragrant with countless
humilities.

Ever instruct me in my
identity, O Lord! May I only
hear Thy whisper: "I am thou!"

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O All-Pervading Spirit, the breeze of Thine inspiration has removed the clouds from my heart. The firmament of my mind is clear, and with a purified soul I behold Thee alone--everywhere.

WHAT IS THE EGO?

The subjective consciousness or "I-ness" adopted by the soul in connection with the body and its environmental relationships is termed the ego, or pseudo soul. The soul itself, being individualized Spirit, manifests only its essential undivided relation with the Spirit and the inherent quality of Spirit: ever existing, ever conscious, ever new Bliss. A reflection of the unmanifested Spirit, the soul is itself individualized, ever existing, ever conscious, ever new Bliss. But as the soul takes on an ideational, an astral, and a physical body, and the normal and abnormal conditions of these three bodies, it also takes on or identifies itself with their natures. This is the ego, or pseudo-soul state of consciousness.

The physical, astral, and ideational planes all have to be cognized through consciousness and their effects on it. The advancing student on the path of meditation should be extremely watchful of King Soul, in the guise of matter-stricken ego, in its wanderings in the different realms of consciousness.

During the state of wakefulness, the human ego ordinarily travels in the realm of sensation or awareness of the physical body and of the material world. But when the curtain of sleep is drawn, the ego withdraws to the chamber of dreams, where it wanders in a semiconscious state. The ego is not aware of actual physical sensations, yet it is dimly conscious of the astral dream-world. Taking a rest from the consciousness of the physical world, the ego rises to the dream world on the astral plane, and looks on semiconsciously during the motion picture showings in the dream movie house. This is indicated by the fact that the ego is dimly conscious of the dream pictures during their performance, and is able also to recall those dreams in memory during the "relapse" into the ordinary consciousness of the wakeful state.

During the perception of dreams, the ego is only semiconscious of the world, and sense experiences; yet it may be at the same time entirely conscious of the dream world. The linking channel between the conscious and subconscious minds is unbroken; otherwise, the memories of dreams could not be recalled in conscious mental states. There is no actual unconsciousness; consciousness may sleep or rest, but it can never be unconscious. In sleep the consciousness is resting, i. e., not active. The soul is never unconscious.

During the retirement of the ego to the subconscious dream chamber, consciousness casts away its garment of gross sensations of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. But consciousness, although divested of its physical sense instruments of expression, still retains, as the subconsciousness, its intuitive powers of cognition; through them it consciously beholds, in the chamber of sleep, dreams compounded of subconscious memories, thoughts, and reactions of the subtle senses (which are the mental or astral counterparts of the physical senses). In dreamland, just as in waking consciousness, you may enjoy the sensory experiences of eating ice cream or hot pie, for example. But when the ego enters the silent chamber of deep sleep, or the chamber of semisuperconsciousness, its experiences consist of unalloyed enjoyment of peace. The human consciousness, turning interiorly backward here, begins to resume its normal, essential state of divine calmness, peace, and joy.

The conscious state ordinarily is marked by restlessness; the ego becomes grossly excited or pleased in the house of physical sensations. The subconscious state is characterized by a mixture of peace and activity as the ego is subtly excited or pleased in the movie house of dreams. But peace reigns in the superconsciousness; hence the ego is peaceful when, in deep sleep, it enters the bordering realm of semisuperconsciousness.

During its stay in the chamber of sensations in the state of physical consciousness, the ego remains linked with subconsciousness through the memory, and with superconsciousness through a sense of inward peace--manifested or unmanifested.

THE TRAINED AND UNTRAINED EGO

During wakeful hours the conscious mind is predominant; the subconscious and superconscious minds remain in the background. By the power of concentration, however, you can make either the superconscious or the subconscious predominant. The usually restless state of waking consciousness can be changed into dreamy subconsciousness or into the supremely peaceful state of superconsciousness. Poets are types in which the subconscious predominates. Businessmen have the conscious state predominant.

The ego encased in the bodily house of the ordinary man stays mostly in the parlor of physical consciousness and concentrates on its experience there. But, when led forcibly or passively to the subconscious chamber of dreams and quiet sleep or into the semisuperconsciousness of joyous sleep, the ego becomes apparently unconscious, or only dimly conscious. The ordinary ego can grasp only one state of consciousness at a time. When it is physically conscious, as in the usual daytime waking state, it knows that state and nothing more; when subconsciously alert, the ego forgets the conditions of the conscious state; when it is in semisuperconsciousness, it forgets both its motion-picture house of subtle dream thoughts and sensations and also the house of gross physical sensations.

In the untrained ego, sidetracked on the path of upward evolution, the conscious mind is predominant. That ego loves to stay in and dream of and be conscious of only the circumscribing parlor of senses. It quickly forgets its experiences during the nighttime, when it semiconsciously moves through the greater chamber of dreams or through the deep semisuperconsciousness toward the Spirit.

CHANGE YOUR CENTER OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The conscious mind manifests through gross sensations during waking consciousness. The subtle astral subconscious is manifested through dreams and quiet negative sleep, and through memory (which never sleeps).

True yogis and swamis have superconsciousness predominating both in the wakeful and the sleep state. Consciousness, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness are different degrees or states of Christ Consciousness. They can never remain apart, but one state can be stronger than the others. The ordinary man works with the waking consciousness predominant, and the yogi works with superconsciousness predominant.

Ask yourself during the day at different times: "What consciousness is predominant in me?" Constantly strive to change your center of consciousness from physically conscious to superconscious predominance.

Psychological and physiological states being closely connected, certain psychological states are attended with certain corresponding physical manifestations, and vice versa. Be angry and your face will show it. Then reverse the process: Adopt an expression of anger in the facial muscles; keep on showing anger by imitating its physical reactions, and you will begin to develop psychological anger.

The accomplished yogi, by adopting certain psychological states, can produce certain physiological states; and, conversely, by manifesting certain physical states he can instantaneously produce corresponding psychological states. For example, during subconscious manifestation the eyes are closed; by closing his eyes, the accomplished yogi is able to produce instantaneous sleep anytime, anywhere. Further, he knows that during the state of wakefulness the eyes are fully open, generally leveled; by keeping the eyes level, the determined yogi can remain consciously awake indefinitely. He knows also that during the superconscious state--and at death, in which the soul races toward the superconsciousness--the eyes turn upward. So, by lifting his eyes upward and concentrating his vision in between the eyebrows, he can switch off at will the motion pictures of subconscious dreams or of physical sensations and launch his consciousness into the land of luminosity where electronic life-forces, peace, and joy reign--the kingdom of Spirit.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Learn how, just by turning your gaze, to shift your ego at will from the conscious world to the subconscious quiet state or dream world; or to the super-conscious state of perfect joy. Imagine what a command you can have over yourself--shifting yourself from the land of terrestrial horror to the land of beautiful dreams, or at will floating in the ether of eternal quietness or joy, where dreams dare not tread or disturb. You are king of three kingdoms. Realize that. Do not permit your consciousness to remain imprisoned in and identified with the body.

The accomplished yogi can do just as he pleases: he can live in a single realm of sound, taste, sight, odor, or sensation; or he can plunge into the land of dreams; or he may dissolve his dream kingdom and float in pure joy. He may remain half conscious and half dreaming, or half conscious and half asleep (without dreams); he may be semisuperconscious and half dreaming, or just quietly subconscious.

Or he may enjoy simultaneously the states of conscious sensation, partial dreams, partial quiet, subconsciousness, semisuperconsciousness, superconsciousness, and immanent Christ Consciousness. When he can do that, his ego becomes aware of itself as soul and his soul breaks its bubble walls of ego and becomes the sea of Spirit--it attains Cosmic Consciousness. Then the yogi's consciousness, instead of resting on a little speck of sensation or on a diamond chip of dream, or fastening on a little shining ambition, becomes enthroned on the sparkling sea-bosom of Omnipresence.

THE ALASKAN SOURDOUGH

In gold rush days, sourdough was precious to the prospector in the remote hills of Alaska. He carried a knapsack containing flour and a piece of sourdough for making bread. A gold seeker might disappear for months in search of nuggets of gold, and his life depended upon the chance caribou meat he might obtain by hunting, and upon the leavened bread he made from sourdough. In fact, these prospectors were called "sourdoughs" because of their habit of carrying sourdough everywhere they went in pursuit of gold.

An amusing fantasy is told about one of them. It is said that by a stroke of luck (good karma) a sourdough chanced to slip into Heaven, where he created discomfiting mischief for the gods. The heavenly deities, with their bright golden automobiles, had a hard time bumping over the streets of Elysium, which formerly had been smoothly paved with gold, because the sourdough had rutted the streets by digging them for gold. All the celestial inhabitants complained to St. Peter about this gold-greedy sourdough's persistent and ceaseless gold digging on the highways and byways of Heaven. But St. Peter only remarked:

"According to the laws of Heaven, whosoever gains entry can never be ejected, unless he relinquishes the peace of Heaven of his own accord. But, dear heavenly hosts, do not worry. When the sourdough has acquired enough gold, he will of his own accord leave the divine kingdom for his family on earth, drawn back by his unfulfilled desires and other karma. Meanwhile something may turn up to save all of you from this mischief-making sourdough. Inharmony cannot exist long, you know, in Heaven."

In seemingly no time the sourdough had dug up whole loads of gold, and the streets of Heaven looked like volcanic craters. The gods had to take to walking since the heavenly policemen had declared the roads impassible. One day, St. Peter was standing pensively by the Pearly Gates, brooding over the possibility of getting rid of the troublesome sourdough, when a rusty-looking, shabby man arrived, "Well, who are you?" St. Peter challenged. The old prospector replied: "I am a sourdough; let me in."

"Oh, no indeed!" replied St. Peter. "You will have to go back, for we are having a rough time already with one wily sourdough who has marred every golden street in Heaven." The prospector was insistent: "St. Peter, I promise you that I will not dig up the streets of Heaven; and I will vouch for the ejection of the other sourdough if you will let me in."

At this St. Peter finally yielded. Then the sourdough made this request: "Honored Sir, before I receive your hospitality in Heaven, I wish to state that I mean business, and I shall forthwith show you that I intend to fulfill my promises. So, while I am yet on the outskirts of Heaven, please call the gold-digging sourdough. I want to talk to him."

In due time the havoc-wreaking sourdough appeared at the gates of Heaven, and the newly arrived one whispered something to him through the barrier. No sooner had the gold-digging sourdough heard the whispered counsel of his fellow prospector than he leaped through the gate and sped off.

St. Peter, wondering at this miracle that all the efforts of the gods had failed to accomplish, welcomed the slyly triumphant sourdough within the walls of Heaven, and with great curiosity inquired: "What did you tell him, that he left all his accumulated gold and willingly jumped into limbo?"

The new arrival laughingly replied: "Well, St. Peter, I told him that he was foolish to waste his time digging gold in Heaven when he could get more precious platinum--all he wanted--from the unrestricted streets of Hades."

Heavenly peace can be found in the willing cultivation of good, and once it is found no one can take it away, not even the gods, unless man of his own accord chooses to relinquish it. Most people persistently seek happiness in heavenly surroundings but by wrong methods. Others feel that they can increase their happiness in unwholesome surroundings (Hades) by evil (self-harming) actions. Evil deeds do sometimes seem to promise more precious platinumlike happiness than do heavenly deeds, and so there are people who do not hesitate to jump from the pursuit of happiness in good to the pursuit of happiness in evil. We should never be like the first sourdough and use the wrong methods to acquire happiness, nor should we give up the peace and prosperity that is within our reach for the uncertain but more glittering prosperity and comfort that evil deeds may seem to promise.

AFFIRMATION

I make up my mind that no one can steal my peace by insulting words or deeds, and that no one can inflame my ego by praise.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I AM KING

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Wisdom's fire is burning. I am feeding the flame. No use sorrowing more! All perishable pleasures, all temporary aspirations I am using as fagots to feed the eternal fire of knowledge. The old cherished logs of desire that I had saved to fashion furniture of pleasures I cast into the hungry flames.

Ah, my myriad ambitions are crackling joyously at the touch of God's flame! My ancient home of passions, of possessions, of incarnations, of many kingdoms of my fancy, of many air castles of my dreams--all are being consumed by this fire of my own kindling.

I am beholding this blaze not with sadness but with joy, for this fire has not only burned my home of matter but all the sorrow-haunted buildings of my fancy.

I am wealthy beyond the dreams of kings, for I am king of myself, not a fancy-enslaved king of possessions. I have nothing, yet I am an emperor of my own imperishable empire of peace. I am no longer a slave, serving my fears of possible losses. I have nothing to lose. I am enthroned in perennial satisfaction. I am a real king.

PRAYER

O Spirit, help me to liberate King Soul from bondage to the senses, that I may lift the searchlight of his attention upward from petty things to Infinity, from worldly pleasures to eternal joy.

REVERSING THE SEARCHLIGHTS OF THE SENSES--Part 1

Consciousness and energy flow down from God to light the bulbs of the senses. The sensory searchlights reveal the world to us but they do not reveal God. Only when the downflow of consciousness and energy is reversed, and the light of the sense bulbs is turned within, does it reveal God.

Instead of thinking of yourself as a physical being, always remember that you are a child of God. Though He has put you on earth to play a part in His cosmic show, He wants you to remain ever conscious of your immortality. It does not matter where God places you; you should do your best to play your part well, whatever it may be. Even during sickness and suffering you should still be able to say: "Lord, Thou and I are one!"

What is Spirit? It is ever existing, ever new, ever conscious Bliss. What is soul? It is individualized ever existing, ever conscious, ever new Bliss. The soul and ego are essentially the same, yet different. The soul is more than the ego. For example, if a rich prince goes into the slums and drinks until he forgets who he is, would you call him poor? No, for as the influence of drink wears away, he will remember that he is in reality a prince. The soul inhabiting the physical body ascribes to itself all the limitations of that body. This is the ego manifestation of the soul. You are in the egoic state when you say: "I own such and such. This is mine. I am an American," and so on. But when you are asleep do you remember whether you are an American or a Hindu? Do you remember whether you are rich or poor? No. Every night God removes the imprisoning consciousness of the body cage. Every night God takes away your titles, but delusion is so strong that you bring them back when you wake up.

You should change your consciousness and know that you are the Infinite Spirit. You should reverse the direction of your concentration from the little body to the vast Spirit. The real Self, free of the consciousness of being related to the body and its limitations, is called "soul." The divinely originated consciousness passed through various steps as it descended into matter. That downward passage must be reversed in order to ascend into Spirit again.

Every day you can find out by introspection just where your consciousness is. The progressive steps in the expansion of consciousness are just the reverse of the following "ladder" showing the stages of consciousness as it

descends from Spirit to man. There are three major divisions of consciousness: God Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, and body consciousness. Ego plus Cosmic Consciousness equals Omnipresence. Ego plus body consciousness equals limitation to the body.

Cosmic Consciousness	)	GOD CONSCIOUSNESS
Semi-Christ Cosmic Consciousness	)	CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS
Christ Consciousness)	
Semisuper Christ Consciousness	)	BODY CONSCIOUSNESS
Superconsciousness	)	STAGE 1 - SOUL
Semisuperconsciousness)	
Subconsciousness	)	BODY CONSCIOUSNESS
Semisubconsciousness	)	STAGE 2 - EGO
Consciousness)	
Attachment to the senses)	

SIGNS OF THE DIFFERENT STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

When we were in the bosom of the Father, we were conscious of all that is beyond creation and we were omnipresent in creation. God the Father is the consciousness that is both within creation and beyond creation, but the consciousness that is in creation only is called Christ Consciousness.

The soul at first could feel itself in all creation and beyond all creation. This was Cosmic Consciousness. As soon as the soul came to Christ Consciousness, it could feel its consciousness only in creation (not beyond creation). When we were in semi-Christ Cosmic Consciousness, we began to descend.

When consciousness first becomes limited by the physical body, it is called the soul. Then it descends to superconsciousness, semisuperconsciousness, and so on, until it comes to the subconscious, where it becomes the ego. The ego dwells in the subconscious, semisubconscious, and conscious states, and in attachment to the senses. See how far the consciousness has come down the ladder from God Consciousness! Even a heaven on earth is not enough to make up for what you had and lost. As the soul descends the ladder of consciousness it loses its awareness of omnipresence.

The purpose of yoga is to reverse the downward flow of the consciousness and take the ego back to Cosmic Consciousness again. If you are concerned only for your family and no one else, you are bound by body consciousness. When you think of the world as your family and the universe as your home, you are reversing your consciousness toward Omnipresence. You must expand your consciousness. Limitation is the "knifer" of love. When love

becomes limited by the selfish ego it loses its omnipresent qualities.

In the highest states of soul-realization you will find yourself in superconsciousness and Christ Consciousness. In those states the astral knots in the chakras (centers) in the spine become untied; you are free. Ordinarily it is those knots that keep the soul tied to body consciousness. You have to detach your consciousness from the spine. That is the most difficult. The higher lessons on meditation take you up to superconsciousness. Then you have to release your consciousness from the spine before you can reach the state of Christ Consciousness.

Semi-Christ Cosmic Consciousness is ever new joy in and beyond creation. When you are in the Christ Consciousness, you feel your presence everywhere in creation, in every atom of matter. When you feel your consciousness beyond creation as well as in all creation, that is Cosmic Consciousness. It is not a simple matter to feel Cosmic Consciousness.

We are never unconscious. We can sleep and rest, but consciousness can never be extinguished. It is because we are essentially consciousness, not a body, that we are immortal. The "I" exists forever; nothing can kill that. Even in sleep we are conscious--on waking we know whether we slept well or not. If you were not conscious of the body in sleep, how could you know whether you slept well or not? You know because your consciousness was still there. So in reality you are never unconscious; you are unaware, in sleep, of what is going on in your body and outside, but you know that you were unaware of the body and surroundings for a period of time. How do you know it? Because you were conscious. Consciousness never ceases to exist. We must distinguish between the different states, and learn how to reach these higher states of consciousness, in order to go back to Spirit.

THE REWARD OF VIRTUE--Part 1

Once upon a time, in Hindustan, there lived a very spiritually minded king, who was beloved by his subjects as much for his great liberality to all as for his just and impartial rule. He was very fond of holy men and delighted in their company, showering his choicest gifts upon them.

One day a scheming rascal, who pretended to be a holy man, came to the king and said: "I have lived the life of a recluse, only now and then stirring out into the great world to visit ancient shrines and places of pilgrimage by the sacred rivers. I feel extremely curious to know how a change in my dull, joyless, ascetic life would feel. O King, let me rule over thy kingdom in thy place just for three days." The monarch, who never denied anything to a holy man, agreed to this, with his wife and two little sons left his state on a three-day holiday.

The "holy" man then took off his yellow robe and put on the gorgeous regal robes. He sat on the throne wearing a golden crown and with a jeweled scepter in his hand, and began his three days' rule.

When this unusual reign was over, the king returned to claim his kingdom, but the "holy" man, loath to part with the crown and scepter so soon, said: "O generous king, I have tasted the sweets of power, but my three days' rule has expired too soon. Let me continue to reign over thy kingdom just a little longer."

"A holy man," thought the king, "knows the scriptures, so he may be trusted to take my place for a little while longer, as his rule is bound to be just and righteous." Thus reasoning, he again went away with his wife and children. They traveled from place to place and finally found themselves in a wilderness. They wandered on not knowing which way to go until, overcome with hunger and thirst, they came at last to a jungle. Here they lived for a time on wild fruits and sweet juicy roots and then resumed their travels.

Finally, they sought shelter at a wayside inn. Here there happened to be a merchant who secretly trafficked in human flesh, and as he gazed with wonder upon the charms of the beautiful queen, he at once decided to get hold of her and sell her to someone as a bride. Immediately he began to set a trap. To the king incognito he introduced himself, saying: "I am a merchant, I have come to transact some business a mile from here; also to secure a house suitable for my invalid wife. Shall we go together to find a little house such as I want?"

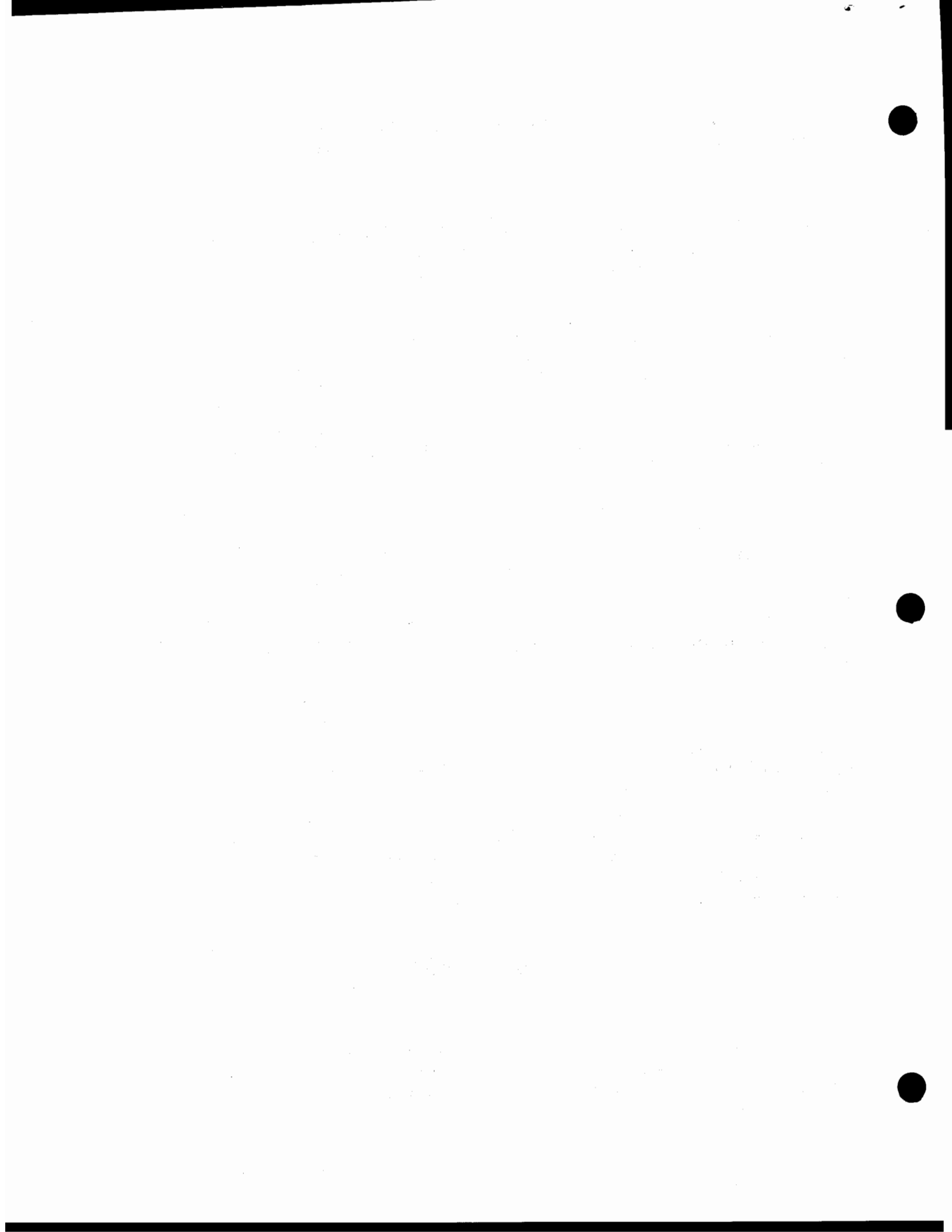
The king, who never missed a chance of doing a good turn to a fellowman in distress, agreed to the plan for the next morning. After some searching they found a pleasant house in a quiet quarter. When everything was settled, they returned to the inn. Then the merchant paid his bill, took leave of the king, pretending to move to his new house.

At dusk the merchant sent a sedan chair borne by two men, and a servant with a note to the king, saying: "Dear friend, my wife has arrived and, just as I feared, she is ill and terribly upset. May I ask you to be so kind as to send your wife to nurse her for the night?" The king, not suspecting any treachery, allowed the queen to be taken away to nurse his friend's wife.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I will conquer pride by humility, wrath by love, excitement by calmness, selfishness by unselfishness, evil by good, ignorance by knowledge, and restlessness by the ineffable peace acquired in the stillness of complete silence.



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BATHE YOURSELF IN THE OCEAN OF PEACE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

After bathing yourself in the ocean of peace in dreamland, you awake with happiness. Before you consider the problems of the day, say: "In sleep I found myself free from mortal worries. I was a king of peace."

"Now, as I work in the daytime and carry on my diurnal battles of duties, I shall no longer be defeated by insurgent worries of the kingdom of wakefulness; I am a king of peace in the sleep, and I shall continue to be such a king in the land of wakefulness."

"As I come out of my kingdom of peace in the sleep, I shall spread that same peace in my land of wakeful dreams."

PRAYER

O Spirit, help me to reverse the little searchlight of my attention from the limited human consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness. Then I shall behold the infinite perfect light forever dancing on God's fountain of bliss.

REVERSING THE SEARCHLIGHTS OF THE SENSES--Part 2

SELF-REALIZATION Self-realization is attained only through step-by-step development. By means of maya, the cosmic delusive force, God is holding the searchlights of your senses so that you are attracted toward matter. The minute you try to turn your mind toward God, it wants to turn you senseward.

It is essential that you sit upright. This is the first step toward successfully practicing the techniques. When you sit with your spine bent and you lean over, what do you immediately think? That you are ready to give up. You must sit as if you mean business. In India we had to practice that for months before we were permitted to receive any spiritual instruction.

A bent spine is an enemy of Self-realization. Your mind will be on the bent spine; you will be muscle-bound. The electric currents of your life force will be busy with the muscles and flesh, and you will be unable to concentrate upon God. Practice this discipline over the body, and your mind will be free to lift your consciousness from the body to the Infinite.

The next step is to cultivate the feeling of expansion. As often as you look at the little body, so often are you conscious that you are limited to the body. You forget that your kingdom is Omnipresence. Look in the mirror and see what you have done to yourself. Age is nothing in itself; but when you accept the idea of age and its limitations for yourself, that is bad. You should always be sparkling within with infinite wit and light. God is twinkling behind your eyes, but you screen Him off. Remember that behind the darkness of closed eyes is the light of God. And that kingdom is yours. Your soul nature is omnipresent. Your home is eternity.

So you see, all possessions of the earth, no matter how great they may be, are limited compared to that which is already yours. If you merely roll on the top of an emotional wave, you cannot feel God, for your comprehension is limited and superficial. Meditation is the way to expand your consciousness from the body to the Infinite. You don't have to forget the body, but include your body in this expansion. You must be able to feel this expansion. You must be able to feel space, and the thoughts of others. Your consciousness then will be omnipresent. The feeling of expansion is not a blind negation of

the body; it is the expansion of your consciousness beyond the boundaries of your body. All the different techniques of meditation that have been given to you will expand your consciousness. The sense of expansion has many steps before you reach the consciousness of Omnipresence. How many of these stages can you feel? How much of what lies about you can you feel?

As soon as you enter a room, your consciousness is almost omnipresent in it because you are feeling the movements of other people around you, and sensing sounds and noises and perceiving shapes and colors. Your mind is more expanded. It is awakening, not falling asleep. You should expand that awakening, and in meditation you should feel that same awakening and expansion. Some people fall asleep during meditation, but that is no better than being dead. You don't want that. You must be wide awake. If you have a spell of sleepiness, shake it off; tense the body all over and sleep will disappear. Fresh air helps to keep one awake too.

Before meditation you should prepare your mind so that it will be calm. Self-realization is just like a tender seedling. You must water it with meditation and grow a hedge around this little plant so that marauding dogs of worries, fears, and anger will not destroy it. Meditate and keep your mind constantly pointed toward the north pole of God's consciousness. Be like the compass: no matter where it is turned, the little needle goes back to the north pole; so should the needle of your consciousness be constantly attracted toward God. Be with God every minute. Enjoy everything in companionship with the Infinite and you will be happy in that consciousness.

EXERCISE FOR PRACTICE Sit erect. Close your eyes. Throw the breath out. Calm yourself. Say: "I behold my thoughts as a forest of dark trees. I feed my flame of perception on these trees of dark thoughts. The conflagration of my perception is spreading through all space and all space is a sphere of flame, a sphere of happiness. I am that. In the light of Self-realization I behold myself as an infinite sphere of flame." Continue to visualize this.

Relax your body in a sitting posture, leaning against the back of a comfortable chair. Close your eyes; forget your worries; say farewell to restless thoughts; become passive. Become mentally listless, let go, reach the borderline between consciousness and the subconscious state. Try to doze. Repeat this several times until the minute you close your eyes and throw the searchlights of your eyes downward and switch off the optical currents, you can instantly be submerged in the subconscious which lies just beyond the borderline of waking consciousness.

Then when you are heavy with sleep, quickly tense the whole body, and lift your drooping eyes; level them in front of you. Keep looking at one object without winking; banish sleep at will. Then close your eyes, relax, and fall asleep again.

Every night before going to sleep, command your subconscious mind to wake you up at a certain hour. Keep on suggesting to the subconscious mind until it obeys. Sleep with the thought that you must get up at the appointed hour, for you are going to catch a train to go to a certain place to put over a million-dollar deal. After you have given the command through deep suggestion, direct your gaze between the eyebrows and instantaneously go consciously into the state of deep peace--deep intoxicating joy. Keep your inner mind free from disturbing thoughts. Every time such thoughts come, throw them off; then meditate on peace. Be drunk with it. Be merged in it. Consciously sleep in that peace.

Make it a habit to practice this (and other Self-Realization Fellowship exercises) whenever you have a period of leisure. Cast your eyes downward, closing them, and go into the kingdom of dreams, dreaming at will. Then come out consciously; level your eyes, and let your gaze roam among the flowers and beautiful scenery of the earth; then lift your vision up into the region of the eyebrows and move into the kingdom of peace.

When you are able to shift the searchlight of attention and energy from conscious to superconscious dreaming, enjoying peace at will, you shall feel complete freedom from the troubles of this mundane world. At will, you shall fly from the planet of sensations to the planet of dreams, or to the sphere of eternal peace. Remember that as you change your consciousness to the subconscious, your body also should manifest all the signs of sleep: the life force and energy must be switched off from the lamps of billion-celled muscles, and from the eyes and ears, and also from the olfactory and tactual nerves, and the nerves of taste. When shifting from the conscious to the superconscious plane, your lungs must be breathless, your heart calm, your cells inactive, your circulation stilled; and you must be listening to the symphony of the cosmic vibration of Om.

While in the superconscious state, one experiences complete cessation of unrest, and obtains fruition of peace and soul-expansion, unhampered by the friction attending sensations in the realm of ordinary consciousness. It would be ridiculous to claim that one can sleep while running, for healthful sleep is always accompanied by sensory or motor relaxation. Just as foolish are people who profess to have attained Cosmic Consciousness without having even learned to relax at will. The first signs of the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness are: the fixed gaze, the consciously stilled heart, and breathlessness. If one cannot demonstrate these he has not attained Cosmic Consciousness.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The little searchlights of our mind's attention and of the five senses ordinarily are focused on imperfect matter. But when they are united as one

beam and thrown back upon the Spirit, they disclose the infinite perfect light forever dancing on God's fountain of bliss, eternally emanating from Omnipresence and Christ Consciousness.

Man's attachment to matter keeps the soul confined to the bodily prison and prevents it from finding freedom with God in the realm of eternal bliss. The ego attempts to satisfy through material channels the soul's constant, insatiable longing for God. Far from accomplishing its objective, it increases man's misery. The soul's hunger can never be appeased by indulgence of the senses. When man realizes this and masters his ego, that is, when he achieves self-control, his life becomes glorified by the awareness of divine bliss while he is still in the flesh. Then, instead of being the slave of material desires and appetites, man's attention is transferred to the heart of Omnipresence, resting there forever with the hidden Joy in everything.

THE REWARD OF VIRTUE--Part 2

The next day the king, accompanied by the two little princes, went to the merchant's house, but found no one there. The bitter truth dawned upon him. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he searched all over the city for his queen, but in vain. Leaving her rescue to Divine Providence, in an agony of despair he took his sons by the hand and left the place. They continued traveling until a stream stopped their progress. Unable to cross to the other side with the two princes, the king left one on the bank, intending to return for him, and, carrying the other son on his shoulders, started to cross the stream. He had not gone far when a tiger snapped up the son he had left behind and made for the jungle. Hearing the commotion the king turned suddenly around to look behind. As he did so the boy on his shoulders was jerked into the water and carried away by the current.

Thus, for the king, misfortunes came in battalions. He journeyed on by himself, finally wandering into the territory of another prince who had just died. The ruler's ministers, according to the custom of choosing a successor by lot, took out a hawk and a golden crown, and the hawk was let loose just as the woe-stricken king entered the city. After circling round and round over the crowds, the hawk finally perched on the head of the newcomer. Seeing this, the ministers put the crown on his head and he was installed as king. So opened a new chapter in his life. He ruled with justice and peace, and an era of plenty smiled upon the land, but the king was sad.

Since the king had no queen, his ministers thought to provide him with a companion. Without consulting him, they inquired far and wide for a suitable bride, promising a handsome reward to the one who found such a person. One evening an emissary found a lady who was, all agreed, in every respect fit to be a queen. After she was approved by the ministers, they left her in a room

in the palace and went to tell the king about their plan.

It happened that just at this time a hunter and a fisherman brought in two boys, apparently orphans, and as the king under the Hindu law is the guardian of all waifs and strays, they were put in care of his ministers. The boys, left to themselves except for the presence of the lady, began telling the adventures each had gone through. While they were talking, she leaned forward and listened intently to their stories. Suddenly she arose and embraced them, and began to kiss them. She was the kidnapped queen, and the boys were her own two little princes, miraculously rescued, one from a tiger's jaw and the other from a watery grave.

While the ministers were suggesting matrimony to the king, a messenger came running to the throne room and informed him of the strange meeting of the lady and her two lost sons. The king, accompanied by the whole court, went to see for himself. Lo and behold, whom did he see but his own missing queen, embracing her two dear sons. Thus did virtue triumph in the end.

The pretended holy man, having ruled the state with harshness, was put to death by his subjects. The ministers found their former king and begged him to return to his kingdom, but as he could not be in two places at a time, he solved the difficulty by making each son king of one state with a council of elders. He and the queen retired into private life as wandering ascetics, in accordance with immemorial custom among the ancients.

--Based upon the story by Shovona Devi

AFFIRMATION

I will drive away all despondency, and make a mighty effort to feel God by meditating until He appears.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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INTUITION, THY HOLY BEACON

By Paramahansa Yogananda

During the night of error we pursued the will-o'-the-wisp of sense happiness. Far from the paths of soul progress, we stumbled through marshes of disillusionment.

O Ever Watchful Father, let not bog-born flames of folly, the ignis fatuus of our passions, lead us into sense quagmires.

May we, Thine eager pilgrim children, easily reach our Home by following the inner light--intuition, Thy holy beacon.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to remember that evil promises only a little pleasure in the beginning and always brings great sorrow in the end.

DOES EVIL EXIST ?

Before God created man He was alone, piping to Himself His eternal song of ever new Bliss. But He saw that there was no one to enjoy Him but Himself, so He began to create universes and to people them with beings who, although they were actually a part of Himself, could enjoy Him and His dream creation as separate individualities. Since everything is actually part of God, the only way that He could give created beings such a feeling of individuality was to cast over all the illusion of separateness, which is called maya, or Cosmic Delusion. God is the ocean, and creation is the waves. As long as the storm of maya whips the ocean there will be individual waves; but if the storm of Cosmic Delusion were to cease, the waves would all sink back into the ocean. In order to perpetuate the creation-making storm of delusion, God gave it individuality also, and the power to go on independently creating and maintaining universes. This intelligent cosmic delusive force is known as Satan, an archangel of the Lord. When Satan saw that all the soul-waves and universes that had been created, would, after a perfect existence, retire again into the cosmic ocean of God, he reasoned: "If creation goes back to God, then I shall no longer exist. So I will resist God. For every pattern of good that is created I shall create a pattern of evil. Thus I shall perpetuate the cosmic storm of delusion. People will be so interested in the exciting changes of maya that they will forget they are immortal sons of God and that they can return to Him."

However, good and evil are but relativities of the mortal consciousness. The innate soul of man is not identified with them. When the ocean produces waves out of itself, it does not change in essence. The ocean of God is the essence of goodness, and the individual soul-waves are composed of that same essence of Good. When the baby is born you can see the glory of God in it. Yet at the same time germs are busy at its destruction. A beautiful flower is attacked by parasites. All physical forms are battlegrounds whereon a war of good and evil is fought.

Some people say that evil doesn't exist. But that is not true. If your illness is not real, why do you need healing? When you want to be healed, you have accepted disease, and therefore evil, as a fact. It is inconsistent to deny disease and then to seek healing; or to say that all is mind, that the body does not exist, and yet to go on eating three meals a day.

For every beautiful process in life there is a contrast of suffering. Whether a child is born out of love, out of evil, or out of passion, the pain of the mother

is dreadful when the child is born. The pain is soon forgotten at the sight of the baby, so sweet and good. But later on that child may become a great trial to its fellow creatures, causing many heartaches.

Why must we grow old? Why must some die of sickness? Why can we not just melt away into the Infinite? Side by side we find good and bad tendencies: love, hate, greed, self-control. No doubt our souls are immortal, but we do not express that immortality when our consciousness dwells on the plane of duality.

Mentally picture yourself with Satan on one side and God on the other. Satan is the metaphysical evil that deludes you into thinking that you can find in the changeable mortal consciousness a lasting happiness. How can you expect to find it there? It is the Unchangeable that bestows real happiness. God is trying all the time to catch you in the net of His unchangeable love. He is seeking you through pure love, pure reason, pure feeling. No matter how we try to drown out the voice of God, it keeps calling us again and again. Satan cannot hold us forever in delusion, for delusion is only temporary; we are eternally children of God. Although Satan has created an evil counterpart for every pattern of good that God has created, His love is the greater force. The wrong doer finally breaks his own sword, compelled by Love. The mightiest blows ever dealt against Satan have been the examples offered by the lives of the saints.

This world has two general patterns--good and bad. If evil thoughts were not created by us, this world would be a much better place. However, we are not responsible for all the jealousy and misunderstandings, the anger and weak thoughts expressed through our minds. We couldn't be! These qualities are born within us and spread their poisonous tentacles until they envelop our lives. This does not mean that we need not bother to try to eradicate evil or seek to free ourselves from delusion. The old way of attempting to explain away evil, as not existing, is wrong. To fear evil is wrong too, because if you are afraid of it you are keeping it in your heart.

Do not deny the existence of evil; acknowledge that it does exist. If there were no evil, then there would be no use of studying anything. People contradict themselves when they say that there is no evil. Evil may not exist in God's consciousness, but that does not mean that it does not exist in our consciousness. God has His eyes open--He sees the true picture in its entirety--so to Him there is no evil. But we perceive evil because we have closed our eyes of wisdom and do not see the light of truth. The Christian Bible and other scriptures were given to us so that we might learn how to overcome evil by substituting good in its place.

Many people think that the disease of temptation and wrong thoughts that comes into their minds is entirely the result of psychological misunderstandings, but it is not so. From the beginning of time, good principles have been fighting evil principles. It is best to remember that jealousy, anger, and

greed were not created by us. They were all given to us from the beginning, and through suffering from these evils, wisdom is awakened and tries to find a way out of these sufferings. The only way that one finds wisdom is by experience, and so, by experience we find out that evil is that which causes us suffering. So, naturally, we must by all means avoid evil.

Watch out for those patterns of Satan. Every time peace descends after a quarrel and you have made up your mind to be kind, the Satan in you says: "You're being imposed upon; say something nasty in return." Don't let Satan win this tug-of-war. God is all the time talking to you, but if you don't listen to Him, how can He help you? Every time, side by side with Satan, God is calling to you. So the question is, to whom will you listen and give authority? No one can influence you without your consent, because you were given free choice, but there is always that delusion originated by Satan. Through the good force we see the solution of problems, but that evil force keeps on creating new misunderstandings.

Perfection means to be free from all mortal desires. God is almighty. He can destroy Satan in a minute, but He gave that Satanic force freedom, and He would go against His own laws if He destroyed that power. God foresaw that some evil results would come from His creation, but He knew that the power of love is the stronger, so He is trying by love to bring us back from the influence of Satan. When He succeeds, Satan also will be taken back into God because he won't have anything then on which to work!

Remember again that you are standing in the middle, free to do anything you want. God is on your right side, and Satan is on your left. Every time you do a good deed, God draws you, and every time you do an evil deed, Satan pulls you on his side. But Satan cannot keep you forever because you are created in the image of God. Love destroys evil. Every time you feel there is something wrong in you, remember that it is not you, but Satan. You have the power to listen to God and to ignore Satan. God never leads us into temptation, for He has given us reason, the power of free choice, by which we can protect ourselves.

As soon as hate comes into your heart, remember that Satan is trying to destroy you. As soon as love comes, God is calling you. Remember these things! There are patterns of evil and patterns of perfection. God is displaying His patterns to attract you, and Satan is displaying his patterns for the same reason. Be like the saint who, while seeing these changing patterns, sang: "Then life is sweet, and death a dream; then health is sweet, and sickness a dream, when Thy song flows through me." Then, you too, can say: "I am immortal, and death, life, health and sickness are only dreams. I am a child of God."

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Evil and sin are not inherent parts of our being. They are only graftings. Gold hidden under a coating of mud will shine with its natural brilliancy when the mud is

scraped from it. So the good in man--his soul--is similarly everlasting. Though the soul-gold be encrusted with the hardened mud of ignorance, we have only to scrape off that mud with the knife of wisdom to reveal its golden brilliance.

THE WOMAN WHO LOVED GOD AS HER SON

Many are the astounding stories told about Krishna, the Christ of India, who lived several centuries before the Christian era. Long before Jesus was born and called "the Christ" the word "Christ" was used in India as an appellation for those great masters who had attained Cosmic Consciousness. Jesus, having attained that consciousness, and being an Oriental born after the time of Krishna (or Christna) was also called Christ.

Jadava the Christna, and Jesus the Christ, have therefore a great spiritual concomitance. Jadava the Christna could project his consciousness into all the Cosmos. Jesus the Christ also had this power, by which he was aware of what was happening to others (Lazarus, for example) who were far away from him.

There are many parallelisms in the stories clustered around the lives of these two great incarnations of God. Both Jesus and Krishna were born of devout, God-fearing parents. Krishna's parents were persecuted by King Kansa; **King Herod caused trouble for the mother and father of Jesus. Jesus conquered Satan; Krishna conquered the demon Kaliya (ignorance). Jesus stopped a storm on the sea to save a ship carrying his disciples; Krishna, to prevent a village from being destroyed by a flood, lifted a hill over it like an umbrella.**

Jesus was called "King of the Jews," though his kingdom was not of this world; Krishna was an earthly king as well as a divine one. Jesus had women disciples, Mary, Martha and Mary Magdalene, who helped him and played a vital role in his mission; Krishna's women disciples, Radha and the gopis (milkmaids), similarly had divine roles to play. Krishna taught one of the greatest philosophies of India in the Bhagavad-Gita; in the Christian Bible Jesus taught one of the greatest philosophies to be adopted in the West. Jesus was crucified by being nailed to a cross; Krishna was mortally wounded by a hunter's arrow. Jesus and Krishna both performed many miracles to demonstrate the power of God. These two divine ones are generally recognized, in the West and East respectively, as the greatest incarnations of God.

There are many ways in which a devotee can worship God. In the Western world the Father and son relationship between God and the worshiper is prevalent. In India, the Mother and son relationship between God and the devotee is preferred because whereas the father's love is conditioned by reason, a mother's love is not conditioned by anything. The greatest sinner is still a son to his mother.

When he invokes God as Divine Mother, the devotee loses all diffidence born of the consciousness of sin and thinks: "Well, Divine Mother, naughty or

good, I am Thy child, and as such I can find forgiveness, no matter what I have done. "

There are other unusual relationships in which God can be known, and these are described in the Hindu Scriptures. God can be worshipped as a lover, as a beloved, as a friend, as a divine servant, as a master, or as a son.

It is said that the great woman devotee, Jasoda, wanted to look upon God as her son. In time it came about that she could adopt Krishna, who was an incarnation of God. Baby Krishna was full of childish pranks, yet he was the "apple of the eye" of the milkmaids and of the other people who lived in the sacred village of Brindaban. The milkmaids carried the milk in large pots on the tops of their heads. One of little Krishna's favorite pastimes was to push the maidens unexpectedly so that as they momentarily lost balance, their milk pots slanted and poured forth milk. The miniature Niagara Falls he thus precipitated was caught in the open mouth of Krishna, waiting expectantly below. The milkmaids never complained, but loved to be taken by surprise by Krishna, so that he might enjoy the milk.

Young Krishna was also very fond of cheese; one day he secretly took an unusually large piece of cheese and began to run. After a long chase through the winding corridors of the house, Mother Jasoda caught hold of him, but it was too late, because Krishna, afraid of losing his cheese, put the whole piece in his mouth. Krishna tightly closed his lips, but the relentless Mother Jasoda, afraid that her adored son would be choked to death, forcibly pried his jaws open with her fingers in order to pull the cheese out. Baby Krishna laughed and opened his mouth, but behold, there was no cheese; instead, a tunnel of eternity, with stars and worlds moving there amidst fire, smoke and thunder!

Mother Jasoda immediately cried out: "Nay, nay, Baby Lord Krishna, close your mouth and have your cheese. I don't want to know you as God, but only as my godly baby." Krishna closed his mouth, apparently having swallowed the cheese. Saluting his mother, he went out to play with his neighborhood playmates.

Mother Jasoda, as she had looked into the tunnel of eternity, a spaceless forest of vastness blazing with unending light, found herself melting in it; she pulled away from it, preferring to see God materialized in the tangible form of Krishna. God is both finite and infinite. In creation the finite aspect of God is emphasized. But pure Spirit, in which creation is dissolved in Him, reflects Infinitude. Some devotees like the finite expression of God, whereas others prefer the infinite aspect of the Divine. Mother Jasoda loved and found God in her son, Krishna. God fulfills all the worthy desires of devotees, as the earthly mother satisfies the wholesome desires of her children.

AFFIRMATION

I shall drink the everlasting nectar of joy found in the fountain of meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAY WE BEHOLD NOTHING BUT TRUTH

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, awaken within us Thy consciousness of peace and happiness beyond dreams. Teach us to find the one highway of inner spiritual law through which we may find Thee. Father, Thou art our Beloved. It is our birthright to seek and to know Thee. Naughty or good, we are Thy children. Reveal Thyself to us.

~~We offer to Thee our devotion. Bless us with calmness~~ and understanding and right effort, that we may see all the rivers of our desires moving toward Thy presence within and without. Lead us from worry to divine love. With burning hearts, with flaming souls, with ardent minds, we lay at Thy feet of Omnipresence all the flowers of our devotion.

Open the stars, open the blue, open the doors of blossoms and call our thoughts and feelings, and nature and history, and show to us Thy great presence. Father, Almighty Being, our Beloved God, with every cell of our bodies, with every thought of our beings, we long for Thee.

Wherever light is, darkness can be no more. We closed our eyes and beheld darkness only. Open our eyes that we may destroy this self-created darkness and behold naught but Thy light, and may we emancipate ourselves in that Light. Let us behold naught but beauty, naught but good, naught but truth, naught but Thine immortal fountain of Bliss.

PRAYER

Father, leave me not in the pit of temptation, wherein I fell through misuse of Thy gift of reason; but if it be Thy desire to test me, make Thyself more tempting than temptation.

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

These lessons teach you that you should not cynically accept temptation, but rather make it your business to find out that there is a happiness better and more lasting than the limited pleasures offered by temptation. We are living in a new age. Standards of living are changing. The scientific way to live is to go within yourself and ask yourself whether you are doing right or wrong, and be absolutely sincere with yourself. If you are sincere with yourself, you are unlikely ever to go wrong; and even if you do, you will be able quickly to correct yourself.

Be master of yourself! You must remain in the safety of your castle of reason. If you know how to destroy delusion by the power of your mind, you will not become its victim. Above all, be true to yourself. The old orthodox way is to deny temptation, to suppress it. But you must learn to control that temptation. It is not a sin to be tempted. Even though you are boiling with temptation, you are not evil; but if you yield to that temptation, you are caught temporarily by the power of evil. You must erect about yourself protecting parapets of wisdom. There is no stronger force that you can employ against temptation than wisdom. Complete understanding will bring you to the point where nothing can tempt you to actions that promise pleasure but in the end will only hurt you.

LAW OF ACTION All human events are rooted in the law of cause and effect. There is nothing called "fate." From the effects of all actions we can trace a cause. In this life you are the architect of your own destiny. No matter how terrible life is, owing to the effects of past wrong actions, it is never too late to change the future, for you are your own savior.

You think you are free, but you are not really free until you have liberated yourself from the effects of past and present actions. When you understand the law of cause and effect, you can see clearly a just reason for all the conditions of life that may now appear to you unjust.

Past actions are not only those that you were performing a few minutes, days, or years ago, but include actions of your past lives as well. Would we not consider God very unjust if He gave to one person the brain of a moron and to another a brain of high intelligence? God is not partial. It is we who create such conditions for ourselves, the result of our own past and present actions. We are immortal, but we imperfectly express our immortality, and we cannot go back to

God until we have overcome our imperfections.

Past actions leave in your mind seeds of future developments. If you consume the seeds in the fire of wisdom, they cannot sprout into future effects, and you will become a free individual. You cannot be free until you have burned those seeds of action in the fire of wisdom and meditation. You should not allow your actions to be wrongly influenced by custom or environment. You should stay away from evil because it is harmful. You should use your wisdom and intelligence to choose the company and the environment that will contribute to your highest good and happiness, and to resist evil customs or environment if you cannot immediately better conditions.

GUARD AGAINST EVIL Do not get into the power of evil; you can avoid it by not forming bad habits. If you form bad habits, evil has already won the battle, and it may be a long time before you will awaken from delusion. Satan is working his way into your life through diseases, mental sorrows, and satiety. When boredom fills your mind, you lose sight of all happiness. The best way to escape is to convince yourself that you are not a sinner, but a child of God. You have been a victim of Satan, and you must try to correct yourself.

Destroy all darkness by light, evil thoughts by good thoughts, and temptation by meditation. Any time you feel that something is overpowering you, meditate. That is the best cure. If you are always kind, darkness will fly. If you have made up your mind to be good, then you are no longer a sinner, even though you fail occasionally. You are simply sleeping in ignorance, and you are imagining that you are suffering from poverty, illness, and so on.

You must always remember that you lead yourself into temptation. True reason will always show you that you are doing wrong, if you consult it. When your reason and will act, then you will become powerful against temptation. Your will power must never become impotent. Do not let anyone control you. You must be able to resist. On the other hand, you must never be stubborn when you should be reasonable.

CONTACT DIVINE SPIRIT First make your contact with the Divine. Satan's method of temptation is to delude you into feeling the little joy of material things and to not let you feel the higher joy of Spirit. God is the only real possession to have because He is happiness everlasting. We should want God because He is the panacea for all our suffering. He is the answer to all our needs. The very thing that our hearts cry for--love, wisdom, everything--we find in contact with that Complete One. After all, even if you are the most famous man in the world, when you die that will be the end here, and you will not remember that people adored you. Only the great ones such as Krishna or Christ know, because they are omnipresent and conscious. Why try to have something that you will lose just as you cross the threshold of the grave?

Increase more the influence of good by contacting God. Nothing can come to you that you haven't earned now or acquired before. Remember, God is not creating your destiny. You are the maker of your own destiny. You can change your destiny (created by your past actions) only by contacting God. You are your own judge and your own savior. You can free yourself if you choose. God cannot force you because He has given you free choice; but He can help you if you are in tune with Him. Usually you are resisting God, through wrong habits of thinking and living, and so He cannot help you. God helps those who help themselves and who ask Him to help them. Remember this: it is the power of God that will help you. Be fearless and feel that you are a child of God and that God shows no special favor to any one.

Why should we avoid temptation? Because temptation produces suffering. The best way to overcome temptation is by comparison. Meditate more and see if meditation doesn't give you more happiness. When the greater joy of God comes, you will see that what you have is greater than temptation. Remember, as long as you feel that temptation is something you must have, you are in the region of Satan, and evil will sometime or other get you.

As soon as you are angry or jealous, you are in the possession of Satan. As soon as you forgive, you are with God. How this knowledge simplifies everything, instead of blindly saying, when you are tempted, "There is no evil." Anything that will hurt you and yet you want to do, remember, that is temptation. Never let it get hold of you, for it will weaken your will. Be strong.

When I went into a beautiful temple in Cleveland, I had a great vision. I always loved temples and large buildings, so God showed me a great temple with a beautiful organ, with a congregation of ten thousand people. He said, "Do you want this temple without Me?" Then He showed me a vision of a tree with myself and a few disciples seated under it. He asked: "Or would you prefer this, with Me?"

I quickly answered: "Lord, I would rather be under the tree with a few disciples and with Thee in our midst. Because Thou art, all things are. All beauties are but the windows through which we behold Thine infinite beauty. The beauty of the rose and the beauty of the moon are but reflections of Thy beauty."

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER If you are non-attached, you have disconnected yourself from evil, and have connected yourself with God. If you can keep non-attached and active for God, you will experience a most wonderful state of being. You now have a great chance to attain this state. Whatever you do, you must do cheerfully for the service of all, and be very ambitious in well-doing.

Do not grieve because you have so few things. Whatever you have, be

happy. It is better to be satisfied with little in the way of material possessions; but in spiritual matters you must be very dissatisfied unless you have communion with God. Attachment is a wall between you and God. That is the test of God. Your difficulty is not mine, and my difficulty is not yours. If you have difficulties, the best way to overcome them is to be non-attached.

Destroy the wall between you and God. What is given to you, you must take care of, and at the same time you must not forget God. If you do become attached, you will forget God; and that is the test of life. The greatest test is whether you can remain like a divine king, behave like a divine king, and go from this earth like a divine king. Do not wait for death to teach you that lesson. Learn that lesson today. Be an immortal playing on the stage of time, not to please yourself, but to please the Heavenly Father, and thus please yourself. Become attached to Him.

The devotee who has already formed habits of indulging in material pleasures becomes depressed when he realizes that he has to give up his dear, long-known psychological relatives of evil tendencies. Then he reasons: "Why can't I enjoy material and spiritual pleasures together?" not wanting to face the fact that this only amounts to wanting to enjoy a poisonous drink and an invigorating tonic at the same time. He erroneously imagines that if he moves into the deeper regions of ecstasy, his mind will be completely unconscious of the world of the senses, and that, by continued inner contact, he may dull the reactions of the senses and ~~ultimately, through long disuse, his sense-faculties may even be utterly annihilated.~~ The above fear is baseless; for a true devotee in deep ecstasy of meditation finds his sense-perceptions and senses highly sensitized by contact with the all-powerful and all-seeing God.

FEEDING THE SENSES

A man who lived in one of the coldest parts of Alaska received one day from the United States a large package. In it, carefully preserved against the cold, were bunches of luscious, long, lady-finger grapes from a friend who lived in Fresno, California. Every grape seemed to hold the fragrance and warmth of the sunny valley where they were grown, and their taste was as tempting as that of wine. As he fondled and savored and slowly ate the grapes, the Alaskan wished that they might last forever. He became so enamored of them that he could think of nothing but reaching the country where they are grown. He disposed of his holdings in the north and, through the kindness of the friend who had sent the grapes, secured a job at Fresno where all kinds of grapes grow abundantly.

On his arrival, the Alaskan was invited to the home of his friend; and soon a young lady, who had been told of his predilection for grapes, brought him a large bunch of his favorite variety. He was almost beside himself with joy, and began to eat them at once. Muttering his thanks as he munched, he hurriedly

gulped the fruit. The young lady, who herself owned a huge vineyard, was amused at his delight over such a simple gift. "Well," she smiled indulgently, "you shall have all the grapes you want. I own a vineyard here, and every day I shall keep you supplied."

The next day, very early, she arrived at his house with a large basket of grapes. The greedy Alaskan, who had not yet digested all the grapes he had swallowed so hurriedly the previous night, came out of the house yawning. Still, when he saw the contents of the basket, he was at once wide awake and filled with joy at the prospect of feasting at will on all the beautiful bunches of fruit this kind acquaintance had brought. "Oh, how wonderful to have so many grapes! Thank you so much!"

When his benefactor had left he tasted a few grapes, although in his mouth still lingered the taste of grapes now fermenting in his stomach. So the man amused himself by gloating over the firm and beautiful globules of color with admiring and greedy eyes. But after an hour or so had passed, his appetite returned and he began to eat again. All day long at intervals he swallowed... grapes.

Next morning--at what seemed to him like the break of dawn--the Alaskan heard his generous provider calling to him. Trying to hide his sleepiness--and the slight touch of vexation he felt at being roused from deep slumber--he appeared at the door with a forced smile on his face. There she stood with a still larger quantity of the finest grapes her vineyard could yield. He greeted both the lady and the grapes with just slightly wilted enthusiasm.

On the fourth morning the vineyard-owner appeared, laden as usual with grapes. It looked to the Alaskan as if she had more than ever before, and he asked himself if it could possibly be only a few days that he had been eating grapes. He could manage only a half-smile and a few rather feeble words of appreciation. "It is really very good of you, but I still have some left over from yesterday."

On the fifth morning, the grape-gorged Alaskan heard his benefactor at the door again. This time he could not manage even the vestige of a smile as he opened the door, commenting unenthusiastically, "Oh, grapes again! It is really kind of you but, I have enough." However, he did not tell her how many he had left over, and so when he came back into the house with the day's offerings, he had to look around for some place to put them. The pans and platters in his little kitchenette were full.

On the sixth day, so that the Alaskan would not fear her generosity was waning, his benefactress brought as many grapes as she could possibly carry. But her knock brought the Alaskan leaping out of bed to yank open the door and face her as if she were an unwelcome ghost. And indeed she was the personification of a ghostly figure that pursued him through nightmares all week, offer-

ing bunches of grapes as big as babies. "Oh no! Not grapes again! For heaven's sake, no! Everywhere I look--grapes, grapes, grapes!"

But the vineyard owner only smiled understandingly at this unmannerly outburst and remarked, "Well, I see that you have been cured of your greed for grapes, and I don't think you will ever gorge yourself on them again."

Yes, "too much of a good thing is bad." Too much of any material thing is bad; and no matter how pleasurable a thing is, if you over-indulge in it, pain will result instead of pleasure.

The owner of the vineyard in this story gave of the boundless store at her disposal until the greedy man was surfeited; and she only smiled at his childishness and petulance when he complained. In the same way, Divine Mother--owner of the vineyard of the world--often gives her foolish children all they want of material gifts. When they are greedy, they must learn through trial and error that any over-indulgence brings pain.

So remember, do not over-indulge in anything--sexual pleasure, eating, sleeping, working, social activity, or any activity. If you do, unhappiness is the certain result. The sages of India have always taught their disciples this truth, ~~and it is an important point in the sacred scriptures.~~

AFFIRMATION

I laugh at all fears, for my Protector, Father, Mother, Beloved God is especially attentively awake and present everywhere with the deliberate purpose of protecting me from the temptations of evil.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TEACH US TO HEAR THY VOICE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, walk through our feet, work through our hands, that we may perform Thine everlasting good. Behold through our eyes what we should behold. Use our speech to speak Thine inspirations and shower Thy kindness from the fountain of words.

Heavenly Father, let Thy fragrance ooze from our hearts and draw souls to Thy temple. Throb in our hearts, that our hearts may throb in tune with everyone. Work through our minds that we may bring others to Thy peace. Be forever on the altar of our joy.

Father, no more forgetfulness! No more shall we walk the pathway of life, torn and bleeding with sorrow. We have been Thy prodigal children. Show us the highway that leads to Thee. Give us bursting devotion of the heart, and in the echo of devotion teach us to hear Thy voice.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach us to feel that no duty is more important than our duty to Thee, since no duty is possible without Thee. Teach us to love Thee above everything, as we cannot live or love anything without Thy life, Thy love.

THE LIFE OF A YOGI VERSUS A BUSINESS LIFE

Most people reason that if they first acquire prosperity, they can then think of God. But we must have God first, because He is our greatest need. Once that consciousness of His presence comes, we shall have real happiness. God must be with us always. If but once we achieve that incomparable contact with God, the universe will be at our feet. It is an absolute truth. We should not forget that God is our provider. It isn't what we own, but what we can acquire at will that denotes real prosperity.

To live unspiritually is to live a contradictory life. When our whole consciousness, no matter what our faults are, is yearning and striving toward God, toward the silence, that is being with God. When we perform all the duties of life cheerfully, without letting concern for duties upset our inner happiness, we are experiencing spiritual happiness. Our whole mind and consciousness are going back toward the Source--toward God. Freedom, happiness, and plain living are the most desirable necessities of life, so the masters of India teach. That is why the masters give the training of plain living and high thinking to students from the beginning of their novitiate.

We are living directly by the power of God. We are supplied with life force and sun and air and food directly by God. Suppose He suddenly changed the climate of earth and made it intolerably extreme. What then? Where would be the food? How would we live? Why not remember that God is the supporter of the life that He gave to us? Even though He made that life dependent upon food, still He is the support behind the food and all other outer necessities. He is the Cause of everything, and when we lose our connection with Him we are bound to suffer.

It is His lightning splendor that is borrowed by the lightning. All lights lose their luminosity before the glory of His light. All beautiful things exist because of God. Because God is, all things of beauty are beautiful.

To forget God and live buried in luxury is heathenish. Yogis have learned that God can never be found outside, but that when we go deep within the soul, in the temple of God, we can say: "No one in the whole world cares for my health, prosperity, and happiness as my Heavenly Father does. He is with me always. Having little material wealth, I yet have everything, for I have God."

Self-Realization Fellowship has come to show mankind why some were born poor, and why others were born rich; that we must depend no more upon man for prosperity, for God is the source of all prosperity, health, power, and immortality. The yogi says: "Be free within. Take God as your provider and live no more in poverty consciousness."

Real prosperity, and real freedom are attained when we realize that God is our provider, and that we are absolutely dependent upon Him. When we have that consciousness, we need not care what happens externally, because we are in the immortal arms of God. Isn't that better than to live unhappily without God, suffering from poverty? Jesus was not wealthy. Yet he was the happiest person in the world. He had God, and he knew that God was the provider.

Riches of the world are perishable, but the riches of God are imperishable. A million times a man tortures his soul with earthly incarnations, and the only way that he can find release is to find God. Having God he will find, is more worthwhile than having all the riches in the world. Be a true child of the Father of the Universe and say: "Earthly riches are but toys. I am rich, for I have my God." Be sure of Him first, then you will see that everlasting riches will be yours in this life and beyond.

Your success or failure now is more or less due to influences from the past, but you can remedy your mistakes because reason and will have been given you. There is no difficulty that cannot be solved provided you believe that you have more power than troubles. You must use that power to explode your difficulties. Very few people try to succeed scientifically. We often hear someone say: "I am lucky," or, "it is fate;" but there is no luck or good fortune that you did not attract to yourself in the past, and there is no misfortune that has not come through wrong actions here in the present, or else way back in the past. That is why some people are born poor and some healthy, rich, and so on. Otherwise, if God made us His children, all equal, and then put some in good homes and others in bad homes, where would be His justice? Remember, the greatest of all things is to please God first. If the whole world is pleased with you and God is not pleased, you have nothing; but if the whole world forsakes you and God is pleased with you, then you have everything.

We are absolutely dependent for life itself upon God's laws, and He will show us the way out of all our difficulties. Mankind shows us a way of life and then "leaves us cold," to reap the results of our errors. God's way will bring happiness and prosperity. If we can reach that state wherein we can say: "What is mine is yours," this world will be much better. In this age of selfishness it is extremely difficult to be prosperous. Selfishness must go. It can be destroyed only by everyone's being unselfish. We must live that way ourselves, and the best way to teach others is by our own example.

Saints and yogis never give up. No matter what our difficulties may be,

if we do not give up, we are struggling against the stream; and to struggle is to win the favor of God. Every man must make a supreme effort. We must not let life idly float us down the stream. Keyserling said: "So many pass by the Ganges river and see only the muddy water, but I felt the vibrations left there by the great saints."

BASE BUSINESS We should learn to spiritualize service--to perform work
PRINCIPLES that gives the best service to mankind. He who makes
UPON TRUTH service rather than money his goal will see the entire
 plan of his life change. He will never be left out. Most
people cannot maintain a balance between the material and the spiritual life. The spiritual man needs money and the material man cannot live happily without God. The spiritual man works with the consciousness that God is the Doer. The material man works too, but he works and acts with the consciousness that he is the doer, and as such he makes himself miserable through his likes and dislikes.

All business activities, whether for spiritual or material purposes, should be based upon true business principles, employed with discrimination. Without that sense of proportion, everything we do tends to produce misery instead of happiness. If a man invites a crowd of poor people to a festivity, and doesn't have the money to buy food for them, that is lack of discrimination, lack of balance in planning. We must understand the law of order which governs our actions. It is wrong to use religion for promoting business, although it is good to use business methods in furthering religion. There is a universal law of happiness that works. If we follow that law, happiness and prosperity are bound to come.

When business principles are not based upon truth, they are bound to bring misery and suffering. In business principles there is sometimes a great error of untruth, since some business methods are based upon selfishness and on making people matter-bound through sense-attraction.

Man should purge his consciousness of the selfishness of material luxury. He should enjoy more luxury in his soul, and so decorate himself with the knowledge and wisdom and love of God. We should learn to live simply, and by one common principle: looking out for one another's good. That unity of purpose can never come if there is selfishness in individual hearts.

The one-sided businessman who is forgetful of his other duties of life, is not a truly successful man. It requires greater skill to live life evenly, rightly, and successfully. He who only keeps his engagement with money is left behind by God. It is true that God has given us the pangs of hunger, so that we get busy and make money to support our physical bodies. Yet it seems that just maintaining our physical bodies is not the goal of life. There is little difference between eating food from a gold plate and from a tin plate. The food in both cases is equally satisfying to hunger. Then why concentrate upon

unnecessary things, or go on constantly multiplying useless desires for more? To create such meaningless demands for luxuries is to become engaged night and day, giving one's life blood, in a foolish pursuit.

Business should not be synonymous with private profiteering. That idea must be eradicated. The glory of divine knowledge is in the recognition of one's fellow beings as brothers. However, it is dangerous to bring people together without first trying to unite them by spiritual methods. If spirituality is forsaken, that is the death of good business, which will evolve only out of unselfishness.

India's material side didn't deteriorate because of her high spiritual development, but because India didn't put enough attention on materiality. She developed only the spiritual side. And the Western people didn't fail spiritually because of their material progress, but because they lacked the desire to develop the spiritual side as well. There must be a balance. God is no respecter of persons; whoever obeys His laws will find happiness. The East needs some of the West's business methods, as the West needs the spiritual methods of the East.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Many persons reason that renunciation of material pleasures is almost an impossibility in the business world, or while living among men whose thoughts are centered on material aspects of existence; but the average man is not advised to return to the jungle in order to find peace. He must learn how to be in the world, yet not of it. He must not be negative toward his surroundings, but neither should he blind himself with material pleasures, and thus fail to enjoy the vision of superior happiness.

TWO BLIND MEN WHO SOUGHT RICHES FROM GOD AND A KING

Akbar the Great (1556-1605), a Mogul Emperor of India, was one of the greatest Asiatic monarchs of recorded history. He won the title of "Guardian of Mankind" because of the benevolence of his rule and the devoted zeal with which, at the same time, he sought to regain lost sections of the once vast empire that had broken away under long periods of misrule before his ascension to the throne.

Akbar fostered religious tolerance among the many diverse religions of India. During his reign, Hinduism and Mohammedanism flourished side by side in complete harmony. Akbar sometimes dressed as a Mohammedan and went into a mosque to pray, and at other times he might dress as a Hindu and worship in a Hindu temple. This broadminded emperor went about showering good on needy individuals and social groups throughout India.

It so happened that Emperor Akbar was in the habit of riding in a richly decorated carriage drawn by eight horses. Heralds and bodyguards would trumpet his approach in all quarters of the city. In spite of this great pomp and splendor it was Akbar's strict order that the procession be stopped at any time, anywhere, if any of his subjects wanted to offer him a petition.

One day, as the royal procession passed along the boulevard, the emperor's attention was attracted by two blind men, sitting about twenty yards apart, shouting for alms. He ordered the carriage stopped in front of the first one, who kept repeating: "To whom the emperor gives, he alone can be rich." After listening thoughtfully, Akbar ordered his carriage moved forward in front of the second blind man, whose cry was: "To whom God gives, he alone can be rich."

For a month, whenever his procession passed along the boulevard, the great ruler heard the two blind men shouting their respective demands for riches from him and riches from God. At last, feeling quite flattered by the first blind man's utterance, "To whom the emperor gives, he alone can be rich," Akbar ordered one day that a very large loaf of bread be baked, and that the inside be stuffed with solid gold. This loaf Akbar gave to the first blind man. The emperor completely ignored the second blind man, who cried that God alone could make him rich.

Soon after, Akbar went on a hunting trip. When he returned and once again passed along the boulevard in his usual way, he came across the blind man to whom he had given the loaf. The beggar was still shouting: "To whom the emperor gives, he alone becomes rich." Then Akbar had the royal coach stopped, and he leaned out and asked: "What did you do with the loaf I gave you?" The man replied: "Your Royal Highness, the loaf you gave me was too large and not well baked, for it was very heavy; so I sold it to the other blind man for ten cents. I was happy to get even that much money." Akbar looked about for the second blind man but he was nowhere to be seen. Upon inquiry, Akbar learned that the other blind man had given the loaf to his wife, who had opened it and found the gold. With this they had bought a home. When he heard this, the emperor at once realized the lesson implied. With inner humbleness, but with an outward show of wrath, he rebuked the first blind man, saying: "You fool, you gave away my gold-stuffed loaf to your friend who depended upon God and not upon me for wealth. From now on you must use his motto: "To whom God gives, he alone can be rich."

The moral of this story of the two blind men is certainly applicable today! Millions of people think that all wealth comes from the banks, factories, and jobs, and through personal ability. Yet periodic great depressions prove that there are divine laws, aside from known physical laws, that govern the physical, mental, spiritual, and material phases of life. Every day strive to be healthy, wealthy, wise, and happy, not by taking away the health, wealth, and happiness of others, but by including their happiness and welfare in your own.

The happiness of individuals, of family members, and of nations, depends entirely upon the law of mutual cooperation or unselfishness, and on living up to this motto: "Father, bless us, that we may remember Thee always. Let us not forget that all blessings flow from Thee."

AFFIRMATION

Father, Thou art my riches; I am rich. Thou art the owner of all things. I am Thy child. I have what Thou hast.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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COME INTO THE SILENCE OF SOLITUDE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

God blesses with enlightenment those who love Him. They will never sleep in ignorance again. They will awake and remain awake to God's glory. The temple of God is within your soul. Enter into this quietness, and sit there in meditation with the light of intuition burning on the altar. There is no restlessness, no searching, no striving here. Come into this temple not created by man. Come into the silence of solitude, and the vibration there will talk to you through the voice of God; and you will know that the invisible has become visible and the unreal has become real.

The power of Truth is here; and if you will but make a determined effort, you will no longer walk in fear and uncertainty on the path of life.

Get away from the delusion of matter. Remember that until you have built a temple of silence within yourself, until you have broken down the ramparts with which environment has surrounded you, you will never see the glory of God; you will never have real peace and lasting joy. When you meet the Great One, darkness will forever disappear.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, having Thee as the deepest joy of deepest meditation, I know that all things--prosperity, health, and wisdom--will be added unto me.

ACQUIRING PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS

THROUGH SUPERCONSCIOUS POWER

Mines of power lie unexplored within you. You use this power unconsciously in all things you do, and you achieve certain results; but, if you learn how to consciously control and use the powers within you, you can accomplish much more.

If you correctly apply the laws through which you have created your present mental state of consciousness, then, and only then, can you attain mastery over your life. To attain mastery over the material affairs of life is not enough. You must attain mastery also in your spiritual life, and learn to commune with God at will. With the advance of science, man has progressed a great deal materially; but spiritually he has progressed only slowly. Most people worship a God that is a mystery to them; but He is knowable, and nearer than the throbbing of the blood in your veins, nearer than your love and innermost feelings--if only you would acknowledge Him.

As I have pointed out before, if scientists and businessmen got together in a temple and prayed for results in their various activities, and did not use their God-given intelligence to work toward those results, would they get anywhere? No. Mind is the power of all powers, but it has to be put to use in order to get results. That is a law of God.

So you should develop intellectually. But that development comes not alone from reading books; it comes also from experience. Very few people realize, without the eye-opening shocks of experience, in what lies their own good. They are always doing something that will make them disliked. Intellectuality is to be shunned when it becomes tinged with egotism. Greater than intellectuality gleaned from reading books is meditation. I like to use the following maxim in order to illustrate the comparative importance of reading, writing, thinking, and meditating. If you read for one hour, write for two hours; if you write for two hours, think for four hours; if you think for four hours, meditate all the time.

A person who deeply meditates does not have to read to understand. I can feel what a book contains the moment I pick it up. When you are charged with natural wisdom and natural vitality, then, just as bees seek the flower, so

prosperity, success, knowledge, and so on will seek you.

"EACH FOR ALL-- Now comes the question: how to select your job. First
ALL FOR EACH" think of the service that you are best equipped to offer;
next, in order to succeed, you must be prepared to give
that service in the best possible way. Then you may be sure that even though
jobs become scarce and others are left out, you have the best possible chance to
go on. Your entire motive must be service. The main purpose of any business
should be service; it should not be merely moneymaking. The store that gives
the best service and handles the best products is the one we like. Just remember
that you must serve in order to please others.

Not selfishness, but unselfishness is the governing principle in the law of prosperity. Each one of us must live for the other. In getting for yourself, you should get for others too. Christian principles should be lived. Jesus himself said: "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor" (Luke 18:22). And Gandhi said: "Each for all-all for each."

Whatever you do, enter into it with heart and soul; never permit yourself to stagnate in your environment. There are two kinds of environment that you should watch carefully--the outer and the inner. No matter what business you are in, it is possible that by changing your environment you would find better results in your work; but don't change unless you are sure that the new place will ~~be better than the one you already occupy.~~ Also, increase your efficiency. You should go ahead like a shooting star in your line of work. You should be the life of the business, and do the work that you are doing for others just as well as if you owned the business.

True success means a balanced life of:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1) meditation, | 4) happiness, |
| 2) intellectual studies, | 5) earning a living. |
| 3) health, | |

Some people feel that they are too busy to contact God. But suppose God said that He was too busy for you. What then? You would not be here. To perform your duties without the consciousness of God is to forget God, but to perform duties with the consciousness of God is the highest and happiest way to live.

The sun's rays, when concentrated by a lens to a fine point, produce heat of such intensity that it will ignite wood, cloth, or paper. Similarly the mind, when concentrated by scientific methods, will burn up the veil of doubt, the cause of all failures, and will cause the light of discrimination to shine. The conscious mind cannot initiate a new cause that will bring positive success in any direction; but, when the human mind communes with God and becomes God-conscious mind, it can be sure of success, owing to the unlimited power of God that creates new causes of success.

Great wealth does not necessarily bring health, peace, or efficiency; but acquirement of efficiency and peace are bound to bring a proper balance of material success. Most people develop mental efficiency only as a by-product of their efforts for material success. When you achieve mental and physical self-control, life will become glorified by bliss while you are still in the flesh. Then, instead of becoming the slave of material desires and appetites, your attention will be transferred to the heart of Omnipresence, resting there forever with the hidden joy in everything.

THE POWER OF ATTRACTION

You should learn to be magnetic. In developing the power of attraction lies the germ of a successful existence.

While it is true that few people are noticeably magnetic, nevertheless everyone possesses within him latent magnetism, which is the attractive power by which you draw unto yourself both material possessions and human relationships: the right husband, the right wife, the right friends, the right business, and so on. Naturally, if your magnetism is not of the right kind you will draw the wrong people and the wrong things. You should learn to develop that finer quality of magnetism by which you can draw to yourself whatever is for your good. People seldom exercise this higher magnetic power, so naturally they do not attract anything very good.

Physical Principles for Acquiring Magnetism

First it is necessary to keep your body free from poisons in order to have magnetism. If your body is filled with poisons, you will find that all your energy is more or less bound within you. Try to clean out poisons that accrue from faulty elimination and wrong habits of living. If you are clean within, then all your energy can be displayed through your eyes and your face and your body. Every time you look, or listen, or lift your hands, you are throwing out magnetic current. And when you send a thought, you send energy with it.

Mental Principles for Acquiring Magnetism

But if you are absentminded, you have much less magnetism. If you are thinking one thing while doing something else, your energy is divided; when you are fully attentive to what you are doing, then you are developing magnetism.

Spiritual Principles for Acquiring Magnetism

Each human being is a medium through which God's magnetism flows, but material desires, revenge, hatred, and an inferiority complex hamper the flow of that magnetism. Do not obstruct that power. To be firm is to manifest magnetism; to be just is to manifest magnetism; to be kind is to manifest magnetism.

Meditation is the laboratory in which you can discover that God is with you and that His magnetism is with you. Wherever you go, scatter kindness;

let your heart be charged with God, your eyes charged with God, so that everyone you meet will be attracted to Him. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "Be ye fishers of men."

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Every human being is a representative of the Infinite Power. You should manifest that Power in everything you do. Whenever you want to produce something, do not depend upon the outside source; go deep and seek the Infinite Source. All methods of business success, all inventions, all vibrations of music, and all inspirational thoughts and writings are recorded in the annals of God.

First, determine what your goal is; ask divine aid to direct you to the right action whereby your objective will be fulfilled; then meditate. Afterward, act according to the inner direction that you receive; then you will attain what you want. When the mind is calm, how quickly, how smoothly, how beautifully you will perceive everything! Success in everything will come to pass in a short time, for Cosmic Power can be proved by the application of the right law.

Seek guidance from within. The scientific man or the businessman would accomplish more if he concentrated upon increasing the receptivity of his brain cells, instead of depending just upon books and college work for his progress. Some people say that our brain cells at birth come already grooved with fixed habits, and therefore cannot be remolded. This is false. Since God made us in His image, we cannot have limitations. If we probe deeply enough within ourselves, we will know that this is so. The sun shines equally on the charcoal and the diamond, and it is the charcoal that is responsible for not reflecting the sunlight as the diamond does.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Both spiritual introspection and perception of intellectually studied truth reinforce the truths gleaned from the Infinite Source, from which all intelligence comes. Through meditation and intuitive perception you get more intellectual truths than through reading books. For best results, tune your intelligence to your intuition after meditation. What cannot be perceived through the senses cannot be inferred through the reason. Then how do you know that you exist? From the direct perception of intuition, not through the intermediary faculties of sensory perceptions and reason.

Intuition must be distinguished from self-confidence, overconfidence, and from the superstition that "because it has happened so many times, it will happen always." There are many such psychological states that pose as intuition

and delude people. When such psychological upstarts are wrongly mistaken for intuition, trouble results. Real intuition can never be wrong.

Once I was visiting a farmer who had semideveloped intuition; he annoyed everyone with displays of his intuitional gifts. He tried it on me several times, until I finally felt I had had an overdose and decided to wake him up from his delusion.

One day while we were sitting in the farmhouse parlor with the door closed, we heard footsteps, and I asked my friend: "Will you please tell me who is coming to the door?" He forthwith replied: "It is my uncle coming home after many years, and he never even wrote me about it." The door was opened and the uncle appeared. When questioned he verified the statement and said that he had come suddenly without notification. My friend triumphantly exclaimed: "See, I have fully developed intuition, not just semideveloped as you often say."

Then I remonstrated: "My friend, beware! you will make a horrible blunder sometime, because you have had a little intuition all your life, but you have not practiced the technique of developing it to the extent that you can really depend upon it." He laughed at me, but soon I had occasion to laugh at him.

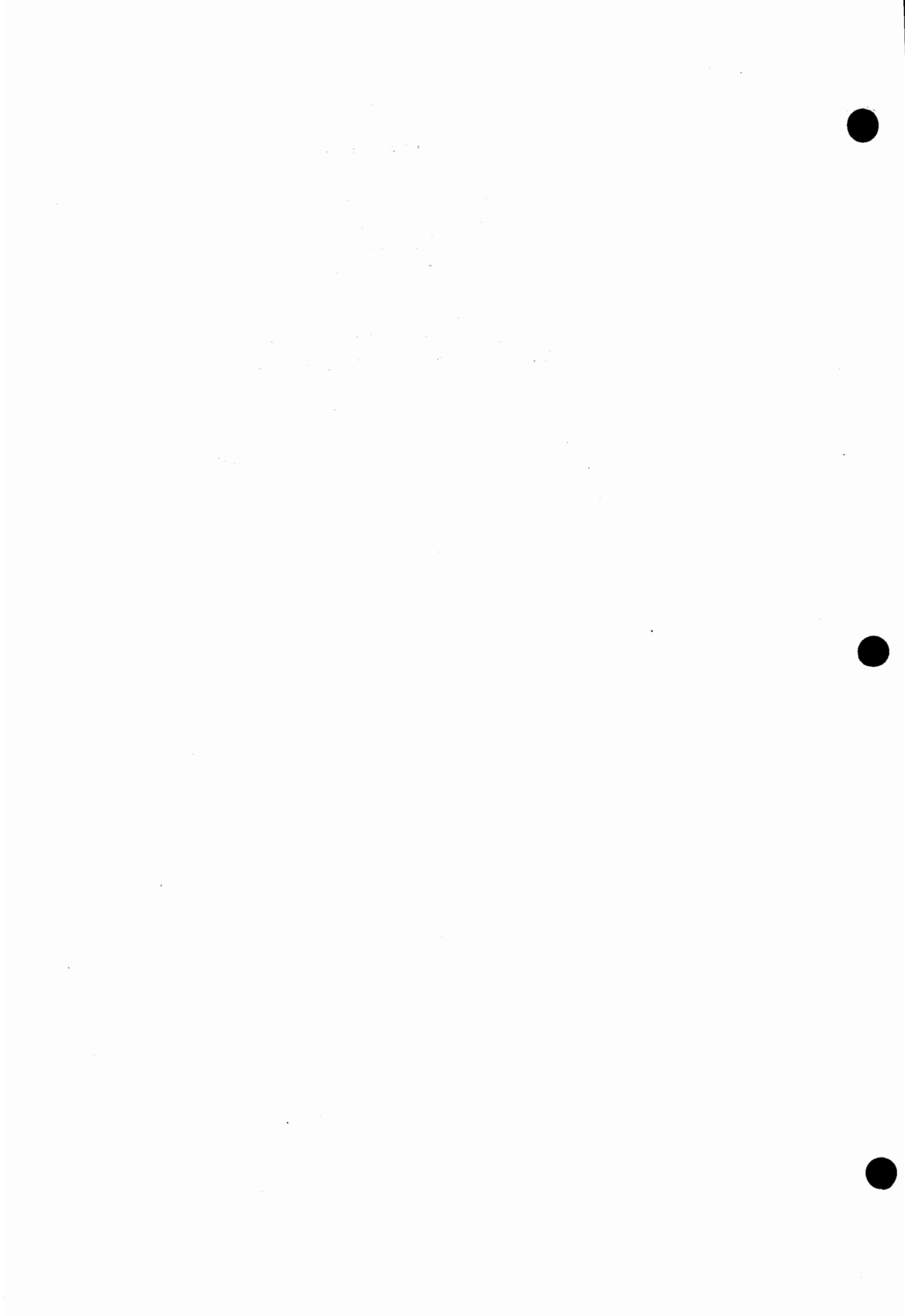
My mischievous prophecy came true. One dismal rainy day we were again sitting in the parlor when suddenly there was a loud knock on the closed door. I said to my friend, "Now use your semi-intuition and tell me who is knocking."

He concentrated for a moment, then said: "My brother has unexpectedly arrived. Open the door and see." I laughed at him and replied: "No, not I. I wouldn't go near the door; my intuition tells me not to. You had better open the door yourself." Saying this, I ran to the other side of the room. When the door was opened, in rushed the farm bull, angrily seeking shelter from the rain. My friend jumped aside frantically. The bull ran toward me. Being prepared, I stepped aside, exclaiming: "My friend, behold your 'brother' whose arrival your semi-intuition foretold!"

AFFIRMATION

Thou art my Father:
Success and joy.
I am Thy child:
Success and joy.

All the wealth of this earth,
All the riches of the universe,
Belong to Thee, belong to Thee.
I am Thy child:
The wealth of earth and universe
Belongs to me, belongs to me,
Oh, belongs to me, belongs to me.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I SHALL CATCH THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I cast my net of devotion in the vast sea of my mind.
Thou hast fled from me many times,
Diving deeper in the farthest depths of my peace.
I am unceasingly casting bigger nets of devotion,
Everywhere--over the surf, on the wavelets of life,
 over the waves of stars,
And all over the billows of souls--with the conviction
 that sometime
Thou wilt be caught in the deep net of my adoration.
All I know is that I am a fisherman, and I must keep
 fishing for Thee
Until I find Thee.

Storms and gales of trials rock my boat of unceasing
 effort.
I am being tossed, but I shall keep casting my net
 of love until Thou dost get
Entangled in it, and, unable to escape again,
Thou wilt surrender Thyself unto me.
I know that sometime I shall catch Thee in the net
 of my devotion.

PRAYER

Father, teach me to be calmly active and actively calm. Let me become the Prince of Peace, sitting on the throne of poise, directing the kingdom of activity.

CREATING INNER AND OUTER ENVIRONMENT

There are many opposite types of people in the world--good and evil, restless and meditative, ignorant and wise, happy and sad. Tell the evil person to be good and the restless person to be meditative, and they will make you feel that they do not like to follow your instructions, or that they cannot do so. This is due to previous habits and not to the desire of the heart. Hence, never put aside good habits; cultivate them, and develop the taste for their superior, lasting happiness. You love the outward pleasures of the senses because you happened to be held up by them at first, and then you remained their prisoner. Even as some persons get used to jail, so we mortals like outer pleasures, shutting off the joys from within.

Environment and the company you keep are of paramount importance. The specific outer environment of early life is specially important in stimulating or stifling the inner instinctive environment or tendencies of a child. However, there is no period in life when environment and good company are not important.

It must be remembered that the inner mental environment, or state, of an individual is what God judges by. One may be a sinner at heart while living in the company of saints, or he may be a saint although in the company of transgressors. But to evolve to a saintly state while clinging to evil companions would be most difficult. It is most important to know that sinners or saints are largely made through the company they keep. If a sinner is willing to mend his ways and lives in the company of saints, he is bound to change, while a careless spiritual man will deteriorate in the company of wicked people. Through reaction to our outer environment, from early childhood on, our inner mental environment is formed. This inner mental environment of thought and mental habits, plus tendencies formed in the past, almost automatically guides our actions.

Now let us consider mental resurrection, the upliftment of the consciousness from identification with the body. In the beginning of each life, the soul starts out to enjoy manifesting through the body and ends by becoming the slave of the body. We must learn to live life above the physical plane. Mental development is the by-product of physical development; so we find, according to natural evolution, that the soul first resurrects itself to the plane of the intellect or the plane of prosperity, and then rises to the plane of spiritual

realization, which gives a meaning to all prosperous development and intellectual attainment. Intellectual attainments are undoubtedly helpful. Through them gradually we understand the way to resurrect the body into the Spirit.

You know that the silkworm weaves threads around itself in a cocoon, and before it slips out of the cocoon as a butterfly, the silkworm gets hold of it, and the butterfly finds its death in the silken prison created by itself. We do much the same thing. Before the wings of spirituality grow, we weave threads of fear, worry, and ignorance around ourselves until disease and death come to destroy us. We find ourselves in bondage created by ourselves. What brings this destruction? Our own thoughts, our own wrong ways of living-- acting first, without thinking. We must resurrect ourselves from thoughts of anger, from thoughts of selfishness, from the clamor of inharmonious living.

Pure love, sacred ever-new joy, poetic imagination, kindness, wisdom, peace, bliss in meditation, and happiness in serving are felt inwardly, first in the mind or the heart; then they are transmitted through the nervous system to the physical body and are manifested outwardly. Do not camouflage your soul with the veil of sermons and solemn words. Understand and feel the superior joys of the inner life, and you will prefer them to the fleeting pleasures of the outer world.

TROUBLES--RESULT OF PAST ACTIONS

Environmental troubles are born because of your conscious or unconscious actions in the past, somewhere, sometime. You must blame yourself for that. However, you must not develop an inferiority complex. Trials do not come to destroy you, but that you may appreciate God more and learn to follow His laws so that you will find real happiness. God does not send those trials, they are born of your own making. All you have to do is to resurrect your consciousness from the environment of ignorance.

For the most part, the senses promise us a little temporary happiness, but give us long, lasting sorrow in the end. Whereas, virtue and happiness within do not promise much, but in the end always give lasting satisfaction. That is why I call the lasting inner happiness of the soul joy and the impermanent sense thrills pleasure.

If a bad habit bothers you, do two things.

- 1) Negatively try to avoid everything that occasioned it or stimulated it, without concentrating on it in the zeal to avoid it.
- 2) Then positively try to divert your mind to some good habit, and keep it furiously engaged in culturing that desirable trait until it becomes a part of yourself.

Persons of strong character are usually the happiest. They do not blame others for troubles that can usually be traced to their own actions and lack of understanding. They know that no one has any power to add to their happiness or detract from it unless they themselves are so weak that they allow the adverse thoughts and wicked actions of others to affect them. Stagnant people are unhappy. Extremely ignorant people scarcely know how it feels to either be happy or unhappy. They are unfeeling, like the stones. It is better to be unhappy about your own ignorance than to die happily with it. Wherever you are, remain awake and alive with your thought, perception, and intuition, ever ready, like a good photographer, to take pictures of exemplary conduct and to ignore bad behavior. Your highest happiness lies in your being ever ready in desiring to learn, and to behave properly. The more you improve yourself, the more you will elevate others around you. The self-improving man is the increasingly happy man. The happier you become, the happier will be the people around you.

WATCH YOUR PROGRESS Very few people analyze their situation to determine whether they are progressing or going backward in life. As human beings endowed with reason, wisdom, and understanding, it is our greatest duty to use our reason and wisdom rightly so that we may know whether we are going backward or forward. If failures invade your life repeatedly, don't get discouraged. They should act as stimulants and not poisons to your material and spiritual growth. The period of failure is the best season for sowing the seeds of success. Weed out the causes of failure and cultivate with double vigor the field in which you want to accomplish something worthwhile. Death in the attempt to succeed is success; refuse to harbor the consciousness of defeat. Always try once more, no matter how many times you have failed. Fight when you think that you can fight no more, or when you think that you have fought your best. Every new effort after a failure must be well planned and charged with increasing intensity of attention. Begin from today to try to do--one at a time--the things you thought impossible for you to do.

BALANCE YOUR ACTIVITIES Try to harmonize monetary craving with spiritual craving. Let neither rule the other. Don't think that you are too spiritual to wish for material success. Don't be so busy with material duties that you have no time for meditation, spiritual study, service, and so forth. One who is chronically unsuccessful in material life has not learned all its lessons. The spiritually selfish man, ignoring material life, is punished with loss of mental balance. All material work is service to your fellow being, if done in the right spirit, and is therefore worthwhile. Don't be one-sided. Lead a scheduled life and grade your duties. Duty should consist of work which you do with pleasure and a sense of privilege, and not with the feeling of paying a debt which is due. Consciousness of spiritual and moral duty should reign predominantly in your mind, above all other duties.

You have talent and power that you have not used. You have all the power

you need. There is nothing greater than the power of the mind. Resurrect your mind from the little habits that keep you worldly all the time. Smile that perpetual smile of balanced recklessness--that million-dollar smile that no one can take from you.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER The influence of stars upon human lives is owing to the interrelated forces of attraction and repulsion of planets and human bodies. First, the evil thought in an individual leads him to an evil environment to express himself in a like manner. Then again, by another free act of will, he can change his mind and consequently change his evil environment. But when one constantly remains mentally in an evil environment, that environment begins to strongly affect him and to exert an almost unconscious influence upon him, and in time he almost entirely loses his freedom to choose a different environment or the power to become free from the resented, undesirable influence of the specific evil environment.

The man of infinite power, tuned in with God, does not wait for the planets to smile; he marches on, influenced only by the Sun of all suns, the Almighty Spirit. When a man has faith, or a proper depth of determination, he can move mountains, and planets wait at his beck and call to do what he commands them to do. The man of realization and determination finds a new heaven with ~~Spirit as the only environment. He sees no seeds of difficulties latent within~~ him, for he burnt them by the fire of wisdom. He sees that he acts, moves, and sleeps under the one influence of a new heaven or God. He consults God instead of the stars for guidance.

SPIRITUALIZING BEFORE BIRTH

Swami Shankara was the reorganizer of the Swami Order, the ancient Order of Renunciation. His life was marked by many singular happenings. It is said that he reached his spiritual attainment and established his life philosophy as well at the age of thirty years, when he made the transition into Infinitude. This uncommon achievement on the part of Swami Shankara was due to the fact that when he was in the embryonic state his soul received high scriptural education, administered through the subconscious mind of his mother.

Swami Shankara's father was an extraordinary yogi. He tuned his wisdom to the subconsciousness of his wife for some time before baby Shankara was born. And the mother tuned her consciousness to that of the sleeping embryonic Shankara. In this way the realization of the truths acquired by Swami Shankara's father were automatically transferred to the unborn Shankara through the medium of the subconsciousness and superconsciousness of his mother. Thus it is that Swami Shankara was born with beatific wisdom, that

reached full expression at five years of age. Like the boy Jesus, who delivered sermons to the wise men in Jerusalem, the divine lad Shankara started imparting his wisdom to others at a very early age.

The subconscious mind never sleeps. It is alert day and night, ready to memorize all important experiences through the phenomenon of memory. All students of Self-realization should therefore remember that even the environment in which they sleep, as that in which they live, directly or indirectly affects them. If they live with drunkards or dissipated people, they will unconsciously assume their traits, and mental lassitude will creep over them. It is desirable to sleep in a house with harmonious, good people, as one will thus attract their good characteristics during one's sleep state. That is one way of becoming worthy and noble without much effort of will power. In the wakeful, conscious state, people learn from, and absorb the vibrations of the specific company they contact, through their imagination and conscious will, as well as through their subconscious mind. This is why a baby helplessly manifests the characteristics of his environment. If an American baby is brought up in an Oriental environment, he will act like an Oriental; similarly, if an Oriental baby is brought up in an American environment, he will act like an American. Parents should also remember that their mental attitudes and spiritual development can make it possible for spiritual children to be born to them. Each mother carrying a child should remember that her particular good or bad nature, her salutary or ignoble thoughts, and her actions toward her family and others, will greatly influence the nature of her baby.

If modern scientific breeding can produce fine animals to order, why then cannot proper human beings be made to order? Many parents are responsible for burdening the earth with misery by ignorantly producing criminal children. Instead, spiritually developed parents could save the world and make it heavenly by creating spiritual children and by living a life of moderation, self-discipline, and meditation.

AFFIRMATION

Having Thee, O God, as the deepest joy of deepest meditation, I know that all things-- prosperity, health, and wisdom--will be added unto me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

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REVEAL THYSELF AS PERFECTION WITHIN US

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Almighty, Beloved One, teach us how to wear the suit of silence and dive through the measureless cold blue ocean of sky, penetrating the cave of mirrored stars--if Thou art hidden there. Teach us how to sink like plummets in the depthless sea of peace--if perchance we may find Thee there. Teach us how to swim over the waves of wind and light, and waft us to Thy measureless shore. We swam down many rivers of desire and dived in Thy many seas, yet we found not the most-sought-for treasure. But as we dived through the measureless sea of the love in all things, in all hearts, we at last found the priceless pearl of Thy presence.

Open the veils of the sky; show us Thy face of eternity; show us Thy face of light. Open the veil of blossoms; show us Thy face of beauty hidden in the rose. Take away the veil of our thoughts and show us Thy great consciousness. Take away the veil of our love and reveal Thine infinite love. O Father, Thou art just behind the sky, just behind the stars in the heavens, just behind the fountain of health, just behind the breath of our life, just behind the love with which we love. Reveal Thyself as health, as power, as perfection within us.

Father, deliver us from dark ignorance into Thy light. Father, Beloved God, no more with words but with the fire of our souls, we invoke Thee. Bless us always; and above all, be Thou the only desire on the throne of our ambition and our activity.

PRAYER

Father, bless me, that I may perceive Thee through the windows of all joyous activities. Mayest Thou look at me and cheer me always, while I am engaged in my duties. Let every activity--waking, sleeping, dreaming, meditating--be performed with the consciousness of Thy presence. Teach me to perform every work just to please Thee.

HOW TO SEEK GOD, AND WHY--Part 1

The vaguest of all conceptions is the human idea of God. Man's researches about food, finance, health, and human relationships are quite extensive and definite. But do you realize how easily you are satisfied with untested concepts of God? You see a little work of God in nature, you hear people talk about God, you read the scriptures about Him, but did you ever set out with a definite aim or intention actually to verify your beliefs about God, or to find out for yourself what God is?

Some people wonder who made God. The question is born of ignorance, and this short dialogue shows why. An Arabian once met a Hindu. The Arabian, who lived mostly on dates, asked the Hindu if dates grow in India. "No," replied the Hindu. "Well," queried the astonished Arabian, "how do you Hindus live?"

So, we reason according to our own mentality. We ourselves are results of causation; therefore we think all things are from a cause. But that isn't so. God is causeless. In Him there is no cause and effect. He is like the ocean. The ocean may have a storm whipping up waves upon its surface, but the ocean is not created by the storm. Nor can the waves say: "We were created by the storm, therefore the ocean is made by the storm."

Suppose there is a jar of salt water in the ocean and the opening is corked. If you take the stopper out, the salt water inside the jar will become one with the salt water of the ocean. Similarly, a human being lives in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, but he does not know God. A portion of God is locked up in the jar of flesh and closed by the stopper of ignorance. In this manner we are moving in God without being aware of Him.

When nothing else was, Spirit was. What is Spirit? It is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy. When Spirit began to create, it became three:

- 1) the consciousness of God beyond creation, which is "God the Father";
- 2) the consciousness of God in creation, which is Christ Consciousness; and

- 3) the cosmic vibration which is the Holy Ghost, the Word.
That vibration was condensed into planets and all creation that we see.

We say that every human being is an expression of the great, vast Spirit. It is marvelous to see how human beings, without any motors, without any wires, without any visible source of electricity, run smoothly. But how do most people use this priceless machine? As a rule, it wakes up in the morning, eats breakfast, goes to work, goes to lunch, then goes back to the office, comes home, has dinner then perhaps goes to the movies; then it goes to sleep, to wake up next morning and do the same thing all over again, day in and day out.

We are controlled by radio-active and vito-active energies unleashed by God. Just as ships may be moved by remote-control radio, so our beings are motivated and controlled by the Infinite Spirit which is present everywhere. But the point is this: Just as the sunlight falling on the water in a cup which I keep moving becomes divided by reflection into a million suns, so Spirit is reflected in each human body and mind as individualized Spirit, or soul. Although this soul is a reflection of Spirit, it is identified with the body. Hence it is trying very hard, through processes of evolution, to free itself from the cage of the body and return to the Infinite Spirit.

~~If I held a cup filled with water under a lamp, at the same time causing~~ the water to move in the cup, I would have a distorted reflection of the light in the cup, and that reflection is not the real light; but if you could not see the lamp you might be deluded into thinking that the distorted image or light in the cup is real. Resurrection signifies taking the reflected soul image away from the moving cup of restless consciousness, and reuniting it with the original all-pervading, undistorted light.

The soul is reflected from Spirit in the body, and it is caged in the body, so the soul seems to have all the limitations of the body and of the mind; therefore we must resurrect the soul from the thralldom of the body and the mind and reunite it with the Spirit.

Thought is infinite. Every word represents an ideal conception of the Infinite, because behind every word and thought there is a manifestation of the Infinite. Many waves of thought are dancing in the waves of consciousness, but behind that there is the great unceasing ocean of truth. Our expressions are waves of the ocean of understanding.

We say that God is invisible to us, but in reality He is visible in the mighty manifested universe. God is everything--not just one thing. One wave is not the whole ocean--the ocean and the waves together constitute the ocean. Thus all manifested things and the unmanifested pure Cosmic Consciousness constitute Spirit.

ALWAYS LIVE IN
GOD CONSCIOUSNESS

If you think that you can live happily in forgetfulness of God, you are mistaken, because you will cry out in loneliness again and again until you realize that God is all in all--the only reality in the universe. You are made in His image. You can never find lasting happiness in any thing because nothing is complete except God.

When you are forgetful of God while performing actions in the world you change your center of consciousness from God to matter. And this false material nature will throw you into a whirlpool of change that will drown you with worries and sorrows. The child is busy with play, youth is busy with sex, and the old man is busy with worries. How few think of God the Sustainer of all things.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

As a human being, you are different from the animals, and as a human being you must make use of your unique powers of intelligence and reason. Don't remain in ignorance and suffering. Tear aside the veil of delusion and know things as they really are. If you have assurance in the Infinite, if you know that God is protecting you, then, whether nature shatters your body or not, you are still on the lap of immortality, still on the lap of that Infinite assurance. Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of human habits and human thoughts. Live every second in the consciousness of God. Quicken your understanding; quicken your efforts. Do not keep your soul buried under ignorance, bad habits, animal instincts, and a mortal consciousness. Resurrect it in everlasting freedom!

Your first duty must be to commune with God. When you have that communion you can do anything, because what the Father has, you have. So remember, precede all mortal actions by contacting God. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you not to wait for death before seeking God. He will not be any closer to you beyond the portals of the grave than He is now. Why shouldn't you find Him now? You can, through deeper and deeper meditation.

ADORABLE BOSS OF THE BLUE

Adorable One, although You are the most colossal businessman, running the factory of the cosmos, You are very meek; You never speak about Your great work. You have caparisoned this cosmos with the paintings of ever-changing scenery, so that Your servants may work with delight. All living creatures, Your employees, have been made audaciously prominent with a fleshly dwelling illuminated with multi-colored lights of thoughts, affections, and determinations, yet You have made Yourself seem very unimportant and Your mansion of space obscure and invisible.

You work hardest of all, since You produce everything, but You also make us work hard to fulfill the unending needs of our lives. Why is it that, although You have made the life-giving grain, the vital breeze, the revealing light, the thirst-quenching water, the blood in our veins, and the heart-engine of our lives, You yet make us struggle so hard to maintain life? Because we work hard to suit our pampered desires, we falsely imagine we are the makers of everything.

The gigantic thermal, astral, and gravitational forces are all purring and bounding, running Your factory of mystery. We know that You, as Boss of the heavens, are pretty busy, and keep Yourself aloof from us, perchance lest we encroach upon Your valuable time and pester You with many foolish questions; yet we ask You: since You made us in Your image, how long are You going to treat us, Your children, as Your employees?

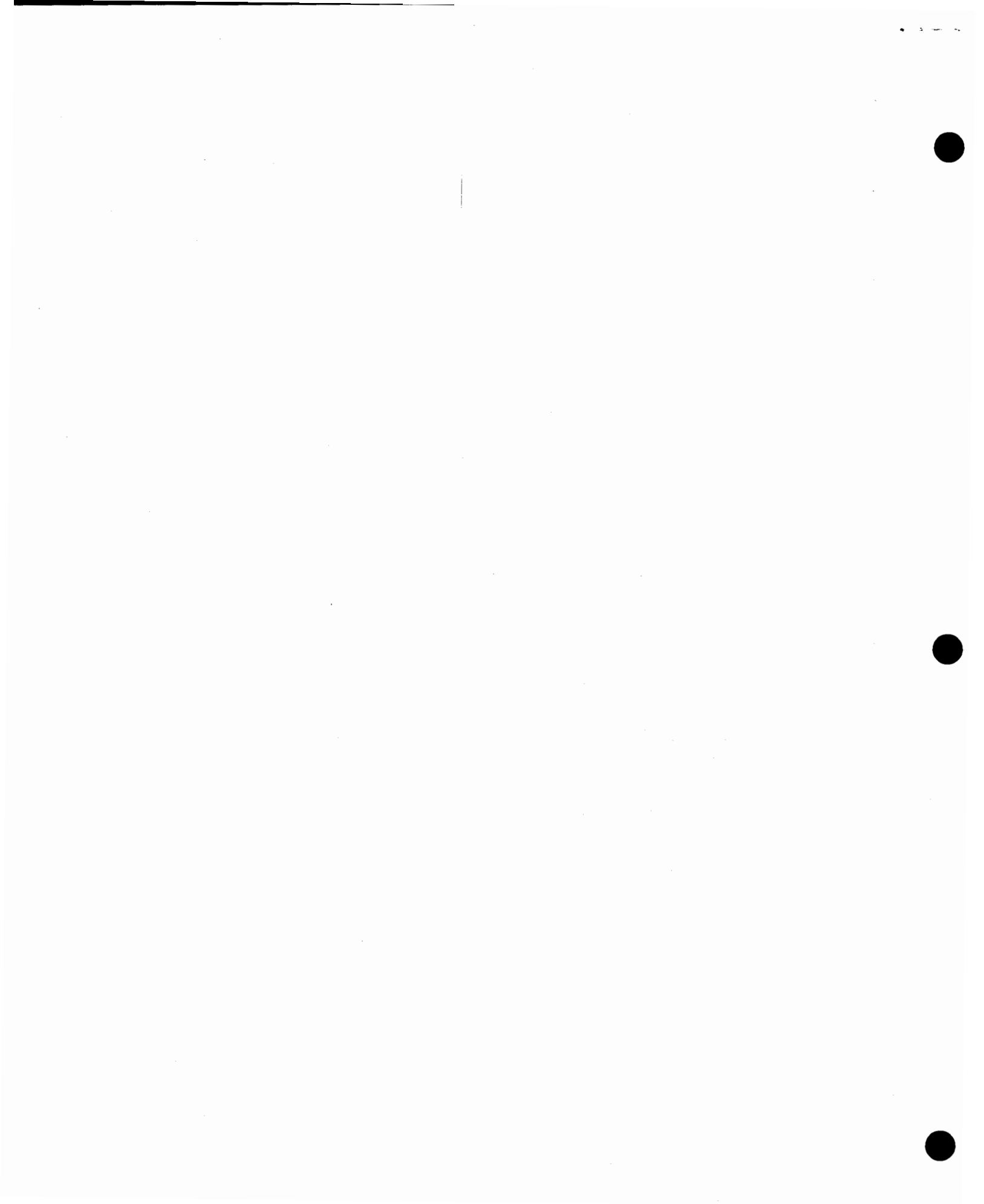
We know that we have been very bad--rowdy, intoxicated with ignorance, living in hovels of mental disorder and limitation--but O adorable Boss of the blue, it is You who can mend our manners. It is Your unlimited power alone that can help our meager faculties and spur our battered will to make the effort to redeem ourselves. We do not mind working for You, but do not let us be strangers. Help us to know that we are all Your children, equally loved by You. You have remained hidden for a long time. You must forthwith leave Your business and attend to the most important business of awakening us.

The fairy woodlands, studded with the gems of blossoms, are calling for Your manifestation. The ever-restless breeze is impatiently waiting for You. The music drum of sea-roars ever has been beating, waiting for Your coming in the star-checked dome of the temple of the blue. O vast eternal God of sky, You have heard the song of all hearts through the changing aeons on the stage of time. With pointed lips of hill peaks, we shall kiss the hem of Your garment of space, glimmering with thunder and lightning. With our cosmic mind, we shall sing the cosmic symphony on the altar of Your omnipresence. In the dream of our indirectly-lighted dispassionate desire, we shall behold You in the ecstasy of our joy.

Our tears will commingle into a flood of devotion and plunge from the mountain of our meditation into the ocean of Your heart. We shall follow the trail of fragrance to Your heart in the flower caves. We shall rush through the pores of the blue into Your eternal presence.

AFFIRMATION

I will seek the kingdom of God in the joy coming from constant, long, deep, continuous meditation. By communing with God, I will be reclaimed as His child. Becoming the child of God first, I shall receive, without asking or begging, my share of all prosperity, health, and wisdom.



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ADORATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Just behind the atmosphere, just behind the sunshine; just behind the pulse of our cells; just behind the throb of our hearts; just behind the thoughts with which we pray; just behind our love, art Thou, O Infinite! Make us realize that it is Thou only that we crave. Make us realize Thou art not only in the farthest star, but twinkling in our thoughts; sparkling in our feelings; and vitalizing our will.

Take away all the veils that hide Thee. Come, Father, come! No more behind the indifferent veil of Nature; no more behind the obscuring veil of matter; no more behind the veil of minds; no more behind the veil of souls will I perceive Thee, but behind my devotion; behind my tender perceptions; behind my inmost soul I perceive Thou art, evermore.

Thou art our Father; we are Thy children. Teach us to love Thee as Jesus loved, as Mohammed loved, and as Krishna, and our great Gurus loved Thee. O God, teach us to love Thee with the intoxicating love of the saints, that we may realize that Thou art the ocean and our love is the wave. Teach us no more to pray with words, but with our souls. Father, break Thy vow of silence. Speak to us through our thoughts.

May all men realize Thy nearness, O God, maker of our tenderest thoughts. Make us in Thine image. We offer Thee our adoration, our soul yearnings. We invoke Thy presence, O God.

PRAYER

O Father, my little raft of meditation is buffeting furious storms of distraction. On this boisterous mental sea I am yet heading toward Thy shore. Master Mariner, come, take charge of my boat!

HOW TO SEEK GOD, AND WHY--Part 2

Walk the pathway of life with God in your heart. Don't seek the recognition of man in the spiritual path; seek the recognition of God. Whom God protects, nothing can destroy; but if He is displeased, although every one else is pleased, their approbation is worthless. Your first duty is to please God.

Why should you give your time, your energy, to the world and to worldly pursuits when the world will not be responsible for the effects of your actions, nor will it stand by you when you get into trouble? You alone will suffer. Do you realize that you are alone and friendless in the world if you cut off God, and that you are ungrateful if you completely forget Him who is with you always whether you know it or not? He came with you in the beginning; He has been with you all the time; and He alone will be with you when you take the next step in your evolution. Make peace with Him now. No duty is more important than your duty to God, for no duty is performed without God's power.

Do not let your environment and temptations control you. A virtuous, spiritual life is far more charming than indulgence in material temptation, but the trouble is that the precedence of sensuous experience and the constant presence of this temptation controls people. From the beginning of life on earth one is subjected to material temptations, and becomes accustomed to them long before being attracted by the spiritual way of life. But if God once tempts you with His love, nothing else can ever tempt you away from Him.

The five senses are very dangerous because they are always making us investigate those things which are not good for us. God has given us the senses through which we apprehend the various aspects of matter; and because we dwell on the sensations produced by those senses, we like things that taste good, feel good, or smell good, but that is only a habit. Many people develop material habits because they have no sense of comparison; they cannot compare sense joy with the joy of the soul because they have not experienced soul joy. There is no chance to compare until one has renounced all pleasure of the senses and found a greater joy. The only way to avoid being trapped by worldly temptation is to know that there are higher things than temptation.

When temptation comes, you must first stop the action or force, and then reason. If you try to reason first, the temptation will often compel you to do the thing that you should not do. Stop the force, and then reason, after that

temptation is gone; otherwise temptation will overcome all reason. Don't say, "I should not do this because..." Just say, "No!" and leave the place, or turn your attention elsewhere, as the case may be. That is the surest way to defeat temptation. The more you develop this "won't" power during the advent of temptation, the happier you will be, because all happiness depends upon the ability to do those things that you should do.

A bad habit sits octopus-like in the brain and commands you to do a certain thing. You don't want to do that thing and yet you do it. So never let yourself reach a point where you become a victim of wrong habits. No matter what you do, remember that you must be the governor of yourself--since you take the consequences. Do not let anything or anyone run you. Remember, if any undesirable thought or act becomes a habit with you, it is time to stop that thing. As a rule, I do not like commandments: Whenever you command someone not to do a certain thing, that person seems determined to do it. So I only suggest that you command yourself. The taste of forbidden fruit is sweet in the beginning, but bitter in the end. You should be very careful not to let anything interfere with your ultimate happiness.

GOD SPEAKS
THROUGH
MEDITATION

Through meditation you come in contact with your real Self and you forget what you imagine that you are. You have been in a state of hallucination, thinking that you are a mortal, struggling and suffering. Every day you should give attention to your true status. Sit quietly and say: "I am not the earth, nor the sky; no birth nor death have I; father, mother, have I none; I am infinite happiness." If you repeat this often, and think about it day and night, then you will realize what you really are. Only those who meditate realize that behind the superconscious mind there is a land of eternal happiness.

The more you feel peace in meditation, the closer you are to God. He moves nearer and nearer to you the deeper you enter into meditation. The peace of meditation is the language and embracing comfort of God. Therefore, God is present right on the throne of peace within you. Find Him there first and you will find Him in all the noble pursuits of life, in true friends, in the beauty of nature, in good books, in good thoughts, in noble aspirations. Finding peace within you, you will know that whatever in life gives you lasting peace, is declaring to you the presence of God without as well as within. When you know God as peace within, then you will realize Him as peace existing in the universal harmony of all things without.

Stop watching the little toy-show of this world. Close your eyes and plunge behind the screen of inner darkness. By deeper effort of meditation, tear the veil of darkness. Lift the veil of silence and hear the magical, soothing, tolling music of planets--behold the fiery light of multi-trillion colored dancing atoms. Behold life force dancing in the hall of electrons. Behold consciousness dancing in the sphere of living light. Behold the Bliss-God and His blessed angels dancing in the thought-fashioned, wisdom-lighted eternal

chamber of perpetual, ever-new Bliss. Lift all the curtains of light in the three worlds and behold God in the glory of Bliss beyond creation.

Nothing except God can satisfy you or wipe your miseries completely away. Your soul, a separate part of Spirit, must find the Whole to be complete. Your desire for satisfaction must find the perfect satisfaction in God; your thirst for knowledge must quench itself by drinking the wisdom of God; your peace can be complete only with the peace of God; your existence can be immortal only in the immortality of God; your consciousness can be unceasing only when attached to the Cosmic Consciousness; your joy can be unending, ever-entertaining joy only when united with the joy of God.

MEDITATION EXERCISES

1. Sit upright, shoulder blades together, chest out, abdomen in, hands at junction of thighs and abdomen. Concentrate at the point between eyebrows, where one can enter the state of superconsciousness. Forget the body, forget the surroundings, earth, sun, moon, stars, thoughts, feelings, and forget all perceptions. Feel only one goal of perception--the vastness that you wish to perceive within yourself. Repeat to yourself: "I am Infinite." Go on mentally affirming this until you feel that you are everything and beyond everything. Say: "I am timeless, I am spaceless, I am beyond the body, thought, and speech; beyond matter and mind. I am spaceless, I am Infinite Blessedness." Meditate upon that.

2. Concentrate at the point between eyebrows. Expel breath through mouth; inhale slowly through nostrils, hold it, counting 1 to 12, and feel all energy centering at the point between the eyebrows. Exhale slowly through the mouth, then inhale slowly through the nostrils; hold it, counting 1 to 25. Exhale slowly through the mouth; then without drawing another breath exhale again quickly. Inhale slowly through the nostrils, hold it, counting 1 to 40, feeling all energy at the point between the eyebrows. Exhale slowly, through mouth, then again throw breath out. Forget it and concentrate at the point between the eyebrows.

3. Imagine a ball of darkness. Now feel that the ball is expanding. It includes your room, city, state. Now that ball of darkness is expanding still farther. Now it includes the entire United States. Go on expanding that ball until it includes all nations, the stars, universes, the entire Cosmos. Now imagine that the ball of darkness is becoming light. Feel that luminous ball of light. It is swallowing everything. All space is a burning ball of flame. Now feel that ball of flame becoming a sphere of unending happiness. You are that happiness. You are that joyous flame of happiness that has melted everything in it.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

In everything that gives you lasting satisfaction you will find God enthroned.

Every morning and night go into silence or deep meditation, for meditation is the only way to discriminate between truth and error. You must have a place of silence. You must have a laboratory where you can test truth. Some of the great metaphysicians use temples of silence, for the condition of divine discrimination is silence.

Truth is within you, only you are not conscious of it. You forget that you are the child of the omniscient divine Father. You think that you do not have that wisdom, but it is within you. You must develop divine discrimination by testing what you hear about spiritual truths to see if they are really truths.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE PRIEST

In ancient India, in a village on the River Ganges, lived a man who caught and sold fish to the villagers. One of his customers was the village priest, a fellow almost as slippery as the fisherman's daily catch. The priest continually charged the fish he bought, but was always very difficult to find when the fisherman tried to collect his bill. The unpaid debts of the priest eventually became very large and the fisherman, after a long search, at last found and accosted the priest with this proposal:

"Your Holiness, why do you avoid me? If you would only teach me a method of walking on the water, so that I can go freely to the places where large schools of fish are known to swim, and it is easy to net them, I will present you with a large fish free of charge and I will cancel your debt to me."

The disbelieving priest had only one thought, to get rid of the fisherman, who he thought must be crazy. So the priest whispered into the attentive ear of the faithful fisherman: "Son, all you have to do is to write three times on the surface of your palm the sacred word Om. Then you will be able to walk over the Ganges to whatever spot you wish to catch fish."

Some days passed before the fisherman was again able to intercept the priest, who continually dodged the encounter. The fisherman finally succeeded, however, and, proffering a large, choice fish to the priest, he said: "I have been trying to get hold of you in order to give you some fish and cancel your debt to me. Everything came through your grace, as you said it would."

Astonished, the skeptical priest looked at the large fish the fisherman was holding and cried, "How did you get such a fine big fish?"

"Well, sir, I did what you told me to do, and every day I have been catching a large number of fish. Yes, Your Holiness, it was possible through your

grace and the spiritual technique you gave me. "

Half credulous and half disbelieving, the priest said, "Well, sir, do show me how you walk on the water. "

Thereupon the fisherman wrote the sacred word Om on the palm of each hand of the priest. Then casually, nonchalantly, in utmost divine faith, the fisherman took the priest by the hand and began to walk swiftly over the water of the holy Ganges. And lo, the priest was walking over the water also. But in a little while the skeptical priest began to fear getting his cloak wet, and then came the thought of drowning. He began at once to sink, and cried out, "Fisherman, I am drowning!"

"Well, Your Holiness, you can't walk on the water and at the same time entertain fear of drowning or worry about your cloth's being drenched. Look at me and see how I walk on the water with complete faith. " So saying, the fisherman led the trembling priest back to shore and left him to meditate on his weakness and lack of faith in God.

"Jesus said: "If thou dost believe and say unto this mountain, 'go into the depths of the sea,' it shall go. " But do not expect the mountain to obey if you go to it and say with a timid, unbelieving, squeaky voice: "Mr. Mountain, will you please go into the depths of the sea? I don't really believe it possible, I am just saying what Jesus said. "

Miracles are simply the working of universal super-laws and they can be performed ordinarily, in a common way, when one is acquainted with the scientific relation between matter and mind. Jesus walked on the waters and saved the skeptical, drowning Peter.

But remember, do not try to do difficult things unless you know the real method of working the miracles of faith and will power. Do not try to walk on water when your spiritual consciousness is relatively undeveloped. Develop your faith first and try to work it to solve small difficulties. Then you will be able to open the Gordian knots of the most abstruse problems of life.

This story shows that you must know the appropriate spiritual technique as well as have absolute faith and abandonment in God if you aspire to work His miracles; and that if you are skeptical and nevertheless try to perform great miracles you may be beset by severe difficulties.

AFFIRMATION

With the love of all saints, I will love Thee. Finding Thee first, I will find everything I desire in Thee.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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FORGET ME NOT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Beloved God, I sit in the temple of silence. One by one I shut the doors of the senses lest the aroma of the rose or the song of the nightingale distract my thoughts from Thee. Come out of the stars, come out of the blue, come out of the cave of silence! Take away the veil of nature; take away the veil of restless thoughts.

Before Thy wisdom my wisdom is naught; before Thy power my power is feeble. But behind the wave of my power is Thy power, behind my love is Thy love, behind my thoughts is Thy thought, behind my reason is Thy reason, behind my life is Thy life.

Forget me not, though I forget Thee; remember me, though I remember Thee not. Beloved of my heart, be Thou the only King reigning on the throne of my devotion.

PRAYER

The starry single eye of my soul insight is now being opened. Bless me, Father, that I ever see the Eastern star of wisdom. May it gleam before my human eyes, alike in daylight and in gloom.

Let my wise thoughts follow the wondrous star that leads to the Christ Child of Infinity.

THE DEEPER MEANING OF SILENCE

Practice the art of silence. When tigers of worries, sickness, and death are chasing you, your only sanctuary is the inner temple of silence. The spiritually deep man lives day and night in a calm interior silence into which neither menacing worries nor even the crash of colliding worlds can intrude. Those who enter that temple of silence are able to commune with other God-bent souls; they comprehend the conversation of flowers and of all living creatures.

The more you are silent the more happiness you will find. What joy awaits discovery in the silence behind the portals of your mind, no human tongue can tell. But you must convince yourself; you must meditate and create that environment. Those who deeply meditate feel a wonderful inner quiet. This stillness within should be maintained even when in the company of other people. What you learn in meditation, practice in activity and conversation; let no one dislodge you from that calm state. Hold on to your peace.

When you meet people, do not become affected by their state of consciousness. Be one with those who are ever singing of God; remain aloof from those who reveal undesirable qualities. Be with people in silence; don't spend precious time and energy in idle talk. Eat in silence; work in silence. God loves silence. Even when death comes, maintain your silence in communion with Him; depart from the body saying, "I am a king of immortality, sitting on the throne of silence."

In your inner temple of silence receive God with your awakened intuition; you want to touch Him with devotion and place Him on the altar of your superconscious bliss. You meet God first on the altar of calmness, a negative aspect of His presence; but when you go deeper, in samadhi-oneness you will meet God on the altar of His omnipresent bliss.

Feel that in the temple of silence you are coaxing God to come, that you yearn to meet Him, to touch Him in devotion, and to keep Him there on the altar of your peace. Then go deeper and enter the temple of samadhi, the highest oneness with Him.

THE SPIRITUAL EYE The spiritual eye has many descriptive names: the third eye, medulla eye, eye of God, dove descending from heaven, star of the East, single eye, intuitional or hidden eye, spiritual telescope, Christ eye, Kutastha eye, Shiva eye.

Like unhatched chicks, human beings live on the yolk of earth encased in a skyey shell. By the penetrating heat of intuition, engendered when concentrating upon the spiritual eye, each human soul-chick can bore a hole in the roof of the space shell and through that slip out into the vast Infinite.

A person in a lighted room whose windows are shuttered may enjoy the beautiful furnishings of the room, but can see nothing beyond unless he opens the shutters and looks out. Similarly, we live in a sunlit decorated hall of earth, but we cannot behold the territory of the Infinite unless we open the window of the spiritual eye.

The human eye changes its position and angle of vision according to our changing thoughts. In sleep, eyelids are closed and the eyeballs are comparatively still. In wakefulness the eyelids are constantly winking and the eyeballs are continually in motion. In the superconscious state the eyeballs turn upward and the gaze becomes fixed on the point between the eyebrows.

There is a correspondence between the position of the eyes (and ~~hence the direction of the gaze~~) and the mental state. By merely showing anger on the face one can produce this emotion in the mind; by closing the eyes one can invoke sleep, and by concentrating the eyes on the point between the eyebrows in meditation one can induce the superconscious state.

A man who is running cannot convince me he is sleeping, because his body and eyes do not manifest the characteristic signs of sleep. Nor am I fooled if a person who is winking rapidly and breathing heavily claims that he is in the superconscious state. In the conscious or ordinary waking state the body, mind, breath, eyes, and pulse are restless. In the subconscious or sleep state, the body, most muscles, the limbs, and the senses are inactive. The pulse, breath, and heart motions are slower, and the eyelids are closed. In the superconscious state, the body and muscles are still; the heart, pulse, and breathing are very slow -- almost entirely quiet -- and the eyes become still and fixed on the point between the eyebrows.

The eyeballs of pure-minded babies, undisturbed as yet by earth experiences, will be found to be turned upward during sleep. At death, the eyes of devoted people, or of people in a trance, tend to turn upward. This happens because the light that flows from the actual luminous eye in the medulla oblongata into the two physical eyes turns back, during trance or death, first to the point between the eyebrows -- the single astral eye of light reflected in the forehead from the medulla -- and then reverts to the point of origin in the medulla.

The spiritual eye has three colors: an outer golden ring, the epitome of microcosmic Cosmic Energy; inside the golden ring a dark blue globe, the epitome of microcosmic Christ Consciousness; and inside the opalescent dark blue globe a silvery white five-pointed star, the epitome of microcosmic Cosmic Consciousness.

The outer ring represents the Cosmic Vibration, or Holy Ghost; the blue represents Christ Consciousness, the Son; the star represents Cosmic Consciousness, or God the Father. The human body in standing posture with feet spread apart and arms outstretched at the sides is the epitome of the star of Cosmic Consciousness residing in the center of the spiritual eye.

Though the light of the spiritual eye may be seen by pressing the closed eyes gently, its secret door can never be opened just by physical pressure. It is only by deep concentration and fixing the eyes on the point between the eyebrows, and by being able to hold the light before our inner gaze for any length of time with open or closed eyes, that we can gradually learn to send the consciousness and the life force through the spiritual eye into the Infinite. This signifies the wise men (or wise concentrated thoughts) following the telescopic star of the spiritual eye to behold the infinite Christ Consciousness.

The star also represents the mouth of the "dove" descending from heaven. The two halos of blue and gold are the wings of the dove. This spiritual emblem of the dove is called the Holy Ghost. "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove" (Luke 3:22). Whosoever sees it during meditation, or is shown the third eye during spiritual initiation, is baptized with the Holy Spirit. "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove" (John 1:32).

The two physical eyes are given to us by our human parents to cognize this world of matter, i.e., a limited range of vibrations; owing to their limited sensibility, the physical eyes see only certain vibrations of matter. But by opening the spiritual eye man may behold God. A guru -- literally, one who leads from darkness ("gu") to light ("ru") -- is he who is sent by God to help aspiring devotees to open the spiritual eye.

The life force is present in all the sensory motor nerves and cells in the body, but it is very strong in the eyes. Pressure on the eyes causes the energy or astral light to be squeezed out and made visible in the darkness of the closed eyes. A blow on the head produces "stars" because the astral light wants to be separated from the physical. If the head were hit hard enough, we would see these star sparks of life forever separated into space. Many people think that this is a physical light and has no significance -- an utterly erroneous idea. The light is astral, and it can be seen with eyes either closed or open, or during meditation, or at death. Many adepts, remaining conscious at the time of death, have beheld the tunnel of light in the spiritual eye ushering them into the Infinite.

Deeply meditating SRF students will not have to die in darkness. They will be guided by the SRF gurus through the luminous spiritual eye into the infinite light of God. Jesus' great disciple John said: "God is light" (I John 1:5). Students who practice breathlessness, as given in the Hong-Sau Concentration Lesson, will say: "Ah, death is not a choking without air; it is escape from the clutch of breath into the breathless Spirit." At the time of death the Self-Realization Fellowship student can say within: "Oh, I see; this is the lesson of breathlessness I already know. Old death is not so bad as he has been depicted: cold and dreary. Well, well! This is simply involuntary relaxation. Because I have practiced breathlessness, I own my body house and do not live in it on a limited lease, to be evicted like ordinary mortals at the end of the term. I will depart when I wish. I will leave my finite mansion for my Infinite Mansion through the tunnel of the spiritual eye and by practicing breathlessness."

The person who has not cultivated soul consciousness is unaware at the time of death of his soul's progress out of the body through the spiritual eye. The yogi, on the other hand, practices throughout his mortal existence seeing this path of the spiritual eye situated between matter and the Infinite, and thus is able to follow this path consciously during the transition of the soul from its temporary home of deathly changeable matter to the ever existing, unchangeable Infinite.

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, ~~thy whole body shall be full of light~~" (Matthew 6:22). "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5).

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER As sunshine is given to everyone, yet some people choose to live in utter darkness, so the sunshine of God's wisdom is scattered all over, yet some persons look at the world through the dark glasses of their own ignorant thoughts. Those who live in the sunshine of wisdom are the happy ones. Develop your mental powers. God knows everything, and you, being a child of God, have His all-seeing and all-knowing power within you. When you increase your perception and feeling, when the all-seeing eye is open, and when the all-accomplishing power is felt, then you will automatically absorb truth from the book of nature. Absorb truth within, not only through the limited power of the senses, but from the depths of silence within, through the unlimited power of your spiritual perception, of your intuition.

No matter how many mistakes you make, if you have a sincere desire to know God's truths, you will find them revealed to you.

THREE GODS AND THE GOD OF GODS -- Part 1

As waves spring from the breast of the sea, play about over its blue tracts for awhile, and when tired fall asleep again in the sea bosom, so creation is born out of the matrix of space, and plays with its dolls of universes the cosmic planetary game until, tired, it falls asleep in the chamber of the living Void. It would be quite audacious of the waves in the sea to think that they create, preserve, and dissolve themselves into the sea without the aid of any superior force. The storm creates the wave, preserves its shape, and ultimately dissolves it in the sea.

There is an old story in India that, in the beginning of creation, three intelligent godlike beings emanated from God: Brahma, the creator of all things, Vishnu, the preserver of all things, and Shiva, the destroyer of all things. The waves of creation were lifted into being by Brahma; they were sustained by Vishnu; and were dissolved by Shiva.

Once upon a time these three gods materialized themselves into human forms in order to visit this earth, one of the playgrounds of their omnipresent activities. Roaming here and there, the three gods observed the birth, preservation, and death of vast empires and of multitudes of people. The deific triad, beholding their own colossal works, fell into a state of self-laudation.

"Friends," said Brahma, "look at the stars, suns, moons, worlds; their vegetation, their multifarious inhabitants, and the wise souls that I have created!"

Vishnu couldn't keep quiet, hearing Brahma's self-praise, and cried out: "Behold the wonder of my power of preservation! All things have been created by Brahma, it is true, but unless I hold them in balance with the strings of my self-emanated rays, worlds would collide and men would perish without food."

Shiva was waiting impatiently to have his say: "Don't forget that I am powerful enough to dissolve all the creations you have thus far manifested and sustained."

Coming to the middle of a beautiful field, the three gods sat down and set up a chorus of self-congratulation: "Aren't we wonderful! We are the supreme gods -- the creator, the preserver, and the destroyer of universes." Brahma added: "I am the matchless one who creates all the beauties in nature." Vishnu declared: "But it is I who give the lease of life to all your beautiful creations." And Shiva said: "Ah, but it is I who destroy the monotony, the sameness of everything by dissolving creation in the furnace of my being and renewing it into something different for you, Brahma, to mold into a new creation." Again the three gods chorused: "Aren't we wonderful?"

Even as this merriment was going on, a little child with night-dark eyes suddenly sprang out of the ether and stood in front of Brahma and

asked: "Who are you?" Laughingly Brahma replied: "Why, don't you know? I am the creator of all things." The little child laughed and saucily replied: "Well, Mr. Brahma, search your memory and find out if you ever created me." Brahma searched his omniscient mind, but at last, exhausted, he sat down in despair and replied: "O little boy, you must have been created by me, yet I don't remember you. I don't think that I created you."

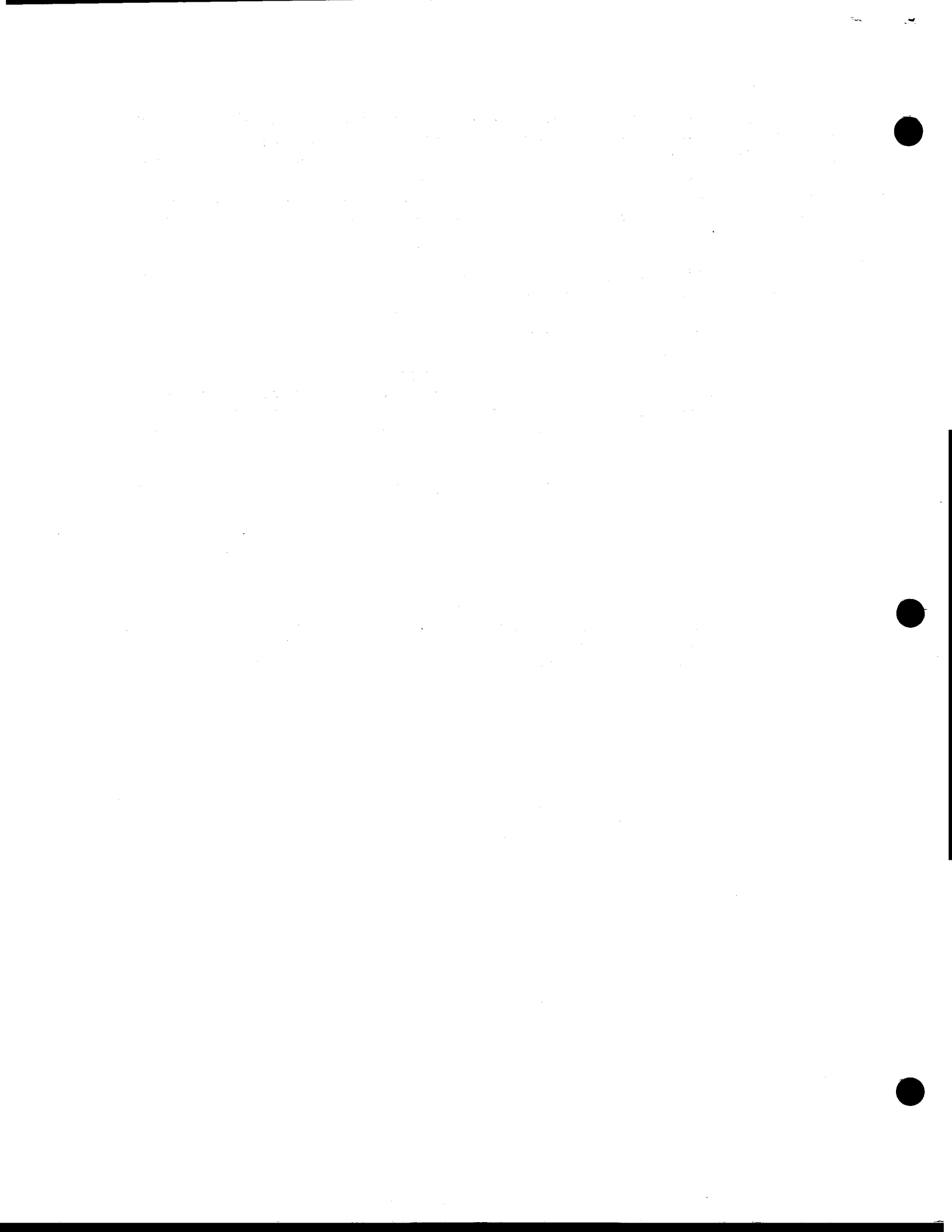
Then the lotus-eyed boy challenged Vishnu and asked if that god were sustaining his life. "Of course!" replied Vishnu. "That is, I think I sustain you." But when the god taxed his memory he was forced to admit that he had not been sustaining the little boy.

Turning to Shiva, the most elated and puffed up god of them all, the little boy taunted: "Shiva, you can never kill me, no matter what you do!" And Shiva found that although he tried with might and main, he could not even use his will power to make an effort to destroy the little child.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

~~I will follow the shepherd of the wise --~~
devotion and meditation -- which will lead
me through the star of inner wisdom to the
Christ in everything.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE FIVEFOLD TAPER OF MY SENSES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Living Lord, help me train the truant children of my senses not to wander away from perceptions of Thee.

Direct my gaze to Thy wondrous world within, to watch Thine ever changing beauty.

May I hear the lilt of Thy secret lyre.

Teach me to feel Thy presence in me, above me, beneath me, and around me.

Bless me that I catch the scent of Thy breath of bliss.

Let me drink forever from the sourceless river of Thine inexhaustibility.

Orientwise, with sacred rites I offer at Thine altar the candles of my senses. May their spiritualized light mingle with Thine in the first pale shaft of dawn, the brash noon brightness, the muted glow of dusk, and the night's moon silver.

O Guardian of my being, keep ever burning before Thee the fivefold taper of my love.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Teach me, O Father, to find Thee within, that I may find Thee without. Teach me to find Thee without, that I may find Thee within. Teach me to find Thee within and without: in the silence within, and in the sounds without.

METHODS FOR ACHIEVING SILENCE

Few people understand fully the meaning of the word "concentration"; fewer still actually know how to concentrate. Study of books on the subject may clarify your conception of concentration, but books do not give you the power of concentration. You must know how to achieve concentration and then practice in order to acquire the power.

Concentration is the gateway to heaven. It is the gateway to power latent within you. Concentration means to gather the attention at one point. But how can you do that if your attention is distracted? The root cause of many failures in life is lack of concentration. Attention is like a searchlight; when its beam is spread over a vast area, its power to focus on a particular object becomes weak, but focused on one thing at a time, it becomes powerful. Great men are men of concentration. They put their whole mind on one thing at a time.

Only when the attention is free from sensation, thoughts, and memory thoughts, can you focus it on God. To thus detach attention from the senses and thoughts, and place it on God only, is called meditation. Sit quietly and meditate on the joy of silence. Think of that joy as communion with God. The more you meditate, the more you will realize that nothing else can give you that refined, increasing joy of silence. That experience of joy in meditation is communion with God. Pray deeply, with devotion, first for God's love, then for wisdom, happiness, health, prosperity, and then for the fulfillment of any specific legitimate wish.

The meditating devotee must do away with little body-attachments. He must learn to be proof against warm or cold climates. He must learn to remain calm in the face of difficulties. He must learn to overcome hunger and pain. He must learn to conquer all the appetites and attachments that have been allowed to govern the body, for as long as the mind is focused on the body and its relationship with the limited material world, the soul cannot remember its omnipresent nature.

The meditating saint is not in a negative state of stupor. He is aware of the fall of the sparrow, the thoughts of human beings, the birth of an atom; his

consciousness is aware in every speck of space. As you are conscious of every part of your body, so he is conscious of everything in the universe. Wherever you are when you broadcast a thought, God receives it, because He is in all space; but your prayer must be strong if you would awaken the response of God.

SENSE TELEPHONES Man is operating five sense telephones. The heart and the medulla oblongata are the two switchboards that control them. When the heart stops involuntarily, as at death, man loses the use of these five instruments. The attention has to be freed from them consciously in order to go to God. Man must consciously disconnect the five sense telephones to free his attention from the distractions of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch--from sensations that rouse thoughts. As soon as you hear a sound, you think: "What is that?" Many persons do not believe that sensations precede thoughts because the thought seems to be simultaneous. But the fact is that when a sensation reaches the brain, that sensation immediately rouses thoughts.

Man receives his sensations through the sensory nerves, and reacts through the motor nerves. For example, pinch yourself on the arm. That sensation is received by the brain through the sensory nerves, and is reacted upon by the motor nerves as your arm twitches or pulls away. Your greatest enemies are sensations. If no sensations registered in the brain, you could not be disturbed. Thoughts are the result of sensations or memories of sensations; if you can stop them you can stop the thoughts.

Through Self-Realization Fellowship studies you have been learning how to withdraw your life energy from the senses and rechannel it to the centers of higher awareness in the spine and brain. Then you can go to the Infinite consciously. Most people do not know how to go into that state of silence. It is not an unconscious state, but an expansion of the consciousness from the boundaries of the body into boundless eternity. In this expansion of consciousness you know that you are not limited by your little body. You live in the actual knowledge that God is with you, and that all you have to do when you want to use your creative power in any way is to remember that the unlimited way is through God. By concentrating consciously, you can throw the searchlight of attention on God, and as soon as you become locked in communion with His joy, you can hear the song of God--Aum, the music of the spheres. In that sound is the creative intelligence of God. You want to attune yourself to that in order to achieve the highest results--spiritual, mental, or material.

Sensations do not exist on the periphery of the body. You enjoy or suffer from them in the brain. The popular way to do away with thought is by diversion, but the scientific way is to shut off the senses so that one may easily and completely withdraw the attention from disturbing sensation-arousing objects.

Unless you completely free the temple of attention from disturbing thoughts, God will not manifest there. If you are thinking of something else when you are praying to God, He will not answer. Why should He? Your inattention is an

indication that you don't want Him--at least not earnestly enough. God doesn't surrender Himself unless He is absolutely sure that every worldly thought is removed from your mind. He is like a candle flame that cannot withstand the gust of restlessness. His light will burn steadily in your temple of meditation when you are free from restlessness. You must be completely attentive when you offer unto the Divine Beloved the bouquet of your devotion. Call to God with your heart and with your soul, that you may by the divine fervor of your heart coax Him to reveal His face everywhere--evermore.

MEDITATION EXERCISES When by relaxation you withdraw the energy from the body, you know with absolute assurance that you are not the body; you are the energy burning in the lamp of flesh. Relaxation, when it precedes meditation, is the way to the Infinite. The following meditation exercises will help you to release your soul from confinement in finitude to eternal freedom in Infinity. Practice these exercises during your morning or evening meditation periods, when you are in a quiet place.

1. Sit upright, look out of the open window into the limitlessness of the sky. (If you cannot see the sky from your window, mentally visualize it.) Mentally picture your mind watching your body, the room, and the sky simultaneously as its encasing body. Keep on meditating for a few minutes until you feel that you are the body, the room, and the sky. This same meditation can be very fruitfully practiced either in the daytime or in the moonlight, when on a mountaintop or at the ocean or in any beautiful scenic surroundings.
2. Meditate in the following way: Sit upright on a chair or on your bed. Close your eyes. Think that you are sitting on the center of the floor of your world home, of which the sky is the roof; then picture this world home, decorated with snow on the north and south poles, and inlaid with mountains, rivers, and pools of oceans filled with frothy, pure-white lilies of wavelets. Behold the ferns of forests which bedeck your earthly house; now behold in your mind's eye all your relative nations, races, families, your loved ones, friends, and so forth, gathered around you playing the drama of life on the stage of time. Then mentally say: "Hello, everybody! my white, brown, red, and yellow fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends." Try to feel all races as your very own family and loved ones. Mentally say again: "Let us all bow to our One Father, God, who made us all in His image. Let us bow to our same grandparents, Adam and Eve, whose one blood runs in all our veins. Let us thank God for putting us in our one big home of the earth; let us live happily and harmoniously and do His will, that our home may become what He wants it to be."
3. Meditate with closed eyes. Mentally say: "I dissolve my body form in darkness." Watch the limitless dark space of eternity spread above, beneath, in front, behind, ahead, within and without--everywhere. Quickly visualize yourself as surrounded by a sealed rainbow balloon of light, a balloon of

light that can never burst, no matter how much you blow into it. Throw the breath out very slowly and visualize this balloon of light as being expanded by your luminous breath until it becomes big enough to contain the star clusters, universes, and planetary and solar systems, including your earth and your body--everything.

4. Close your eyes. Look up mentally and keep on traveling mentally as far as you can go into the sky. Look to the right mentally as far as you can, and then look to the left as far as you can. Look down as far as you can; then bring your eyes to a focus between the eyebrows and concentrate at the central space in the heart and mentally say: "I am a tiny speck of space in the heart, and I am all space, alive with everlasting, ever new Bliss at every point of space, spreading from within my body to the limitless beyond. My body, mind, brain, intelligence, body cells, organs, and so forth, all constitute the living, intelligent space into which I swallow and absorb everything, and out of which I disgorge the glittering universe according to the will of Spirit in me."

By constantly holding the peaceful aftereffects of meditation in mind; by feeling immortality in the life force in the body; by believing in eternal life instead of being hypnotized by the illusory changes of temporal life; and by feeling the ocean of immortal Bliss-God underlying the changeable waves of the experiences of past lives--and the waves of perceptions of childhood, youth, and age in this life--the soul can find not only perpetual rejuvenation in itself, but also in the body.

Just as soon as man finds that the body is not isolated from Spirit, but is composed of a number of rising and falling waves of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, the perpetual rejuvenation of the Spirit can be implanted in his body if he so desires. The ocean can help any wave to retain its form if it keeps pushing that wave from within its bosom; so man can retain physical youth by asking the unchangeable, everlasting Ocean of Immortal Power behind the wave of his mortal form to continue manifesting Itself as that vital youthful form.

INSPIRATION

I sought to catch Thee in the secret waters of superconsciousness. To lure Thee I used the bait of love. Its fragrance attracted many rare fish of sacred inspirations; the float-quill of my yearning bobbed often. But, Elusive Lord, every time I reeled in my line I found I had missed Thee.

With ever attentive zeal I watched. Suddenly the quill sank in fulfillment beneath the swell of Thy bliss waves. I pulled steadily at the line; and Thou, O Colossal Denizen of the Deeps! didst leap into the boat of my life.

THE THREE GODS AND THE GOD OF GODS -- Part 2

Then the three gods asked: "Audacious little lad, whence comest Thou?" The boy laughed. Then he put a small piece of straw in front of the three gods and addressed Brahma thus: "O mighty, self-appointed creator of universes, use your will and try to create, if you can, another piece of straw just like the one you see before you." Brahma floated the Cosmic Energy out of himself and willed until he was exhausted, but he could not create a duplicate piece of straw. Forehead beaded with perspiration, the puzzled Brahma sat down and bowed his head, vanquished and chagrined.

Then the little boy said: "Vishnu, please try to save this little piece of straw that I am going to destroy." The lad belched smoke and fire at the piece of straw and it melted and vanished. Vishnu, with all his preservative, almighty will - command, could not keep that little piece of straw from being destroyed.

The little boy said: "Behold, I bring back the little piece of straw." And the piece of straw reappeared to their sight. Now the little boy turned and looked with fiery eyes at Shiva and said: "Almighty Shiva, destroyer of all things, please try to dissolve this little piece of straw." Shiva opened up his spiritual eye and let loose a flood of world-dissolving fire. But although Shiva foamed flames that set the whole forest of space ablaze, he could not even sing that piece of straw. At last the three gods lowered their eyes and hung their heads and asked: "Shining, blessed little child, who are you?"

Hearing no response, they looked up and saw the little boy dissolving into the ether as he gently said: "You have yet to find out who I am--I, whose residence is in you and in everything else!"

This story illustrates that, no matter how powerful one becomes in life, he must not forget his entire dependence upon the Cosmic Fountain of Life--the Life of all life, the God of all gods.

Pride is blinding, banishing the vision of vastness possessed by greater souls. No matter how great a person is in a certain field, there will be found in time a greater one in the same orbit of achievement. Never forget that lurking around the future turns of the pathway of life there may be someone greater than you, as was true in the case of the three most powerful gods, who became wiser through the knowledge that their powers were only borrowed from His Supreme Excellency, the God of all gods. So before pride blinds you and shuts out the vision of the Infinite, you should learn that no matter whether you are a successful business-man, a powerful politician, a dictator, or a great reformer, your power is naught but the reflected power of God. Humbleness is the open gate through which the Divine Flood of mercy and power loves to flow into the recipient souls.

(Conclusion)

AFFIRMATION

Father, be with me on the altar of peace. Father, evermore be present on the altar of my silence.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LEAD US TO THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, may our consciousness be cleansed of all error and doubt. May our souls be filled with a desire to understand these great truths. Thou dost reveal Thyself unto babes. Make us like little children, humble and receptive, that we may follow the true path until Thou dost reveal Thyself. Bless us with the thorough understanding that leads to Thee. May we never be satisfied until we find Thee.

Take us away from side paths and direct us to the main road that leads to Thy temple--the temple that is fragrant with devotion from the hearts of all the saints who have ever loved Thee. May we harbor a new determination to follow the one direct path of Self-realization, to our highest goal and to the fulfillment of incarnations: which leads us most quickly to find Thee. For if we have Thee, we have everything. Give us perfect ideals, good habits, and above all, the supreme desire to know Thee and to live with Thee every day.

PRAYER

O Holy Vibration of Aum, boom Thou on my inner shores. Destroy the boundary thoughts of flesh confinement.

In meditation let me hear Thy subtle oceanlike reverberation in my body, mind, and soul; and in my environment of creation: first in my immediate surroundings, then spreading to all towns, cities, the earth, the solar system, and the universe.

May I be conscious of my augmented being in the vast cosmic body of Nature.

STEPS TOWARD COMPLETE REALIZATION

GOD MANIFESTS AS VIBRATION God in His manifested aspect is ever conscious, discriminative, perpetually peaceful, joyous Vibration.

The different components of the material universe--earth, water, fire, air, ether; man, beast, consciousness--all these are only different rates of vibration. The difference between solid, liquid, and gaseous substances consists only in their rate of vibration. Heat a piece of iron and it will liquefy; further heat the liquid ore, and it will evaporate into gas. The difference between organic and inorganic matter also is one of vibration. A pound of organic flesh when burned becomes a little less than a pound of inorganic carbon.

Consciousness consists of various rates of intelligent vibration, and matter consists of differently vibrating electrons. Electrons are constituted of differently vibrating emanations of conscious cosmic energy, and cosmic energy is vibrating cosmic intelligence: God in matter is vibrating intelligent energy. God is acting in the minds of men as the vibration of intelligence. God is therefore not only the vibrating energy and consciousness that pervade everything, but also the "frozen" energy and consciousness that we behold as matter.

Vibration is a quivering, stirring force. Guided by conscious discrimination, it arranges itself into a livable harmonious universe. If vibration were not intelligent and beautiful, the universe might be only a meaningless mass of mud, or nothing but vapor or water; or there might be an earth without beings, or human beings might have been created without vegetation for food supply. The order in everything clearly shows that there is one Intelligence that guides the vibrations to so arrange themselves as to form an orderly systematic universe, and an earth whereon are possible a routine of seasons and laws of life. Manifested Spirit, then, is discriminative, beautiful vibration. If vibration alone existed without intelligence to guide it, then it would be only a powerful force without any conscious ability to create a systematic universe.

Why is the earth an earth, the ocean an ocean, a human being a human being, the solar system a solar system? Because an intelligent force is guiding them to some definite destiny. By scientific analysis it has been discovered that the stars, which are millions of light-years away, are made of the same materials of which the earth is composed. Why is there such perceptible beauty and orderly arrangement in the universe? It must be because of an intelligent, all-powerful God. Not only do we see the evidence of intelligence in everything about us, but also we see that everything has been so worked out as to appear to be the result of a prearranged plan.

Not only were the rose and the earth and the human body intelligently made, but also the entire solar and stellar systems; and earth, water, air, and electricity. Thermal and gravitational laws all operate in harmonious relation to each other. This shows that the universe is not the work of many intelligences, but of one governing intelligence of God, who knows how to make small things and big things at the same time; who knows how to relate all of them harmoniously in the cosmos according to a cosmic plan.

The universal Spirit is trying to manifest beauty, a moral and a noble plan. We find not only intelligence working, but the manifestation of beauty--the scenery of mountains painted on the ever-changing azure canvas of the sky, the mysterious mechanism of the human body, the rose, the green grass carpet, the magnanimity of souls, the loftiness of minds, the depth of love--all these things remind us of a God who is beautiful and noble. No doubt this universal power is working under some adverse circumstances, but still it is evident that a secret force is at work trying to carry out a plan--a moral, spiritual plan to bring order out of the seeming chaos of creation. Face to face with temptation, your conscience is fighting; face to face with personality, your true Self is fighting; face to face, disease and health are fighting; ignorance and intelligence are fighting each other; and prosperity battles with poverty. Death and destruction are fighting face to face with new births. All creation is struggling to bring about the life beautiful.

FINDING GOD IN DAILY LIFE

The centuries of human years are but little days--nay, a few hours--in God's consciousness. Wake up! Arise from dreams of limiting mortal boundaries to the realization of the vastness of the immortal soul within you. In this mortal dream you are a big bee buzzing around the poisoned honey of blossoming sense lures. Come! I will show you that you are an eternal bee, born to drink with countless mouths the nectar-bliss hidden in the honeycombs of all human hearts and of the very atoms. Feed no longer your human habit of limited mortal consciousness with actions that keep you bound to that delusion. Rather, cultivate the divine habit of constant daily meditation, and love God all the time; thus the habit of recognizing your own omnipresent soul nature may be revived in your consciousness, displacing body-bound, world-caged human ideas, beliefs, and habits.

Drink the nectar of God-love in all hearts, but avoid the poison of body

attachments and all small worldly attachments. Use every heart as your own wine cup to drink the ambrosia of God-love. Do not drink divine love from one heart only, but from all hearts drink only the love of God.

Ask God to be with you. Learn to love God as the joy felt in meditation; then victory is very near. Every morning think of God as you start on the path of your material and spiritual duties. Think of Him with each step of your advancing feet; then think of Him after you have traveled the path and finished your progressive action. By your own will, choose good food; then think of God before you eat that food; think of God when you are eating it; and when you have finished eating, think of God.

Invoke God as power in the temple of consciousness during the day. Let every word and action be tinged with intoxicating love of God. Be drunk with God, but talk and act sensibly, like a man who drinks a lot and yet keeps his senses alert. Let every action of daily life be a temple dedicated to your constant memory of God. Perform every action to please Him; then in the shrine of each action, each thought, God will glisten.

Carry your love of God deep in your heart before you go to sleep, so that when you dream, you may dream of Him resting on the altar of sleep as Krishna or Christ; as peace or bliss. In the temple of sleep or dreams, feel God as peace or ever new bliss. God clasps you to His bosom of peace and joy when you go to sleep in the chamber of your subconscious, in your temple of dreams. Then you are locked in His arms of tranquillity. So before you fall asleep, hold the thought that you are going to embrace Him as peace in sleep and dreams.

When you are deeply sleeping or meditating, feel God as the omnipresent Bliss embracing you. His great omnipresence touches you in sleep and in meditation, and through His blissful touch He wants to make you forget the little painful worries you have garnered during your truant stay in the slums of matter. Enthroned peace and joy in your heart. Feel joy no matter whom you meet or what you do. If you can do this, though the universe be shattered into nothingness, or your body be torn by trials, you will find Him dancing in your memory as imperishable Joy forevermore.

Hold on to your spiritual treasure of joy, cultivate it and plant it in other hearts. Never surrender your joy into the hands of the thieves of worry and selfishness. Hold on to joy, no matter if death frowns at your door, or your own subconscious mind says: "All is lost!" Drown all noises with the silence of your invincible joy. Enthroned joy in the sanctuary of all your aspirations, noble ambitions, noble actions, noble thoughts, and you will consciously feel God as joy reigning on the altar of every thought and feeling. Divine love will be enshrined in all your memories of past incarnations and present thoughts. Then you will find that evil and misery were dream creations of your own imagination. You slept and dreamed a nightmare of evil; you wake in God and feel only joy and virtue existing everywhere. And when the divine memory

of constant joy arises, you will forget your self-created nightmares of evil, and you will behold only God, goodness, and bliss existing in everything.

GOD IN EVERYTHING Think of God before deciding on a course of action. Think of Him before performing an action, while performing an action, and after the action has been performed. Feel God as love in all hearts. Feel God in the impartial love you feel for all. Create godlike habits by thinking of Him as beauty and fragrance in the flowers; color in rainbows; love, wisdom, and power in all human minds; and as vastness in the ocean and the skies. Think of Him as life in the breeze, vitality in the sunshine, peace in dreams, joy in deep sleep, perennial bliss in meditation, and love in all hearts.

Reason that God is energy which has frozen itself into electrons, gases, liquids, and solids. Reason that God is frozen intelligent energy. Hear in all songs the heart-stirring ecstasy of God's songs. Tune in and hear God's program of celestial inspirations.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER God is like a lighted match of smiles. Just think of that! His smile is just like a matchstick lighting up the gloom. Life is mostly darkness. We stumble along, but when we see people smile it drives away our sadness like a matchstick struck in the dark.

The laughter of the infinite God must vibrate through your smile. Let the breeze of God's love spread your smiles in the hearts of men. Your divine smiles will be contagious; their fire will chase the gloom from others' hearts. You are the Infinite, which has become the body. The body, as a manifestation of Spirit, is the ever youthful Spirit.

Every time the spiritual man sees sad faces, he shoots some buckshot of vitality-spreading smiles at their owners. As soon as he comes upon a sorrowful heart, he fires into it sympathetic smiles and kind words. The minute he sees somebody overwhelmed with clouds of sorrow, he disperses the gloom by the continuous cannonading of his courageous smiles. Whenever the heart of sorrow is pierced with the bullet of a smile, he scores a bull's-eye. We should have target practice every day in shooting smiles into the body of sadness. We must shoot sorrow on sight. We can kill "the blues" with the bullet of wisdom.

FINAL EMANCIPATION

Most people live almost mechanically, unconscious of any ideal or plan of life. They come on earth, struggle for a living, and leave the shores of mortality without knowing why they came here, and what their duties were.

No matter what the goal of life is, it is obvious that man is so undermined with needs that he must struggle to satisfy them. Both the believer and the disbeliever in God must struggle to supply the necessities of life. It is, therefore, very important to know that man should concentrate upon his needs and not create a lot of useless extra desires.

The divine state of final emancipation is not a blank nothingness or inner extinction, but a demesne of positive, conscious, eternal, blessed expansion. Worldly people revel in conflicting desires and remain wallowing in the mire of suffering. People who live in the superconsciousness of the soul, on the other hand, become nonattached to material objects; but they are not indifferent--like the hobo who is too lazy to make any decent effort to enjoy either material or spiritual attainments. The true devotee, who has tasted the extra-fine perceptions of soul bliss, remains unmoved and without craving for material pleasures, even though he may move among them. That is the true, secure, spiritual state.

AFFIRMATION

In the stillness of my soul I humbly bow
before Thine omnipresence, knowing that
Thou art ever leading me onward and upward
on the path of Self-realization.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The following Lesson Summaries are quick general reviews of each Lesson in Step Four. These summaries are intended to refresh your memory of, and to fix firmly in your mind, the most vital points presented in the preceding lessons. These reviews will also enhance your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice of the techniques, and of the importance of one to the other. Review is an important factor in any study, and particularly in the study of Self-Realization Fellowship teachings; for if you have been steadfastly practicing the techniques, you will find that each time you review a lesson you will discover something worthwhile that may have escaped you in previous study or perhaps unexpected satisfaction in a point that had not particularly impressed you before. It is through repetition of and meditation upon the truth that we learn the most.

The summaries include some explanatory notes not contained in the lesson proper. It has been our sincere purpose to present the authentic "why" of all the principles expounded by the masters of India. In order to cover thoroughly and comprehensively these fundamental principles, the summaries that constitute Lesson 104 will be continued in a series of installments.

The review questions at the end of each installment of the summaries are intended to help you in your study of the lessons, and aid in evaluating your understanding of the teachings. You are to keep the answers to these review questions.

FOURTH STEP Try to bear in mind the importance of the following salient truths in Step Four:

When you are in attunement with your Infinite Source, you know yourself to be made in His image and in possession of His qualities. You know yourself as a creator, possessing unlimited power, and you realize your responsibility to the Father's plan. The laws of the Cosmos are the laws of your being. God's work is your work.

The real devotee consciously accepts God's will as his own, as the will of all good, so he forgets his little self in the greater Self and

finds progress in obeying that will. In having consciously accepted his heritage, he is now aware of a more rapid expansion of consciousness and a preparation for the light that until now would have been too great for him to bear. If all this has been accomplished, the next step opens the gate to complete liberation.

LESSON 79 Behind your will is the will of God--the flow of unlimited energy seeking to manifest all that is good. This is why, if you tune in with divine will and never waver in your efforts, you cannot fail.

Will is desire plus energy directed toward fulfillment. There is nothing that can be accomplished without will power, not any act of your daily life. Most people will do all manner of unessential things, and do not concentrate their efforts constructively. To wish is not to will, though wishing may be the forerunner of willing.

In developing will power, you first must make up your mind, using reason, discrimination, and wisdom. Then exercise and use your will consciously toward a specific purpose. And never give up until you reach your objective. When you tune in with divine will, and revolve your mind and will continuously around a certain idea, your will becomes impregnated with power.

Human will, directed by selfish desire and ignorance, brings suffering and trouble. You cannot know any lasting happiness until you desire God and truth above all things, and turn your will toward the never-to-be-given-up search for God.

Remember that your will, harnessed to divine will, can blaze like a flame through any situation or difficulty. A thought coupled with action by dynamic will brings that thought into outward form. Nothing can permanently withstand it. But beware of will wrongly directed. It is a boomerang.

Will power evolves through childhood and youth:

1. The baby's will is called physiological will. He cries due to some physical condition.
2. Later his will is "mechanical"--guided by his mother's will.
3. Next comes the blind will of youth manifesting in the consciousness that he can get his own way if he tries. He explodes it experimentally in a new feeling of power, but without reason.
4. Later, through reason and a few hard knocks, he learns to guide his will consciously.
5. Some people never get any farther than this, and go through the gate

of death without ever having sought the answer to life. The awakened ones tune in with divine will and thus their efforts are all directed toward bringing His will upon earth. Their dynamic active prayer is: "Thy will be done."

LESSON 80 To most people this life is an amazing paradox because their sense of values is not true. They seek happiness in trying to fulfill desires that expand the ego instead of living so as to expand soul qualities. It rests with us whether we live and express the light of God, or blunder along, swathed in the veil of ignorance.

The first thing to do to rend the veil of ignorance--and to repair your mind microphone so that you can broadcast your prayers to God, and receive His answer--is to practice concentration and meditation deeply. Peace and accomplishment are the flowers grown through daily meditation. Right meditation must flower into right action.

One of the greatest enemies to success is fear, for it destroys initiative without which one cannot succeed. Mental laziness, lack of initiative, and lack of perseverance are barriers to success.

It is not success itself which should be the goal, but the kind of living which brings success. Too great an eagerness for success may be its own hindrance. Sustained creative effort and definite purpose are essential to success.

Creative effort can be put into any kind of work you may be doing at the present time. Being made in God's image you are a creator. What are you creating? Your problems and tests are creative material, and God never gives you more than you have the innate strength to handle.

Remember: if you think you are going down, just "give one more punch."

Avoid an inferiority feeling. It is false. You are a child of God, and the servant of all.

Good books are good friends. Read with attention and intuitive perception. Digest ideas, and assimilate truths. Do not be just a collector of information through your reading, but garner wisdom from the great minds of all ages and make it your own through intelligent thinking and assimilation.

Although there is a certain vibratory influence of stars upon human lives owing to interrelated cosmic forces of attraction and repulsion, a man of infinite will power, tuned in with God, uses his free will to change his environment. He marches on, influenced by the Sun of all suns, the Almighty Spirit. To him, from the depths of his determination and faith, all things are possible. He burns the seeds of difficulties in the fire of wisdom, and consults only God for guidance.

LESSON 81 All food that is eaten produces certain chemical effects in the body and brain. Food sensations can determine a specific mentality. Food should be selected with care, and the life force trained to draw energy from subtler sources. The body's energy requirements can be supplied partly by sunshine and oxygen. Vitamins are different kinds of rays, and for this reason, foods rich in vitamins should be used. Proper diet is very important in building vitality. Each one of the millions of cells in the body is a tiny mouth taking nourishment.

The nine-day diet has the effect of cleansing all the cells of the body of their accumulations of poisons, and allowing these poisons to be eliminated from the body.

Follow instructions carefully:

1. Eat only the foods on the list.
2. Drink water in abundance.
3. Take a nightly bath, using salt or Epsom salts in the water, to aid in elimination through the skin. Take an Epsom salts bath frequently for several weeks after finishing the cleansing diet.
4. Use a laxative daily during the diet.
5. After the nine-day diet, the selection and quantity of your food intake should be given especial care. Resume a normal diet gradually. Do not overeat. Gradually increase the amount and variety until you are again on a normal diet. This should take four days. Use only foods listed in this Lesson.

Complete fasting should not be attempted except under the supervision of a medical doctor.

An oxygen diet consists of inhaling and exhaling deeply, filling the lungs with fresh air down to the lower lobes. This should be done either out of doors or by an open window, and should be practiced from six to twelve times every hour. It should not, however, be undertaken by weak individuals or invalids.

LESSON 82 The nine-day diet is good preparation for the system before either trying to reduce or build up the body. Whether you choose the reducing or weight-increasing diet, or wish to hold your present weight, your food intake should include foods that contain all the elements needed for proper maintenance of the body. Study your food lists and choose carefully. If you have wrong food habits, change them gradually. Eat at least some of the foods listed under "Daily Diet" every day. If your system demands flesh foods, such foods should be used not oftener than once a week, and preferably once a month. Abstain entirely from all beef and pork products.

It is the intricate task of the life force to distill more life force from the nourishment taken into the body. Therefore, one's diet should

be confined to foods that are easily converted into energy, or that are productive of fresh energy. Learn to depend more and more upon Cosmic Energy, and less upon material food.

"Food" is of three kinds: material food, mental energy, and divine wisdom, affecting the body battery, mind battery, and soul battery respectively. Remember that good thoughts and concentration are nourishing food for the mind. Evil thoughts are poisonous to the health of both body and mind.

Your magnetic diet consists of:

1. The thoughts you are thinking.
2. The thoughts you are receiving from the close thought-contact with your friends and relatives. (This may be either peaceful or disquieting.)
3. Rays and oxygen:
 - a. Vitamins are different kinds of rays. When you are eating, you are eating energy.
 - b. The ultraviolet rays that one absorbs from the sun exert a beneficial vitalizing effect on the body.
 - c. Treatments with artificially produced ultraviolet and infrared rays under the guidance of a specialist are beneficial.
 - d. Bathing in sunlight-heated or ultraviolet-ray-saturated water is very good.
4. Vigorous rubbing of the body with the hands generates life force.

To overcome mental stagnation:

1. Give the twenty body parts a breakfast of energy the first thing in the morning by practicing the Energization Exercises.
2. Practice lessons on concentration and meditation.
3. Exercise with the instruments of judgment, introspection, and initiative. Exhale poisonous thoughts of discouragement, discontent, and hopelessness.
4. Feast on the creative thinking within yourself and others.
5. Take mental walks on the path of self-confidence.
6. Take up intensive spiritual study and intensive spiritual dieting, and refuse to suffer longer from the infection of ignorance.

LESSON 83 Since the food one eats contains the building material of the body, and the condition of the body influences the disposition to a great extent, it stands to reason that the mind should take command and use discrimination in the selection of food.

As it is important to introduce the right food into the system, so

it is of equal importance to awaken the vital forces by proper exercise, in order to develop the powers of digestion, assimilation, elimination, and all the steps in the process of converting the food into usable energy for the well-being of body and mind.

You understand the importance of making plaster for a house of the right ingredients, or of not omitting any of the ingredients in making a cake. If you forget to put some of the right materials in a cake, you will find there is something wrong with the cake. And so it is with the human body. Sixteen elements are necessary ingredients in good body-building. If any of them are omitted, there result bodily defects which are called "disease." So you see, it is up to you to see that you build your body of the correct materials, including all of the necessary elements. All the proper food materials can be classified under the following: minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, fats.

Individuals differ in their needs as regards amount and proportion of these classes of foods. Occupational activity is one factor. The need of strengthening certain faculties and organs and body parts is another consideration. So it takes study of foods and study of your needs, in order to select your food properly.

Give attention to this Lesson and note the corrections you should make in your own diet; then start right away to do something about it. Practice the stomach exercise to stimulate and improve digestion.

It must be remembered that the Lessons on vitalopathy are given to help you awaken the life force in each organ. You are not the body, not the breath, not the mind. You are the Life of all, beneath and permeating all; That in which everything in the universe has its being. Spirit alone, with Its ever new joy, has expressed Itself into a vast body of nature.

LESSON 84 A great war on ignorance must be waged in order to declare the freedom of the bondslave, religion. Superstition, bigotry, dogma, untested beliefs, have hidden truth from all but the courageous few. Exploitation of religion by the bigoted and unscrupulous among the priesthood and clergy has finally driven a great many of the real thinkers and intelligent people from the churches.

In spite of all these hindrances, religions of all kinds have held up an ideal and a goal which has held out hope to mankind and given impetus to better living. The light has never been completely hidden. A few true prophets have carried the torch of their own realization to guide the stumbling multitudes.

There is only one Truth; It can be known only by individual spiritual experience. Such experience will be found to be the same, whether the individual be Hindu, Christian, or a member of any sect or school of thought. But such realization cannot be described in words. It can only be manifested in living the life.

Really intelligent, scientific search without ceasing is the only and sure way to realization--to know God--to know Self. A breaking down of caste, class and racial barriers, a search for the hindrances in ourselves instead of in our brothers, is one of the first steps that must be taken. Break away from religious fear, parental religious habits; combine the best of East and West; try to discover the true art of living that can really daily uplift and help all people.

We must have fellowship for the good of all, and not separative sects and "isms." We need one "Church of God" to shed its light to all mankind. The time will come when only those souls who have attained Self-realization, who live the life, will give instruction and draw crowds of souls.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the Summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP FOUR

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 79

1. What is will power?
2. Explain how to develop will power.

Lesson 80

1. Upon what is the attainment of success dependent?
2. To what extent should you recognize planetary influence in your life?

Lesson 81

1. What general types of foods affect
 - a. the spiritual brain?
 - b. the active brain?
 - c. material brain?
2. What is an oxygen diet?
3. What benefits are to be derived from the nine-day diet?
4. Name five essential points to remember in taking this diet.

Lesson 82

1. Of what does the magnetic diet consist?
2. In what form are nuts the most wholesome?
3. In what combination of other foods should they be eaten?

Lesson 83

1. What influence does diet have upon health and mind?

Lesson 84

1. What plan should the churches adopt to make their religion truly progressive?

Note: Self-Realization Fellowship does not request a Personal Report on Step Four; however, please let us know if there is anything in the material received thus far that is not clear to you, or if we may be of help to you in your practice of the techniques.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON 85 The scientist gets results because he applies the laws of im-
partial reasoning and the universal laws of nature. He ex-
periments and tests. He does not receive his knowledge by shutting himself
up in a room and praying for it. He tirelessly and actively applies himself
toward getting results. Religion must use the same methods. Hand in hand
with science, religion must apply effort to the conversion of the human body
into life energy. It should turn to experimental psychology and test the real
efficacies of faith and spiritual laws upon human beings in the laboratories of
the churches. It should conduct real research on life-molding and ignorance-
~~elimination. It should delve into the real inner nature of man and teach man~~
to know himself. It should separate the dross of superstition from real reli-
gion by burning it in the furnace of scientific research.

The scriptures, in order to be worth-while, should give help to man in
every walk of life. They do contain such material and instruction, and both
the material and psychological interpretations are necessary--although the
spiritual interpretations are of the greatest importance. The truly spiritual
man is the balanced, all-round man, happy, healthy, intellectual, prosperous,
and wise.

God made us angels of energy encased in the material bulb of flesh. We
have so concentrated upon the fragile globe that we have forgotten our inde-
structible immortal self charged with eternal life energy. We must now make
real concentrated effort to feel His consciousness of omnipresence again.

The root of hope is in the secret spring of the soul's intuition, its forgot-
ten knowledge. Hope is born of the intuitive consciousness in the soul that we
shall sometime remember the image of God within us. The first flower of
this hope is faith. Hope for the highest and best, for that is your birthright.
When hope is used properly to work for the acquisition of the soul's lost intu-
ition, then faith, or intuitive Self-realization, develops.

LESSON 86 You may believe what you hear and read, but to positively
know a thing, you must experience it in your own conscious-

ness. This is true of God. Until you have experienced God, made actual God-contact, which is the realization of your oneness with God, and therefore, of God's unity with all manifested things and unmanifested cosmos, you do not know God.

God is visible to you in the beauty and grandeur of nature. He speaks to you through sweet music, the song of birds, the gentle loving voices of your dear ones, and in the thundering call of duty. The urge within us to find perfection, peace, happiness, immortality, and conscious knowledge, is God's voice calling us back to His mansion of oneness. It is His image within us trying to manifest itself through our matter-bound consciousness.

The only way to know God is to experience Him in deepest meditation. God is present right on the throne of peace within you. You can know Him within, in the peace and bliss of meditation, then realize Him as peace existing in the harmony of all things without. Forget your little isolated life-wave, and know yourself as a part of the great human family, one with universal life.

To love God-created things more than God, is not wisdom. Make your goal the source, the fountain of all powers, God. Perform your material duties well, and at the same time do your duty to God by keeping your contact with Him in meditation. Above all, never neglect God.

LESSON 87 The development of intuition quickens evolution in the individual because through intuition one can know any phase of truth correctly and directly. This kind of knowledge brings understanding of the purpose of life, and it is through complete understanding that wisdom is born. Complete understanding embraces all phases of outer manifestation and inner truth, so that all appearance of division and duality is dissolved in the blaze of that perception. Intuition thus developed can reveal the real nature of the substances and phenomena of all things. To develop intuition within you is to establish the omnipresent image of God within you. All new truths are nothing but old hidden truths once known to the soul and Spirit, and give us joy by becoming familiar to us again.

The door of intuition may become effectually closed through self-sufficiency and egotism, or through too full a dependence upon intellectual channels of education through inferential education. The knowledge which is obtained through mechanical schooling, sense experience, and one's own power of inference, is necessarily limited.

Correct methods of education consist of the development of intuition and bringing back to the plane of human consciousness the memory of all knowledge already existing in the soul. One lifetime is not a long enough time in which to learn all things of heaven and earth through the modern methods of education, and dependence upon the senses and mind. As a result of practicing the techniques of concentration and meditation, intuitive faculties are

developed by which knowledge is grasped with extraordinary quickness.

The education of intuition should start in childhood if possible. If such early training has not been received, begin now with yourself, and in addition try to give as much assistance to children and younger people as you can in right training methods. Important items in the method are:

1. Walk and sit with spine erect.
2. Learn and apply the technique of concentration, thus developing your receptive power of wisdom.
3. Practice daily meditation, with calmness and peaceful lovingness, and so contact God as joy.
4. Expand your love from self-love, on up through family, social, national, international, to divine love in God, wherein you know that God has become everything, and that all created things are God-vibrations.

As you develop, you spread good and truth everywhere. Your good counter-balances the appearance of evil about you.

LESSON 88 God has given us a soul, a mind, and a body, which we should try to develop uniformly. To neglect any of the three is to perish in incompleteness. Do not remain a slave to environment and be whipped by your own habits. ~~Wake up, arise, snatch your life away from the world's influences and the impositions of instinct, heredity, custom, and conventions.~~ You alone sow the seed whose harvest you must just as surely reap. Be sure that you use your own free choice in what seeds you will sow.

You must learn that a balanced life consists in first acquiring wisdom. You must give some deep thought to the details that determine success in life. These are:

1. Development of the Cosmic Power within you through the techniques of concentration.
2. Attaining mental freedom, uninfluenced by environment or prenatal tendencies.
3. Living a controlled life.
4. Understanding the law of cause and effect: burn bad karma in the fire of meditation and build good karma by wise, right action now.

The soul saturated with the prosperity or wisdom consciousness attracts wealth or knowledge, according to the law of cause and effect which governs it.

No matter how you have distorted the image of God within you, in essence you are unchanged. Seek and find that inner Self.

The special exercise given in this Lesson is important and will bring you

wonderful results if practiced faithfully and with deep attention. Study it carefully and practice each step exactly as directed. In deep peace, and at ease, while the breath is out, mentally chant: "Om-Spirit-Christ," or "Om-Spirit-Bliss." Then inhale. Repeat this practice of exhalation, mental chanting, and inhalation at least twelve times.

LESSON 89 As a rule, a material phenomenon or manifestation, is first made known to us by the senses, then perceived by the mind, and cognized by the inner ego. Inferential reasoning is based upon the testimony of our senses. Our senses tell us only of the most superficial aspect of matter. Even reasoning is based upon knowledge derived from sense testimony. Science frequently has to discard all its previous findings on a certain subject as some new and heretofore unknown factor comes to light. Our senses do not tell us the whole truth, and therefore the data furnished by them may lead to conclusions that are entirely wrong, or, at best, incomplete.

Hence, although the power of inferential reasoning has its uses, still it is incapable of proving the ultimate nature of Reality. It is useful in that the very power of concentration used is itself a stride in the development of intuition. Intense effort in concentration, followed by relaxation and meditation, will open the door to perception of Reality. It is in the silence that truth dawns upon the consciousness, like a light breaking through mist. But concentration, reasoning, and logic prepare the mind for acceptance and recognition, and hence understanding.

The authority of the scriptures is not proof of their truth, because they must be interpreted by human beings of limited powers. According to Patanjali, any real inner teachings in scriptures of East or West cannot be understood through the testimony of others, but can be grasped only by testing them directly by the power of intuition. Individual realization is the only proof of the truth of the scriptures.

Before studying the scriptures, calm and steady yourself, physically and mentally; then take a few lines and meditate upon them for some time. Beware of self-sufficiency of the intellect in study of spiritual books. Intellectual study of the scriptures with the sole desire to learn, know, and feel, leads to realization. Study, meditate, apply!

LESSON 90 Stones, animated beings, dead creatures: all are waves in the ocean of life. Everything is living. Like everything else in this vibratory universe, the human body is a combination of three co-existing waves--of electrons, life-force, and intelligence, knit together by a soul--rolling up and down the ocean of life. The birth of the baby is the rise, youth is the crest, and death the fall of the human body-wave in the infinite ocean of life.

Death is a reward; a deep sleep earned after a long term of activity in

the office of life, sometimes release from suffering and pain. A suicide deserts earth as a coward and cannot be granted the pension of rest.

Both the physical pain and mental suffering anticipated in death originate in the mind. If a man's mind and feelings are rightly trained, he can watch an operation on his body without feeling the pain.

Therefore it is necessary to become acquainted with death by learning to consciously control the heartbeat and breath so that we may declare with St. Paul: "Verily, I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ, I die daily."

Death is experienced differently by different people, according to the lives they have led. The nightmares or pleasant dreams they experience are self-created by their own actions preceding death.

In death the power of touch goes first; then smell, taste, vision, and lastly hearing. Never discuss the condition of a dying man within range of his hearing; his body or speech may be paralyzed, but he may be perfectly able to hear you.

Even if you are not yet perfected in the art of living directly by life-energy as great yogis can, you can begin your march toward freedom from fear of death by ceasing to be attached to the care of the body. Perform your duty to the body with joy but with nonattachment. More and more you will come to realize that man is a soul, but has a body; then you will not dread parting with the fleshly garment.

LESSON 91 King Soul, in forgetfulness of his Bliss-source, and temporarily identified with the body and its relations, is termed ego. The Soul, as Spirit's reflection, is individualized, ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, but being identified with the three (ideational, astral, and physical) bodies, and their normal and abnormal conditions, takes on their natures.

The linking channel between conscious and subconscious minds, and also the semi-superconscious mind, is unbroken. There is never unconsciousness. The ordinary human ego generally travels to the realm of sensation during the state of wakefulness, then wanders in the chamber of dreams during sleep, and is able to bring back some dream memories into the conscious hours of wakefulness.

In the student on the path of meditation, the ego begins to resume its normal state of calmness, peace, and joy, and the conscious state then becomes marked by restfulness. It is extremely necessary for the advanced student to watch the wanderings of his ego in the realms of consciousness.

The conscious mind is usually predominant during wakeful hours. By the

power of concentration you can make the subconscious or the superconscious predominant. Poets and artists are types in whom the subconscious is uppermost. Business men have the conscious mind predominant. True yogis have superconsciousness predominant, and can change their consciousness at will from one to the other, or can be conscious through all three at the same time.

During different activities and moods of the day, ask yourself: "What consciousness is predominant in me now?"

Psychological states are attended by certain corresponding physical states, and vice versa. Turn the corners of your mouth up in a smile and you will find cheer forcing itself into your consciousness. So, by consciously adopting certain psychological states, one can produce certain physiological states, and by manifesting certain physical states one can produce corresponding psychological states. The real yogi can do this.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP FOUR

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 85 1. In what does hope have its foundation?

Lesson 86 1. How can you know what God is?

Lesson 87 1. In what does true education consist?
2. How can your evolution be quickened?
3. What closes the door on intuition?

Lesson 88 1. Describe special technique on concentration given in this Lesson.

Lesson 89 1. Explain why knowledge that is based upon reasoning and logic may be incomplete and misleading.
2. Are the scriptures final authority on truth?

Lesson 90 1. Everything in the universe is actually living; why does man fear death?
2. What are the various death experiences of different types of men? In what order do the senses shut off during death?
3. Advanced yogis may consciously shut off heartbeat and breath to experience death at will; what may beginner yogis do to help overcome fear of death?

Lesson 91 1. Define ego.
2. Is there ever unconsciousness?
3. Give illustration of connection between psychological and physiological states.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 92 The four principal steps on the ladder of consciousness are: Cosmic Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, soul consciousness, and ego consciousness. The ego is the final stepping-down of the soul into body consciousness and sense attachment. The senses, lighted by consciousness and energy flowing down from God, reveal the world, and view the self as apart and separate from its Source and from the rest of creation. The body cage has captured the reflection of Spirit, which is soul; the soul, in a state of forgetfulness, views the body cage as its real self, and ascribes to itself all the limitations of the body. The soul in this state is called ego. But when the ego or little self realizes that its relationship with the body is only temporary, and that it is itself immortal, it may be called soul.

Christ Consciousness is the reflected consciousness of God the Father expressing itself throughout creation. Cosmic Consciousness is the consciousness of God the Father expressing itself not only in, but beyond creation. The consciousness in Jesus was Christ Consciousness, the universal realization in which he could feel all the sorrows of the world as his own. He endured the finite struggle to show the way of salvation through Christ Consciousness to all, that all might be "raised" with him into that Consciousness. He re-entered Cosmic Consciousness when the finite struggle on earth was over.

It is not a simple matter to feel Cosmic Consciousness. As Lord Krishna said: "Out of one thousand, one seeks Me, and out of one thousand who seek Me, one knows Me." Do not be charmed and satisfied by beautiful gardens of mental miracles such as you may come across as you advance on the pathway. Seek permanent, ever new joy--the dynamo from which all powers come. With determination and never ceasing effort, plunge forward and tear asunder the veils that hide His Presence. The memory of God is the altar of His Presence. Your love for Him is the open door. If you make up your mind, nothing can hold you back. Conquer every adverse quality by its positive opposite, until all restlessness is stilled in the ineffable peace acquired in complete silence.

LESSON NO. 93 Since Self-realization is attained through step-by-step development, each step is important. The first step is

correct posture--keeping the spine straight. Practice this discipline over the body to free your mind and lift your consciousness from the body to the Infinite. A bent spine keeps the electric currents busy with the muscles and flesh, makes one muscle-bound, and prevents concentration upon God.

Your kingdom is omnipresence. This does not mean that you have to disregard and forget the body, but rather that you include your body in this expansion of consciousness. Do not be conscious only in the body. You must be able to feel this expansion in space, in the thoughts of others, in the perceptive quality of your mind, in an increased alertness of all your faculties, and in your increased capacity for enjoyment. Color becomes more brilliant to you, sound more marvelous, feeling more exquisite and intense, the farther you advance on the spiritual path.

You are not meditating if you are dozing. Never allow yourself to get into a negative state, but keep the attention constantly pointed to God, like the needle of a compass. No matter what you are doing, keep thinking of God. Enjoy everything with the Infinite, and be happy always.

The little plant of your Self-realization is delicate and fragile. It must be guarded and carefully tended. Water it with meditation and keep away from it the weeds of worries, fears, and anger.

You can learn to shift at will from one state of consciousness to another by the simple practice of shifting the position of the eyes. Relax in a comfortable position, close the eyes, become passive, mentally listless, "let go" and doze. Practice this until you can fall asleep instantly by closing the eyes, thus switching off the optical currents. Again, when you are heavy with sleep, quickly open and level the eyes, gaze directly in front of you, unwinkingly tense the whole body and become wide awake.

To shift your consciousness to the superconscious plane, direct your eyes and attention to the point between the eyebrows, and instantaneously go consciously into the state of deep peace, intoxicating joy. These states of consciousness must be genuine and accompanied by their bodily indications. As in the subconscious state your body will have all the signs of sleep, so the superconscious state will be accompanied by the consciously stilled heart, fixed gaze, and breathlessness.

LESSON NO. 94 Satan, being an intelligent creative force projected from God, realized that finite creation, since it retained its original essence as do the waves of the ocean, would return again to the Infinite after its cycle of perfect existence. This cosmic force or Satan, a going-out from God, having free choice, came to desire an individual existence and continued power over finite creation. Satan then created patterns of opposites called "evil" to delude and keep creation in its finite state and prevent it from returning to God, its infinite Source,

Finite creation, being made also in the image of God (its original essence), and having free choice, is ever the battlefield for the forces of good and evil; constantly man must choose between the patterns of delusion and the patterns of good. God represents the innate soul of man. You are free to choose. God will not break His own laws by using force to destroy Satan, but He is ever using the mighty power of love to draw you back to Him. Love eventually destroys evil in the manner that light destroys darkness. Even Satan himself will eventually be taken back into God. We cooperate with God when we choose good.

All our suffering is caused by our own wrong choice, in which we cooperate with the negative, outgoing force. In choosing the delusive patterns of evil we find that promises of happiness are unfulfilled and that pain is our lot instead. Thus experience is the principal factor in teaching us understanding. We come eventually to avoid evil naturally through wisdom.

The power that holds the universe together is Divine Will. In your body the power that heals is life force. The command given by the mind generates the current to do the healing. Therefore, will power is the power that connects, or generates, the life force. When the life force ebbs, decay begins in the body. A mighty will can even circumvent death, for it is will power that ties life and consciousness to the body. Divine Will is the will that does not give up. Contact God and tune in with Divine Will, connect your will with God's will; then you can never fail. First establish a consciousness of God. You know this great Life Energy is in your body and around your body. You know you must connect yourself with it. Meditation and will power make contact. There is nothing more powerful than will. Everything in this universe was produced by will.

LESSON NO. 95 You are the maker of your own destiny, your own savior and your own judge. You can free yourself from suffering if you choose. God is the essence of love and He would not inflict suffering upon His beloved children. But He has given you free choice, and by that, through your own past action whether in this life or previous lives, you bring suffering upon yourself.

Be entirely free. Do not let anyone control you. You should not be influenced by custom or environment. If you are subject to anger or jealousy, you are not free; you must be master of your emotions, and of your actions. You are not free until you are free from past and present actions; free even from instincts. Be absolutely sincere with yourself. Wisdom, intelligence, understanding will free you. Ignorance and seeds of past actions must be burned in the fires of meditation and wisdom. This is the only way to combat the insidious attack of delusion.

Satan deludes you through delight in material things. He influences you through the promise of happiness in temporary pleasures, and thus tries to

prevent you from tasting the true and higher joy of the Spirit. The best way to overcome temptation is through comparison; through meditation you learn the joy of God. Meditate more often and more deeply, then you are free to choose, for then you have understanding. Finding the Father more tempting than temptation, your choice will spontaneously and naturally turn toward eternal Bliss.

Never criticize and condemn others. If you follow the path of wisdom, you will feel for all, and you will never get angry. You will feel with the Christ Consciousness your oneness with all created things. Then you will give your life to helping your brothers, whom you will look upon as part of yourself; you will feel that they must be lifted up with you before you can be completely happy. To condemn another is to condemn yourself to the same actions for which you judge him; you would not see the fault if its seed were not in yourself.

Hate temptation and never let yourself be caught in its coils. Strive to so let the light shine in and through you that others will turn from darkness through a recognition of that light that lies hidden in each and every one.

LESSON NO. 96 It isn't what you own, but what you can acquire at will that is real prosperity. Your needs must be met and at the right time, but in order to meet your needs it is not necessary to get and hold and become attached to possessions. Gathering possessions and making money should never be your goal. The material life should not be neglected, but the material life should be lived in God Consciousness. There must be a balance between the material and the spiritual life.

Since the spiritual, or God-Life, is the Source of all life, it is plain that God-contact is your first necessity. When that consciousness comes, you will have real happiness and the prosperity of the universe will be yours. God is your provider, the direct Cause of everything. The riches of the world are perishable; your only security is in the arms of God. Affirm and realize, "I am Thy child; all that Thou hast is mine." Learn to be calm and still, that you may become aware of the perfect image of God which you are. Still the mental waves by superconcentration so that image will not seem distorted by your restlessness.

All spiritual and material pursuits must be based upon the principles of truth. Instead of making money and greater profits your goal in business, make service your goal, and you will see the entire plan of your life change. Learn to spiritualize work as service.

The life of a yogi is not only compatible with a business life, but should be the foundation of one's business life. Business for private profiteering is wrong. There should be no business that is not harmonious with the spirit of truth and service to mankind. Learn to understand the law of order that

governs our actions. Work with the consciousness that God is the Doer.

Live simply, and live by a common principle, serving one another. In unselfishness, unity exists. It is selfishness that creates duality. God first, always! Become saturated in devotion and love for God. Sing always in your heart; that song will overflow into all of your life: "Spirit and Nature, Spirit and Nature. Victory to Spirit and Victory to Nature."

LESSON NO. 97 God is knowable, and nearer than the throb of the blood in your veins. To know and acknowledge Him is to open up the unexplored mines of power within you. In using that power unconsciously, which you do every hour of the day, your results are scattered and incomplete. In consciously using the laws of God, marvelous things can be achieved, not only in material life but in spiritual life. You must attain mastery over your spiritual life as well as over your physical life.

Mind is a mighty power, but it must be trained. You must develop intellectually. This comes from experience, reading, thinking, and meditation. Shun intellectual pride, or intellectuality tinged with egotism. True success means a balanced life of meditation, intellectual study, health, happiness, and moneymaking or ability to supply your needs and the needs of those dependent upon you.

~~Your work should be of such a nature that it is not just a job to which you give necessary attention for a few grudging hours a day. Your first consideration in selecting your life work should be service. But it must be remunerative so that you can take care of your necessities and fulfill your obligations, thus widening your field of service. Live by the principle: "Each for all and all for each." Then enter heart and soul into whatever you do. Increase your efficiency, develop creative ability. Be a shooting star in your line of work. Never allow yourself to stagnate. Be alert, always expanding your usefulness, whether you are an employer or are employed; both are working for the same employer, God, and to Him both are responsible.~~

When you are magnetized with natural wisdom and natural vitality, then just as the bees seek the flower, so prosperity and friends will seek you. Each human being is a medium through which God's magnetism flows, but humans allow many things to tamper with that power so that it is diverted and draws undesirable things and conditions. The right kind of magnetic power must be developed by practicing the following:

1. Meditation: feel your being charged with the pure magnetism of God.
2. Shut out the inharmonious emotions of revenge, hatred, material desires, etc.
3. Be firm, just, and kind.
4. Keep the body free from poisons by eating little or no meat, but plenty of raw foods, leafy vegetables, fruits, and nuts.
5. Be attentive in whatever you are doing.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP FOUR
(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 92

1. Name and describe four main steps on the ladder of consciousness.

Lesson 93

1. Why is it necessary to sit upright?
2. Explain the physical method by which you can change your consciousness at will.

Lesson 94

1. Does evil exist?
2. Are humans alone responsible for the ills that come to man?
3. Why should you never say: "I am tired"?

Lesson 95

1. What is Satan's method of temptation?
2. What is the best way to overcome temptation? Explain.

Lesson 96

1. What is true success?

Lesson 97

1. What should be the first consideration in selecting your work?
2. Why is concentration necessary in developing magnetism?
3. a) What foods should you eat to develop magnetism?
b) What foods should you avoid?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 98 Real happiness depends chiefly upon conditions of the inner mind. It comes from being inwardly happy at all times, while putting forth your utmost effort to understand and uproot causes of unhappiness. One should strive for health, an efficient mind, prosperity, the right kind of work, and true wisdom.

One should not be submissive to unsuitable environment. Environmental troubles are born of your own past actions in the first place. You have woven your own cocoon of bondage. The first thing to do is to try to understand the cause of your environmental bondage, so that you can eradicate from your physical and mental bodies all lingering infection of discord. This brings about a mental resurrection, giving rise to spiritual realization, and eventually resurrection into the Spirit. Resurrect your consciousness from the environment of ignorance. It is better to be unhappy about your own ignorance than to die happily with it. Remain awake and alive always, ever ready and desirous to learn and to behave properly. The self-improving person is the increasingly happy person, and is influential in promoting the happiness of others.

Even though you believe yourself to be strong, evil environment has a subtle influence that gradually undermines your fortifications, and so every effort must be made to attain good environment. Seek soul joy instead of mere sense pleasure. To exterminate a bad habit, negatively avoid everything that occasions it or stimulates it. Then positively plant a good habit and cultivate it with great intensity until it becomes a part of yourself.

Do not become discouraged by failure. In failures lie the seeds of success. Weed out the causes of failure with undiminished perseverance, redouble your vigor, and "keep on keeping on." Success lies in the good fight rather than in ultimate attainment. One who dies trying builds better than he knows.

Begin from today to try to do, one thing at a time, the things you thought it impossible for you to do.

Keep your balance. The spiritually selfish man, ignoring material life,

is punished with loss of mental balance. Material duty is very important and must be supplemented with social, patriotic, and international duties. Intellectual duty is superior to material duty. Consciousness of spiritual and moral duty should reign predominantly in the mind. Draw on your unused reservoir of talent and power. Resurrect your mind from the little habits that keep you worldly, and smile the million-dollar smile of happiness that no one can take from you.

Life force is intelligent. It guides creation. Electricity is more or less a blind force; it has only instinctive intelligence. Electricity is the animal current of the spiritual world. Life force is finer than any other force existing; it is the power which goes out in healing. It emanates from the brain as light, so the halo often pictured on saints is not a myth.

LESSON NO. 99 Human beings reason according to their own mentalities, their own degrees of understanding and knowledge. The human idea of God is extremely vague in the minds of the majority of people. Many simply accept an orthodox concept of God, and give the question very little individual thought. Others reason God into a mold of their own ideals. Few definitely set out to verify their beliefs, or find out for themselves what God is. The last is what each should and can do. Be humble but determined in your intention to find the way.

The manifested world is a world of continual cause and effect, but God is Causeless. This is hard for the human mind to grasp, because it reasons from experience. But behind all things is that which simply is--Spirit. Spirit alone was. When Spirit began to create, it became God the Father. The ball of vibration is the Holy Ghost. Spirit beyond creation, that which creates, is called "God the Father." The consciousness in creation is Christ Consciousness (Son).

We must know that every human being is an expression of the great, vast Spirit. These expressions are waves of the ocean of understanding; behind all is the unceasing ocean of truth. We think that God is invisible to us, but in reality He is visible to us in the whole manifested universe. He is That which is behind all things and That which is in all things.

Human beings are controlled by something like radioactive and vitoactive energy from God. Infinite Spirit, everywhere present, is in us, and in It we move and breathe and have our being. We are in the sea of Cosmic Consciousness, and by removing the cork of ignorance from our physical-mental receptacle, we may become one in understanding and consciousness with that Cosmic Sea. The Spirit, having become individualized in the soul, is struggling to resurrect itself and return to the ocean of Spirit.

To live in forgetfulness and unconsciousness of God is to live in tears and suffering until in that suffering is born the desire, and the determination to know the Cause. To know the Cause is to know God, and thence freedom and

happiness. There is no other way. You must change your center from matter to God, then you will know yourself to be on the lap of immortality. Resurrect your consciousness from human habits and human thoughts to God Consciousness. Quicken your understanding, quicken your efforts. You can surmount the shortcomings of all mortal action by contacting God. God can be known now; He will be no closer beyond the portals of the grave. You need not postpone happiness. Meditate deeply and know Him now.

LESSON NO. 100 Do not seek the recognition of man in the spiritual path. Seek to please God. It will come to pass that men will seek you, because they feel intuitively that quality in you that reflects God. Carry God as the torch in your heart into all the pathways of your daily life. Naught can harm those in whom God is well pleased, but the favor of men is fleeting and changeable. You will never stand alone and friendless if you consciously contact God. All else may fail you and fall away, but He will never fail you.

The peace of meditation is the language and embracing comfort of God. When you know Him as peace within, then you will realize Him as peace existing in the harmony of all things without. You will recognize Him in the beauty of nature, in true friendship, in all noble pursuits and aspirations, and behind the veils of all things. Behind the veil of silence you will behold Him in the sphere of living light; lift all the curtains of light and behold God in the glory of Bliss.

Give God a chance to tempt you with His love. Then nothing else can ever tempt you. You find material temptation charming only because you do not yet know the joys of soul happiness. You can compare only after you have experienced both. Be free to choose. Do not let yourself be bound and limited by any sense habit or by environment. Do not let anything or anyone control you. Test your habits and see if they are controlling you. Show them that you have dominion. Let nothing interfere with your happiness. The octopus of habits that clutches you and keeps you from the joys of the Spirit must be dislodged once and for all. You will never be satisfied and free from misery until you find God and abide in Him. Your soul, a separate segment, must find the Whole to be complete.

Practice the three special meditation exercises as given in this lesson. Know yourself as Infinite.

Remember that virtue always triumphs in the end, even though it may take more than one lifetime. Never become discouraged through suffering and losses. You will enter into your true kingdom at last, in happiness beyond expectation. Through your own sufferings, learn to sympathize with others and to feel yourself in all, as Jesus did.

LESSON NO. 101 In your temple of silence you may coax God to your altar of peace. Practice the art of silence. Only

behind its portals can you find happiness and sanctuary from worries and sickness and death. Wrap yourself in your mantle of calmness and never be without it when you mingle with people in the activities of life. Hold your peace, always.

The life force is very strong in the eyes. By deep concentration and by fixing the eyes on the point between the eyebrows, and by being able to hold the light perceived there, we can gradually learn to send consciousness and life force through it into the Infinite. By pecking with the beak of intuition and concentration upon the spiritual eye, the soul breaks the space shell of finiteness, as a chick breaks from the limitations of its shell. In meditation, by concentration upon the eyebrows, we induce the superconscious state.

"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). When, during meditation or initiation, one sees this light of the spiritual eye, one is baptized with the Holy Ghost, or Holy Vibration. The spiritual eye has three colors: a golden ring on the outside; inside of this a dark blue globe; and inside of the blue is a five-pointed star. The star represents the mouth of the dove; the blue and golden halos are the two wings of the dove. This spiritual dove is called the "Holy Ghost." Self-Realization Fellowship students who practice breathlessness as given in an early lesson need never be forced out of the body by death, but may be guided through the luminous eye into the light of God. They will find that death is but a freedom from the chain of breath and leads on to the breathless Spirit.

The prodigal soul having wandered from the bosom of Spirit, roams on the tracts of incarnations, gathering experiences. Through the darkness of the mineral kingdom, on through the corridors of plant life, to living halls of birds and animals, and thence into the robes of human flesh. Self-exiled, its omnipresence imprisoned, it dances with death through many incarnations, but at last awakens to a realization of its immortality. Having returned at last to its mansion of Omnipresence, the prodigal soul desires to incarnate for the purpose of bringing back all its wandering brothers to the home of complete freedom.

You are a prodigal son. You have wandered far from your home of peace. The Father is waiting. You need not beg. Demand your birthright. The Father instantly accepts your supreme demand of your oneness with Him.

LESSON NO. 102 Concentration is the gateway to power. The root cause of failure is lack of concentration. As the rays of the sun can be focused through a magnifying glass, causing intense heat that will kindle a fire, so can the rays of the attention be focused through a mind that is cleared of distractions. In the heat of such concentration, that which you seek must reveal its secrets. Such concentration directed toward God is called meditation. The joy-contact in meditation is contact of God. The more you meditate, the more you will realize that nothing else can give you that increasing joy of silence.

The meditating devotee must detach the attention from the senses and place it on God alone. He must learn to have dominion over the sense of heat and cold, and hunger and pain, and over all the appetites of the body, so that the soul may be freed to remember its omnipresent nature.

The medulla oblongata is the switchboard that controls the five senses. The heart also controls these five sense telephones. So, by stilling the heart, you cut yourself free from sight, sound, smell, taste, touch--or in other words, free from sensations which rouse thoughts which distract the attention. This is not a negative state, but is an intensely conscious state of awareness. A master is conscious in all creation. This is God Consciousness, wherein not a sparrow may fall without the Father knowing.

Practice the four meditation methods which are given you in this lesson. Practice them in the morning or evening; or any time you are in a quiet place; also be sure to practice number three, visualizing the expanding rainbow of light surrounding your body.

By constantly holding the peaceful aftereffect of meditation, you can find not only perpetual rejuvenation of soul, but also of body. When you realize that the body is not isolated from Spirit, but is composed of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, then perpetual rejuvenation of the Spirit can be implanted in the body.

LESSON NO. 103 The order in the universe clearly shows that there is one intelligence guiding the arrangement of vibrations into material forms. Thus an earth with a routine of seasons and laws of life is possible. Vibration is a quivering, stirring force, but if it were not guided by conscious discrimination it could not arrange itself into a livable harmonious universe.

God acting in the minds of men is vibration or intelligence. Insofar as man stills his restless objective mind to tune in with the Universal Intelligence, he clears his mental channel for the expression of that force, which is ever pushing outward to express perfection. The fact that every human being visualizes in some manner a state of perfection, wherein he may enjoy happiness, safety, and immortality, is proof of the image of God, the seed of perfection, within him. The ultimate destiny of perfection is the tree which is in the seed. It is already there. It needs proper conditions for expansion in which to fulfill its destiny. Wrong conditions stunt its growth, but there are ways of bringing the tree to fruition with seemingly magical rapidity.

The universal Spirit manifests in beauty, in the loftiness of minds, the depth of love, the fountains of mercy. The soul attuned with God is deeply sensitive to beauty in all forms, and seeks ever to express beauty in the little as well as the big details of living.

Learn to be conscious of God all the time, in every act of your life. Invoke God as power in the temple of consciousness during the day, and know His embrace of peace and joy in your temple of dreams in sleep. Feel God in the temple of Bliss in meditation. Having this great understanding of joy in realization of God, the Father of your being, you will never surrender to worries and selfishness and the deforming influences of evil.

Jesus made known a new law, or rather brought the knowledge of this law to the consciousness of mankind. He lived and taught this law, the same law by which Mahatma Gandhi set the pattern in his own life in the present century: the teaching of nonretaliation to evil persons and resisting evil by spiritual force; the law of "love thy neighbor as thyself"; the use of the superior weapon, "resistance by love and non-cooperation with the enemy's evil ways."

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP FOUR

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 98

1. Upon what does real happiness depend?
2. How should you act in order to overcome a bad habit?
3. What is the cause of our environment?

Lesson 99

1. What is the Self-Realization Fellowship definition of Spirit?
2. Why should one seek God?

Lesson 100

1. How should you act when temptation assails you?
2. Describe the meditation exercise in which you imagine an expanding ball of darkness.

Lesson 101

1. What is the purpose of concentrating upon the spiritual eye?
2. What does each part of the spiritual eye represent?
3. What is meant by baptism with the Holy Ghost?
4. Briefly trace the wanderings of the prodigal soul.

Lesson 102

1. Explain why concentration gives power.
2. Where are the two switchboards of sense telephones in the body?
3. Describe the meditation exercise in which you are instructed to look out of the window into the limitlessness of the sky.
4. Describe the exercise in which you surround your body with a rainbow balloon of light.

Lesson 103

1. What is the proof of God in the manifested universe?
2. What is the proof of our ultimate destiny of perfection?
3. Name the law which is common to the life and teachings of both Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE WORSHIP THY TRUTH

By Paramahansa Yogananda

We bow to Thee, our one infinite Father, who manifests in all the different churches and temples, which are all erected in Thy honor. We worship Thee, our one God, resting upon the altars of various teachings and religious faiths. Heavenly Father, teach all nations to live as brothers in a United World, guided by Thy Truth as their Spiritual President.

Teach us to find Thy presence on the altar of our constant peace and the joy that springs from deep meditation. Bless us that we may find Thee in the temple of each thought and activity. Finding Thee within, we find Thee without, in all people and all conditions. Teach us to know that Thou art the power that keeps us healthy, prosperous, and seeking spiritual truth.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to remember that tolerance comes only through intuitional study of the scriptures, which gives realization of the fundamental unity underlying all faiths.

HOW TO FIND THE TRUTH IN THE SCRIPTURES

That which is truly beautiful and worthwhile in life is generally hidden away in mines of secrecy. Often the rarest gems are in inaccessible places; rare spiritual treasures, too, have to be unearthed with the pickax of understanding and wisdom. The scriptural truths embodied in the Biblical record of Genesis describe the beginning of creation. But the scientific spiritual significance of these passages remains hidden from most people because they do not know how to perceive or interpret the truth.

The ocean may be willing to pour itself into a cup, but the cup can hold only its own capacity. Similarly, the truth is hidden in the Bible for anyone to find, but people with limited intelligence do not try to look beneath the surface. They cannot understand it because they do not know how to find out the truth in it. We must try to learn how to do this.

The question is not "What is truth?" but, "How can we grasp truth?" For instance, the way to apply the laws of Patanjali to discover the truths hidden in pure universal teachings and scriptures is to live those teachings in life. I asked a spiritual hypocrite if he had read the Christian Bible. "I have read it a hundred times, Sir," he replied. "I know all about it."

It was to forestall this kind of desecration of truth that in ancient India the Vedas and the Hindu Bible (Bhagavad-Gita) were kept unprinted for centuries. The spiritual truths they contain were handed down from memory by sages to their most devout disciples. Only a few received all the truth. Others were told no more than they could realize at one time. Now almost any yoga book or world scripture may be bought for a few cents and intellectually swallowed with little effort. But devouring assorted ideas from the scriptures without digesting them creates only a greed for more books and more ideas, resulting in chronic indigestion and spiritual nonassimilation.

A thirsty man coming upon a lake craved to swallow all its waters. Naturally, he could not drink more than his stomach would hold. Likewise, many thirsty seekers of limited understanding sit by the lake of truth and aspire to drink all of its vast waters and contain all of its mysteries. They do not understand even this truth: that to swallow those waters requires an understanding of equal magnitude.

Western philosophers have always assumed that truth can be known by

dialectics and reason. Immanuel Kant was the first among them to question whether man had the requisite faculties for knowing truth fully.

The seeker of truth should thoroughly scrutinize various beliefs; but indiscriminate reading of religious books written by novices or untried enthusiasts yields only an indigestible hash of imagination, emotional outpourings, and diluted realization. Patanjali's yoga philosophy (embodied in the Yoga Sutra), the Christian Bible, the Hindu Bible (Bhagavad-Gita), and a few other books written by men of realization should be studied, a little at a time, and meditated upon for hours or for days together. The best time to read scripture is after practicing meditation, when the intuitive feeling is awake.

Spiritual books should not be read "from cover to cover" as you would read a novel. Read a little, and inwardly digest what you have read. Spiritual books should be a perpetual inspiration because they continually give spiritual nourishment; as you masticate their message, you will more and more reap the good results of realizing their hidden truths. My Master taught me how to perceive them. Then, one day, he told me that he wouldn't teach me any more. He said: "Go and study the scriptures; whatever page you open to, you will understand what is written there." Each sentence and paragraph of intellectually studied scripture should be substantiated by a corresponding realization; and then a little more should be read and realized, and so on.

HOW TO PERCEIVE TRUTH What is the best way to test the truth of the scriptures? How are you to test which one is true? Suppose you have before you the Hindu Bible, the Islamic Bible, and the Christian Bible. How do you know that they contain the truth? Much scripture is not truth, but the product of repeated mistranslations made by men without actual spiritual realization. The fact that many people believe in a certain statement is not evidence that it is the truth. Sometimes one man knows more than the rest of the world: Columbus had correctly deduced that the earth was round but no one believed him. The majority of people are like a herd of sheep. If one jumps from a cliff, the whole flock jumps with him.

There are two methods of perceiving truth--by intelligence and by intuition. The intellectual method depends upon sense perception and intelligence; but sense perception deceives us, or at best limits the application of our intelligence. If you base your ideas of truth on the testimony of sense perception, then the conclusion may be wrong. Our senses are all limited instruments of perception; therefore we cannot perceive truth intellectually except in a limited way.

Man's intelligence is not only limited but may even be deceived by misleading sense perceptions. For instance, we see smoke on a distant hill and conclude that there is a fire. But on going to that hill we may find that the "smoke" was just a cloud of dust. Therefore we say that the appearance of truth (the phenomenon) can be known by the intelligence, but the noumenon, or truth itself, can only be known by intuition.

We find that all inferential knowledge depends upon the data given by the senses. If the data is wrong, the inference is wrong. Therefore reason cannot be the sole proof of any bible. Besides, our senses are so limited in their power that they are deceiving us all the time. You see only what the limited power of the eye permits. You hear only certain vibrations within the hearing range of the human ear.

INTUITION IS NEVER WRONG Intuition, on the other hand, is developed by meditation--conscious direct communion with the omniscient soul consciousness. Therefore intuition can never be wrong; but this power within us has for the most part remained undeveloped. The consciousness of existence arises from intuition. You do not need reason to know that you exist.

Therefore intuition is the power that tests truth. You must feel, you must realize truth before you can know that it is true. What seems true to reason and sense perception is not always true in fact. The only sure way to know truth is to realize it intuitively. To know the atom, you must become one in consciousness with the atom. You must become what you want to know. Can you know the taste of sugar without tasting it? No! So it is with the metaphysician: he experiences everything within himself. The scientist experiments with things outside himself.

Intuition does not mean self-sufficiency, or blind faith in one's own opinions. But calm reason plus calm feeling can lead to intuition when guided by meditation. So the more you meditate and reason in a calm state, the more intuition you will have. In order to test truth, you must experience it intuitively. The whole philosophy of the East is based upon intuitive experience. No matter how intellectual you are, you may be still a child in spiritual realization. You must realize the truth yourself. You must experience truth before you can know that it is true. That is the power by which we must test the scriptures.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER In the study of spiritual books, be warned against the self-sufficiency of the intellect. Although you may hear or read the words "Cosmic Consciousness" many times, that does not mean that you know about it. The best way to understand the scriptures is to read and thoroughly study them. Intellectual study of the scriptures without a corresponding realization produces vanity and a false conviction that one knows, and is detrimental to realization; but intellectual study of the scriptures with the sole desire to learn, know, and feel, leads to realization.

Before studying the scriptures, calm and steady yourself, then take two or three lines and meditate on them for several minutes. When the meaning becomes one with yourself, close the book and go about your business. One hour of regular meditation is worth more than one month of theoretical study of the scriptures. In meditation, direct knowledge is received.

THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE--Part 1

A proud prince of Hindustan with a large, gorgeously attired retinue went forth one day on a hunting expedition. Blowing trumpets and cow-horns, they filed into a jungle. After bagging many game birds, wild boars, fleet-footed deer, and fierce, cruel tigers, the prince and his party discovered that they had lost their way. They had food, but no water, and although they galloped around the jungle in frantic search, they could find none. Neither had they any shelter against the danger of marauding wild animals during the night, which was fast approaching.

Just as the sun was about to sink out of sight, the prince, who was riding a little ahead of his party, came unexpectedly upon a crumbling old cottage. Dismounting, the prince pushed upon the unlatched door and entered. Inside, all was dark except for a faint glimmer of light peeping through a hole in the roof. "Surely the cottage is deserted," he thought in despair, but hoping against hope the prince called aloud: "Hello, is anyone here?"

To his surprise, a calm, firm voice replied: "I am here. Do you want water?" The prince peered intently into the semidarkness until he made out the figure of a man. Astounded that this person could know his thoughts even before meeting or knowing him, the prince asked his host: "Who are you?" "I am only a poor hermit," was the answer.

The hermit lit a lamp, and the prince then called in his retinue. They were overjoyed to be provided with water and fruits by their host in this lonely jungle retreat. "Aren't you afraid of tigers and snakes?" the prince asked the hermit. "Oh, no," the old man replied. "The tigers are my pussycats, and the cobras are also pets. They and I are friends, ever basking in the sunshine of God's love, which is in everything."

As the prince scrutinized the hermit curiously, he was taken aback at the sight of two cobras hanging like a garland from the holy man's neck. When the prince approached closer for a better look at the snakes, they hissed and lifted their hooded heads, for they felt the unpleasant vibrations of fear and vengefulness hidden in his breast.

Just at that moment there was near panic among the prince's followers; a huge royal Bengal tiger had come into the cottage! He calmly sat down at the feet of the hermit; after receiving his meed of patting from the holy man, the tiger ambled slowly away into the dark woods.

Amazed, the proud prince thought: "This old man seems to be good and kind; he has saved our lives from predatory wild beasts and parching thirst. I would like to make him rich and prosperous." Addressing the holy man, he said: "Hoary hermit, your face is beaming with kindness and sincerity. I appreciate all that you have done for me and for my party. Therefore I am going to tell you a secret that will enable you to become very rich, a secret

that I am revealing for the first time, and to you only." With this, the prince pulled out a stone from beneath a fold in his garment. He continued: "I am going to entrust to you this family treasure, a philosophers' stone, so that you may become rich by using it. This gold-making stone was given to my father by a great alchemist. It has the power to convert into gold anything you touch with it. You may use the philosophers' stone every day for a whole year to convert all the stones and rocks you wish into gold, and sell them to build a golden palace here. I will come back in a year to pay you a visit, and to retrieve my precious philosophers' stone, which I value more than my life. Do not lose it!"

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Today I shall help someone to establish a temple of devotion within his own soul in order that God may dwell there forever as kindness and understanding.

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I BEHELD THEE IN THY DANCES OF CREATION, PRESERVATION, AND DESTRUCTION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Kali, I Bow to Thee--all-sheltering Mother Nature, ruler of time, space, form, and relativity. Invisible Spirit took shape in Thee, a visible Woman Divine.

The beauty spot of the moon is set between Thy spacious eyebrows. Clouds of eternity hide Thy face. Gusts of prophet lives blow aside momentarily Thy mystery veil, revealing to mankind glimpses of Thine ineffable beauty.

The countless worlds delineate Thy form--million-eyed, moon-garlanded, infinite in adornments and glories. In Thy changing robes are woven the dreams of creation, preservation, and destruction. On the endless etheric curtain of Thy mind a myriad cosmic dramas play. Thou dost entertain Thy good children and frighten Thy naughty ones.

O Kali Primordial, from Thy hand of creative power issue the vibrations of Aum, materializing in an inexhaustible, bewildering, and wondrous variety of finite forms. Another hand holds the astral sword of preservation, keeping guard over planetary rhythms and balances. Thy third hand clutches the severed head of Cosmos, symbolizing annihilation in Brahma's Night. Thy fourth hand stills the storm of delusion and bestows on devotees Thy rays of salvation.

Thou dost project the fabulous dream fiestas of the centuries: the pageant of human life and death, the birth and passing of civilizations, and the evolution and dissolution of solar systems.

On earth Thou art equally present in the slums of misery, the halls of festive prosperity, and the quiet shrines of wisdom.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

The magic wand of meditation touches all sounds, melting them into the primal Aum. It courses through the stars, through the earth, through the waters. O Spirit, reveal Thyself to me as Aum, Aum, the call to prayer of the cosmos.

All tissues of my body, all filaments of my nerves now sing seraphic strains of Aum.

THE STORY OF CREATION--Part 1

When creation is withdrawn from manifestation at the end of a cycle, Spirit alone exists--the Unmanifested Absolute, having neither beginning nor end. God is the Manifested Absolute, projecting Himself as Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, or the Word, which in turn manifests in many forms: solids, liquids, gases, electrons, and energy; and all these forms have a beginning and an end. How is it that the Cosmic Vibration, a universal force, manifests itself in such different ways--as ice, on the one hand, and water on the other--as earth, scattered gases, atoms, human beings? Cosmic Intelligence organized that Cosmic Vibration and caused it to differentiate itself into these various forms of matter, life, human intelligence, and so on.

In Spirit the state of being, the act of perception, and the object of perception are all One; hence there is no vibration. Vibration is any mental, astral, or physical (atomic) motion. Thought, energy, and finite matter are different rates of vibration, different forms of motion.

When Spirit created the vibratory universe of finite matter, the first manifestation was vibration--the vibration of thought. Spirit became three: the Creator, the power of creation, and the object created (the finite universe). God in the role of Creator is vibratory Intelligence.

This vibratory Intelligence manifests as cosmic intelligent energy. In the body this cosmic intelligent energy is epitomized in the spiritual eye seen in deep meditation. Vibration has sound, and the cosmic sound, another manifestation of the vibratory Intelligence is epitomized in the body in the sound of Om heard during deep inner silence. By seeing through the spiritual eye, one may behold the whole universe as light, as a chick coming out of the dark egg-shell beholds the vast kingdom of solar light. In the lesson giving the Om meditation technique you learned how to hear and listen to the sound of the Cosmic Vibration in the body and in the whole cosmos.

The Christian symbol of the dove descending from heaven represents the Holy Spirit descending as sacred vibration to create the finite cosmos. Spirit, God the Father, Cosmic Intelligence, Cosmic Energy, life force (Cosmic

Energy manifesting through the body), Cosmic Sound, the Word, Aum, Pranava, Amin, "Voice of Many Waters," Holy Ghost, and Amen are all names ascribed to different aspects of the Intelligent Cosmic Vibration. In Hindu temples the beating of drums, the blowing of conch shells, and the ringing of bells represent the cosmic sound emanating from the vibratory motion of the elements of creation.

The consciousness existing beyond creation is called God the Father. His pure reflected consciousness in creation is called Christ Consciousness, and the vibration which structures all creation is called the Holy Ghost. The whole universe is the physical body of God, and the Christ Consciousness is His intelligence manifested within this great body. The little human body is a miniature universe; our small consciousness is the miniature Christ Consciousness. Now, if you can expand your consciousness, then you can attain that Christ Consciousness which is manifest in the universe. Your consciousness has become limited to the body. By listening to the cosmic sound that is emanating from the cosmic energy, your consciousness will become one with it, omnipresent in the universe.

The sound that is coming out of all atoms is the sound of universal vibration, Om, or the Holy Ghost. When you hear that sound, a bridge between yourself and Christ Consciousness has been built across the stream of ignorance. When you hear the cosmic sound, then you are in touch with Christ. That is the surest way to contact God. Your consciousness is now busy with the sounds of the world and the body, but when you hear the cosmic sound, which can be heard in deep meditation, then your consciousness will be expanded until it becomes one with the consciousness which is present in all atoms. That consciousness which is in all atoms is Christ Consciousness, and that consciousness was manifest in Jesus. When you have Christ Consciousness, your consciousness is expanded to behold everything.

The active intelligence of God the Father in creation is Christ Consciousness; the only approach to this consciousness is through the Holy Ghost--"the faithful witness" or sound emanating from that vibration. Jesus promised that when he was gone he would send the Comforter. That is the great sound, or Amen (Om); and when you have contacted that sound, you can expand with it and be one with the universal Christ Consciousness.

Suppose the sun existed alone in an empty sphere of space. You could say then, "The sun alone exists." But if you place a crystal ball in front of the sun, you have three things: the sun shining beyond the crystal ball, the sunlight permeating the crystal ball, and the crystal ball itself. So it is with Spirit and creation. Before there was any creation, Spirit existed alone. But when Spirit shines on the cosmos of cosmic vibratory creation, It becomes three things:

- 1) God the Father of all creation (the sun beyond the crystal ball);

- 2) the Christ Consciousness (the sunlight reflected within the crystal ball of creation), called the only begotten Son because it is the only pure reflection of God in the delusive manifestation of matter);
- 3) the conscious intelligent vibration of the Holy Ghost (the crystal ball of the cosmos).

TRUE SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTION OF GENESIS The mental motion picture of creation begins with Genesis, which describes all things as they came from God. The trouble is that very few people are able to understand the Bible. The Biblical truths do not require revision, but men's interpretations of them need to be revised. The deep truths in the Bible are hidden behind a hard shell. People who do not know how to study the Bible bite at its hard shell and break their teeth of understanding. The wise ones break through the shell of the outer literal meaning by means of the nutcracker of intuitional verification of spiritual truths.

THE BEGINNING ACCORDING TO HINDU SCRIPTURES The Indo-Aryan (Hindu) Scriptures date back ten thousand years before the Christian era. They taught that the universe is divided into:

- 1) Ideational or causal universe, which is the idea of God impinged on matter or vibratory force.
- 2) Subtle or astral universe of finer forces of electricity, gravitation, attraction, repulsion, electrons, life energy--forces beyond sensory perception.
- 3) Material universe of grosser vibrations, for example: solids, liquids, gases, fire, water, earth, air, and ether.

The vibratory force of matter is guided by God's intelligence--solids, liquids, gases, etc., all manifesting some definite form. The material universe has been molded by Divine Intelligence. Everything in it is a manifestation not only of an idea, but also of some useful correlation; for example, God created hunger, but He also created food to satisfy it.

The idea universe contains the blueprint of the astral universe, which in turn contains the plan of the material universe. The last is visible, the others are subtle.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Do not go hurriedly through any book of a deep spiritual nature. If you study such

a book only intellectually, you will not want to realize the truth in it because you will have become falsely satisfied by intellectually knowing it. Jesus Christ was crucified once, but his teachings suffer crucifixion every day at the hands of men of limited vision. Jesus Christ's teachings cannot be understood just by reading the Bible, even a thousand times, or all through life. The truths in the Bible can be known only by living and trying out in everyday life the principles taught in the book.

THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE--Part 2

The hermit did not want to accept the responsibility, but after the prince's repeated importunities he consented to keep the philosophers' stone. The prince saw the hermit casually tuck it under the light band of clothing at his waist. (Many people in India carry their money this way--safe from the reach of pickpockets!) Then the prince departed.

After a year he came back again with his retinue, expecting to see, instead of the hermit's run-down cottage, a gorgeous palace. He was dismayed to find the same cottage there still, the only change being that it was in a more dilapidated state than ever. Dismounting from his horse, the prince burst through the cottage door and called out: "O hermit, are you alive?" The deep sonorous voice of the hermit responded: "Indeed yes, Prince. Welcome to my humble home."

Without any delay for ceremony, the prince voiced his feelings: "Whatever is the matter? What did you do with my philosophers' stone? Why didn't you use it to become rich?" The hermit appeared to ponder a moment. Then he replied: "Well, well, what's all this about a stone? And about my becoming rich? I don't want to be any richer than I am."

The prince was alarmed. Perhaps his prized philosophers' stone had been carelessly lost by the old hermit. "Don't you remember," he pleaded in agonized tones: "the priceless philosophers' stone that you tucked beneath your waistband a year ago? What have you done with it?"

"Oh, yes, now I remember all about that precious stone of yours," the hermit replied. "I happened to be deeply immersed in the thought of Spirit as I went to bathe in the river one day, and I think the stone must have dropped out from my clothing then."

"I have lost everything!" cried the prince, and fell in a swoon. The hermit brought him back to consciousness by sprinkling cold water on his face. Members of the prince's retinue advanced menacingly toward the old man. But the hermit laughed. "You Hydra-headed prince, I didn't think you would make such a fuss about a stone. Come along with me to the river and I'll search for it."

"What? Search now for a stone that slipped into the swift currents of the river a year ago?" Undaunted, the hermit commanded in a loud voice: "Princeling, all of you come on! Don't make any more commotion until we have searched the river bed."

As if under a strange spell, the prince and his retinue responded to the hermit's subtle spiritual magnetism; mutely they followed the saintly old man to the river. There the hermit asked the prince to pull out his handkerchief. "Hold its four corners with your hands," he instructed. "Dip it in the water of the river and pray: 'O Prince of the Universe, maker of all precious stones, give me back my philosophers' stone.'"

As the prince raised his handkerchief out of the water, he beheld in it with amazed and unbelieving eyes two score of philosophers' stones exactly like the one he had lost. Testing each stone he found that every one would convert into gold the ordinary stones on the shore. Then the prince tied the two score gold-making stones in his handkerchief and threw them back into the river.

The hermit and the prince's retinue cried out: "Why did you do that?" The prince turned to the saint, and with folded hands knelt at the old man's feet. "Honored Saint, I want to have what you have, that you regard gold-making stones as worthless pebbles." And so it was that the prince quit his earthly kingdom in order to learn from the wise old hermit how to acquire the imperishable kingdom of Spirit.

This story illustrates that earthly riches, no matter how valuable they may seem to be, are perishable and have to be left behind after the body grows cold. Instead of using your philosophers' stone of gold-making business ability to acquire only perishable riches, be like the hermit who employed his time and ability to attain the imperishable riches of God. Having God, you will be wealthy beyond dreams, and, if necessary, willing to throw away millions in earthly money as easily as if they were pebbles, in order to enjoy the imperishable riches of Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

My body is the universe and I am the astral breath that enlivens all things in it. I am the big life that is throbbing as the little life in the heart.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I BEHELD THEE IN THY DANCES OF CREATION,
PRESERVATION, AND DESTRUCTION--Part 2

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Pristine Mother, in the cyclic dawn of creation I beheld Thee crowned with wild Nature, wearing the scant garment of primitive cultures and roaming amidst unpolished minds.

In the noonday of creation I saw Thee in full activity. Thy vast body perspired as Thou, unseen, didst accomplish the tasks set by the restless ambition of Thy children. They felt the strain of struggle; scorched by their own ego blaze, men implored Thee to send cooling breezes of soul peace.

The night of total destruction approached; I beheld Thee covered ominously with mourning veils. Thou didst plunge the universe into a terrible but purifying ordeal by fire. The sun burst, belching smoke and flames; doomful quakes sundered the sky and conflagrated the stars. The worlds vanished; within Thy crucible, matter became pure, luminous.

The phenomenal spheres, that came from light, slept as astral embers. Then, stirred by Thee, O Perennial Mother, the universe reawoke in its vibratory body of subtle flames.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

O Divine Friend, though my dark ignorance be as old as the world, still, make me realize that with the dawn of Thy light, the darkness will vanish as though it had never been.

THE STORY OF CREATION--Part 2

INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void" (Genesis 1:1, 2). During the first phases of creation, the cosmos was composed of fine forces; heaven and earth were not yet made of matter. They had no dimensional form and were "void," because God had created them first in idea.

"And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit (the intelligence) of God moved (vibrated) upon the face of the waters (elements existing only as ideas or mental conceptions)" (Genesis 1:2).

The word "darkness" as used in Genesis 1:2 has a special significance: it means duality or relativity. Just as the calm sea cannot be ruffled into myriad waves without a storm, so also the sea of the one Spirit could not divide itself into manifold creation without the storm of the law of duality or relativity, or darkness. God first created the heavenly electrical, thermal, and electronic forces, and all material laws and matter, in idea only, by the law of relativity of thought. He ruffled up His consciousness, or Oneness, into waves--or countless ideas--by means of the storm of duality. This duality is maya, the "measurer," which has the magical effect of causing the infinite Formless to appear divided or "measured" into countless varieties of forms.

"And God said (vibrated), Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). The spiritual intelligence of God gently vibrated upon the elements created thus far in idea only, and immediately after that God "said," i. e., vibrated, more eloquently, and those idea-created elements "froze" into the grosser form of the one cosmic light or cosmic energy. The subtle force and gross elements of which earth's crust, stardust, human bodies--everything--are made, are but different rates of vibration of that one light, or conscious cosmic energy. Thus after having created all things in idea, God created them astrally by vibrating them into light. The entire universe is made up of electrons that are called energy or light.

"And God saw the light, that it was good" (Genesis 1:4). God saw that He could use that light for the creation He wanted to bring forth, hence the light is called "good."

"And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night" (Genesis 1:4, 5).

God saw that this light could be very serviceable in His work of creation. He divided Himself into darkness and light; that is, one portion of Himself remained as the unmanifested Absolute, and another portion was manifested throughout creation as the all-creating life energy.

The creation-making light was called by God "day" and the unmanifested portion of His existence was called "night." These two phases--the unmanifested state of His existence plus the manifested state of His existence, were established in a day, that is, a cycle of time consisting of perhaps millions of years. Most people misinterpret the word "day" to mean a man-made terrestrial day of twenty-four hours. As a result many otherwise intelligent lovers of the Christian Bible blindly assume that the earth was created in seven ordinary days, contradicting the definite findings of the earth's age written on the pages of its strata and buried flora and fauna. God took a whole cycle even to create the universe in idea and vibrate it into luminous subtle energy. Everything about the universe shows that God took time to think it over before He created anything.

"And the evening and the morning were the first day (cycle)"(Genesis 1:5).

"Evening" means the period of mental creation, and "morning" means the period of astral creation. The "first day" means the first cycle, consisting of the millions of years taken by God to plan this creation in idea and then create it astrally in light.

"And God said (vibrated), Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so" (Genesis 1:6, 7).

"Firmament" means space; behind it hide all the finer forces. Space is a distinct vibration. It separates the astral from the physical. For example, millions of angels may be moving about us, but we cannot see them because our gross eyes are unable to register such high vibrations; therefore space may be said to hide them from us. All sounds are moving in space; we do not hear all of them. Yet if you have a radio you will be able to hear through it many of the songs and voices moving through space.

"Waters" means elements; the astral elements were divided from the gross elements below by the firmament (space). So, we are actually below space, and above space is the land of the gods.

The boundary line between heaven and earth is space. First space and all the finer forces were formed; and then the waters or elements of the astral universe and the gross universe, which are merely different rates of vibration.

God is not isolated in any one point of space; He is everywhere--omnipresent. All the finer forces of the astral universe are light or energy, and everything that is astral is hidden behind space. If this vibratory screen of space were removed, you would see them all. Our sight, hearing, smell, and taste are limited to this finite world. If for twenty years your eyes were closed and then you suddenly could see, everything would appear to be flat; you would have lost the power to see the third dimension, and would have the two-dimensional sight of the lower animals. This has been proven. Similarly, space is another dimension; it is the pearly gate of heaven. But it remains invisible to ordinary physical sight. The spiritual eye that you see if you meditate deeply is also a manifestation of the pearly gate. Your wisdom must pass through the star in the spiritual eye in order to behold the other world--the astral world.

So God by His almighty will caused a grosser vibration (God "said") and created the ineffably sheer yet opaque rampart of space or firmament in the midst of, i. e., separating, the astral and physical elements. This firmament subtly separates the inner finer forces and the outer gross material substances. God called the firmament heaven; it encompasses within its boundary the territory of subtle electronic rays, different states of consciousness, angels, radio messages, and so forth. Within the walls of this space lie also the earth and the sun's other planets, luminaries visible to our eyes. Of course, this space is interpreted according to the limitations of our senses; that is why we cannot behold the finer vibrations of the subtle elements of matter. The Cosmic Light was divided into fine elements and gross elements through the medium of intervening space.

We are making inroads into heaven, the receptacle of subtle forces, by the discovery of radio and electricity. We have bored doorways in space to hear, through radio, silently passing songs. We have pulled electricity out of heaven and are making use of it on earth.

How beautifully and unequivocally space is spoken of as dividing the subtle elements from the gross elements, or waters! This interpretation is correct; a literal interpretation, having the firmament divide two masses of water, would be absurd. The gross forces were under the firmament. To create the firmament took another cycle of many, many years, or a "day"--that certain period required for a particular manifestation of God's consciousness. All these manifestations were witnessed by the manifested and unmanifested consciousness of God.

If our ears were attuned, we could hear the earth moving through space. All creation is producing myriad kinds of music. The sounds of the astral world do not reach us and the sounds of our world do not reach the astral world. Only through meditation, when our consciousness becomes expanded, can we hear those astral sounds.

(To be continued)

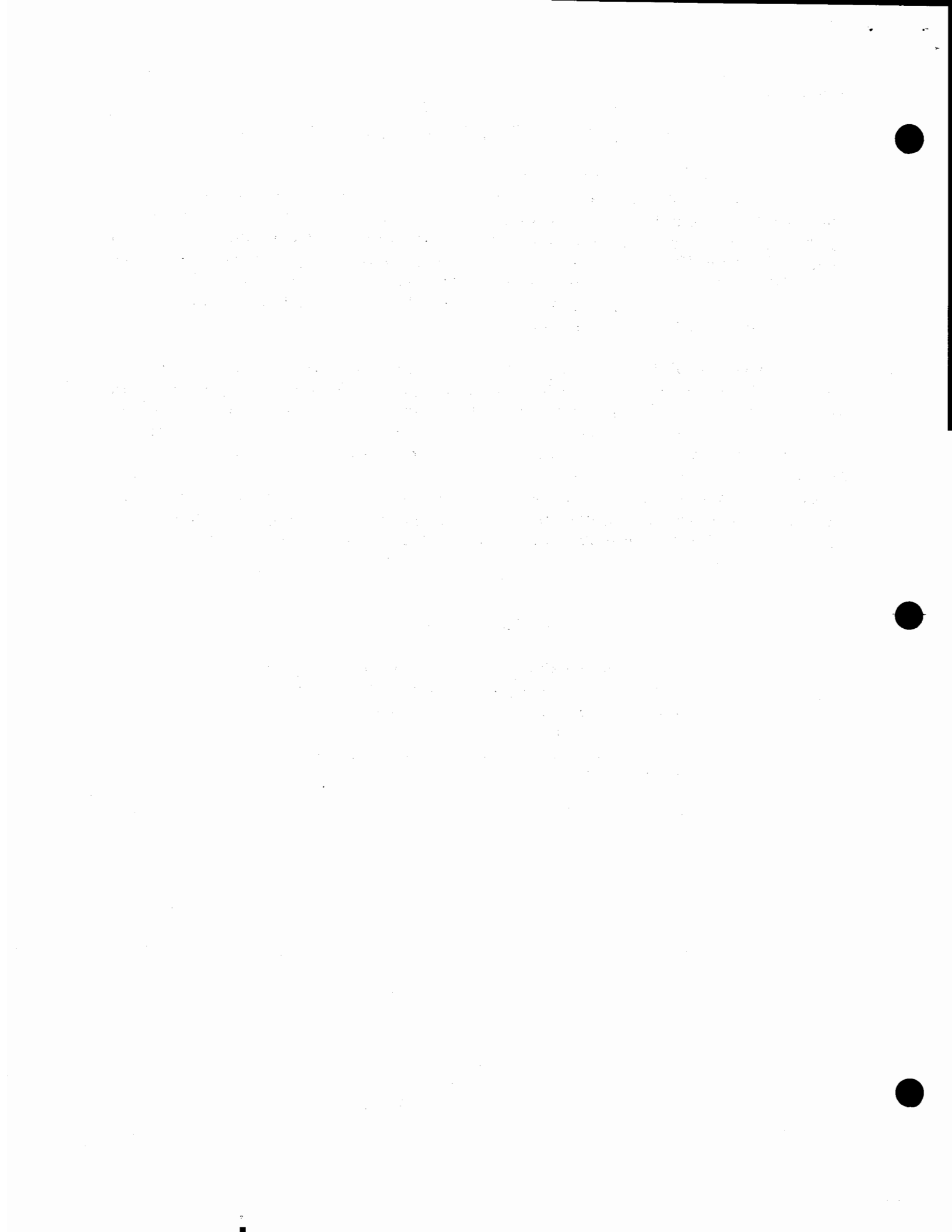
GOD IS ABSOLUTE, MAN IS RELATIVE

God did not want to remain forever silent in the chamber of infinity and let no one know and enjoy His wisdom and bliss; so He divided Himself into many parts through the power of delusion, just as the sea is broken into many sparkling waves by the power of the wind. When the wind subsides, the waves again become unified and dissolve into the sea. God brought all created beings out of Himself so that He could entertain all living manifestations with His wisdom and bliss, according to the degree of intelligence they have developed through natural evolution and finally through self-effort.

God has complete freedom, so He made mortals in His own image and endowed them with partial freedom and free choice. Man has limited freedom and free choice because he is a part of God and has to develop himself before he can reflect Spirit completely. God is absolute, man is relative, like the ocean and the wave. The ocean is the whole; the wave, being a part, is limited. So the wave, which aspires to be like the ocean, must lose its boundaries of form. The form-freed wave becomes the ocean. So also man, the partial reflection of God, must demolish the self-imposed boundaries of selfishness, ignorance, and delusion before he can expand himself and merge into God.

AFFIRMATION

I shall behold the only begotten, only reflection, of transcendental God the Father, born in the womb of all finite matter and vibration as the only Christ Intelligence, shepherding all creation to an intelligent divine end.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I BEHELD THEE IN THY DANCES OF CREATION, PRESERVATION, AND DESTRUCTION

(Part 3)

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The Unmanifested Infinite is hidden beneath the magic shroud of Maya, whilst Thou, O Exuberant Goddess of Forms, dost whirl in fantastic dances of finitude. Thy wild steps cease only when Thy feet touch the transcendent breast of Thy consort, Shiva, in whom all creation has rest.

Everywhere, O Kali, I hear Thy voice, resounding in the thunder or singing softly in the flux of atoms. I hear Thee in the symphony of spinning stars. I hear Thee, too, in the tinkling bells of little, laughing, harmonious lives. Thou art nearer to me than the throbs of my heart; and I perceive Thee on the farthest horizon of consciousness.

O Dancer of Unsearchable Caprice! Thine entrancing footsteps ever echo in my soul.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Manifest Thyself to me, O Father, as the light of reason, as the blaze of wisdom, as the breeze of amity and harmony. Manifest Thyself, through the song of atoms and electrons, and the vibration of their music. Teach me to hear Thy voice, Thy cosmic voice which commanded all vibration to spring forth; which commanded each melody to sing its own song.

THE STORY OF CREATION--Part 3

INTERPRETATION "And God called the firmament Heaven" (Genesis
OF GENESIS 1:8).

God called space (firmament) heaven because heaven--the receptacle of all finer forces--is behind space. Firmament is the rampart of heaven. It is everywhere. And matter is on the outer surface of this wall of heaven. That is why Jesus said: "Seeing, ye see not; hearing, ye hear not."

The superconscious mind can penetrate space through the spiritual eye, and can see that the universe is really limitless. Anything that you wish can be found right there. The world that you see around you is but a gross copy of the astral world. The astral flowers and the astral kingdom are much more beautiful than anything you can imagine.

"And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Here "evening" means the time of astral expression, and "morning" means the time of physical expression. "The second day" is the second cycle, during which God created the fine astral and the grosser physical expressions of cosmic energy or vibration.

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so" (Genesis 1:9).

The elements (waters) of earth, water, fire, and air, and ether were gathered together under the firmament (space, heaven) and composed themselves into the ninety-odd elements of the physical universe (dry land). Thus the physical cosmos came into being. God commanded His powers (the elements aforementioned) to combine into a solid earth, seeing that the dry land would provide a good stage for a future drama to be played by living creatures.

Scientifically speaking we must remember that a "day" means a cycle of millions of years. Such a "day" was required for the subtle elements to change into comparatively gross nebulae, or into the gases that eventually

condensed into water and dry land.

"And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10).

Water here means elements. Now the day or cycle starts. The dry land came. The earth is held round the sun by a cord of light, by the sun's magnetism. First the waters (astral elements) were gathered together, then the dry land (physical elements) appeared. Science says, first came the electrons, nebulae, ocean; then the dry land, vegetation, animals, and finally man. The Bible describes creation in this order:

- 1) mental or causal creation;
- 2) astral creation;
- 3) material creation.

The waters (elements existing as yet only astrally as different forms of energy) began to move and the intelligence of God began to play on them because God wanted to express Himself on yet another plane, the physical. As He concentrated on the astral elements they changed into forms expressing intelligence. Out of the physical element of water came dry land, and God called the dry land "earth" and the water "seas."

"And God said (vibrated), Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so" (Genesis 1:11).

This bears out the theory of evolution, does it not? Vegetation came first, then vegetation mutated into animal life. The difference between organic and inorganic matter is entirely illusory. A piece of tin feels pleasure and pain and it can be poisoned and even killed. Professor J. C. Bose of India proved through the use of delicate instruments that there is no fundamental difference in the life force that flows into various forms. Everything is animated by an intelligent force or energy which is electrical in nature.

"And the evening and the morning were the third day" (Genesis 1:13).

This "evening" means the period from the time God started until the "morning" or time He completed all primeval vegetation. After dry land came the grass, then came different forms of vegetation with the power to reproduce their own kind. Since plants have sex, we see that even at this early period God had planned the continuation of the lower forms of creation by sexual means.

The Bible then tells us that next "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in

the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so" (Genesis 1:14, 15).

God created cycles and seasons and interrelated everything into a composite whole. God's harmony is everywhere and everything in the universe is related. Hence when God reached the point of creating the various forms of vegetation, He had already created the sun, moon, and stars; because grass could not grow without sunlight.

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16).

This refers to the creation of the sun and the moon--the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night. God saw that the day would be used for activity and the night more for retirement in Spirit. The sun and moon are positive and negative radiating forces; also, the moon represents the mother aspect of God and the sun the father aspect.

"And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. And God said (vibrated), Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:19, 20, 21).

And all these things God performed through His manifested and unmanifested state, during another day or cycle. Then there manifested in the waters amoebae, the first moving creatures, followed by other early forms of marine life. As these primeval creatures chased each other they began to develop fins; and when here and there the waters began to dry up, other types began to develop lungs. (In Australia today there is a "lungfish" which is able to exist in or out of water.)

As the evolutionary drama of creation unfolded, the fins of some creatures became useless and atrophied; in their place wings began to develop (in the course of a few thousand generations). Any physical change vital to survival induced a modification of cell structure that eventually created the required body part.

Science also tells us that everything living came from water. The frog was a fish in the beginning; then it evolved into a half land, half water creature with legs.

"And the evening and the morning were the fifth day" (Genesis 1:23). The fifth "day" or cycle was thus devoted to the evolution of animals.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

As you watch television, seeing those images made of ethereal waves of light, remember that behind them is the astral world, and behind that is God. I see Him every minute, every day. Remember God; forget the world. Do the best you can to carry out your worldly duties and responsibilities, but find in the Divine bosom your best shelter from all harm.

This world will always have turmoil and trouble. What are you worried about? Go to the shelter of God where the Masters have gone, and whence they are watching and helping the world. You shall have safety forever, not only for yourself, but for all those loved ones who have been entrusted to your care by our Lord and Father.

TO KNOW GOD

Learn to find God in the stars, in the earth, and in each throb of your feelings. He is hidden right within our hearts--the most neglected Reality. If you follow the path of Self-realization steadfastly, and meditate regularly, you will see Him in the golden robe of light spread through eternity.

Within each thought you will feel His bursting presence. To talk about God is not enough. Many people have talked about Him; many have wondered about Him; many have read about Him, but few have tasted Him. Only those who taste Him, know Him. When you know Him, then you will not just stand apart and worship Him, but you will become one with Him. Then you can say: "I and my Father are one," as Jesus and the Masters have said.

If you find God within, you will find Him without, everywhere; but if you try to find Him without, not having first sought Him within, you will never find Him.

AFFIRMATION

I bow to Thee, O God, in the temple of the
skies, in the temple of nature, and in the temple
of my human brothers.



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WE OFFER UNTO THEE THE DEVOTION OF OUR HEARTS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, receive the devotion of our hearts. We have brought a bouquet of minds and souls to offer unto Thee. Receive this bouquet of our devotion in the temple of Om.

Thy vast temple dome includes all temples, all churches. In the wall-less temple we worship Thee with the love of our inner beings. Receive the offering of our hearts. Tear away the veil of silence and show us Thy face of power. Tear away the veil of matter and show us Thy face of energy.

O Spirit, we behold Thee through the windows of stars and the doors of the moon and the sun. We behold Thee through the portals of wisdom and devotion. We behold Thee through the portals of our prayers, but we find Thee through the portals of our love.

Father, naughty or good, we are Thy children; receive us in Thy temple. Burn away our grossness, our weakness, our disease, and our ignorance. Be Thou the only king on the throne of our desires. Be Thou the ocean in which the rivers of our desires meet.

PRAYER

O heavenly Trinity--Om, Tat, Sat: God the transcendental Father, God the immanent Christ Consciousness, and God the Holy Creative Vibratory Force! Grant me wisdom to know the truth!

THE STORY OF CREATION--Part 4

CONCEPTIONS OF THE
UNIVERSE ACCORDING
TO HINDU SCRIPTURES

By the deluding power of Maya, the magical measurer, the Indivisible Infinite makes Itself appear divisible or finite. The Infinite is like the ocean, which never changes its essential nature, though its waves are constantly varying its appearance.

Spirit vibrated into matter; hence both Spirit and matter exist. But matter does not exist in the way that it appears to us--finite and divided into multifarious forms. The seemingly solid physical universe exists only as an illusion. It is as insubstantial as a mirage in the desert.

"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1)--that is, Vibration, the first manifestation of Spirit in the role of Creator. The Cosmic Vibration divides itself into three modes of creation:

- 1) the ideational, whereby the cosmos exists solely as ideas (Genesis 1:1);
- 2) the astral, wherein idea vibrations condense and separate into grosser manifestations of light and energy; and
- 3) the separation of these astral vibrations into an astral cosmos of subtle light and energy and the gross physical cosmos whose basic elements are ether, air, fire, water, and earth (Genesis 1:7).

The terse summations in Genesis of whole cycles of evolution are more understandable when studied in conjunction with the interpretations of the Hindu scriptures. Physical creation, according to the Hindu scriptures, has five koshas or stages of evolution, through which all matter has to pass in order to become spiritualized and emancipated. It is part of the drama of creation that the soul, a tiny spark of Spirit, goes through all these processes before becoming reunited with the Infinite. God is said to sleep in the dry earth, dream in the herbs, awaken in animals, and, in man, to know that he is awake. In the enlightened man He regains His lost omnipresence.

In the second day (or cycle) the light was divided into subtle and gross elements. In the third cycle dry land and herbs came; in the fourth cycle planetary interrelations were definitely settled. In the fifth cycle the fishes, birds, and beasts were created. And in the sixth day (or cycle) man was created.

LET US MAKE MAN
IN OUR IMAGE

And God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26).

What is meant by the use here of the word "us"? Why didn't God say: "Let Me make man in My image"?

The following illustration will help you to visualize the deep explanations from the Hindu scriptures that are being given in this lesson. Suppose a man wishes to create a house. He creates it first in idea; that is, he has the idea of building. To carry out and supplement his idea for the house he calls together architects, engineers, building contractors, and so on. They do the actual work of bringing his original idea into manifestation.

Similarly, God separates His Cosmic Consciousness (out of which the idea of creation was conceived) into seven subjective forms of consciousness--His architects and builders who carry out His idea of creation, producing the cosmos and, eventually, man. When God said, "Let us make man in our image," He was expressing or vibrating the desire to create man according to images and plans evolved by His subjective offspring--differentiations of His consciousness--that act as His agents in creating and controlling different departments of creation.

When Spirit decided to create, Its Cosmic Consciousness put on the aspect of:

- 1) God the Father existing beyond creation;
- 2) Christ Consciousness, the only begotten Son (or reflection of the intelligence of God the Father present in an undisturbed state throughout creation); and
- 3) the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, the active, objectifying creative power that structures all creation.

The Cosmic Consciousness of God present in the universe in an undisturbed state is called Kutastha Chaitanya, or Christ Consciousness.

The Christ Intelligence separates itself into six subjective reflections of Cosmic Consciousness; and the Holy Ghost separates itself into six objective manifestations of the Christ Intelligence. The Christ Intelligence and its six subjective reflections are "the seven spirits which are before his throne" described by St. John (Revelation 1:4).

The Holy Ghost Vibration or Aum created six objectifications or outward manifestations of the Christ Intelligence: an ideational cosmos, an astral cosmos, and a physical cosmos; and their epitomes in man--the ideational body, the astral body, and the physical body.

The six objective creations may be classified as one--the Holy Ghost--governed by the supreme Christ Consciousness (in whom the six subjective reflections of the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father become one). We

can say even more concisely that the Holy Ghost or one objective vibratory creation is governed by one subjective Christ Consciousness. In this lesson, however, we are discussing the six aspects of the subjective Christ Consciousness (a reflection, of course, of God's Cosmic Consciousness); and of the objective Holy Ghost Vibration that manifests creation.

The six subjective reflections (three macrocosmic and three microcosmic) of Christ Consciousness are:

- 1) Iswara (pronounced Ish¹-war-a), the cosmic architect who presides over the ideational cosmos;
- 2) Hiranyagarva (pronounced Here-on¹-ya-gar¹-va), the cosmic astral engineer who directs the energies of the astral cosmos;
- 3) Birat (pronounced Be¹-rot), the cosmic builder of physical universes;
- 4) Pragnya (pronounced Prog¹-nee-a), creator of human consciousness;
- 5) Taijas (pronounced Tie¹-joss), the engineer controlling the astral body of man; and
- 6) Biswa (pronounced Bish¹-wa), the builder of man's gross physical body.

Expressed in a slightly different way, we may define these subjective intelligences and their activities thus:

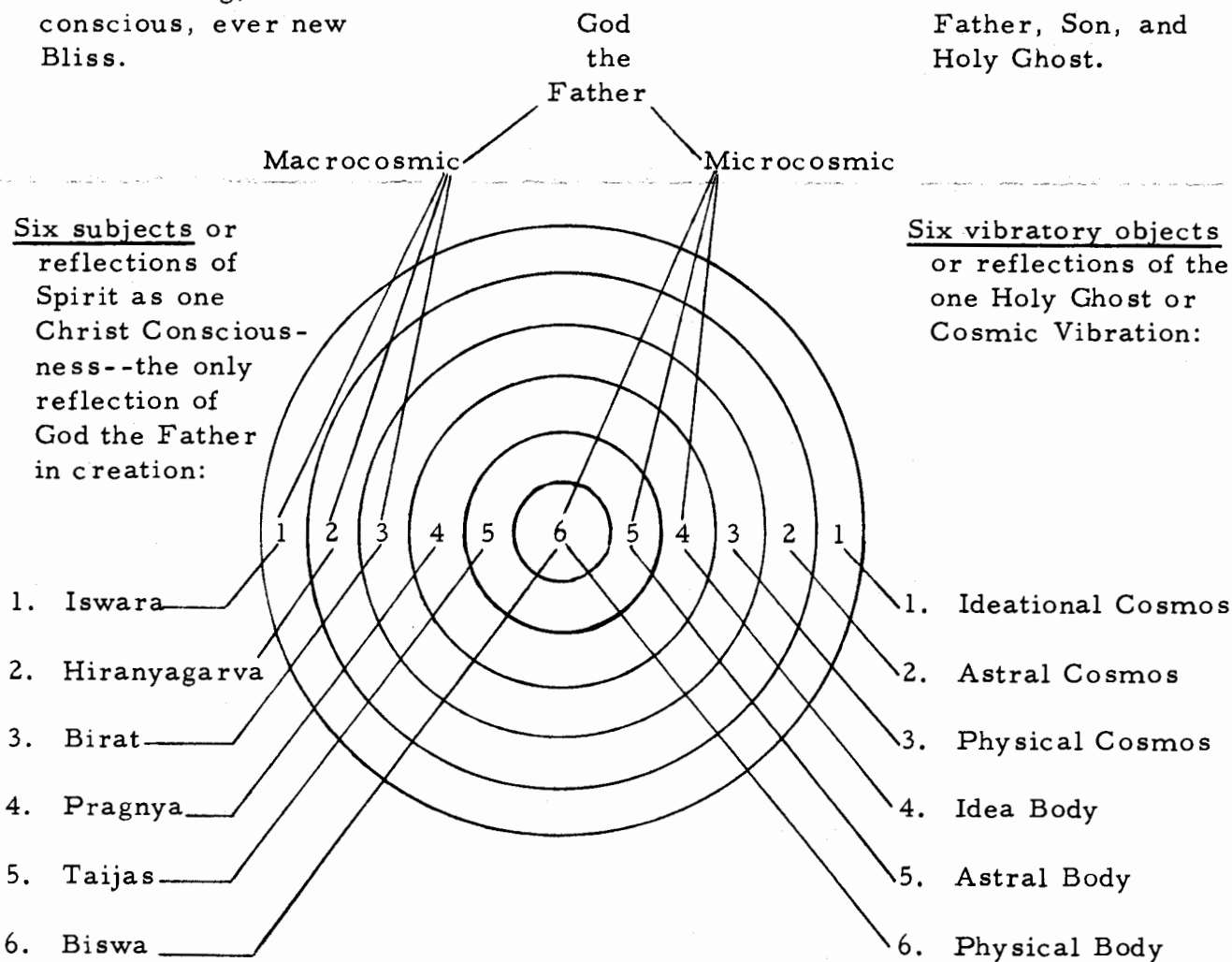
- 1) Macrocosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness immanent in the causal (idea) body of the universe is termed Iswara, a Sanskrit word meaning "God the Father."
- 2) Microcosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness present in every individual unit or object in the universe is termed Pragnya.
- 3) Macrocosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness existing in the subtle or astral body of the universe is called Hiranyagarva.
- 4) Microcosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness existing in the Maya-made astral body of man and each individual unit in the universe is termed Taijas.
- 5) Macrocosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness present in the material body of the universe is called Birat.
- 6) Microcosmically, the Cosmic Consciousness present in each material body and individual object is termed Biswa.

7) The Cosmic Consciousness present microcosmically and macrocosmically throughout the vibratory universe as just outlined is one and the same--the Holy Ghost. In its macrocosmic aspect it is called Maya (universal delusion) and in its microcosmic aspect it is called Avidya (individual delusion). The existence of a finite creation is actually unreal; hence the designation of Maya or cosmic delusion for the intelligent Holy Ghost Vibration that structures it. Manifesting microcosmically in man, Maya is called Avidya, or individual delusion, because it gives man the illusion too that creation is real and that he and the cosmos exist separately from God.

SIX OBJECTS, OR SIX VIBRATORY CREATIONS,
ARE GOVERNED BY SIX SUBJECTS, OR SIX REFLECTED FORMS OF
CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD THE FATHER

Unmanifested Spirit--
ever existing, ever
conscious, ever new
Bliss.

Manifested Spirit in
Creation as God the
Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost.



PARALLEL IN GOVERNMENT It can be said, in a general way, that the President governs the United States; similarly it can be said that God the Father beyond creation, reflected as Christ indirectly working in creation, and as the Holy Ghost, directly working in creation, rules the Vibratory Cosmos. In a more detailed way it can be said that the fifty states of America are governed by the President and his Cabinet and Congress; so it can be said that the vibratory creation of the various planes (macrocosmic and microcosmic) is ruled by the Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and six Intelligences or cosmic reflections of Christ Consciousness.

In order to understand America, one should understand its form of government. Likewise, in order to understand the so-called mysterious universe, one must know how it is governed by God and His seven reflections or "seven spirits before his throne." The Cosmos works according to a definite plan. God divided Himself into many cosmic personalities who work out and govern the details of creation. Thus were planets laid out in space, and electrically controlled. The lighting, heating, seasons, and system of governing the inhabitants of the cosmos were definitely planned and carried out by God and His seven angels (Christ Consciousness and its six intelligent reflections acting through the Holy Ghost).

You should now have a clear idea of the functions of these entities who govern the universe. The stars, moon, sun, seasons, and civilizations do not change mysteriously, but according to a definite plan--modified by the free will of man. And now we understand that not only was man made in the image of God, he was created after God's seven agents were created. It took tremendous preparation, and the creation of the entire ideational, astral and material universes, before God was ready to create man.

TO SUM UP: The Christian Bible speaks of seven Spirits before the throne of God which may be understood in this way: Spirit and God are one and Christ and the Holy Ghost are one; hence we have God the Father, with Christ and the six deities (manifestations of the Holy Ghost) as seven Spirits before His throne.

In order to manage the sixfold macrocosmic and microcosmic universes, Spirit, the Ruler of the Cosmos, divides Itself into God as Father (Sat); God as Son (Tat), the Christ or Christna (Krishna) Intelligence; and God as Holy Ghost (Om), Mother Prakriti or Nature, consort of God; and the six Intelligences (cosmic emanations of Holy Ghost vibration).

The three macrocosmic universes are the ideational cosmos, the astral cosmos, and the physical cosmos. Their epitomes are the microcosmic universes of the ideational body, astral body, and physical body of man.

Spirit is reflected in each human body and in all creatures in yet another way, for in each human body we find the presence of the boundless Spirit manifesting as soul. In this body the home of God the Father, and of the soul, is

in the upper part of the brain (the thousand-petaled lotus). The Christ Center (Kutastha Chaitanya) is at the point between the eyebrows, and the Holy Ghost, as Cosmic Light, is also there in the spiritual, or single, eye.

The beings or intelligences called Iswara and Pragnya work through the spiritual eye of man. From the ideational universe they pour ideas into the superconsciousness and causal or ideational body of man. Hiranyagarva and Taijas, the lifetronic engineers, work in conjunction in the cosmic astral universe, pouring life into the astral body of man. The intelligences called Birat and Biswa work together harmonizing the cosmic force with the body of man through his subconsciousness, body and matter consciousness, and human consciousness.

SOUL MUST REASCEND Every soul, therefore, has to ascend the same steps on the ladder of evolution by which it descended. None can reach Spirit without first dissolving the relative states of consciousness inherent in the physical, mental, and ideational bodies. First the soul must escape the limited consciousness of the physical world of solids, liquids and gaseous energy; and then it must dissolve the consciousness of the astral energy into the triune perception of Cosmic Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Intelligent Vibration, and of the six deities governing the six universes. After this, the advanced devotee must dissolve the consciousness of the three Intelligences into the ultimate realization of the one Spirit. This is the highest state of ecstasy.

During a dream, man's consciousness becomes divided into three--the dreamer, the act of dreaming, and the objects of the dream--even though in essence they are made of one dream consciousness. So the Spirit's cosmic consciousness becomes differentiated into the dreaming God, His dreaming cosmic consciousness, and the objective God-dream of the universe. As a dreamer realizes on waking that his dream and the objects and persons in the dream are all one and the same dream-stuff, so mortal man, by waking up in ecstasy, realizes that Spirit, Its cosmic consciousness and Its manifestations of a cosmic dream universe are made of one Cosmic Consciousness.

So man has descended into the cosmic dream delusion by countless various steps and habits born of experience. In order to reascend to Spirit, he must pull his soul away from material objects of attraction, body consciousness, the senses, the subconsciousness, and the superconsciousness; that is, from the physical, astral, and ideational consciousness; finally passing above the six objective spheres and into the perception of his soul and the six deities present in his diminutive ideational, astral, and physical bodies and his macrocosmic bodies of the cosmic ideational, astral, and physical spheres. When the soul attains this perception and can pass beyond the region of vibrations, then it becomes omnipresent Spirit again. The prodigal son comes back to the house of the Father from which he strayed.

**SPECIAL SPIRITUAL
EXERCISES**

1. Feeling Cosmic Consciousness in the Body.
Gently move the body, then remain still, concentrate on the flesh which forms it. Affirm: "Biswa Cosmic Consciousness, who holds the cells of my body together, I bow to thee; give me health."

2. Feeling God in the Life Force which Tenses and Relaxes the Tissues.
Tense entire body gently, hold tension. Affirm: "O Taijas Cosmic Consciousness, who maintains my astral body, give me the strength and vitality which I feel during tension. I bow to thee."

3. Feeling God in Pure Consciousness which Tenses and Relaxes Energy.
Tense, charge, relax energy in the body. Affirm: "O Pragnya Cosmic Consciousness, who sustains my will power, which I feel in tension and relaxation, I bow to thee. Give me wisdom." Then forget your little body.

4. With closed eyes, perceive in your mind's eye universes, stellar and solar systems, earth, your body, all floating as one sea of matter. Affirm: "O Birat Cosmic Consciousness, now present in my body and all matter, teach me to feel thy presence in all matter and in my body."

5. Open your eyes, close them, forget the motion pictures of planets and universes with dimensions; visualize all planets as globes of fire rolling in an eternal mist of space. Affirm: "O Hiranyagarva, O Flowing Cosmic Fire, sustain the flow of vibratory force. All energies connect the vitality in my body with thy vitality, omnipresent in everything."

6. Open your eyes, close them, visualize the universes as dreams and ideas floating in the endless mind of God. Affirm: "O Iswara Cosmic Consciousness, teach me to behold my dreams and thy cosmic dreams as thy one dream. Teach me to behold not matter, but the whole cosmos, as dream stars hung in the firmament of my consciousness by thine omnipresent mind."

FURTHER EXPERIMENTS

1. Gently move your body. Feel in it the movement of God.

2. Gently tense and relax, feel energy flowing through you, and then feel the presence of God in this energy.

3. Charge your body with energy; withdraw that energy in your consciousness only. In this mental tension and relaxation feel consciousness.... feel God.

4. Close your eyes, visualize your body as a part of earth, earth as part of the cosmos, cosmos as part of all gross creation. Feel matter and your body as one substance pervaded by your own consciousness of Birat Cosmic Consciousness, and perceive that you are also one with matter.

5. Visualize your astral body, the earth, solar and stellar systems as balls of space floating in your luminous Hiranyagarva Consciousness. Affirm: "O Spirit, make me see my astral body, all fiery planets, all creation floating as waves of one sea of light."

6. Realize that you exist only in idea. Through your consciousness alone you know of the body, the cosmos. When that idea sleeps, or becomes unconscious, your body, the entire cosmos ceases to exist for you. Realize that your body, life forces, the earth, universes, and cosmos are all ideas, existing within yourself. Affirm: "O Cosmic Consciousness, I am an idea. The cosmos is a greater idea. Teach me to see, within me, myself and everything as Thine ideas."

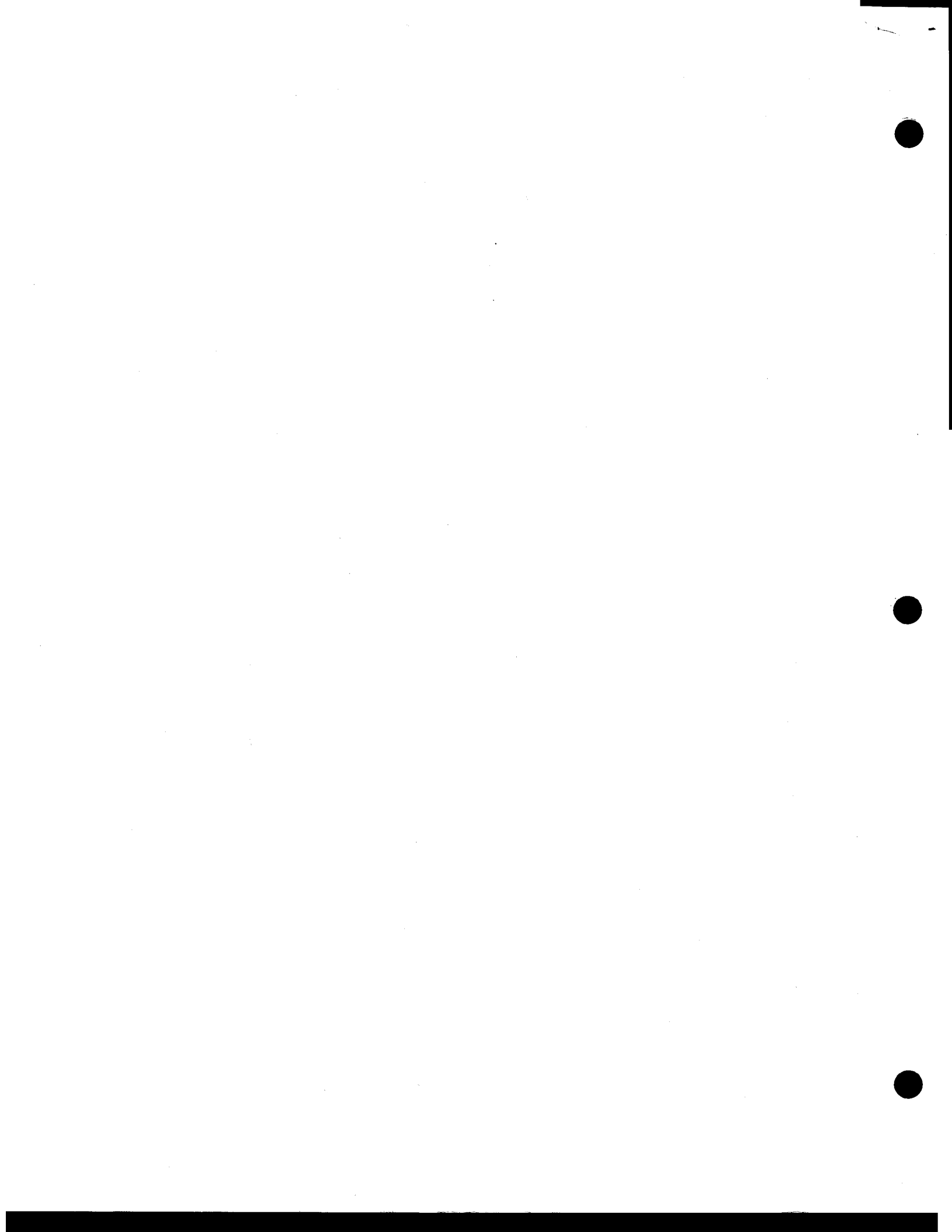
THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The question of your redemption from the self-created prison of ignorance must be settled directly by yourself and God. Invoke God in the temple of silence, in the temple of peace, and invoke Him in Bliss. Feel that He is right here and that you are addressing Him with all your soul, asking Him to manifest on the altar of peace, on the altar of bliss.

When you can feel yourself in all creation, then you will have attained that consciousness which Jesus reached. Then and then only can you say: "I and my Father are One." There is no "redemption"(enlightenment) without the "Holy Ghost." The intelligence in creation is the same as the intelligence beyond creation. The OM sound that you hear is the Holy Ghost--the Holy Vibration. When this is sensed, then you are attuned to the intelligence of Christ.

AFFIRMATION

I bow to the Christ in the temples
of all human brothers, and in the temple
of all life.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DRINK DIVINE LOVE THROUGH ALL HEARTS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Through gravitational pulls, magnetic Divine Love is coaxing all matter to melt into Its bosom of space. Divine Love is flooding through the sluice gates of hearts to inundate and destroy all ignorance-erected boundaries of individual, social, patriotic, and human-love attachments. Then Cosmic Love draws all hearts back to rest and to be rejuvenated in Its bosom of healing, silent, eternal love.

When human love is constantly diverted by changes of faces, it breaks itself on rocks of attachment. Man should seek satisfaction in drinking Divine Love from the well of one heart alone by perfecting some one human relationship. Finding in one true heart the ever-increasing love divine, the human heart shall quench its thirst. Drinking Divine Love in one heart, the soul then learns to drink Divine Love through all hearts. Divine Love finally tastes Its own nectar everywhere in everything through Its sweet lips of omnipresence.

PRAYER

O Spirit, let not my insatiable sense cravings be fed with wrong actions. Teach me to discipline them, that they may want only true happiness. Let me learn to govern wisely the finite forces Thou hast entrusted to me, that each possession may be used only for good. Let me, O Spirit, cooperate with Thy will until my thoughts conform to Thy harmonious plan.

THE STORY OF CREATION--Part 5

ADAM AND EVE Man and woman were created in God's image. The individualized Spirit, or soul, sustained the bodies of the original man and woman. Man and woman are the two natures of God--reason and feeling--expressed in different bodies. Spirit is knowledge plus feeling. When He divided Himself as God and Nature, man and woman, He found both dualities manifesting the same qualities, so He conceived a clever plan. In man He kept reason uppermost, and feeling hidden; and in woman feeling uppermost and reason less prominent.

Reason is that which tells you the kind of flower, the color, the shape, and so forth; but feeling expresses love for and enjoyment of the flower. Do you see? God is wisdom and He enjoys His wisdom. God is feeling and reason--male and female. Woman expresses more feeling in her behavior, appearance, and interests, and man expresses more reason. While man is the positive aspect and woman is the negative, when compared to God we all are negative and God is the one positive force. We can balance the positive and the negative tendencies in us by contacting God. That balance comes only from God.

The relative differences in the two above-mentioned qualities and in sex kept man and woman separate and different, but God had given them the power to commune with Him in spite of this dual consciousness. He placed them in heaven. In the original plan of creation, man and woman, ideal soul mates, were to lead a heavenly life by keeping their minds in the heavenly region of Bliss-Will in the forehead. The spiritual marriage consisted in woman (or feeling) uniting with man (or the masculine force of knowledge) and thus becoming one in God.

STORY TOLD IN GENESIS "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Genesis 2:8). Eastward refers to the place between the eyebrows where the sun of the heavenly eye is seen. Man's consciousness originally remained in that center, which is in the East (or front side of him).

"The tree of life... in the midst of the garden" (Genesis 2:9) refers to the

treelike nervous system through which the sap of life flows so that the blossoms of the senses and thoughts may flourish for harvesting. A human being is like an upturned tree: the hair and the cranial nerves are the roots, the spinal cord is the trunk, and the afferent and efferent nerves ramifying from them are the branches.

"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). The first sentence means that it did not fit in with God's plans of creation that man should be alone. Help meet means a soul mate or the other half of man, who would help him eventually to liberate himself from the state of human existence. Ideal marriage was meant to help lead toward liberation.

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof" (Genesis 2:21). He slept means that Adam, through the power of Avidya (individual illusion as opposed to Maya, or universal illusion), found himself separated into man and woman. Man means God, and woman means Nature. These two are equal in power and divine expression. Rib means vibration. Woman is made from the vibration, or rib, of man, or God force; that is, first the knowledge of God created man, then His feeling coming out of His knowledge-nature-vibration (or rib, of man) created woman. Here let us refer back to Genesis 1:27: "In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." This passage shows that previously God had simultaneously created the male and female. So we can safely conclude that Genesis 2:21 (above) describes in detail the creation of man and especially of woman.

"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis 3:2, 3). In these verses, the serpent is the outgoing current of life energy stimulating sex expression. The garden is the human body, especially the center of consciousness. Trees are various nervous systems. Fruit is sensation. "Fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden" is, therefore, the fruit or sensation of sex which is situated in the middle of the body, embedded in the tree of sex nerves. Here die means to lose divine consciousness, through descending from his heavenly consciousness to sex consciousness on the day he indulged in physical union or physical marriage, deserting the heavenly union of knowledge and feeling in divine spiritual marriage, as was meant originally in God's plan of creation.

"And the eyes of them both were opened" (Genesis 3:7) means that they concentrated upon their physical sight and had, henceforth, to depend upon their two physical eyes, not their single spiritual eye.

This human body is the Garden of Eden, where there are several trees, or nervous systems, bearing different kinds of fruits of the senses; that is, the optical, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactual nerve centers, bearing the

sense fruits of the attractive sensations of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. God told Adam and Eve to enjoy all the fruits of the senses which grow in the garden of the nervous system except the fruit of the nerve tree of the creative force situated in the middle of the bodily garden.

These things are also mentioned in the highest Hindu Scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita, where in Chapter 15, Verse 1, there is a reference to "the tree with roots above and boughs beneath."

ORIGIN OF SEX CREATION This fruit of momentarily alluring touch sensation is spoken of as the apple. The serpent is the life energy which stimulates the nerves of the creative force. It is this coiled serpentinelike energy at the base of the spine which rouses the negative feminine instinct of feeling (or Eve) in man, to experience the conjugal mode of creation (eating apple). This feminine Eve-feeling tempts the faculty of reason (or Adam) in man to plunge into conjugal experience. The creative instinct is first roused by the life force accumulating in the lower spinal centers and sex organs as a result of physical thoughts and stimuli; then feeling, or emotion, is awakened and overpowers reason. This creative nerve force which flows through a coiled passage in the coccyx is called the Kundalini power in Hindu books. This Kundalini power when concentrated in the lower spinal centers stimulates the creative urge--ordinary mortal consciousness. Through meditation, spiritual thoughts and right action, the Kundalini force is raised to the higher spinal centers, bringing divine perceptions and spiritual consciousness.

Even as God had created the first beings by special creation, and not by the law of cause and effect through parents, Adam and Eve were empowered to create children after their hearts' tendency by materializing the life force into a body by the immaculate method. Children could not be brought into being on earth if parents had not been created first, so the first parents were created by God.

When man, instead of keeping his consciousness on the Paradise spot in the region of pure thought in the brain and at the point between the eyebrows (Christ Center), allowed the mind to run down to the sex plane, he fell--that is, he changed from being able to perform immaculate creation by will, to the method of physically propagating the species.

All children are born and nurtured in the paradise of peace, purity and bliss until they are tempted by the creative serpent force and begin to live on the pro-creating plane. Then begins worry, weakness, jealousy, boredom, and an infinite variety of ills. The idea is, that unless the sex instinct is controlled and moderated, young men and women will be driven from the paradise of happiness which accompanies a life of self-control and moderation. Love, pure love, must be predominant. If any man or woman could remain in the sphere of thought and lofty ideals--constantly busy with noble ideas, enjoying good music, pictures, good food, and fragrant blossoms--and could refrain from getting mixed up with the sense of touch involved in material procreation, they would be

in paradise.

Bear this message in your heart and deliver it to young Adams and Eves who are still in paradise, and who can be induced to remain there and be saved from the miserable experience of being cast into the molten fires of sense satiety and self-created folly.

THE GREATEST LOVER

A long time ago there lived in India a God-loving man and his wife. This saintly man, named Kumar, loved his wife, but he loved God more than her or anything else. In fact, he had married in order to discover whether his love for God was greater than his conjugal affection, and with the understanding that he would leave his wife, and all possessions, if the love of God possessed him and he had an urge to leave all for the Lord's sake. He was continuously introspecting to discover whether he was loving anything else more than God. He thought: "If at any time I weaken and begin to love anything more than God, I shall have to remove that obstacle."

Time is a great trickster, and delusion is subtle and penetrating; so after a while Kumar went on a pilgrimage with his wife, who was about to give birth to a baby. Both he and his wife thought that the birth of the baby in the holy city of Varanasi (Banaras) would be auspicious, and be good for its future.

On the way, as they passed through the outskirts of a certain city, the wife was stricken with labor pains. Kumar hastily took her into an old dilapidated, deserted house. As the wife writhed in agony, she said to her husband: "Saintly one, promise me that you won't desert our newborn babe under a divine impulse, for I feel that I am going to die."

Kumar, although extremely touched by the words of his stricken wife, yet felt that he was between two fires--the child to be born and his paramount love for God. He thought to himself: "I could not love my wife or the baby unless God made them lovable and gave them to me to love with the very love which came from Him." He therefore determined, "No matter what happens, I must never let anything come in the way of my love for the Divine, and I must forsake anything to appease my love-thirst for God." He resolved to cut off his hand or pluck out his heart or his eye, or otherwise maim himself, and forsake everything if by so doing he would become worthy of God's love.

Although he was inwardly resolved to forsake all for God, by way of consoling his wife and not causing her any heartache, he replied to her repeated entreaties: "I will see what I can do. I will try my utmost to carry out your wishes."

But hard are the tests of God and subtle are the ways of delusion. The wife

died, leaving behind her a beautiful baby boy, such as they had always prayed would be sent to them. The baby was crying piteously, while lying near the dead mother and the stunned father, when there was a great rumble in the ether and a light, burning the bush of all ignorance. A Presence possessed the distraught father. He heard a voice say: "Beloved, come to me. We will remain in the ecstasy of divine love in the caves of the Himalayas."

Kumar was shaken with the love of God on one hand, and the love of the helpless baby on the other hand. But then he thought: "I could not know what love is, nor have the baby to love, without God's love; so, if I cannot forsake everyone--father, mother, wife and child--for God, I am not worthy of Him." Thinking this, he prayed: "Lord, Master of my life, you could even take my life away now, and I wouldn't be here to love or take care of this baby, so I must show that my love for You is greater than my love for my baby. So now, Lord, take care of the baby, as I must hasten to depart for the retreat of the Himalayan caves, where I wish to commune with You."

His eyes suddenly turned toward the floor, and he saw a lizard give birth to an egg and silently slink away, leaving the egg behind her. The egg broke; a tiny lizard was born. It opened its mouth in hunger and suddenly a small insect flew into it. The little lizard then closed its mouth and, its hunger being satisfied, began to move away toward a hiding place. Seeing this, Kumar thought: If the Lord feeds the baby lizard, forsaken by its mother, He will also take care of my baby forsaken by his parents.

Thinking this, in the deep ecstasy of God's love, he ran out of the house, all the while hearing the cries of the baby. But his heart was shaken and his human love suffocated him. He stood under a tree and prayed: "Lord, although my love for You is greater than my love for the child, You gave me a human heart and I feel worried about the motherless, fatherless, helpless baby. Lord, I beseech You, show me some sign by which I can know that my baby will be cared for."

The Lord's response was magically prompt. As Kumar had been praying, the emperor's coach was approaching the deserted house. In it rode the barren empress. Attracted by the cries of the forsaken child, she bade the driver stop. She stepped down from the carriage and entered the house. There she saw the child lying by the side of its dead mother. Tenderly picking up the baby, the empress re-entered her coach and hastened back to her palace.

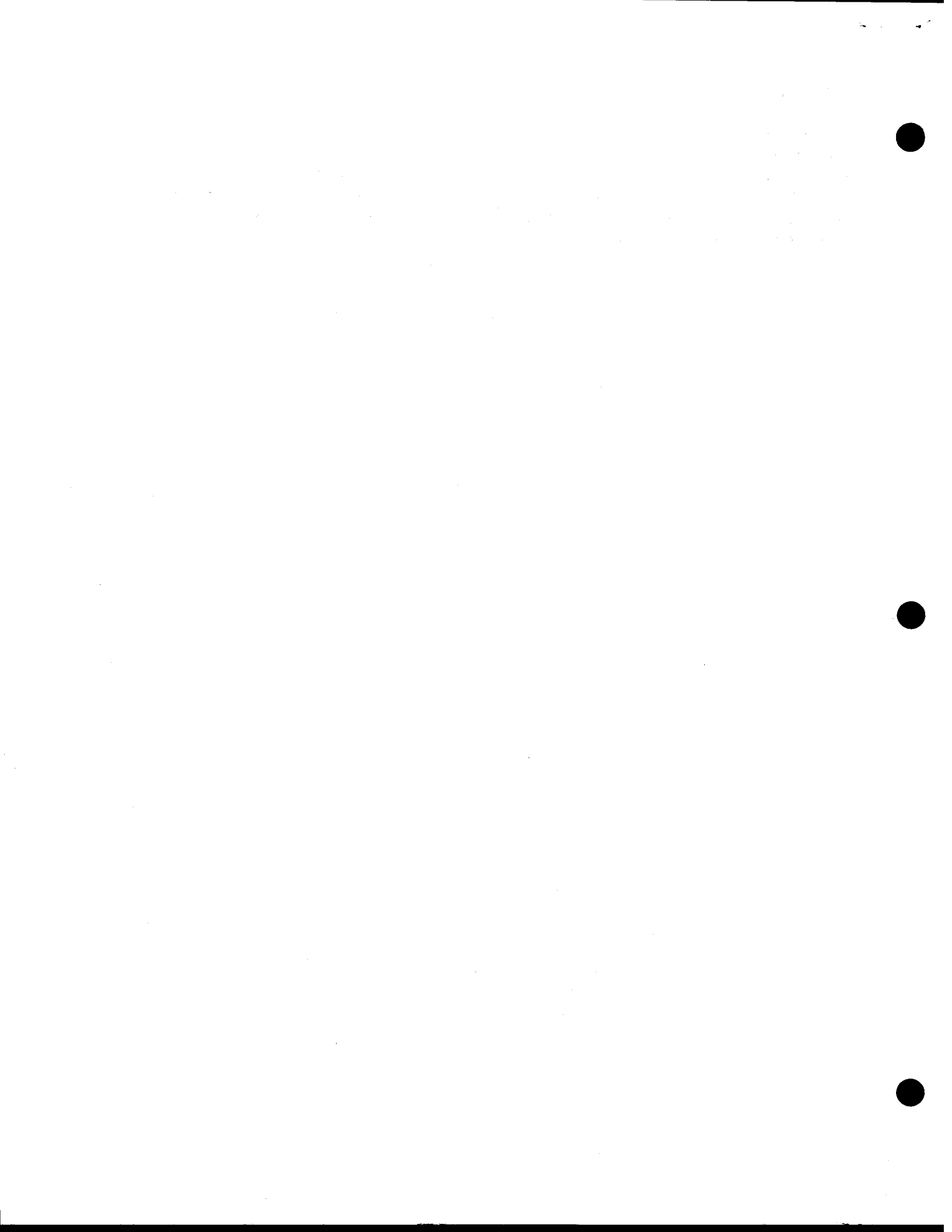
Later, as Kumar loitered in the city for a day or two, he heard that the king and queen, having no children of their own, had adopted the foundling as their child and successor to the throne. Then Kumar, much pleased, left the city to keep his tryst with God in the Himalayan caves of Hindustan.

Love God with all your heart and soul. Seek the kingdom of God first, then all your desires will be fulfilled. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off." Cut off

all difficulties which lie in the path of Self-realization and supreme freedom. It is better to enter into eternal life having maimed your fleshly comforts than to burn in the hell-fire of satiety and discontentment through overindulgence. Love God more than you love anyone or anything else, for you cannot know what love is, nor use that love to love anyone or anything, without having first received that love from God.

AFFIRMATION

I am one with the Spirit existing in the templed stars,
in the tabernacle of the sun and the moon, in the temple of
human souls, and in the living shrines of flowers, birds,
and beasts.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I WEAR MY SCARS AS ROSES OF COURAGE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I have bled for Thy Name; and for Thy Name's sake I am willing ever to bleed. Like a mighty warrior, with gory limbs, injured body, wounded honor, and a thorn crown of derision, undismayed I fight on. My scars I wear as roses of courage, of inspiration to persevere in the battle against evil.

I may continue to suffer blows on my arms outstretched to help others, and receive persecution instead of love. But my soul shall ever bask in the sunshine of Thy blessings, O Lord! Thou dost guide Thy soldier's campaigns that conquer for Thee the lands of human hearts now oppressed by sadness.

With the transfiguring sword of wisdom I smite the error foe. My army of freedom thoughts is disciplined by the divine martinet, Singlehearted Devotion to Thee. Blowing trumpets of Thy liberating Name, the battalions march into enemy-occupied territory: maya-deluded minds.

May the legions of light banish the despot, Darkness--usurper in man's kingdom of consciousness.

Oh, in my invasions of the continents of ignorance Thou hast ever been Commander in Chief!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Divine Artisan, burn away all the dross of weakness in me; give me the steel of endurance and the strength of calmness.

SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL HEALING METHODS (1)

What is the power that really heals? Is it medicine? And if medicine heals, why doesn't it heal everybody? Medicine is not the source of healing; nor is healing due entirely to mind power. A certain amount of body preparation is necessary for body healing. If you continually eat too many wrong foods, you will die sooner than you should, even though you use medicine when disease overtakes you. You should obey the laws of good health, for these are laws of God, and you should obey all laws of God. Then, if you are sick and you seek out someone who you believe can give you mental healing, and if you have faith in him, he will be able to help you. If you believe in a doctor, go to a doctor. If you believe in a mental healer, go to a mental healer. But you must believe, above all, in God who gave them both the power to heal. The medical healer depends upon chemicals, but what is behind the chemicals? The power of God. Nothing can operate without God's power. God's vibration is in the medicine. Omit God and every remedy is rendered impotent.

Electricity and rays will be the future medicine of the world. And when we advance still further, thought will be the medicine. Potentially millions of volts of energy are right in your brain. Each gram of tissue contains immeasurable latent power, and this energy is present throughout your body. From just the tiny bit of protoplasm that is gathered by the third day in the embryo, all the bones and matter of the body are formed. When a soul is to be incarnated, the will and energy create a body for it. To give up the use of will power would mean to disconnect yourself from the Source of energy.

When you work for God; when you realize, in meditation and conscious dreams, the Power that is within you, that talks to you through the blades of grass and every nod of every leaf, then you know that you are not surrounded by death but by the immortal breath of God. But you forget your infinite nature when you look at the limited surroundings of the material world. Because you relate yourself to the world and its limitations, you think that you also are limited.

THE TERROR OF DISEASE

Why is disease so terrible? Because it produces pain and death. Disease must be cast out from the body, mind, and the ignorance-cloaked soul. Disease is detrimental not only to your material ambitions, but to your mental and spiritual aspirations. You can't think of God while you are suffering with a headache, nor can you think of Him when you are being bombarded with bills, or when your mind is haunted by jealousy, fear of death, or when you are at war with yourself.

There has always been more or less suffering in the world. Our bones are brittle and they break; mentally we suffer from melancholia and other moods and fears; and spiritually we suffer from ignorance of our immortal soul nature. So we can classify all diseases in three ways: (1) physical diseases born of bacteria, transgressions against the body, accidents, etc.; (2) mental diseases born of mental weaknesses such as fears, worries, and other wrong habits of thinking; and (3) the greatest of all diseases--spiritual ignorance--unawareness of one's own soul.

It is your duty to clean out the bacteria from your bodily temple. There are many and various ways to do this, for which I bow my head to the great doctors and the great scientists; and to the saints who have been the instruments of mental healings. When seeking health, one of the first rules is to outlaw counteracting thoughts and actions. Stop those actions that create the disease in you.

The saints and sages of India have shown that the divine Power works in a practical way, provided you have really established communion with It. What is the way? How shall you reach the unlimited power of God? How tune your mental radio with the divine harmony that destroys all disease and lets the cosmic vibration of God pass through?

Find God! Vibrate energy and mind power, and charge the body with that energy, ~~destroying the demons of bacteria with the flaming energy of God.~~ Bring God to you, not merely by imagination, but through actually drawing on His vitality. Bring His energy into your body by affirmations such as this: "God is in my mind; I am healed."

Spiritual ignorance is the root cause of all suffering. Remember this: if you heal yourself of soul ignorance, you will have healed body, mind and spirit. Always remember that as a student of these teachings you are much more fortunate than many other persons. Knowing the laws of truth, you have it within your power to obliterate diseases and make yourself what you want to be.

Cheerfulness is very important to health. It is the best antiseptic that you can have--plus the thought that you are all right. But along with right thinking, you must live rightly. Do not be like those who fanatically think that they are all right while at the same time indulging every day in wrong habits of living.

VARIOUS TYPES OF NERVOUSNESS

The human body is a bundle of nerves. They are like little tubes through which you drink in impressions of the material world about you. But the nerves are not meant to bring you only physical sensations; they are meant also to enable you to imbibe the eternal nectar of God. You have a bundle of nerves in the ears, eyes, and in every organ of sense. How are you using them? Most people absorb through their nervous systems only mundane sensations.

Nervousness means to be nerve-bound, to identify your happiness with the state of the nerves: your happiness is identified with certain experiences that you regard as pleasurable according to your particular type of nerve response. Everyone has a certain kind of nerve response. You have your individual likes and dislikes. You believe that you like this or that. In Mexico there is a general predilection for chilies; in India people enjoy curries. Each nationality has some special desires, owing to mass tendencies of nerve response or nervousness. Nervousness does not necessarily mean restlessness; it also means using or responding to certain sets of sensations produced by the nerves. Any sensation that controls you is deadly. Let no sensation in your body control you.

Peace and harmony are necessary to maintain health. OM, the holiest of all sounds, is a soothing sound. Inharmonious noise creates nervousness and disease. People would live longer if they did not have so much noise about them.

There is another form of nervousness--spiritual nervousness. The soul is so identified with the body that it has quite forgotten its real nature. You are so identified with your nerves that you think of yourself only as a mentally and physically sensate creature. Even thoughts are but sensibilities that cluster around your soul.

Physiological nervousness can be destroyed by eating more fruits, and other wholesome foods; and by not overeating. And mental nervousness can be destroyed by reading good books, cultivating good company and good thoughts, and so forth. Spiritual nervousness can be destroyed only by meditation. That means transferring the attention from the nerves to the perception of infinite Joy. Don't live just in this little cage of the body. Your real Self is in the cage and also outside the cage. When you know your true Self you will find that you think through all minds, feel through all hearts, work through all hands. This Self is real.

Meditation means transferring your attention from the bundle of sensations that is your body to the Infinite Joy that is your true Self. Every night God takes your attention away from these nerve tubes and makes you forget all the sensibilities of the body. Meditation, practiced in the right way--in the way that you have been taught in these Self-Realization Lessons--is very important. Lift your consciousness from mortal nervousness. Those who remain in the consciousness of the Self do not feel any sensation in the body. If you meditate, you will feel that behind your muscular power there is a greater Power; that you are no longer merely a weak individual. But as soon as the nerves are allowed to control the mind, your soul is in the ego state of physical identification, and in that state is controlled by the nerves and material sensations. Thus you produce, in time, the miseries that go with material things.

Many people are clothes conscious, nerve-bound, and appetite-bound;

they forget the Infinite behind this body. You are really infinite electricity. You are immortal. You cannot be killed by anything. You are Infinite Limitlessness throbbing behind this body. You are a child of the Infinite. So do not allow a little nervousness to bother you. Never think of yourself as a man or a woman. You are the Infinite. You are the electricity in the bulb of flesh, you are not the bulb. The electricity goes back into the dynamo when the bulb is gone. You are not this little body bulb; still you exist, for you are the Dynamo.

Do not think of yourself as a little person who becomes blind, or deaf, or lame. You are the Infinite Intelligence behind this body; the Infinite Joy behind this body. So you should banish nervousness, which makes you think that you are the slave of your body. Realize that your soul is really free from identification with the nerves. You should be using them only to drink the honey of the Infinite.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you not only to seek, but to establish actual God-communion. Then all good things--health, happiness, abundance--will be added unto you as a part of your divine birthright. We are all prodigal sons, having run away from our Heavenly Father. Only when we reunite our souls with Him do we regain all He had given us, His divine children, as part of our heritage. ~~Seek prosperity with God's consciousness of all-supply,~~ but seek God first.

A man only acquires prosperity, happiness, and abundance as it is measured out to him by the cosmic law according to his past actions and the development of his brain capacity; that is why so many people do not get the things for which they pray. No one can acquire anything that he does not deserve to receive. Why then pray and visualize in the wrong way? Pray no longer as a prodigal son of God, but as a divine child united with the Heavenly Father.

THE MAN WITH THE NERVOUS HEART

Sometime ago a man suffering from a chronic nervous condition of the heart came to me for healing. He explained: "I have tried many things, but I am unable to get rid of my heart trouble." After calm, intuitive reflection I told him to bring me a pair of scissors. He looked alarmed. "Sir, are you going to perform an incision on my heart?" I laughed and replied: "I am not a doctor, and you have never heard of anyone using scissors for operating upon the heart."

At last, when he reluctantly brought the scissors, I cut off one of his vest buttons and told him not to sew another one in the place of the missing one, and not to put his hand on the place where the missing button belonged. Then I asked him to come back after fifteen days, saying I expected him to be

healed by that time. The man thereupon laughingly exclaimed: "I will do what you say, since I believe in you, but I think that of all possible cures, this is the craziest!"

After fifteen days he came striding to me, exclaiming with joy: "The specialists say I am healed of my nervous heart. Sir, what did you do? Did you dispossess a ghost from the button?"

I answered with a mysterious smile: "Yes! Your hand was constantly pressing and playing with the vest button near your heart. This button was the 'ghost' nagging your heart into a nervous fit. So, I cut it off and told you not to put your hand over your heart. That is why the heart, freed from the disturbing pressure, has ceased to bother you."

AFFIRMATION

The light of His perfect health shines in all the dark nooks of my bodily sickness. In all my body cells His healing light is shining. They are entirely well, for His perfection is in them.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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ADORING THEE THROUGH ALL THE AEONS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

In the temple of meditation I light twin lamps of dawn and my own wakefulness. Gorgeous garlands of my devotion encircle Thy feet of omnipresence.

Thy fragrance exuding from love-flowers in the vase of my heart permeates every nook of my being.

All shadows and fears of my imagination vanished at Thy light-coming, O Lord! Thou hast roused me forever from the dream state of mortality.

Sleeplessly, with adoring eyes, throughout the aeons of eternity I shall watch the lovely changes of expression on Thine infinite face.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Healer, strengthen my will that I may plunge the gaze of my faith through the window of the spiritual eye and baptize my body in the healing light of Christ Consciousness.

SCIENTIFIC AND SPIRITUAL HEALING METHODS (2)

RELATION OF MIND TO BODY IN HEALING When you understand that mind governs the body, that mind plus will power governs everything, then you can be above material laws. But until you have developed that mental power, you should obey health laws. Meanwhile, begin to give the mind more power: Believe more in will power; live more by will and cosmic energy. The more you depend upon mind and will power, the more they will do for you. Outer methods are not as effective. When will and energy have left the body, nothing can heal you. Therefore, will and energy are most important--they are the real creators of the body.

Thoughts have to be understood and rightly applied before they can be effective. They come to you in crude forms. People who try to employ crude thoughts without understanding get no results. Then they say that thoughts are not effective. Crude thoughts must be distilled before they can be effective. A distilled thought is one that has been chemicalized by soul force--without that soul force it has no value.

If you affirm, "I am well," but in the background of your mind hold the thought that it isn't so, the effect is the same as if you had taken a helpful medicine and at the same time swallowed poison, counteracting the good effect of the medicine. In using thought as a medicine you should be very careful not to neutralize good thoughts by wrong thoughts. Otherwise you cannot heal yourself.

To be active and successful, a thought must be impregnated with such will power that it will resist every opposition. Thought must be materialized in order to be fully effective, and this can only be done through will power. If you tune in with the mental vibrations emanating from the Prayer Council at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, no matter where you are, you will feel the vibration of healing. It is traveling through all soundless (to the physical ear) vibrations direct to you. This is telepathic healing. It is also very effective when a group concentrates and continuously sends healing mentally, visualizing the healing power flowing into the mind of the patient.

You can use autosuggestion to restore your confidence and to strengthen your will power.

The mind and body are wonderfully related. Many people can be healed just by suggestion, and many can be made ill by suggesting sickness to them. Remember, your mind has grown the different parts of your body. It continues

to supervise the manufacture of body cells, and can vitalize them at the command of your will.

Jesus knew that the universe is the result of God's thought--this seemingly tangible world is nothing more than God's materialized thought. Jesus understood the principle. You may believe in this, but in order to send effective healing thoughts to others you must know how to materialize thoughts in some form. Unless you prepare yourself, you will lose faith in mind power. Your thought should be developed enough so that it can be active.

WILL POWER--STRONG FACTOR IN HEALING No negative influence should be permitted to weaken the will. Will power is your savior, and salvation is no lazy man's job. It is for those who have made up their minds that nothing can prevent them from realizing what they are--deathless souls.

Will controls the energy in the body. It is not the will that heals; but will rouses energy, which is the cause of healing. There is no force more effective than energy applied by will power. Will and energy are the two most effective powers in the system.

If you develop your will power you can then develop healing power, but do not try to heal those who doubt you. Those who ask your help must have faith in you; otherwise, their will is not tuned in with yours. If your will did not function, your ambition would be cut off and you would pine away. So if you want to be a success, never cease cultivating the will. Do not become discouraged at temporary failures; then you will see the power of a persistent will. It is all right to try to heal the body, but do not forget to heal the soul also. True healing must take the person straight to God--you must first realize the soul's identity with Him. When you thus heal the soul of ignorance of its own divine nature, the body will be healed automatically.

NECESSARY PREPARATION FOR HEALING In healing it is necessary to remember that the body is only controlled energy. The same force, will, that governs the body keeps the atoms of the earth together. You must have faith, which is more than mere belief. Will is motivated by faith, but not by belief, because a belief can be contradicted by a contrary phenomenon. Faith is the proof of the existence of things unseen. Knowing and believing are different qualities. Faith is "knowing" through intuitive perception, which occurs when you are one with Truth. What you perceive through your senses you can know about through your intelligence and senses; but how do you know God? He is seen only through the eye of intuition. Real faith is rooted in intuitive realization of Truth or God.

In healing you must first consider the seed and the ground. The seed is the will power of the healer; the ground is the faith of the person to be healed. Unless that person is receptive you will find that it is almost impossible to do anything. You may broadcast a sound to a distant place, but if there is no

receiver it cannot be received. The broadcasting power of the healer plus the receptivity of the person to be healed are both necessary. Seeds do not germinate on stones, nor can good ground produce plants without good seeds. So it is necessary first to put the patient into a receptive mood. Then till the mind with the plow of reason, for the ground is hard. When the ground is soft, plant the seeds of faith, and water them with your divinely attuned will.

Suggestions of disease and heredity have a terribly discouraging influence upon the will of man. Simply saying that will brings energy is not enough. You must feel that energy. Will is a very strong factor. The direct source of energy is reached through will power, and therefore this will must not be discouraged by wrong suggestions. That is why it is always good to keep company with those who have strong wills. Your will, when guided by wisdom, is God's will.

Concentrate with utmost faith, and make your will a bridge with the divine will. Go on willing the patient to be cured, by thinking that God's healing energy, conveyed by your will, is running through his forehead, down his spine, and through his body to the center of the affected area. Do not doubt; do not be curious as to whether the person is cured. Just believe, send forth the healing power, and forget. Do not talk about your efforts or results to skeptics. Never say: "I cured." Always think that the divine will, acting through your human will, cured the disease. Give the whole credit to God's healing power and divine energy.

HEAL BY DIVINE WILL The energy projected by God to bring forth creation is here termed divine will. Human will is a microcosmic aspect of divine will. Divine will is omnipresent, residing in every unit of cosmic energy, or universal prana. Divine will has creative power as well as sustaining power. Disintegration of cosmic energy atoms is constantly taking place in the universe, owing to the constant flux and influx motions of maya (the delusive force of repulsion that repels all creation from its Source). Yet the great force of divine gravitation is constantly pulling all units of energy toward God as the center of everything (force of attraction).

The maya-force, born of the divine will to create, constantly tries to keep creation in existence by the law of repulsion. The collision between the creative force of maya, and the divine gravitational force toward God causes inharmony in the universe. One of the manifestations of this inharmony is called disease. Owing to this disease, or inharmony of soul and body, we are isolated from God. Hence, "disease" is anything that keeps us from God-realization. To harmonize the maya repulsive force projecting outward, and the divine attractive force drawing inward, can be termed "healing." Hence, disease of body, mind, and soul ought to be divinely treated.

God works through will. The human soul is the reflection of God. The human will is the reflection of divine will. Human will is limited in power.

Divine will is unlimited in its power. God's will controls cosmic energy. Therefore, to send energy into the body requires that you harmonize and convert your will into divine will.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

To awaken energy, practice first thing in the morning the Energization Exercises taught in the early Lessons, and give the twenty body parts a break-fast of energy to limber them up. This makes the body a temple of vitality. Then, in this temple of vitality, establish the temple of intuition, peace, and bliss by practicing, for at least fifteen minutes each, the Lessons on concentration and meditation.

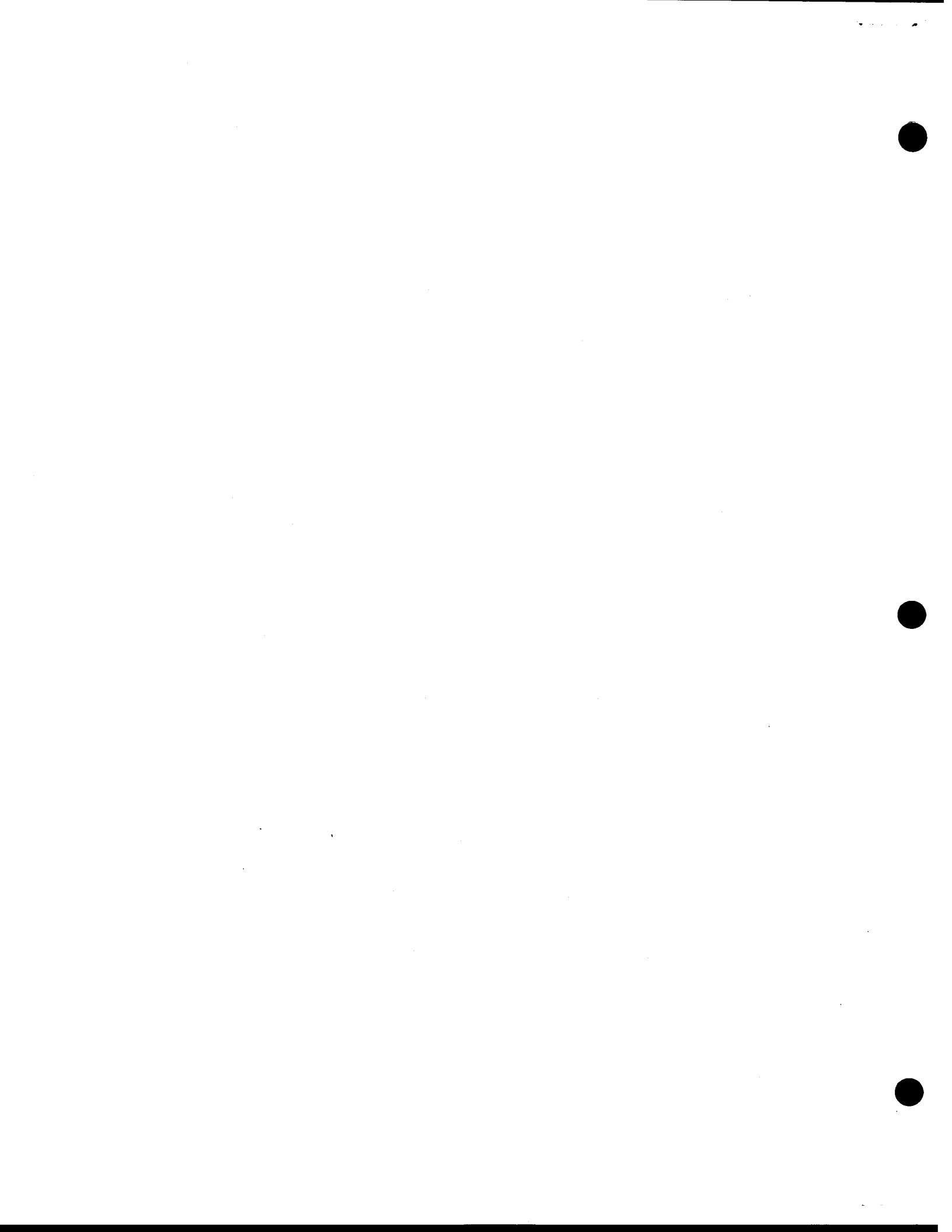
THE SAINT AND THE GREEDY MAN

A saint and a greedy man were eating. The saint said: "I am enjoying this good food," but he ate relatively little. The greedy man, who had never before tasted this delectable dish, ate until he collapsed and died.

The greedy man, having died while filled with desire for the rich food, ~~had to come back to earth again to work out his greed. But the saint, being a~~ man of self-control, could enjoy food without the slavish attachment that brought death to the greedy man. He did not miss the food when he did not have it, because he lived by Spirit. The idea is it is not necessary to renounce everything in order to live spiritually; but it is important to do everything with the thought of God, in the conscious awareness of His presence in all things.

AFFIRMATION

I think my life to flow, I know my life to flow,
 From brain to all my body to flow.
 Streaks of light do shoot through my tissue root.
 The flood of life in vertebrae
 Doth rush through spine in froth and spray.
 The little cells all are drinking;
 Their tiny mouths all are shining;
 The little cells all are drinking;
 Their tiny mouths all are shining.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE BLOSSOMS OF OUR DEVOTION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, in our temple of silence we have made a garden for Thee, decorated with the blossoms of our devotion. Come Thou, O Spirit, into the temple of peace. Make us realize that Thou art ours evermore. We are Thy children of immortality, sent to this earth, moving on the pathway of incarnations; but Father, we have torn our feet on the brambles of sorrow and suffering. We want to go home, back to Thy mansion, where no sorrow reigns, where no poverty dwells, and where death and sickness do not gamble with our lives.

Bless us that we may increase our willingness and intensity of zeal to seek Thee with love for Thee. With the incense of the breeze we worship Thee, our Heavenly Father, who art within our hearts, nearest of the near. We wash Thy feet of eternity with the crystal tears of our persistence. May all the dark corners of our minds be brightened by Thy presence; may our bodies feel Thy vitality; may our souls feel Thy love. Lead us from the oblivion of materiality to the consciousness of Thy presence.

PRAYER

O Heavenly Father, breathe Thine immortality through this mortal frame of mine.

THE WAY TO IMMORTALITY (1)

Truth comes into our consciousness at first like the gentle dew; but through our ever deepening meditation it changes and becomes an oceanic flood, inundating and sweeping away the mire of mortal consciousness. That is why you should follow the truths you have been taught in these lessons. You must realize what you are: a spark of the Divine Being.

Change, though often welcome is not always sure to bring you happiness. One of my first experiences in America showed me that American housekeepers are fond of moving things from one place to another: when I went to get a book from the place where I usually put it, it was gone. For me, at least, the change was not good!

The more pointless or unwise changes you make, the more will be your troubles. Once in a while it is pleasant to swim in the ocean, but if you had to remain on its billowy surface your body would soon be shattered. Similarly, if you are constantly subject to the ups and downs of unnecessary changes, or change for its own sake, you cannot be happy.

The body is of course conditioned to numerous necessary changes; for example, with every step you take, three hundred muscles are put into action. This motor mechanism, which causes the body movements, weighs eighty pounds: sixty pounds of muscle and twenty pounds of bone. You use one hundred and forty-four muscles, besides the muscles of the motor mechanism, in one movement of your arm or leg; and every one of these changes draws energy from the brain, the central storehouse of energy in the body.

Most people naturally become tired from all these changes, because they do not know how to keep the energy in the body. Yet energy is always present there; indeed, the physical body lives on even after the soul's departure at death. If certain portions of the body were put on ice shortly after death, life would remain present in them for many days. Nothing is ever really dead. There is only a difference in rate of the vibrations of life. This difference in vibratory rate creates the opposite appearances we call life and death. You must realize that the same form of life is present in both a living and a so-called dead body.

But why spend so much time looking after the little physical body? The philosopher who understands the infinite nature of his soul is always smiling. In wealth or poverty, health or sickness, life or death, know that you are one with the Changeless Unborn.

Unceasingly repeat to yourself this truth: "I am the Changeless, I am the Infinite. I am not a little mortal being with bones to break, a body that will perish. I am the deathless, changeless Infinite." Do not construe this advice to mean that you should not eat properly and look after the body's real needs. You should take care of all your earthly responsibilities, but without becoming bound by them.

Offer up to God the prayer that will really make you happy: the prayer to realize the infinite nature of your soul. Do not allow your consciousness to be imprisoned in this mortal life. Make your consciousness expand till all the stars throb in your bosom; feel the boundless airs of space within your being, and stretch your muscles all studded with planets. Concentrate upon changelessness, upon realization of your oneness with the Eternal. Day and night the ordinary person is moody or happy, or pleased or indifferent; but no matter what happens in your life, you should always be happy. To do so you must get away from identification with changeful mortal life and reidentify your consciousness with the changeless soul within you.

I am showing you a greater way to freedom. Do not concentrate upon change; and whatever comes to you in life, do not let it affect you. Polish the diamond of soul consciousness, for that will go with you. Make your soul a reality in your life. The way of expansion of consciousness is not to be bothered by material changes. No matter what comes, be happy. Never worry about what you have or do not have. Constant change does not give you happiness.

You will notice that I always take you into the deepest regions of soul perceptions, and bring you back, so that you can connect these depths of thought with your own experience. I want to give you something tangible. I live in the sphere of tangible things, as you do; and I enjoy with divine soul-consciousness everything around me; for from the depths of spiritual perception I behold all creation as immortal--as multifarious projections of God's thought.

HOW THE BODY IS SUSTAINED The body has several grades of changes: growth, retention, chemicalization, and disintegration. All these changes in the body have to be maintained by food. When you cannot eat you think that you will die, but that is not so. Anything that you think you cannot do without, you should get rid of. Do not be bound by habits. You are here on earth to learn to behave like an immortal and not to be too definitely identified with the world. You are neither man nor woman, but a soul. You are above the need for food, if you would but realize it.

You should have a balanced diet, but you should not live entirely on the food plane. You eat because your forefathers did. The body is best sustained by simple foods. Fruits are good for spiritualizing the body. I do not mean that you should not eat any protein; but those who eat too much protein and meats will be kept on the sense plane. Too much food produces greed, which will cause you to be thrown back to this plane of change. We must remember,

when we depart from this life, not to carry any thought of this world into the infinite sphere.

Learn to live more by the direct intake of energy. You are not dependent entirely upon food; and you will find that the farther you advance in the practice of these principles, the less you will need to depend upon food as a source of energy. Your body is vitalized and fed directly by spiritual energy. That is why Jesus said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Remember that your body in reality is a group of materialized thoughts. The rays of the stars, all things, are but differentiations of God's thought. If you tune in with the thought of God and hit the nail of delusion with the hammer of right thoughts of Truth, you can overcome delusion. Destroy all mortal thoughts by substituting a thought of immortality, such as: "I am everlasting youth; I am eternal joy."

REALIZING TRUTH This truth has been sent to you so that you may realize in your own consciousness that you can break the shackles of mortal limitations and be free. The time will come when your body will cease functioning; if only you can quicken your soul not to go back to the material plane, there to be governed by material attractions, it can regain its natural constituent of immortality, and release itself from the mortal consciousness of the earth plane.

If you saw life in only one form you would not see any death; indeed there would be no death. So if you place your concentration on the vast Ocean of life, you won't see the hundreds of millions of people who are living and dying. It is because your attention is on the change, and not on the Object that is causing the change, that you are deluded. When you have a little trouble with the body, you immediately fear that you are going to die. Fear of the change called death is the cause of untold human misery.

If everything about God had been told by the saints, nobody else would make the necessary effort to know God. You must know Him yourself. All the saints are here, even now. You can see them when you develop spiritually. They are just as real to me as you are. So impregnate every cell of your body with the thought of God, through meditation, work, right diet, good actions, and so forth. That is the way to immortality.

In God there is neither life nor death as we see it. The Ocean never dies. The waves change, of course, but even they are immortal, because they are still essentially part of the ocean, whether they remain as waves on its bosom or sink back into the deeps. So is the human body, in this sense, immortal. Everything is immortal; only the forms are mortal, i. e., changing. The form of man is always changing in essence. Why is it that you think of yourself as one day dying? Because your consciousness cannot explain the change. Your

body is changing every day; but when you can retain your consciousness no matter what happens to the body, you will find that you remain the same. So retention of consciousness is the way to immortality. No matter what life brings-- pain, death, disease--if you can say: "I am not afraid," you will conquer. If you can retain your consciousness under all circumstances, you will know immortality. Nothing can kill you. God is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy, and you are made in His image.

Not all the wealth in this world can clothe a human being as God has clothed the lily. Look to God and you shall be clothed with His magnetism. May the light of the Infinite be with you. May you march unfalteringly toward your goal of immortality. We love God together, we drink God together, we shall get all drunk with God. Wherever you go, intoxicate yourself and others with God, God, God!

DEATH AND THE DREAM

Mind is the woof with which the cloth of creation is woven. Mind was frozen into matter. A dream is the temporarily frozen fancy of man. Creation is the comparatively more lasting frozen fancy of God. Without mind, matter, sensation, thought, and feeling, it is impossible to cognize nature. In a dream, the mind plays the part of the material objects as well as the conscious creatures in the dream.

In a dream, the mind materializes itself into the earth, sunlight, flowers, rivers, mountains, glens, oceans, sky, air, fire, ether, and water. In that dream setting of the earth, the mind materializes itself into sentient blossoms, singing birds, and conscious human beings.

While in a dream, you perceive the earth you walk on as different from water in which you swim. You breathe the air, feel the heat of the sun, smell the fragrance of flowers, feel cold and heat, have all kinds of sensations. In a dream you can see a baby born, a person die, someone sick and someone healthy. In a dream, you think, feel, will, hate, love, forgive, or are revengeful, or are happy or sad.

While you are dreaming this dream-existence on this dream-earth, you recognize the relative difference between solids, liquids, gases, water, air, ether, fire, thought, feeling, will, sadness, joy, poverty, prosperity, health, sickness, birth, and death; but upon waking from this earth dream, you see no difference between solids, liquids, gases, ether, thought, birth, death, darkness, light, sadness, and happiness, for they are all only different rates of vibrating mind. Darkness is a thought different from the thought called "light." So birth is a thought different from the thought called "death." Sad thoughts are different from happy thoughts, but sadness and happiness are both differ-

ent rates of vibrating thought. Happiness is soothing thought; sadness is burning thought.

The following story from my autobiography illustrates a point here.

In 1915, shortly after I had entered the Swami Order, I witnessed a strange vision. Through it I came to understand the relativity of human consciousness, and clearly perceived the unity of the Eternal Light behind the painful dualities of maya. The vision descended on me as I sat one morning in my little attic room in Father's Gurpar Road home. For months the First World War had been raging in Europe; I had been reflecting sadly on the vast toll of death.

As I closed my eyes in meditation, my consciousness was suddenly transferred to the body of a captain in command of a battleship. The thunder of guns split the air as shots were exchanged between shore batteries and the ship's cannons. A huge shell hit the powder magazine and tore my ship asunder. I jumped into the water, together with the few sailors who had survived the explosion.

Heart pounding, I reached the shore safely. But alas! a stray bullet ended its swift flight in my chest. I fell groaning to the ground. My whole body was paralyzed, yet I was aware of possessing it as one is conscious of a leg gone to sleep.

"At last the mysterious footstep of Death has caught up with me," I thought. With a final sigh, I was about to sink into unconsciousness when lo! I found myself seated in the lotus posture in my Gurpar Road room.

Hysterical tears poured forth as I joyfully stroked and pinched my regained possession: a body free from a bullet hole in the breast. I rocked to and fro, inhaling and exhaling to assure myself that I was alive. Amidst these self-gratulations, again I found my consciousness transferred to the captain's dead body by the gory shore. Utter confusion of mind came upon me.

"Lord," I prayed, "am I dead or alive?"

A dazzling play of light filled the whole horizon. A soft rumbling vibration formed itself into words:

"What has life or death to do with light? In the image of My light I have made you. The relativities of life and death belong to the cosmic dream. Behold your dreamless being! Awake, My child, awake!"

AFFIRMATION

My body cells are made of light,
My fleshly cells are made of Thee.
They are perfect, for Thou art perfect;
They are Spirit, for Thou art He;
They are immortal, for Thou art living.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAY THY LIGHT DAWN UPON US

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, glorious Father! hear my prayer: that those who are really devoted, those who are really willing to learn these great truths, may find at the end of the trail the supreme goal--Thyself.

O Beauty of all beauties, O Fragrance of roses, O Perfume of kindness, O Strength of our wills, O Intelligence of our reason, O Light of our wisdom, O Love of our devotion, O Life of our life, O Mind of our minds, O Heart of our hearts, O Spirit of our souls! receive the love of our souls. Reveal Thyself more and more in our hearts.

We think of Thee, O sweet Nectar! with all our thoughts. With all our love we think of Thee. With all our remembrance we try to remember Thee. O Beauty of beauties, Beloved of our hearts, reveal Thy face of dauntless immortality and omniscience. May we follow Thee in everything, for Thou art the Guru, the Preceptor, and the Mind that sees all. Thou art the Vehicle; Thou art Everything. Naught else exists, for Thou art all in all. Bless us with Thy consciousness, that Thy light may dawn upon us; that we may know Thou art in us evermore as eternal Joy.

PRAYER

O Heavenly Father, help me to realize that I am the blessed child of sweet Immortality, sent here to play the drama of births and deaths, but always remembering my deathless Self.

THE WAY TO IMMORTALITY--Part 2

MEDITATION
IS THE WAY

What is God like? How can you love someone of whom you know nothing? If I tell you that there is a wonderful soul in South America and that you should love him--even though you have never seen him--can you do it? Can you feel love for anyone whom you do not know? Then how can you love God? Love of God presupposes knowledge of God. To know Him is to love Him, but how are you going to know Him?

Every good thing you have ever yearned for will be fulfilled in the bliss of having God. There is nothing greater than His joy. That is something real. If you know God and love Him, everything else will be added. God can exist without us, but we cannot exist without Him.

When I speak of an orange you know exactly what it is. You should know exactly what God is. Think of the taste of an orange. Probably you know it, but you cannot make me know how sweet it is unless I myself taste a ripe orange.

We know that electricity has power, but electricity does not have the intelligence to get into the bulb. Someone puts it there. God is the seat of intelligence. His intelligence is in everything; the earth and the planets are ruled by it. Everything comes in direct order, being governed by universal intelligence. We see that there is a great deal of intelligence in creation, therefore we conclude that God is universal intelligence.

For example, take the human body. In its separate elements it consists of a handful of chemicals you could buy cheaply in a drugstore. But who combined those elements into a beautiful living body? And why is your nose shaped like a nose, and not as big and cumbersome as a leg? Such things are determined and brought about by that vast, limitless intelligence which underlies everything and governs everything--God.

"Where art Thou? When I behold the flower, I see Thee secretly hidden, everywhere working Thy creation tapestries with the needle of life." God is the busiest of all, and yet He is drunk with His own bliss nature. God is inside everything: in the seed He conceals the design of the flower; through the

beauty of the rose the infinite beauty of God is watching us.

God is Cosmic Intelligence. He separates electrons into different material manifestations: flowers, trees, stars, and so forth. In every aspect of matter is evidence of the originality, the orderly direction and control of that Cosmic Intelligence. Oneness with God, far from being a negation of consciousness, is an expansion of consciousness. Broadly speaking, there are four states of consciousness:

- 1) the state of the ordinary man, in which he is aware only of the world outside himself;
- 2) the state in which the devotee becomes aware of the presence of God within, by meditation and communion with the soul;
- 3) the state of being able to behold God at will either in Nature or within oneself;
- 4) the final state of unbroken oneness with God's consciousness everywhere--nirbikalpa samadhi.

Four veils hide God from us: solids, liquids, gases, and light. Lift those veils and find God everywhere, in everything.

FORM THE HABIT OF MEDITATION To reach God, that is, to actually commune with Him, it is necessary to meditate. As soon as you take away the ripples of sensations from the lake of the mind, God's heavenly bliss bursts forth from the soul. His bliss is already there, but it is hidden within you. The more you meditate the more you will feel the endless joy of God. As soon as the ripples of worldly desires cease to exist, then you will see clearly His mooned face. Meditation brings proof of the existence of God.

Form the habit of meditation. It is the only way to find everlasting happiness of the soul; and when you have that, nothing else matters. The joy God has implanted in the soul is more charming than all the lures of worldly temptation. That is why you should pray: "Father, make me realize Thou art enchanting beyond any earthly temptation. "

The essential thing to remember is that scientific meditation means the withdrawal of life current from the nerves. When you can do that, sensations cannot reach the brain to rouse perceptions and associated thoughts. Concentration and meditation both have two sides: disengaging your attention from objects of disturbance, and putting it on one object at a time. In the beginning you cannot make your attention stay on one thing. After you have attained that state wherein you can control attention (dharana, the sixth of the eight steps of yoga described by Patanjali), you will find that you can accomplish much

in both a spiritual way and in a material way. If at death you can hold on to the state of deep meditation, of soul awareness, you will go consciously and know no change.

GOD IS EVER-NEW JOY What is everyone seeking? Ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy. God exists forever; God is eternally conscious of His existence; and God is ever-new joy. Everyone is seeking happiness; and wants to be conscious of happiness; and wants that happiness to go on forever.

We are all trying to find this ever-existing, ever conscious, ever-new joy; but is there anything like it in Nature? It seems that the joy we seek is buried somewhere in our souls, and can be perceived only when we are calm and undisturbed by any desire. Desire is a condition of disturbance and unrest of thoughts and feelings.

To illustrate with an example:

If you have a pot of water and you disturb that water, you will not get a clear image reflected in its disturbed surface. So when the mind is ruffled by desire for outer things that we believe will make us happy, we lose sight of the happiness that is already within us.

Only meditation yields this ever-increasing, ever-new, responding joy. Sooner or later you will realize that you want a thing only until you get it; then you will start looking for something else. But in discovering soul joy, you will find that "something else" which you were seeking through the labyrinthine ways of desires for false pleasures. You will never tire of this ever-new joy of your soul, which is of God.

My Master said to me: "You will tire of everything else but that joy. If you can realize that God is with you every minute, the sparkling, bubbling, refreshing spring of His joy will be yours. When you attain oneness with this joy in your soul, you know you are divine." The joy that is already within ourselves, we are seeking in possessions, fame, name, money, and position; and we don't find it. We perish in our outward efforts to find happiness. Only the inner effort of meditation brings proof of the existence of joy unfading.

MEDITATE UPON Please sit upright and practice the Hong-Sau Technique.
GOD AS OM By watching the breath you calm the heart, and when
 the heart is calm, the energy withdraws from the senses
and your attention is then free and can be put on anything you desire to concentrate upon. By watching the breath, you attain breathlessness. By watching the breath you separate yourself from it. You realize that life is not dependent on it except in the state of body consciousness. Breath is the cord that ties the soul to the body; when you know how to die daily--that is, to consciously release the energy from the body by untying the cord of breath--you are one with Spirit.

Before you practice the technique of breathlessness given in the Hong-Sau Lesson, affirm:

"I know that breath is the cord that ties my soul to the body. In breathlessness I find my soul free to unite with Thine Omnipresence, both within and beyond my body. The storm of breath causes ripples of sensation and thoughts on the lake of my mind, and I behold a distorted image of Thy presence, O Spirit! Stop the storm of breath. Conjure away ripples of restlessness. Teach me to behold Thy mooned presence in the unruffled lake of my consciousness."

When in deep silence, use the freed attention to meditate upon God as Om. Close your ears to shut out all outer sounds. When you hear the sound of Om, you will distinctly know it from the other astral sounds. (The Om sound is beyond the astral: first are the physical sounds of the body, then the astral sounds, and then the cosmic sounds.) Then pray: "Holy Ghost, be with me. Father, always guide me." Be continually in that consciousness. Through the spiritual eye you can see the whole universe. Vibration is called "Holy Ghost." You cannot reach God without experiencing the three states of consciousness--Holy Ghost, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness.

When you hear the sound of Om oozing out of all atoms, then your consciousness is merged with the universal consciousness. When you hear that sound, ask God to be always with you. Pray for what you need, or pray for God Consciousness.

PRACTICE WITH OPEN EYES Open your eyes, then throw the searchlight of meditation penetratingly through everything around you. Behold yourself a sphere of joy and light as big as your body, then melt your body in it. Forget it. Now, with the power of steady meditation, keep expanding the circumference of this mellow lighted sphere of joy until you melt in it the city, the world, the solar and stellar systems, all space--everything. You are this sphere of light and joy in which all things are melted and in which all things may reappear.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER Spirit is ever-new Bliss, Absolute Consciousness (the Absolute Consciousness that knows only the present tense and is not suppressed or eclipsed by the past or future tenses; He is and He knows that He is) and Immortality (or changelessness--death is change; Immortality is changelessness). We can conceive of the relation in which He may stand to us by searching through all the motives of our actions. We find that we are seeking eternal, ever-new Bliss, immortality, and everlasting consciousness. We are seeking everlasting Bliss, and along with it are automatically seeking immortality and Self-awareness, for, with-

out these, we cannot possess eternal Bliss.

WITH THE CHISEL OF WISDOM, CARVE OUT A LIFE OF BEAUTY

Man, like a woodcarver, works with a chisel of material ambition to mold the substance of his thoughts and energies into various shapes of worldly accomplishments. He uses the chisel incessantly, until it becomes old and worn. As a soul, man can never find true satisfaction merely through possessions and selfish interests.

With the dawn of spiritual ambition, man chooses a chisel of wisdom to mold his life. Only that chisel can shape crude mortal men into holy beings who love God and humbly serve humanity.

My Guru showed me how to use the chisel of wisdom to make myself into a fitting temple to receive God's presence. Each man can do the same, if he follows the precepts of divinely illumined teachers.

AFFIRMATION

O Divine Mother, whether I float on the surface of the present life, or sink beneath the waves of death... I am held in Thine immortal arms.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DIVINE ECHOES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

My freshly cut flowers of mental whispers of devotion I offered in my temple of silence. Those blossoms of love spoke through their silent voice of fragrance their love for Thee.

In the temple of peace at last Thy light hovered over and settled upon the altar of my prayers. Thy invisible veil of secretiveness was burned in the flames of wisdom. And lo, I beheld Thy glory!

Mutely shall I ever worship Thee, with never a whisper of complaint; for I have found in Thee all that I thought I had lost, all that I had so long sought in the forest of time.

Now my roamings will cease, for in Thy face of nature and of inner light I now behold, painted brightly, all the beauties and dreams of my fulfilled ambitions of all incarnations.

On the white altar of my love I shall ever keep for Thee my freshly cut flowers of devotion. The silent song of their fragrance will eternally chant of Thee to the winged winds, until all creation shall ring with divine echoes of Thy name.

PRAYER

Divine Father, teach me to enjoy Thee in Spirit, that I may enjoy the world and my earthly duties with Thy joy. Help me to train my senses so that they may enjoy all good things. Teach me to enjoy earthly pleasures with Thy joy. Teach me to weave Thee into my daily activities.

HOW TO WEAVE GOD INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE

Our aim should be to bring God into our national life, our social life, and our personal life to such an extent that we feel the spring of God's presence flowing continually beneath the fountain of our existence. That should be the intention of every seeker of Self-realization. The question then is how you may serve God in your daily life.

WHY DESIRE TO KNOW GOD? First of all it is necessary to understand why you should want to know God. Those who don't understand say, "See how many people there are who don't think of God at all and they are getting along all right in the world." But are they? The greatest number of suicides is among the wealthy, who are "getting along all right." The trouble is that they use most of their time for the accumulation of money, thinking that it will give them everything they want. When it does not, they become disillusioned. Many times I have gone someplace without money in my pocket, but the Heavenly Father has always supplied my needs.

Jesus said that if one leaves father, mother, and friends, for God, one shall have a hundred times more, and persecution, perchance; but hereafter, everlasting life. I have found that to be true. Everything that I forsook for Him has been given to me again in some form. And I am not waiting for everlasting life, because I feel it in every cell of my body and in every fiber of my thought, now. I am speaking of That which dreams the body--the eternal Spirit. That alone is real.

Like a child, you cry for so many things that you never will find. Why don't you try crying and yearning for God? Of course, a mere show of devotion won't do; He knows what you are thinking. But if you really cry for Him, the Lord will come to you, sometime, without fail.

Everyone of you, in your heart, has some strong desire. Some want to get married, others want money or jobs. Some want healing. Some want to fulfill artistic ambitions. Meanwhile, every day, life is creeping forward. What are you doing besides wishing? Are you progressing spiritually or are you going toward death? Analyze yourself.

WHY SEEK GOD FIRST Again ask yourself: "Why should finding God be my greatest ambition?" Because without Him you cannot fulfill any other ambition. Think of it! Perhaps you will say: "Paramahansaji

is talking of dreams. Today we are busy with new inventions, new pursuits. This is a practical world. "The idea that God is not for this age is not true. I thought the same thing once, but I wish I could show you all the things I have since learned. To him who says that it is not practical to think of God, I would reply: "It is not practical to forget Him." If it were, there would not be so much suffering endured in the world by those who have forgotten Him.

Only when you shall purge from your heart every other ambition except the ambition to know God--when you shall say: "On the throne of my ambition lies only the desire for God"--only then shall you know Him. I can show you that Spirit, without fail, if you will follow me and practice what I teach you. I promise you that, because I have found Him. But God does not wish those who know Him to use miracles to draw other children to Him; you must make your own effort to find Him.

ONLY ONE IS YOURS Those friends and relatives of whom you say, "They are mine!" shall be taken away from you. Seek Him who gave you the power to think, the power to love. You wouldn't be able to think or love or gather knowledge without the power of God. Cultivate His acquaintance. It is possible to know God just as well as you know your dearest friend. That is the truth. Now you are thinking, "Why don't you show Him to me?" Well, if it were God's will that I should do so, I would; but He has decreed that you find Him for yourself. I can only show you the path to follow and the techniques by which you can overcome obstacles.

Those whom you think are your own, are yours because of the Divine Mother. When your mother or sister or wife says, "Come and eat your dinner," it is the Divine Mother who has taken form to serve you. How much more you should love your Divine Mother! So shy! She lets you think that your visible mother loves you, while it is really Her love which is being expressed. Your human mother could never have loved you if she were not an atom of the omnipresent Divine Mother.

So it is with other relationships. It is the Heavenly Father that you see in the mortal father. She whom you call "My wife, my love," is not your wife. It is the Divine Spirit that has taken the form of the beloved to offer love unto you. He whom you call your servant is not your servant. It is the Divine Spirit taking the form of the servant to serve you. He whom you call your friend is not your friend. It is the Divine Spirit expressing through your friend.

Then why do you look up to God in the clouds? He is so near--so real. He receives your kind thoughts and returns kindness and love through your companions. And so I feel His love and service through my disciples and students. Who gives me love, who gives me attention, who gives me service? Only God, through them. What if God switched off the life current from these loved ones? They would be sitting like statuettes, neither heeding nor caring for you or for me.

So why look above for Him? God is right here. Why should you try to find

Him? Because He loves you more than anybody. He loves you more than your father, mother, or beloved because He gave them to you. He is the beloved; He is the father and the mother. If you should die and be buried, and then be reborn in the house right next to your old one of the former incarnation, will your former father and mother recognize you? No. But God knows and loves you through thousands of incarnations. To love any being without loving God is meaningless, but to accept the love of family and friends as part of the love of God makes it so real! In my heart I love everybody. Why? Because I see God in all. God is expressing Himself in the soil, in the metals, and in the flowers. God calls to you and says, "Right behind the petals I am hiding." God is right here. Why do you think of the flower as apart from God? I see it as God--I see every human being as God. If you have this realization you cannot dislike anyone. If you once saw God in some form, or experienced Cosmic Consciousness for even a moment, then you would love everybody. It is a strange experience. It makes you love everybody just as your own family.

When I returned to India and saw the people among whom I was born, I could not see that they were any different from anybody else. I thought I would find that my family was my own, but it was not so. I saw that every person was my relative. I felt that the whole world was mine. I did not exclude my family but I found that inside and outside the family circle the relationship was the same. It is a wonderful life when you have that expanded consciousness. Such joy comes to your heart in seeing people and in serving them. That is why you should love God. It is because most people do not consciously serve Him that the world is full of suffering.

You must realize that you came to this earth alone and you will leave it alone. The only One who accompanies you is God. He is serving you all the time. God made the sky and the sun and the moon--everything that we use in life, He made. That is why you should love God. And when you die--when your family says goodbye and your nation and earth are left behind, then God alone is with you. Why shouldn't you love Him? God will be with you when all things else shall forsake you, if you will only love Him now. Having Him you shall have eternal protection.

HOW BIG IS YOUR FAMILY? In time you will learn that counting on the changing material world is folly. When, while visiting India, I saw all the things that I used to do, I was absolutely disillusioned. I couldn't find joy in those things any more. I went to my old school, and in my mind I could see all my old playmates. But the old friends were gone, and the new students did not recognize me. Yet God had not failed me! I saw Him everywhere.

People have married and lost their love. People have attained success, and then lost their money. There is only disappointment in store for those who follow such paths. So I forsook the way of the crowds, and in meditation tried to find the answer to the mysteries of existence. Such joy I found, such happiness, such truth! You can taste it also. But you cannot find it quickly by yourself. You must find the right teacher, and the right teaching. The right teaching is

here. Follow it. I am telling you of the way that I found. What assurance, when you see heaven open within yourself!

For there is a heaven, and it is composed of "many mansions" or astral planes. Just as there are myriad sounds going on in the world, some of which we can hear only by means of radio, so behind the ether of the conscious mind God is hiding with all the saints. But you must tune in. Every restless thought is static. If your radio is out of order you cannot get the program of God. This, I have often told you. So practice the methods, don't just try them out. Why spend so much time on other things, which are useless? Why not try to know God? That is really worthwhile to you. It is an injustice to God to imagine that He planned life to be full of hunger, sickness, and disappointment.

TIME AND EFFORT ARE REQUIRED There are some who are trying to sell heaven just as if it were a patent medicine. They have the nerve to tell you that you can find heaven in a few minutes. No one can give you God Consciousness that way. If that had been possible, Jesus Christ would have given it to everybody. Instead, he said, "The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few." The harvest of spirituality is plenteous but few are the laborers who make the effort to find that realization. Those who come and tell you that you can know God through some magic formula--and all this in a minute--lie to you. You cannot know about Him without your own effort, without expanding your own meditative consciousness.

Spiritual truth cannot be found by proxy. You have to use your own brain. On the other hand, many seek but they don't find God because they have no one to point out the way. But through faith in the Heavenly Father they will find the way. The Heavenly Father is your eternal heritage. The kingdom of the Father is your own. You now know the way, and if you will but try you will succeed. By finding Him you can find everything.

The certificate of the Father's approval means everything, and in your consciousness you know whether or not you have that. And if you haven't reached Him consciously then you haven't found that, so beware of becoming self-satisfied. Keep seeking and you will find Him and obtain it. It is better to spend the flesh to buy Bliss in eternity than to enjoy the flesh and forget eternity. Everyone can find God, and He is Bliss. How can you find Him? First of all you must continually keep in mind the reasons you should seek God. Remember that money gives only temporary release, health gives only temporary joy. But when disease has come, and when doctors are of no further help, what do you feel? You rebel against the world then; and if you have not contacted God, you fear the time when you will drop into the unknown.

You may think, "Well, If Jesus Christ was so great why doesn't he talk to me and advise me? If Krishna was so great why doesn't he appear any more?" Still, in your heart, you know these Avatars didn't tell lies. Since they spoke of immortal life they exist today. In fact, in every generation there are some

devoted disciples who hear and see them. But as yet you don't know how to get in touch with them. All those who have gone before are just behind the ether, but you don't know yet how to attune your consciousness with them. Pursue the path of Self-realization and you shall be able to contact them.

TWO WORTHY AMBITIONS The first thing is to forget many desires. You should have only two real ambitions. The first is to know God, and the second is to play your part on earth as His perfect child. If you know God then you will play your part well, and vice versa. If you do your part well only when it is a pleasant one, you have gained little. If you don't even try to play your part right then you have accomplished nothing. Yet, many are drunk with oblivion of truth, drunk with maya (delusion), drunk with sorrow. The flesh is tender and weak. All these errors and frailties are yours. The only way to get rid of every suffering is to find God. So the first thing is to continually remind yourself of all the reasons you want God-realization. Jesus and other Avatars have said so, St. Francis said so, my Master said so, and I am telling you: God is the only Reality.

Why do you so often insult God by your indifference? He who loves you--He who never punishes you for forgetting Him, but gives you life just the same. Instead, while you are playing the part He has assigned you, try to gain His attention and approval.

WAYS TO FIND HIM Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you the highest path. You have received in these Lessons concentration and meditation techniques which, when practiced correctly and with ever-deepening devotion, can surely lead you to God Consciousness. Therefore why make life so complicated? Why not make life simple and try out my recipe for living? Every night, before going to bed, meditate until you feel that your mind has gone beyond the static of your thoughts. Yet even that is not enough. After interiorizing the mind, then pour out your devotion. You must surrender yourself completely to God. Then suddenly you will feel, "I've reached Him!" A great light will appear, or suddenly you may see a figure, or be aware of a delightful fragrance, and then you will know that God has manifested. And not only that, but you will better understand the meaning of everything that happens in your life. That is the proof of your experience. Or perhaps, while you are meditating, peace will envelop you. Then if you keep on, suddenly all thoughts will be gone and a great joy will come upon you. Some students give up before they reach that state--millions of people don't even know of it. And beyond these states there is even greater joy.

Now I shall tell you another way by which you can find God. If you put aside all other desires you can find Him. Every day when you are walking or working or waking from sleep, have but one desire in your heart, to know Him. This will not interfere with your duties; in fact, you will be able to perform them better. Just say, "I want to be a success at my work," and then work, but constantly retain your desire for Him at the back of your mind, just as the eager

lover remembers the beloved. Then, at night, meditate. You shall succeed. Continuous desire for Him will bring an answer.

It is also necessary to eradicate certain character faults before you can succeed. You can't love God and be unkind to your associates. You can't love God and be full of wrath. You must keep His commandments. And remember, above all, there is one which you must keep. Love God with all your heart. Most people love God when they want something from Him. But no matter what you are doing you must think of Him and love Him with all your heart, and mind, and strength. To love God with all your mind means to give Him your attention no matter what you are doing. You must own your mind--that is, you must be able to govern your thoughts. You cannot give your mind to God unless you have learned, through concentration, to bring your mind under your control.

Then love God with all your strength--that is the most satisfactory way of all, and is where the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship come in. It is done by switching off the life force from the senses. You do that every night unconsciously, but now you must learn to do it consciously. Only then can you know God. The kingdom of heaven is right here. Why shouldn't you take advantage of it by learning to enter at will? Then, when you know God, He will come in any guise you prefer. Until you have accomplished this, don't stop. Be serious about finding God. Through these teachings you will be able to find God if you want to pay the price in perseverance and sacrifice. If you do this, you shall find that I have been truthful with you. For I have made the effort for a long, long time, and I have traveled this path. It is not always easy, but it can be done.

Every little throb of your consciousness is part of Spirit, part of God, for it is Spirit which has become the throb of your consciousness. On the lotus leaf of your life is trembling the dewdrop of God's Consciousness. Realize that! Find the connection between the dewdrop and its Infinite Source and you shall find Him. Only by complete surrender can you make God answer. He is very humble. Only in humbleness can you find Him.

MEDITATION EXERCISE During your next meditation period practice the following exercise. If you concentrate earnestly on each thought expressed, and visualize the different states described, you will find this consciousness-expanding meditation will raise your thought from the physical through the astral to the ideational plane.

EXERCISE Sway gently forward and back three times, saying: "O Cosmic Consciousness, sustainer of my body, I bow to Thee." Then sit erect. Tense and relax the body several times as you silently affirm: "O Cosmic Consciousness, make me aware of the macrocosmic physical cosmos in which the microcosmic cosmos of my little body is included. Make me feel that I am the Cosmic Consciousness which is in both the vast cosmos and this little body." Meditate on this.

Now, forget the physical cosmos. Feel that your body is made of light, because it is composed of nothing but electrons. Feel that everything is light. Say to yourself: "I am light. The whole astral cosmos is my body, in which the Cosmic Consciousness is glittering and twinkling." Meditate on this.

Now dismiss this thought of light. Think of your body as an idea; the earth is just an idea; everything is only an idea in God's mind. Say to yourself: "I exist only in idea. I am the Cosmic Ideational Universe in which my little body is included, and the Cosmic Consciousness is twinkling in this vast body of Ideational Cosmos and in this little idea body." Meditate on this.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER Material man is inclined to be shortsighted, and only look for things that are disillusioning, forgetting those things that are imperishable. Because of the limitations of the body, you are in the habit of wishing for things that are limited. Instead, you should strive for things that are lasting: wisdom and happiness through Self-realization.

If you succeed in this primary duty, you will then be ready to perform your secondary obligation in life, which is to do your best to bring other prodigal sons of God back to their spiritual home. Awaken souls, relieve them from ignorance; throw the current of love and draw them back to God. There is no other work that pleases God more than to bring your erring brothers back home through your example. But first you must acquire the pearls of wisdom. Then, as you wear them, their gleaming will give light and joy to others. That is the way of Bliss.

AFFIRMATION

Divine Mother, Thou art invisible, yet Thine energy flows through the rays of sunshine. My veins are filled with Thine invisible rays, making me strong and tireless. As the sun shines in the busiest streets, I behold Thy rays of protecting love in the crowded places of my life's activities.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TERRORS OF MUNDANE DELUSION ARE BUT DREAMS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Wrapped in the blanket of earthly hopes, I slept long. I dreamt that I was sitting on a throne; my face held a bouquet of smiles. It soon withered; one by one the petals of merriment dropped.

Then I beheld myself in rags, lying on the jagged stones of poverty. In the unrelenting grip of adversities I sobbed bitterly. My tears fell unheeded; the world passed me by in mocking silence.

My heart wailed for Thy help. Moved by the spiritual force of my unceasing pleas, Thou didst waken me at last. In joy I found myself secure in Thee, beyond the reach of bewildering dualities.

Mayest Thou awaken all other men from the world dream of smiling opulence and crying poverty. Deliver them, O Maker of Dreams! from ugly nightmares of death. Revive in them the consciousness of immortality. Bless them, that by unbroken calmness they realize the terrors of mundane delusion are but dreams.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine King, I am no longer a slave serving my fears of possible losses. I have nothing to lose. I am enthroned in perennial satisfaction.

OVERCOMING FEAR AND FAILURE THROUGH DETERMINATION

Fear is actually a mental poison, except when it is used as an antidote for rash recklessness. Then it serves as a spur to calm caution. Fear develops a malignant magnetism by which it draws to itself the objects feared, just as a magnet draws a piece of iron, and thus increases our miseries. Fear intensifies and magnifies our physical pain and mental agonies a hundredfold, and is destructive to the heart, nervous system, and brain. It paralyzes mental initiative, courage, judgment, common sense, will power, and the sense-to-avert-danger consciousness. Fear contaminates strong imagination and feeling, and through them may so influence the subconscious mind as to completely vanquish the willing efforts of the conscious mind. Fear throws a veil on intuition, shrouding the almighty power of your natural confidence that springs intuitively from the all-conquering soul.

UPROOT FEAR AND
FAILURE THOUGHTS

Failures and successes remain deep-rooted in the three minds of one life--unless worked out by fruition or weeded out by wisdom. They keep accumulating, and at death travel beyond the grave and are carried into one's next life as seed tendencies. Though generally hidden in the beginning of the new life these seed tendencies from the past manifest themselves when favorable germinating conditions arise. (All the successes and failures and troubles of many, many lives are packed as seed tendencies in the brain through which your present consciousness, subconsciousness, and superconsciousness are expressing.)

Hundreds of ghosts of stubborn conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds are silently standing behind the spectral gloom of your present three minds, encouraging you with bursts of inspiration or discouraging you with explosions of depression. This is the reason why so many people, in spite of conscious efforts, do not succeed as well as they want. Though scientists call these "unchangeable, congenital, prenatal, hereditary tendencies," this explanation is limiting and unsatisfying.

When you are threatened with the possibility of injury, do not throttle your all-producing inner machine of consciousness with mental fear. Rather, use your fear as a stimulus to manipulate your inner machine of consciousness to produce some mental device that will instantaneously remove the cause of fear. These mental devices to escape fear are so numerous that they

have to be specially manufactured in the all-accomplishing machine of consciousness according to the specific and extraordinary needs of an individual. So when you are threatened by danger or any hurtful experience, do not sit idly. Do something calmly, do something quickly, but do something, mustering all the power of your will and judgment. Will power is the steam or motive power that works the machine of activity.

Fear of failure or sickness is cultivated by turning over such thoughts in the conscious mind until they become rooted in the subconscious and finally in the superconscious. Then the superconsciously and subconsciously rooted fear begins to germinate and fill the conscious mind with fear plants that are not so easy to destroy as the original thought would have been, and these eventually bear their poisonous, death-dealing fruits.

If you are unable to dislodge by conscious will a haunting fear of ill health or of failure, keep on diverting your attention by reading interesting books that absorb your attention; or even indulge in harmless amusements. Then the mind will forget to haunt itself with fear. Next make your mind take up the shovels of different mental devices and dig out from the soil of your daily life the root causes of failure and ill health.

Uproot them from within by forceful concentration upon courage, and by shifting your consciousness to the absolute peace of God within. When you are able psychologically to uproot the negative quality of fear, then divert your attention to getting busy on positive methods of acquiring prosperity and health.

FEARLESSNESS-- Associate with healthy and prosperous people who
A CARDINAL VIRTUE do not fear sickness or failure. There is a deep-seated karmic reason for chronic ill health and repeated failures. Idlers do not succeed either, and the self-indulgent suffer for their pleasure, as they gradually transform their bodies into pits of hidden, hibernating disease germs. So avoid association with these types.

To an unseeing materialist, a disease might appear to be inherited--just the result of a physical law of cause and effect, or hereditary contagion. A medical doctor is heard to say that the father or grandfather had tuberculosis, and that is the reason that the son has it. But a spiritual doctor, who traces the deeper causes of chronic diseases and other apparently unjust suffering, finds that certain so-called hereditary diseases are not transmitted from one to another because of physical or mechanical reasons. Rather, a disembodied soul carrying a tubercular tendency is attracted to a family where there is tubercular infection.

Of course, tuberculosis can be produced in a healthy body when there is no karmic tendency, by disregarding physical and hygienic laws. No person, however healthy, prosperous, or good can be sure of his behavior or future experiences unless he has destroyed all the insidious germ seeds of wrong

tendencies of past lives. Sterilizing the brain cells of all germs of failure, sickness, and different undesirable tendencies is by no means easy. Like some physical diseases that eat into the system, the rootlike evil effects of past actions remain and spread, through the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds of not only one life, but many lives.

Do not fear accidents or disease if you have had them once; rather fear to be afraid, for fear may bring repeated accidents or recurrent disease, whereas fearlessness will in all probability avert them, or at least neutralize their power.

DEATH--DELIVERER Do not fear to die, for death is a deliverer. When
NOT TYRANT death comes, the cause of fear will be removed.
When suffering is intense, death delivers us from
all pain and mental suffering. Death is the inner physical, mental, and
spiritual anesthetic that relieves one from all pains for a period immediately
following mortality.

Kill fear by knowing that you are protected behind the battlements of God's eternal presence whether you are in a castle or on the open battlefield of life, where bullets of trials are incessantly flying. His all-powerful rays can evaporate the menacing clouds of doomsday, calm the waves of trials, and keep you safe even if you are tossing on a sea of suffering, or death is dancing at your door. But remember, without God's protection, your prosperity, health, and life are not safe, even though you are in a scientific, hygienic castle of opulence surrounded and made impregnable by trenches, and fortified by all the fire-emitting guns of man.

No matter how impossible of accomplishment his objective may appear, the man of volition never stops repeating conscious acts of determination as long as he lives. The evolution of this great force should be carefully studied.

When fear comes, tense and relax; exhale several times. Switch on the electricity of calmness and nonchalance. Let your whole mental machinery wake up and actively hum with the vibration of will. Then harness the power of will to the cogwheels of fearless caution and continuous good judgment, which in turn must be made to revolve continuously and produce mental devices for escaping your specific impending calamity.

SHORT STORY OF SUCCESS

There are some people who go from one job to another without becoming interested in any. That is not the way to success. You must choose the work that you want and then go after it. One day a man came to me and said that he couldn't seem to get ahead. I said: "Do your work so well that your employer cannot get along without you. Do not be like the employee who works, all the time looking at his watch, and waits for the end of the day to come so he can

go home. That way you will never succeed. Take anything that you work at as your own heart interest. Efficient people are wanted everywhere."

You must always strive to get ahead, but never infringe upon the rights of others. Once in Boston, when the sidewalks were jammed with people coming home from work, I said to myself: "Thousands are walking ahead of me, but I am determined to be the first to get to my destination. I must be at the head of this crowd. If there is a little opening anywhere, I shall go through it."

And so, wherever there was a space I slipped through until I got to the head of the procession of people. Then, after the great thrill of having succeeded, I said: "All right, now all of you can go along." All I did was take advantage of my opportunity. I only went through where I saw a vacant space. I did not try to push anyone out of his place.

STAGES OF SUCCESS

Remember that the stages of success are:

- 1) choice of good material or spiritual vocation that suits you;
- 2) performance of that work with attention, love, and interest;
- 3) continued interest and superhuman patience;
- 4) the thought of constant progress, while acting patiently, must be used to neutralize the results of mechanical habit;
- 5) perseverance to reach the kingdom of success. All deserters, all quitters, all unsuccessful discontented ones are either ignorant of this law or consciously violate it.

Remember that any opportunity in life is your own creation, and does not come by chance. It is either created now or was created sometime in the near or distant past, by yourself. If you see no opportunity now, create one by your will, which is divine will, and that opportunity will come to you. It never comes of itself or through "good luck." Say to yourself: "I will do everything myself with my own will, which is a reflection of divine will in me."

Whenever you want anything, cultivate the consciousness of the fact that the Divine Spirit is your own Father and is the owner of the whole universe along with all its wealth and abundance, and that you, being His beloved child, have the absolute right to possess anything, even as He does. Never beg for anything, but hold the thought that you have everything, and that all you have to do when you want anything is to take it, seize it with infinite, natural confidence as the child of God. Do not be a beggar, but realize that you are a child of the Emperor of the universe.

Take a spiritual or material desire and float it in the Cosmic Vibration that you hear and feel in deep meditation. That desire will be realized if you are in conscious contact with Cosmic Vibration. But, above all, try to have

one desire: "To contact God always, in everything," and relate this supreme desire again and again to the Cosmic Vibration. Having Him, you will have everything.

You may be a person of concentration and will power and still when you dive deep into the sea of problems you may not find the pearl of success at all. There are many persons who although they have powerful concentration do not know where to strike for success. Brilliant people with efficient minds also have starved, or have had only meager success. This is where another factor in acquiring prosperity comes into consideration: Learn to seek the success of others in working for your own highest achievements.

Do you know that you have been using only five or six percent of your attention in your vocation? You ought to use one hundred percent concentration in doing your work henceforth. All good work is God's work, if you perform it with divine consciousness. Only work done with a purely selfish motive is material. In earning money, always think that you are doing so for your fellow beings, even though you have no family. Destroy the false division between material and spiritual work.

Be in love with your present work, but do not remain contented forever with what you are doing now. You should progress--try to be the very best in your profession. Express the limitless power of soul in anything you take up. Every position you hold in life will be the stepping stone to a higher one if you strive to climb upward. You must constantly create and produce new successes and not become a business automaton. All work is purifying if done with the right motive. To say that you have no job is error. Shake the whole world to find your work, and don't give up until you find it.

Success is for the hardworking man. Success is for the man of creative ability. Success is for the man who knows how to economize. Success is for the man who asks views of financial experts before he invests his money. Success is for the man who tries harder to make money after each failure. Success is for the man of incessant working ability. Success comes to the man of character. Success comes to the man of regularity. Success comes to the man who seeks for more with dissatisfied satisfaction--does not rest on his laurels. Success comes to the man who performs little accomplishments well. Success comes to the undaunted rational plunger. Success comes to the man who advertises his business rightly and sells the best articles. Success comes to the man who spends less than his income and not more. Success comes to those who make money by making others more prosperous. Success comes to those who spend for God's work with as much spontaneity, naturalness, and pleasure as they do for themselves or for their own families.

AFFIRMATION

The king of the universe is my Father. I am the prince-successor to all His kingdom of power, wealth, and wisdom.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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O FAIRY SONG OF LOVE EVERLASTING!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I tune the harpstrings of my heart to play an old
song newly--the story of my first-born love.

O Spirit, I would offer Thee fresh notes from
the virginal soul; original variations on the change-
less theme of my adoration.

My hymn waves dance to the cosmic rhythms of
Thine Ocean and float me on billows of bliss to Thy
terminal shores.

O Lullaby of the Sea Serene! ever croon to me
thy devotion chant to the Divine Eternal Mother.

O Fairy Song of Love Everlasting! rock me in
thy cradle of melody and bring me sleep on Her
bosom of peace.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Spirit, reveal Thyself to me as Om, Om, the call to prayer of the cosmos. May I be conscious of my augmented being in the vast cosmic body of Nature.

HIGHER VIBRATION AND OCCULT PERCEPTION (1)

LAW OF VIBRATION Intelligent vibration creates and guides the universe. Vibration means motion--any kind of motion. Unless vibration has rhythmic intelligence to guide it, it becomes disturbing. Intelligence itself is vibration, and consists of various forms of thought. Thoughts are separated from each other by their different rates of vibration; without this relativity of vibration it would not be possible to cognize any vibration in the universe.

Everything in creation has its own particular rate of vibration. If two waves move side by side, there is harmony, but if one wave strikes another, there is a conflict of forces. In your life you should avoid contradictory vibrations in order to live harmoniously. The vibrations of one's physical surroundings should harmonize with the vibrations of the physical being. The harmonious man should have harmonious vibrations of color, form, and so forth, around him.

Different rates of vibration, balanced in the cosmic rhythm, produce before us the majestic cosmos. As the sun holds the planets and stars around it by its great magnetic force, so our ego binds our thoughts and cells together. If this ego has left the body (as in death), or is inactive during prolonged unconsciousness, all the thoughts will vanish from the body, the strings of life forces will be burst asunder, and the cells will begin to decay.

VIBRATION IN RELATION TO PEOPLE In relation to people, how do you know when you get good vibrations or bad vibrations from them? First of all, there is a "feeling." Some people do not realize the difference between real vibrational differences and mental judgment. You must keep a very kind feeling within your heart at all times--a feeling that is absolutely unprejudiced. That feeling can judge better than all the intelligence in the world.

The best way to know what kind of vibrations people radiate is to watch the microphone of your feelings, right in your heart. It is the most sensitive instrument of all. For accurate results, however, you must be free from any attraction to the opposite sex, and from any feelings toward others of attraction or repulsion. A neutral state of consciousness is necessary. When you can use that microphone of pure feeling, which does not judge from prejudice and emotion, then you have developed spiritual sensitivity. The spiritually

sensitive man loves everyone. You naturally love those who are dear to you, and you must learn to give that kind of love to the whole world. In the soil of your heart the seeds of love are growing; cultivate those seeds with the water of universal love and universal sympathy. As soon as you love all people with the intensity of the love that you have for your family, then you are expressing divine love. The whole purpose of loving is to develop that kind of love. Universal love is trying to vibrate through you, but attachment, limitations, and concentration on the senses hinder the free expression of that universal love.

You can also sense the general vibratory rate of the body, mind, and soul of another person. An ill person has negative, inharmonious body vibrations, and he should reject them. If you live with sick people all the time, they tend to make you sickness-conscious. You must be stronger than the thoughts and suggestions constantly vibrating from other people. That is the way to conquer wrong vibrations that come into your environment.

Some people vibrate nervousness; some, temper; and some, cruelty. Other people have no will; the minute you meet them you feel their spinelessness. Some people vibrate kindness and you love them immediately. You must always keep in tune with positive high vibrations in your heart.

Even in foods God creates harmony of color, and when you cook foods too much, you destroy these colors. In this way you contradict the harmonious vibrations of foods, so that they become inharmonious. In eating, in arranging furniture, and so on, you must have harmony. Cheerful colors always create happiness in the mind. Some colors are soothing, while others are irritating.

VIBRATIONS OF THOUGHT AND REASON Vibrations of thought are so powerful that if you live in the same building with persons who have wrong thoughts, their wrong vibrations will affect you unless you are powerful enough to protect yourself. If you have a very powerful good vibration of your own, you do not need to be concerned about people who have wrong vibrations.

Then there are vibrations of reason. There should be a balance of feeling and reason if you want to be happy. That can come only by surrounding yourself with vibrations of kindness and intelligence. Not only do you get vibrations from outside, but you must create the right kind within yourself. What you need is a complete balance between the vibrations of reason and feeling. You must be ready to feel everything that is around you, and yet you must be able to estimate everything according to its real value at the same time. That is why the combination of man and woman on a spiritual plane is very good, for then they combine pure feeling and pure reason. As one meditates deeply and unites soul with Spirit, this balance of pure reason and pure feeling is expressed in the highest degree.

SOUL VIBRATION A strong soul vibration is evident when a person is

always conscious of being with God; and when you are with such a person, you feel the presence of God. That is the vibration to carry with you wherever you go, so that whoever comes in contact with you may forget all but the power and love of God. Try to be the clear crystal through which the sunlight of God's presence may reflect to all mankind. This kind of vibration gives joy to you and at the same time it burns away all evil. The vibration of God is the most intelligent of all and produces perfect harmony. When you let that vibration pass through you, all other vibrations become harmonious within you. That is why Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all else shall be added unto you."

The God that I perceive is as real--more real--than all this human panorama. By constantly desiring that my eyes should be opened, I received Him. I had closed my eyes to Him, but through unswerving determination and constantly trying to surround myself with harmonious vibrations within and without, through regular meditation, my eyes were opened and I saw Him templed everywhere.

So remember this: develop a fine sensitivity. After you meditate deeply, then use that perception and the sum total of the feeling that you have after meditation, and concentrate that feeling in the heart. Then it will give you power to radiate good vibrations and to absorb good vibrations, and it will also give you wisdom.

Some bacteria experience in two hours what it takes us years to feel. They are born, give birth, and die within two hours. Scientists also are studying life in the electron and the atom. This short span of life that we have is but a wink of eternity and from the standpoint of time we are just like the bacteria. With every wink of God, a life span of one hundred years passes away. So, do not waste your time. Do not be controlled by your desires. Do not allow yourself to do anything that you should not do. Be the master of yourself. If you know that you are master within yourself, nothing else matters. Every minute is a link between you and God. So you should not waste your time here on earth, but learn now to be master of yourself.

Dispel all inharmonious vibrations from your life by meditating regularly. In deep communion, God comes as ever new Bliss. The God of the clouds, the God of the moon and the sun, the God who is templed in all creation is within you and manifests as peace. Learn to love Him as the peace and bliss of meditation. May the Om vibration, conjoined with the music of the spheres, dispel all your darkness and bring joy and understanding in your heart.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The superman, by withdrawing life and energy from his body into the spine

and brain, can expand them and project them into all space, thus actually feeling the presence of all universes and every atom of the earth in his own consciousness. In the superman, the lost omnipresence of Spirit is found in the soul, or individualized Spirit.

Jesus, through Christ Consciousness, by the expanding power of love and the spreading power of meditation, was able to extend his consciousness throughout all the regions of vibratory space. That is what is meant by Jesus' being full of the Holy Ghost. He was not possessed by a ghost, but his consciousness was expanded fully from the region of the human body vibration to the region of the cosmic vibration. Jesus, the man, a speck of the earth, became Jesus, the Christ, with his consciousness pervading all vibration through the finite universe.

Omnipotent Spirit becomes buried in matter and vibration, just as the oil remains hidden in the olive, and can be released again only through love and meditation. When the olive is squeezed, tiny drops of oil appear on its surface, so Spirit tries to squeeze its way out of matter as the souls of gems, beautiful minerals, plants, animals, men, and supermen.

THE DREAM STORY OF DIVINE LOVE--Part 1

The spring of love lay hidden somewhere in the sky panes or in the depths of the measureless blue. The fountains of love lay unformed in the mass of molten feeling-flame somewhere in the vast breast of Omnipresence. The elixir of love secreted itself somewhere in the dark black jar of our unknowing, ready to be poured into the mouth of our satiety-parched senses.

Is love the fragrance hidden in the multicolored beauty bottle of all nature? Who made love, who dreamed love, who first thought of love so intangible--so intoxicatingly beautiful? Is love made in the factory of Spirit or is it produced in the mechanisms of human hearts? Was love breathed into souls by Spirit? Is love the flower which grows in the plants of two or more blended souls? Did love lie like a hidden seed in the soil of hearts, ready to grow into blossoms of family, social, patriotic, and human love, or is love the product of the factory of our interacting soul-revolving feelings?

In the heart of Spirit lay divine love--latent, undefined, unexpressed, unused. So He burst His heart, and squeezed it into countless sparks that it might fly out from its bottled existence and express itself. Thus out of the center of eternal Heart the love-corded star sparks sprang out to swim as the family of stellar systems and solar systems, as flame mists, and as planet vapors. Then His divine love became divided into many forces. It is His love which holds the starlets in the stellar system together. It is His love which acts as the mutually holding magnetic forces. The sun by its magnetic

divine love keeps the earth from swimming away in space, and the earth loves the sun with its own love and keeps its separate individuality within the circle of the sun's magnetic love boundary.

Love was born in the balance-creating mutual pull of planets in the force of harmony, otherwise the earth would have lost itself in the burning love of the sun. God bound the stellar systems, solar systems, and island universes with the greater love of His harmony, lest they collide and destroy one another, and start disastrous fires burning the peaceful blue forest of space, and menacing the living inhabitants of all ether.

The earth, by the gentle attracting motherly love force of gravity, holds her children--smiling blossoms, grave mountains, boisterous bounding oceans, buxom winds, restless plumed birds, and humans--from falling off her soft cloddy breast. The music of gravity is borrowed divine love of the earth, which holds together the scenic beauties dancing in rhythm with the earth around the solar God.

All these beautiful planet children went out of God to play the cosmic play in the tract of space harmony. But when these children planets remain truant too long, playing in space, forgetful of the bosom home of God, He calls back the outgoing sparks; and the planets race headlong to come home and sleep in His bosom of calm dissolution.

The sea loved to send the servant storm to play with its "children" waves. But when the big waves begin to fight too much with the little waves, the storm is called off and billows are made to vanish in the chamber of calm--hidden in the sea breast. Similarly, life-tossed waves of living forces, heaving and playing over the ocean spaces, are called back to the home of eternal rest. Divine love is the force expressed in the balance, created by the magnetic force which keeps stellar systems and floating universes swimming in eternal rhythm.

The invisible eyes of Omniscience opened up into countless fiery-eyed planetary globes of love and peered through dark spaces, inviting brother stars to join the festivity of the first emerging finite expressions of cosmic love. Love of God flowed through their planetary eyes. The planets, by their hypnotic eyes of fiery love, held one another in the balance of infinite attraction. So the living space fires formed little groups and started the cosmic dance of outwardly manifest divine love. Sometimes a naughty baby truant star would stray from the rings of rhythm and run fast away as the shooting star. (continued)

AFFIRMATION

The Ocean of Spirit has become the little bubble of my soul. The bubble of my life cannot die, whether floating in birth, or disappearing in death in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, for I am indestructible consciousness, protected in the bosom of Spirit's immortality.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY OMNIPRESENT THRONE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I came down from my omnipresent throne of love in the bosom of space and in the hearts of twinkling lights to find a cozy place in the heart of man. I stayed there long, shut out from my large, large home.

I was everywhere; then I hid myself away in the small places. Now I come out of my hiding places. I open the gates of the human limitations of family, caste, color, and creed. I am racing everywhere to feel again my consciousness of omnipresence.

Through the transparency of my deepest meditation I shall receive the light of the omnipresent Father passing through me.

I shall be a son of God, even as Jesus was, by receiving God fully through my sacred, meditation-expanded consciousness.

The moment I am restless or disturbed in mind I will return to silence and meditation until calmness is restored.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, free my soul from the cage of bodily vibrations and baptize me with Thy cosmic vibration of Om.

HIGHER VIBRATION AND OCCULT PERCEPTION--Part 2

BAPTISM BY WATER The extremely sacred ceremony of baptism by water came originally from India. Baptism by immersion in water symbolizes the cleansing or purifying of the body in order to practice the disciplines of a spiritual life. Purification of the body aids in, and should precede, purification of the mind. All souls who desire to begin living the spiritual life first have to purify their bodies: "Cleanliness is next to godliness." However, baptism of the body, unless followed by baptism of the mind, becomes practically meaningless. Unless we cleanse the mud of wickedness from the soul by calmness, meditation, and constant spiritual vigilance, we will retain bad habits in spite of the temporarily purifying effect of water on our bodies and minds.

To illustrate this metaphorically: A Hindu saint said to his would-be disciple: "Son, it is not necessary to bathe in the Ganges to purify the mind from sin. Your sins will leave you temporarily while you bathe in the holy waters; but they will wait for you in the trees on the bank, and as soon as you come away from the sacred influence of the holy water, they will jump on you again."

If you bathe every day and meditate immediately thereafter, then you will feel the power of baptism by water. Water opens the pores of the skin, letting out disturbing body poisons, calming and soothing the whole organism. Water cools the nerve endings and sends reports of cool sensations through the vital centers, balancing evenly all the vital energies. All life came primarily from energy, then from nebulae, then from water. All seeds of life are irrevocably connected with water. Physical life cannot exist without it.

BAPTISM BY THE HOLY GHOST Man is a combination of body, life force, and consciousness--a reflection of Christ Consciousness. His life force is a reflection of cosmic energy. His body is condensed cosmic energy and life energy. Consciousness, life force, and the body are different rates of conscious Cosmic Vibration. Life force at a higher rate or vibration becomes Cosmic Consciousness, and life force when it vibrates grossly, changes into electrons, atoms, molecules, and bodily flesh. The human body, life force, and consciousness, being three different vibrations, are held together by the nucleus of the ego and the soul. Man is condensed vibration. In order for the soul to be freed from the cage of the threefold vibrations of body, life force, and consciousness, it has to be baptized or united with the original cosmic vibration of Om. When the wave feels itself isolated from the sea, its boundaries must be expanded until they encompass the sea.

In the same way, when the soul feels itself confined in the physical, astral, and ideational bodies, it should be taught how to detach itself consciously from these bodies and how to become expanded into Spirit. By deep meditation, the body loosens its atomic vibrations and becomes life force, and by deeper meditation the astral body changes through elaboration into the ideational body. Then, by wisdom, the ideational consciousness becomes expanded into Christ Consciousness.

It must be remembered that when the yogi (one who practices yoga, or strives to unite his soul with the Absolute) listens to the Cosmic Vibration, his mind is diverted from physical sounds of matter outside his body to circulatory sounds of the vibrating flesh. Then his consciousness is diverted to the subtler vibrations of the astral body. By deeper meditation, his consciousness wanders from the vibrations of the astral body to the vibrations of consciousness in all atoms. Then the consciousness of the yogi hears the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Sound emanating from all atoms. This is the way that ordinary consciousness can be baptized or expanded into Christ Consciousness through the expanding power of the Holy Ghost, or the all-spreading vibratory sound of Om heard in meditation by the practice of the Om Meditation Technique given in Lessons 27 to 30.

When Om is chanted, it travels not only all around the earth, but throughout all vibratory space and eternity. The sound emanating from the vibration of all atoms is called the Holy Ghost, or the Sacred Vibration. When, by the practice of deep meditation, one is able to shut out all sounds of matter, one's consciousness passes through the musical astral sounds to the sound of Om, or the Holy Ghost. When the yogi's consciousness is able not only to hear this Cosmic Sound, but also to actually feel its presence in all finite vibrating matter, then the soul consciousness of the yogi becomes one with the Holy Ghost, or Holy Vibration.

When Jesus met John the Baptist, his guru preceptor of former lives, Jesus was baptized by this omnipresent sound of Om, and he also saw the spiritual eye, described as the dove descending from heaven. The wings of the "dove" are the ring of golden light (epitomizing the vibrating energy of the Holy Ghost) and the ring of blue light (representing the Christ Intelligence); the mouth of the dove is the silvery star in the center (symbolizing Spirit).

BAPTISM BY CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS The voice of God, the omnipresent vibration of Om, signified: "Thou art My Son." Jesus felt his consciousness attuned to the Christ Consciousness, the Son or only begotten reflection of God the Father's intelligence as manifested in the Holy Vibration. In other words, Jesus first felt his body as the entire vibratory creation in which his little body was included; then, feeling his cosmic finite body, he felt that within the cosmic body of all creation there was a Christ or Universal Intelligence. This Christ is "the only begotten Son" because it is the only active manifestation of the intelligence of the indirectly active transcendental (lying beyond creative vibration) God the Father reflected in vibratory creation. As the husband

is reborn in the wife as the son, so God the Father (Transcendental Intelligence), is reflected in the womb of the Virgin Mary (the virgin creation), as the only begotten Son, or Christ Consciousness.

Often the theologians fail to differentiate between Jesus the man and Jesus the vehicle in which the only begotten Son or Christ Consciousness manifested. Jesus himself did not speak of his body as the only begotten Son, but of his soul, which was not circumscribed by the body, but was one with the only begotten Son, the Christ Consciousness in all specks of vibration. "God so loved the world (the creation He had made), that He gave His only begotten Son" to redeem it; that is, God the Father incarnated as the hidden Christ Intelligence in all matter and in all living beings in order to bring each one, by beautiful evolutionary coaxing, back to His home of All-Blessedness. When all mortal tests are overcome, one ceases to reincarnate in matter; that is, he need "go no more out."

Saint John said about Jesus: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). The plural number in "sons of God" shows distinctly that all persons could become sons of God who clarify their consciousness by meditation and receive--or in an unobstructed way reflect --the power of God. In other words, they could be one with Christ Consciousness, the only begotten reflection of the Father in all matter, and become sons of God like Jesus.

The Spirit would not be so partial as to create one Jesus and make all other men only mortal beings. God could create thousands of ready-made divine Jesuses and export them to earth; and, being predestined spiritual puppets of God, all of them would naturally behave on earth as Christs. But such Christs could not be ideals to struggling mortals with all their frailties. When, however, we see a man who has become a Christ by self-struggle and the proper use of his God-given free choice and power of meditation, then hope of salvation stirs in the weak, matter-tortured, fear-maligned, timorous, frail human breast.

BAPTISM OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

The student of Self-Realization Fellowship will find that after listening to and feeling the Cosmic Sound throughout the physical, astral, and ideational cosmoses, or in the physical, astral, and ideational Holy Ghost, his consciousness will vibrate with Omnipresence in all creation. When his expanded consciousness becomes stable in all creation, it feels the presence of Christ Consciousness in all vibration. Then the student becomes Christlike; his consciousness experiences the "second coming" of Christ; he feels in his body vehicle the presence of Christ Consciousness, as Jesus felt Christ expressed in his body. Most human beings find their consciousness bound to the body; but by listening to and feeling the Om vibration and intuitive Christ Consciousness, the yogi realizes that God the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness, exists inactively in regions where there is no motion or presence of the Holy Ghost vibration. The Holy Ghost vibration is limited to a certain tract of space, which is peopled by the cosmos and all its island universes. All planetary creation is condensed Holy Vibration.

When the student feels his consciousness one with Christ Consciousness, he realizes that Christ Consciousness is the reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father. Then the student, like Jesus, can say: "I (Christ Consciousness in creation) and my Father (Cosmic Consciousness beyond creation) are one."

When vibratory creation exists, God assumes the triune aspect of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When, by cosmic dissolution (greater than Noah's flood, which was only partial dissolution) the Holy Vibration is dissolved, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost become reconverted into the one unmanifested Absolute Spirit.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Om is the faithful witness of the beginning of all creation. The Hindus call it Om, the Christians call it Amen, and the Mohammedans call it Amin. When a motor is running, you know that it is doing so by the sound. The same is true of creation. It is rotating at a tremendous rate of speed, and sound comes from this. Wherever there is activity, there is sound, but the highest and the lowest sounds are not audible to the human ear.

Spirit's first vibration is the Om sound, and if you tune in with this sound, you will be in constant contact with all creation, and God. This sound can be heard in meditation, and if you are constantly listening to this sound, you will feel the presence of the Christ Consciousness. When we chant Om, we must remember to try to listen to that sound.

THE DREAM STORY OF DIVINE LOVE--Part 2

Through the central heart or nucleus in the solar system and stellar system, God is trying to pull everything back into Himself. But His divine pull of love only acts through evolutionary persuasion. God could have pulled all truant things back into Himself in a trice; but He did not do it because He gave all His children, who came from Him, the joy and privilege of independence even as He enjoys it.

So all things resist the cosmic pull of divine love and keep their individual existence. Cosmic Love can melt everything into its perfection only if all beings and objects are willing to yield to God's evolutionary persuasions. Disobedient planets are constantly being recalled from their truant wanderings to rest in God's bosom of dissolution.

God's cosmic love is working slowly but surely, trying to swallow everything within itself. Divine Love became a stem to hold fragrant petals together,

to lure busy human bees to come and enjoy celestial love-drinks of honey and perfume. God mutely, in a tableau of colors and form, enacts the drama of His beauty-dream of love on the stage of velvet blossoms.

God became the river calling thirsty ones to drink His love nectar of water and muse on Him by its banks. He became the mountains to lure people to behold His lofty love hovering above all human, mundane loves. He became the ocean to express the vastness of His love.

God stabs His heart of clouds with the dagger of lightning and lets His vital raindrops flow into the thirsty mouths of soil and plants, when they cry with drought. He became the Nautch Girl of Time, appearing in snow-white wintry robes, or summer or spring costumes of green leaf laces. He opened His eyes of sunny reason and moved with feeling to chase dark ignorance away. His two eyes of sun and moon show illumined power of fatherly reason, and the silver sympathy of motherly feeling, to dispel invading gloom. He became the curtain of change and death to decorate the players of life in new costumes and bring them out to play new parts in His ever-new drama of love.

Through eternity God gently called all things to come and rest in Him, to unite in a flood of all-sadness-destroying love light. Then the divine love began to work in the human brain and heart and body, feeling and looking after billions of life cells with intricate planning, interest, and healthful laws. The diseased man is he who has failed to respond to the loving protection of God's natural health plans. In the obedience of health laws lies the appreciation of God's protecting laws.

Then imprisoned divine love in the human heart broke the bars of selfishness and began to spread itself in parental, conjugal, family love. The bars of family attachment were broken by death and separation, so that divine love could spread its victories in the hearts of many nations. Divine love broke through the prison walls of bigoted patriotism and alien consciousness, so that the human heart could include in its kingdom the love of all living creatures. Divine love extended its love ecstasies to the region of mute stars, distant sun furnaces, and rings of dancing starlets. Then divine love found itself back in its bosom of Omnipresence.

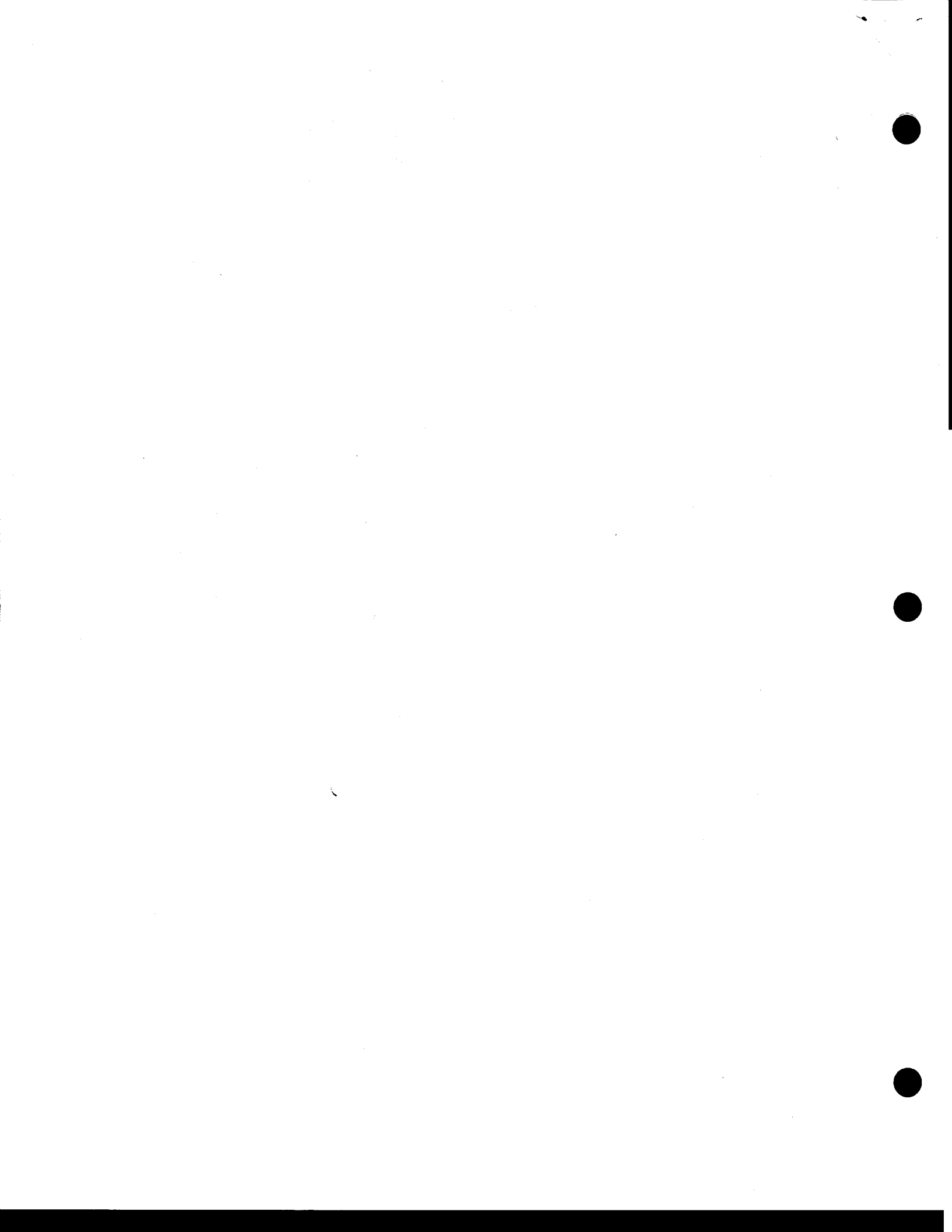
Divine love of a heart leaps into parental, or conjugal, or friendly love and finds a larger territory; unless parental love is invaded by armies of attachment; or conjugal love is devastated by sex and physical beauty, or over-indulgence, or blind, friendly limited attachment. As soon as physical attachment keeps conjugally united souls on the sex plane only, love flies through the back door of satiety. Divine love chokes in narrow parental or friendly love. So every soul must find in the friend, wife, husband, father, or mother, the complete, intoxicating, ever increasing, nonattached, soul progressing unselfish divine love.

Love expands in increasing the quality of usefulness. Your wife, husband,

or parents may be useful in the conjugal or social way, but unless they develop ever increasing, divinely emancipating usefulness, you will never experience true or divine love in them. In my Master I found the unconditional impersonal expression of divine love, because of the usefulness of the divine emancipation which I found through him. Love is born in usefulness. Love is evoked by one who is aesthetically, materially, mentally, morally, socially, conjugally, or spiritually useful. Love is the cosmic pull of God to bring back all things that went out of His bosom. Pain is the love-cry and sympathy-tears of God to distract human beings from doing what is evil.

AFFIRMATION

At dawn and the opening of lotus buds, my soul
flower softly unfolds to receive Thy light. Each petal
is bathed in rays of bliss. The early breezes waft the
perfume of Thy presence.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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O CHRIST, BE RESURRECTED WITHIN US

By Paramahansa Yogananda

With great devotion invoke the spirit of Christ within you. Remember, you too have been crucified. Now you are risen in Christ. You have a new birth in His consciousness. Let every cell in your body be resurrected with Christ Consciousness. Let every thought in your mind be resurrected with Christ Consciousness. Let your soul be lifted and resurrected in Christ. Fill your mind with Christ-power and wisdom. Fill your soul with Christ-bliss. Fill your body with Christ-vitality. Fill your mind with Christ-intelligence.

Christ must be felt. I want you all, with utmost devotion, to feel His presence. Fill your entire body and brain with Christ Consciousness. Fill your heart with Christ-bliss. Envelop your body in Christ-bliss. Behold Christ Consciousness enveloping the hills and the stars. Behold Him in the devotion of all churches. Worship Christ with the spirit of Jesus. As Christ Consciousness was manifest in the body of Jesus, may that Christ Consciousness be manifest in us, resurrecting us from disease and ignorance.

Joy within, joy without. O Christ, be awakened within us. We crucified Thee with our ignorance. Be resurrected within us again, as eternal wisdom, as eternal bliss. Be resurrected within us as everlasting wisdom and perennial bliss.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, unite our hearts as one heart,
that on the altar of united hearts we may find Thine
omnipresence enthroned forever.

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM

Why should we wish to know the similarity between Christianity and Hinduism? Because truth is one; and if we can find the points of similarity in true teachings, we will see that truth is in each of them, and that they are one in the truth. The differences among religionists are based on superficialities.

There is hardly a religious belief in the world that has not already been tried out in India; and there is hardly a religious belief in the world that has not drawn its inspiration, directly or indirectly, from India. The religion of India has several aspects: the ethical, the metaphysical, and the intuitional. The last is that aspect of India's sacred teachings by which religion can be made practical. That is, belief can be converted into actual experience of God, by attunement of our human consciousness to the intuitional divine consciousness of the soul.

In India a scientific procedure is followed to find a true teaching. Seekers are advised to search for truth until they find a real teaching, and then to hold fast to it without digressing. The great teachers point out that no one can reach his goal if he diverts the efforts he is making in one direction in order to follow every other teaching that comes to his attention. The test of a teaching is: "What is this teaching doing for my physical, mental, and spiritual welfare?" Those students who have followed Self-Realization teachings with faith, devotion, and steadfast effort, know that these teachings can pass the test.

Because they have not understood the superficial aspects of Hinduism, some uninformed people have erroneously called Hindus "heathens"; not realizing, perhaps, that to Hindus the attitudes and actions of many Westerners appear heathenish. Such derogatory generalizations are born of ignorance of the truth. If we know the truth, we know it is the same anywhere. The test or standard by which we can judge the relative value and truth of all religions is the spiritual progress or Self-realization we gain by practicing them.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS True Christianity started with Christ, naturally. It is fortunate that Christianity was not called "Jesusism," because the terms "Jesus" and "Christ" have a different significance; the word Christianity has a much broader meaning. "Jesus" signifies only the tiny physical body of Jesus in which Christ Consciousness was born. It would be a metaphysical error to

say that Christ Consciousness was circumscribed by the body of Jesus. Christ Consciousness, being universal, could not have been thus limited; but it could vibrate or manifest in the body of Jesus.

Jadava Krishna (or Kristna) is the Christ of the Hindus. Both these great world prophets could rightfully claim the same title: Jesus in whom Christ was manifest, and Jadava, in whom Kristna was manifest.

The Hindus scientifically explored religion, and found that there is a universal consciousness that is present in every cell of every being and object in creation; and that it is a reflection of the omnipresent consciousness of the Absolute Spirit beyond creation. They called this consciousness that pervades creation Kutastha Chaitanya: Christ Consciousness. One meaning of the word Kutastha is "anvil"--that on which many different things can be made, but which itself remains unchanged. God's consciousness is active in creation as Christ Consciousness; yet Christ Consciousness remains essentially unchanged or undisturbed, one with God the Father.

A person who has attuned his consciousness, as Jesus did, with the Christ Consciousness everywhere can feel Christ Consciousness even in his finger tips, in his heart and head--wherever there is vibration. Jesus could feel his consciousness everywhere in the world and everywhere in space, because Christ Consciousness is a universal consciousness. Being one with it, he saw all beings, all objects, as reflections of God; and he could love all creatures as expressions of God. When you can feel that impersonal, all-inclusive love for every creature, you are in tune with Christ Consciousness.

Lord Krishna of India lived much earlier than Christ, and the word Christ, or Krishna, as we know it in India, originated with him, because he expressed that universal consciousness. Just as Jesus did later, Krishna performed many miracles; and there are even many similarities in his life story. Miracles come as a natural law to those who know God, as Jesus and Krishna did. But those who become attached to miracles will lose God. The Lord must be the sole goal of our hearts.

If you put some salt water in a bottle and cork it; and then place the bottle in the ocean, the water in the bottle cannot mix with the water of the ocean. Remove the cork and the salt water in the bottle mingles with the salt water in the ocean; they become one, being composed of the same ingredients. Similarly, if we remove the cork of ignorance from the bottle of our consciousness, we become one with the great universal consciousness. God's consciousness is everywhere; it is present throughout His whole creation as Christ Consciousness. Just as you know when anything is happening in your body, He knows everything that is going on anywhere in the universe. Both Krishna and the Christ spoke of the universal Christ Consciousness. They had pulled out the cork of ignorance that separated their human consciousness from the ocean of Christ Consciousness, and had become one with it.

The purpose of religion is to expand the human consciousness until it unites, becomes one with, the universal Christ Consciousness, even as Jesus and Krishna did. How can we do this? One way is by endeavoring to love everything that is. We tend to love only our family, friends, those people and creatures with which we are familiar. But to extend and expand our love to take in others outside our little circle is to evolve toward Christ Consciousness.

The transcendental way to attain oneness with Christ Consciousness is by meditation. That is, by uniting ourselves first with that all-pervading consciousness of God in creation, we automatically feel and realize our oneness with all the rest of His creatures; and we easily love them, recognizing them as all being individual expressions of Himself. We know that we, and they too, are all part of His one Being.

The body and its limited sensibilities constantly tries to convince your consciousness that you are not divine, but merely a fleshly mortal being. But every night God shows you in sleep that the real you is not the body; your consciousness is ever aware; it tells you in the morning how you slept. Therefore you exist as a consciousness that is beyond and apart from the body. Self-Realization studies have taught you how to become consciously aware of this soul consciousness, how to realize you are not the wave of the body but the ocean of God's consciousness behind the body. Both Krishna and Jesus taught this truth.

CONCEPTION OF THE HOLY TRINITY The conception of one God, and of God as the Trinity, is the same in Hinduism and in Christianity. The Trinity is not a contradiction of one God, but symbolizes a metaphysical truth: that One became Three. In the beginning there was only Spirit, the One. But as soon as Spirit projected out of Itself that ball of vibrating light and creative energy which became the universe, Spirit took on the aspect of the Trinity.

The sphere of vibration is called the Holy Ghost--"Ghost" means vibration, creative energy. "Ghost" also means something invisible and intelligent. The Cosmic Vibration is both invisible and intelligent. "Holy" signifies its spiritual origin and nature; that this vibration is guided by the intelligence of God. His intelligence is present in creation or Holy Ghost as the "Son." The "Son" or Christ Consciousness is the only undistorted manifestation or reflection of God's consciousness in creation.

Imagine that nothing exists except light. Then imagine a blue crystal ball appearing in the light. There is then the original light (Father); the light reflected in the blue crystal ball (Son); and the crystal ball itself (Holy Ghost).

So we have Spirit in the aspect of God the Father (the intelligence of God existing undisturbed beyond the cosmic vibration of creation); as the Son (the Christ Consciousness or only begotten--i. e., only reflected--intelligence of God existing undisturbed in the cosmic vibration of creation); and Holy Ghost,

the cosmic vibration itself, which uses Christ intelligence independently to carry on its continual activities of creation, preservation, and destruction.

The Hindu scriptures referred to Om, Tat, Sat--Holy Ghost, Christ Consciousness, and God the Father--long before Jesus came on earth and described the Trinity as Christians know it.

How are you going to know the Holy Ghost? The great exponent of Yoga, Patanjali, explained that a sound is emanated by the cosmic intelligence working in the Holy Ghost; every vibration emanates a sound. And so the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibration emanates a sound--the Om of the Hindus or the Amen that St. John spoke of when he said: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). That trumpet is the Holy Ghost, sounding the call of the Heavenly Father to come to our Cosmic Home. By attunement with the pure vibration of the Holy Ghost we become aware of the Christ Consciousness, the Good Shepherd who leads us to our Father's Home. In the Christ Consciousness is our comfort and salvation.

RELIGIOUS UNITY OF EAST AND WEST

What is necessary for perfect results is a combination of the religious ideals of East and West. In the East we believe in gathering the honey of Self-realization, and in the West you believe in building hives of churches and religious organizations. But hives without honey will not do. We must bring together the East and West and have the hive and the honey of Self-realization. If you can keep the light of Self-realization burning forever on the altar of your heart, some day you will behold God reigning there.

HOW THE MASTERS OF INDIA TEACH THE SCRIPTURES

If what you listen to, and what you read in books is valuable, meditate upon it long enough to become one with the thought of the author. Then try to manifest that realization in practice. Realization comes from constant regular meditation, combined with wide-awake, ever busy, ever-searching mentality which strives to convert theory into solid knowledge through practice.

All beliefs should be thoroughly scrutinized. Overindulgence in study should be avoided. Indiscriminate study, especially of religious books written by spiritual novices or untried enthusiasts, results mostly in indigestible hashes of imagination, emotion, and at best a diluted realization. Patanjali's Yoga Aphorism, the Christian Bible, and Hindu Bible (Bhagavad-Gita), and a few other books written by men of realization should be studied, a little at a time, and meditated upon for hours or for days together. The best time to read scriptures is after practicing meditation, when the intuitive feeling is awake.

My Master Sri Yukteswar related one of his own experiences in scriptural edification. The scene was a forest hermitage in eastern Bengal, where he observed the procedure of a renowned teacher, Dabru Ballav. His method, at once simple and difficult, was common in ancient India

Dabru Ballav had gathered his disciples around him in the sylvan solitudes. The holy Bhagavad-Gita was open before them. Steadfastly they looked at one passage for half an hour, then closed their eyes. Another half hour slipped away. The master gave a brief comment. Motionless, they meditated again for an hour. Finally the guru spoke.

"Do you now understand the stanza?"

"Yes, sir." One in the group ventured this assertion.

"No, not fully. Seek the spiritual vitality that has given these words the power to rejuvenate India century after century." Another hour passed in silence. The master dismissed the students, and turned to Sri Yukteswar.

"Do you know the Bhagavad-Gita?"

"No, sir, not really; though my eyes and mind have run through its pages many times."

"Thousands have replied to me differently!" The great sage smiled at Master in blessing. "If one busies himself with an outer display of scriptural wealth, what time is left for silent inward diving after the priceless pearls?"

Sacred and inspiring books are helpful in stimulating the desire for realization, if a little at a time is assimilated. Otherwise, overstudy of books produces vanity and false satisfaction that one knows when he does not know at all.

Ramakrishna said: "I pity the ignorant; I love the unread man of realization; but I consider as a bit of straw the man of book learning who is without realization. I can blow him away by a puff of questioning about realization. I admire, love, and respect a man who has realization as well as intellectual knowledge of different scriptures."

Do not let a love of book reading or ceremonial diversions be the delusion to divert you from realization. God-realization must come first; books and everything else are of secondary importance. Have God and you have everything. Seek ye the kingdom of God first, and all things will be added unto you --all wisdom, prosperity, and beauty. Get the tree of all life, and you shall have each of its fruits too.

AFFIRMATION

O God, I worship Thee resting on the various altars of all teachings and religious faiths.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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"He who perceives Me everywhere,
and beholds everything in Me, never loses
sight of Me, nor do I ever lose sight of
him. "

--Bhagavad-Gita VI:30

UNITE OUR HEARTS ON ONE ALTAR

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, banish the imaginary barriers that separate brother from brother. Show us that Thou art the Spirit ever existing on the altar of our hearts. Bring all nations to an understanding. Unite our hearts on one altar; unite all temples to be Thy church.

Father, electrify our health with Thy perfection, electrify our souls with Thy wisdom, electrify our minds with Thy power. No more forgetfulness! After centuries of wandering, at last on the pathway of remembrance we behold Thee. Open the windows of our hearts, and teach us to behold Thee everywhere.

Father, reveal Thyself through the open gates of dawn. Teach us to feel Thy muscles in the powerful rays of the sunshine. Let us behold Thee through the pale portals of the moon, and behind the drawn curtains of twilight and evening. May we behold Thee in the dark-domed temple of night. Enter Thou into our souls through the portals of our hearts' devotion and prayers. Inflammé our beings, ignite our ignorance, banish darkness evermore from our minds. All our love and devotion, everything in us that is noble, we lay at Thy feet.

PRAYER

O Divine Friend, purify my heart with
Thy friendship, that it may provide an open
door to world unity.

THE ART OF LIVING

My Master always used to remind me: "Learn to behave." He repeated this advice so often that I wondered if he were not overcautious about human behavior. But since that time I have met numerous people of different walks of life--and searched the vaults and secret tunnels of their lives--and I realize how important it is to everyone to learn the art of right behavior.

Uneducated persons often do not behave well merely because they don't know any better. It is safer then to remain quiet and merely decorate the scene, rather than to make a fool of oneself by speaking. But the intellectual-smart often do not know how to behave either--they tend to exaggerate others' peculiarities and often impute wrong meanings to others' motives and actions, owing to their hypersensitive imaginations. Intellectuals ought to feel and sympathize with other people as they feel for themselves; then they can understand the difficult complexities of others' lives. As they make allowances for their own mistakes and shortcomings, let them commiserate with others in their errors and deficiencies.

DANGERS OF
ANALYZING
OTHERS

Those who are emotional--too much swayed by feeling also misunderstand their associates and get into trouble in their dealings with others. Without wisdom, feeling becomes clouded, fogging the vision of those who try by analysis to penetrate into others' lives.

The would-be reformer of others' behavior must live wisely himself before he can analyze others and plant wisdom in their hearts. Critical analysis of others--dissecting their personalities and behavior for the fun of it--is sadism. Those who indulge in it hide their own faults under sneers of criticism.

Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). I humbly suggest, "Judge not any except yourself," or "Judge not others unless you are requested to do so." To criticize others is bad enough, and to expose others' faults publicly is a sin against God who dwells in the temple of the error-stricken as well as the righteous. It is not good to rub unwanted salt of criticism into others' character wounds. Give unto the erring the healing salve of proper sympathetic advice. Refrain from criticizing and advising others unless they want you to do so. Be busy watching the gardens in human souls, laden with flowering qualities; do not concentrate on the sewers of morbidity,

or on the drains of deficiencies in others--unless you are a spiritual plumber.

PRACTICE SELF-REFORMATION Love those who love you, and learn to love those who hate you, for they are your mentally sick brothers. Your Heavenly Father is pleased when you love your good brothers, and He is infinitely more pleased when, by love and good example, you can persuade your wicked brothers to forsake willingly the path of misery-making iniquity and follow the bliss-making path of God.

Love is the mirror that truly reflects the good and bad traits of your brothers. And, when requested, you must be ever ready to polish and add luster to the shining faces of the good, and to wipe away the soot of evil from the faces of the error-stricken with the soft antiseptic cloth of wisdom.

Through love and sincerity continuously beautify your inner life in every way, by daily looking into the mirror of introspection; and then others--noting your inner beauty--will let you beautify them.

Reform yourself, and you have reformed thousands around you.

Smile from within and all those around you will try to smile. Be cranky, and sour faces will mushroom along your path. Don't be a human skunk--making others run away from you--become a scented orange blossom, to draw good human bees around you.

Don't try to get along with others by adopting artificial mannerisms. Just be loving and ever ready to be helpful and saturate yourself with divine communion--then you will find yourself getting along with every one in your environment, no matter whether you are roaming in the jungles of human civilization or in a natural wilderness surrounded by vicious animals.

A divine exemplary life talks louder than words. Don't speak unless asked. Ever quietly keep busy reforming yourself--and you will get along with every one, God and man.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

It is extremely important to find out whether or not you can keep the continuity of your calmness throughout the day. Your muscles, your senses, your desires, and the misunderstandings of others, all come to disturb the quietude of your soul. A calm person reflects restfulness in his eyes, keen intelligence in his face, and proper receptivity in his mind. He is a man of decisive and prompt action, but he is not moved by impulses and desires that suddenly occur to him. A restless person is like a puppet that dances at the instigation of emotional desires arising in response to the temptation offered by others.

Be sure to work, slowly or fast, from a center of calmness. Under no circumstances work or act from a center of restlessness, with your concentration centralized on your restless state of mind. All actions should be performed with peace, calmness, self-possession, intelligence and keen concentration.

THE STORY

It does not seem possible that we who, according to the scriptures, are made in the image of immortal God, can cease to exist at death. Neither can we imagine, as some would have us believe, that imperfect human beings can at death merge at once into the perfect being of God. It stands to reason that if we are cut off by death in an imperfect state, we shall have to be reborn on earth in a similar form in order to have another opportunity to perfect ourselves. We must wipe away all the stains of our errors before we can merge in God.

Men seldom reincarnate as animals. That would be devolution instead of evolution. In rare instances, however, it happens that a person who has lived a very animalistic existence is drawn into the body of an animal, to learn some lesson. This explains the "thinking dogs" and "thinking horses" which have puzzled scientists who have tested them.

But the case of a man taking on an animal body, as described in the following story, illustrates an entirely different principle. It is said that a great saint or teacher who is highly evolved can deliberately assume the form of an animal in one or more incarnations. To prove that God is omnipresent, some saints have worked not only through human vehicles but also through the vehicles of lower animals, even as electricity can work in the human body as well as in a mechanical machine. God operates the life force of humans, animals, and atoms; saints who become One with Him show that they also can operate through human bodies, animal bodies, and atoms. This was demonstrated by Jesus when he put his omnipresent life into the dead body of Lazarus. He also demonstrated, by making the fig tree barren, that he could shut off the life force. He thus proved that he had the power to put on or shut off life at will. Jesus, having atomic control, also fed many people with a few loaves of bread. Saint Francis also had power over animals: birds obeyed his request to be quiet and listen to his sermons, then flew away in the form of a cross; and a vicious wolf became friendly and ceased its vicious...carnivorous habits. Saint Francis, by his omnipresent consciousness, awakened the sleeping God in the wolf and changed its nature.

Therefore, just as a saint can influence animal bodies, so he can encase himself, or reincarnate, in any sort of body. The scriptures and literature of India contain many stories of such incarnations. So I hope you will understand the theme of this story about the reincarnation of one of India's holy saints in the body of a mother squirrel.

THE HOLY SQUIRREL

Once upon a time this saint, who had lived as a recluse, so loved baby squirrels that he wanted to incarnate as a mother squirrel so that he could actually bestow his maternal affection on the helpless little ones. Our story tells how this saint reincarnated as a mother squirrel, who, with her tiny babies, lived in the top of a tree by the sea.

It is said that whoever fed this squirrel became prosperous, or was healed of whatever affliction he possessed. Because of this, many people came to know of the unusual mother squirrel and realized that the furry little body housed a great soul who had reincarnated thus to demonstrate the will of God even in the animal body.

Once, when the holy squirrel had gone far away from the shore in quest of food, a storm lashed the ocean into high waves and swept away the tree with all the baby squirrels. The loving mother, on her return, discovered the dark work of the sea and commanded: "Ocean, give me back my babies or I will destroy you."

The ocean paid no attention to her warnings. The mother squirrel was subsequently seen, day and night for seven days, dipping her bush tail in the water and then brushing it on the sand. Noting this continuous, curious, determined activity, an angel of God appeared and said: "Holy mother squirrel, of all strange things, your action of dipping your tail in the ocean and rubbing it on the sand is the strangest. Please tell me the reason for your unusual behavior."

The squirrel replied: "Heavenly angel, the sea swallowed my babies in my absence and paid no heed to my request to return them, so I am resolved to sweep the ocean dry." The angel laughed and remonstrated, "Why mother squirrel, in seven days more you won't have any brush left on your tail with which to attempt to run the ocean dry!" But the tiny mother, with the determination of eternity written on her face, replied: "A thousand million lives or more will I be born again and again as a squirrel, and I will grow as many bushy tails as are required to dry the ocean." Saying this, the holy squirrel went on with her strange activity.

Seven days later, the brush of her tail had almost disappeared, and yet the mother squirrel had not stopped her work. In fact, the dynamic will--in tune with the Divine Will--perfected in former incarnations had prepared her to continue for as long as the world endured. And so the angel of God came back, and with head bowed said: "Holy squirrel, your will is law; please stop punishing the ocean and we will return your babies."

Remember, dear student, if all mortal methods of accomplishing your worthwhile desires have failed you, do not be discouraged, but rouse your slumbering, all-accomplishing divine determination. Then you will find that whatever you wish and work for will come to you naturally through the action of the divine laws of God.

AFFIRMATION

I will mingle my inner devotional whispers with the prayers of all saints, and continuously offer them in the temple of silence and activity until I hear God loudly whispering from everywhere.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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BLESS US WITH THY PRESENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Come Thou, O Spirit, on the altar of our hearts; come on the altar of our calmness; come on the altar of our love. The altar is ready with new-grown flowers of devotion, saturated with the musk of our agelong love. Come into the temple of silence; come into the temple of quietness; bless us with the assurance of Thy presence.

Father, naughty or good, we are Thy children. Alone we came on earth and alone we go. Thou, the Spiritual Hunter, hast always pursued us but we have fled from Thee through dark, titanic gloom. All things have betrayed us because we have betrayed Thee. Open the stars, open the portals of the moon; show us Thy beauteous face.

O Tremendous Love, hiding behind the dusk of evening and the gloom of night, hiding behind the mighty dawn, come out, receive our soul's devotion. With the toil of passions, with the glory of the mind and the depth of our devotion and the burning language of our hearts, we pray Thee, come unto us!

Reveal Thyself, for we are Thine. No more would we worship Thee hiding behind the veils of nature; show us Thyself as Thou art. Crossing the sky and earth and the billows of the sea, bounding over the vast thoughts within, O Thou Silent River of Life, show Thyself. Teach us to swim in Thee.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, help me to regain my latent cosmic intuitive faith through continuous hope and efforts in meditation.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

FAITH, HOPE
AND LOVE

Hope really belongs first on the list; for hope is much more than a result of human reason. It is a manifestation of soul consciousness. People hope blindly, or subconsciously, because the latent inner divine voice of the soul intuitively reminds them: "All is not lost forever. Death and failure are not final experiences. Behind the dark clouds of temporary disillusionment awaits the silver lining of eternal fulfillment." We must keep hoping to know God, even to the last breath, for we have all eternity in which to hope for the best and the highest. The greatest insult to the soul is to attribute to it the consciousness of final despondency.

Hope is the eternal light on the dark pathway along which the soul must travel through incarnations in order to reach God. Never extinguish hope, as you would then have to wait miserably in darkness on the pathway until you chose to rekindle your searchlight of hope and started again on your journey toward God.

Most people hope and try for a while, but if they fail a dozen times they cease to hope and then become despondent. The student of Self-realization never stops hoping, for he knows that he has all eternity in which to materialize his dreams. We must not think of death as an abyss of eternal oblivious sleep, but consider it a caravanserai where we rest for awhile so that we may, with fresh hope and energy, journey on until we reach our mansion of eternal fulfillment in God.

To kill hope and be despondent is to put on an animal mask of limitation that hides your divine identity. Instead, hope for the highest and the best; as a child of God, nothing is too good for you. Keep on hoping! Move in that light as you travel on pathways of incarnations to your luminous home in God. Hope is born of the intuitive consciousness in the soul that sometime or other we shall remember the forgotten image of God within us. This intuitive consciousness is faith.

FAITH IS THE PROOF
OF THINGS UNSEEN

Metaphysically, faith, or the intuitive experience of all truth, is present in the soul. It gives birth to human hope and the desire to achieve, but it also hides behind the wall of ignorance. Ordinary human beings know practically

nothing of this intuitive faith that is latent in the soul, which is the secret wellspring of all our wildest hopes.

No hope is too grand or impossible for this all-seeing eye of intuitive faith to bring into manifestation. Faith leads to the ultimate perception through which we know all things as they are. In ordinary mortals we see only the manifestation of hope. When hope is used properly, to work for the development of the soul's hidden intuition, then faith, or intuitive Self-realization, develops.

FAITH VERSUS BELIEF The word faith is often erroneously used for belief, as: I have faith in him. A belief is problematic and may be followed by disillusionment. Belief is the initial experimental feeling about the truth of anything. Untested belief often crystallizes into dogmatic sentiment or, if discouraged, it may change into skepticism or unbelief. When belief turns into dogmatic sentiment or into skepticism it is destructive.

Constructive belief is the attitude of mind necessary for testing the truth about a thing in the beginning. The person who refuses to believe in anything refuses to test and experiment, but these are the only means by which to know truth. Constructive belief is good when one continuously believes and experiments to prove a particular truth until its real nature is revealed. De-structive disbelief is limiting, because one disbelieves for the sport of doing so. Constructive disbelief or doubt is all right if one assumes an attitude that says: "Well, I shall not believe your statement until you prove that it is true."

All phenomena or visible matter can be recorded by the senses, but not invisible substances such as vibrations, subtle cosmic forces, and astral lights, which are unseen, unknown to, and unregistered by the limited power of the senses. According to Saint Paul (Hebrews 11:1), "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." That is, the proof of the existence of all the subtle forces, and of God as the final Substance, lies in faith. This instantaneous, all-knowing, all-seeing, intuitive power of faith is developed through deep meditation and conscious communion with one's soul and, through that, communion with God.

"For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).

If one has faith in, i. e., intuitive knowledge of, Cosmic Consciousness as the prime mover of all atomic creation, then, through that all-pervading consciousness one can act on or control any portion of matter on the earth or on a distant star.

Just as your consciousness is omnipresent in a microcosmic way in every part of your body; and as you can swing an arm or move your muscles, thus causing consciousness to act in any part of the body; so the man whose cosmic faith attunes him to the omnipresent Cosmic Consciousness can cause any portion of matter to respond to his command. Such faith is inner light, in which the presence of all the finer forces, invisible to the eye and the senses, is revealed as true.

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE After one regains the latent cosmic intuitive faith through continuous hope and efforts in meditation, he becomes very selfish and wants to enjoy the acquired kingdom of God alone. Love is born of sympathy, and sympathy is born of the consciousness of omnipresence, in which the advanced soul can transfer his consciousness to souls in other bodies, and experience their limitations and sufferings. When he does this, then the loving desire to offer help springs forth.

Selfishness cramps and confines the omnipresent soul in a prison of limitation. Selfishness defeats its own purpose: Instead of producing happiness it brings on misery; often it shuts out desire for the perfect, unlimited joy to be found in God's omnipresence with a fog of desire for imperfect, limited, worldly happiness.

I used to want salvation only for myself, until my Master Sri Yukteswar said to me: "Do you want the whole divine channa (milk curd) for yourself alone?" He made me understand that the ultimate joy in my own salvation would come when I shared it with others.

From that time on I wanted salvation so that I might give it to everyone. I wanted to drink God's omnipresent nectar not only through my own soul-mouth, but through the countless mouths of all other souls. I wanted to share Him with all. That is love. But spiritual aspirants should remember this: You must first have God yourself before you can give Him to others.

THE POND FROG WHO DOUBTED THE LAKE FROG--Part 1

Once upon a time there was a frog who lived at the edge of an immense lake. He enjoyed his freedom in the huge body of water and on the seemingly endless shore. At times he would hop out of his watery home and take a sun bath on the warm stones at the margin of the lake. Often as he dozed happily at the edge of the shining water he heard the croaking of multitudinous brother frogs beyond a neighboring hillock.

Curious, he sacrificed his afternoon sunning one day and proceeded to hop over this little hill--it seemed like a mountain to him--to take a look at his brother frogs. There he saw a pond with steep banks--a shallow hole,

really--no broader than a well. This tiny pond was fed by seepage from a stream that emptied most of its waters into the lake. No sooner had the lake frog appeared over the top of the bank than all the pond frogs croaked a welcome in unison: "Hello, wandering one! Jump in here and enjoy the hospitality of our spacious home."

The lake frog blinked and shook his head. The pond was so crowded that the backs of the frog inhabitants covered every inch of the surface. Had he accepted the invitation, he would have landed on the back of a brother frog. Thanking their leader politely, the lake frog said, "Some other time, perhaps. Not now, friends," and hopped away.

On the way back to his lake home, the exploring frog almost burst with mirth as he recalled the voice of the leader of the frogs in the pond, saying: "Come into our spacious home here." The frog of the lake pitied the ignorant frog leader and was quite saddened to behold so many frogs living like sardines in the little pond. "Maybe here's a chance for me to do some good," he thought. "Let me see if I can help those overcrowded frogs in the pond by bringing them to my commodious lake home. At once he turned round and hopped back to the pond, where he received another croaking welcome.

The frog leader of the pond community hopped over to greet the lake frog, and after offering his guest tidbits of special frog delicacies, began questioning him: "~~My friend, whence comest thou?~~"

"From a vast place called the great lake," the visitor replied.

"What is your purpose in honoring us with this visit?"

"To take you all to my spacious home," the lake frog replied. "There you can live in freedom and security. I fear that here you will die of suffocation."

But the frog leader was proud. "Pray tell me first the size of your lake?" he demanded. "Is your lake this much bigger than ours?" and he jumped a distance of one foot from the bank of the pond.

But the lake frog, with a slight blink of amusement, replied: "Nay, my friend; the lake is much bigger than that."

The pond frog, still willing to believe, jumped two feet from the pond's edge and asked: "Is your lake this much bigger?"

The lake frog, more amused than ever, replied: "Nay, nay, my friend; it is much bigger than that."

Then the disgruntled leader of the pond frogs jumped from one side of the

pond to the middle. "Is your lake this much bigger?"

Croaking mirthfully, the lake frog exclaimed, "My friend, it is much bigger than that."

Then the chagrined jumper puffed up to his full strength, and jumped from one side of the pond to the other. "Can your lake dare be twice as big as this?" he asked, sure of triumph.

The lake frog could not restrain his sense of superiority as he confidently replied, "Indeed, friend, my lake is bigger than a thousand ponds like yours."

Piqued, the pond frog croaked his disbelief. "Impostor!" he cried. "Vanity incarnate! What you say is impossible. Nothing could be bigger than our pond."

However, after considerable argument, the visiting frog persuaded the pond leader and his brother frogs to visit the lake. Upon seeing the great body of water, the skeptical leader of the pond frogs bowed at the feet of the lake frog and exclaimed: "Mighty brother, indeed your watery mansion is much larger than we could ever have conceived. We never would have realized this if we had remained in our narrow environment. It is only by comparing our little confined home in the pond with your huge lake that we are fortunate enough to understand the grandness of the home you have offered us."

The lake frog was pleased that his good deed had turned out so well, and assured his new friends that they were welcome to join him. And so they all lived in happiness in the lake.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I will bathe in the sacred pool
of God's love hidden behind the ram-
parts of meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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AS OLD AS I

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I am older than the first vapors of heaven,
Or the first baby star that was born
Out of the womb of the blue heavens.
I was born before life opened its eyes
On earth's cradle.
I was born and my mind worked
Beneath my skyey skull.
My thoughts spread in the veins
Of the all-pervading cosmic rays
And tingled in the space cells of my finite body.

I breathed the breath of life into everything.
I am the oldest in existence,
For it is my One Self,
My one memory, which has been thinking
Through all the human brains
Of all incarnations in all eternity.

Yes, it was I who sang
Through the birds of centuries,
And I who played the flutes of atoms.
It was I who made the ornaments of diamond planets,
Ruby starlets, and blue sapphires
To decorate my skyey body.
Yes, I slept many times in many lives
In caves of diamonds,
In the bower of rose petals,
In the breasts of bluebirds, and in countless babies.

But, as I awoke in the omnipresent minds of supermen,
I remembered that I was the same One, the Oldest,
The One who had been thinking, working,
Laughing, coming and going, waking and sleeping,
In the bowers of countless brains.
All souls who have known this
Know that they too are as old as I.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Thou didst wipe away the soot of indifference that covered my soul, and it shines with Thy light. I know now that I am Thy child. O Spirit, enable me, with divine love, to wash other souls clear, and to behold as Thy children even those that are as yet in darkest ignorance of Thee. Let me behold them as my very own, my sleeping brothers.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONALITY

Personality constitutes the aggregate qualities that a particular person possesses, as distinct from the qualities possessed by others. Whenever you meet a person, man or woman, you tend to classify him or her according to one of the following specifications, or according to any other quality which you may observe. You feel that he (or she) is:

A strong personality with a strong will, or a weak personality with a weak will	Persevering or impatient
Magnetic or repelling	Selfish or unselfish
Habitually brave or timid	Always truthful or prevaricates according to convenience
Joyous or depressed	Brutally frank or spiritually diplomatic
Wise or ignorant	Poetic, or prosaically matter-of-fact
Intelligent or divinely intuitive	Bachelor, or too-much-marrying
Kind, loving, or cruel	Old-maidish or falling-in-love-at-sight
Aesthetic or crude	Sincere or fickle
Congenial or morose	Home-loving or travel-loving
Neat or slovenly	Bound by a superiority complex or by an inferiority complex
Businesslike or procrastinating	One who has Self-realization, or who has only theoretical, theological knowledge
Long-winded or terse	Spiritually free or materially entangled
Definite or evasive	Habitually failing or habitually succeeding
Moral or immoral	Studious or indifferent to reading
Faultfinding, gossiping, or appreciative, closemouthed	Silence-loving or noise-loving
Womanish or mannish	Habitually meditative or intellectually restless
Quick-witted, or slow but thorough	Calm or nervous
Easy or difficult to get along with	Logical or emotional
Self-controlled or a slave to the senses	Easily yielding or tenacious
A mental or a motor personality	

All personalities may be broadly classified as follows:

- 1) Transcendental, those who actually are one with God, like Jesus, Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, and other great masters;
- 2) Sattvic, good-loving;
- 3) Rajasic, activating;
- 4) Tamasic, darkness-loving, error-creating.

Transcendental personalities are marked by the following traits: Developed intuition, absolute wisdom, nonattachment; omniscience, evenmindedness; enjoying ever new Bliss; speaking from Self-realization and not from book learning; calm; ever ready to help spiritually; more meditative than studious; steady, calm gaze, without effort; still body, without making any effort; still breath without holding the breath; self-control; naturally calm without effort; God-communion through Self-realization and not through imagination.

Sattvic, or good-loving personalities, are those whose habits are marked by some wholesome quality that produces a good effect on themselves or others; that is, a sincere personality, a spiritual personality, a person of clean habits, clean thinking, clean living, clean dealing, and so forth. Anyone who manifests any of the above-mentioned Sattvic qualities is a Sattvic personality. All meditative activity connected with a religious organization for uplifting a soul or souls, or one's own self, is classed as Sattvic activity.

Rajasic, or activating personalities, are those who display matter-of-fact businesslike qualities. A man who follows the business pursuits of life--for his own good, or the good of others--based upon strictly moral principles, is a Rajasic personality. That is, money-making in an honest way, for self or others, constitutes Rajasic, or activating, activity. All material and social activities connected with religious organizations, such as collecting funds or erecting temples, are Rajasic activities. All business activities for personal benefit are Rajasic activities.

Tamasic personalities are those who engage in nonconstructive activities. Such people enjoy eating impure foods and particularly meat; they pursue dishonest, immoral, uncontrolled, unregulated lives. Anyone manifesting insincerity, jealousy, a gossiping inclination, greed, extreme anger, and other harmful instincts is a Tamasic personality.

CONFLICTING PERSONALITIES

Animals were created before God created man, and man's body was made after the pattern of animals. His soul was made after the pattern of God. Embedded in the animal body and animal mind is the pure image of God, the soul. This hidden God-personality, or soul personality, is constantly trying to obliterate the animal personality in man; when a person emphasizes the animal instincts

in himself, he becomes an animal personality, and when he emphasizes his soul qualities, he becomes a soul personality.

The supreme purpose of discovering the true nature of your personality is to know how you affect others and yourself. Consciously or unconsciously, people feel your personality as animal or spiritual or businesslike or selfish, etc. It is best to know what sort of person you are, so that you can change evil tendencies, for your own good and happiness; and so that you can refrain from imposing a negative or harmful personality upon others, thereby saving them from suffering.

REINCARNATION AND HEREDITY Personalities are formed through the sprouting of seeds of actions left from a previous incarnation. That is, if you notice that you have shown a business, or spiritual, or animal tendency from the beginning of your childhood, then know that you brought that personality from a past life.

Good or bad heredity is not ordained by God but is the result of man's own actions in past incarnations. Otherwise, the fact that some people are born healthy and some born sick, or some born wealthy and some born poor, would seem to indicate some partiality on God's part. Health, wealth, sickness, or poverty that come in infancy are brought about by causes initiated in a past incarnation just before death. In other words, if you died healthy, or wealthy, or poor in your past incarnation, then in the beginning of this incarnation you will display those prenatal acquisitions. Fortunately, all prenatal habits and instinctive traits can be changed by cultivating wisdom.

Personalities that are negative as a result of the working of the law of re-incarnation and heredity can be changed by proper methods of concentration, spiritual discipline, and continuous mental and physical effort. According to eugenics, a person's mind is fixed by heredity and cannot be changed, but the yogis teach that it is a man's own actions in previous incarnations, rather than his family heredity in this one, that produce the individual traits in an infant. Nor are prenatal habits imposed upon man by God; they are created by man himself through his own free choice; therefore all effects of heredity can be gradually erased if a person uses his own free will to follow continuously the methods of self-discipline and Self-realization. Hence, all types of personalities, no matter how deep-rooted, can be changed by using strong will power and continuous methods of self-discipline. Analyze yourself and find out what your personality is. See if you need to change it entirely or merely to improve it.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Jesus compared the evolution of the Kingdom of God within a human being to a mustard seed that develops into a potent herb: the potential divinity in

man can be awakened and developed only by one's own effort.

It may be a heavy undertaking, but man must perfect himself by cultivation of his own character in order to attain his true or superhuman state. This state is the gold vein that is being uncovered, or the Kingdom of God that is being established, by his labor. Truly the person of such attainment rebuilds his house of life on a foundation of gold.

The truth is that whatever spiritual gain and real happiness one may hope to attain in the life hereafter will, in a great measure at least, be a product of one's own labor here. What else did Jesus have in mind when he exhorted people to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven by being virtuous on earth?

THE POND FROG WHO DOUBTED THE LAKE FROG -- Part 2

This story illustrates how different worldly people live in the little overcrowded pond of sense happiness, clamoring and shouting for a little room for peace. A materially minded man fails to comprehend the experiences of a spiritual man who communes with God and roams freely in the vast lake of Bliss. The earthbound, sense-bound man can realize the limitations of his meager happiness only if he actually launches his consciousness into the great ~~expanse of Bliss, which is reached by meditation alone.~~

Likewise, we find in this world many opinionated people who live within the narrow walls of their limited surroundings and scanty experience; they are unable to picture the vast experiences of an intelligent world-traveler until they actually become world travelers themselves.

Also, petty custom-bound, caste- and class-bound persons can never realize the great happiness possessed by understanding, liberal-minded, cosmopolitan people who consider the whole world their own home and all the inhabitants their blood relatives and divine brothers. Hidebound, prejudice-encased persons can realize the misery-making and wisdom-choking atmosphere of their minds only when they roam on the plane of understanding in the free skies of liberal thought. Again, we find people of small learning unable to fathom the depths of people with vast learning.

There are also priests and ministers of broad theological knowledge who are nevertheless unable to comprehend the ideas or actions of a spiritual superman who, with the power of his intuition, swims in the lake of true wisdom. The small boundaries of theological understanding can only be done away with by flooding them with the all-devastating power of direct wisdom from God by communing with Him in deep meditation.

A bigoted religionist feels some joy in following his religion, but he is

unable to picture the boundless happiness of feeling all churches as one church of God, all religions as one Truth, and all religionists as children of one God.

The dogmatist lives in a prison of limitation; and after he passes the portal of the grave, he can only expect to live in another prison of dogma there. Whereas a man who is wise with Self-realization lives in the heart of all churches, in the heart of all teachings, in the heart of all-pervading Truth, and in the hearts of all men because he is in tune with the Heart that throbs in all life. After death, such a wise man finds each speck of space a temple of Spirit, each spark of wisdom a tabernacle of His presence, and each heart a sanctum of the Infinite.

The dogmatist insists: "My idea is best and nobody else can convince me differently."

The wise man sees the truth. "Behold," he says, "My love throbs in the dogmatist and in the liberal, in the friend and in the enemy alike, in the ignorant and in the wise, and in the Occidental and the Oriental churches alike."

The wise man knows: "My soul rests on the bosom of One Truth, and my intuitive understanding is the foundation of all teachings." The wise man throbs with joy in this realization: "My wisdom twinkles in all knowledge-illuminated eyes; my mind thinks in all sober minds; my joy is bounding in all hearts; my life throbs in all veins; my love beats in all breasts; and my laughter ripples over every face. I am the x-ray of wisdom. I am only sleeping in the heart of narrow-eyed opinions, but from the heart of all life, I behold with wide-open eyes all true ideas."

AFFIRMATION

I am the immortal child of God, living for a little while in the caravanserai of this body. I am here to behold the tragedies and comedies of this changeable life with an attitude of unchangeable happiness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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HIS OMNIPRESENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

When you find that your soul, your heart,
 Every wisp of inspiration,
Every speck of the vast blue sky,
 Every shining blossom of the sky,
The mountains, the earth, the whippoorwill
 And the bluebells are all tied
With one cord of rhythm, one cord of joy,
 One cord of unity, and one cord of Spirit,
Then you know that nothing exists
 But the waves of His cosmic sea.
I feel Him like a gentle breath of bliss,
 Breathing in my body of universes.
I perceive Him shining through the bright
 Twinkles of all luminosity,
And through the waves of Cosmic Consciousness.

I behold Him as the light of solar inspiration,
 Holding the luminaries of my thoughts
In the rhythm of balance.
 Like a silent, invisible river
Moving beneath the sands,
 Flows the vast dimensionless river
Of Spirit through the sands of time,
 Through the sands of experience,
Through the sands of all souls,
 Through the sands of all living atoms,
And through the sands of all space.
 I feel Him as a bursting voice,
Leading, guiding, teaching
 Secretly in the soul temples of all men
And things in creation.

PRAYER

The sunbeams of Thy love shine with equal ardor on all the members of Thy cosmic family--the prophet, the hero, the moth, and me. It is our own fault if we have become opaque through dullness. Teach us to wipe away the mists of error from our mirror of right understanding.

HOW TO DEVELOP PERSONALITY

PURPOSE OF STUDYING PERSONALITIES We should study human and animal personalities of various types, and people of different nations, in order to compare their various traits and then adopt in our own lives what is valuable, good, and lovable, and discard what is harmful, evil, and unlovable. By studying the results of others' good and evil actions we may profit by their experience, developing wisdom without suffering the harmful consequences of ignorant evil actions.

Good personalities reflect the attractive qualities of God, the supreme Good. Personalities that manifest evil traits are reflecting the delusive cosmic satanic force which is responsible for all the miseries of the world.

To develop a specific personality one must absorb the desirable characteristics of that personality by constant attentive association. Study, discussion, association, friendship, and respectful attention between two different personalities causes a mutual exchange of their individual characteristics. In addition, one should study the various characteristics of different types of personalities and pick the kind of personality he likes. Then he should try to think and act and feel the qualities of the particular type of personality he wants to cultivate. If you want to be a poet, or a businessman, or an orator, or an aviator, or a God-knowing saint, pick the best in that class and associate with that personality, and intelligently follow his counsel and example until his traits become your traits.

By studying the outstanding traits of various nationalities, one can learn to recognize the utilitarian, active, swift, American-type personality and the spiritual, deep-thinking, slow, Hindu-type personality in one's own family, society, and country. Americans are marked by swiftness in active thinking, kindness, liberality, fickleness, and great utilitarianism in everything; the Hindu Aryans by high spirituality, depth of thinking, slowness in business ventures, and kindness. The English are marked by tenacity, literary culture, pride, formal mannerisms, patriotism, and aristocracy; the Scotch by congeniality, frugality, and clannishness. The Germans reveal characteristics of scientific thoroughness, militaristic pride, and patriotism; the French show friendliness, universality, formal congenial attitude, and love of art.

**ANIMAL-LIKE
PERSONALITIES**

Souls, being made after the pattern of God, display many of His qualities. But since bodies are made after the pattern of animals, each individual physical and mental trait suggests a specific animal. Man's anatomy, bone for bone, muscle for muscle, can be compared to that of a horse, ape, or other animal.

If one studies the personality characteristics of the different animals, he will find their various traits reproduced in different human beings. There are brave persons who remind you of the lion. The king of beasts never kills unless he is hungry. Lionhearted people would never knowingly destroy anyone's happiness. Other people may remind you of the tiger, which kills through vicious instincts, even when its stomach is gorged. Some people are like the cobra, which bites at sight; such persons will cheat you or harm you at first meeting, without any provocation. Some men and women are like cats. Just as a cat may eat a tame canary and then curl up peacefully, professing innocence, so some men and women do a great deal of wrong and yet hide under a cloak of innocence. The cat is a very clean animal, but some are selfish; and some people are immaculately clean in regard to their physical bodies, but within their minds are unclean with selfishness.

Monkeys love to imitate whatever they see, and some persons are like that. They imitate the mannerisms of real aristocrats without being able to be real aristocrats. Monkeys are very restless too, always moving and frisking about. There are people also who cannot rest even for a few minutes. They have to keep going all the time. Monkeylike personalities imitate others' customs, fashions, idiosyncrasies, good or bad habits, and ideals, without discrimination. Imitation without reason is productive of little good. (However, even blind imitation of good principles is good, and imitation of evil habits is of course harmful.)

Some personalities are meek, like the dove and the lamb. They are humble and hurt no one. It is good to be humble, but weakness of character should not be confused with meekness. In fact, it takes a very strong-willed person to be meek and to forgive insults through the superior but self-controlled strength of his or her spirituality.

The donkey is famous for its stupidity and forgetfulness of the cause of its hurts. If it falls into a mudhole it is likely to repeat the error as soon as it gets out. The sex addict is an example of the human donkey personality. He makes the same errors again and again. As the donkey does not remember the cause of injuries or punishments, so the human sex addict forgets the evil effects of sex transgressions and does not desist from sex errors, no matter how they weaken his health, heart, brain, vitality, and mental and moral strength.

Some wealthy persons are like the cow; they give the milk of riches to their families, yet they themselves lead dull, uninteresting, unprogressive, mechanical lives. Although they provide their children with material luxury, they fail to improve their lives, or the lives of others, in an intellectual or

spiritual way.

DEVELOP PERSONALITY THROUGH MEDITATION

Always realize that the soul is the reservoir of all power. By intensely, deeply, and continuously meditating upon the photograph of a saint, one can become like him. By meditating upon God and asking Him to change one's personality, one can be changed. My Master followed the wisdom path. When I feel his presence, I can talk only of inner wisdom. When I think of Lahiri Mahasaya, I feel the ever new joy of God. When I am one with Lord Chaitanya in meditation, I feel divine love omnipresent. When I commune with Jesus Christ, I feel God as the Father, with whom I am one. I feel God as the one object of reverence, and I feel God as one with me.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

It is very difficult to forsake any earthly happiness that is present in your consciousness and sways your mind by the influence of habit. It is very hard for a devotee to give up known sense pleasures of the present for the unknown pleasures that may arrive in the future. This is the reason why millions of people today would rather eat, drink, and try to be merry now, than to take the trouble to meditate in a quiet place and cultivate lasting, ever satisfying, inner happiness.

Even the superman, although he is fixed in a high state of consciousness by deep meditation, is still subject to the temptations of his prenatal and postnatal memories of sense enjoyments, which promise quickly obtainable pleasures in place of the hard-earned, lasting joy of self-control and meditation.

If you do anything wrongly for a long time, you form a bad habit that is difficult to overcome. If you have lived to be sense-sufficient, it will be very difficult for you to comprehend liberal, lofty, and spiritual thoughts. If you have formed habits of restlessness, it will be painful to meditate until you become intoxicated with the wine of joy.

CONQUERING DEATH THROUGH WILL POWER

One of my students told me an interesting story. He and his sister were both students of these lessons. The sister became very ill and finally lapsed into a state of coma. The brother was desperate; but he remembered what I had taught about the power of will. He remembered, too, that I had explained that a dying person's hearing is the last sense to go. He went to his sister and began to talk to her in order to rouse her will power. With deep concentration he spoke: "Sister, come out of it. Remember what Yoganandaji told you. Use your will!" At that moment she took a deep breath, made a supreme

effort, and revived. Afterward, when relating the experience, she said that while she was dying, her senses were all leaving her; but although she could not speak, she could hear what was being said to her.

"When I heard the doctor say that it was all finished with me, my breath went," she told us. "But as soon as I heard my brother telling me to make the effort and command the life force to return to my body, my will revived; my breath came back and I sat up."

That was a remarkable case. So remember, if you are around a sick person, do not discourage him by negative thoughts or speech, as the doctor unwittingly discouraged my student. Instead; send forth your will power continuously when you want to help anyone. You must continuously mentally pour forth life force to that person through your will, until the healing becomes effective.

What is it that heals? Life force. When you command your mind to move your hand, the mind generates the necessary life current in your hand. When the mind disbelieves its own power, as in sickness, the energy is shut off from the body. The life force is always moving, its motion is what we call life. Even the slightest movement of your head is caused by the action of that life force, whose power keeps the cells of the body together. When life force runs low, all the cells of the body begin to die. Yet that tremendous power which is the life of the body--the life of every living thing--is unrecognized.

Millions of volts of life force travel in and around the body, but how can we connect the current within the body with the cosmic currents outside the body to manifest healing? There are two ways: by imagination and by will. Imagination is autosuggestion. You paralyze the life force by the consciousness of chronic disease. If this motion called "life" cannot heal the sickness in you, nothing can. Life energy is within you and around you, but how can you utilize it? In the first place, you must be convinced that the energy is there; and if it is there, you must be able to tap it. How? By consciousness and will power. There is no other way. The energy in the flesh and in the universe can be united by will power. It is the will of God that is holding all the atoms in your body together and everything in the universe in order. You must attune your will with God's will. Surely He who controls every corpuscle of your blood can heal you. You must first establish a consciousness of God. No matter what your trouble is, you must first commune with God. Divine will does not give up. To desire to be healed is a start, but do not weaken that desire with hopelessness if results are not immediately forthcoming.

As a ship can be directed on the sea by radio, so God is moving our bodies and keeping them alive by the life force that He causes to flow in through the medulla oblongata. If we are out of tune with, or unconscious of that current, we cannot be guided by it. To tune in, we must meditate and use our will power. When we use our will power, we become at one with that life force.

INSPIRATION

All things are possible by faith. Faith, or intuitive Self-realization, develops when hope is used properly to work for the acquisition of the soul's lost intuition. Metaphysically, faith or intuitive experience of all truth is ever present in the soul. It gives birth to human hope and the desire to achieve, but it hides behind the wall of spiritual ignorance. Most human beings know practically nothing of the intuitive faith latent in the soul, which is the secret spring of all our wildest hopes.

To kill hope and to be despondent is to put on an animal mask of limitation, and to hide your divine identity with the Almighty. Instead, hope for the highest and the best, for as a child of God nothing is too good for you. Keep on hoping! Move in that light until you travel through pathways of incarnations to your luminous home in God. Hope is born out of the intuitive consciousness in the soul that some time or other we shall remember our forgotten image of God within us. This intuitive consciousness is faith.

AFFIRMATION

I will strive to make myself and all others
definitely rich with God, first, last, and always.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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SHOW THYSELF IN MY FLAMING DEVOTION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Reveal Thyself, beloved Divine Mother! Hide no longer. Shatter the walls of my ignorance and appear unto me in all Thy splendor. When I meditate upon Thee with closed eyes, O Divine Mother! lift the veil of darkness and show Thyself in the light of my flaming love for Thee.

Divine Friend, with my little arms I want to clasp Thine omnipresence. Come! Come! I can wait no longer. O Sun of Love, burst through the opaque firmament of my selfishness-clouded love and embrace me with Thine omnipresent light.

I will burn the door of Thy silence with the fires of my ever-working dynamic inner whispers to Thee. O ever-burning Love! show Thyself in my flaming devotion. May the memory of Thy presence shine forever on the shrine of my whispering devotion. May my love for Thee forever burn secretly in the temple of my heart, and may I be able to kindle love for Thee on the altars of all hearts.

PRAYER

By stealth the fisherman, Transitoriness, deludes us. We swim in the shallow waters of false assurances of safety, while a deadly net of ignorance is closing in upon us. In the daily haul, many are caught--few escape.

O Measureless Mercy, save us from the dread dragnet of desires and matter attachment! May we dive into the deep-sea spaces of divine communion and become uncapturable.

COSMIC DELUSIONS

MIND AND MATTER The sages of India teach that we should not be fanatics about anything, for example, denying the existence of matter. We should develop our consciousness to that point wherein we can know that mind and matter both exist, but are not as we think they are. Matter appears as a visible, tangible form, but in reality it is composed of unseen electromagnetic waves. It is a force. All so-called solids that we see are insubstantial. They are composed of flying atoms held together by a magnetic force. Nothing is solid.

This world was created through the vibration of God. Matter is one vibration and mind is another. Matter is a lower vibration, but to deny its existence is foolish. Humanity is suffering from delusions about matter, earth, planets, body, mind, and soul. Only the wise and the spiritually awakened can discern the true nature of creation. For instance, it appears to our visual sense that the earth is flat and stationary, but through scientific research it has been proved that the earth is round and rotating. According to Hindu philosophy an error entertained by one person is called avidya, or "illusion," while an error that deludes all mankind is called maya, or "delusion."

TEN PRINCIPAL DELUSIONS

Our senses and reason can partially interpret phenomena, or the appearance of substances, but most of the time our senses are reporting falsely about the real substance, or noumenon. Ten principal delusions of mankind are listed here:

1. The delusion of time and space, of seeing relativity in the Absolute.
2. The delusion of attachment to one family or to one country.
3. The delusion of consciousness whereby one feels pain in the body instead of being aware of it only as a mental idea.

4. The delusive consciousness of difference between solids, liquids, gases; life, thought, and feeling.
5. The delusive consciousness of birth and death.
6. The delusive consciousness of waking, dreaming, and sleeping states.
7. The delusion of the importance and worthwhileness of the body, which is really so insignificant and small.
8. The delusion of finding it easier to cling to evil than to good.
9. The delusion of seeing matter only, without any awareness of the presence of God in it.
10. The delusion of not knowing that the seen is unreal and the unseen is the real substance.

METHODS OF
DISCARDING
DELUSIONS

The consciousness of pain is a delusion. Pain was originally a heightened sense of awareness. By emphasizing our individualities, we have separated ourselves from the rest of nature and have evolved differences. That is why so many things hurt the body.

Dualities originally existed in harmony and separateness. Their collision was announced by the sense of awareness. But this awareness was developed into pain. Under chloroform, a surgical operation on the body is painless, for the mind is not aware of the condition of the body. Gandhi and others have demonstrated that a strong mind can consciously hold itself apart from the condition experienced by the body while under an operation; that is, avoid feeling pain that is created by hypersensitive awareness. Learn to be strongminded and ignore pain. The country child feels much less pain from a thorn in the foot than a city child would feel. Overcome sensitiveness by mental hardness. Banish pain from your consciousness and it will not be felt in your body.

The delusion of the touch sensation is the most powerful. Close your eyes, forget the feel of the body, and think of the vast limitless sphere of space around you as your vast body. Feel joy in every tissue of your space body; joy will be in your circulation; joy will flow through all the veins of your feelings. The consciousness of dragging flesh and bones about will disappear. You will touch only the peace feeling of God. The phenomena of the senses will disappear. Their blindness will be revealed through the recovery of the one true sense of meditation-born intuition. You will see, hear, smell, taste, and touch all diverse things as solely God. The Noumenon, the Absolute Substance, will reign on the throne of your omnipresent consciousness.

Banish the delusion of nationality, caste, creed, and color. You belong to a living family of all God's creatures. Close your eyes, meditate upon the little circle of your family and country. Break the boundaries of this hereditary imagination and make a circle of boundless love, a vast home of sympathy, a vast heart of feeling, and behold there

all nationalities, all creatures, living with you in peace around the fireplace of universal brotherhood.

MEDITATION IS Matter is known to us as solids, liquids, gases,
A CURE FOR heat, light, electricity, and energy. Yet none of
COSMIC DELUSIONS its various forms is what it appears to be.

We can behold, in a dream, a mountain or an ocean, or breathe the atmosphere, or feel the heat of summer, or see sunlight or electricity lighting a city, or the vibrating colors of the aurora, or feel the life force surging in millions of human bodies. God is dreaming the dream of cosmic motion pictures on the screen of delusive human consciousness. When one unites his own consciousness with God's, he perceives this cosmos as God's dream going through his mind. But no one can experience this realization until he experiences his complete unity with God. Just as a dreaming person does not know that his dream of a city containing buildings, streets, and lights is made up only of different vibrations of his imagination, frozen into thought forms, so one who is under the spell of the cosmic delusion does not see that it is only God's dream.

Science has proved that matter is actually electromagnetic waves, and that these waves are "frozen" light. Metaphysicians say that this light is really God-vibration frozen into forms we see as matter. One should certainly think over and meditate upon these truths until he can see all matter as God's dream.

A cosmic delusion can also be overcome by meditating deeper and deeper, until one can pass beyond the consciousness of the body. When you meditate with closed eyes, all matter vanishes from the picture; and when you firmly feel that the real is One Consciousness of blessed omnipresence, then you will no longer perceive the delusion of the cosmic motion picture. When in meditation the yogi feels the consciousness of ever new peace--that peace which can stand the challenge of all tests of physical pain, passing pleasures, sorrows, and all mental dualities--he achieves the complete dissolution of material perceptions. The fire of meditation dissolves all dualities in the consciousness of an ever joyous Spirit.

LIMITATIONS Our senses are limited to certain vibratory scales.
OF SENSES The eardrum picks up only a particular range of vibrations. The eye cannot see the most dim or most powerful lights. The sense of touch cannot feel the subtle forces. The senses of taste and smell record only certain vibrations of olfactory and gustatory sensations. A man walks by the seashore, hearing only the noise of a few waves, not of the whole ocean. He does not hear the millions of songs in the air except through the external medium of a radio. The radio has definitely proved that we are relatively deaf. The cosmic noise of atoms, God's program of limitless joyous experiences, the voice of the ether, the sound of whirling planets, the rumble of the earth racing around the sun, the throbs of the heart and blood, are unheard by the physical ear.

NO TIME--
NO SPACE

We think of time as divided into present, past, and future, yet the only time that is real is the present. God is presenting on the screen of the present many new pictures. He can reverse this film of His cosmos and show you right now, on the screen of consciousness, pictures of formative and prehistoric times, and also many new pictures of so-called future civilizations. Man has divided eternity into time in relation to his own existence, which appears to be limited by death. God is conscious only of the present, for He never dies.

There is no space, for all forces can stay at one point or expand everywhere. This universe is a motion picture of planets moving in a limitless consciousness. One consciousness dreams everything, includes all creation. The large and small planets within it, the biggest and smallest things, having no dimension and not occupying space, cannot collide. There is no space, no container, nor anything to be contained. The cosmos consists of dreams. Reason that way constantly, and you will free yourself from the dream of space and time.

The difference between a stone floor, lightning in the sky, daylight and night, electricity, and your thoughts, is merely a difference in the thought forms in your dreaming mind. In a dream you can create a world of matter; you can walk on a stone floor, see lightning in the sky, see the passing of the day and the night, and behold a city full of electric lights; you can think, talk, and sing, but when you wake up, you will laugh and say: ~~"Ah, I was only dreaming all those things."~~ Meditate often upon this and know that this universe is nothing but a dream bluff of nature to test your consciousness of immortality. Do not become frightened at your dream trials; just laugh an unquenchable laugh, especially when you are under the shellfire of difficult experiences. This is the way you will reclaim your celestial birthright, beholding everything as one consciousness of God.

A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

These few years of your life are just so many seconds, compared to the eternity before you were born and the eternity ahead of you after death. You were casually thrown into one country for a brief period, but you are perpetually an inhabitant of your true country--Eternity.

REALIZING GOD IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

You must cease to think you are a mortal being if you would find lasting happiness. Practice this truth in your daily life. It is a battle you have to fight throughout this life and incarnations to come,

so it is better to start now! Do not put it off, thinking that you will start meditating tomorrow. Tomorrow will never come. Long ago I passed a whole year in this attitude, and still I was saying, "tomorrow." Then I made up my mind: "I will start meditating today." Since then I have never missed a day.

You must first resolve in your mind the importance of God. You must realize inwardly that He is the greatest need of your life. First practice the presence of God in daily life by making your meditations very deep. It is better to meditate a little bit with depth than to meditate long with the mind running here and there. If you do not make an effort to control the mind it will go on doing as it pleases, no matter how long you sit to meditate.

Next, practice long meditation with depth. That is what takes you to His kingdom. Until you learn to practice meditation both long and deep, God will not reveal Himself to you. Gandhi devoted one day a week to silence and meditation. All saints who have found God sought that silence. I give my nights and mornings to Him. It is not possible to do exactly that in the business world, but if you will try, you will be surprised how much time you will find to devote to thoughts of God. We delude and deprive ourselves when we think we can wait until tomorrow to make that great effort to be with God.

God responds when we make the effort. Then you know that He is. He will no longer be a myth. He will respond invisibly to your desires, playing hide-and-seek with you. And after that He will come to you openly. Your past mistakes do not matter. But to continue in those mistakes is the greatest sin against yourself, for when you do wrong it deprives you of true happiness. You have the power to hurt yourself or to benefit yourself. It is up to you to keep away the ants of ignorance that bite your flesh. If you do not choose to be happy no one can make you happy. Do not blame God for that! And if you choose to be happy, no one can make you unhappy. If He had not given us freedom to use our own will, we could blame Him when we are unhappy, but He did give us that freedom. It is we who make of life what it is.

You may ask, "Why, if we have free choice, do things not turn out as we wish them to be?" It is because you have weakened your will, your consciousness of divine powers within you. But if you strengthen your will by practicing self-control and meditation, it becomes free; and as soon as your will is free, you are master of your fate. But if you find that day by day you are living a life against your conscience, you will never be free. You must take time to do the things that are good for your own welfare. No one stops you but yourself. You make yourself a prisoner of your own moods and bad habits. That is why you must train your will to be more elastic. Keep your will under control by doing the best things in life--thinking more of God, meditating more, practicing self-control, and so on.

Of greatest help in your development is the habit of mental whispering to God. You will see a change in yourself that you will like very much. No matter what you do, God should be constantly in your mind.

When you want to see a special show, or to buy a dress or a car you have admired, is it not true that no matter what else you may be doing your mind is continually thinking how you can get those things? Until you fulfill your strong desires, your mind will not rest; it ceaselessly works toward fulfilling those desires. Your mind should be on God night and day in the same way. Transmute petty desires into one great desire for Him. Your mind should continually whisper, "Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day."

That is the philosophy of life by which we should live. Not tomorrow, but today, this minute. There cannot be any excuse for not thinking of God. Day and night, rolling in the background of your mind, God! God! God! instead of money or sex or fame. Whether you are washing dishes or digging a ditch or working in an office or a garden--whatever you may be doing--inwardly say, "Lord, manifest to me! You are right here. You are in the sun. You are in the grass. You are in the water. You are in this room. You are in my heart."

And when great love for God comes in your heart, you do not miss anything; no matter what you have or do not have in this world, you nevertheless feel fulfilled. Divine love transmutes all material desires--even the longing for human love, that mortal passion which so often brings pain either from its fickle nature or because it is snatched away by death. Loving the Lord, you can never turn back to being satisfied by lesser loves. In Him you will find all the love of all hearts. ~~You will find completeness. Everything that the world gives you and~~ then takes away, leaving you in pain or disillusionment, you will find in God in a much greater way, and with no aftermath of sorrow.

AFFIRMATION

I will be the fisher of souls. I will catch the ignorance of others in the net of my wisdom, and offer it to the God of all gods.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I WILL BE THINE ALWAYS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I may go far, beyond the uttermost star, but
I will be Thine always.

Devotees may come, devotees may go; but I
will be Thine always.

I may bound over the billows of many incarna-
tions, forlorn beneath the skies of loneliness, but
I will be Thine always.

The world, engrossed in Thy playthings, may
forsake Thee; but I will be Thine always.

My voice may become feeble and fail me; yet
with the voice of my soul I shall whisper: "I will
be Thine always."

Trials, disease, and death may riddle and rend
me. While the embers of my memory still flicker,
look Thou into my dying eyes; they shall mutely say:
"I will be Thine always."

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Omnipresent Protector! when clouds of war send rains of gas and fire, be Thou my bomb shelter.

In life and death, in disease, famine, pestilence, or poverty may I ever cling to Thee. Help me to realize I am immortal Spirit, untouched by the changes of childhood, youth, age, and world upheavals.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

If life is eternal motion, how can we account for the apparent cessation of motion and life in the human body at death? Actually, death is neither cessation of motion nor annihilation of matter. The burned candle changes form, but its weight and constituent ingredients can be proved the same if the gaseous combustion products that result from its burning are caught in a jar. Similarly, the soul with its life and intelligence slips away at death from the burned-out body-candle. Matter is indestructible. Matter and life are inseparable. Life is intelligence; matter is sleeping intelligence. Since matter, an expression of life, is indestructible, all life is indestructible.

The term "span of life" is relative. All waves of life emerge from and merge into the Infinite Ocean. Some last longer than others, but they all have to express the Infinite variously and fully--the speck of stardust, the sun, moon, clouds, rainbow, the gossamer, the nightingale, the whippoorwill. Natural death comes when each object, each human being, has done his full share in expressing the silent Infinite. The untimely death of a child or a youth suggests that he is discarding his diseased or disabled body vehicle and is existing elsewhere for better opportunities. If he has been snatched away by an accident, it is probably so that he can be placed in a more suitable environment for fulfilling his karma. That is why the beautiful rose and the glorious youth, after expressing certain qualities of the Infinite, disappear as silent waves into the fathomless Ocean of Life. The body is the froth of life on the waves of intelligence and soul. The froth is temporary compared to the individualized soul wave; and the individuality of the soul wave is temporary compared to the eternal Ocean of Life.

Life is not bound by form or time, nor dependent upon material sustenance. There are verified cases of men who have lived for long periods of time in a state of suspended animation, proving that earthly life is not dependent upon food or oxygen only. Life remains for some time even in a corpse, but in a different form. A chicken heart can live many years in a solution of various chemicals--longer than the ordinary life span of a chicken. A crocodile lives six hundred years; man lives sixty years; some insects live sixty hours; some

cell forms sixty minutes. Yes, life is vagrant, appearing and disappearing like a river in the desert of time.

Death causes fear in spiritually ignorant human beings, but to the wise it is a transition to a higher state--a promotion to higher grades of life. Those who learn in this life to live by Spirit, and are unattached to the body, quickly gain after death their soul-freedom from the bondage of oxygen, food, and water. Mortals should learn to live more by inner energy, and strive to be unattached to the body.

MATTER AND SPIRIT There is no difference between inorganic and organic life except that they are separate manifestations of the one Life. Nothing is really dead. The atoms in the flesh of even a corpse are rapidly vibrating and constantly moving with life, as are those in a stone or a piece of metal. Different forms of life are manifestations of the same life force. Just as ice, water, steam and their gaseous constituents of hydrogen and oxygen are different forms of the same thing, so also solids, liquids, gases, stones, crystals, plants, animals, and human beings, both living and dead, are manifestations of life.

The Spirit contained in matter, and matter, are the same, just as hydrogen and oxygen, if contained in a block of ice, are of the same essential composition as the receptacle itself. The thing contained is made of the same material as the container. If it were otherwise, matter and Spirit would be the result of two coexisting infinite forces, which is impossible. As the ocean becomes waves, so does Spirit become matter. The waves are disturbed ocean, and matter is distorted, objectified Spirit. The waves, except in form, contain all the essential qualities of the ocean. Similarly, matter, organic and inorganic, either manifestly or latently contains all the qualities of Spirit. Thus we might say that life sleeps in the crude earth, dreams beauty in the flowers, wakes with power in the animals, and in man has consciousness of infinite possibilities.

It is by understanding that life continues after death that we can unite our consciousness with the cosmic consciousness of God and find the cord of one life, one law, one rhythm, and one wisdom uniting us all. It is only when we feel that we are prodigal immortals on earth, and that our gift of discrimination must be used to find a truly universal art of living, that we make the effort to unite all wisdom in our hearts and to realize that all of us are world brothers marching hand in hand back to the mansion of God.

THE INFINITE IS EVER NEW If there were no death, countless millions of people would monopolize the cosmos. The planets and the universes would trademark God with the seal of finitude. The infinite spaces would be exhausted. Without the contrast of death, life would lose its taste of charming mystery; everything would grow old and stale. But this is not the case. The Infinite is ever new, so by God's magic wand of renewing

death, He keeps everything ever expressing, ever remodeling itself into a more suitable vehicle for expression of the Infinite.

Eternal infinite Life manifests Itself through myriad finite forms of living creatures. The phenomenon of death, or the illusion of change, is reflected in all finite substances, otherwise the Infinite would be limited and measured by finite substances. The Infinite would lose Its nature by becoming finite, definite, circumscribed, and molded.

Death gives soul actors above all else new robes in which to play new dramas on the stage of life. Death is a transition to a better land, a change of residence. The wise man who has opened his spiritual eye finds that the cessation of earthly life gives him a new beginning in another supernal life. On this earth, seeing, we see not. Just as we cannot see with our eyes the bones of the body, so we do not see the cords of light--blue, violet, aquamarine, orange, yellow and white, that bind the atoms of the earth together. We hear the gross noise of the world and a few sweet melodies, and nothing more.

Yet, when viewed through the spiritual eye, the crude brick seen by the physical eye appears as a colorful garden of electrons. Human beings with skeleton bodies, ugly sinews, and red blood appear as beautiful many-hued vibrating beings made of visible, mellow, materialized love. The rose of the human garden looks like a paper rose compared to the inner rosy luster of its whirling atoms.

Death is the cosmic furnace in which all objects and living beings are purified of dross. Death comes to a dutiful soul as its promotion to a higher state. It comes to an unsuccessful soul to give it another chance in a different environment. The wise man experiences through death an infinitely better, safer haven than this earth affords.

WHAT THE WISE MAN BEHOLDS A soul that has lived a materialistic life in ignorance of infinite laws experiences after death a deep, dark sleep, which gives temporary rest from earthly travail before another life begins. But with his spiritual eye the wise man beholds, in this life and after death, a very attractive sphere. Instead of terrifying darkness he finds glorious light. The soul bird-of-paradise finds its freedom from the limiting cage of earthly manifestation. Appareled in multihued light, it soars in infinite directions, searching out and claiming its lost territory of eternity.

In the mellow light of the other world, the wise person perceives the inner nature of stars, stones, living beings, dust, iron, gold, earth, and planets dazzling with infinite brilliancy. Every object we perceive has two sides--the gross, ugly side, present before the physical eyes, and the inner, exceedingly beautiful side, revealed to the eye of wisdom.

Nothing in that world fades quickly. Everything there talks silently.

they also are God's children.

God is the ocean of Infinity oscillating with waves of finitude. The only way to destroy your imperfections is to unite your isolated consciousness with God. A wave apart from the ocean is miserable, bound by the laws of change to be born, live, and die. But when a wave finds itself as the sea, when it knows that it is the sea, it realizes that it may change outwardly, but will never be lost nor annihilated.

THE ANT AND THE SNOW PILE

Although we think that our possessions are marvelous, they are not big to God at all. Once I saw a big pile of snow and a very little ant crawling on it. To the ant it must have seemed that it was scaling the Himalayas. Yet what was the Himalayas to the ant was only a little pile of snow to me. The contrast between our concepts and God's is similar.

AFFIRMATION

Divine Mother, the brave may laugh while passing amidst flying bullets, though death lurk in each one. But I laugh under all circumstances. Whether I float on the surface of the present life or sink beneath the waves of death, I rest on the sea bosom of Thy protecting, omnipresent eternal life; I am held in Thine immortal arms.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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ETERNITY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Oh, will that day arrive
When I shall ceaselessly ask,
And drive infinite questions
Into Thine ear, O Eternity, and have solution
How weak weeds grow and stand unbent,
Unshaken beneath the trampling current,
While the storm wrecks titanic things,
Uproots the trees,
And quick disturbs the mighty seas;
How the first spark blinked, and the first tree,
The first goldfish, the first bluebird so free
And the first crooning baby
In this wonderhouse made their visit and entry.
They come, I see;
Their growth alone I watch.
Thy cosmic molding Hand
That secret works on land and sea,
I wish to seize,
O Eternity!

PRAYER

O Maker of Dream Worlds, intoxicate me with devotion's wine. I will drink of Thee until death. My earthly desires shall die and I will live in Thee forever.

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE UNFOLDED

Think what a mystery life is! It emerges from the unknown, and into the unknown it dissolves. Think what a mystery death is! It swallows up the hard-working man and the idle man alike, the good and the bad ones, and causes their bodies to revert to ether and the elements. Think how everybody fears death, and yet it comes only to give peace and relief when life's burden seems to be extremely heavy with grief, ill-health, or apparently incurable trouble.

Why spend all the treasure of your wisdom trying to make this uncertain perishable body comfortable? Wake up! Try to reap the harvest of imperishable immortality and lasting, ever new Bliss on the temporary field of the body. There is no lasting comfort to be had from the body. It slowly melts away. Nor can you press honey of divine happiness from the rock of sense pleasures. But lasting comfort ceaselessly flows into the pail of your life when you squeeze the honeycomb of meditation and peace with the eager, powerful hands of will, and with ever deeper concentration.

Why do you intoxicate yourself with material desires? Your present material activity is a sort of sleepwalking. You are working in a dream of delusion during the deathlike sleep of ignorance. How can you be so sure of yourself? How can you devote your entire time to building up your material fortunes, which you must leave at the instant call of death? Material riches are too heavy to be carried in your astral car on your journey to the great beyond. Why not prepare now for the last day on earth, when you will have to leave all the things to which you are so attached?

I do not mean that you should be a cynic and not enjoy things in this life. But do not be so attached to anything which you enjoy here that you will feel mental agony when you are forcibly separated from it. If you do not grieve for earthly things when your bodily garment is cast off, you will then have better things hereafter. You will also again receive from the hands of your Father, God, all the things that you lost and cherished. He takes things from you so that you will not remain earthbound and forgetful of your immortality.

THE LAW OF DEVELOPMENT Consider what man knew one hundred years ago. For instance, we know now that the music caught by radio is in the ether; but did people know about it then? No. But now radio digs into the ether and catches the music out of the air. The same is true of television. The principle of it has always been there, but only

recently discovered. Likewise, images are in the ether. When you are dead, your image will be in the ether; your soul will not be dead, your habits will not be dead, your thoughts will not be dead.

After death, we go on developing just the same as in this life. We can either improve or get worse. God has given us intelligence, and we have the freedom to use that intelligence as we wish. When you go to sleep and then wake up, you just begin again where you left off. No great change occurs in you overnight. And, similarly, you do not become an angel just by the virtue of death. You will have to be an angel now in order to be one later on.

Compare the present with the times when primitive men walked on the face of the earth and lived like animals. Man then did not know the music of the stars and the beauty of the moon, nor any of the wonderful things that he has since discovered. We have learned much, but we are still picking up pebbles on the vast seashore of life. We are living like the chick encased in an egg-shell. We do not know what is beyond. As the chick hatches out of the shell, so, by right methods, you can hatch yourself out of this physical shell and look into the bowl of space; then you will know that space is alive with other living beings.

Everything lives. Even a piece of tin lives and dies. In the ocean is a vast world with valleys, ferns, and beautiful creatures--all living in the water. ~~The fish think nothing can live except in water, but we know that is not true.~~ And we think that nothing can live without air, but that also is erroneous. If fish can live in water, other creatures also can live without air, as air is not the foundation of life. There is in Australia a lungfish that develops lungs when there is no water, and it can breathe air. When we leave the body we do not breathe and do not have a body like this one, but to think that we are dead is incorrect. Those who pass on into the other world are alive. The fact that they do not come in touch with us does not mean that they are not there. It is because of ignorance that we cannot communicate with them, nor they with us.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

You who are reading this and I who am writing it, and all the two thousand million people throbbing with life today, will exist a hundred years hence only as thoughts. Great men and small, with their highly sensitive bodies, must one day be buried beneath the grass or thrown into the hungry flames of cremation. We who are now so sure of our breakfast, lunch, and dinner, will be unable to swallow or to speak. Our lips will be sealed forever. We who love to listen to the sounds of the brook and the breeze, to the sweet melody of music, and to the familiar voices of our loved ones, must one day be absent, our ears closed, never again to hear any sound from this sad earth.

The roses and blossoms that you love will someday send the messenger of sweet fragrance to knock at the door of your perfume-loving sense, but the door of that sense will not open again. You will never again be lured by the

earthly perfume of nature. The day will arrive when all beautiful objects and faces will stand mutely before the gate of your gaze and will knock to get into the chamber of your appreciation, but you will no longer see imperfect matter.

The chamber of wisdom will be left untenanted. The brain that controlled your 27,000 billion cells and your bodily factory will direct no longer. The soft touches of the breeze and the warmth of the sunshine; the blessings of soft, kind hands; the raindrops, the ocean, and the waves; the cool and warm laving of water will soothe you no longer; your body will be inert as stone.

The day will come when you cannot see, when you cannot move your hands or feet, when you have no sense of smell, when your skin will not feel the touch of costly dress, and when you will have neither good nor bad thoughts, neither success nor failure, fear nor bravery, life nor death, wisdom nor ignorance, excitement nor peace. Since this must come to pass, why build bad habits and a conviction of permanent comfort around this melting butter-doll of a body? The heat of death will melt these frozen bodily atoms.

FORGET DELUSIONS Reincarnation is an indubitable fact, but do you realize that you will never have the same body, the same appearance, the same mind, the same friends, or the same place in which to live, and laugh, and die, in exactly the same way as you are experiencing them in this life? Remember, for a few years you have to play one role of sorrow and laughter on the screen of time, then this particular film of life will be shelved forever, never to be played again in the same way, but revamped and played on the screen of some other incarnation.

If each soul's worthless garment of flesh must be discarded, so that the soul may put on the shining robes of immortality, then why should you cry? If great immortality-declaring saints and trembling-at-death small men must both die, why should you fear death? It is a universal experience through which all must pass. Out of billions of souls no one--except Jesus and a few other great ones--has been allowed to come back to earth with the same body to tell all mankind that it is possible to return after death in the same body.

Forget the delusions of today. Get ready by making your acquaintance with God, so that at the end of the trail, when you pass through the portals of the last day of this life, you may be allowed to enter the kingdom of your Father and remain there forever.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Bliss-consciousness, or God-consciousness, can pervade all our actions and moods, if we let it. If we can get a firm hold on this thought, we shall be able to judge the relative religious value of every minor action and motive. If we are once convinced that the attainment of this Bliss-consciousness is our religion, our goal, our ultimate end, then all doubts as to the meaning of multifarious teachings, injunctions, and prohibitions of the different faiths of

the world will disappear. Everything will be interpreted in the light of the stage of growth for which it is prescribed. Truth will shine out, the mystery of existence will be solved, and a light will be thrown upon the details of our lives, with their various actions and motives.

INSURANCE WITH THE INFINITE

Several years ago, when I was on the train going to Los Angeles, I met a man whose manner and general appearance immediately attracted my attention. He was a well-dressed, prosperous looking businessman, with every indication that he was blessed with all the good things of life and had every reason to be happy. But regardless of all these favorable outer impressions, I felt very sorry for him because he emanated deep gloom. I said to myself: "What is the matter with this man? He seems to have buried himself beneath this artificial habit of gloom. I must resurrect him."

Looking straight at him, I said: "Are you happy?" He tried to discourage me with a fierce look, but I returned his gaze squarely. I reasoned that by his glare he had already annihilated me in his mind, so he could not kill me again. Finally he spoke. "Is that your business?" "Yes," I replied. "I resurrect the walking dead."

Shortly, he said, "Yes, I am happy." "No," I insisted. "I can tell what is in the mind."

"Why shouldn't I be happy?" he retorted. "I put fifty to sixty thousand dollars a month in the bank." "Poor soul!" I thought, realizing that he believed that his happiness lay in depositing those large sums in the bank. But I said, "Tomorrow you may not be here to carry a cent. Have you opened your 'bank account' with God?"

Later he invited me to lunch, but he was still inwardly antagonistic to me. Then we talked again, and he became more reasonable. "Do not rely on riches," I advised. "You may die and not even have a chance to make a will. These material riches are not yours. Open your 'bank account' with God."

He had become interested, so he suggested, "Meet me in Boston." I countered with the proposal, "Meet me in Los Angeles." But he did not have time. Later, when in Boston, I was in the hotel where he had told me he stopped. When I inquired about him the hotel manager said, "Don't you know what happened to him? He was coming from a hockey match and was struck down by a truck. He never regained consciousness." I felt very bad. He had awakened a little, but not enough to have been really helped.

If you have attunement with the Infinite, you will know that whether or not

nature shatters your body you are still on the lap of Immortality, still on the lap of that infinite assurance. Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of human habits and the human thoughts thereof. Live every second in the consciousness of your relationship with the Infinite. It is the one thing that will live forever. This I say not to frighten you, but to quicken your understanding, to quicken your efforts, so that you do not keep your soul buried under a false satisfaction.

Open your "bank account" with God--it will never be lost. You can use it through all your travels, now and in eternity, whether in an airplane or an astral plane. You should say to yourself: "From star to star I will fly; whether on this side of eternity, or the other side of eternity, or whether surging through the waves of life, from atom to atom--flying with the lights, whirling with the stars, or dancing with human lives! I am an immortal! I have resurrected myself from the consciousness of death."

AFFIRMATION

Thou art wisdom
And Thou dost know
The cause and end of all things.
I am Thy child;
I want to know
Life's true mystery,
Life's true joyous duty.
Thy knowledge in me shall show
All things that Thou dost know.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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UNITE OUR LOVE WITH THY LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O mighty Spirit, bless us that in our thoughts and actions, in our understanding, and in all that we do, we spread Thy glory on earth to establish temples to Thee in the souls of men.

Bless us that we not become sidetracked from Thee. Bless us that all our actions, thoughts, perceptions, and consciousness may converge toward one end--to establish Thee on the altars of our soul temples and in the souls of forgetful brothers.

Continuing to love all those whom we love now, and all those whom we loved before, we come to give the blossoms of our love to all. We carry blossoms of the loves of incarnations in the basket of our hearts, and we strew them in the hearts of others of all nations, of all things living, that we may give all to our Father.

A heart full of devotion, all the blossoms of our love, we bring unto Thee. We pray unto Thee in the burning language of our love. Reveal Thyself! No more shall we wander. We shall follow the path that straightway leads to Thee. Unite our love with Thy love, unite our lives with Thy joy, and our consciousness with Thy cosmic consciousness.

PRAYER

Beloved Father, this day I will resurrect my body into light, my mind into Cosmic Consciousness, my will into the Bliss of Spirit.

RESURRECTION--Part 1

What is the meaning of resurrection? To live again! To rise to renewed life! What rises again ...and how? We must understand in what way resurrection means to live again. Everything is undergoing a process of change. These changes are either detrimental or beneficial to the object which changes. For example, if I take a dirty glass and strike it on the floor, it will be changed, will it not? But this change will not be beneficial; it will be harmful to the object. However, if I wash the glass and make it shine, that change is beneficial. Resurrection means any beneficial change to an object or to a human being.

The soul outlives the body. It is eternal! But you do not have to wait until "Gabriel blows his horn" in order to be resurrected. God would never force immortal souls, created in His own image, to live for centuries in entombed bodies. The soul moves on to other regions when the body dies. If we are made in God's image, how can we die? Nothing really does die; it only changes form. So even the death of the body is a delusion. But resurrection refers to the soul, rather than the body. For it is the soul, not the body, that is made in the image of God--immortal, incorruptible.

In the Christian world, the word "resurrection" has been greatly misunderstood. People tend to cater to their own way of thinking, and very few try to delve into the reality of spiritual mysteries. Most men and women are satisfied with their own spiritual beliefs, and sometimes they are too listless to investigate or test those beliefs.

You can resurrect your old furniture in the carpenter's or upholsterer's shop. You can resurrect your house through the help of architects. But we are talking of resurrecting the human body. In this context, resurrection means any uplifting change. You cannot remain stationary. You must either go forward or backward. Isn't it a great and inspiring truth, that in this life you cannot remain stationary? You must accept changes constantly: both those which are harmful to you and those which are beneficial to you. In this Lesson, we are talking of the latter.

Resurrection is the art of emerging from what you are into what you are going to be in the future. In the beginning of creation you were a pure reflected image of Spirit, but you have smeared that image with the soot of ignorance, collected through many incarnations. That is why you were born with certain

limitations in this life. Now you must clean your face of life with the purifying waters of constant meditation. You must resurrect your real face of life from beneath the superficially gathered soot of error. Then you will know that you were, and are, and ever will be, a perfect reflection of Spirit. You are Spirit, though now you imagine yourself to be mortal. But by meditation on your true Self and by constantly performing your duties in a godly way, you will in time recall your forgotten Spirit nature, and remain in that consciousness through all futurity.

Every human being is an expression of the vast, immeasurable Spirit. Isn't it marvelous, when we see how human beings, without any motors, without any wires, without any visible source of power, run smoothly? The human machine wakes up in the morning, eats breakfast, goes to work, goes to lunch, goes back to the office, has dinner, goes to the movies (or perhaps enjoys some hobby at home), then it goes to sleep, to wake up and do the same things all over again, day in and day out.

We have no existence except in the universal. The body you see is nothing but materialized energy. How could energy be sick? Sickness is a delusion. But simply saying that it is delusion is not enough. If in a dream you strike your dream head on a dream wall, you will have a dream fracture. Wake up and you are healed of your dream injury. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches that only by coming into attunement with God can one see that the universe is God and the human body a mass of condensed energy. And energy is "frozen" Cosmic Consciousness. We should not call it mind. Mind is different. To say that everything is mind is incorrect. It is Cosmic Consciousness that causes us to be aware of different things, to have a consciousness of so-called matter and a consciousness of Spirit.

Death is not the end; it is emancipation, releasing us when we are too tired or exhausted by suffering to carry the burden of existence any longer. Death resurrects us from the painful tortures of flesh into awakened peace and calmness. Death is a pension earned by years of struggling through life. It enables you to rest. And when you are rested, your desires begin to work again and you want to satisfy them. When those desires become strong again, you come back into a human form.

RESURRECTION
FROM MENTAL
HABITS

Thought is infinite! Each word represents an ideal conception of the Infinite, because behind each word and thought is a manifestation of the Infinite. Many waves of thought are dancing in the waves of consciousness, but behind that there is the great unceasing ocean of Truth. Our thought expressions are waves of the ocean of understanding.

In the beginning of life, the soul plays with the body instrument; gradually it becomes the slave of the body. Hence we must learn to live a life above the physical plane. Mental development is superior to physical development. We find,

according to natural evolution, that the soul resurrects itself to the plane of intellect or the plane of prosperity, and then rises to the plane of spiritual realization, which gives a meaning to all prosperous development and intellectual attainment. Intellectual attainments are undoubtedly helpful--all good things help. Gradually, we understand the way to resurrect the body into the Spirit.

The silk worm weaves threads around itself into a cocoon. Then, before it slips out of the cocoon and becomes a butterfly, the manufacturer gets hold of it, and the silk worm meets its death in its self-created prison. We all do that. Before the wings of spirituality grow, we foolishly weave threads of fear, worry, and ignorance around ourselves until disease and death come and destroy us. We find ourselves in bondage created by ourselves. What is most destructive? Our own thought, our own wrong ways of living--acting first and then thinking. We must resurrect ourselves from spiritually deadening anger thoughts, from the thoughts engendered by selfishness, from the clamor of inharmonious living.

Resurrect yourself from the littleness of life, the little things that disturb you. Do you ever think that you have been completely unsettled by circumstances, ruffled, shattered, whipped--lacking power? Banish such thoughts! You have power; you do not use it. You have all the power you need. There is nothing greater than the power of the mind. Resurrect your mind from the little habits that keep you worldly all the time. Smile that perpetual smile--that smile of God. Smile that strong smile of balanced restfulness--that million-dollar smile that no one can take from you.

Resurrect your immortality, your real Self, which has been too much identified with human habits. Even as Jesus, when sorely tested, could manifest his love and say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," so you must show forgiveness during your exacting trials and say: "My soul is resurrected! My power to overcome is greater than all the weight of my trials, because I am a child of God." Thus your mental powers will expand, and your cup of realization will be big enough to hold the ocean of knowledge. Then you will have resurrected yourself.

Sometimes we pray theoretically; sometimes we think, momentarily, that we are resurrected from our blemishes, but it is only imagination. The facts of our words and actions prove something different. Resurrect your Self. Resurrection must take place not only theoretically; it must occur practically. The point is this: It is necessary to resurrect yourself (your soul) in order to free it from the thralldom of the body--to unite it with Spirit in order to attain Self-realization.

RESURRECTION FROM DISEASE

You must resurrect your mind from the consciousness of disease--from the thought of disease. The body now rules the mind, but the mind must rule the body. Then the body

will not accept suggestions of environment and suggestions of heredity. Wrong ways of living on the physical plane have been handed down to posterity. Often diseases appear only because you have stimulated the race consciousness of disease present in your forefathers, and thereby reinforced your susceptibility. You should always remember that if Spirit were to withdraw the radioactive energy that activates creation, you would drop dead, just like a bird that has been shot; despite all your prestige and all your money, you could not live. You must give the whole credit to God by remembering that you are living directly by His power. Resurrect yourself from the consciousness of physical disease. God did not create disease. Resurrect yourself from disease consciousness that has been handed down by your forefathers. There is a close relation between the mind and the body. Many times when you are cured of a disease, your consciousness of disease brings it back to you again.

Many people think that they are free because they can move their hands and feet, and walk on the street freely. They are not. They are in bondage, chained by the subconscious habit of moving in a certain way only, like men walking in their sleep. There are many forms of bondage. If you have not been able to resurrect yourself from the bondage of sickness, then you are still imprisoned behind the bars of matter. To resurrect yourself from disease by right living is extremely necessary. After many years of deep study, you can learn how to express health--by contacting Cosmic Energy.

Sickness and health are both dreams; prosperity and failure are both delusive. But a dream of prosperity is better than a dream of failure. Why not dream prosperity if you have to have dreams? You should try to have good dreams in this life. If you have too many bad dreams, you will be very busy crying and not have time to know that it is all a dream.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Give yourself to God. Do not break His laws; be reasonable. Do not be fanatical about anything. Do not wish to be free from every difficult situation but be prepared to meet any kind of trial or test.

Control the sensations of your body if you would like to know the difference between mind and matter. You can control the results of sensations by the power of your mind. Sensation is not a part of the mind unless the mind accepts those vibrations. Pain is the greatest delusion. The reason you feel pain is because you are attached to the body. Sleep or no sleep, food or no food, comfort or no comfort--it should not matter. Be above all these things.

I am not telling you to be rash, but gradually to try to endure more as your power increases. For instance, try to eat food that you have said that you don't like. Discipline the body. Then you can say: "Matter doesn't exist." You must

meditate and emphasize in your consciousness that you are only Spirit; then, when you wake up in God, you will know that you are one with Spirit, and that there is no death.

THE PRINCE WHO BECAME A BEGGAR--Part 1

In India it often happens that young men from various walks of life forsake their families and material prosperity to go in search of a master who can teach them the ways of renunciation and finding God in the temple of meditation. But even in India it is a rare occurrence if a prince leaves his material kingdom in search of the kingdom of God.

Before Jesus Christ graced this earth, there lived in India a great king, whose spiritual queen had a vision clearly indicating that a great divine soul was soon to become a member of her household. Strange to say, but true to the vision, the queen gave birth to a son, whom they named Siddhartha. Later, he was called Gautama, the Buddha, or the "Enlightened One."

Prince Siddhartha, from his early childhood, lived in a golden palace surrounded by gardens with every imaginable luxury and comfort. As the astrologers had predicted in the horoscope of Prince Siddhartha that he was to leave the kingdom and lead the life of a renunciant, his father took extreme precautions to protect his princely son from the sight of any misery or suffering, and from meeting any saints--which might arouse in him the consciousness of dispassion and desirelessness for worldly objects.

When the prince became a young man, he felt an inner urge to see the world, so one day he induced his principal attendant to escort him secretly out of the palace on a sight-seeing tour of the kingdom ruled by his father. Once out of the palace, the prince felt a tremendous freedom and joy at the sight of thousands of people saluting him and throwing garlands of flowers at him in token of their reverence for him as the future heir to the throne of India. Very soon, however, the prince began to notice the difference between his marble palace and the rickety village homes filled with squalor and dirt. Having been surrounded from his childhood with a spotless and rich environment, he had become accustomed to thinking that the whole world was like his surroundings. The result was that he became sick at heart upon realizing that he was so well provided for while others wallowed in worries and want.

As Siddhartha's chariot moved along through the cheering crowd, the prince suddenly saw a deformed, crippled man. He at once thought of his own beaming face and healthy body, and, staring at the the sorry figure of the crippled man, he exclaimed to his attendant: "Pray, good charioteer, tell me, can my body become crippled or deformed or diseased?" "Oh, yes, Prince," answered the charioteer. "The physical body is vulnerable to disease and suffering. One never knows what

is going to happen to it." At this astounding revelation, the prince became still more sorrowful and inwardly disturbed, and in his soul he felt the first disillusionment regarding the temporal material things that had encompassed his life.

As the prince moved along in his golden chariot, he was astonished at seeing a very old man with hoary hair and wrinkled face begging for alms. The prince stopped his chariot and accosted the old man: "Dear friend, has your body always been like this?" "Oh, no," the old man replied, "my body was just as beaming and healthy as yours in my younger days. Do not pity my old body, for your body will also become like mine when you grow old." The prince gave some alms to the old man but inwardly shuddered at the thought of his own beautiful body becoming shriveled and shrunk. He almost felt that the net of old age was already being pulled in about him from all sides.

Then to add further to his distress, as the chariot rolled along, the prince finally encountered four men carrying a dead man on a bed, as is the custom in India. The prince commanded that the chariot stop before the lifeless form of the man; then, in great bewilderment and agony, he asked his charioteer: "Pray tell me, is this the end of all human life? Will my beautiful body be congealed by death?" The charioteer hung his head and sadly whispered: "Yes, my Master, all life is subject to death and even you cannot become an exception in that event."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I perceive myself as the Cosmic Center
around which the sphere of Eternity, the
sphere of Bliss, the sphere of omnipresent,
omniscient, living space is revolving.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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REMOVING THE CORK OF IGNORANCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

No longer is my consciousness limited to a phial of flesh, corked with ignorance. No more do I move through Thine Ocean of Spirit day and night, years, incarnations--so close, yet without contacting the Sea. No longer do I thoughtlessly dwell in Thee, knowing and feeling Thee not.

As I listened in awe to the ever expanding cosmic sound, the surging of Thy holy Name, the vibrations removed the tight cork of delusion that had long prevented the mingling of my waters and Thine.

Now my being is consciously merged in Thine omnipresence. Having released the "I-ness" in me, I know that Thou art I; and that Thou art the souls of all.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Christ, bless me that I may behold my immortal Self, resurrected in the light of illumination present in every soul, every flower, every atom.

RESURRECTION--Part 2

CONSCIOUS RESURRECTION Resurrection means not only to transport body and soul to another sphere of existence, but to change the atoms of the body as well--to spiritualize them and release them from materiality along with the mind. Resurrection also means relaxation, to let go of the tenacious habit of identification with your body. In meditation you release yourself from identification with your mental body; you must similarly relax the life force from the internal physical organs, and thus do away with body consciousness. In that relaxation of your hold on body consciousness you become free; your soul nature is revealed and you know that you can live without the body though living in the body; it is separate.

Resurrection is not a change that takes place only after death. You must resurrect yourself while living in this body. You do it every night in sleep, which is unconscious resurrection. The next step is to do it in meditation, which is conscious resurrection. There were saints in India who, being apparently dead, were buried, and later brought back to life and consciousness after several days under the ground. They have proved that resurrection is possible. To do without food and still live is another kind of conscious resurrection.

Resurrection also means to free the soul from the cage of ignorance; to uplift and release the soul from the bondage of mortal consciousness. Human life is sometimes very beautiful, but one who is attached to it is like a bird of paradise in a cage. You open the bird's cage, but because of attachment and habit, it may stay in the cage and not want to fly away. Isn't it a pity that the bird does not want to go out into the boundless freedom whence it came? Yet it is afraid. We also, feeling ourselves slipping out of body consciousness in deep meditation, may think: "Will I slide into the Infinite and never come back?" We are afraid to try the skies of Omnipresence. We have lived too long identified with the body, and now we shrink from entering our own infinite home in space, frightened to resurrect our true omnipotence, our own divine omniscience of the soul.

SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION Life is glorious--beautiful--if only you can find God. Do not take this changing picture of life and death seriously; behold your immortality! It is the most joyous realization you can experience. God is hidden behind the moon and the sun and the stars; yet their light advertises His presence. He is advertising Himself through you, too. Your very conscience is the voice of God. But there is no offering you can make

that will persuade God to reveal Himself except real devotion and meditation. In every lily and in every gentle fragrance you can perceive His beauty, and yet you do not see Him as an entity, you just sense His essence. He says: "Follow the trail of beauty. I am hidden somewhere in its heart. I am Harmony, I am Love, I am Beauty, I am Fragrance, I am Joy."

Whenever you perform some good act, remember that you are being resurrected. And another thing, you must resurrect yourself in meditation. Compare your state before and after meditation. Meditate deeply if you would know Christ, or Krishna, or any of the great avatars. Let your evil habits, indifference, and restlessness die daily. And every time you want to be attuned to Christ, think of him and look in the inner spiritual eye between the eyebrows. That is the center of Christ (or Christna)-consciousness. Your human consciousness has a location in the body, and this Christ-consciousness has a location, in the spiritual eye in the center of the forehead. When you are deep in thought, your eyes naturally turn upward and your brow becomes wrinkled, to focus the eyes and attention on this center.

Do not delude yourself by believing in your human limitations. Think of the example of Jesus and other Christlike lives. Meditate! Man's cross is his heavy burden of bad habits. If you will try by deep meditation to get through the fog of restlessness, then you will see that you have come to the great soul kingdom of eternal happiness within. That is the resurrection I want you to experience. When your soul becomes attuned with the Spirit, then the silence begins to speak. You can go through that experience and feel that you are one with Christ.

When the ordinary child cries and its mother brings a toy, the child is satisfied and forgets what it was crying about. But the child who cries persistently, refusing to be satisfied with toys, forces the mother to remain at his side. So if you want the gift of Christ Consciousness, you must be like the persistent child: Throw away all your toys of useless desires and cry for God only. If you can arouse that burning zeal--that ardor by which you are determined to prove to the Lord that you want Him more than playthings--then He will come. Out of that silent crying, Christ Consciousness will be born in you.

You can mentally experience all the emotions and trials of Jesus, or of any other great master who has attained liberation, and by resurrecting your soul wisdom you can rise above those experiences and conquer them. If you can meditate deeply on God, some day you will be able to go through these experiences in the Christ-conscious state. So bring Christ Consciousness closer. Mentally go through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and you will get the lesson that he learned. It can be done. But you must meditate deeply upon it. You can attain understanding and devotion by meditation upon his experiences. And with every kindness and every good action that you perform you are immediately in tune with his divine consciousness. You have then made a new altar for Christ. He will instantly commune with you through your goodness.

Do not be satisfied with just a little joy in the silence of meditation. The joy of God-contact is more than that. For instance, suppose you are being punished by not being allowed to go to sleep when you are desperately in need of sleep, and then someone says: "All right, you may go to sleep now." Think of the joy you would feel just before falling asleep. Multiply that one million times! Still it would not describe the joy felt in contacting God.

**RESURRECT YOURSELF
INTO THE UNIVERSAL
CHRIST SPIRIT**

Jesus didn't perish, even though his body was crucified. He went into the ocean of Spirit and came back again, replete with the power of God, to show that all life is immortal. Very few of us are fortunate enough to have that experience. The mortal death of Jesus should not be emphasized. He was both human and divine. It is a beautiful thought that we, although human, can also be divine like him.

When we achieve Christ-consciousness, by improving our thoughts and our actions, we shall laugh at the dream of death and shall be resurrected in the freedom Jesus attained. What he could achieve, we too can achieve, for it was said of Jesus: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (and, as sons of God, attain victory over death). (John 1:12.)

Jesus came to show that the universal Christ spirit could be manifested in the human body. Jesus the man and Jesus the Christ were two different entities. Within the body of Jesus existed the universal Christ spirit. The body of Jesus was the vehicle. The universal spirit of Christ did not manifest only in the body of Jesus; it has manifested in all avatars. Resurrection means that the universal Spirit present in all creation as the Christ Consciousness is constantly being resurrected--that is, awakened or manifested, in everything.

Our souls "die"--lose sight of their immortal nature--when we are buried in the tomb of ignorance. Awaken yourself in Christ Consciousness. You can not only experience the life of Jesus in visions, but you can practice resurrection every day of your life. First, forget your old weaknesses and troubles. Just think: "Christ was resurrected, and I am resurrected too, for I am no longer my old self." You may believe that you are wicked, but today you can have a new birth. If you believe this, your belief will transform your consciousness. You can be what you want to be, no matter what your past has been. Persist in your determination. Believe what I am telling you.

Whenever you do away with ignorance and think good thoughts, Christ is being resurrected within you. Do you see? Resurrection is not the power of Spirit in the body of Jesus only; Spirit is in everyone. It is not necessary for man to die in order to resurrect Spirit. You can resurrect Christ Consciousness within you now.

Jesus struggled, Jesus suffered, and yet he won. From the debris of human frailties he rose up to declare: "I am immortal." Jesus was the ideal sent for

us to follow. He did not come on earth to enact the drama of life and death in an ordinary way; his mission was to show us that what he could do, we too can do--provided we meditate as he did, and provided we love God as he did. Worship of Jesus Christ without trying to emulate him is meaningless. You must try to be like him. We adore Jesus because he gave us an example by which we can pattern our own lives.

What is valuable and what is precious and great has to be achieved through evolution and through effort. To be like Jesus takes effort and willingness to pay the price. When your consciousness is like his--when you are able to give up your life for all, as he did--then the Infinite will manifest within you. The Unseen will be seen, and the Invisible will be visible.

The world may not know you, but if Christ knows you, then you are eternally a spiritual king.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

You do not know what joy lies beyond the screen of the subconscious mind. Do away with restlessness and bodily sensations, and sit quietly praying: "O Christ, be born within me." Then on the altar of silence He will come. The joy of Christ and God is indescribable. When the lips of every cell are drinking the nectar of Christ, when every thought imbibes the joy of Spirit, you have the proof that Christ is ineffable joy--joy that no changing dream of life and death can ever take away. Be resurrected in Christ. This can be experienced if you meditate deeply and practice the meditation techniques that have been taught to you through these lessons by our great Gurus.

THE PRINCE WHO BECAME A BEGGAR--Part 2

From that time on, the Prince's slumbering divine memory of past incarnations was awakened. He resolved inwardly to leave his princely surroundings and go in quest of truth, in search of a master who would solve for him the enigma of life. Whenever the prince returned to his palace, he was always moody and remained aloof from his beautiful wife, courtiers, and friends. His father, upon inquiry, discovered the reason for Siddhartha's moodiness, and immediately doubled the guard in his palace, giving strict orders never again to let the prince out where he could see what is ugly in the world.

Life for the Prince went on in this manner for some time, until one night divine love possessed Siddhartha; its intoxication was even greater than his conjugal love, or the tender love he felt for his newborn baby. Sitting on his bed, he gazed upon the beautiful faces of the queen and their infant son by the glimmering, dim light from the oil lamp in his palatial room, and he reasoned thus:

"I love my wife because God gave her to me and put in my heart the desire to love her. I love my baby because God gave me the life and love and intelligence to love him. That is why I should love God more than my family, for I could not love them without borrowing life and the power to love from God."

Feeling this divine impulse and the call of God--who tests His devotees as to whether they love Him more than His gifts of family and wealth and relatives and friends--Prince Siddhartha cautiously arose. Gently he awakened his charioteer, and commanded him to equip the royal chariot for a trip beyond the garden walls. The charioteer remonstrated, but to no avail. Reluctantly he prepared for the journey. But the question then arose as to how the palace gates could be opened; for they were guarded by watchful sentries.

It has been said that when the devotee is ready, God responds in mysterious ways. So it happened that when Siddhartha was ready, the sentries, according to the divine wish, were suddenly overtaken with a stupefying sleep. Thus it was that Prince Siddhartha's golden chariot soon raced out from behind the imprisoning walls of the palace. Farther and farther away it rolled. Arriving at a woodland spot, the Prince commanded that the chariot be stopped. Siddhartha alighted and, parting with his princely costume, asked the charioteer to exchange his plain clothes for the rich attire.

After thus transforming himself, Siddhartha, despite the lamentations of the charioteer--and his own thoughts of a relinquished palace and beautiful wife and son--briskly walked away, barefooted, into the jungle.

Siddhartha at first practiced many austerities and sought to overcome the flesh by fasting and discipline. Still he found no peace within, and his hungering spirit remained unappeased. At last he went to Bodh Gaya. There he seated himself under a banyan tree, and with great determination made the following resolution:

"Beneath the banyan bough
On sacred seat I take this vow:
Until life's mystery I solve,
Until I gain the Priceless Lore,
Though bones and fleeting flesh dissolve,
I'll leave this posture nevermore."

There he remained, according to the legend, without food or drink for seven years. (Continued)

AFFIRMATION

The immortal Christ Consciousness will be resurrected again in me when my wisdom repents, and forsaking its agelong slumber, remains awake.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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AWAKE FOREVER IN THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Father, may we find in our souls lasting temples of Thy presence. Let every brick of thought, all mortar of inspiration, be used to build a temple everlasting--a temple of wisdom within us--in which we shall behold Thy face of eternity, glistening with the glory of the stars, radiant with the joy of Nature. Receive, Thou, the fervor of our souls! Receive the devotion of incarnations, the love of ages, which we have kept locked in the vault of our hearts.

Let Thy mercy-rain fall upon us; let Thy love inundate our hearts; let all gloom leave the glorified shores of our consciousness. With folded hands, with humble hearts, with deepest devotion, we pray that today will be not the last opportunity, but the beginning of a greater understanding for those who study and practice to the end. May they follow the truth until the light of Thine understanding is firmly established in their hearts, and, once awakened, may they remain awake forever, forever in Thee!

PRAYER

O Spirit, help me to awaken in wisdom, so that I shall see within myself the resurrection of Christ Consciousness.

RESURRECTION -- Part 3

HOW TO
ATTAIN CHRIST
CONSCIOUSNESS

Christ Consciousness is that aspect of God's consciousness which is present in all creation, and of which we are a part. Each intelligence is a part of the vast Christ Intelligence.

We are like the jets in a gas burner. There are many little holes through which the ignited gas is pouring, but under the burner is but one flame. We are the little flames coming from the big flame of Life. Breathing through all the pores of life is the one Life, and within all flowers is the one Life, and behind all nature is the one Life. When you can feel your consciousness in all creation, then you will have attained Christ Consciousness.

When you can lift your consciousness beyond every created thing and realize the vast eternal joy of God alone, you are in Cosmic Consciousness. When you are in tune with that consciousness, which is beyond all creation, then you will see that God begat creation in the womb of His intelligence. The intelligence in all creation, which is the reflection of the intelligence beyond all creation (God the Father), is called Christ Consciousness, the Only Begotten Son. In India it is called Krishna Consciousness.

Krishna (or Christna) of India was Jadava, whose consciousness was in tune with the Intelligence that is in all creation. And Christ was Jesus, whose consciousness was in tune also with the Intelligence in everything. These two great ones had found that behind all life is the One Life. They had withdrawn their consciousness and seen that behind everything is the one reflection of God--the one Son of God--Christ, or Krishna Consciousness. Jesus, Jadava, Buddha, Babaji--all are Christs; that is, they expanded their consciousness to receive the universal Christ Consciousness.

THE THREE MINDS

The change from life to death is merely a passing from one dream to another dream. It is only a thought.

First you are dreaming that you are alive, and then you are dreaming that you are dead. When you attain that great Christ Consciousness, you realize that life and death are but dreams of God. That is why Jesus could say: "Destroy this temple (body), and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). He knew that he could change that dream of death into a dream of life, even as God can.

If someone pricks your body with a pin, you know it. Your consciousness is present in billions of body cells. You are also more or less conscious of every thought that you have during the day. But at the end of sixty years can you

remember all the thoughts you have entertained during your life? No. And yet most of them are there waiting to be recalled, for your subconscious mind registers the thoughts that were outstanding. The main events of your life are all recorded in your consciousness. God has given you, first, the conscious mind, which is more or less limited. At the end of several minutes--or days or months or years--your conscious mind begins to forget certain thoughts and events, but your subconscious mind contains the memory vaults, and everything of importance is stored there.

Now behind the subconscious mind is your superconscious mind, which never forgets anything you ever did. At the time of your death the superconscious mind will have kept a record of everything you have done, every thought you have entertained, and all these things will flash before you at the time you leave the body. Your strongest impressions will determine your next life's environment and habits.

Even as an ego--a soul living in body consciousness--your consciousness can be everywhere, for thought has no boundaries and you are present in each thought you have. If you can reach superconsciousness, beyond thought, then you can watch all your thousands of thoughts from that vantage. If you develop your superconscious mind, at the end of sixty years you will be able to remember all the thoughts you had during this life. In divine memory nothing is forgotten. Thoughts are things and are eternal, ever present in the ether.

EXPANDING
YOUR
CONSCIOUSNESS

In the beginning we are limited by our own ideas and our own thoughts. It is natural for us to be partial to our own ideas, and to overlook the ideas of others which may actually be bigger and better. We love to carry out ideas that are for our own benefit.

All of us find ourselves more or less fenced in by our desires and experiences. A person is free when he is through with being influenced by customs and conventions and is guided in all his actions by discriminative wisdom. Above all, we can best distinguish truth from error when we are free from those habits and customs that have been imposed upon us. When we are free from all prejudices and customs, we can see, without malice, what is right and what is wrong about different nationalities--but not until then.

As your range of experience begins to increase, you begin to stretch your consciousness, which is expandable like rubber and will never break. The more you stretch it, the greater it will be. When you limit your thoughts to yourself and your loved ones, then you are limiting your consciousness to yourself and preventing spiritual growth. But as soon as you begin to do something for someone else, then you are no longer completely selfish. You are taking a step toward Christ Consciousness. When you really do something for someone else without any thought of using that person for your own selfish ends or desires, then you have momentarily stepped into Christ Consciousness.

Relatives are those persons whom we think of as our own. By loving them we receive training in stretching our consciousness, and practice in loving all peoples as our relatives, because both our relatives and those whom we think of as strangers are all children of our one Father. If you limit your love to your family, you limit your consciousness. When you love your neighbors as your family, then you are beginning to express Christ Consciousness. When you feel for all people with the love that you feel for your own loved ones, then you are expressing Christ Consciousness. If wherever there is a lonely heart or a weeping brother by the wayside your heart goes out to that soul, you have at such moments temporarily expanded your consciousness into Christ Consciousness.

One morning, at Sri Yukteswar's hermitage, I experienced a divine state in which I was in tune with everything. I could not distinguish between my brother and anyone else. Later, when I went to Master, he said, "Your training is finished. You feel the same love for all." Master knew my thoughts and feelings. My guru was not interested in what people were saying, but in what they were thinking. He was always conscious of everything that was going on, always calm. He had expanded his consciousness into Christ Consciousness.

SYMPATHY AND UNSELFISHNESS

The world is yours. All space and everything in creation is yours. When you realize this, then you are in Christ Consciousness. You should strive mightily to reach that consciousness wherein you realize and feel that everything is yours and you have no prejudices about race or color. When you begin to feel the hearts of others, then you are developing Christ Consciousness. When you have that consciousness, you have the love of a million mothers in your heart, you have love for everybody. You feel it, not just imagine it. That is the kind of love Jesus had.

This sympathy develops by practicing the transcendental way of meditation. The superconscious-minded man is one who is always happy and always wise, and who retains the aftereffects of meditation. If you can retain without any effort the expanded state of consciousness that you feel after fruitful meditation, then you have superconsciousness. And Christ Consciousness comes after superconsciousness.

Be sincere with all; and above all, be sincere with yourself. God watches you. You can't deceive Him. In your heart there must be sympathy that takes away all pain from the hearts of others. That is what Jesus had when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He had that great love of the Christ Consciousness for all. He could have destroyed all his captors with a look. As God is constantly forgiving us, even knowing all our thoughts, so those who are fully in tune with Him naturally have that same love.

METAPHYSICAL WAY TO CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS

There are many people who read a few books and then say that they have Christ Consciousness. You can have that only through meditation and self-disciplinary effort. God is the whisper in the temple of your conscience and God is the light of intuition. You know when you are doing wrong. Your whole being

tells you, and that feeling is God's voice. If you do not listen to Him, then He becomes quiet; but when you spiritually awaken again, He will guide you. He is always waiting for the time when you will return home. He sees your good and your evil thoughts and actions, but whatever you do, you are loved as His child just the same.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The metaphysical way to Christ Consciousness is greatest; and that is through meditation and by holding on to the aftereffects of meditation. Your consciousness is not limited by this body, but when it is expanded you will sense the feelings of all peoples. You will be able to know all about them. Marvelous realizations will come to you. Sometimes when that state comes you will be able to feel yourself in the stars and in the moon, and in every blade of grass. You will think: "He whom I was seeking outside of myself--in the stars and the clouds--I found within myself! What a revelation! He is within whom I searched for without."

THE PRINCE WHO BECAME A BEGGAR -- Part 3

After years of severe fasting, Prince Siddhartha looked barely alive; his body had become so thin that he looked almost like a skeleton. But he continued his extraordinary communion. One night as he sat in meditation some beautiful women appeared and danced around him; they were demons who had come through the instrumentality of Mara (Satan) to tempt him to give up his loving search for God and to enjoy the frivolities of material life. But Prince Siddhartha smote the earth and said, with great determination: "Mara (Cosmic Delusion), I have conquered thee. Tempt me no more." As if by magic, all the dancing forms (materialized subconscious visions of hidden material desires) vanished. He perceived within himself an ocean of peace and wisdom. From that time on, Gautama was referred to as the "Buddha" or the "Awakened One."

Next morning a princess visited him and gave him a rice preparation to eat. She told him that it was not necessary to fast so long, weakening his body, in order to attain Self-realization. Self-realization, she said, could be attained through concentration, deep meditation, and continuous inner love of God; it is not necessary to torture the body, which is a temple of God.

Thus the princess acted as a divine intermediary to instruct Gautama Buddha that he could attain spiritual realization only through the Spirit within, not through mere physical discipline of the body.

Gaining great strength of body and spirit, Buddha, garbed as a mendicant, went all over India preaching to thousands of people the way of complete renunciation. His message spread like wildfire, and hundreds followed him. Even his

forsaken queen left the luxuries of the golden palace to put on the garb of a beggar and embrace discipleship under her husband--now her guru--the prince who chose to be a beggar.

Buddha's great message of love for all human beings, and of mercy toward animals, spread through most parts of India and into all China and Japan. His noble "eightfold path" taught how to escape misery and free oneself from the karmic wheel of birth and death. One of the principles he emphasized (and illustrated in his own life) was the doctrine of mercy, not only for human beings, but for all animals. One day as he was passing through the estate of a feudal prince of India, he saw that the people were about to sacrifice a little lamb before the temple, and that the ceremony was presided over by the local ruler himself. So keenly did Buddha feel the presence of universal life, even in animals, that he was painfully shocked at the pitiful sight. Walking up to the prince, Buddha begged him to spare the life of the little lamb, offering himself as a sacrifice in its stead. Touched by the sincerity and deep love manifested by Gautama Buddha, the prince agreed to spare the lamb, and, far from sacrificing Buddha, he and all his subjects became followers of the Enlightened One.

In different periods of world civilization, the great teachers of those eras taught their particular doctrines according to the different needs of human beings at the time. When there is a lack of wisdom, a great teacher appears on earth preaching wisdom. When there is a lack of love, a great teacher appears on earth bearing a message of love. Jesus Christ bore the message of devotion and wisdom to the world. Buddha bore a message of mercy for all beings.

Many followers of Buddha misunderstood his doctrines, and in some countries his teachings degenerated into a nihilistic philosophy: "nirvana" was interpreted as extinction rather than as God-communion, the great Goal of life. Many of his devotees turned to Swami Shankara, who established the doctrine that freedom from reincarnation (i. e. , nirvana or extinction of the desires that keep man bound to the wheel of reincarnation) is not only the goal of life; but that it constitutes an expansion of consciousness--a positive attainment--of ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, or God.

AFFIRMATION

All the veils of my ignorant inner life
are burned in the light of my awakening in
Christ.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The story of creation, from the beginning on through the resurrection, is the story of each individual as well as of the universe. Life and Truth are ever existent, but must become Self-conscious in each individual through the light of Self-realization. It is through this constant expansion of the light of realization in all matter that each manifestation is uplifted to a higher vibratory expression of the Infinite.

Upon man rests the final responsibility, through his power of attunement with Infinite Intelligence, to lift matter into Spirit. You are one with the Infinite Intelligence, you are one with the Infinite Flame of Life now! In meditation this realization floods your being, and one day it will leave you no more, but will burn steadily forever in eternal bliss.

LESSON NO. 105 Truth is ever existent, ready to pour itself into the cup of your realization; but the amount of truth that you can perceive is dependent upon your own capacity, your intelligence and intuition. The faculties required to know truth must be developed. The only proof of the truth contained in the scriptures is in living the life, and in the knowledge attained through intuition gained thereby. Intellectual study alone will never bring perception of truth. You may know all the facts about sugar, but you do not know its flavor until you taste it. And so it is with truth, which must be intuitively experienced. Pure intelligence, pure feeling, calm reason, and meditation lead to intuitional realization. Experience truth yourself. That is the only method by which you may test the scriptures.

Incessant and indiscriminate study of religious books should be avoided, as it usually results in mental and emotional indigestion. Spiritual truths should be studied a little at a time and meditated upon for hours or days together. Studied in the correct way for perception, they should be a perpetual inspiration and source of continual spiritual nourishment. By the very nature of realization, even a knave, once perceiving and realizing truth, could be a knave no longer.

The scientist experiments with things outside himself. The metaphysician experiments with what is within himself. The scientist deals with inferential knowledge dependent upon data furnished by the senses. The power of

the senses is limited and often deceives us. Intuition developed in meditation cannot be wrong. Intuition is the power that tests truth. The whole philosophy of the East is based upon intuitive experience.

Many people have talked about God, have wondered about Him, and read about Him; but few have tasted the nectar-bliss of His presence. Only those who taste Him know Him. If you find God within, you will find Him without-- everywhere; but if you try to find Him without, not having first sought Him within, you will never find Him. If you follow the path of Self-realization steadfastly and meditate regularly, you will see Him in the golden robe of light, spread throughout eternity.

LESSON NO. 106 Spirit is. Spirit is the Unmanifested Absolute--vibrationless, without beginning or end, ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Joy. God the Father is Manifested Absolute, the first vibratory projection of Spirit. God, the Creator, is the Christ intelligence, which further appears as the cosmic intelligent vibration or Holy Ghost, which in turn appears as the cosmic intelligent energy, or cosmic sound of Om. The "faithful and true witness" mentioned in the scriptures refers to this intelligent cosmic vibration, the Holy Ghost, or sacred vibration, cognizable to the human being as the cosmic sound, "Om," heard in silence, and the spiritual eye seen in meditation.

Vibration is a force, and it is organized by cosmic intelligence manifesting as matter in its varied forms.

The consciousness in creation is called "Christ Consciousness." The human body is a miniature universe; our consciousness is the microcosmic reflection of Christ Consciousness. Because our consciousness is busy with the body and the mundane world, it does not hear the voice of creation. However, by listening to the cosmic sound that is emanating from the cosmic energy, your consciousness will become one with it. Through that contact, your consciousness expands to behold everything; then you attain Christ Consciousness. The only approach to this consciousness is through the Holy Ghost, "the faithful witness." When you hear the cosmic sound, and your consciousness is one with it, then you are one with Christ. Receive the light of God through that sound, and know that the little bubble of your life is embraced by the great ocean of all life.

The idea-universe (causal or ideational), is the cause of the subtle universe (astral or finer forces), which in turn is the cause of the material universe (grosser vibrations). The universe is divine-intelligence-molded matter.

LESSON NO. 107 God first created the forces of electrical, thermal, and electronic laws and matter in idea only, by the law of relativity, or duality of thought. The earth then was without form and void,

being created in idea only. Then the Spirit of God, or intelligence of God, vibrated upon the mentally created elements. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The entire universe is made of electrons that are called "Light." All the manifested universe is made of light rays, or different vibrations of light. God looked upon the light and saw that it was good, and serviceable in His work of creation--that it could be vibrated into myriad manifestations according to the manifold relativity of His thought.

The cosmic light was divided into fine elements and gross elements through the medium of intervening space. The firmament in the midst of the waters, dividing the waters from the waters, is called "space," and is a distinct vibration separating the finer from the grosser forces. It separates the astral from the physical. It is the boundary line between heaven and earth. It is the receptacle of the finer forces. All angels, all sounds, all finer forces--as electricity, for example--are hidden in space. Science has made inroads into space and has drawn electricity for man's use, and has drawn also some vibrations to be heard by the human ear through the use of radio.

Our sight, hearing, smell, and taste are limited to perceiving this finite world. The spiritual eye is the pearly gate through which our wisdom must pass in order to pierce space and behold the other world, which in reality lies all about us. If our ears were attuned, we could hear the music of the spheres. Only through meditation can we break the shell of finiteness, and thus, through the expansion of our consciousness, become aware of the infinite beauty in space.

LESSON NO. 108 "And the evening and the morning were the second day." We must remember that, from a scientific standpoint, a "day" means a cycle of many years taken by light to become the subtle elements, and for the subtle elements to change into the gases and gross nebulae that eventually became condensed into water and dry land. A "day" or cycle means millions of years, the time required to express a particular phase of creation. The waters (elements) began to move under the intelligent vibrational force of God, and to draw together or separate, according to the ideational picture, at the command of God. For first there came mental or ideational creation, then astral creation, and finally material creation.

All things in the universe attract one another; thus the "influence" of planets is simply one's environment, which is dependent upon his own karma. It is you who attract such influence or environment and allow it to control you. If you let yourself be governed by an environment to which your karma has drawn you, then you are ruled by vibrations of the planets. It is true that you may have attracted from a former life that influence which is present in this life, but you need not allow it to continue. You were given the power of dominion. Use it!

Every day and minute and hour are the windows through which you may see eternity. Every minute is eternity, because eternity can be experienced

in that minute. Understand the present moment and you understand eternity. Understand how to crack the shell of these truths and realize their true meanings through meditation-born intuition.

LESSON 109 God's differentiated consciousness, or seven manifestations, are the "seven angels before the throne of God," or the seven agents creating and controlling the different departments of creation. Man was created according to the images and plans evolved by these subjective offspring. Thus "us" is the differentiated consciousness, or manifestations, of God the Father.

The presence of God the Father is manifested in the material universe as Christ Consciousness, the divine intelligence that guides the activities of cosmic vibration or Holy Ghost. Hence the Christ Consciousness is spoken of as "the only begotten of the Father," i. e., the only reflection of the Father in creation.

The Christ intelligence immanent in creation differentiates itself into six subjective creative intelligences: Iswara, Hiranyagarva, Birat, Pragnya, Taijas, and Biswa. Each of these six reflections of the Christ intelligence in creation governs one of the six objective reflections of the Holy Ghost or Cosmic Vibration: the macrocosmic ideational, astral, and physical universes; and the microcosmic ideational, astral, and physical bodies.

Study carefully the chart and the outline in this Lesson. Familiarize yourself with the names of the six spirits, or differentiated forms of consciousness governing the six objective manifestations of vibratory creation. Cosmic Consciousness, whether present microcosmically or macrocosmically in the universe, is the same; it is only designated differently in reference to universal or individual appearance or manifestation.

As in a general way the President and Congress govern the United States, so it can be said that God the Father beyond creation, reflected as Christ in creation, rules the vibratory cosmos. And as the fifty states of America are ruled by the President, Congress, Governors, and other officials, so it can be said that the vibratory creation is ruled by God the Father, God the Son or first reflection, and His six reflections. In order to understand the objective plane one must study and understand the subjective plane. In order to understand the so-called "mysterious universe," one must know how it is governed by God and the "seven angels before His throne." The cosmos works under a definite plan. The stars, moon, sun, seasons do not change mysteriously, but according to a definite plan modified by the free will of man.

Man is a part of the earth, and his consciousness seems limited to the body; but when he hears Om, the vibration moving through the three creations -- ideational, astral, and physical -- and when his consciousness expands, he feels Christ Consciousness. When he experiences Christ Consciousness, he senses that the consciousness in all creation is the same as that beyond all

creation. When he feels that, he realizes the truth of the statement: "I and my Father are One." But he must first feel Christ Consciousness in all creation.

LESSON NO. 110 The Spirit is knowledge plus feeling. Reason and feeling are expressed in different bodies. It can be said that man represents God, and woman represents Nature. These two are equal in divine expression. In man (positive pole) reason is predominant and feeling subjective. In woman (negative pole) feeling is predominant and reason subjective. The spiritual marriage consists in woman, or feeling, uniting with the knowledge of God-created man or masculine force, and thus becoming one in Spirit. Study the following diagram:

(God	(Man	(Positive)	Perfect balance in God-
(	(Reason predominant	(	) contact when both man and
(Nature	(Woman	(Negative)	woman possess both perfect
(	(Feeling predominant	(	) reason and feeling.

The bodies of the original man and woman were sustained by the Spirit, individualized as Soul. In the original plan of creation, man and woman, ideal soul mates, were to lead a heavenly life by keeping their minds in the heavenly region of bliss-will in the forehead. Man's being placed in a "garden eastward in Eden" means that he was originally in that center of consciousness in between the eyebrows where the sun of the heavenly eye is seen.

The human body is the Garden of Eden. The spine is symbolized as the Tree of Life, the tree of consciousness through which flows the sap of life in order that the blossoms of the senses and thoughts may flourish. The spinal cord is the trunk, the cranial nerves are the roots, and the afferent and efferent nerves are the branches. "Trees" refers to various nervous systems. "The fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden" refers to the sensation of sex, the fruit of the tree of sex nerves. To "die" here means to lose divine consciousness. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their consciousness fell from the spiritual eye, and henceforth they had to depend upon the sight of their physical eyes alone. They became body-conscious and were aware of their nakedness. "The serpent," the outgoing current of life energy stimulating the nerves of creative force, tempted them to physical union, whereby they lost divine consciousness.

Adam and Eve were empowered to create children after their hearts' desire by materializing the life force into a body by the immaculate method, even as God did in creating them. When man, instead of keeping his consciousness on the Paradise spot in the region of pure thought at the Christ-consciousness center, allowed the mind to run down to the sex plane, he fell from being able to perform immaculate creation by will to the method of physical propagation.

The creative force that flows through the coiled passage in the coccyx is called the "Kundalini Power" in Hindu books. It arouses the negative feminine

instinct of feeling, or Eve, in man. As emotion awakens and overpowers reason, it leads man to plunge into conjugal experience.

All children are born and nurtured in the paradise of peace and purity until tempted by the creative serpent force. Innocent boys and girls are thus thrown from the heaven of pure living. They should be taught that the sex instinct must be controlled and moderated. Love, pure love, must predominate.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP FIVE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

- Lesson 105
1. Why is an intellectual concept of the scriptures insufficient for knowing the truth contained in them?
 2. In what way do the metaphysician and the scientist differ in their method of experimentation?

- Lesson 106
1. What is the bridge between human consciousness and Christ Consciousness?
 2. Name and describe briefly the three divisions of the created universe. How are they related to each other?

- Lesson 107
1. What does the word "darkness" in Genesis 1:2 of the Christian Bible signify?
 2. Explain the meaning of "And God said..." which occurs in the first chapter of Genesis.
 3. What is meant by: "And God saw the light, that it was good"?
 4. Define space and describe its function.
 5. Of what is the universe made?

- Lesson 108
1. What period of time does the word "day" signify in Genesis?
 2. Name the order of creation in its several steps.

- Lesson 109
1. What is maya?

Lesson 109 (continued)

2. Briefly define the meaning of "us" in Genesis, where God says: "Let us make man in our image."
3. Explain the difference between Christ Consciousness and Holy Ghost.

Lesson 110

1. What is "the tree of life" in Genesis? Why is it called that?
2. What, in Genesis, is the "fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden"? Why were Adam and Eve commanded not to eat of this fruit?
3. Where is the garden of Eden?
4. What is the serpent referred to in this story?
5. How did Adam and Eve fall?
6. Explain spiritual marriage and its ultimate purpose.

Note: Although Self-Realization Fellowship does not request a Personal Report on Step Five, please let us know if there is anything in the material received thus far that is not clear to you, or if we may be of help to you in your practice of the techniques.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 111 A certain amount of preparation is necessary for bodily healing. To continue to disobey laws of right living is to obstruct the forces of healing, because you continue to aggravate the cause of the disease. If you are suffering and wish to be healed, prepare yourself now in the following ways:

- (1) be cheerful and optimistic of disposition;
- (2) obey the laws of good health (dietary, hygienic);
- (3) decide what method of healing you are most strongly inclined to put your faith in (mental or medical healing) and then if you want help, go to that type of healer;
- (4) realize that whatever the instrument of healing, God is the power behind it--nothing can operate without God's power;
- (5) above all, destroy ignorance, for it is ignorance that leads to transgressions of every kind, which result in spiritual, mental, and physical inharmonies.

Electricity and rays will be the medicine of the future. In ages of still greater achievement, thought will be the instrument of healing. Thought, understanding of the laws, and will power are the necessary ingredients for healing. Man is constantly advancing in his understanding of the universal laws, moving from discoveries about the grosser forces to an understanding of finer forces.

Nervousness consists in heeding certain sets of sensations produced by the nerves. Nerves are little tubes through which sensations are carried to you. To identify your happiness with the sensations brought by them is deadly.

Nervousness is of three kinds: physical, mental, and spiritual. Physiological nervousness may be destroyed by harmonious environment and correct eating habits. Mental nervousness may be destroyed by good reading, good company, good thoughts, etc. Spiritual nervousness may be destroyed only by meditation --transference of attention from the body to the infinite nature of the true Self.

Regular meditation is important. When nerves control the mind, the soul is controlled by material things, and miseries result. Meditation enables you

to feel the greater power of the soul behind you. In the realization of your greater self, you no longer find yourself limited to the little body and all of its sensations. At last you realize that you are the Intelligence behind this body, the infinite Joy. Use your nerves to drink the honey of infinite Peace.

LESSON NO. 112 Before one can have faith in mental healing, it is first necessary to understand the relation of mind to body. Otherwise, lingering doubt may remain in the back of the mind and neutralize the constructive thought. Then one may lose what little faith existed. Understand the laws, then develop your will power. Will and energy are the two most effective powers in the system. Will controls energy. It is not the will that heals, but it is the will that rouses the energy. There is no greater or more effective force than energy applied by will power. They are the real creators of the body. To be active and successful, a thought must be impregnated with such will power that it will resist everything and materialize. Remember: if you heal the soul, the body will be automatically healed.

In preparation for healing another, you must first put the patient into a receptive mood and instill faith. Use reason and suggestion. Your will power, tuned in with divine will, is the seed that must be planted. Do not try to heal anyone who doubts you, for then the patient's will is not tuned in with yours. The patient's will must be tuned with yours, and yours must be tuned with divine will.

Human will is the reflection of divine will and when guided by wisdom it is unlimited power. God's will controls the cosmic energy. Then, to send energy into the body would require that you convert, or tune, your will into divine will.

Study carefully the technique of healing given in this lesson. The life force coming through the medulla is the direct source of life. Your part as healer is to contact that current directly and send it through your spiritual eye into the spiritual eye of your patient. Practice the technique just as given, and visualize the current going through the point between your eyebrows into the point between the eyebrows of your patient. Then just know that the cure has taken place; do not even investigate to see if it has. Give the whole credit to the divine healing power and divine energy. Never say, "I cured."

The collision between the creative or outgoing force, and the divine gravitational force drawing everything toward God, causes inharmony in the universe and results in so-called disease in the human body. Disease is anything that keeps us from God-realization. To relieve this state of disease, it is necessary to get into the main stream of force gravitating toward God and away from the pull of the repulsive outgoing force. Therefore, it may be plainly seen that healing must take place at the source of the inharmony and must be divinely treated. The soul must be "healed" or drawn back to God.

LESSON NO. 113 When you say "I am the Changeless, I am the Infinite," you are repeating a divine truth. You are a spark from

the Divine Being. At first, this truth dawns upon you gently, then as the mighty realization floods your consciousness, you know that all outer change is due only to your concentration upon environment and body appetite. You can keep your world steady and harmonious by concentrating upon the inner changeless spark of life, which is the real you. You must not neglect the body and its needs; but you will find that its needs become fewer as you advance in the practice of these principles. Care for your body as you would an instrument which serves you well, but do not be attached to it nor bound by habits. "Man shall not live by bread alone."

If you concentrate upon change, your consciousness is bound to outer things. Too much protein and flesh food keeps you on the sense plane, which in turn involves you in complications of living, troubles and inharmonies. Learn to live more by energy. Concentration upon the inner dynamo, which you are, prevents your energy from leaking out. You will not become tired if you learn to keep your energy in your body.

This is the way to greater freedom. Concentrate upon changelessness and do not be affected by changes going on around you. Hold your center of peace and happiness. You become magnetized with God when your attention is upon God.

If you can quicken your soul, so that it does not go back to the material plane to be governed, and to material attractions, then it can release itself into Immortality. You fear change because you do not understand it. Your attention is upon the change instead of upon its cause. This fear is due to bodily consciousness. There are two vital steps on the way to immortality. One is to rechemicalize your body through meditation, work, food, etc. The other is retention of consciousness upon the plane of changelessness. Then you will know that there is no death. May the light of the Infinite shine forth from within you.

The sun, by its magnetic divine love, holds the earth from swimming away in space, and the earth loves the sun with its own love and keeps its separate individuality within the circle of the sun's magnetic love-boundary. God bound the stellar systems, solar systems, and island universes with the greater love of His harmony. The earth, by the gentle attracting motherly love force of gravity, holds her children from falling off her soft cloddy breast.

LESSON NO. 114 Desires and sensations of all kinds, carried to the mind by the various telephonic nervous systems, obstruct our perception of the soul's true knowledge. The only way to destroy these veils which blind us to reality is to eliminate sensations, desires, and truant thoughts. When all obstructions, distractions, or veils are lifted, then there is no negation, but reality--God. So we must know how to do away with all the obstructions. The great shortcut, or airplane route, is through the correct method of meditation,

by which you automatically shut off all the sense telephones and thus disengage your attention from all objects of disturbance. Scientific meditation means the withdrawal of current from the nerves, thus clearing the lake of the mind for the perception of reality, the face of God. If at the time of so-called death, you can hold on to the state of superconsciousness born of deep meditation, you will go consciously into the Infinite.

Everyone is seeking a happiness that will not turn to ashes in his hands, leading to further restless seeking and disillusionment, a happiness that will not pall or diminish by familiarity. It is ever existing, ever conscious, ever new joy that all mankind is seeking. Through experience man learns that earthly pleasures are fleeting. Usually he finds that when he gets a thing he wanted, he is still dissatisfied, and so he follows desire after desire, never finding completion or perfect happiness. The joy of meditation is that awareness of Reality, that perception of God, by which love for God is born. With that love--that joy --in your soul, you are divine and know immortality. Meditation brings proof of the existence of God.

Practice the technique of breathlessness as given in a former lesson on meditation. Practice meditation regularly. Let nothing interfere. If you know and love God, all else will be added unto you.

God is the Universal Intelligence governing everything. When you hear the cosmic sound of Om oozing out of all atoms, then your consciousness is bridged into the Universal Consciousness. The sound of Om is beyond the physical and the astral sounds. You will distinctly know it when you hear it in meditation. To reach God you have to go through the three states of consciousness, Holy Ghost, Christ-consciousness, and Cosmic-consciousness.

Practice the marvelous method of meditation with open eyes, as given in this lesson.

God's divine attraction of love acts through evolutionary persuasion. Imprisoned divine love in the human heart breaks the bars of selfishness and begins to spread itself in parental, conjugal, and family love. Then it breaks the bars of communal, patriotic and national consciousness, and includes the love of all living creatures. Then divine love extends its love ecstasies to the region of mute stars, distant sun furnaces, and rings of dancing starlets. And so divine love finds itself back in the bosom of Omnipresence, all melted in Oneness.

Do not impede the course of divine love by limiting attachments, which end in satiety. Love expands in increasing qualities of usefulness. Develop ever increasing, divinely emancipating usefulness--unconditional, impersonal. Love is the cosmic attractive force of God to bring back all things that went forth from His bosom.

Spirit is in everything and has in Itself a great drawing power; therefore, all things created out of Spirit have this drawing power, though only in an individualized state. The soul's power of moving toward God is called "soul magnetism." It is an uplifting, expanding power, and has the power of expanding the consciousness of persons who come under its radiation. That is why, if you are near-- and especially if you tune in with persons of highly developed soul magnetism-- you feel an expansion of your own consciousness, a keen awareness and an awakening of your discriminative power and intuition.

One who meditates on Om and God day and night, and intuitively perceives the all-attracting divine magnetism, develops spiritual magnetism of limitless range and power. By meditation one contacts this higher magnetism and goes consciously toward God, at the same time attracting others into this unifying and uplifting plane of consciousness.

The Satanic force is an expulsive force going out from God and finitely creating; hence reincarnation, the law of cause and effect, and the power of desire born of contact with finite matter. The only way man can free himself from this wheel of birth, or this outgoing tide, is to tune the attractive force of his own soul with the emancipating attractive force of Spirit and thus overcome the delusive sense of duality and separateness. Man's mind and senses are attracted to finite matter; his discrimination and intuition are attracted to soul-pleasing actions and Spirit. Thus the struggle. Through meditation, then, is the only freedom.

The soul, by the power of discrimination and intuition, tries to pull into itself, and put into harmonious actions, all unifying noble bodily and mental forces. By soul magnetism one draws to oneself all good human experiences, the right friends, loved ones of past incarnations; even dominion over the elements is possible. One may draw all creative luminous forces, and invite angels, saints, and savants. Such a person can attract to himself the rays of all knowledge.

Avoid above all things the detrimental effects of hypnotism and animal magnetism. Animal magnetism is more subtle than hypnotism in that a person is conscious, and sometimes not aware of the magnetic influence causing him to become blinded and prejudiced in his judgment, so that he is secretly guided by another's instincts and habits. Animal magnetism and hypnotism have just the opposite effects from soul-expanding spiritual magnetism.

Meditation is the door to true freedom. Practice the spiritual exercises in this lesson.

My greatest purpose is to help you to reach the superconscious state and commune with God. In superconsciousness there is the germ of Divinity. There is no longer limitation. There is wisdom. If you go the right way, you will have that wealth and happiness and success that is God's. Do things with the sanction

of God, then you will not be a slave to environment. You are receiving this teaching through the masters who have been emancipated. If you practice the techniques they will emancipate you too, because they are from God.

LESSON NO. 116 Fear only to be afraid. Fear is the greatest enemy to success and good health. It is a mental poison. It draws to itself the object of its fear. It increases suffering by stimulating the imagination. It is destructive to the heart, nervous system and brain. It must be psychologically uprooted.

All the successes and failures and troubles of many lives are packed as seed tendencies in your present consciousness, and begin manifesting when favorable germinating forces arrive. They are deep-rooted and keep accumulating unless worked out by fruition or wisdom.

When you find yourself haunted by fear, the first antidote is to know that you are protected behind the battlements of God's eternal safety. Nothing that happens to you can harm your eternal Self. Even death is but a spiritual anesthetic to relieve one from pain for a period immediately following mortality. Then recognize fear as an enemy to your sense-to-avert-danger consciousness:

1. Shift your consciousness to the peace and calmness within.
2. Concentrate upon courage.
3. Summon determination and volition. Will power is the motive power for the machine of activity.
4. Do something, calmly and quickly, mustering all the power of your judgment.
5. When fear comes, tense and relax, exhale several times.

The stages of success consist in the following:

1. Choice of suitable vocation.
2. Performance of work with attention, love, interest.
3. Continued interest and patience.
4. Hold thought of constant progress, to neutralize results of mechanical detail work.
5. Cultivate the consciousness of being God's child.
6. Float your desire in the Cosmic Vibration during meditation.

Opportunities in life come by creation, not by chance. You can create opportunities now. If you have no job, shake up the world until you find one, and don't give up.

Steps on the ladder of success:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hard work 2. Creative ability | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Seek expert advice, use good judgment |
|---|--|

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 4. Economy | 8. Spend less than income |
| 5. Renewed effort after failure | 9. Try to make others prosperous |
| 6. Character | 10. Spend naturally for God's work |
| 7. Regularity | |

Above all, find God in meditation. When you are in touch with His power, all the divine forces of nature will wait upon you.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP 5

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 111

1. How would you cure the three types of nervousness, physical, mental, and spiritual?

Lesson 112

1. Describe the steps necessary in preparation for healing others.
2. Describe the technique of healing in which you send the healing energy from your spiritual eye into that of the patient.
3. What is the metaphysical cause of disease?

Lesson 113

1. Why shouldn't one eat too much protein?
2. Should you try to please man?

Lesson 114

1. What happens when you remove the ripples of sensations from the lake of your mind? Why does it happen?
2. What is everyone seeking, consciously or unconsciously?
3. What is love?

Lesson 115

1. What is meant when it is said that Satan was cast out from heaven?
2. What is soul magnetism?

Lesson 116

1. What is the greatest enemy of success and right action?
2. Tell how to overcome this enemy.
3. Name the stages which lead to success in one's life work.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 117 Unless there is a relativity of vibration there cannot be cognizance of any vibration in the universe. Do you realize how much that statement explains? Anything of which you are cognizant has a relative vibration within yourself. One who is quick to see and judge evil in other persons has the seed of that evil within himself. The Godlike person of pure and high vibrational tone is always aware of the God-spark in all he contacts, and his magnetic soul vibration draws to greater intensity that vibrational force in those who come within his vibrational range. Everything in creation has a different rate of vibration. The different rates of vibration balanced in the cosmic rhythm produce before us the majestic cosmos.

Soul vibration results when a person is always conscious of the presence of God. The vibration of God is the most intelligent of all and produces perfect harmony. When you let that vibration pass through you, all other vibrations become harmonized. And that is why, when you tune in with the cosmic Om vibration, you become conscious in all creation; you are in Christ Consciousness.

If your vibrations are in harmony with divine intelligence and love, you will express that harmony in your environment in personality, form, color, action. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

Any hindrances to the expression of this divine harmony through you are limitations you have created, or allowed to accumulate: attachment, prejudice, habit, concentration on the senses, and so forth. Find out what your own hindrances are by becoming aware of them, and then eliminate them. The vibrations of reason and feeling must be in perfect balance. As one meditates deeply and unites soul with Spirit, this balance of pure reason and pure feeling is expressed in the highest degree. Dispel all inharmonious vibrations from your life by meditating regularly and deeply. Let the Om vibration, conjoined with the music of the spheres, dispel all darkness within you and bring joy and understanding to your heart.

In order to receive the vibrations of others, you should first harmonize the feeling in the heart; free it of all prejudice and emotion. In the heart, the center

of feeling, are the sensitive antennae that will tell you truly what kind of vibrations people have. This is more reliable than mental judgment, but you must first be sure that you are free of all attraction, repulsion, prejudice, and other disturbing emotions.

Beyond the land of peace, beyond the land of dreams, beyond the land of silence, lies the garden of Self-realization. When God's power is flowing through you, you are a divine magnet.

LESSON NO. 118 "Cleanliness is next to godliness." The ceremony of baptism by water symbolizes the purification necessary to spirituality. Cleanliness of the body is a first step in living the spiritual life. However, it becomes meaningless unless followed by the second step, the cleansing and purifying of the mind. These but prepare for and symbolize the spiritual baptism, the baptism by the Holy Ghost.

Physical life cannot continue without water. Water cools the nerve endings and sends a report of cool sensations throughout the vital centers, thus evenly balancing the vital energies. Water opens the pores of the skin, letting out disturbing body poisons, which in turn calms and soothes the whole organism. Immersion in water, therefore, has a definite though temporary effect upon the consciousness. If you again put on your bad physical and mental habits when you come out of the water, there will be no lasting good. But if you meditate immediately after bathing, you will feel the real power of baptism by water.

Consciousness, life force, and the body are different rates of conscious cosmic vibration, held together by the nucleus of the ego and soul. In order to free the soul from the cage of these threefold vibrations, it has to be baptized or united with the original cosmic vibration of Om. This sound, emanating from the vibration of all atoms, is called the Holy Ghost or sacred vibration. Attunement with the Om vibration sound heard in meditation is the way in which ordinary consciousness can be baptized or expanded into Christ Consciousness through the expanding power of the Holy Ghost. When the yogi is able not only to hear this cosmic sound in his consciousness, but also to feel its actual presence in every unit of space, the soul of the yogi becomes one with the Holy Ghost. This is baptism by the Holy Ghost. An actual vibrational change takes place in this baptism. The body loosens its atomic vibrations and becomes life force. This life force at a higher rate of vibration becomes one with Cosmic Consciousness.

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" to redeem it. God so loved the world that His love (vibratory force) went forth into creation as Christ Consciousness or Christ Intelligence. This love, or Christ Consciousness, or only reflection, was consciously manifested in Jesus, the vehicle. To those who received Him, meaning those who also received this reflection, or Christ Consciousness, they also, and they only, became sons of God, like Jesus. Those who do not receive this vibratory baptism are not "redeemed," or lifted up, until they do so.

Jesus lived and struggled through many lives, even as all other human beings, with all their frailties, have done. By proper use of his God-given free choice and attunement with the holy vibration, he became the Christ in whom shone undeflected the only begotten reflection of God. Thus he was the Son of God, even as all men may be. He is the divine example, and his words are words of life and hope; for he says, "What I do, all men may do." When the student feels his consciousness one with Christ Consciousness, he realizes that Christ Consciousness is the reflection of the Cosmic Consciousness of God the Father. Then, like Jesus, he can say, "I and my Father are One."

LESSON NO. 119 If we know the truth, we shall know that truth is the same everywhere. It is only ignorance that prompts the followers of one religion to call others heathens. The similarity in religions, however, cannot be detected by intellectual reasoning alone. Self-realization is the only standard by which we can judge religions, because in that alone do we have the intuitional perception of eternal truth, which is one for all mankind. If the followers of all religions, and scientists too, would experiment with religion and discover truth within their own selves, they would realize the common foundation in truth that all great religions possess. Know the truth, which alone can make you free. Truth is not dependent upon religious or church affiliation.

Jadava, or Krishna (Christna), is the Christ of the Hindus, as Jesus is the Christ of the Christians, in that each was "Christed;" that is, the Christ Consciousness was exemplified or made manifest in each. You have already learned that Christ Consciousness is the consciousness that is present in every atom. The Hindus call it Kutastha Chaitanya, and the Christians call it Christ Consciousness.

Herein lies the first similarity in the two religions. You will note that although there were 3000 years between these two great men of God, each was given the same name: Christna, or Christ, indicating that they had attained the same state of consciousness. Their lives also were similar in many aspects. From Christna came the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita, the Hindu Bible; and from Christ came the teachings of the Christian Bible. In addition to the similarity of the concept of Christ Consciousness, these scriptures have a second great similarity in the concept of one God; and a third similarity in the concept of the Trinity, the One in Three.

The metaphysical truth of the Trinity is as follows: Spirit existing alone beyond all creation is one. The Holy Ghost is the vibrational universe, or ball of vibration, in which is reflected Christ Consciousness, or the only first reflection --the Son. Thus, as Spirit reflects in the ball of vibration (creation), it is the first cause, or Father of the Son (consciousness or intelligence in all creation). Thus Spirit becomes the Father, the first of the Trinity. The reflection is the Son, the second of the Trinity. The ball of vibration (in which the reflection is present) is the Holy Ghost, the third of the Trinity. So God the Father is the intelligence beyond all creation. Christ Consciousness is the intelligence in creation. The Holy Ghost is the vibration itself.

LESSON NO. 120 Ignorance is the greatest enemy of world peace and unity. It must be dispelled from all minds, that all may become conscious of the cord of one life, one law, one rhythm, and one wisdom, uniting all. The bringing in of world peace and unity through the art of living is the ushering in of the rule of God upon earth (physical manifestation) as it is now in heaven (the idea plane). All is perfection now in God's plan, but through individuals that perfection must become manifest in the outer world.

Through all races, nationalities, and civilizations, the art of living is undergoing experimentation. Great men and saints have lived from time to time through the centuries who by their lives exemplified the universal truths of all times.

A man may be considered a good citizen of one country, but his mode of living may not be in accord with the ideals of peace and good will to all men. Being a good citizen of one country is not sufficient, although it too is necessary. True values can only be discovered by laying aside all personal, communal, national, and racial prejudices, habits of thought, customs, etc.

Largely speaking, the art of right living can be found in:

- (1) The study of the best in all nationalities.
- (2) Study of the individual lives of great saints.
- (3) Recognition of higher spiritual values.

In application the foundation must be in:

- (1) International laws of hygiene, peace, prosperity, education.
- (2) Universally useful moral and religious sciences.
- (3) Universally practical moral codes, applied psychology, and spiritual laws.

The lesser laws of nations should be in all points harmonious with these foundational principles.

The perfect world citizen must of course develop individually. A combination of spiritually efficient qualities with scientific, materially efficient qualities, in which neither is neglected at the expense of the other, will result in the development of the superman with balanced qualities. Through Self-realization man becomes aware of true values as to his place in the divine plan and his relation to the past, present, and future of mankind.

Fearlessly follow truth as you perceive it. Love family and country deeply, so that through that love you may understand, love, and serve all nations and races. Perceive the light of God in all.

LESSON NO. 121 Hope is the eternal light on the pathway each soul must travel to its ultimate destiny of perfection--God. It has

its roots in the intuitive consciousness of the image of God within us. Hold fast to the silver thread of hope. Wind it on the spool of your life. Follow it to the loftiest heights. Never let go! Never lose hope! No dream is too grand or too impossible for this all-seeing eye of intuitive faith to bring into manifestation. Faith, or the intuitive experience of all truth, is present in the soul. Although this intuitive faith is clouded over by human ignorance, its tendrils reach up even through this darkness to man's mind for his use; and rightly used, hope leads to the highest achievements.

Belief differs from faith in this, that belief is the initial experimental feeling about the truth of anything. Constructive belief is the attitude of mind necessary for testing the truth about anything in the beginning. Untested belief crystallizes into dogmatic sentiment or, if discouraged, it may change into skepticism. Constructive belief is good when one continually experiments until the real nature of a truth is revealed. It results not in a turning away from truth, but in proving truth. Faith is the soul's intuitive knowledge of all truth. It is the "evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1), things incognizable by the limited power of the senses. This instantaneous all-knowing, all-seeing power is developed through deep meditation and soul contact.

Just as your consciousness is present in every part of your body, so in cosmic consciousness, your consciousness is present in all creation. Through this universal consciousness the advanced soul may feel the sufferings, experiences, and needs of limited souls and of all humanity. ~~From this consciousness is born the love desire to help relieve that suffering.~~

Selfishness in wanting to keep the joy of God to oneself defeats its own purpose, and will stunt the soul in the prison of limitation. Happiness must be shared with all; that is the expression of love, the greatest of all virtues. But remember, you must first have God yourself before you can share Him with others.

LESSON NO. 122 It is usually more or less easy to analyze others and classify them according to personality. It is often more difficult to turn the searchlight on oneself in strict honesty, but that is what you must do in order to find out what improvement or change is necessary. One purpose of discovering your own personality is to know how you affect others. Consciously or unconsciously, people feel your personality, and their reaction is a clue. A person should develop a good personality for his own happiness and for the good of other people.

Personality constitutes the aggregate qualities which one individual possesses as distinct from the qualities possessed by others. Personality is the cloak of qualities, but it should be the outer expression of inner fineness. True personality blossoms forth from within. Personality tendencies of early life are brought with you from previous incarnations. These instinctive traits can very definitely be changed. You need never be bound by a negative trait. It is up to you, first to discover your personality, and then to take definite steps toward correcting it

if necessary. This can be done, first in making your choice, then by using proper methods of concentration, continuous mental and physical effort and self-discipline, and also spiritual discipline. Prenatal habits are created by man himself and he can free himself through his own free choice and effort.

All personalities come under four broad classifications:

- (1) Transcendental
- (2) Sattvic, or good-manifesting personalities
- (3) Rajasic, activating in usefulness to self and others
- (4) Tamasic, error creating

Transcendental personalities possess outstanding characteristics and traits by which they may be known, such as:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (1) intuition | (7) stillness of eyes and breath
without effort |
| (2) absolute wisdom | (8) fearlessness |
| (3) even-mindedness | (9) sincerity |
| (4) spiritually helpful | (10) face expressing ever new bliss |
| (5) more meditative than studious | (11) calmness and self-control |
| (6) nonattachment | |

Souls, being made after the pattern of God, display many of His qualities. Man should, by the use of his free choice and will power, discard all animal traits as mere layers of useless accumulation of personality, and so allow the true image of God to manifest in him. Express Spirit inside and outside.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP FIVE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 117

1. Explain how you can know what kind of vibrations people around you radiate.
2. How can you protect yourself from being influenced by wrong vibrations which come into your environment?

Lesson 118

1. Explain the value of baptism by water.
2. Explain the vibrational change which takes place through baptism by the Holy Ghost.
3. Explain the meaning of the statement that Jesus was the "only begotten Son" of God.

Lesson 119

1. Name three principal points of similarity that exist in the teachings of Hinduism and Christianity.
2. Explain the Holy Trinity.

Lesson 120

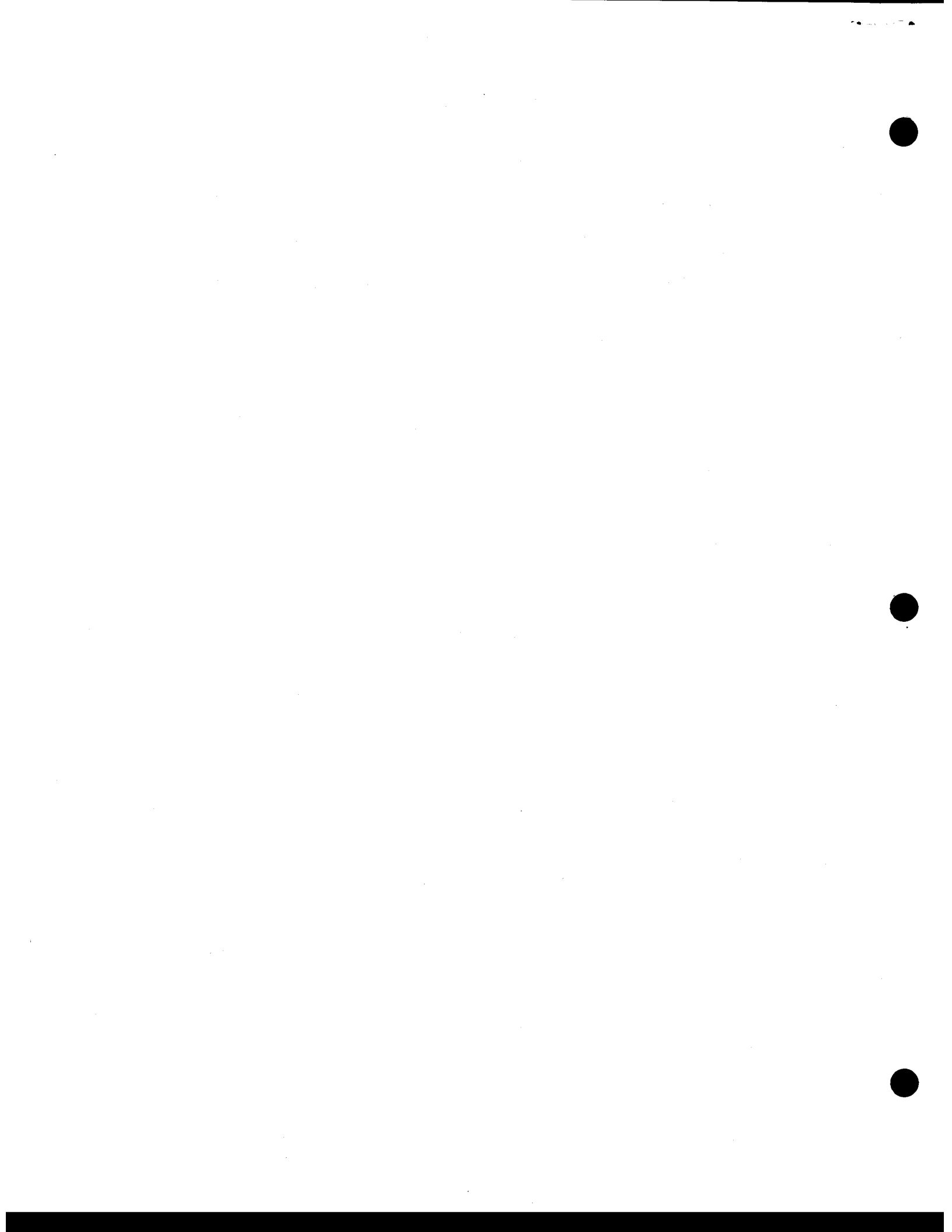
1. How could world unity be established on this earth?

Lesson 121

1. Define hope.
2. What is the difference between faith and belief?

Lesson 122

1. Define personality.
2. Name and describe the four broad classifications under which all personalities come.
3. Can personality be changed?



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 123 Outstanding racial traits have far-reaching effects, as do also individual personal qualities. A seemingly pleasant personality may not always be productive of ultimate good. It is therefore extremely necessary to use clear discriminative intelligence in the study of both the personality and its result. You should acquire the qualities you admire in others--never by blind imitation, but by intelligent selection and understanding of their true source and result.

The purpose in studying the various types of animals and individuals, and outstanding national traits, is to compare these traits and their expression--which leads to good or evil results. This experimentation has been going on through the ages. You may learn, if you will, not alone by your individual mistakes, but by understanding the causes of the general unhappiness and suffering of all mankind.

When you have understandingly chosen the qualities and traits of character that you wish to incorporate into your own personality, you should adopt the following procedure:

- 1) Eliminate negative qualities which are obstacles to your progress.
- 2) Try to think, act, feel as though you already possess the desired qualities.
- 3) Learn by absorbing, and by constant attentive association, friendship, and discussion and study with individuals that possess those qualities.
- 4) Intelligently follow the counsel and example of such a person until his traits become your own.
- 5) Through your diligence and devotion in meditation, and by realizing the soul as the reservoir of all power and all good, you can feel the divine attributes of the great ones.

LESSON NO. 124 Science has proved that all matter is but electromagnetic waves, or condensed light. Matter does exist, but it is not what it appears to be to the limited vision of human beings. Our senses are limited to but a few octaves in the vibratory scale. However, even this sense-awareness varies with different human beings, and it can be expanded consciously to such an extent that the walls of separateness are broken through, and the true nature of matter perceived.

Read and study the list of principal delusions of mankind in this lesson. When it is understood that these things are delusions, then one begins to question the reports of the senses. It is through the comprehension which comes to one by means of deep concentration and meditation that cosmic delusion is overcome, and the true nature of matter is revealed.

Pain was originally a heightened sense of awareness. Because the perception of cause was ignored, the understanding of its nature was lost. Thus pain developed. When there is comprehension of cause, then pain is recognized as mental sensitiveness and not a physical condition. In such recognition lies the power to eliminate pain from the consciousness.

The delusions of nationality, caste, creed, etc., are due to the sense of separateness. One may break the boundaries of this hereditary imagination by making a circle of boundless love which includes all in its vast heart of feeling.

LESSON NO. 125

Reasons for the advent of death:

- 1) Death comes when each object, each human being, has completed its share in expressing the Infinite.
- 2) Untimely death suggests the soul is changing its vehicle for a better opportunity in expressing the Infinite.
- 3) It may be a promotion to a higher grade of life; for the wise it is a transition to a higher state.
- 4) Through death, the Infinite is ever renewing Itself in forms more suitable for infinite expression.
- 5) It is the cosmic furnace in which all objects and living souls are purified of dross.
- 6) It brings freedom from the cage of manifestation, and gives new robes to the soul-actors.

Explanation of what life is:

- 1) Matter is life; life is intelligence. Intelligence is consciousness, ever renewing, ever expressing, ever changing, but indestructible.
- 2) The body is but the froth on the soul-wave, the grosser garment.
- 3) Life is vagrant, like a river now on the surface, now in deeper underground caverns, appearing and disappearing.
- 4) Life vibrates in changing forms. As ice, water, steam are different forms of the same thing, so different forms of life are manifestations of the same life force.
- 5) The Spirit in the vehicle, and the vehicle, are the same in essential composition.

The wise man of understanding, whose spiritual eye is opened, sees that the illusive change called death is but a new beginning in another supernal life.

He perceives not only the gross outer side of manifestation, but the inner, dazzling, exceedingly beautiful side--the soul, which is not dependent upon oxygen, food, and water, but which exists on rays of light and joy of the Spirit, celestial love.

Mortals should learn to live more by inner energy, unattached to the body. Those who learn in this life to live by Spirit, quickly realize the freedom of the soul after death. Yogis practice control of life and the breathless state to be able to live in airless regions of living light, unburdened by the body.

LESSON NO. 126 The ignorance in which most people pass their existence is actually more deathlike than so-called death, which is merely a step in the unfoldment of life. Attachment to the body, enslavement by the senses and blind material activity are stagnating and earth-binding, and tend to blight the true flowering of the soul in immortality.

It is all right to enjoy the good things of this life, but do not become attached to anything so that you suffer if it is taken from you. God takes things from you so that you will not remain earth-bound. You can never squeeze the honey of divine happiness from the rock of sense pleasures. Lasting sweetness ceaselessly flows into the pail of your life only when you squeeze the honey-comb of meditation and peace with the eager powerful hands of will, and with deeper concentration.

Although death is a door through which all must pass, you will never again have the same body or characteristics, the same relationship with the same people, the same environment, or anything exactly the same as you have it now. This particular film of life will be shelved forever. Your progress and development will go right on from the point reached at the moment of death. You will not take a big jump into angelhood, unless you reach that state before you die.

Everything lives, even a piece of tin, but life is ever changing, unfolding. Do not stay in your limited physical shell. Crack the space shell by the drill of your concentration and meditation, and allow your consciousness to expand into the consciousness of immortality.

Your question of redemption from the self-created prison of ignorance must be settled directly by yourself and God. Jesus and a few other great ones have come back to the earth with the same body after death, to show all mankind that it is possible.

LESSON NO. 127 The word resurrection has been greatly misunderstood in the Christian world. The soul does not need to wait for death of the body to be resurrected. Nothing in life remains stationary. Everything is undergoing a process of change. Nothing dies; it merely changes form. Change is either detrimental or beneficial. Resurrection means any beneficial or uplifting change.

Every human being is an expression of the vast Spirit. But you have distorted yourself by smearing yourself with the soot of ignorance. You are in bondage, chained by the subconscious habit of moving in a certain way only, like sleepwalkers. Disease exists because you stimulate the race thought of your forefathers, and thereby reinforce your ignorance. You weave the thread of fear, worry, and ignorance around you until disease and death claim the body, and the soul is in darkness.

You must resurrect yourself mentally by dispelling ignorance and eliminating wrong habits. You only imagine yourself to be mortal. You must resurrect your real face of life from beneath the superficially gathered soot of error. Then you will know that you were, are, and ever will be a perfect reflection of Spirit. By meditation on your true Self, by constantly performing godly duties, you will remember your forgotten Spirit nature and remain in that consciousness forever.

Mind must be resurrected into consciousness of reality. We have no existence except in the Infinite. The body is materialized electricity, which cannot be sick, therefore how can the body be diseased? But simply saying so is not enough to dispel the consciousness of disease. It is only by contact with God that one sees that He is the universe and that the body is but condensed electricity, which is energy or frozen Cosmic Consciousness. Gradually we understand the way to resurrect the body into the Spirit.

LESSON NO. 128 Resurrection does not mean a change only after this mortal change. You are being resurrected every day. Every morning you are resurrected after sleep, but you drop back into old bad habits again. You must consciously resurrect yourself in a threefold manner in order to come into your birthright.

RESURRECTION:

1) Physical:

- a) Change and spiritualize the atoms of the body.
- b) Learn to relax body parts. This frees the internal organs, frees the mental body from body consciousness; makes it possible to live more by Cosmic Energy and less by food.
- c) Changes must be made by conscious effort while in this body.

2) Mental:

- a) Dispel ignorance.
- b) Free the mind of all such limitations as prejudice, instinct, hereditary tendencies due to karma, restlessness and indifference.

3) Spiritual:

- a) Resurrect the soul from ignorance of its divinity, and so release it from the bondage of human life.
- b) Real devotion and meditation are the only payment acceptable to God for the priceless blessings of resurrection.

You are crucifying the Christ within you when you give way to evil habits or restlessness. The Christ is being resurrected within you when you do good deeds and kindnesses, and when you meditate. The Christ-Consciousness center has a location in your body. Your body is the temple of the living God. That is why you must purify your body and mind by right living and good thoughts, then meditate on the Christ-Consciousness center so that the consciousness may freely permeate and free all your being.

What Jesus achieved, all of us can achieve. He went into the ocean of Spirit and came back again, replete with the power of God to show that life is immortal. Within the body of Jesus existed the universal Christ Spirit. He was both human and divine, even as we are. But he overcame the flesh completely, even as we too can do.

We can be what we want to be, no matter what our past has been. We can practice resurrection every day of our lives. Each day is a new birth. Jesus ~~suffered, struggled, and won. It takes effort, but it can be done.~~ That is the great message of Jesus' life to us all.

LESSON NO. 129 We now see that resurrection consists of a threefold process of lifting the body, mind, and soul. When the consciousness of every cell of the body, as well as the mind, and soul, is raised to the consciousness of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, then we are in Christ Consciousness, are resurrected.

All of us find ourselves more or less fenced in by our own desires and experiences. The beginning of the awakening of Christ Consciousness in us is when we raise our eyes from the limiting walls of selfishness, habit, imposed custom, and personal experience, and stretch our consciousness to include affection, kindness, and service to others hitherto outside our personal circle.

Definite steps into Christ Consciousness are signified by:

- 1) Kindness and service to another without the desire for reciprocation.
- 2) Freedom from prejudices, customs, and habits.
- 3) Love for strangers as well as relatives. Love for your neighbor as for yourself. Love for all nationalities and races as for your own. Sympathy with every lonely heart and weeping brother.
- 4) Joy is all beauty and goodness

This sympathy develops by following the transcendental way. You can

only have it through meditation and effort. God is the whisper in the temple of your conscience and God is the light of intuition.

REVIEW QUESTIONS --STEP FIVE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 123

1. What is the purpose of studying personalities?
2. Name some of the personality traits of different countries; of animals.

Lesson 124

1. Does matter exist?
2. Name some of the principal delusions of mankind.
3. Explain the true nature of pain.

Lesson 125

1. Why does death visit the human body?
2. Describe briefly the state of the spiritual person after earthly death.

Lesson 126

1. Which is more greatly to be feared, death or ignorance? Why?

Lesson 127

1. Give a brief, general definition of resurrection.
2. Why are few people free?

Lesson 128

1. What is the most important form of resurrection?
2. What message does Jesus' life hold for mankind?

Lesson 129

1. What are some of the signs of the awakening of Christ Consciousness in a person?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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GOD'S BOATMAN

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I want to ply my boat, many times,
Across the gulf-after-death,
And return to earth's shores
From my home in heaven.
I want to load my boat
With those waiting, thirsty ones
Who are left behind,
And carry them by the opal pool
Of iridescent-joy
Where my Father distributes
His all-desire-quenching liquid peace.
Oh! I will come again and again!
Crossing a million crags of suffering,
With bleeding feet, I will come--
If need be, a trillion times--
So long as I know
One stray brother is left behind.

I want Thee, O God,
That I may give Thee to all.
I want salvation,
That I may give it to all.
Free me, then, O God,
From the bondage of the body,
That I may show others
How they can free themselves.
I want Thine everlasting bliss
Only that I may share it with others;
That I may show all my brothers
The way to happiness
Forever and forever, in Thee.

PRAYER

Teach me, O Lord, to conquer the self by the Self. May I never permit the blind ego in me to obstruct the soul.

Bless me, that I willingly appoint the soul as the body's only charioteer. May the divine driver, with its perfect discrimination, control the five fiery steeds of my senses, hold firmly the reins of my mind, and triumphantly take my little chariot on the wheels of right discipline over the speedway of incarnations.

O King of Kings, after the last lap of the final race I shall ride a chariot of Thine infinite light!

THE LAW OF REINCARNATION

Reincarnation means that the true image of Spirit, the immortal soul, survives the perishable body and passes to another body. This process is repeated many times, until the soul fulfills its destiny and becomes reunited with Spirit. Reincarnation is necessary for the working out of the effects of man's egoistic actions of many former lives, which are lodged as seed-tendencies in the subtle bodies accompanying the soul in its passage from one body to another.

Reincarnation is a scientific doctrine. Although it originated in the religions of the East, it may also be considered a Christian doctrine. We find in the Christian Bible the same conception of reincarnation--the same universal laws of finding God--as in the Hindu Bible (the Bhagavad-Gita). Reincarnation is one of the greatest doctrines; without the concept of reincarnation we cannot conceive, from the limited perspective of one life, the eternal justice of God. Three hundred million Hindus in India, one hundred and fifty million Buddhists, the thousands who follow the Persian faith of the Magi, the ancient Jews, the early Gnostics, and early Christians--in short, more than half the human race --have believed in some form of the doctrine of reincarnation.

Evolutional reincarnation extends from inert crystals to the expressive human sphere of existence. After many lives in various animal bodies, the soul passes to the body of a man. Matter suppresses Spirit, which is trying to reform it from within by evolutional coaxing. Reincarnation represents the progressive stages through which Spirit returns from material embodiments to Itself--from the many to the One. The Gita says:

"... but as when one layeth
 His worn-out robes away,
 And, taking new ones, sayeth,
 'These will I wear today!'
 So putteth by the spirit

Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh. "

THE SOUL IS IMMORTAL The law of conservation of energy is true in the subtle psychical world as well as in the physical world. The soul is immortal, hence the soul, though encased in a mortal body, existed before and will exist in all future time. The significance of reincarnation cannot be understood intellectually; the immortality of the soul and its transmigration from one life to another can be realized only when one consciously experiences the transitory states of sleep and death by practicing with devotion the highest techniques of concentration and meditation. This is Self-realization, recognition of one's own Self as eternal bliss, eternal consciousness, eternal existence.

One life is not enough in which to purify ourselves sufficiently to commune with Spirit. We must have time to work out our imperfections. Our immortality--the pure soul within us--must have time to retrace its steps back to God. We have come away from God and we must go back to Him. We cannot go back to the immortal state unless we become perfect, and to become perfect we must have a number of lives to work out our desires and get back to God.

The soul, being immortal, outlives the body. But this immortal soul, while in the physical body, puts on the mask of the ego and its imperfections. The soul cannot go back to Spirit until it has removed those delusive imperfections. Since they cannot be done away with in one life, the soul must reincarnate in order to conquer them. It is erroneous to believe that by virtue of physical death a soul goes back to God. If that were so, what would be the use of being good? Why not do all the things one desires to do, good or evil, if at the end of life we go back to God anyway?

God sends immortal souls to this earth-school to enact a mortal drama with the attitude of immortals. But souls, long in this school begin to forget their immortal nature; they circumscribe their omnipotence with limiting mortal desires. We should avoid mortal desires, because they prevent us from realizing the ever-newly blissful, all-sufficing, immortal nature of the soul.

God did not mean that all mankind should retreat from an active, useful life in the world to live like hermits. It would not even be possible for all men to do so. Rather, the Gita points out: "Perform all duties of worldly existence with the consciousness of God." In thus playing our roles in the drama of mortal life we please both God and man.

In the Bible we read: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out" (Revelation 3:12). He who overcomes the bodily desires will be a fixed soul (pillar) in the mansion of God's presence, and he will not have to go back to the earth in pursuit of the fulfillment

of earthly desires.

TREE OF LIFE "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7). He who overcomes the desires of the body will not come back to earth to taste the bittersweet fruits of earthly life, but will be able to enjoy God, or the "Tree of Life," which is ever present in the paradise of ever living, divine happiness.

Again the Gita says: "I, the Spirit, reincarnate Myself again and again in order to uplift the oppressed and redeem the virtuous." Lord Krishna and Lord Jesus were two such divine incarnations.

We do not improve all at once, but gradually; many births give our souls and subtle bodies a chance to improve. The difference in the temperament, nature, capacity, and evolution of different members of the same family, having the same surroundings and the same training, cannot be explained except through the doctrine of reincarnation. Impartial God would not create one person prosperous and another person poor; they are what they are as a result of their own actions. However, those who are fortunate should not callously leave to their "fate" those who are not. People with good opportunities should help those with lesser opportunities; otherwise they will develop apathetic karma that will spiritually degrade them and ultimately make them poor.

When a baby is born blind, is it because of some sin of his parents? No. The baby transgressed some spiritual law in a previous life. Where does a person with equal good and bad karma go? Does he belong in Heaven or Hades? Reincarnation for attainment of complete goodness solves this question.

AVOID FORCED REINCARNATION It is natural to want to live free, as the owner, and not be thrown out of your bodily home. But your real home is omnipresence; you have forgotten that. Some day this little cage will be broken whether you want it so or not. Why not learn the way by which you can consciously go out of and return to the body, at will?

When Spirit alone existed He said, "I want to become manifest." So by His law of evolution He expressed Himself in various inanimate forms until He eventually became plant life. Then He thought, "I express life and beauty in the plant, but I want to enjoy motion." Thus His feet were released from the earth and He manifested as animal life. In nature, God first realized His beauty in manifestation, and in the animal He not only realized His beauty but also His sensibility. His voice began to sing in the nightingale, but He said, "Well, I sing, but I am not conscious of what I sing," so God became man. Then He began to express His reason. In man's power of thought, God's omnipresence is expressed more than in other forms. Then God became the superman who realizes his origin and oneness with God. In the superman, God is able to express His omnipresence; for He knows, even in a human body, that He is present in all

things. How to attain to that divine consciousness of your omnipresent God-nature, is what these lessons teach you. First it is necessary to learn how to reverse the searchlight of the senses from matter to Spirit, so that you can be free to try to live as a master.

When you can accomplish that reversal at will, you are truly on the way to Self-realization. If you persistently follow this path, you will know the Truth.

One life is not enough, one lesson from the world is not enough; but through appreciation of all good things, and through nonattachment, we can be free from forced reincarnation, which is a self-inflicted punishment. We should reincarnate on earth as Jesus did--of our own free will, not as a matter of compulsion. Free the soul from karma's law which binds it, and free it from the bondage of forced reincarnation.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

So long as a man's heart holds hatred and repulsion toward any brother, so long must that man keep roaming through the corridors of incarnations. When you feel that the stars, clouds, birds, beasts, great men, and outcasts are as dear to you as your blood relatives, and that your omnipresent heart throbs in them all, then the imprisonment of reincarnations will be enforced on you no longer. Then you will be able freely to go everywhere and to open the rainbow gates of wisdom to help all sorrowing brothers to make a rushing exodus into the everlasting freedom of God.

CURE OF A WICKED SON

Once when I was in Seattle, Washington, I was sitting near the ocean, much inspired by the thought of its vastness, which reminded me of the vastness of God. After a time I felt hungry, and went to a nearby farmhouse to buy some cherries. Here I met an old man with rosy cheeks. He looked happy, and showed me great hospitality.

But a divine impulse came over me and I said, "Dear man, though you look very happy, there is a hidden suffering in your life." He inquired, "Are you a fortuneteller?" I answered, "No; but I tell people how to mend their fortunes."

The conversation shifted to spiritual matters. To my surprise, the old man suddenly cried, "We are all sinners! The Lord will burn our souls in hell-fire and brimstone." I appealed to his common sense. "How," I asked him, "could a man who at death loses his body and becomes an invisible soul, be burned in a fire created by material brimstone?"

The man became angry. He kept insisting, "It's true. We shall all burn in

hell-fire." Then I inquired cajolingly, "Did you receive a radiogram from God about this matter, that you are so certain He will burn us in hell-fire?"

"Blasphemy!" the old man cried. He became more excited than ever.

I then spoke soothingly, and quietly changed the subject. Presently I asked him, "What about your unhappiness over that wicked son of yours?" My host was astonished at my words and admitted that he experienced a constant sorrow over a wastrel son whom he seemed to be helpless to correct.

"I have a remedy for your misery," I said. The old man's eyes gleamed with hope, and he smiled.

"If you can do anything for me--anything," he said, "I shall be grateful to you for the rest of my life."

With a mysterious air, as if about to reveal a precious secret, I asked him in a low voice, "Have you a stove with a large oven?" With my hands I described the dimensions I wanted.

He replied, wonderingly, "Why, yes."

"Good," I said. "I shall ask you to heat it red-hot. Now, have you two friends whom you can trust never to betray your secrets to anyone, no matter what you do?"

"Why, yes, but--"

"Good!" I interrupted him. "You'll need their help. Now, have you several yards of strong rope?"

"Yes, I have," the old farmer replied, with mounting suspicion. "But why am I going to need that?"

"Please be calm, dear friend. Didn't I promise you I would give you a remedy for your troubles?" Hopefully the man dismissed his misgivings and listened to what more I had to say. I then asked him casually, "Your son is quite a heavy sleeper, isn't he?"

"Yes," came the sorrowful reply. "He comes home so full of liquor."

"Excellent!" I cried, in a tone of exultation. "Now then, tonight I want you to call your two friends over. Heat your oven as hot as possible. Keep your friends quiet until your son is sound asleep. Then slip quickly into his room, bind him securely, carry him downstairs and shove him into the oven!"

"Fiend! Murderer!" the old man shouted, shaking his fist at me. "Is that

your remedy?"

"Isn't that what your son deserves?" I asked. "Just think, you will never be troubled by him again."

"This is outrageous!" cried the man. "Whoever heard of a father burning his own son? I wouldn't do such a terrible thing even if my son were ten times as wicked as he is!"

"Of course you wouldn't!" I replied sternly. The old man looked at me in surprise. "Now," I continued, "stop and think what I have been trying to tell you. You, who are human and far less perfect than God, cannot bear to see your own son destroyed, no matter how evil he may be. Where did you acquire this instinct of love, if not from your Heavenly Father? Even a human father could not stand the cruel thought of punishing his own son by roasting him alive. How, then, can you think of your ever-loving Heavenly Father as one who burns His own children in eternal hell-fire and brimstone? God's love is much greater than yours. Your love is only a reflection of His infinite love."

The old man's eyes filled with tears of repentance. With new tenderness, he looked at me gratefully and said, "I now realize that our Heavenly Father is a God of love. He would not punish us for our ignorance. Surely it is only we who punish ourselves."

AFFIRMATION

I will crucify my ignorance and
hidebound evil customs, and rise from
the tomb of narrowness into the freedom
of cosmic brotherhood. I will resurrect
my soul from the tomb of reincarnations.



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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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A NIGHTINGALE OF HEAVEN

By Paramahansa Yogananda

A nightingale of heaven, I have perched in
the trees of many incarnations.

In the garden of the centuries I pour forth my
orisons, rousing sleeping ones to awake in Thee.

I travel from one heart bower to another,
giving concerts of Thy blissful songs.

I shall come to earth again and again. I
yearn to attract straying birds, to teach them Thy
sacred melodies, and to fly with them to Thy skies
of eternal freedom.

PRAYER

Father, fill my heart with the love of Jesus Christ, with the love of the saints of all religions.

Beloved Spirit! Intoxicating Wine of Centuries! my devotion to Thee has been aging secretly throughout incarnations in the cask of my heart. I tap Thee at last, and quaff measureless draughts of Thine unending joy.

LAWS OF REINCARNATION

The physical body is composed chiefly of sixteen chemical elements that could be procured in a drugstore for about ninety-eight cents. Yet when the physical body dies, we cannot recreate it from its constituent elements; nor can we fashion a new one from chemicals purchased at a pharmacy. What subtle forces determine the creation of a physical body? And what blueprint determines its various features?

The ancient yogis of India discovered that hidden within the physical body of man are two other bodies: the astral body composed of nineteen powers, and the causal or ideational body composed of thirty-five elemental "ideas."

The soul, plus the ideational body, plus the astral body, plus the unfulfilled desires of past earthly lives and the karmic traces left by past earthly actions, are the forces that combine to compel man to enter a new earthly incarnation.

Suppose you place a small corked jar of water inside another jar of water; and that you then cork the second jar and put it inside a third jar of water, which you also cork; and lastly, that you throw into the ocean the largest jar, which contains the other two jars. Obviously the water in the three corked jars could not mingle with the ocean water. All three jars would be required to be uncorked before the water imprisoned within them could become a part of the ocean.

Similarly, the corked outer jar of the physical body contains within it the corked jars of the astral and ideational bodies. The soul, which permeates all three bodies, cannot mingle with the omnipresent ocean of Spirit because the soul is held in its three bodily containers by the three corks of ignorance.

To give another illustration: it is as though man has three pieces of clothing--overcoat, suit, and undergarment. At the death of the physical body the soul sheds only its "overcoat"; the soul is still wearing its "suit" of the astral body and its "undergarment" of the ideational body.

The astral or subtle body of nineteen vibratory elements, together with the karmic traces left by past actions, reincarnates; but the physical body does not. With each earthly incarnation the astral body must take on a new physical body.

The causal or ideational body has thirty-five "ideas," of which nineteen are instrumental in forming the astral body, and the balance (sixteen) supply the "ideas" from which come the gross sixteen chemical materials that compose the cells of the physical body.

The astral body is the repository of these nineteen ideas:

- 1) intelligence (buddhi or mahatattwa);
- 2) egoism (ahankara);
- 3) heart or emotion or feeling (chittwa);
- 4) mind or sense-consciousness (manas)--ability to perceive through the senses; this is the mind that is chiefly operative in all beings; but the more they employ of intelligence (buddhi), the more discrimination and judgment they display.

After these four come the remaining fifteen ideas in the form of three sets of powers (five powers in each set):

- a) five instruments of KNOWLEDGE:

the subtle astral powers that enable the physical senses to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch;

- b) five instruments of EXECUTION or ACTION:

1. power to procreate (sexual organ);
2. to excrete (rectum);
3. to talk (mouth);
4. to walk (feet);
5. and to exercise manual skill (hands);

- c) five instruments of LIFE FORCE:

the five forms of prana by which the physical body is maintained; the five vital airs that carry on the crystallizing, assimilating, eliminating, metabolizing, and circulating functions.

If the crystallizing current in the body is not functioning properly, some disease such as tuberculosis may start. If the circulating current works

irregularly, inharmonious conditions such as anemia, high or low blood pressure, etc., may result. All nineteen astral body powers are interrelated with the physical body; hence illness may affect any of the subtle senses dwelling in the ten astral organs of sensibility: the seeing, listening, tasting, smelling, and touching powers; and the powers of action in the hands, feet, tongue, and in the genital and rectal muscles.

At physical death, man, encased in his astral and causal bodies, goes to the astral world. There he remains for a certain time (the span is karmically determined). Then he again takes a physical form in order to reap the results (karma) of former actions during previous physical incarnations, and to work out all earthly desires that have not been fulfilled.

Desire is the fundamental cause of rebirth. Performing actions with egoistic desire for a particular result leaves traces in the mind, whereas performing actions without selfish attachment to their fruits does not leave traces (i. e., does not create any new mental patterns of binding karma). Strong egoistic desires in connection with ambitions or with one's relationships during earthly life (such as with family, friends, country) are bonds that tie man to the earth and to reincarnations there.

If you are sick or frail during most of this life you will attract a future physical body with similar weaknesses unless you have learned the karmic lesson involved. If you are healthy now, you will attract a healthy body again-- provided you have properly but in a detached way cared for this one, and provided that you have not been unsympathetic toward those less healthy, and so on. Similarly, if you are wealthy, you are likely to be attracted to a wealthy home again, and if on the other hand you have a consciousness of poverty or lack at the time of death, the karmic tendency created by your mind will cause you to reincarnate in a poor home. Best of all is to be born into a family of spiritually minded people. Each man attracts to himself the parents and environment that he has earned.

What you are now, you have brought upon yourself by what you have been; what you are now you will be, unless you are making a real effort to change your consciousness, habits, and desires. Your present is determined according to your past, and your future (your environment in the next life) will depend upon the essence of your thoughts in the last moments of this life. The trend of your entire life will come before you then, and your character will thus determine the kind of body, mind, and environment you will have in the next life.

It is natural to wonder if, after physical death, one is reborn on earth immediately. Just as some people sleep a long time and others sleep only a little while, so in the astral world some souls wake up quickly after the sleep of physical death, and desire to return to earth; while others remain for hundreds of years in the astral world. Spiritual people may remain for a long time in the astral world or may quickly take a new physical body, as they please.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PHYSICAL SENSES AND
ASTRAL SENSES

The physical body, as such, has no sensory perceptions, only sensory organs; the perceptions have their basis in the astral body. The physical senses are merely instruments of the subtle astral senses, which are the real organs. Only the mode of expression is dependent on the physical instruments of sense. However, even though the physical sense-telephones of the eyes and ears may be damaged or dead, the power of sight and hearing remain in the astral body; the physical eyes may be blind but the astral eyes can still see. A blind person may see in a dream, for then he would be using his astral power of sight. It is the same with hearing and the other senses. Man can freely use all ten senses in the astral body. In his dreams each night man employs his astral senses; everything a person can do in the physical body, and much more, can be performed in the dream world by the power of mind acting through the ten subtle senses and the five instruments of life force. The phenomena of dreams are proof of the astral nature of sense perceptions and provide a clue to the nature of the astral world.

IDEATIONAL OR
CAUSAL BODY

The ideational or causal body has thirty-five "ideas," as has been explained earlier in this lesson. When God first created the thirty-five elemental "ideas" that compose MAN, God gave these "ideas" their relative distinction or differentiation in thought. He then caused these thirty-five thoughts to vibrate to bring into formal manifestation the subtle astral body of nineteen "ideas" or powers and finally the gross physical body of sixteen material elements. Before God actually created matter, or thought, or feeling, He created each of them as an "idea" in His mind, i. e., as differentiations in His consciousness. A rock is a materialized thought in the cosmic dream created by God's consciousness; the only difference between the rock and a flash of thought consists in the kinds of ideas that produced them. This is true also of human dreams, wherein we may create a realistic rock or a realistic human being; their reality and apparent differentiation are merely ideas supplied by our own minds.

Egoistic desire keeps the soul in the cage of thirty-five elemental ideas. At physical death man's astral body and causal body enter the astral world. Those who have worked out all their earthly karma, and who hold no desire to return to earth, go straightway back to God. Hence the saints tell us to conquer desire, "the great enemy," because desire is the chief cause of the soul's bondage in the three bodies.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Man is given many chances to play both comedy and tragedy parts, being cast in each lifetime drama according to the wishes of the producer, karma (past actions). Then he goes out of that play forever, to be cast in the next life in some new production. In spite of the fact that he reincarnates, each person lives but once as a particular personality, because he does not recall his previous lives.

Each soul, although immortal, is conscious only of its present life. It is well that we know only that we are to play this drama of life once, to be called back then whence we came. Many people would postpone the effort to do their best if they knew that they were to have another chance, and many would not have the courage to try to play their life-drama well if they knew that they had acted very poorly in their former lives.

ACTORS ON THE STAGE OF THE EARTH

O Cosmic Stage Manager! I am a particular type of human actor needed on the stage of Thy creation. There is no one like me. I cannot play any one else's part, no matter how I may wish to do so. I must play my part, assigned by Thee.

I shed many a tear for what I could not be, until I found that it does not matter to Thee whether one plays a big or a small part so long as that part is played well, in attunement with Thy divine inner promptings. Thus my life is as important as any other life.

After trying everything else, running along many paths, I was driven toward one way--the way Thou didst choose for me. Now I know the road Thou dost want me to travel. I have learned that, although the trail is pointed out by Thy golden finger of still command from within, I must be willing to move along the path directed by Thee.

On Thy stage in the playhouse of earth, with the blue sky for its proscenium arch, and illumined by countless star-lights, are shown scenes of present, past and future time. As they keep shifting, they reveal human actors, birds, beasts, and blossoms, appearing in the ever-changing robes of many incarnations. The background of verdant nature, the planets, the sun and moon, remain constant, whereas the human actors keep changing.

Where are those witty souls who sparkled on the stage of history? What fleshly or astral robes do they wear and what parts are they now playing? Where are Shakespeare, Milton, William the Conqueror, Genghis Khan, and St. Francis roaming? In what land are they, oblivious, perhaps, of their former selves, and of us who now play our particular part with this name, this form, only once--only in this life--never again to be quite the same. Each incarnation is interesting and changeful; it would be intolerable if we lived the same life always, unadorned with Thine ornaments of mystery.

AFFIRMATION

O Divine Mother, after this rhythmic dance of incarnations, after the rising footsteps of birth and the falling footsteps of death, I will slide into Thy sea of Immortality.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I FLY FROM LIFE TO LIFE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

With living threads of Thy beauty my winsome wings were woven. Endowed with a spark of immortality, I have flown from life to life.

I escape from all who audaciously try to possess me; I belong only to Thee. No transiency enthralles me; my true Home is Thy Changeless Spirit.

Thou hast clothed barren eternity in the verdure of multicolored cycles. In the forest of incarnations I flit gaily from tree to tree. I shall alight at last, O Lord, upon Thine outstretched hand.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Through the door of meditation, the imprisoned Soul-Bird of Omnipresence was released. It spread its wings of joy and flew over infinite space, casting cool peace-shadows on unhappiness-scorched beings. Then the Bird of Heaven remembered its little cage of past habits, and folding its wings, lodged itself again behind the bars of earthliness. O Bird of Eternity, escape forever thy confining dream-cage! Fly to thy nest of Omnipresence!

EVOLUTION AND REINCARNATION

All matter is composed of living intelligent electrons. Minerals, plants, and animal bodies--all are made of intelligence and electrons. Even the clod reflects intelligence, transforming itself into minerals in some places and in others nurturing plants that support animals and human beings. The soil is alive. Plants too are alive; a tropical variety of Mimosa called sensitive plant closes its leaves when you touch it.

According to the theory of evolution, all forms of marine, animal, and bird life are interrelated. For instance, some fish that were hunted by larger and faster fish developed birdlike attributes and became flying fish. Other fish developed lungs that can be used instead of gills when their native rivers dry up. The tadpole starts out as a fish with gills and becomes a land animal with lungs. But as yet there is no evidence of an ape's changing into a man. The idea of a missing link between animals and man is erroneous. The earth's deepest strata reveal first, seashells, then vegetation, animals, and finally different kinds of primeval man, Neanderthal, Rhodesian, Cro-Magnon, and modern man. We do not find any half-man, half-animal skulls or bones in the strata where animal skeletons are found, or in the strata where human skeletons are found.

MAN--
A SPECIAL
CREATION

Man is a special creation, although the human body is made after the animal pattern. Human ears resemble seashells; and the tail, or coccyx, at the end of the human spine resembles that of primates. The Darwin point at the top of the ear is a vestige of the long ears of the donkey; our intestines resemble the snake. In his quick movements, restless eyes, and grinning face, man resembles the monkey. The running power of man is akin to the racing power of the horse. Man can be brave like the lion, crafty like the jackal, cruel like the tiger, meek like the lamb, musical like the nightingale, ferocious like the wolf, and hypocritical like the cat that looks innocent after it has just eaten a tame canary.

The dispute between the evolutionist and the special creationist may be resolved by accepting an intermediate view: The scientist is right when he

declares that all animal bodies are interrelated, and that they came from the lemur, and the lemur from the fish family. But since no one has found any missing link between animals and man, we should admit the possibility of man's being a special creation. One might then ask "How is it that there are animal characteristics in man, if he is a special creation distinct from the animals?" The answer is that for further advancement, the most highly evolved animal souls were made to reincarnate in specially created human bodies.

The first human beings are referred to symbolically as Adam and Eve. God created human bodies specially so that the newly created Adams and Eves might use the power of will to materialize Cosmic Energy into the forms of human children, that is, immaculately create their own kind. God told them to enjoy all the other fruits of the garden of the senses--sight, smell, taste, and hearing--but not to indulge in the sense of touch. The transgression of Adam and Eve shows that they remembered their former incarnations in animal bodies, which are reproduced only by sexual creation, and were tempted. That is the reason Adam and Eve ignored the warning of God not to awaken the sex instinct, the forbidden fruit on the spinal tree of life. As a result, having chosen to create in the animal way rather than in the divine way God had intended for them when He gave them human form, Adam and Eve and their descendants had to go on creating their own kind by sexual creation rather than by immaculate conception.

MEMORY IS NOT THE TEST OF PRE-EXISTENCE — ~~The fact that we may not remember our former lives~~ does not mean that we did not exist before. We do not remember the nine months of our embryonic existence in this life, nor do we remember when we were six months old. It is all the less likely therefore that we would remember when we had lived in a different body with a different brain and nervous system, and a different appearance.

It is well that we do not remember our hard experiences in the school of past lives, for we might be discouraged at the prospect of having to struggle with them again. We might even feel disinclined to be good again, imagining good deeds to be of no value; or we might be bored by repetition. Who would care to live over again all the pranks of childhood, the comedies of youth, the tragedies of old age, of even one lifetime! Think what a blessing reincarnation is! It demolishes our rickety old body car and gives us a brand new model in which to try again to win the race of life.

It requires years of concentrated mental investigation to know one's former incarnations. You can know about reincarnation, not by reading books or hearing lectures, but through scientific metaphysical research. Reincarnation is the only logical solution to the mystery of the purpose of our lives. We are immortal souls, destined to return one day to our home in God. If we die in the consciousness of mortal imperfection, we cannot immediately go back to

God. We must eradicate our acquired egoistic imperfections by right living. To re-establish our soul-perfection may require many lives.

The tendencies that we exhibit up to the age of five come from our past lives. After that age they become diluted with newly acquired tendencies of this life. Think back as far as you can remember, then enumerate your first unalloyed tendencies. Did you feel attracted to incense, or Oriental furnishings, or pictures of saints? Or did you love mechanisms and mechanistic instruments? Those early tendencies, separated from the acquired tendencies of this life, reveal your past. Occidentals can develop Oriental characteristics in this life, and vice versa; and when they are reborn they can change their race and nationality.

Sometimes wise children are born of ordinary parents, and sometimes moronic offspring come from intelligent parents. These seeming vagaries in life show that souls of varying evolutionary progress may be born in the same family. If the members of a family fight most of the time, it sometimes indicates that they knew each other in a previous life and were archenemies, concentrating on and establishing hatred for each other in their hearts. Therefore, according to the laws of concentration and attraction involved in hatred, Nature brought the fighting souls together again, so that at close quarters, within the small arena of the home, they could get enough of the long missed and eagerly waited for opportunity to indulge in the joy of fighting with one another. So beware! Do not bring your enemy near you, nor attract his bad qualities by constantly concentrating upon him through the channel of hatred.

BE FREE FROM
DESIRES AND
ATTACHMENTS

God sent perfect souls forth to behave like immortals--calm, desireless, and happy--while watching and acting in the moving pictures of earth life. But, through proximity and ignorant behavior while performing in and watching the intricate dramas of earthly life, souls develop egoistic attachments to other actors and to certain scenes and conditions in the mundane moving pictures. Unless these desires are cast off before death, the soul must return to another body in the same earthly moving picture house in order to work out the desires born there. For instance, if you die with the desire to possess an expensive automobile, you won't remain in heaven, or the astral spheres, where souls glide about without vehicles; you will have to come back to earth where that particular desire can be fulfilled. Even the highest types of earthly desires are limited when compared to the soul's true desire, to inherit the eternal kingdom of the cosmos.

Actions performed to please God create no karmic bonds of attachment. For instance, if you eat strawberry shortcake or make money to please God, or with the consciousness of pleasing God, you will not carry the desire with you when you die; but if you act with greed or thought of gain for self, and then suddenly

die with the desire unfulfilled, you will have to come back on earth to fulfill that desire. This does not mean that you should be without ambition. The lazy, negligent person who is not ambitious to please God by good actions on earth has to come back until he learns to work with the sole purpose of pleasing God. The egotist, who works only to please himself, becomes involved in an endless net of desires, from which he can extricate himself only after many incarnations. Therefore, you should be neither idle nor absentminded, nor egoistically ambitious; but rather be divinely ambitious to work and play on earth with the right attitude of mind, in the way the Divine Director wishes.

To leave the world and go to the forest to meditate is an extreme solution that may not work out, for your earthly desires can follow you to the forest. To be merged in the worldly consciousness causes misery and increased desires, but to be in the world but not of the world--or better still, to enjoy the world with the pure joy of God--brings lasting happiness. Then everything that you do will be right. To leave the world and become a hermit without conquering desires produces hypocrisy; and to live in the world without spiritual training mixes you up and makes you hardboiled and worldly. To do everything in the world to please God is the highest ideal, according to the Hindu Scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita, whose teachings are as compatible with Western life as with Eastern life. If you go to the forest and do not live hygienically, you will die of disease; and if you live in the world without cultivating spiritual peace, you will die of mental worry. With God in your heart, and a smile on your face, let your ~~hands ungrudgingly work for truth alone. Then you will find real happiness~~ wherever you may be.

YOU MUST PASS
ALL GRADES IN THE
EARTHLY SCHOOL

The physical body is the tenement and the soul is the tenant. The fleshly house is perishable and the soul, being the image of Spirit, is imperishable. That is why Jesus said: "I (the reflected individualized soul) and my Father (omnipresent Spirit) are one." When the body dies, the soul has to go somewhere else for shelter; but owing to the soul's intimate contact with the body, it develops desires for imperfect physical pleasures. These imperfect material attachments cling to the disembodied soul and prevent it from returning to Spirit. Thus, the immortal but imperfectly manifesting soul has no alternative but to come back to the mortal school of life to work out imperfections.

When a child that is sent to school fails to make the grade, he has to go back again and again until he passes his examinations. So also souls who fail to preserve their perfection while in the mortal school of educative entertainment have to go back for many incarnations until they completely bring out their hidden Spirit-nature. The immortal soul must win several prizes in maintaining Spirit-endurance, self-control, detachment, morality, calmness, and spirituality before graduating, and must pass all grades in the earthly school in order to be ready for immortality.

Immortal soul-children are sent to the movie house of life to make pictures or to watch pictures of life, both tragedies and comedies, with unruffled equanimity. When these divine children can go back to God and say: "Father, I enjoyed acting in and watching Thine earthly moving pictures, but I have no more desire for evanescent amusements," they are no longer forced by their material desires to come back to earth.

INSPIRATION

Forsake the slums of the beggar-ego, and its claims to its miserly material kingdom. Never mind if you have lived a few incarnations in the slums of matter and have become attached to that life. Never mind the time that you have spent identified with matter; that is nothing compared to the eternal time that you will spend in the bosom of God in full, conscious possession of all His glory. No matter how long you have erred and been sidetracked from God, you must now forsake the slums of ego and reclaim your kingdom of divine Bliss for eternity. Possess the universe, for that is yours, O Prince of all possessions, O Prince-Image of God!

AFFIRMATION

I am the prince of perpetual
peace, playing the drama of sad and
happy dreams on the stage of experi-
ence.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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ON THE MOONBEAMS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Mix your mind with the moonbeams at night. Wash your sorrows in their rays. Feel the mystic light spreading silently over your body, over trees, over vast lands. Standing in an open space with still eyes, behold, beyond the limits of the moonbeam-revealed scenery, the bedimmed fringe of the shining horizon. Let your meditation run past the rim of the visible to the lands of fancy.

Spread your mind from the moonbeam-visible objects to the dim stars and distant skies lying beyond in the eternal stillness of the ether, all throbbing with life. Watch the moonbeams spread, not only on one side of the earth, but everywhere in the eternal region of your spacious mind. Meditate until, in the cool moonbeams of your calmness, you race over trackless skies and, in realization, behold the universe as Light.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, teach me to use the gift of Thy love in my heart to love all of Thy children. Teach me to enter through the portals of family love and through the love of friends, into the larger mansion of social love, into the wide fields of international love, and thence into the endless territory of divine love, in which I may perceive all animate and inanimate objects as breathing and living by Thy love. Since it is Thy love with which I love everything, teach me to love Thee more than anything else.

DISEMBODIED SOULS -- Part 1

TRUE DEFINITION A disembodied soul is usually thought of merely as a soul that has lost the physical body by death. But in the ultimate sense "disembodied" signifies that the soul has been liberated not only from the physical body but also from the two other bodies--the astral and the causal.

On earth, people are not free to enter others' homes at their own pleasure. Nor are unliberated souls, after leaving the physical body, free to roam where they please in the Father's mansions. They must remain in certain parts of the astral universe; the locality is determined by the karmic law of cause and effect which governs the outcome of all human actions. According to their different qualities, physically disembodied souls consciously or unconsciously form various clans, and remain together in their respective quarters in space.

Yogis who learn in their earth-life how to remain conscious during the state of sleep, and who can stop the breath at will and still remain conscious, may then go out of the body consciously, and remain conscious, even in the final sleep of death. Souls that have lived virtuously on earth have the privilege of leaving their vibratory residence in the astral world whenever they desire to reincarnate on the physical plane; reincarnation is not forced upon them. People with deep realization may thus come and go from earth as they wish.

During our earthly sojourn we bestow our love mostly on members of our family. We grow attached to them, and then suddenly they are torn from us by death. It makes us feel like rebels. Why is it that beings come into our lives and then are taken away? What is the reason? If anyone wrests our material possessions from us, we fight, we bring lawsuits against him; but we can only weep helplessly when the dearest of all our possessions, our loved ones, are suddenly and apparently unreasonably taken away from us. We suffer silently and then, after a time, we more or less forget, and accept the decree of destiny.

WHAT GOVERNS
HUMAN
RELATIONSHIPS?

Is there any satisfying explanation why we are given certain ones to love and why, perhaps before our love for them has fully matured, they are mysteriously taken away from us by the cruel hand of death? Is Nature a jester that takes pleasure in seeing lovers separated, and that mocks at man's sacred vows of loyal love and friendship? Is parental love merely instinct-instigated? Is conjugal love only nature-and-sex instigated? Is friendship born only of passing emotions? Is the dream of eternal love between souls a mockery of imagination?

Is it through a vagrant whim of Nature that some souls are thrown together so that they become attached to one another? Or is it because of similar actions of previous lives, similar dispositions, like tendencies? Is it prenatal acquaintance, friendship, and love that bring souls together? Has God made of us intelligent puppets to play out His life-dramas, only to be destroyed in the end at His will? Has He made some of us poor, some of us rich, some idiotic or wise, merely to fill His stage of life with variety, pulling us back at death into His bosom? Is this life the beginning and the end? Are souls created for only one lifetime as various types of mentalities that will be attracted to one another through similar likes and dislikes, only to part forever in death? Is love just a chemical affinity that loses its strength after a certain period of temporary union, so that in death lovers must part forever? Is Nature, or destiny, jesting with friendship and with true love between souls? Questions such as these come to mind as we travel through life.

HUMAN LOVE
MUST BE
EXPANDED INTO
DIVINE LOVE

The answer to them all lies in this explanation: Divine Love is trying to express itself in human souls through the various avenues of conjugal and parental love and the love of friendship.

All the various relationships of family, society, and nationality among living creatures (even among animals, birds, and flowers) are but catalysts of life, intended to purify and convert earthly love into divine love. When friendship and love between souls becomes corroded with poisonous chemicals of possessiveness, selfishness, mechanical family relationships, sex obsessions, physical attachment, emotional excitement, utilitarian barterings, sudden attachments followed by sudden hates--then human love dies.

But hidden in each man's heart is an eternal divine love. It may remain asleep for awhile, but it can never really die. If man's human love fails to become purified by his association with other people, he will be dissatisfied and will keep on seeking other loves in this life (or beyond the portals of this life in an astral incarnation) until he meets someone (usually his guru) in whom he finds the full expression of all the perfections of divine love.

The highest form of earthly love is friendship, for in friendship there is no compulsion. Until the perfect, unconditional, undying, pure, divine love of true

friendship has been expressed by the soul in a human incarnation there will be no liberation.

**HUMAN LOVE FINDS
THE DIVINE ANSWER
IN PURE FRIENDSHIP**

The immortal perfect love in us is trying, during our various incarnations, to find a perfect human channel through which it can express itself. When perfect pure love and friendship are expressed between two souls, that love will be registered in heaven as one divine love; that love will be a commingled fount of love ever playing in the bosom of God. Divine love defies mortal destiny, and laughs at the impotency of time and death.

Souls who are seeking the joy of divine love mutually shared will never be satisfied with substitute-pleasures of physical attachment, "eye attraction," or sex lure. These may pacify man for the moment, but the thrill is soon over. True human love can be satisfied only when it has expanded itself into unselfish, unconditional, divine love.

When you feel that you can be a friend to another person unconditionally; when you feel that all your most exacting demands for perfect and pure divine love have been amply expressed through this person; and when you lose all desire to seek human love in anyone else, then will the friendship-thirst of your soul be quenched.

Human love may find a perfect divine answer to its seeking in a pure friendship with someone of the same sex; or it may behold the divine love in pure conjugal friendship with someone of the opposite sex. In the latter case, human love can perfect itself only if there is a predominance of soul affinity and a subordination of physical attraction. It is possible for human love to find divine satisfaction in all types of human relationships: in that of parent or son or servant, or--and this is the highest relationship--that of guru and disciple. The guru or spiritual preceptor expresses the highest ideal of love and friendship: he wants nothing but the disciple's good; and leads him, through incarnations if need be, to the ultimate good or God.

KEEP ON SEEKING Until you are able to express divine love, Nature will continue to mock at your friendships through the instrumentality of moods, fickleness, temperament, emotion, sudden parting, and death. You should keep on seeking, in this life and throughout incarnations if necessary, until you find in some pure heart the perfect divine love of God. Then you will find, simultaneously, that your heart feels the same divine love for all men--the members of your family, your countrymen, your world-family. You will feel that divine love emanating from you even to the flowers, birds, and beasts.

Sometimes it happens that after a long search through many incarnations and through long years of this present incarnation you may find, almost at the end of life, the dear one through loving whom you feel you can perfect your human love, transmuting it into divine love for all. What happens if death cuts

you off from that dear one, and you are thus unable to convert your human love into divine love by sufficient practice of the highest virtues in your relationship with him? You will be born again with the heart of a faithful, true friend, seeking only the one who fulfills the pattern of your dreams of unconditional divine love. When you find him, as you will, together you and he will go on striving to perfect the mutual love, as both of you had started to do in a previous incarnation.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

In the sorrow of separation from their loved ones through death, the unwise cry for a while and then forget. The wise feel the intuitive impulse within to seek their lost loves in the heart of Infinity. What we lose in finite life we should seek in the chamber of Infinity.

Dive into the star of meditation. Keep broadcasting your love thoughts to your dear ones of this world and to those who have gone ahead of you in robes of light. There is no space between minds and souls. Though far away, in thought our loved ones and all things are really ever near.

EXPLANATION FOR THE STORY OF SRI CHAITANYA

Esoteric activity means to perform all actions with the consciousness of God, to work with one's heart calm and full of love. "My feet are purified walking for Thee; my voice is sanctified talking of Thee; my feelings are pure, feeling Thee. Work Thou through my hands and my feet, through my eyes, my brain, and my speech."

Calmness is the throne of God. The yogi meditates day and night so that he does not lose that power. As often as he has a moment for reflection, he brings back that power of calmness and manifests it. My Master said: "There are willing instruments and unwilling instruments. God works through willing instruments."

When a man "drinks" God, endless thrills of intoxication are with him. A silent, burning devotion comes to him. The yogi prays silently until God answers. We should pray when others are asleep: "Father, answer my heartburning prayers. I am no longer satisfied with playthings, Father, I want Thee. I will wake all creation with my cries. Come, I want Thee. I want playthings no more!" Devotion is the love we express to God. Devotion should have no taint of fear. It is to man's own interest that he should show devotion to God silently, devotion of the heart, burning devotion. We have to surrender ourselves to Him and pray until He answers us. No one can destroy the charm of divine love.

STORY

(Liberated saints, being one in Christ Consciousness, can commune together and work through one another even though one may be on earth and another on the astral plane. Sometimes the great ones in subtler realms of existence choose to give a message to the world by using the physical vehicle of a brother-saint who has incarnated on earth to help souls. Thus Sri Chaitanya once spoke through Paramahansa Yogananda in the following words. --Ed.)

"Long ago I (Chaitanya) lived in India. I preached no sermons. I did not talk of wisdom. I did not speak of anything but the love of God. Wherever I went, I expressed burning love of God. I spoke only when I felt moved to do so, and often I said only two or three words, but thousands followed me just to hear me sing, 'Radha, Radha, Radha, Govinda, jai!' (That is, 'Spirit and Nature, Spirit and Nature, dancing together! Victory to Spirit! Victory to Nature!') In this chant, Govinda is one of the names of Sri Krishna, an embodiment of Spirit, and Radha, disciple of Krishna, symbolizes Nature.)

"Nature is the consort of my Beloved Father, and my Father is Spirit. Those two aspects of my Lord--Spirit and Nature--I beheld everywhere, and I wanted to speak of Their love manifesting in all: in the love of mother and child; in the love of father and mother; in the love of man and woman; and in the unconditional love of true friends.

"Once, as I was walking through a village singing, 'Victory to Spirit, victory to Nature,' men and women left their work and followed me out of the village; but gradually they dropped behind and finally I lost sight of them. I had come into a vast field, where I saw a man washing some clothing. 'Washerman! Washerman!' I hailed him. 'Don't talk to me,' he replied, 'I am too busy. Go away, you madman!' But I urged: 'You don't have to talk with me. All I ask you to do is to sing. Give me the happiness of singing with me my Beloved's name. Then I will go.'

"The washerman began to sing with me: 'Victory to Spirit! Victory to Nature!' And as we sang, the clothes he was washing fell from his hands. I moved on and he followed me, singing, and even the birds sang with us of their love of Nature and God. As we went along singing, the washerman's wife came up and, brandishing a broomstick, said to her husband: 'What is the matter with you, that you follow this crazy man?' But the washerman replied: 'Reville me if you will, but sing just once with me.' She began to sing, and we all sang, and as we did the broomstick dropped from the woman's uplifted hands.

"While we were engrossed in divine joy, singing to Spirit and Nature, four village gossips came along. Spying their friend the washerman's wife, they cried, 'Hey, what is the matter? Why do you go about singing with that crazy man and your husband?' But the woman replied: 'It is all right. Just sing once with us.' Then we all sang, 'Spirit and Nature, Spirit and Nature!' One hundred,

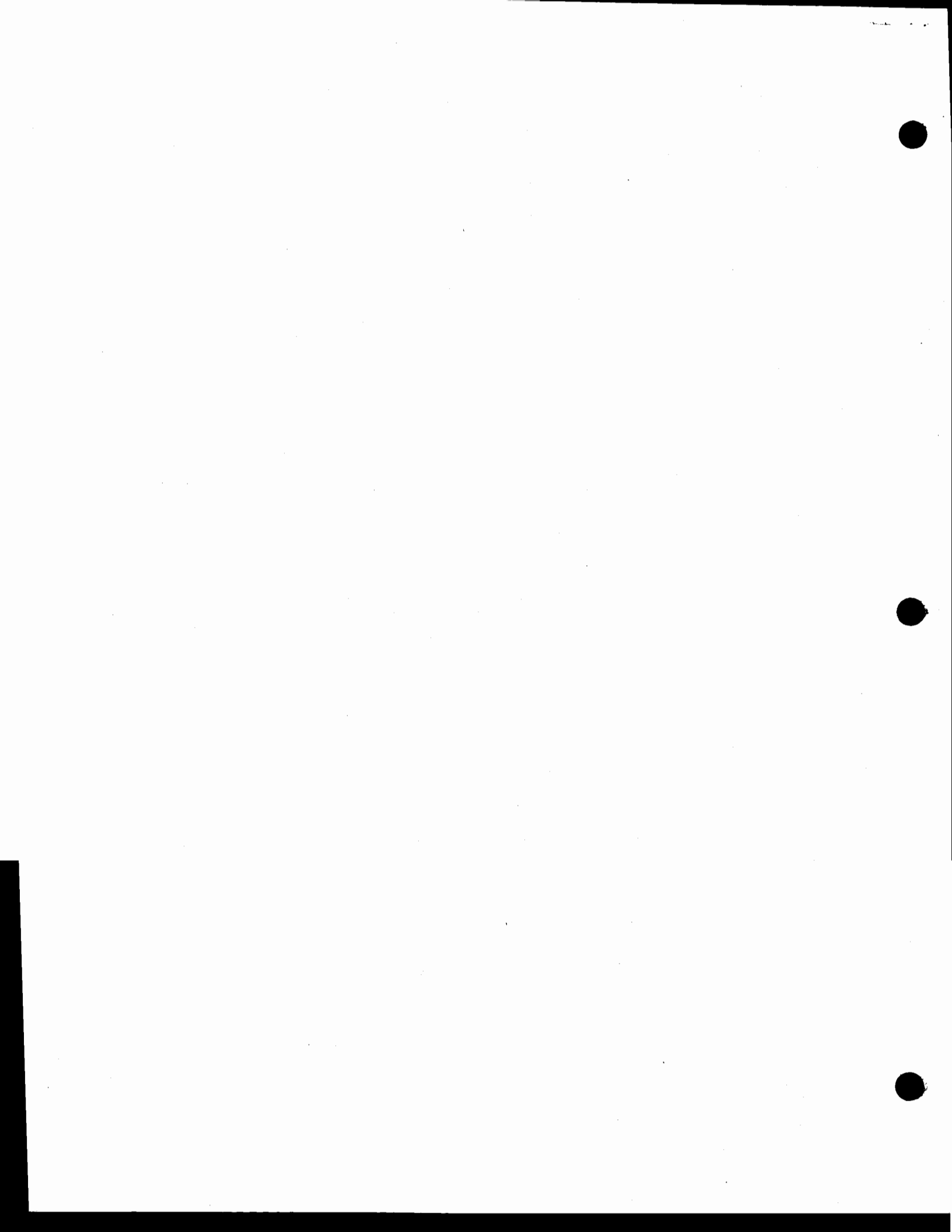
two hundred, three hundred, five hundred came to drive us away as we went back through the village singing, but they too became intoxicated with divine joy and I walked off with all of them.

"Dear ones, do not take the name of God in vain, but sing, live, and drink the name of my Beloved until you get all drunk with His name. Let us all sing, as I sang long ago, of the love of God, with hearts aflame and souls afire! 'Krishna, Radha, Krishna, Radha!' Sing on! Sing on! 'Spirit and Nature, Spirit and Nature, Radha, Govinda, jai!' Be intoxicated with the Lord's name!"

May the bliss of Sri Chaitanya be with you. Sing the Lord's name with all your heart. No more call the Beloved with dry voice and absent-minded prayer; drink His name with all the fervor of your soul and be intoxicated with His name!

AFFIRMATION

I am happy in the happiness
of my loved ones who are on earth
and those who are in the great beyond.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAKE OUR SOULS THY TEMPLE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Come, Spirit! Come with the glory of the dawn; come with the vitality of the sun; come through the portals of our silence. Receive the love of our souls. Father, Thou art just behind the breeze, just behind the echo of our voices, just behind the words with which we pray, just behind the moon and the sun. O Spirit Beautiful, open the window of nature and the windows of our minds, that we may behold Thee in all Thy glory --in the apparel of all beautiful thoughts.

Come Thou, O Father! Thou art just behind the love with which we love all our dear ones. Reveal the vast kingdom of Thy presence. Come Thou, O Spirit, reveal Thyself! Take us home from our wanderings in the wilderness of matter. Reveal Thyself! Teach our hearts to pray, teach our souls to feel that at any moment all doors may open and Thy presence be revealed.

PRAYER

May I learn to recognize in the bright soul-galaxies of past friendships, the One Great Friend smiling at me radiantly and clearly.

DISEMBODIED SOULS--Part 2

METAPHYSICAL
TECHNIQUE OF
CONTACTING
LOVED ONES

Let us not bury the soul in the grave, imagining death to mean annihilation; let us rather see death as a door through which bravely marching souls leave earthly life and enter the luminous, ever peaceful region of our common cosmic home. Mortal fears, heartaches, dreams, and illusions fade; the darkness of death changes into the light of a beautiful astral universe. Why pity the dead? In new-learnt wisdom, they pity us. We cannot see them with our gross, spiritually blind physical eyes, but they can see, with their spiritual eyes, their super-region and the earth at the same time. "Insult not my death with your tears, ye who are left on this desolate shore to moan and deplore. It is I who pity you."

Death is the complete switching off of prana (the main nerve current of life force) from a particular body-bulb. It is a state of passive involuntary relaxation brought on by disease, accident, or sorrow. The forcible, sudden, and "permanent" disconnection of the life current from the body-bulb, which many men suppose to be the extinction of life, is in reality only a temporary state. It is not the end of things, but a transfer from physical experiences in the gross domain of changeable matter to purer joys in the astral realm of multicolored lights.

Men whose causal and astral bodies are tainted with seeds of evil karma (past actions) and with obnoxious desires become extremely afraid at the call of death and struggle very hard to be deaf to it. They want to stay in the apartment house of flesh even when their bodily lease has expired. But the law of change, or death, evicts them by force. The deep mental agony arising in such men at their undesired expulsion, causes them to become unconscious at death. It takes a long time for them to regain full consciousness in the astral world. According to the quality of their subtle bodies, disembodied souls are allotted different vibratory regions of pranic or life-energy mansions, in infinite space, to live in.

The body is composed of intelligently organized motions--motions of sensations (physical body), of energy (subtle body), and of ideas (causal body)--revolving around an ego. The soul does not come back to its own consciousness of Spirit so long as the ego rules the three bodies. This ego is present in the state of body-consciousness or identification of the self with the body.

It is the ego that says "I am walking," and so on. The ego is also present in the dream-consciousness that knows "I am dreaming." It is present also in the turiya or deep sleep state. Because of the active presence of the ego, the soul does not get a chance to know itself. Salvation lies in completely freeing the soul from its identification with the three bodies. Great souls re-incarnate in the three bodies without being attached to or identified with them.

REMOVING ALL FEAR OF DEATH Self-Realization Fellowship students know the method by which they may switch off the life current from the entire body through conscious will, thus freeing their consciousness from the fear of death. Just as electricity does not "die" with the breaking of the bulb into which it flows, but merely retires into the dynamo, so the real Self is never destroyed but retires into the infinite, omnipresent Self when man's life forces are switched off from the body-bulb.

Whether in this life or in the astral life, there is no death. We are ever on the lap of God. When you go to the astral world, earthly life becomes unreal to you, and astral life seems real; and when you come back to earthly life, astral life becomes unreal to you and earthly life seems real. But you must know that both of these experiences are nothing more than the dreams of God. Some day, when you find Him, you will awaken from all these dreams of "life" and "death."

Man's ideas of Utopia come from his experiences in the astral land. But even when you arrive in the heavenly astral kingdom you will not be completely satisfied. You have to free yourself from all delusions, whether of the physical world or the astral world, before you can realize yourself as eternally blissful Spirit.

REACH ADVANCED BEINGS THROUGH LOVE The contacting of astral beings is possible both by the power of passivity and by the power of concentration. A spiritualistic medium can invoke the presence of astral beings while in a certain trance state, but this practice is dangerous. Astral beings can be and should be invoked consciously. In the negative or trance state, only stray, truant, disembodied souls possess the body into which they have been invited, and may harm it by overstaying. Great souls in the astral world accept only the invitations of prayer, love, and meditation; other means do not attract them, nor do they manifest their presence through mortal mediums who are not highly developed spiritually.

To attain conscious communion with desirable astral beings, you must, first of all, possess the desire and the patience and the strength; and you must follow the law. How? The spiritual eye is the instrument. It is the radio by which you broadcast, and it is the receiving set by which you may tune in with the other world. Many of you know that if you deeply love someone who has passed on, you may see him in dreams. Such appearances are not always a

mere reflection of your own thoughts; sometimes departed loved ones do try to get in touch with you when you are in the dream state. It is also possible to "tune in" with loved ones who have died and who have been reborn on earth. In dreams you can't communicate any message to them, although they may talk to you. But in the superconscious state you can know how to locate them and also how to talk with them. This is what happens: the heart sends out certain vibrations; and certain responsive electrical impulses come into the brain. Then during deep concentration, when all other thoughts have subsided, the desired image appears. What you want to learn is how to tune in with superconsciousness.

Unless you have love for a person, you cannot find him. And if you are sad and grieve for a person who is dead, you may keep him earthbound. That attitude is selfish. You cry for yourself because of your own loss. You can help him much more if you send just your love. Broadcast loving thoughts; such thoughts travel through the ether and are received by departed souls. When you send an intelligently directed thought through the ether, if the thought is continuous it will finally reach the desired person, even if you do not know where he is.

If you lose through death someone very dear to you, and if you find it impossible to forget him, even after the passage of many years, then you may proceed to find him in the following way: (Practice it for two hours each day, for months, or, if necessary for years.) Sitting on a straight chair, practice for one hour the highest technique of concentration you know (Kriya or Hong-Sau or Om); then lift your hands and concentrate upon the fingertips. Then concentrate upon the point between the eyebrows, see the spiritual eye, and continuously will to contact the astral body of the departed soul. Keep on turning your hands very gently in a circle toward north, south, east, and west. At every direction in the circle around which your hand moves, try to feel the presence of the astral body of the departed soul.

When your fingers feel that you have touched him, as you used to touch him when he lived on earth, your heart will be thrilled. Keep on visualizing him in the spiritual eye and you will see him. Instruct your fingers and heart to indicate in what place your friend has been reborn, according to the direction you had felt him through your fingers. When you feel him through your fingers and heart, and can see him and talk with him, he will tell you where he is in the astral world, or in whatever place he has been reborn. Then there will be great rejoicing!

You must not feel helpless before the fact of death; you must not accept the decree of fate and begin to forget your true, perfect friend. Throughout your life broadcast to him your undying love, until you succeed in seeing his or her astral body, or until he or she appears to you in the conventional garb of a human body.

If you had a perfect friend who met a so-called untimely death, make the

following affirmation after meditation. Look at the point between the eyebrows, see the light, and broadcast your message: "Dear one, be comforted; receive my vibrations of ever-living love. Meet me again soon." If you perform this exercise faithfully, you will find that living, loving vibrations will pour into you through your spiritual eye; you will realize the presence of your lost perfect friend. Even if your friend has already been reborn on earth, his astral body will respond and be projected as an image before your spiritual eye.

Disembodied souls can be consciously located by those who can "live without breath" and who can consciously watch and disengage themselves from the physical body; and by those who can retain their consciousness during sleep and the deep sleep of death. Only advanced souls who can live without breathing or heartbeat are consciously aware of the true state of death (in which the breath and heartbeat also stop). Undeveloped souls become unconscious when they lose their breath. Advanced souls on this earth can consciously go whenever they please to the astral world; and there, by intuition, can detect the presence of those souls whom they seek. So, practicing breathless silence is almost a condition, a passport, required before man can consciously enter the astral world.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

~~If you are~~ guided by the Divine Consciousness, then even when the future seems absolutely black, everything ultimately will come out all right. When God guides you, you cannot fail. If you faithfully and devotionally practice the SRF techniques and principles they will emancipate you, because they are from God.

In the preceding Steps you have learned that the conscious mind is the mind of limitations, and that the subconscious mind--which governs habits and involuntary actions--also has limitations. But there is another mind which is unlimited: the superconscious mind. In superconsciousness lies the germ of divinity. This is the form of consciousness which you should cultivate, for in this state you are in communion with God. I want you to know that miracles do not occur only in the lives of saints; they come to all who are receptive. The God-way is unfailing in results.

HOW TO OVERCOME SORROW

By knowing the difference between hallucinations and subconscious suggestions, you can develop the superconsciousness through which you will receive messages from your loved ones who have died. Say a prayer for them and they will receive the message. Always concentrate between your eyebrows when thinking of them, but free your mind from sorrow.

If Mr. Sorrow comes, do not give him strength by acknowledging his presence. If you feed him with the nectar of your tears, he will stay; and soon he will have made himself at home throughout the mansion of your life. Laugh at him the very instant he arrives, and he will go away. If he tries to intrude his presence again, let him feel the fists of your will power. Throw him out of your life! When you keep smiling you win a physical bout against sorrow, and also a metaphysical victory.

If you find your smiles momentarily buried in the tomb of sadness, resurrect them! Smile though the storms of suffering shriek around you. God knows that it is because your vision is still clouded by ignorance that you are tossing on a sea of trials. He knows that you must battle the storms around you. But He also knows that the little ark of your life is moving toward Him and that eventually you will behold Him as the Spirit that is in everything. When trials come, pray to the Father: "I have launched my boat on a dark sea, but I have heard Thy call. I know that Thou knowest I am coming."

AFFIRMATION

I will secretly remain in the caves of
divine love in souls and silently serve them
with invisible thoughts of helpfulness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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AT THY FEET OF IMMORTALITY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Blossoms of light I plucked from the heart of the dawn as offerings unto Thee. The lamps of my wakefulness and of dawn, I have lighted in the temple of my morning silence.

I beheld Thy bliss-face come out of the shadow of ignorance, which had kept Thee hidden in my temple for aeons. And seeing Thy face of joy in the mirror of my inner eye, I know that my life's face was made after Thine own blessed image.

In the mirror of Thy love, I have beheld the countenance of my love bearing Thy likeness.

I will blame the fates no more. Beloved Divine Mother, it was my self-made darkness that hid the glory of our love. Now, in the translucent mirror of Thy bliss, I see myself and know myself as perfect joy. And in my unwavering mirror of happiness, I beheld Thee--the ever-sacred, only perfect bliss.

I pour my love at Thy roseate feet of immortality! I pour my heart from the overflowing chalice of my soul! I pour the intoxicating musk of my reverence at Thine ever-moving feet of progress in everything.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, teach me to roast the seeds of my karma in the fire of meditation and right actions, free from desire for the fruits of action.

THE LAW OF KARMA

Your physical body was not manufactured by God alone. You have done much work on it. God made all men in His image, and some faces do reflect godliness; but other men have desecrated that image of God by wrong thoughts and actions, and their faces reflect evil and cruelty. Your physical appearance mirrors your actions of this life and of past lives.

What you have sown, you must reap now or in the future. It is not God who punishes you or rewards you. You are your own judge. You punish yourself through evil thoughts and actions, or free yourself through good ones. Your only escape from karmic law is to realize the Self within.

Karma is the law of action. Mind or body in a specific form of movement is termed "action." Every action mentally or physically performed, consciously or unconsciously, has a specific effect on the life of man. These good and bad effects of actions in this present life remain in the subconsciousness, and those seed effects brought over from past existences are hidden in the superconsciousness. The seed effects of actions--good or bad--are stored in the subconsciousness or superconsciousness until one develops spiritually to the point where his actions are no longer identified with feeling or personal attachment. The ideal is not total inaction or inertia; rather, to cognize experiences without desire for the fruit (outcome) of action. Action is necessary to life on this plane, but it should be performed with unselfish ambition if one is to avoid imprisoning karmic chains.

Action that is performed in this life by free will and intelligence is called free action, or Purushakar; actions performed under the influence of habits established by actions in past lives are called Samskar. Purushakar means action performed by free will. Samskar means action performed by influence. Actions that come under the classification of Samskar are those past habits, or actions of past lives, which come as the instincts and habits of this life. This inner environment governs your life. There is also an outer environment--the planets, world, nation, family, neighborhood, books, and so forth. These all influence man's actions.

To be able to do anything one pleases is not the real meaning of freedom of action. You should understand to what degree you are free and how much

you are influenced by bad habits. To be good just because it has become a habit to be good is not freedom. To be tempted is not bad, but to be able to resist and overcome temptation is great; this is freedom, for you are acting by free will and free choice only. To be good, not just from habit, but because you think you should be good, and because you have the will power to be good-- that is real freedom.

THE LAW OF ACTION
IS BASED UPON THE
LAW OF CAUSE
AND EFFECT

The law of karma, or action, is scientific, being rooted in the law of causation; it has also a philosophic, moral, and practical side. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed" (I Samuel 2:3).

Karma exists for man so that he may learn from its workings the wisdom of returning from multiplicity to unity. Transgression of karmic law delays man in his spiritual evolution.

The following are reasons why all men should know the karmic law:

1. To be liberated from the clutch of karma by understanding it.
Knowledge is freedom.
2. To be able to act rightly, free from external influence and desire; and thus to be able consciously and independently to create good karma, in accordance with right judgment.
3. To understand the various influences that may be employed to modify the effects of bad karma; thus to escape or minimize the results arising from errors already made, and to avoid future mistakes.

Springs of Action

1. Impulses acquired in previous state of existence.
2. Influence of environment.
3. Impartial reason of man.
4. Acquired habits of present life.

We are held responsible for the acts springing from our innate impulses; even though we do not remember their origin, we ourselves have created those impulses by actions in past lives.

Every person is subject to influences of various kinds: world influence, national karma, family influence (for example, repeated affirmations of the

mother or of close childhood companions, such as "John is a bad boy"); influence of impulses--those acquired in previous lives, those acquired through heredity, or through reason, or through superstition; and the effect of independent will upon action.

Decrease the percentage of undesirable karmic action and increase the percentage of your independent good actions. Individual as well as collective actions produce vibrations in the ether that affect the world in good or bad ways.

GOOD RULES:

1. Think before you act.
2. Above all, act lawfully to rise above the law.
3. Roast karmic seeds of past actions in the fire of desireless action and deep Kriya Yoga meditation.
4. Diagnose all paradoxical events of karma.
5. Control so-called fate.

KARMA IS NOT FATALISM

The law of action, or karma, is not fatalism. The effects of whatever you have done may be changed. Many people confuse karma with what they call fate. The effect of an action for which a person is responsible may not come to him until a long time afterward, when he has forgotten about the action. Not being able to account for the effect because he has forgotten its cause, he decides that he must be a victim of fate.

The idea of fate springs from ignorance of the real causes that operate to produce a particular event. The seed-effects of our actions do not always immediately sprout; and if we happen to think of the possible consequences, we quickly forget if the results are not immediately forthcoming. But the seed effects born of those actions remain hidden, ready to germinate into the seemingly sudden and unexpected events of life. Then we mistakenly think them to be caused by an external fate. But there really is no such force as fate. Our lives are governed by our past actions.

Different habits are controlling our different lives. Everything we are now, and everything that is happening to us now, comes from the past. This lesson is given to show you that you should not be a fatalist, going through life feeling beaten and thinking that everything disagreeable that happens to you is caused by an unjust fate. Nothing rules you. You are the architect of your destiny.

YOU MUST REAP Those who acquired riches, health, prosperity, wisdom,
WHAT YOU SOW or spirituality in past lives are born with specific advantages from the beginning of their present lives. And why does a person suffer from illness? Because he has transgressed divine laws in this or in a past life.

The karmic law--that you reap in this life what you sowed in past lives--is a just law. We should not impute to God the stigma of being an autocrat who creates some people with healthy brains and some people with defective minds just for variety. The karmic law explains the seeming injustices that occur from the very birth of human life. It also gives hope to all; for the sinner is a sinner, not because erring parents gave him a twisted mind, but because he created that brain in a past life and thus attracted, and was attracted to, sinful parents in this life.

On the other hand, a sinful person who has performed mitigating good actions may earn an incarnation with good parents. If he responds to their love and help, he may continue to become a better person; or, if the influences of past bad habits are too strong, he may become a "black sheep" in this otherwise good family.

Many times parents are unjustly blamed, or they blame themselves unnecessarily for a child's mental or physical infirmity. A medical doctor would probably say that a mental patient whose father is unstable inherited the affliction from the father. A metaphysician would say that he was naturally attracted to a mentally unbalanced parent in this life; that his soul carried the tendency to insanity as a result of wrongful actions in a former life. The pattern of the past actions of both parent and child created a mutual attraction that brought them together in this life; but each is responsible for his own situation. The doctrine of karma alone gives faith in the justice and wisdom of God's laws working in the lives of man.

If a person lives for one hundred years, he has time to use his God-given reason and free choice to struggle against evil and become good; but a child who dies at the age of five has no time to exercise his powers to win the battle of life. He dies because of a former transgression, and will be born again and again in various schools of life, until he educates himself to right behavior.

The various grades of latent health or ill health, or good or bad tendencies that people have can only be satisfactorily explained by looking back into the records of their former lives. Even a hundred years of sinful living does not warrant eternal punishment. And what could be done with souls whose lives are equally good and evil? Would their astral bodies be sawed in half and one section sent to heaven, the other to hell?

A bandit who is killed does not become an angel by dying. Persons who live a desultory life and yet expect to be angels when they die will have a long

wait and a disillusionment. We are the same after sleep as before it; and sinful or virtuous are the same after death.

Since millions of people die in imperfection, they cannot remain forever in the pleasant astral world, but have to come back to earth to regain their lost soul-perfection. As souls we are already rays of God's light. Just as the sun hides momentarily behind a cloud, we can remain hidden in sin only for a little while; but not forever. All the sins of the cosmos could not obliterate our native luminosity. But we must remove the torturing, choking clouds of ignorance and manifest our everlasting light. We should not reason this way: "Since we will certainly be redeemed someday, let us tarry on the way." That is foolish, for sin has very painful results and one should not willingly let the soul suffer for aeons through willful failure to overcome ignorance.

We reap what we sow, hence all the visitations of ills are due, not to some hereditary fault passed on by our parents of this life, nor to the shortcomings of our grandparents; our misfortunes are due to our sins--in this life or in past lives. We are never sinful enough to deserve eternal damnation. Sin is a graft, a parasite. Essentially we are perfect souls. Souls come to earth to work out sins. When they have overcome, souls become free to be one with God again. Souls who re-establish their perfection need never again come back to earth.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

All effects or seeds of our past actions (karma) can be destroyed by roasting them in the fire of concentration, meditation, the light of superconsciousness, and right actions, free from desire for the fruit of action.

WHY THE RICH MAN BECAME POOR AND THE POOR MAN BECAME RICH (Part 1)

Once upon a time there lived in India two friends--Mr. Sham, a rich man devoted to worldly pleasures, and Mr. Honest, a poor man devoted to seeking God. They both lived with their families in a large double house. Mr. Sham was a shameless, unprincipled, godless rogue, whereas Mr. Honest was a conscientious, upright, religious man. Their lives were paradoxical in that their inner conduct could in no wise explain the difference in their outer status. Although Mr. Sham was an unfaithful husband and a dissolute sinner, he nevertheless had a clinging, loyal, gentle, beautiful, and spiritual wife who put up with all of his humiliating and cruel ways. It appeared that the more Mr. Sham sinned and caroused, the more he prospered, grew strong and healthy, and attracted all kinds of helpful wealthy friends. His investments unfailingly

brought him added wealth.

Mr. Honest, on the other hand, was strictly loyal to his wife, although her disposition was as ugly as her appearance, and she had attained perfection in the art of nagging and rapacious gossip. It seemed that the more Mr. Honest became absorbed in his spiritual study of metaphysics and in protracted meditations, the more his fortune worsened. Friends deserted him, investments went bad, and poverty pursued him.

The rich Mr. Sham often said to him: "Mr. Honest, if you would forsake your queer, unprofitable metaphysical ways and take a drink or two and be a good sport like me, I would give you a new financial start, and you would then attract riches and friends. But I say 'nothing doing' until you give up your preoccupation with religion and metaphysical matters."

Mr. Honest would then remonstrate: "No, my friend, thank you very much for your offer, but I have no intention of giving up my idealistic ways, which give me an inner satisfaction even though they do not yield me a harvest of money and other worldly prosperity."

Months passed, and the worse Mr. Sham behaved the more opulent he grew. But as for Mr. Honest, the more he studied his beloved metaphysics, the more he failed in health, happiness, and prosperity. This had been going on for some time when one evening Mr. Sham and Mr. Honest met and squabbled over the proper way of living.

Mr. Sham started in: "You have gone mad over metaphysics. Perhaps you believe yourself to be an angel, but all I see is a miserable failure; the more religion you try to swallow, the more it chokes you. Why don't you give up your ascetic practices and behave naturally?"

Mr. Honest at once retorted: "You are a good-for-nothing, ego-inflated wastrel, and I do not want money if getting it requires imitating your reprehensible habits. I am all right, though my outward fortunes may belie it."

Mr. Sham, confident of his way of life, gravely said: "Don't you see how good it is to live a natural life? I take a drink when I want it. I do what my impulses move me to do, and see, I am as healthy and happy as a lark. Your metaphysics have paralyzed your will power and creative ability. Now you have become queer in your mind and it keeps you physically and financially sick. Look here! Give up God and follow nature and me, and you will be happy. There is no God, and there are no laws of life except what you create yourself. Come on, be a good sport and join me in my way of natural living!"
(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I will use my reason and free choice to act rightly in all life's situations. Nothing rules me. I am the architect of my own destiny.



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THE SUN GAZE OF MY LOVE NE'ER SETS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I take a sacred vow: Never shall the sun gaze of my love sink below the horizon of my thought of Thee. Never will I lower the vision of my lifted eyes to place it on aught but Thee.

Never will I do anything that reminds me not of Thee. Actions springing from ignorance lead to nightmares. May I weave only sweet dreams of noble achievements, for they are Thy dreams.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, bless me that through the light of Thy wisdom I may drive out all the darkness of undesirable past actions and find my true freedom in Thee.

THE RELATION OF KARMA TO HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

Success in this life depends upon the ratio between past success tendencies and present judicious efforts of will for success. If the tendency toward success in a past life was weak, and efforts to attain success in this life are weak, then success in this life will be meager, almost negligible. But if the success tendency of a past life was strong and the present life is marked by inactivity and inertia, one may be successful, but only by indirect means, such as being born in a rich family or suddenly inheriting a fortune. Persons who grew tired of accumulating riches in a past life might be reborn in poverty because of the repulsion against money developed before death. They might have to struggle, but usually they come into large sums of money by a so-called "stroke of good luck" or through a sudden inheritance or lucky small investments.

No one can be exclusively either a financial success or a failure in all lives, for human consciousness changes by its own weakness or strength or through the influence of changes of environment. Real financial success in all lives--until emancipation frees one from such considerations--consists in the ability to destroy all the apparent tendencies of failure by the power of super-concentration. A yogi may not possess much material substance, but through his ability to focus his mind he learns to create at will that which he needs. Of course, advanced yogis do not entertain any personal desire. They live only that God's love may reign on the shrine of their souls forever and that the Heavenly Father may help them to kindle His love on the flaming heart-altars of others.

SEEDS OF PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY

Blind selfishness is the root cause of unbalancing the prosperity vibration. Rich people who have fought failure and acquired success, but who later become selfish--ignoring the agonies of others who fail--may lose their wealth by wrong investments, or may attract poverty in the next life. Many are the romances of Dame Fortune with her consort, Lord Karma (the law of cause and effect).

A person who is not prosperous may feel that he must have been a failure for many lives. But even if this is so he should remember that buried somewhere in his subconscious mind he has the success tendencies of other past lives, which, if roused, can help him. The chronic failure must remember

that he has an almighty, all-conquering will--only it may have become lazy and lie sleeping because of lack of initiative, and failure to make undaunted repeated efforts to succeed. The chronic failure should not waste time neglecting his will, so that it becomes paralyzed. He must rouse will power by repeated judicious initiative efforts. By the repeated efforts and knockings of his will power, ultimately he will surely rouse the success tendencies sleeping in a dark chamber of subconsciousness.

Most people start out to adopt a career or profession without considering the influence of prenatal karmic habits. That is why born artists fail when they attempt to act the role of businessmen without training or experience. That is why the born spiritual man does not usually succeed as a businessman. A man cannot be an absolute failure unless he hypnotized himself into thinking so; a man is an absolute failure only when neither his judgment nor the judgment of others can convince him that he can be a success.

HEALTH TYPES
CLASSIFIED
AND EXPLAINED

There are different degrees of health, just as there are different degrees of illness and many kinds of diseases to produce them. Some people are so healthy and shining that they seem to be proof against any disease. I call them the "asbestos" clan. There are others whose health is like a fine watch that goes well when properly cared for, but "runs" erratically at the slightest neglect. They might be called the "mechanical" type. Some people keep on existing in spite of frequent hailstorms of disease, with only occasional periods of health. I call them the "die-hard" type. Some are sick all the time. Some are healthy most of the time, but when they do get sick, they are very sick. They are the "born healthy" type. Some are healthy but weak. They are the "medium healthy" type. Let us trace the past karma of each of these types--their prenatal habits-- and their postnatal results.

1. The "asbestos" type is born of the accumulated good health habits of many lives (including the last incarnation), plus natural health habits and regular exercise in this life. This type of person was probably a yogi in many lives and he can destroy all past seeds of ill-health if, in this life, he practices yoga principles (scientific union of body, mind, and soul with God by the scientific psychological methods of meditation and discipline). If he merely concentrates on physical exercise and proper diet, but does not practice spiritual yoga principles, he may retain his health, but runs a chance of losing it late in life. The person who properly practices yogic concentration (as you have been taught in previous lessons) overcomes little health transgressions and any accumulated seed tendencies of unhealthy habits acquired in this life. An aspirant for the "asbestos" type of health cannot depend only upon past health tendencies and physical exercises in this life; he must also keep burning away the accumulating seeds of unhealthy actions of this life, no matter how small they may be.

2. The "born healthy" type lives on his accumulated past health seed-tendencies, plus fairly good health habits and exercises, but performs no yoga practices. He becomes ill when the store of acquired health has been used up, and the little unroasted seeds of tendencies of health transgressions in this life grow strong.
3. "Medium healthy" is the state of those whose past seed-tendencies of health were acquired solely by will power, and not by the power of mind plus physical exercise. That is why this type is born healthy but weak. Physical exercise in this life would remove that weakness.
4. The "mechanical" health type is the result of past obedience to health laws only through fear and nervous caution. That is why this type has health only as long as he follows rules. Too much dependence upon physical laws and not enough upon God, plus a lack of self-reliance, makes one become "health-law-bound." Do not be a slave to law; use the law to serve you.
5. The "die-hard" type is born when sickness and health tendencies have equal power. That is why he has health and sickness alternately. If you have great devotion and are obedient to God, you will have a greater chance of response from God than if you have great devotion but continually break God's hygienic, mental, and spiritual laws.

DESTROYING SEEDS
OF DISEASE
AND FAILURE

To destroy sprouted chronic disease seeds and other lurking disease seeds, the exercises for recharging the body battery, given in the first Step of the lessons, should be practiced with deep concentration, and followed by practice of the concentration and meditation lessons. When practicing these lessons, the consciousness of health, energy, and power must be kept predominant. When this power is felt all over the body as an incessant influx of vitality, then that vital ray should be switched to the brain and held there for a long time. In this way the vital power will roast all lurking disease seed-tendencies from the past.

During meditation, the yogi feels the power of concentration in between the eyebrows, and peace all over his body. Whenever he especially wants to rid the brain cells of past failure or sickness seeds, he must switch that raylike peace and concentration power into the brain. The peace ordinarily felt in the entire body, and the power of concentration in between the eyebrows, must be continuously transferred to and felt in the brain.

The same method may be used to burn seeds of failure. Every businessman should know that good fortune is dependent upon the law of successful actions of the past plus continued successful activities in this life. A man striving for permanent success should meditate every morning and night, and when the superconscious peace and concentration rays burst forth and the

nocturnal blackness and restlessness disappear, then he should turn those rays on the brain to scorch out lurking seeds of past failures and stimulate success tendencies. He is the really prosperous and healthy man who can remove past tendencies to failure and ill-health by his power of will, and also remove all failure and ill-health tendencies that might have, without warning, entered the cells of his brain owing to slight negligences in this life.

ESCAPING THE
EFFECTS OF
BAD KARMA

The best way to escape the effects of a specific action is to overcome its effects in this life; otherwise it will be carried over to the next life. You should remove now the undesirable results you have brought about. To assist you in the fight against bad karma you have the good forces of all lives, plus God, and contact with Him eternally. Your undesirable karma cannot be destroyed without contact of God. When you realize that you and your Father are One, then you will be able to bring in the light of wisdom, and you will drive out all the darkness of undesirable past actions and be free in God.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

When all the seeds of evil tendencies in the brain are roasted, each microscopic brain cell becomes the throne of a brilliant king of wisdom, inspiration, and health, who sings and preaches the glory of God to the intelligent body cells. People who have attained this state are really free. Such people have freed themselves of karma in other incarnations. They reincarnate only to wipe away the tears of other karma-bound souls. Liberated masters carry halos of invisible healing light. Wherever they go, they scatter the light of prosperity and health.

The kind, omnipresent God neither punishes nor rewards us. He has given us free will: the power to punish or reward ourselves by the use or misuse of our own reason and will. As man transgresses the laws of health, prosperity, or wisdom, he punishes himself accordingly with ill-health, poverty, or ignorance.

Through the law of cause and effect that governs human actions, we order ourselves to be punished or rewarded. Man should parole himself from the prison of his own past undesirable habits. Since man is the judge, no jail of suffering, poverty, or ignorance can hold him if he wants to liberate himself. It is up to him to speak the words: "Be thou free," and to make the jailer of his wrong convictions obey his command.

WHY THE RICH MAN BECAME POOR AND THE POOR MAN BECAME RICH
(Part 2)

Mr. Honest replied indignantly: "You ignorant man, there is a God, and He does listen to our prayers. He has His own mysterious way of rewarding devotees after they pass all His earthly tests."

Mr. Sham shot back a challenge: "Well, Mr. Superfavorite of a non-existent God, why don't you coax your almighty Nothingness to demonstrate something tangible to me?"

Mr. Honest, with perfect assurance, answered: "All right, I accept your challenge. I will start praying to God night and day for a month, and on the Friday following the end of the month I am sure that you will behold a great demonstration of answered prayers. I am confident that God will answer my persevering prayer through all that will happen to you and me on Friday, a month from now."

Mr. Sham inquired curiously: "What do you mean by 'all that happens to you and to me on Friday, a month from now'?"

"Well," replied Mr. Honest, "I mean that my continuous prayer will result in our Heavenly Father's answer on that Friday. If on that day good fortune comes to you and misfortune to me, then you win and I lose, and I shall concede that there is no God. But if He sends good fortune to me--and I am sure that He will--and misfortune to you, then you will have to admit that God exists and that He responds to prayers. If you lose, you must follow my spiritual ways of living; and if I lose, I will follow your 'natural' ways of living."

Mr. Sham laughed good-naturedly. "All right," he said. "I will wait for your prayers to bring action on the appointed Friday."

Mr. Honest returned to his home and engrossed himself in praying night and day: "Heavenly Father, my own dear God, as proof of Your existence, please punish Mr. Sham on the Friday I have specified, and on that day bring me some good fortune, so that I may win for Your sake my bet with Mr. Sham."

Like Mr. Honest, we often pray in our own way and ask God to fulfill our requests in the particular way we want Him to respond, without leaving it in His hands. But inconceivable to man are the ways of the Lord. God does not care to advertise just what His response will be, even to the prayers of true and earnest devotees. And so it happened that God worked most bewilderingly on the Friday designated by Mr. Honest in his wager with Mr. Sham.

A very strange and apparently unjust occurrence took place on that important morning. Mr. Sham was in high spirits and could not wait for the day to come to a close. He felt that he was sure to win and, led by a strange hunch,

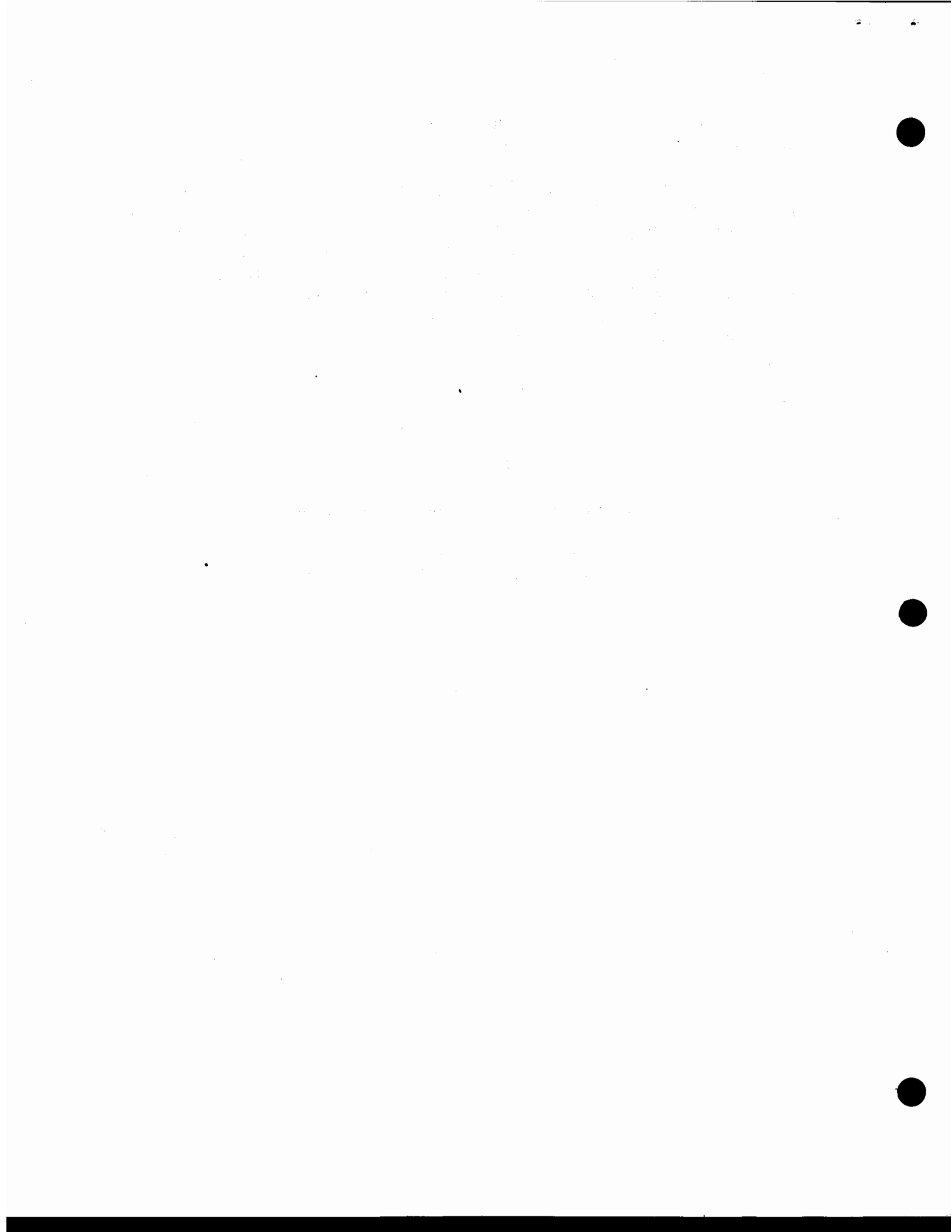
he went to a nearby forest to hunt. Ruthlessly he killed a lot of birds, more than he needed to feed his family, and packed them on his horse.

On his way homeward, Mr. Sham stopped under a shady tree to rest. As he lay on the ground he absent-mindedly began to strike and dig at the sod with his hunting knife. He was astonished to hear a metallic sound as the knife struck something. Curious, he began to dig, and finally he uncovered an iron chest. Loosening the soil around it, he succeeded in opening the lid. Amazed, he beheld inside a fortune in gold coins. The chest of gold pieces had been there for years, buried in this secret spot by pirates who had subsequently fought with one another over it until every man was killed.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Divine Mother, I am enveloped in the
aureole of Thine all-protecting omnipresence
in birth, in sorrow, in joy, in death, in
activity, in meditation, in ignorance, in trials,
and in final emancipation--all the time--always.



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THE LANGUAGE OF THE FLOWERS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

God is the Master Painter. His infinite beauty is suggested in the beauty of the flower. Whenever we see a blossom we should think of Him. God is invisible. Until we find Him through meditation, how could we know anything about Him if He didn't speak to us through flowers and myriad other lovely creations? Every day through His creations He is telling us of His existence.

Flowers are given to us for a purpose. Humbly serving all with their beauty, flowers say more to us about God than anything else. Each one brings a message that the Heavenly Father is right here.

Flowers have been used for centuries in the temples of all countries, not just for decoration, but to declare the fragrance and beauty of the Lord. We may behold through them the smiling presence of God. Each flower is a divine temple in which the Divine One comes to us.

PRAYER

O Cosmic Physician, teach me to drink copiously from the fresh waters of peace flowing from the spring of every circumstance, vitalized by my determination to be cheerful.

SOURCES OF REJUVENATION--Part 1

The apparently solid body is a combination of cells that are made of moving molecules. These cellular molecules are made of whirling atoms, protons, and electrons, which in turn are made from electroprotonic energy--the basic substance of creation--composed of semi-intelligent sparks of God's consciousness.

HOW LIVING CELLS ARE REJUVENATED A chemical force knots various cells together in mysterious ways to form the different kinds of cerebral, nervous, connective, osseous, and muscular tissues, and organs. That same invisible force biologically arranges the cells so that some form into hard bones, wonderfully worked into a skeletal frame, to which the flesh clings. The body as a solid substance occupies a very small space, but since the body is essentially made of condensed Cosmic Consciousness, it is potentially vast and omnipresent.

Bodily motions are constantly flooded and rejuvenated from the inner soul source by the different motions of consciousness: subconsciousness, consciousness, superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. On the external or material side the body is reinforced with a constant flow of chemicals, oxygen, and sunshine. It is a strange phenomenon of maya that the chemical motions of the body have to be kept active by these material forces when it would be possible to keep them alive and charged with vitality entirely from the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness. The body, being motion, cannot live without motion. It has to be kept dancing with life by forces derived from external sources--food and sunshine; and by vitality derived from the internal source--Cosmic Consciousness.

The nature of matter is change. The nature of Spirit is changelessness. The body is born. It progressively changes through growth from babyhood to adulthood to old age. Then it degenerates and dies. During all this time the tissues are passing through continual phases of cell growth and decay. The cells of the body are constantly decaying. This does not mean disintegration of the body. "Decay" merely means certain variations of motion that human beings fear and dislike. Yet we like the changing, dancing waves of vitality called "youth."

This certain bodily motion called "youth" may be made more stable by reinforcing it with power from the two sources that keep life stirring in the body. Death is not cessation of motion forever; it is only cessation of the temporary body state until the inner motions of the vital forces of soul, ego, and karma can reappear as materialized motion in a new body. Usually the soul uses the processes of reincarnation to gather anew the necessary vibrations of energy and chemicals and to transform them into a new body. However, an evolved soul sometimes rejuvenates a worn-out body by changing its atomic vibrations thus halting the natural tendencies of the flesh toward dissolution. The all-powerful soul of a spiritually evolved man can even remodel an old body, instead of discarding it entirely, by reweaving the garment of flesh into the desired form with strong electro-vitalic threads. Only the masters can do this, and only a few of those who have such power choose to use it. As a rule, they accept the ordained laws of birth, death, and reincarnation.

INFINITE SOURCE OF ENERGY God's omnipresent energy is flowing into your body all the time, but you are not conscious of it. All nature pays highest respects to God, and His power is within you. The trouble is that you do not make a connection! Realize that you are living directly by God's grace and that every other power would fail without the power of God.

Food, oxygen, and sunshine can give you health only to a limited extent. You must know how to receive perfect health from the Infinite Source, because the physical sources are like little batteries, which play out quickly; but the Infinite Source is an infinite dynamo, continuously pouring strength, happiness, and power into the soul. That is why it is so important to rely as much as you can upon the Infinite Source.

MIND AS A SOURCE OF ENERGY The first step is to learn the law by whose operation you can receive added power and strength from God. It is necessary to convince yourself of the truth that thought is reality. Everything you see is some form or expression of the consciousness of God. He thought of this earth before He made it.

Many people suppose that mind is the product of the body. The structural design and intelligent arrangement of the interior parts of the body clearly show that the human system is the product of a superior Mind. Mind is the chief factor governing the body. One should always avoid suggesting to the mind thoughts of human limitations: sickness, old age, and death. Rather, the mind should constantly be told this truth: "I am the Infinite, which has become the body. The body as a manifestation of Spirit is the ever youthful Spirit."

The mind, being the brain, feeling, and perception of all living cells, can keep the human body alert or depressed. The mind is the king, and all its cellular subjects behave exactly according to the mood of their royal master.

Just as we concern ourselves with the nutritive value of our daily food menus, so should we consider the nutritive potency of the psychological menus that we daily serve the mind.

Metaphysicians say that the body is not merely an electromagnetic wave, but a wavelet of consciousness floating in the sea of divine intelligence. Every day you should increase the strength of your body, the strength of your mind, and awareness of your omnipotent soul by meditation, right thinking, and right activity. Thus you will make body, mind, and soul a temple of eternal power where God may reign.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

God says: "My love is ethereal and mystical, yet I surely respond to the call of the true devotee.

"I make blood, marrow, flesh, bone, and brain out of food and then nourish My children every day; but they think they live by food and without My aid. So many call on Me absent-mindedly, with a despairing belief in the background of their minds that I will not answer their prayers; or that I am difficult to please; or that I do not respond to devotion; or that apparently I do not respond to all devotees.

"But I aid all My children, whenever they need Me; I like to help without their knowing that I help. That is why most people do not know Me and think I am far away.

"But if you are not discouraged--even though trampled by a crowd of weaknesses, or distractions, or bad habits, or restless thoughts--but keep calling soulfully, silently, or shouting for help, then without fail I will come to the rescue.

"To the devotional call of that child of Mine who struggles, prays, and meditates in order to know Me--in body, mind, and soul--as all-pervading, ever new joy, as the ever increasing bliss of meditation, I silently and deeply respond."

WHY THE RICH MAN BECAME POOR AND THE POOR MAN BECAME RICH (Part 3)

Mr. Sham was delirious with joy. Disgorging the dead game birds from his gunny sacks, he forthwith filled them with the gold coins. He was positive he was the winner. Hurrying homeward, he wondered what had happened to his friend, Mr. Honest. On his arrival, he heard news that both astonished

and amused him. Mr. Honest, while walking in a prayerful mood, had met with a severe accident owing to his absent-mindedness, and had been almost killed in a collision with an automobile. He had been carried unconscious to the hospital.

Did Mr. Sham then laugh his fill? He certainly did. Exultingly he told himself: "Now I know that there is no God. I hope Mr. Honest recovers from his accident and lives long enough to realize this. Perhaps he will now become a pragmatic atheist like me."

After several operations, Mr. Honest returned from the hospital. The first thing he heard about was his friend's wonderful luck that Friday afternoon. "Good-by, God!" he cried. Throwing all his metaphysical books in the fire, he rushed out of his house into the forest, thinking to end his life. He could not believe in God any longer, after such a shock. Neither could he make up his mind to relinquish virtue and deliberately become evil. Coming upon a lake in the depths of the woods, he tied himself to a stone so that he could drown himself.

Just at this moment a plainly dressed saint arrived on the scene. God had sent him to explain matters to Mr. Honest. In tones of gentle warning the saint said: "Mr. Honest, what are you doing there on this glorious God-ordained day?"

Mr. Honest testily replied: "Get away, you God-flattering man. It is none of your business what I am doing. I don't want ever to hear that meaningless word 'God' again."

To this the saint replied: "Why? Is it because you bet on God and lost by being run over by a car?"

Mr. Honest was extremely astonished. This stranger knew about the wager and its unfortunate outcome, which Mr. Honest had thought a secret known only to himself and Mr. Sham. Taken aback by the miraculous words of the saint, Mr. Honest softened and said: "Honored sir, can you tell me why I, who have zealously studied metaphysics and have faithfully meditated, should have grown physically and financially poorer in every way, the more I meditated? And why is it that God not only turned a deaf ear to my soul-stirring prayer, but made a fool of me before Mr. Sham seemingly proving to him the value of atheism?"

The stranger-saint gravely replied: "Mr. Honest, you could not bribe God with prayer to comply with your wishes. God did not need your prayers to know that Mr. Sham was maligning His good Name. Nor was He duty-bound to answer you just because you prayed to win a bet. You should never bet about God. Nor should you take the attitude that He is obliged to answer your prayers. Rather, you should depend upon His wisdom, which alone determines whether

your prayers are justified and whether they should be fulfilled or not. You do not know, Mr. Honest, that in your past incarnation you were a great sinner, and because of it you became chronically ill. Only in your later years did you see that this was the unprofitable, unhappy result of your conduct. Just before your death you made up your mind that you would be a virtuous man again. That is why in this life you were born with a good resolution to study metaphysics, and a desire to meditate. But, because you had been a sinner before, creating much bad karma for yourself, you have met with many physical, mental, and spiritual reverses.

"In your past life you had a very good, forgiving wife whom you never appreciated. You made her life miserable with your evil ways. For this wrong, and for all the other sins of your past life it was inevitably ordained by karmic law that Friday was to be the day of your death. Just think, because you have been so virtuous in this life, your life was spared and you escaped only with an accident. Now that all the seeds of your past evil actions have sprouted and produced their fruits, the balance of virtue in your life has become greater than that of evil. Return home, and henceforth good fortune will seek you in everything."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I am the wind of wisdom which is drying the sighs and sorrows of all souls. I am the silent joy of life moving through all beings.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THOU ART EVER MINE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Beloved, make me transparent with purity, that Thou mayest shine through me. Make me luminous with wisdom, that I may behold Thee in me. Still the moving mirror of my mind, that I may behold Thy mooned face, undistorted by my restlessness, ever reflected there.

Open all the windows of faith, that I may behold Thee in the mansion of peace. Fling open the doors of silence, that I may enter Thy temple of bliss. Awaken the memory of past incarnations, wherein I sought Thee and loved Thee.

Remember when I met Thee in the bower of the Milky Way, and worshiped Thee in the ever changing, living temple of nature. Beloved Divine, make me know at once and forever that Thou hast always been mine, ever mine. My error dreams are past and buried beneath the sepulcher of oblivion, and I am awake basking in the sunlight of Thy awakening.

While I slept this sleep of earthly life, I dreamed this nature dream. I awoke, and now I dream of Thee alone.

The correct diet is very important in building vitality. I cannot repeat too often that eating plenty of ground nuts, ground carrots, and fruit juices will help. Fasting one day a week on orange juice (or other unsweetened fruit juice) and taking a suitable laxative that day will help to keep the body cells firm and free from disease. A three-day fast once a month on orange juice with a laxative each day while fasting will expel almost all poisons and will do much to make the body strong, healthy, and youthful to the last days of life. Orange juice is very good because it counteracts acids in the body which are caused by eating meats and heavy foods.

DIRECTING ENERGY Whenever you have a headache, or any other kind of pain, direct energy to that place, and hold the thought that God's electric energy is flowing through you. God's energy is holding your body together, and you should know how to connect your will power with that energy.

To direct this energy, slowly tense the affected part to a medium tension; hold that tension, counting 1 to 10 while you recharge the area with energy. Then relax. Repeat nine times. Do this three times a day when your stomach is empty, or almost so. As an exhausted battery can be recharged from a dynamo, so the holding of tension in any body part recharges that part, but in both instances it takes time. Life force is the all-healing X-ray, without which no healing is possible.

While walking, slowly inhale, mentally counting 1 to 12. Hold the breath for 12 counts, then exhale while counting 1 to 12. Do this twenty-four times every time you go for a walk. Have a one-half hour sunbath twice a week, or preferably every day for ten to thirty minutes, depending on the sensitivity of one's skin and on the strength of the sun's rays. However, do not overdo this. A sunburn does more harm than good.

METHOD FOR ROUSING ENERGY Every time you move your hand, you are producing an electric current, and the ether about you is filled with Cosmic Light. Because you do not see it does not mean that it does not exist. It is that Light which is giving you life. Just as ships without any crew can be operated by radio, so the ship of your body is operated by the radio-beam of energy that God continually pours into your body. The fingers are marvelous things. They are your antennae and you can very often feel the energy flowing into them.

Now make an experiment to sense this energy. Relax your hands and arms. You do not feel any energy in them now, but as soon as you practice the following method you will feel the energy flowing through them. This power has always been within you, but you have not been aware of it except when practicing the Recharging Exercises. I will teach you how to connect the body and the mind and the will so that the energy can be gathered in your hands and arms. You can do the same with your feet and eyes, but that requires more advanced development.

Close your eyes. Concentrate upon your arms. Can you feel any

energy there? Just a little bit, probably. Do not willfully tense your arms at all, but keep them perfectly relaxed at your sides. You are now feeling as if just a little energy is gently flowing through them. Keep relaxed with eyes still closed. Now lift your hands and mentally send energy through them by will power. Feel that there is a tremendous amount of energy passing through your hands and arms. Feel it a little stronger. Now drop your arms and relax. This is just a mental or imaginative process.

Now come the physiological processes. Raise your arms again. First, with continuous will, take one hand and rub the opposite upraised arm, feeling that you are charging the "battery" of your arm with electrical power. Now remove your hand and feel the current in the upraised arm. Then bring your arm down gradually. You should have felt the current much more strongly than you did in the first exercise by imagination only. Now relax; then try the next experiment.

Rotate your hands in a forward motion around each other. Rotate them faster. You do not feel the current yet, but your hands soon will be filled with current. Keep your mind concentrated upon the current and think that it is going from the medulla oblongata into the hands. Go on rotating them, faster and faster. Do not cease concentrating. Now raise your arms and hands forward, then slowly bring the outstretched arms down, all the time visualizing the current flowing out from them into someone who is sick and to whom you wish to send the energy. Keep perfectly relaxed as you bring your hands slowly to your sides. Don't you find this exercise more powerful than the first and second ones? When you are sure of these directions, close your eyes and repeat the process. Feel the current going through your arms and hands and fingers.

Rub your palms together quickly. Concentrate, with closed eyes, feeling energy in your hands and all around your body. Concentrate, charging your arms with immortal energy. Do not tense; keep perfectly relaxed. Remember, this energy is flowing along the entire length of your arms and hands. Forget your arms and hands and feel the current only. Now raise your hands in front of you and bring them down gradually. Think of someone who is sick and send the current to that person. Can you feel the tremendous current moving now? Do you realize how powerful it is? Can you deny that power? No! It is flowing into your body through the medulla and going to the point between the eyebrows and through the spine into your arms and hands.

REJUVENATION THROUGH MEDITATION Most important of all, man should depend more and more upon the limitless supply from the source of Cosmic Consciousness and less and less upon the other sources of bodily energy. The highest form of rejuvenation is to unite the human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation.

By holding the peaceful aftereffects of meditation in the body, by believing in eternal life instead of being deceived by the illusory changes of this temporal life, and by feeling the ocean of immortal Bliss-God underlying the changeable waves of the experiences of past

lives and the waves of perceptions of childhood, youth, and age in this life, the soul can find not only perpetual rejuvenation in the soul, but also in the body. Just as soon as the body is found to be, not a creation isolated from Spirit, but a number of rising, falling waves of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, then the perpetual rejuvenating power of the Spirit can be implanted in the body if so desired.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Psychological diseases can be eradicated by good company, reasoning, mental discipline, and study. Spiritual unrest can be cured only through wisdom, the finding of one's own inexhaustible inner resources. To be calmly active and actively calm--a Prince of Peace sitting on the throne of poise, directing the kingdom of activity--is to be spiritually healthy. Too much activity makes one an automaton and too much calmness makes one lazy and impractical. Peace is the enjoyment of life; activity is the expression of life. A balance between the activity of the West and the calmness of the East is needed.

WHY THE RICH MAN BECAME POOR AND THE POOR MAN BECAME RICH (Part 4)

Mr. Honest sobbed with gratitude and burst forth: "God, my Beloved, now I understand that my life was spared because of my virtue in this life. I crave your pardon, my Almighty Friend. Forgive me for my ignorant blasphemies against Thee." Then he inquired of the saint: "Will you satisfy my curiosity as to why all good things were attracted to Mr. Sham, and why even on that Friday he found three million dollars?"

"Well, my son," the saint replied, "Mr. Sham was not wicked in his past life; indeed, he was a tolerably virtuous man. But in time he became tired of a life of restraint, and he thought: 'What's the use of stupidly being virtuous?' Then he made up his mind to live according to the dictates of his evil impulses. And just about the time that he made up his mind to live as he pleased, he died. Mr. Sham was born a sinner in this life because of this resolution before death in his last life; but because of his soul virtue in his last incarnation, he automatically reaped the results of his past good actions. Thus he attracted to himself a good wife, friends, fortune, and health. Now, however, the balance is tipped: the weight of his sins in this life has become greater than that of his virtue of the past incarnation. On that Friday he received the last big payment of his accrued good karma, in the form of three million dollars. It is nothing compared to the imperishable virtue you have acquired in this life by constant hard labor after God. Go back and you will find that your friend Mr. Sham is a victim of untold miseries now pouring on him from all directions." Saying this, the saint suddenly vanished.

Mr. Honest, armed with the miraculously received truth, returned home to find his nagging wife stricken with an incurable disease, from which she soon died. Later on he met a wonderfully sweet and spiritual woman, whom he married. His ill health disappeared as if it had never existed, and a rich aunt changed her will a few hours before her death to leave him her ten-million-dollar estate.

On the other hand, Mr. Sham found himself suddenly stricken with paralysis, and lay helpless. Shortly after this, his good wife died. According to custom in India, Mr. Sham had buried all of his money in a secret chamber beneath the floor under his bed. A disgruntled servant got scent of it. One day, in collusion with a few robbers, the servant masked himself and entered his master's room. While Mr. Sham lay helpless, the servant made off with all the money. After that, Mr. Sham had to live on the charity of his friend, Mr. Honest, which he did for the rest of his life.

This story helps to explain the paradoxical happenings of life: why some people are born healthy, intelligent, and wealthy, and from the very beginning of their lives do not have to struggle for an existence; and why some others--good, spiritual, and intelligent--are born in poverty, ill health, and trouble. All our misfortunes or fortunes are due, not to luck, but to definite actions consciously performed at some time in the past.

Therefore, no matter how fortunate and good one may be, he should not become inactive in the performance of good or, like Mr. Sham, active in the performance of evil, lest he use up all the fruits of past good actions and be left impoverished and miserable. The wise man increases in virtue until he attains that perfection from which there can be no fall. Even a sinner who apparently "gets away with it," should not be too sure. He should stop all evil actions lest the counteracting fruition of good actions of the past be spent and the fruits of his erring actions of the present ripen into utter misery, as in the case of Mr. Sham. Man should ever desist from evil ways and steadily reinforce with continued good deeds the virtuous actions of the past.

Even a virtuous man who continuously suffers from all kinds of difficulties should not be discouraged from remaining virtuous; for if he continues to be good, he will one day find that the counteracting influence of his virtuous actions has obliterated the karmic power of past evil actions. He who keeps on being virtuous, even when sorely tried in every way, eventually finds that the balance turns; then good fortune seeks him in everything, as it did Mr. Honest.

No one should imagine that he can escape the effects of evil actions; nor that virtuous actions are fruitless. It is inevitable that evil actions bring evil, or suffering; and that good actions bring good, or happiness.

AFFIRMATION

In the heart,
In the star,
In the body cell I love Thee;
In the electron I play with Thee.
I wish to worship Thee
In body, star, star-dust nebulae.
Thou art everywhere; everywhere
I worship Thee.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MEMORIES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Thou hast given me recollection of
past incarnations in which I loved and
sought Thee. Whether on earth or in the
astral world I pursued Thee. Dost re-
member when I met Thee in the bower of
the Milky Way? and worshiped Thee in
the beauty of protean forms of creation?

I am Thy little bee that yearned for
the nectar of happiness. Greedily I
drank from many blossoms of transient
love and capricious Nature. But when
I came upon the eternal sweetness of
Thy lotus heart, I hummed with desires
no more.

PRAYER

Thou art my Father, I am Thine offspring. Thou art Spirit; I am made in Thine image. Thou art Creator and Owner of the universe. Good or naughty, I am Thy child, with the right to command the cosmos.

I have been truant and wandered away from my Home of cosmic plenty. Help me to reidentify my mind with Thine. Expand me; let me feel again I am like unto Thee.

Rescue my mind, shipwrecked through thoughts of error and now confined to a tiny isle of consciousness.

By Thy grace I shall rediscover my true nature, that of omnipresent Spirit, and have dominion over the world of matter.

HOW TO CREATE AT WILL WHAT YOU NEED

Most people do not try to understand life at all. They live mechanically, without any aim or goal, and leave the shores of this world unconsciously when life is done. We are not meant to live thus, like automatons. We must find the purpose of life.

Both the great man and the small man have to struggle just to exist. Most people excuse themselves from a search for the eternal verities, saying, "How can we adjust our actions to an ideal? We do not know how." But you do know that you must eat and that you must think in order to live; therefore you should find peace first in fulfilling your material and intellectual needs. We can build the temple of our prosperity by analyzing our existing needs and learning how to fulfill them in a divine way. By analysis we can see that the nature of every human being is threefold: physical, mental, and spiritual. Life is often spent in supplying the needs of the physical being only. However, man's true prosperity lies in supplying the needs of his mental and spiritual beings as well.

Knowing how to become prosperous is always important and the word "prosperity" plays an important part in our consciousness. We should know therefore in what lies our real prosperity, and the surest way of attaining it.

Real prosperity means supreme happiness, mental efficiency, and some material advantages. Real prosperity comes by increasing the power of your mental efficiency, by which you can create at will the things you need. There is a difference between things that you need and things that you want. Your needs are those things which are absolutely necessary in life. What you want is usually something you can get along without, but desire causes you to think you must possess it to be happy. Most people spend their entire lives in trying to acquire so-called "necessities." The wise person always concentrates

upon the things that are absolutely necessary. Seeing what others have does not cause him to feel that he must have the same.

True success is another expression for all-round prosperity. Those who have perfect health, prosperity, happiness, wisdom, and understanding have true success. If you know how to withdraw your attention and energy from all objects of distraction and place them upon one object of concentration, then you know how to create at will what you need.

WHAT IS PROSPERITY? All of us want prosperity, but do we all find it? No. It is a will-o'-the-wisp that is always hiding from us. Most people have a limited concept of the meaning of the word. Some will say: "Well, prosperity means health." But health without money to satisfy your hunger is not prosperity. Someone else will say it means great wealth. But if you have great wealth and great pain from chronic indigestion, that is not prosperity either. When you are able to adjust yourself perfectly to the world, then you may be called "prosperous." But beyond that a thoughtful person wonders about the origin of reason and the other faculties peculiar to man. Unless we find the answers to all our questions, we are not really prosperous. When you no longer doubt, but know the spiritual answer to every question about life; when you can find the answers to every problem within yourself, then you are prosperous.

IS MONEY "PROSPERITY"? Most people think that you are prosperous only when you have lots of money, but real success means that you have the power to create all things--whatever is necessary for your entire existence--at your command. In what lies real necessity? We should analyze the real meaning of "needs." If the need is boiled down to certain definite things, then the need can be easily satisfied.

Money is not in itself either a blessing or a curse. It is the manner in which we use money that determines its effect. Take a dollar bill and ask it "Shall I buy poison with you?" The inanimate dollar doesn't answer. But misuse it and it will punish you. When you use money rightly it gives you happiness. Even a saint uses money in his work. Whoever eats has to pay for the food; it is better to be able to buy food than to have to live on charity. Everything of value has its price.

Most people spend their entire mental energy in trying to make money, and some succeed in this only to die of heart failure just when they are about to secure happiness. If you have splendid health and ample wealth and plenty of trouble with others and with yourself, you really have very little success or prosperity. Life becomes futile and without purpose when you can't find happiness. When wealth is lost, you have lost little; when health is lost, you have lost something; but when inner peace is lost, all is lost.

You should increase the strength of your body and then increase the power of your mind. The best way to increase mental power is to try to accomplish

something worthwhile every day. Choose some worthy task or project that you have been told you could not do, and try to do it. The more you improve yourself, the more you can be a friend to others. When you reform yourself, you are by your example and its influence helping everyone around you. Each day try to accomplish something that you have always thought you could not accomplish.

When we have too much to do at one time, we become very discouraged. Instead of worrying about what should be done, just say: "This hour is mine. I will do the best I can." The clock cannot tick twenty-four hours away in one minute, and you cannot do in one hour what you can do in twenty-four hours. Live each present moment completely and the future will take care of itself. Fully enjoy the wonder and beauty of each instant. Practice the presence of peace. The more you do that, the more you will feel the presence of His power in your life.

HOW TO CHOOSE A VOCATION

When you make up your mind to do something, though the earth and sun fly away from you, do not give up. You are a child of God--just as good as the greatest man on earth. One man is not greater than another before the Lord. You should have your will power so firmly fixed that you will stick to a thing until you succeed. First, carefully choose your work. If you have not yet found something that you like, continue to search for it. You must like your vocation if you expect to succeed.

Take your time in making up your mind what vocation to follow; then when you decide, stick to your resolution. Do not bend unless someone shows you that you are really wrong. Then you should accept the correction thankfully. Obstinance is bad. You must first know that what you are doing is right, then stick to it. Success attained through determination and right action does much more for you than bring material wealth; it gives tremendous happiness.

Every useful line of business is an art for dispelling certain human miseries. Obtaining a job in the line of business to which we are best suited, and making a success of it, is the art of satisfying our physical needs. Intellectual study nourishes our mind and intelligence and makes them better fitted for all good work.

BE GUIDED BY GOD, SOURCE OF ALL GOOD

God has given you independence; you can shut out His power or let it in. By concentration and meditation make your mind like a diamond, so that the light of God's power may shine through you. God wants you to create at will the things that you need, but do not pray for and work only to fulfill material needs. Strive first for communion with God. If you have faith that prosperity is controlled by God, not man, you will see that His power is working with you. In wanting us to depend on Him alone, God does not mean that you should not think for yourself; He wants you to use your initiative. The idea is, if you fail to seek conscious attunement with God first, you cut off the Source, and so you cannot receive His help. When you look to Him first for

all things, He will guide you; He will reveal to you what your mistakes are so that you can change yourself and change the course of your life.

All our actions are governed by certain laws. Nothing in our destinies happens just by chance, or because of circumstances outside ourselves. Every event in a life can be scientifically traced by a master to a certain cause. To a certain extent one can trace his own cause-effect experiences by introspection and impersonal analysis. Only those who do not understand that there is a law of cause and effect believe in chance or fate. The sunlight shines equally upon the charcoal and upon the diamond. So remember, the light of God shines equally in each of us. God made us His children but we have chosen to play the role of beggar. So long as we live in spiritual poverty, we are governed by the law of cause and effect, and thereby suffer the limitations and insufficiencies of materiality.

You should often repeat this prayer to your Heavenly Father: "I will reason, I will create, I will do everything I set my mind to do, but Father, guide my creative abilities to the right thing that I should do." And be fair with God. If you do not receive the result for which you have prayed, it may be that He has something better for you. Talk sensibly to God with love and faith and you will see that He will work with you in helping you to accomplish your worthy ambitions.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Remember that when you are unhappy it is generally because you do not visualize strongly enough the great things that you definitely want to accomplish in life, nor do you employ steadfastly enough your will power, your creative ability, and your patience until your dreams are materialized.

Some persons build air castles in fancy, but because they do not know how to hold onto them tenaciously, or how to materialize them, those castles in the air vanish in the invisible domain of consciousness. Men of success are those who have forethought enough to make an indelible blueprint in their minds of whatever they wish to build or produce upon this earth. Backed by the financier of their creative ability, they employ their will power as contractor, their detailed attention as carpenters, and their mental patience as the necessary labor to materialize in true life the desired result or object.

ON CONQUERING OUR ENEMY--Part 1

Mr. Sanders was a great architect in a well-known American city. Owing to his unprecedented success, many other men were envious. Among those who resented his prosperity (although it was well-earned) was Mr. John,

a man of crooked nature who made it his business to put down anyone who lifted his head above the average in a group of successful people.

Mr. John himself had failed in every business venture he undertook, but he became highly successful in undoing men of achievement by skillful lying and blackmail. Although some people knew about the nefarious net of evil that Mr. John had cast over some of the city's prosperous people, none had dared try to curb or cure him.

As soon as the news of young Mr. Sanders' phenomenal success reached the ears of Mr. John, he prepared to do some mischief. First he invented a lie, saying that Mr. Sanders was dishonest and that he had used cheap materials to build an expensive-looking but flimsy building, and had pocketed the huge savings on it.

This lie about Mr. Sanders was circulated constantly by Mr. John and his well-dressed henchmen, chiefly among people who had business relations with Mr. Sanders. There is a saying, "Give a lie a twenty-five-mile start and it becomes immortal." So although this lie about Mr. Sanders was at first ignored by its hearers, after a while people began to talk about it, and finally the gossip about Mr. Sanders came to be considered as fact.

Then Mr. John "framed" Mr. Sanders in a despicable deal. He deliberately arranged for Mr. Sanders to design a building, and while it was being erected, he bribed the masons to put very cheap material in the walls and to fill them with watered sand. Although they looked all right outwardly, they were ready to crumble if given a good push.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Divine Mother, I care not what I may permanently possess, but give to me the power to acquire at will whatever I may daily need.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE CATHEDRAL OF LIFE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I have built an ever expanding temple of love.
I invite the brown, the white, and the black man to
come in. I call even my mute brothers--the stars
and starlets, the lamb, the lion, the bluebirds, the
reptiles--to come into my temple and join the
worship of the One who loves us all alike--men,
~~beasts, plants, stones--as His children.~~

Welcome, stars! Welcome, souls! Welcome,
all creatures--my brothers! Join in my devotions
unto the One who gives us daily sermons in the temple
of life, in the temple of conscience.

All prodigal brothers, sidetracked in inharmony
on the pathway of ignorance, adrift on the streams of
misery, come home to the cathedral of everlasting
life. Come, join your voices in the cosmic worship.
Unite your hearts, unite your devotion, unite your
songs, unite your souls.

Ah, listen! God says: "Naughty or good, you are
all My children. Come home from the wanderings of
miserable earthly incarnations, and I will let you rest
on My bosom. Meet Me in Mine unseen temple."

PRAYER

Open Thou the petaled bars of our heart buds, releasing the imprisoned fragrance of love. On the winds of our spiritual perceptions the sweet odors will float to Thy secret temple.

O All-Adorable! we want our wistful breeze to blow upon Thy hidden feet.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE--Part 1

Spirit is ever existing, ever conscious, ever new joy. From the human point of view of time He is, was, and ever shall be Joy. In Spirit there is no past or future tense--only the present--because Spirit Consciousness, unlike that of man, is not interrupted by death and oblivion. Spirit is ever conscious. Divine Superconsciousness never ceases to operate actively, as the consciousness of man does in sleep. Spirit has no alternating consciousness of wakefulness and subconsciousness like that of man, but has perpetual, enjoyable, active and inactive wakefulness combined within Itself.

Spirit has always existed as ecstatic Bliss. But there was no one else to enjoy His blissful Being, so He separated Himself into three aspects: the knower, the act of knowing, and the thing known--the enjoyer, the process of enjoying, and the thing enjoyed. This triune division was accomplished by the law of relativity, or the cosmic delusion. Spirit, being one and indivisible, had to wilfully and willingly imagine Himself to be many. Spirit being independent and Self-contained, everything that evolves out of Him has His qualities of independence and Self-sufficiency. The apparent desire of Spirit to create Himself as many was not real desire because its fulfillment was not necessary to Him. If creation were a necessity to Spirit, then He would be imperfect. In differentiating Himself as the knower, the knowing, and the known He merely wanted to appreciate His own almighty Bliss-consciousness through Himself as many individual consciousnesses. The many were to discover that Bliss by individual, independent effort. Spirit only differentiated Himself in this way for a cosmic entertainment.

SPIRIT AS KNOWER, Spirit has one consciousness, that of Bliss. But as
KNOWING, AND KNOWN individual souls encased in bodies, Spirit beholds solids, liquids, gases, energy, feeling, and thought as relatively different things. This is illusion; for solids, liquids, gases, and feelings are nothing but different forms of consciousness. All these can be duplicated and perceived in a dream. Spirit's imaginative power to dream is infinite. Anything coming out of Spirit has the essential qualities of Spirit, hence Cosmic Delusion, or Satan, is the conscious imagination of Spirit willing to make Himself look finite, whereas in reality He is infinite. This desireless desire, this infinite cosmic dream of finitude does not affect Spirit; but it affects

all individualized spirits or souls evolved out of Him. To Spirit that which appears to us as death is nothing more than one aspect of the eternal Cosmic Play.

Satan, the conscious force of delusion that makes the Infinite look finite, received independence to go on constantly transforming the Infinite into the finite. The satanic force was unable, however, to keep in finite forms the creatures God had created. Satan then tried to perpetuate the various species by the law of sex propagation. Defect and misery arose from this. All things and creatures began to suffer. Animate and inanimate creatures, instead of realizing themselves to be living waves of the cosmic sea of life, unchangeable and essentially immortal, were made to believe, by the cosmic law of satanic delusion, that they were isolated, separated from the cosmic dream of life, having origin and decay. Individual souls were further deluded into feeling attached to their passing states of existence. Such attachment is born of ignorance, the evil which is the real cause of all suffering, hence suffering born of ignorant attachment is also an evil.

HYPNOTIC SPELL OF SATAN, OR DELUSION Finite beings, instead of observing with the all-seeing eyes of the Infinite the superficial and formal changes they undergo, began to behold these transitional states through the deceiving eyes of cosmic delusion, or Satan.

~~If all finite things acted in tune with the Infinite, they would not experience~~ fear, disease, or death in the ordinary mortal way; but only as illusions being suggested to them, as during a hypnotic trance. An outsider cannot make a person under hypnosis believe that he is not seeing or feeling something that has been suggested to him to see or feel. A dreaming man does not know that he is dreaming. So it is that persons under the hypnotic spell of Satan, or delusion, do not know that all evil--disease, inharmony, wars--are merely illusions created by cosmic delusion and the misleading imagination born of that delusion.

Why is the tiger the enemy of man, and vice versa? Why does the cat eat mice, and the big fish devour smaller, helpless fish? Why is it that the mosquito is not satisfied with just drinking human blood but also injects poison into it? Why are there earthquakes and sudden accidents? Why do sudden famines and epidemics visit man? Why is it that destructive forces lie side by side with the harmonious divisions of seasons, night and day, health, sunshine and fresh air, human reason? It seems that if God is goodness, or harmony, and all things are created by Him, then we must ask: how can inharmony, suffering, or evil exist? Certainly man did not create all evil.

INORGANIC SUBSTANCES CONSTANTLY CHANGING The conscious cosmic delusion, or the desireless desire of Spirit, empowered by the Infinite to create finite things independently, through its divinely bestowed imagination, began to pull everything away from the Infinite. Thus the law of repulsion was evolved, and through this the process of

propagation of species by cellular division and sexual creation, to keep everything as small individual units vibrating outward, away from the Infinite. The law of sex creation in man and of any kind of physical reproduction is the effort of the cosmic delusion or Satan to preserve the kingdom of inharmonious finitude. Tempting all creatures to remain on the plane of sex creation, Satan fights the divine law of evolution through reincarnation, by which souls evolve into higher and higher forms until they go back to Spirit.

In spite of the cosmic satanic power's influencing everything to remain in finite forms, the Infinite Power is ever calling everything back to merge into Him by the law of evolution and reincarnation. The life and consciousness in all inorganic substances are constantly evolving into higher forms, from earth to minerals, minerals to trees, trees to animals, animals to superanimals or man, and man to superman, or God-realized man. So, in spite of earth's changes, such as bad weather, reversed seasons, nature's catastrophes, disease, immorality--all ignorance born of cosmic delusion and man's intelligence acting under its influence--the divine law of evolution and reincarnation is ever trying to reconvert inorganic and organic matter into Cosmic Consciousness.

The constant war between satanic delusion and the forces of God is marked everywhere in human lives and in all things. Through its misguided independence, nature, or satanic delusion, tries to hide God and glorify itself. It produces harmful bacteria that cause diseases in man, and other trials; in the tiger it produces the instinct to kill, and various other inharmonies and discords of nature.

God's power, through the law of natural death or change (as against sudden untimely change or premature death) is constantly trying to release finitely influenced souls to infinite freedom. The desire for self-defense and the cruelties born of this desire; and the desire to hurt and kill in order to eat, were suggested to man by the cosmic law of delusion, which broke away from the infinite, wise, and loving nature of God to become finite, unreasonable, and harmful.

DEPEND UPON GOD, We were made in the image of God, but satanic delusion took advantage of the independence God gave to man and to all things. To believe that disease, suffering, and death are perpetually real, instead of acknowledging them only as dream-realities, born of ignorance or imagination during a cosmic dream, is to reinforce the power of satanic delusion.

Our imagination of the experience of death and disease when we are awake is different from the delusive imagination of disease and death--which make these experiences seem real to us--which is instilled by the cosmic delusive force within us. A dreaming man dashing his dream skull against a dream wall thinks he is hurt, but as soon as he wakes up he knows it was only a dream. And, if a man sits quietly and imagines that he is dashing his skull

against a wall, that cannot hurt him either. But if a man merely thinks that his skull is a dream skull, and dashes it against a wall, the skull will certainly be broken. Only one who beholds Spirit can see that neither the skull nor the wall is real, and so cannot be hurt.

Death and disease are real to the one under the influence of the suggestions of the cosmic satanic dream. One can perceive matter as delusion, or as "frozen" Cosmic Consciousness only when his consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness have become one.

To rely too much on medicine and other material methods for the cure of disease of the body leads to the bad habit of relying solely upon limited aid instead of making use of the limitless healing power of Cosmic Consciousness. Food and chemicals are only indirectly helpful to the body. Divine force helps the body directly and also indirectly by causing the food chemicals to operate for the benefit of the body. We should depend more upon God and His direct help and not foolishly put our trust in chemicals.

PRENATAL AND
POSTNATAL
EXPERIENCES
OF THE SOUL

To make truth win this tug of war between satanic delusion and God's law of evolution and reincarnation, every human being should meditate upon the laws of right thought and right action that reinforce progressive evolution. One should look upon prenatal and postnatal changes merely as different experiences of the soul. Diseases should be looked upon as the results of broken laws of physical, mental and spiritual harmony which, when broken, produce disturbances of the body and of the peace of the soul. Disease should be taken as a danger warning, not as a punishment. Since diseases are the result of one's own ignorant wrong actions, these delusive causes should be uprooted by right application of material and spiritual laws.

Try to realize that the soul cannot be affected by disease. Just as a chloroformed man is unaware of any accident to his body, so by discipline of the senses a man should neutralize the attachment of his consciousness to the body; then he can remain fully conscious but be unaffected by either hurtful or pleasant sensations, at the command of his own will. He should regard the body from an impersonal standpoint.

The body is the closest friend and relative of the mind; it suffers only through identification, closeness of association, and imagination, and for no other cause whatever. Do away with mental sensitiveness. You should be able to speak of all experiences as dream experiences, real only to the deep dreamer, unreal to one awakened in wisdom. To say to the mortal dreamer that disease and death do not exist is to confuse and delude him. He must first be shown how to awaken in God through meditation; then he will realize that he was only dreaming disease and death.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Your value as a human being is in exact ratio to the extent that you manifest on the surface of your life the divine power within you. The real You is the prolific Source of all power; but the everyday you is only a fragment of that which can be brought out and manifested. The basic You is infinite in its potentiality. So long as you have not touched the inmost depth of this fundamental You, know that you are not yet That. The apparent you is not all that you are. Do not let appearances hide the glory of Reality. Do not determine your spiritual value according to the dimensions of visible you. Instead, assess yourself by your measureless consciousness.

Do not try to analyze other people and to pass judgment upon them. The following example will illustrate this point: A is fairly intelligent; B does not possess as much intelligence as A, so A thinks that because he can read B like a book, he can read everybody else. However, C is more intelligent than either A or B; and, because C can read A and B, he thinks he can also read everybody else.

Although it is natural for the average person to feel that he knows more than anyone else, he deludes himself. We can understand those who do not possess as much intelligence as ourselves; but we cannot understand those who are superior to us. The wisdom of the greatest mortal is little compared with the intelligence of the angels and compared with the omniscience of God. On earth that man is most wise who is most humble.

ON CONQUERING OUR ENEMY--Part 2

Mr. John invited many prominent architects and guests to a banquet in this home built by Mr. Sanders. While the guests were at the table he spoke about the wonderfully solid walls in the new house. After dinner, by way of showing the strength of the building, Mr. John dashed his full weight against one of the walls, with the result that it crashed down, revealing the sandy contents. The alarmed guests fled. Mr. Sanders sensed foul play, but could not understand the reason.

News about Mr. Sanders' so-called dishonesty ran riot in town. Damage suits were brought against him, and his fortune melted. Success and fame vanished too, but he silently bore this affront. A student of Truth, he refused to leave the city of his former successes, at least until he was vindicated.

By strenuous effort, Mr. Sanders persuaded all the owners of homes he had built to answer his challenge and get them examined. When every house was found to be perfect, strong, and well built, people began to believe in Mr. Sanders again, saying: "Well, he slipped only once; we hope he never again will build a home with ready-to-fall walls." But facts being overwhelmingly

against him in that one instance, nobody was willing just yet to really believe in Mr. Sanders.

Now the scene changes. One day, long after he had passed through the foregoing experiences, Mr. Sanders, with his million-dollar smile of sincerity, was coming down on the elevator in a hotel. Whom do you think he met there? Yes, it was that old scoundrel, Mr. John. Mr. John turned his head, feigning that he did not see or recognize Mr. Sanders. But Mr. Sanders, with a divine smile on his face, patted his former persecutor on the back and said: "Hello, old fellow, how are you? I'm glad to see you." Mr. John looked at him in wonderment, thinking he must be ridiculing him. But there was only golden sincerity shining all over the face of Mr. Sanders.

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

In my little chamber of quietness,
I am always resting; I never speak but
with the voice of my silence. Through
my silence, O Divine Mother, eloquent-
ly converse with me.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY OMNIPRESENT THRONE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I came down from my omnipresent throne of love in the bosom of space and in the hearts of twinkling lights to find a cozy place in the heart of man. I stayed there long, shut out from my large, large home.

I was everywhere; then I hid myself away in the small places. Now I come out of my hiding places. I open the gates of the human limitations of family, caste, color, and creed. I am racing everywhere to feel again my consciousness of omnipresence.

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, ignite our earthliness with the flame of Infinity. With the torch of our devotion blaze our dark indifference, our restlessness, and our ignorance. Inflammate our minds with Thy thoughts! Inflammate our hearts with Thy love! Inflammate our souls with Thy joy!

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE (2)

YOU HAVE THE POWER OF FREE CHOICE There are always two forces trying to get hold of you, Satan and God. Listen to the voice of God first. Never say: "I must do this, I can't help myself." Remember, you have free choice. To think that you like evil ways is a delusion. No one wants to hurt himself. You love yourself more than you care for anyone else. You will sacrifice for yourself when you will not sacrifice for others. That is why you should do what is of real, lasting benefit to yourself. You should not perform any action that brings you sorrow. The law of action gives you free choice; you do not have to be influenced by evil. Wrong actions leave traces in your consciousness that must eventually be eradicated.

Although there are both evil and good in the world, free choice is man's savior. Animals do not have free choice; they know neither good nor evil. They have some intelligence, but live mainly by instinct; and they evolve to higher forms. But man is uniquely endowed with the power of free choice. Nothing can influence him unless he chooses to accept it. Unless you drink poison, you will not die from poison; unless you cultivate hatred, you will not feel the hatred of others in return; unless you are jealous, you will not receive the karmic effects of jealousy.

YOU WILL REAP WHAT YOU SOW Your actions will lead either to good or to evil consequences. Both virtue and vice flower in activity. But the cycle does not start with action. Thought is even more important than action because it is the force that instigates action. Just as ideational creation preceded material creation, so thought precedes action. Evil or negative thoughts tempt one to perform actions that will be regretted, whereas positive, uplifting thoughts lead to an improvement in one's actions and their results.

According to Western ethics, you are not considered evil unless your actions are evil, and you are not considered virtuous unless your actions are virtuous, but in India it is considered evil to have evil thoughts and feelings. According to the law of action, or karma, we reap what we sow. This is not fatalism. Before you act, you have freedom, but after you act, the effect of that action will follow you whether you want it to or not. That is the law of karma. If you read a book that stimulates wrong tendencies in spite of the

fact that you know that it is not good for you, you will nevertheless reap the results of reading that book. Do you see? You are a free agent, but if you perform a certain act, you will reap the results of that act.

If you do not want to redeem yourself, no one can redeem you. If you choose to live altogether on the material plane, you will be material, not spiritual. You have freedom of choice. Kick evil away from you. Every time something bothers you, meditate. Then some day you will say: "I am a free man."

The way to freedom is through service to others. The way to happiness is through meditation and being in tune with God. Let your heart beat with love for others, let your mind feel the needs of others, and let your intuition feel the thoughts of others. Break the barriers of your ego; banish selfishness; free yourself from the consciousness of the body; forget yourself; do away with this prison house of incarnations; melt your heart in all, be one with all creation.

TEMPTATION--FIRST AVOID, THEN CONQUER If you are convinced that temptation is bad because it promises happiness and gives sorrow, then delusion can't possess you. Temptation is alluring. There is no doubt about that. It appeals because our senses are all turned outward. There is a current flowing from the brain into the eyes, ears, in fact into all the organs of sense, and through them outward to contact with and perception of the physical universe. We always like things that cause our sensory perceptions to flow outward.

Remember that evil or finite temptation is tempting because you have no comparison. When you permit temptation to overwhelm you, your wisdom is a prisoner. The quickest way to banish temptation is to first say "no" and get out of that particular environment; then reason it out later when calmness and wisdom return. The best way to avoid being tempted is to be so merged in the bliss of God that all other happiness will only be secondary to that sublime state.

Why should you let evil wreck you just for a moment of false happiness? Keep your will power free from the clutches of bad habits. Replace evil habits with good ones and then, when you have an abundance of good habits, you will be free and able to fight evil. Never force yourself into being good. Be sincere with yourself. Exercise reason and free choice to be good. Likewise, if you force good onto a child, the first chance he gets he will do what he was told not to do. A child should be made to see why a thing is wrong and another's will power should not be forced upon him.

LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT Those who deny the existence of evil go on doing anything they please, but when one recognizes the law of cause and effect, there is no chance of falling into this delusion. God is telling you to do good and Satan is influencing you to do

wrong. To deny that evil exists is to be filled with delusion.

All your sins and errors are only a temporary covering over the pure soul. God made you as light, darkness cannot exist in you. The trouble is that you cover up the light of the soul. You are a child of God. It is wrong to say that you are a sinner, for you are the ever burning X-ray light of God.

In this life sometimes we are victims of disease and trouble, but we do not realize that at sometime, somewhere we ourselves, by our wrong actions, were the cause. Blame yourself for anything that happens to you, but do not worry; you can remedy matters for yourself. How? By doing good deeds now, and by burning up the karma-seeds of past evil deeds in the spirit-fire of meditation.

To become bored with life and succumb to temptations is wrong. When you meditate, you will see what life really is.

"O, Wine of Countless Centuries, I found Thee bottled in my heart, long corked with ignorance. As I drink Thee, draught after thirsty draught, I look in the bottle of my heart and find Thee yet untouched."

God will never bore you. Nothing in this world, apart from God, will give you sufficient joy to satisfy you. But when you have God, you will find that He is sufficient. God is complete. The love that you are ignorantly seeking in passion, you will find in God. The lasting peace, power, and prosperity that you are seeking in the world, you will find in God, who can please you as naught else can.

THE VALUE OF GOOD COMPANY Some people put just a little water of practice on the seeds of good conduct, and the seeds die. Others water the seeds with greater care but do not put a protecting hedge around them; and they too, are soon destroyed. It is very important to put a hedge around them, and good company is that hedge. The people with whom we associate constitute an important part of our environment; and environment has a very strong influence upon us. Environment is stronger than will power; so choose your friends carefully. Good company will stimulate your actions and thoughts in the right direction; and your good actions and good thoughts will germinate like seeds. When they have become sufficiently abundant, there will be no room in your environment for evil seeds to sprout, and so they will die out. You can't please everyone, but you should try to please others, to the best of your ability. Most important of all is to please God. That is better than pleasing everyone.

Fear no one, but remember, you are living in a glass house and everyone is watching you. Try to improve yourself. If anyone criticizes you, try to see your faults and mend your ways. Do not be affected by praise. Do not

allow yourself to be flattered, nor to flatter others. If your love and kindness cannot hold them, flattery will have no effect. Flattery is poison to the soul.

Your conscience is the whisper of God. It is the voice of God. If you listen to Him, you will be saved from evil and its effects. Be proud that you are a child of God. He is shining in the high and in the low, in the white and in the dark races. It is better to have the glory of God than the glory of man. To die in God and live forever is the highest ideal.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

If you are in the world and yet have no attachments, you are a real yogi. "Take no heed for the body" means not to worry too much about superficial things. The true meaning of renunciation is not that you are to punish yourself, but that you should sacrifice a few little things for the highest thing--God. Worldly people have left God for perishable things, but you should be able to leave perishable things for God.

Jesus taught physical renunciation and also mental renunciation. God's law teaches that when you want to conquer something you must also know why you wish to conquer it. You should not only forsake and stay away from temptation, but as soon as you think of it you should throw those thoughts out of your mind. You must conquer the mind.

It is very difficult to know God, especially for the many people who are so mentally insincere. By this I mean that their desires and thoughts about people and events are not in accord with their professed aim--the attainment of Self-realization.

Through these teachings you will learn how to hear the voice of God--how to contact God. Then you will know that it is not church affiliations, but truth, that sets you free.

ON CONQUERING OUR ENEMY--Part 3

They both walked out of the elevator. Mr. John tried to get away from Mr. Sanders by walking faster and then turning aside to buy a paper from a newsboy standing on the sidewalk. But Mr. Sanders stopped too, and paid for the newspaper before Mr. John could even get his money out.

Then Mr. Sanders firmly grasped conscience-stricken Mr. John by the right arm and said: "Come along, old fellow. I will drive you to your home," and before Mr. John could remonstrate he found himself following Mr. Sanders,

under the spell of his all-conquering love. "Well, now," said Mr. Sanders, "can't you forget the little misunderstanding we had? I have forgotten it long ago. You know, I'm really glad to see you. Now let's be friends; we are both children of God and we don't want to go to our graves with a dark hatred over our souls. Please accept my sincere friendship, and forgive me if I ever angered you."

As the car rolled on to Mr. John's home, he was speechless, and his eyes filled with tears. But without saying anything, or turning back to bid Mr. Sanders good-bye, he jumped out of the car as soon as it stopped, and rushed into the house.

Six months passed, then one day, while Mr. Sanders was sitting in his parlor meditating, the doorbell rang. He opened the door, and who should be there but Mr. John, wearing an extremely penitent countenance. At sight of Mr. Sanders, he sobbed out: "I must tell you, dearest Sanders, that I beheld in your face the pure love in your heart, that day you drove me home. I was amazed at how genuinely you loved me, although I had almost ruined your business in this town. Since that day I have passed many sleepless nights, and I have beheld your loving face staring at me, pleading: 'Will you accept my friendship?' Now I have come to tell you that I am trying to be worthy of it. I invited all your old friends to dinner at my home once more and confessed to them how I framed you by bribing the masons who built the frail home, supposedly according to your architectural design. Now will you accept my unworthy friendship?"

Mr. Sanders and Mr. John embraced each other in divine understanding, and were great friends ever afterward. Mr. Sanders became reinstated in the high esteem of his friends and Mr. John was considered to be a brave man for confessing his guilt.

This story proves that love can change and reform man.

AFFIRMATION .

Heavenly Father, I am Thy prodigal dewdrop, quivering on the hollow, trembling leaf of life and death, which floats on Thy shoreless sea. I am Thy truant dewdrop, homeward bound at last.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

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PEACE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Peace flows through my heart, and blows through
me as a zephyr.

Peace fills me like a fragrance.

Peace runs through me like rays.

Peace stabs the heart of noise and worries.

Peace burns through my disquietude.

Peace, like a globe of fire, expands and fills
my omnipresence.

Peace, like an ocean, rolls on in all space.

Peace, like red blood, vitalizes the veins of my
thoughts.

Peace, like a boundless aureole, encircles my body
of infinity.

Peace-flames blow through the pores of my flesh,
and through all space.

The perfume of peace flows over the gardens of
blossoms.

The wine of peace runs perpetually through the wine
press of all hearts.

Peace is the breath of stones, stars, and sages.

Peace is the ambrosial wine of Spirit flowing from
the cask of silence,

Which I quaff with my countless mouths of atoms.

--From "Metaphysical Meditations"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, every word that I speak,
let it have the vibration of Thy voice.

HOW TO DEVELOP THE VOICE

An aspiring violinist knows that before he can become an accomplished player he must be equipped with a good instrument, and acquire the mental and physical skill necessary to produce pleasing music by a harmonious contact of the bow and the violin. It is also true that one who wishes to become an effective speaker or singer must first become familiar with the basic factors that will help him develop his singing and speaking voice.

FOUR FACTORS

- 1) Proper use of the breath to produce harmonious sounds. As the bow proficiently used against the violin strings produces beautiful tones, so the breath flowing over the vocal cords in the right way produces the desired harmonious, magnetic sounds.
- 2) Proper use and care of the throat is important; it should be kept free from hoarseness, and protected from infection at all times.
- 3) Proper use of the vocal cords, and daily practice of the art of relaxing and tensing them.
- 4) Application of will power and concentration.

IMPORTANCE OF CORRECT BREATHING Correct breathing is very important in speaking and singing.

Just as the bow moves in countless precise ways over the violin strings to produce music, so the breath, modulated by habit, concentration, and will power, produces the desired speech and musical tones as it moves over the vocal cords.

Practice the following breathing exercise for half an hour before speaking or singing, but do not think of the breath or breathing exercise during the act of speaking or singing. The principal guiding force in speaking or singing should not be technique, but inspiration, which is roused by the habit of being inspired and by the practice of deep concentration.

BREATHING EXERCISE

1. Sit on a straight chair with spine erect and chin parallel to the floor. Calm yourself.

2. Keeping the mouth shut, put the thumb of your right hand on the right nostril and very slowly inhale through the left nostril, filling the lungs and expanding the diaphragm simultaneously counting rapidly 1 to 25.
3. Then close the left nostril with the forefinger, hold the breath, and count 1 to 6, or 1 to 12 (whichever is comfortable for you).
4. Then open the right nostril by removing the thumb, while keeping the left nostril closed with the forefinger. Exhale slowly, counting 1 to 25 rapidly.
5. Now reverse the procedure, closing the left nostril and inhaling through the right to a rapid count of 1 to 25; closing the right nostril and holding the breath to a count of 1 to 6 or 1 to 12; and opening the left nostril for a slow exhalation counting 1 to 25.
6. Continue, alternating between inhaling through the left nostril and exhaling through the right; and inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left.

Use this as a daily exercise, preferably in the morning before breakfast. Also practice it for at least 30 minutes (or for an hour) before delivering a speech. During practice of this breathing exercise, the lungs and abdomen should be inflated simultaneously during inhalation and deflated simultaneously during exhalation. Those who do not practice breathing exercises are usually short of breath, and find the lack of proper breath control a hindrance during speaking or singing.

It is best to eat very little or nothing at all for at least one or two hours before public speaking or singing. Overindulgence in any foods, especially in meats, should be strictly avoided in order to stop the accumulation in the bloodstream of waste by-products, which leads to faster heart action and consequent heavy breathing. All public speakers and singers will find long walks, or regularly paced moderate running, a very healthful and helpful practice.

TO STRENGTHEN LUNGS Stand erect, extend arms sidewise at right angles to the spine. Open palms. Slowly exhale, bringing palms together in front. Slowly inhale, tensing all body parts "high" in pairs, such as both feet, then both calves, and so on from "down, up," simultaneously extending arms with clenched fists to the first position. Slowly relax all body parts similarly from "up, down" and exhale, slowly bringing palms together in front. Repeat at least three times. Relax and drop arms. This is an important exercise.

TO STRENGTHEN CHEST It is slow but sure suicide to walk, sit, rest, talk, or lie down with a caved-in chest. The cells of the lungs become starved thereby, and maladjustments of the vertebrae

often occur. It is essential to physical well-being always to keep the chest a little forward and the shoulders held back, even while leaning against the back of a chair for rest. Practice will relieve any feeling of irksomeness.

Close the eyes. Very gently contract both sides of the chest. Put the whole attention on the chest while contracting its two sides. Hold the contraction, counting 1 to 30. Release the contraction. Repeat six times. Practice in the morning, at noon, and at night.

Exposing the chest to direct sunlight is very beneficial. Remain outdoors as much as possible. Walk slowly two miles every day. Eat plenty of raw green vegetables and thoroughly ground pecans. Clearing the throat and nose with a mixture of half a teaspoonful of salt in a glass of tepid water early in the morning, at noon, and just before going to bed, has been found quite beneficial.

CARE AND EXERCISE OF THE THROAT An important factor in voice culture lies in the care and exercise of the throat, the mouth, the lungs, and the diaphragm. All public speakers should refrain from using sour foods (for example, pickles, unripe citrus fruits). It is good for anyone to use a little honey after drinking orange juice. Frequent use of honey is very good. Raw ginger and rock candy are good for the throat. Public speakers who talk for long hours at a time should lubricate their throats by putting a piece of rock candy and a small piece of ginger in the mouth, long before the time of speaking, and sucking on them. Avoid sore throat through regular good habits and right living. Avoid colds by eating lightly at night and by eating more fruits and vegetables.

BEST EXERCISE Drop the chin to the chest. Tense the muscles of the throat, feeling that your chin is tied to the chest. Then slowly lift the chin, pulling against the tension of the throat muscles while the head goes upward. Then relax quickly and drop the chin to the chest. Repeat twelve times morning and night.

In public speaking it is important not to strain the vocal cords, nor the lungs. One should learn to start the breath and the thought waves from the diaphragm and let the breath pass through the lungs and throat into the mouth. The vocal cords should be used to speak loud or soft tones, not by artificial exertion, but by inspiration. Those who have no inspiration and try to impress their audiences through loud speech injure their vocal cords. Deep inspiration should produce loud tones and gentle inspiration should produce soft tones in singing or speaking. Remember that the depth of inspiration should be the guiding force of the vocal cords. All sounds should be produced through the mouth, inspired by the strength of the abdomen, diaphragm, lungs, and breath trained according to the above-mentioned methods.

CURE OF STAGE FRIGHT Remember, if by calmness you can prevent frequent visitation of mild psychological nervousness, you will

never suffer from the more serious and long-continued forms of nervousness. Stage fright is a form of fear that causes nervousness in many people; they become unable to do anything naturally. If you are shy and have stage fright, quiet your mind and remember that all the power you need is within you--power to convince people, power to give the direct truth. The particular kind of truth that you want to give is in the Infinite Spirit, which functions through you. Overcome stage fright by

- 1) getting used to talking to groups, by doing so frequently, and
- 2) by imagining whenever you give a talk that you are addressing an empty hall, or that you are talking to children or to very simple people.

Try to realize that all the power you use--to think, to speak, and to act--comes from God, and that He is with you now, guiding and inspiring you. As soon as you actually realize that, a flash of illumination will come and fear will leave you. Sometimes the power of God comes like an ocean and surges through your being in great boundless waves, sweeping away all obstacles. Feel that God talks through you whenever you speak.

STRENGTHENING NERVES Inhale; hold the breath. Gently and simultaneously contract the muscles of the entire body. Hold the contraction, counting 1 to 20, with deep attention upon the entire body. Then exhale and release the contraction. Repeat three times. Practice any time you feel weak and nervous.

TONIC FOR NERVES One of the physical aids to overcoming nervousness, as taught in India, is a soothing drink made of fresh limes. Preparation: To one glass of water add the juice of one quarter of a fresh lime and about a tablespoon of sugar or powdered rock candy. Stir thoroughly, and add a little crushed ice. It is difficult to give exact measurements because of the difference in the size of limes, but the drink should not taste like ordinary limeade one buys at soda fountains. That is far too strong. This drink should be blended so that the sweetness and sourness are equal and you cannot distinguish which you are tasting. Sipping two or three glasses of this during a spell of nervousness has been found to be extremely beneficial. If the drink is properly blended, every nerve will feel calm. If you have too much lime or too much sugar (never use honey for this special nerve drink), it will not produce the desired result. The blending must be equal.

TECHNIQUE PLUS SOUL INSPIRATION The daily practice of specially selected, graded vocal exercises is highly important in the development of the speaking and singing voice. A most helpful point in voice culture consists in using concentration to learn the technique of speaking or singing. When you can be alone in a closed room, then, with deep concentration, very intelligently and inspirationally try to speak or sing extempo-

raneously to an invisible audience. Try to apply the techniques of correct speaking and singing while practicing before this invisible audience.

Your technique of speaking and singing should be practiced and perfected until it is without fault or blemish. After that is accomplished, your self-confidence, inspiration, concentration, and emotion will guide the technique. In other words, inspiration should be the outstanding power behind the speech of the speaker and the song of the singer. As there is no excuse for faulty, halting speech or an imperfect technique in singing, so also, speaking or singing with perfect technique but without soul inspiration and soul originality is inexcusable.

THE CULPRIT AND THE JUDGE

The Kazi, a Moslem judge, squatted on a large wooden divan, looking comfortably important as he gazed at the awestruck group around him: clerks, chaprasis (office bearers), and policemen--not to mention the criminals they had brought before him.

Being ignorant, the clerks and policemen of the village feared the all-powerful Kazi. The criminals waited, fearful and trembling in their chains, for they knew they could anticipate a dire fate at the hands of the much dreaded decree-administrator. But on this particular day, among the criminals to be sentenced, there was one who faced the mood-governed official dauntlessly. Mr. Ali, the village kalu (oil dealer and cultivator), not only did not tremble, he smiled at the Judge, whose satisfaction in his sacred authority was put out of joint at this impertinence. Annoyed, the Kazi threatened Ali with hanging.

But the smiling Ali said craftily, "Honored Kazi, your two-horned ox wandered onto my pasture lands and fought with my ox and broke both his precious horns. I have a damage suit against you, sir, and I want prompt redress."

The Kazi scratched his head. How to wiggle out of this dilemma? Assuming his momentarily forgotten air of fierce authority, he called out to the office clerk, "Bring hither my lal pothi (red leather law book)." The book was brought. The Kazi quickly opened it at the center pages, and even though it was upside down, he pretended to read from the unquestionable authority of the law book the absolute judgment in connection with the case brought against him by Ali:

"The red book says that oil dealers are as slick and slippery as the oil they sell; and because of their proverbial cunning they should be able to live by their wits. Therefore this one, Ali, should not have been foolish enough to lose control over his own stupid ox and allow it to fight with my powerful ox. The beasts themselves are not responsible, being nonintelligent beings. My ox broke the horns of your ox because both were beasts. Case dismissed."

The villagers looking on in the little courtroom were bewildered by this unjust judgment, and indignantly muttered among themselves. But clever Ali, with a smile on his face, launched his next attack as follows:

"Honorable Kazi, I beg your pardon. I made a little mistake in my statement to you, which I must correct."

"What is that?" inquired the Kazi.

"Why, Your Honor, my beast, fighting with your beast, broke the precious horns of your beast."

The Kazi reddened with rage. "Bring the second lal pothi," he shouted to the clerk. Again the Kazi pretended to read. "The red book says," he declared, "that proverbially slick oil-dealers should live by their wits and never be foolish enough to breed stupid beasts that break the horns of intelligent animals owned by intelligent lawmakers. Mr. Ali, you should never have harbored such a vicious ox. The penalty is that you must provide an intelligent ox with two horns in place of my hornless animal--and pay one hundred dollars fine for all the trouble you have caused me, and for telling an untruth in the beginning."

This story illustrates a common fault: partiality to one's self. No matter what the facts are we tend to twist them to put ourselves in the right. Yet personal interest should never warp or prejudice our judgment. Though we love to forgive ourselves, we find it difficult to forgive others.

Many people think they can do no wrong; or are at any rate very blind to their own faults. It is customary for most minds to magnify the faults of others, and to minimize or resolve to nothingness their own errors. One who demands justice from others must also be fair enough to demand justice from himself. If he deplores the faults of others, he should learn to deplore his own faults too. If anyone feels the pangs of injustice done to him, he should also be commiserative about the injustices he perpetrates against others.

If your feelings are hurt easily, you should not indulge in hurting the feelings of others. If you want to be justly treated, learn to treat others right. Abuse of authority may stifle the voices of enemies for a time, but it cannot defuse the dynamite of hatred against you that may be secretly piling up to explode under you at some unexpected moment.

HOW TO ATTRACT GOD'S ATTENTION

It is possible to attract the attention of God only when your soul is silently satisfied in trying to please your heavenly Father, not man. That which is of the earth perishes with the earth. That which is divine is imperishable.

Being desireless, be very ambitious for God. His recognition is everlasting, for God's memory is not fickle, but runs through eternity. Serve Him in others by silently doing good every day, helping others with something you have.

Everything you do should be done with peace. That is the best medicine for your body, mind, and soul. It is the most wonderful way to live. The man who has peace in his soul, has all the wisdom of the gods. He can march among the foes of life proclaiming: "I am a child of God in the kingdom of peace. With the sword of wisdom and will power I will disarm all enemies. I will vanquish all my difficulties. I am marching with the King of peace! I am victor!"

When you have peace in every movement of your body, peace in your thinking and in your will power, peace in your love, and peace and God in your ambitions, remember, you have connected your life with God.

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, all the power that I use to think, to speak, and to act comes from Thee. Thou art with me always, guiding and inspiring me.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE TAPER OF MEDITATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I enter the interior temple of soul research. To discover Thee I have abandoned all other duties. Darkness-haunted yet unafraid, I am groping, seeking, crying for Thee. Wilt Thou leave me alone? Reveal Thyself, O Father!

The door of memories swings open. Among the motley I look for Thee but Thou appearest not. Halt, ye throng of countless thoughts and experiences past! Come not into my sanctuary.

Firmly I close the bulging thought-pressed door and fix my mind on Thee alone.

Perceiving the astral glow of a little taper of deep concentration, I murmur a long prayer. My heart's teardrops and the gusts of my supplications almost extinguish the holy taper.

I pray no more with words but only with wistful yearning. I command my breath to make no sound; I rebuke my boisterous love for Thee. On the cushion of peace I silently adore Thee.

The taper of meditation is burning more steadily; a divine light grows brighter and brighter. I apprehend Thy presence! Thou art I!

In joy I worship.

PRAYER

Divine Father, bless me with the gift of good memory. Let me not forget my worthwhile experiences and thus fail to learn the lessons they teach.

HOW TO CULTIVATE A GOOD MEMORY

What is memory? Memory is that power by which you recollect your past experiences. All the reactions and events of your childhood--all the experiences that you have had--are stored in your subconsciousness. These experiences can be reproduced mentally from your subconsciousness by your mental faculties. Thus you may profit by those that contain valuable lessons and discard the rest. Memory is essential to our spiritual development. God gave us memory lest we forget our experiences and thus fail to learn the valuable lessons they teach. An experience that has been forgotten is no longer ours. We cannot benefit from it if we do not remember it.

Memory is active to different degrees in different people, according to their brain capacity. Some people can remember much more than others. In order to develop your memory, you need education, experiences, concentration, and meditation. Unless a person has developed his memory, he is not really educated.

A good way to develop this faculty is to recall all the beautiful things that have happened in our lives. We never tire of reliving in memory our agreeable experiences and good deeds. We should repeat them again and again in our consciousness by reviving good memories and by performing new good actions inspired by those memories. Thus we may make our lives replete with better and better experiences.

SPECIAL EXERCISES One way to develop your memory is to connect what you wish to remember with some outstanding event that has impressed you; then you won't forget. Memory develops by the association of one thing with another. It is true that most people have a certain amount of memory ability from birth, but if you limit your ability to remember by failing to exercise this faculty on an ever wider scale, you limit your soul. Memory can be stretched like rubber. It is eternal, elastic, and can record many things if you develop it.

All our faculties have to be cultivated to bring out their true potential. A poor memory needs exercise to become a good memory. If you practice addition, subtraction, and multiplication mentally, it will help to develop your memory. Try also to remember, or to visualize, some object or place or event. Every day try to recall what you did a week ago that day. That will

help quite a bit. You should also try to recall what happened in your life much earlier. However, one should try to remember only the constructive things that have happened.

Another way to develop your memory is to pay strict attention to the thing that you want to remember. Why do you remember the greatest sorrows of your life? Because you directed more attention to them. Deep attention is a strong force that develops memory. A poor memory usually indicates a "butterfly" mind that flits from one object of thought to another, without giving a careful attention to each individual thing. Disciplined exercise of the memory is very important. You should link one idea with another. Connect certain ideas, persons, or objects with certain other things that are related and that are already firmly fixed in your memory.

The art of visualization is very important in improving memory. Look steadily at a certain object, or at some scenery, or in a show window, then turn away and see how many of the details you can enumerate. The deeper your impressions, the better your visualization, and the more details you will be able to remember.

Most people perform life's duties absent-mindedly. There is a wide gulf between their actions and their thoughts. That is why they cannot remember much. It is necessary to put great attention upon whatever you wish to remember.

MEMORY HAS NO DISCRIMINATION-- IT IMITATES The reason you do not remember who you were before you came to this earth is because you do not possess divine memory. Jesus knew exactly where he came from, where he was going, and so on. Divine memory such as Jesus had has to be awakened by development of the mortal memory. This mortal memory is essential to getting the best out of experiences. Memory does not discriminate. It takes in and stores anything to which you give attention, and can be trained to recall any stored impression. To bring back into your consciousness evil things that may have occurred in the past is a misuse of memory, a very negative use of the faculty.

Sometimes memory won't let you forget certain impressions. It is therefore unwise to feed memory with the food of wrong thoughts and actions; through memory you will suffer inwardly, as well as outwardly, from their effects. If even the most evil habit is constantly practiced, after awhile it will seem to you to be all right; but it will surely lead to unhappiness in the end. Therefore, never repeat a wrong action. Give it up quickly. Do not let it remain in your consciousness, lest it be repeated consciously until it becomes a habit. Then the act is controlled by the subconscious, as are all involuntary actions, and cannot be eradicated without repeated determined efforts of will power. I am not telling you to be negative, but rather to be positive and not be a slave to anything. In your consciousness there are all kinds of records, both good and

bad. Destroy all records that revive memories of unhappiness and evil deeds and unkindness. As soon as you have learned the lessons they brought you, scatter them to the winds.

LEARN TO CHOOSE YOUR MEMORIES It is necessary to increase the performance capacity of the memory so that it becomes powerful enough to remember all the good things that went before. The yogis have always taught and demonstrated that memory can be developed by exercise. Many scientists, on the other hand, take the view that a person with a hereditary brain defect cannot exercise or develop the faculty impaired thereby. However, with greater knowledge of the art of concentration and memory development as taught by the yogis, it will be seen that there is always something greater if you know where to seek it. Through the deepest art of concentration and memory development mental changes can be effected.

One great metaphysician said: "Memory gives the power of reproduction." Memory was given to you to reproduce good things. It is not wrong to remember certain mistakes so that you can avoid them in the future, but one should not dwell on them. Nor should you keep in mind the evils of others. If you continually think of someone whom you intensely dislike, and every day in your mind you are hurting him because of your memories of what he did, you are misusing your memory. You should not deliberately recall such experiences. They are gone and do not now belong to you. By remembering a thing, you live it over again. Develop forgetfulness in such a case. If you can remember some of the ego's experiences with different people in this life, why can't you remember the experiences that have happened to the soul? Because mortal memory reproduces the experiences of this life and divine memory reproduces all the experiences of the soul.

GOD IS THE ESSENCE OF ALL GOOD THINGS Remember only the beautiful things that you have felt, and seen, and experienced. If your five senses behold only the good, then your mind will be a garden of blossoming soul qualities, and in the garden of memory there will be no weeds of wrong thoughts. If you can make your garden produce the blossoms of beautiful thoughts, then in that garden of beautiful memories God will visit you. He who loves all good things and remembers all good things will at last remember God, the essence of all good things. Some day an invisible power will shatter all the windows of your memory into one big opening through which you may see and remember that you are one with God.

THE WISHING TREE

There was once a hermit of Hindustan, named Hari, who almost wore the soles off his feet traveling through the rocky heights of the Himalayas in search of a certain wishing tree! Indian legends describe such miraculous trees as

endowed with perpetual vitality and specially imbued with magic power to fulfill any idea of the person sitting under one. These delightful and desirable trees are said to have been grown by divine fairy sprites particularly for the benefit of deserving ascetics who might happen to seek them.

Now the hermit Hari was spiritual, devoted, and firm in his determinations. Long had he searched for God, but only rarely did he perceive glimpses of the Infinite in meditation. Next to God, the object that Hari coveted most was a wishing tree. Although he had learned to consider union with God as the greatest desire, this hermit had not yet freed himself from lesser desires and had many lessons to learn!

Although Hari could not commune with the Infinite at will, he had nevertheless developed great occult powers because of his austerity and self-discipline, and by occasional experiences of spiritual communion. He felt sure that the time had at last arrived when his determined search and his yogic practices had culminated in the accumulation of so much good karma that its stored-up magnetic power, plus the latent divine power now manifesting in him, would combine to reward him with the possession of a wishing tree.

And this bud of a wish did burst into a flower of fulfillment when--as he traveled through a snow-walled valley in the interior of the Himalayas--he came across a great leafy tree. Very few people had ever desecrated this ~~virginal magic land with their footsteps.~~ Hari's awakened intuition led him to recognize that the impressive tree was a magic one. He at once approached the tree and stood under it--as legendary rules instruct the seeker to do--and prepared to test the occult powers of this strangely endowed creation.

Hari closed his eyes and thought: "If this is a wishing tree, I desire the instantaneous materialization of a mighty castle!" No sooner had he thought this than a great castle appeared near the tree, surrounded by completely landscaped grounds with trees and gardens. So natural did it appear, one would have thought it had always been there.

Encouraged by this first successful test, Hari made another wish: "I would like to be attended by bright-eyed damsels--and these fair attendants should serve me with rare foods, heaped on golden plates, and with nectar from golden goblets." Even as he drew his next breath, a feast was spread before him, and the golden utensils sparkled in the sun; yet they were no brighter than the sparkling eyes of the graceful maidens who smilingly served him.

Delighted by the instantaneous fulfillment of these two very worldly desires, Hari then wished for a mighty army to protect him and guard his new treasures. Lo, there was a mighty army garrisoned near the castle, and armed guards stood beside all the doorways.

After feasting, Hari walked up the marble stairs and inspected part of his

new domain; then, wearied even by the sight of all the opulence that surrounded him, the erstwhile hermit retired to a secluded room on the ground floor of the castle. The low, wide windows overlooked the garden and the deep forest beyond it. Now, the sumptuous room he had chosen was so huge that its distant corners were shadowy and dreary. No one was near, and it was very silent--except for little noises that reached him from the garden and, perhaps, from creatures that were prowling in the wild jungle beyond. As Hari lay facing the window which looked out on the whispering trees, he felt very much alone, and a quiet little fear crept into his mind. As it grew stronger, he automatically sent forth another powerful thought: "Even though an army is here for my protection, not one soldier is outside that open window--and there are no bars. The jungle is close, and the beasts are hunting. If a tiger comes through that window to get me, it will be my finish."

Just as this fearful thought enveloped him, a ravenous tiger bolted through the castle window and carried off the terror-frozen hermit! It was too late for him to realize that a wishing tree would fulfill both his good and his bad thoughts, irrespective of whether they were actuated by constructive or by harmful motives. The business of a wishing tree is to carry out ideas, and this one ran true to form, faithfully materializing Hari's strong negative visualization. So that was the hermit's last thought!

My great Guru, Sri Yukteswarji, often used the foregoing story to illustrate that every man is living in this world beneath his own magic wishing tree of all-desire-fulfilling will power. Man's will, being a reflection of the Almighty Divine Will, has in it the seeds of almightiness. Most people rejoice at sudden success in this life, without stopping to think that success has come as a result of continuous will and effort in an unknown past life. It is also true that people who continuously misuse their will power, are surprised when suddenly they reap evil consequences, forgetting that these, too, were created by their own divinely-bestowed wishing tree. If you have not learned to control your desires and wishes and thoughts, be thankful that every uncontrolled thought is not instantaneously materialized. Otherwise, how often your passions would cause tigerish misfortunes to spring upon others, and upon yourself!

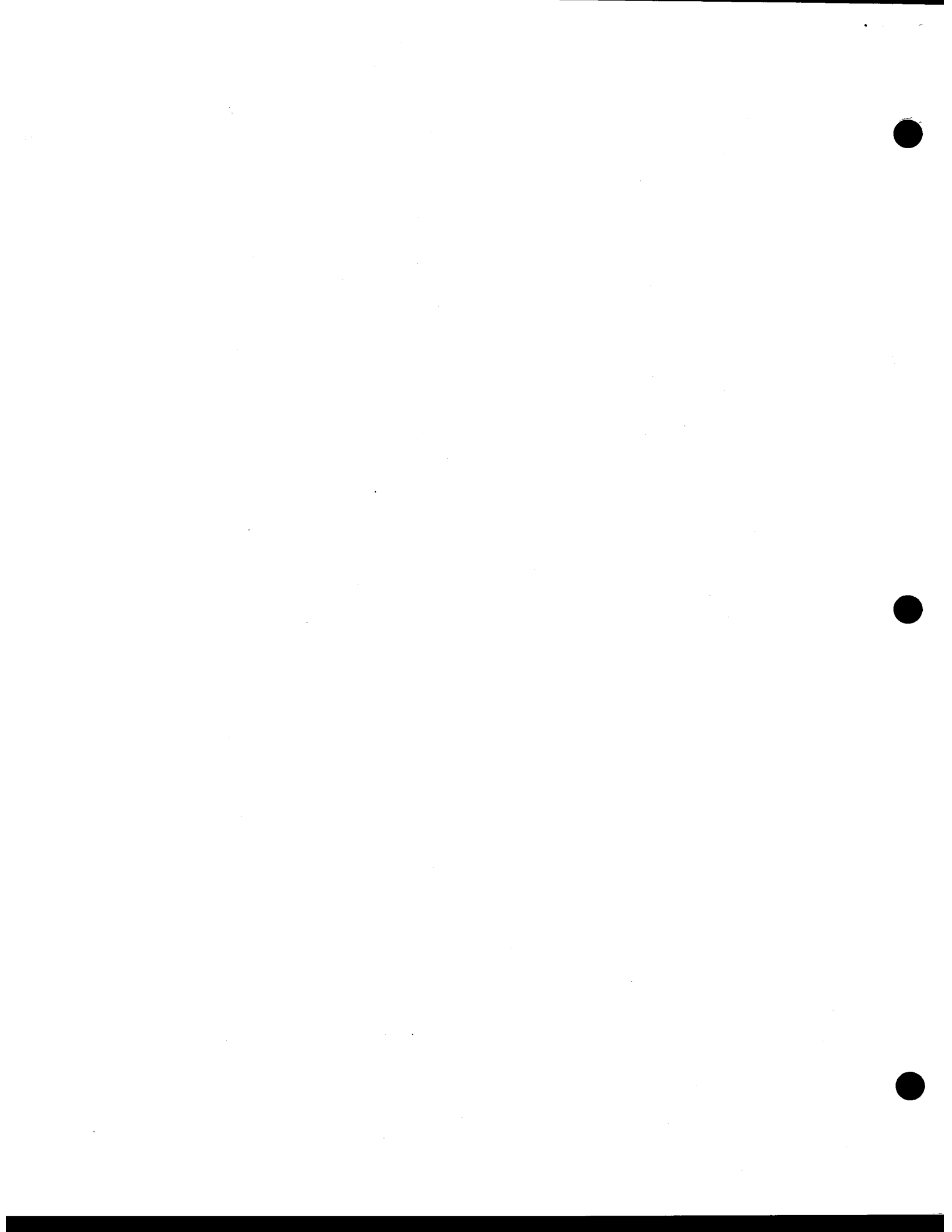
So you must gain wisdom as you strengthen your will. You must be wise enough to focus your mind upon good things while you are standing beneath the almighty wishing tree of your will, and to be careful that you do not concentrate upon fears, failures, diseases, ignorance, and lack of God-communion. They might suddenly loom out of the unseen and cause you unending troubles.

Remember, you were born beneath the boughs of a wishing tree that can shower you with success, high accomplishments, and achievements--if your thoughts and actions merit them. And so you must not harbor negative thoughts, as they will bring nothing but harm to you. And since this invisible wishing tree grew from the divine will in you, use it all the time to attain

Self-realization. In this way you will forever quench the thirst of all your desires.

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, I will develop Thy gift of good memory by recalling all the beautiful things that have happened in my life.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAKE THY LOVE OUR LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, templed in the blue, templed in the souls of men, templed beneath the voice of our prayers, listen to the appeal of our hearts, the appeal of our devotion, and our love. Naughty or good we are Thy children. Before Thy wisdom, our wisdom is naught; before Thy power, our power is little. These are but Thy borrowed powers. ~~Father of the heavens, Father of our hearts,~~ awaken Thy consciousness within us. Break Thy vow of silence.

No longer can we be satisfied with words; no longer can we be satisfied with the beauties of nature and the beauties of songs; we want to see Thy beautiful face. No more veils of music and art -- appear to us as Thou art! Most Beautiful of the beautiful, come out of the darkless dark, come out of the lightless light!

Bless us with Thy consciousness. Make Thy joy our joy, make Thy love our love, that with Thy love we may love all others as our own. Divine Father, Song of our heart, Devotion of our soul, Utterance of our being, reveal Thyself. No more side-tracking in the path of life for us; we want to go straightway to Thee. Open the veils of the sky. Show us Thy presence in the great masters of India.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Guru-Preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. I bow to the Spirit in my body temple. I bow to Thee in front and behind, on the left, and on the right, above, and beneath. I bow to Thee everywhere, for Thou art everywhere.

WHAT INDIA CAN TEACH US--Part 1

All religious beliefs either originated in India or have been influenced by the scriptures of India. India was the first nation to develop spiritual methods that can lead any persevering student to Self-realization.

In the beginning each nation, like a child, is busy with material development, then with intellectual development, and finally with spiritual development. India went through these three stages long ago. Recent archaeological discoveries have revealed that the civilization of India is older than that of Egypt. India precedes other nations in almost all forms of development. It is by virtue of centuries of spiritual investigation that India has had a chance to put down all dogmas and to understand the ultimate truth. That is why in India since ancient times people with different beliefs have left the formal worship of the temples and have gone into quiet places where there are great teachers who live the life, great ones who actually commune with God and who are not merely elected to spiritual office by a church board. India has already gone through that process of religious evolution. Hinduism is thousands of years old.

TRUE MEANING OF SYMBOLS Many people think that Hindus are idol worshipers. This is not true. The Hindus worship the meaning of their symbols. An idol should be a reminder to us of the ideal or spiritual quality it represents. When one forgets the meaning and worships only the symbol, then it becomes idolatry. Christians have the Cross as a symbol of mercy and forgiveness. It is not idolatry if, whenever one sees a cross, he thinks of Jesus' loving words on the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So in their places of worship the Hindus have little statues that for them have equally inspiring spiritual meanings. They do not think of God as an idol in a limited material form, but as an omnipresent Being.

PANTHEISTIC CONCEPTION OF GOD We should take from Hinduism its pantheistic conception of God and its practical, scientific methods of approaching God. Pantheism is a teaching of Yoga philosophy. Man has believed variously that God is many; or that He is One; or that God and matter exist separately. The pantheistic belief is the most nearly

correct, as it teaches that God is everything; that matter and God are essentially the same, as the waves and the ocean are essentially the same.

VARIOUS PHILOSOPHIES From the Hindu philosophy came the Buddhistic philosophy, which develops the consciousness of love and devotion and kindness. Buddhists started the first missionary movement in India. Buddhism, however, does not give a clear teaching on the consciousness of the ultimate Supreme Being. It teaches that negation or cessation of desire is the goal. Hinduism, on the other hand, teaches that there is something to be sought here and beyond: "From Joy we come, in Joy we live, and into that sacred Joy we melt." Through various pathways of ambition we are consciously or unconsciously seeking God. We are all seeking one thing--perennial happiness, which is God.

India's sages were not interested in identifying themselves with religious names and forms. They sought the ultimate truth, asking: "What is the science that will help me to find God? What is That, knowing which, I shall know all?" The Hindus say: "You do not have to profess any particular religious belief; the important thing is to know the method of contacting God."

It is probable that the fifteen unaccounted-for years of the early life of Jesus were spent in India with Hindu saints. His entire teaching is in accord with Vedanta truths. However, it does not really matter where the truth came from, or who first discovered it. What we are all primarily interested in is truth itself. That Jesus taught Yoga methods of God-communion to his close disciples, to aid in their redemption, is revealed in the little-understood chapter of Revelation in the Bible. There St. John speaks of seven stars and seven churches. These symbols refer to the seven chakras or centers of light in man's cerebrospinal axis, explained in Yoga treatises as the seven divinely planned exits or "trapdoors" through which the devotee, by meditation, may escape by seven successive steps into Cosmic Consciousness.

HOW TEACHERS ARE CHOSEN IN INDIA India is very particular as to the method of teaching truth. There the would-be disciple seeks acceptance by a spiritual teacher, or guru. In the Western world the method is different; usually the teacher has to coax disciples to accept him! The time will come in the West, however, when only those teachers who have lived the life will draw crowds of seeking men and women. Spiritual truths cannot be effectively taught by one who has merely committed scriptural texts to memory. The real spiritual teacher must have experienced and understood truth before he can successfully transmit it to others.

During my spiritual search for a God-realized guru I met three souls of exalted character. They truly had God in their hearts. If you were to ask, "Have they a following?" I would have to answer, "No. They live in a little hut, with only a few students around them." To those in whose eyes success is synonymous with a following, it may seem odd that really great teachers would have but a few students. But I would rather sit with one of those saints,

in whose company I know that I am in the presence of God, than be associated with a teacher who has a great following but who has no Self-realization. The look of a holy man has the power to change spiritually persons who are receptive. The sight of a holy man is in itself a blessing to the beholder. The ground on which a saint has walked is thus made sacred. I used to purify my body by rolling in the dust on the ground where such saints had walked.

Day after day, as I sat in meditation with these holy ones, the darkness and gloom of doubt began to vanish; I began to perceive that God is real. The God who has been forgotten by almost everyone is sleeping in the vast shroud of Nature. Whether you call Him or not, He does not mind. But you can rouse Him only by your love and desire to know Him.

If your heart is ready, if you are desirous of knowing God, and if you continuously march toward Spirit, then you will meet the saints of India and you will recognize them. When your heart is not ready, you may meet them and yet not recognize them. But once a true teacher has been found, if you follow him with due reverence and with open eyes, you will save yourself years of otherwise wasted time, for no one can lead you to God unless he himself has first found God.

This is the theme of India: that truth should be sought of God-realized saints, wherever they may be found, whether it be in temples or in the solitude of mountain or forest. The people of India go to the temples to worship, of course; but to learn the deeper truths they seek out real teachers, saints who have realized God. Whether such saints live in the woods or teach in a temple is of no consequence. The earnest devotee seeks Self-realization wherever he may find it.

TRUTH MUST BE RETAINED Dogmatism is not to be admired in any religion, because it springs from a materialistic attitude. Churches should be laboratories of spiritual experience. When people know truth, i. e., know God, by experience--then dogmas can be done away with. I want to bring to the minds of different religionists this thought: that the time has come to relinquish blind belief in dogmas and to seek Self-realization, whereby the wisdom and love of God freely flow through the mind and heart. It is not my purpose to show the supremacy of any particular religion, but to reveal truth wherever it is. Self-Realization Fellowship does not try to monopolize truth. Self-Realization teachings show you how to discover for yourself the truth in every great religion. Do you see the beauty of that? If you are a follower of one who follows truth, you will know by your own Self-realization --not merely by dogmatic belief--that you are God's child.

We should have nothing but the religion of God--the religion of truth. Let us make up our minds to follow the truth. Then, as Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free " (John 8:32).

A KING'S SEARCH FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD--Part 1

There lived in India in ancient times a mighty emperor named Bharata. In his youth he had been a great warrior. Having conquered almost all the chieftains and princes who ruled different parts of India, he settled at last in his capital at Hastinapur.

After enjoying a protracted peace, the emperor began to grow restless. Sometimes his mind would dwell upon the exultant expectation that he had felt on the eve of a victorious battle. On the other hand, as he introspected and visualized his past life, scenes of the awful carnage loomed up on the screen of his inner eye, and he began to feel distressed and shocked, remembering the groans of the wounded and the dying.

Nevertheless, being tired of peace, the emperor was subconsciously longing to carry on expeditions against certain unconquered hill tribes who reigned in the secret regions of forbidden Tibet, walled off by the high Himalayan mountains. But even as Bharata felt drawn to a revival of his career as a warrior, his spirit shrank in horror from the thought of killing brave men and their innocent womenfolk and children, and from the cruel devastation of their hard-earned family lands. Torn between these two emotions--desire for, and aversion to, war-- Bharata suddenly felt a tremendous inner thirst for knowledge of spiritual matters. He reasoned: "If God exists, He must be known by at least a few men; and with my money and power I can find and bring here some man who knows about God to share his knowledge with me." The aggressive emperor called together his courtiers and commanded them to issue a proclamation throughout his kingdom: that any man who could give the emperor knowledge of God would be munificently rewarded with lands and jewels.

Months passed. When no one had volunteered to give the much-desired information, Bharata became annoyed. He summoned the priest of the royal family, who greeted him thus: "I am pleased to be with Your Majesty. I shall be gratified to know your royal wish."

In Oriental fashion, the emperor arose from his golden throne and touched the feet of the family priest. Then he said in a subdued but firm tone: "Honored priest, I am very curious to know about the cosmos and its Master. You, being the religious head of our kingdom, ought to be able to satisfy my desire for spiritual knowledge."

The priest--who was an expert only in the art of mechanically performing religious ceremonies--had little dreamed that he would ever have to answer such a question.

"Your Majesty, I know the scriptures, but not the God who is mentioned in them," he replied. "I am only a theologian, not a Self-realized master."

"Why, this is outrageous!" the emperor exclaimed. "The royal treasury

helped your forefathers in years past and has been providing for you also these many years, in recompense for your religious services to the state and to myself. I now demand that you bring me a knowledge of God within seven days!"

"But, Your Majesty!" The priest was interrupted by the emperor: "This is my royal command: Unless you can impart to me knowledge of God within seven days, it is my inexorable decree that your head be severed from your body. Now depart!"

Almost frozen with fear, the priest slowly backed away and left the royal mansion. He went home and related to his wife his unsettling experience. He passed four days in terrible anxiety, conscious every moment of his approaching death, for he knew he could not fulfill the emperor's strange demand.

On the sixth day Ramana, a son of the priest, arrived home and learned of his father's plight. According to the general consensus, Ramana was mentally unstable; in reality, however, he was a sage who hid his wisdom under the guise of an unbalanced exterior. Ramana gazed with compassion on his terrified parent and said consolingly: "Father, be not afraid. Go at once to the emperor and tell him that if he does all I ask of him, on the seventh day I will fulfill his high wish."

The royal priest at first did not know whether to laugh or cry at the words of his son, about whose sanity he had always shared the general mistrust. But so insistent was Ramana that his father at last consented to go to the king and deliver Ramana's message.

The memorable seventh day arrived. The emperor, bursting with curiosity to know God, and in compliance with Ramana's request, followed the young man and his father into a dark wood. With Ramana leading and the king next, followed by the priest, the three walked along a sylvan path until they came to a little secluded plot of greensward on which stood only a few trees, in contrast with denser sections of the forest. Here Ramana called a halt and asked the emperor and his father to seat themselves on a fallen tree. While they were resting, the emperor's attention was attracted to a little bundle that Ramana carried under his arm. He was distracted from his observation by Ramana's forceful command: "Your Majesty, you must do exactly as I tell you if you expect to achieve your heart's desire." The emperor nodded, signifying his willingness to obey. (To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

I am beholding through the eyes of all. I am working through all hands, and I am walking through all feet. Brown, white, olive, red, yellow, and black bodies --all are mine.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WASHING SORROW WITH MOONBEAMS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I will suckle the perfume
From the breast of the rose.
I will steal the milk of honeysuckles
Like Krishna of yore,
And in merriment
Roll over the velvet green
Or run after golden wings of gossamer.
I want no companions
But quietly wish to roam with my nursing breeze.

Where the sheoli flowers,
Dressed with pearly dew and showers,
Rest on the throne of green lawns,
For a while I will stand to pay my homage
To their scented majesties.
With the wings of the birds,
My spirit joyfully flies over unknown fancies everywhere.

Through the voice of birds
I will sing in silence.
I will spread with the vast blue,
And with the threads of sunbeams
I will sew my tattered joy.
With the moonbeams, I will wash my sorrow.
With the night, I will obliterate my dark experience.
With the dawn, I will create my new world of eternal joy.

PRAYER

Open my inner eye, O Fountain of Light, that I may behold Thee in the dance of myriad-hued atoms. Burst open the doors of space, that I may see Thee behind the mists of illusory matter. Thou dost hide behind the walls of Thy brilliant cosmic rays. Open the portals, that I may behold Thee everywhere.

WHAT INDIA CAN TEACH US--Part 2

We are all children of the One God, the Source of all contentment. The time has come for us to find Him, through realization of the Self. This is the teaching of India: that we must know the techniques of Self-realization before we can know God. And India has sent these Self-Realization Fellowship teachings to show you how to expand your consciousness to receive the infinite wisdom, the infinite love, the infinite joy of God.

Truth is marching on, and creeds and dogmas that are not founded on truth are bowing down. The hive of creed must be filled with the honey of realization. Self-Realization Fellowship teachings show you how to realize the truth that underlies all great religions, and to understand that truth is One. In the final analysis, real unity among mankind can come only when people of all faiths test their beliefs in the pot of Self-realization and keep only those that stand the test. The fires of meditation will burn away to dross dogmatic beliefs that are not based on truth, and will enable you to establish in your heart an everlasting temple of Self-realization.

A dumb man was eating honey. Someone asked him what the taste of honey is like. Although he could not speak, the dumb man made such motions that the inquirer understood that honey is very sweet. Similarly, when the mind enters the superconscious state and becomes united with the Infinite, it knows that it knows God, and that the experience is sweet; but there are no words to describe what that union is like. Just as a pain can be very real to you, and yet you cannot make others know what it is like, so with the perception of the Infinite: it is something one cannot explain to others. Communion with God must be experienced to be understood.

NOTHING BUT GOD EXISTS India teaches that the person who would know God must first learn to rise above the consciousness of the body and of matter. By practicing the great yogic methods developed by India's sages you can rise above limiting body consciousness. Then you can feel your identity with God. You can see that your real existence is Spirit, spreading out with the stars, twinkling through their luminosity. You can see yourself as the ocean of ether in which creation is floating. In oneness with the eternal Spirit you see yourself as the beginning and end of all. You will feel that

you are working through all hands and thinking through all minds; that your heart is throbbing through all hearts. You will feel your presence in everything, and perceive that stars are but ornaments on your vast body of the material universe.

Body and mind are but two aspects of Spirit. Whether whipped into waves by a storm or unruffled during a calm, the ocean is still the ocean. Spirit manifested as matter is still Spirit. Since Spirit exists in matter as well as beyond it, why deny matter? Everything we see has come out of the one Spirit. It is because of maya, or delusion, that we see matter as apart from God.

When you are tossed on the wave of sickness you forget the vastness of the oceanic Life beneath you. If you could but see the ocean and the wave together-- you would see God and yourself together, as One. When your little soul-wave melts into the ocean of God you will not lose your consciousness of identity as one of His individual creations. You cannot destroy the Self, and you cannot lose your consciousness in God. You always know that you are existing and that God is existing, and that you and He are One.

When you are tossing on the ocean of Spirit as a little body-wave, you do not see the Ocean; but do not forget that the Ocean is there. Forget the body! In meditation get away from the consciousness of yourself as a limited human body; feel your consciousness spread everywhere. Unite your heart with your family, with your nation, with all creatures; realize that they are your relatives. When you see God in meditation you will know that He exists in everything in creation, and that He exists without creation also. God alone exists; naught else exists.

MATTER IS A
REFLECTION
OF GOD

Space is swallowing matter in the course of evolution. One day solids will be changed into liquids, and liquids will be vaporized into electricity and electricity will melt into God.

Matter exists as a reflection of God; therefore do not deny its existence. It is better to say that everything is God, which is the truth. Just as waves could not exist without the ocean, creation could not exist without God. But God exists with or without creation.

Irrational denial of the existence of matter only creates doubt. In India we say that matter is not as it appears to us. This dissolves all argument; for scientific investigation supports the fact by showing that what appears to be solid matter is actually composed of invisible electricity.

To continue to feed and care for the body while at the same time denying the existence of matter is a blind contradiction of one's own belief. But Jesus could say, "Take no heed for the body," because he understood that the body and matter do not really exist except as a manifestation of Spirit. He had risen above them both by realizing himself as Spirit.

Suppose you are dreaming that you have broken a bone in your arm, and you are crying with pain. All I would have to do to show you that no bone is broken is to wake you up. So when you wake up in God, you will know that the body does

not exist. All sickness will vanish when you are in God. By communing deeply with Him, you can express His all-powerful consciousness in health, wealth, and happiness. That you must realize. First be One with the Creator; when you are awake in God you will see that all creation, including your body, is only His dream.

One who has attained the divine consciousness does not recognize the existence of matter or of medicine; he perceives everything to be Spirit. But without that consciousness one should not drink poison to try to prove that matter does not exist! Similarly, until one has attained some awareness of God as the prime healing factor, he should not deny medicine as an aid to healing. Acknowledge what good doctors are doing, but try always to exercise the power of mind; you will come to realize then that mind is a greater power than medicine. To live more and more by the power of mind should be your aim. However, until you have become spiritually advanced you cannot live entirely by mind. Give the body good food and then forget it. There are far greater things to study than food.

India teaches how to live more and more by the power of mind until you realize: "God is living in me." As you strive deeply to attune yourself with God in meditation, you will see one day, by His grace, that there is no body, no death; only change. But as long as you do not have that realization, do not deny the body or medicine. After all, you eat, and food is medicine that builds up the body. Get to that state wherein you can live more by mind, independent of physical aids. Then you can truly realize the truth that matter does not exist.

**THE GREATEST
WISDOM IS TO
KNOW GOD**

You are a soul, and you have been given intelligence with which to solve the soul's problem of freeing itself from the delusive bondage of the body and of matter. The divine memory of the soul must be awakened so that you may realize you are not the body; that there is no breath or blood but God's. He is the energy in your muscles, in the flowers, in grass; everything is God. You must realize that. But as you look upon creation, which appears so solid and real, remember always to think of it as the thought of God, frozen into physical forms. You can condition your mind to this realization in little ways each day. Whenever you see a beautiful sunset, think to yourself: "It is God's painting on the sky." As you look into the face of each person you meet, think within: "It is God who has become that form." Apply this trend of thought to all experiences: "The blood in my body is God; the reason in my mind is God; the love in my heart is God; everything that exists is God."

Greater than any other accomplishment is to know your Creator. Awake! Do not delay your search for Self-realization, and you will find, if you have the zeal, that through Kriya Yoga India has come to you offering diamonds of immortality. And as you awaken your desire to know God, you shall decorate yourself with immortal realizations, and shall declare your supreme desire to be for God. Find God first; then ask Him what you should do with your life. The desire for God should be foremost in your life, whatever your situation may be. You should

not have any other desire stronger than the desire for God. It does not matter how many mistakes you have made; He is pleased so long as you have no other desire before Him.

When you watch for Him through the window of your mind, He will keep looking at you without your knowing. He will follow you like a mysterious stranger; and whenever you look back, He will have vanished. You feel that He is present in the flower, and you eagerly seize it, but He disappears. He is hidden behind the portals of your mind. You seek Him in the mountains and in the sky and in people about you, and do not find Him. But when you sit and seek communion with Him in the silence of your soul, and when you follow those whom you feel have Self-realization, then you will behold Him on the altar of every created thing.

We are children of God, ready to meet Him and to worship Him on the altar of our hearts. Let us with united hearts and minds offer our devotion to God, who is just behind our love, and just behind the words with which we pray. Let us sing with our souls to our one God who rests on the united altar of our hearts.

Do not limit yourself by racial prejudice, nor put on a badge that proclaims: "I am a Hindu," or, "I am an American." Think of yourself only as a child of God. We are Hindus or Americans for only a little while, but when we leave the shores of this earth we shall know that we are all children of God, forever and forever.

I have come to give you the treasures of India, the happiness of India. If you could only feel this, you would throw away every other thing and say: "Oh, what joy! What great volumes of happiness, Lord! Where is the end? I was a slave, and You made me a king."

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The masters of India have taught that beneath this mortal body is the immortal soul that sustains all. When you realize the soul you can say in truth, "I am not breath, nor water, nor fire. I am not the body, neither bones nor flesh. I am not the mind nor the feelings. I am That which is behind stars, breath, mind, and feelings. I am the life of all; I am the laughter on happy faces, the smile on the flowers, and the joy in every soul; I am the wisdom of everything; I am the power that is in everything. I am That in which everything in the universe has its being." It is a joyous experience, a splendid light, and all the universe seems like a vast bed of joy and bliss. You are beyond everything; you see that Spirit alone in space with Its ever-new joy has expressed Itself as the vast body of Nature.

A KING'S SEARCH FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD--Part 2

Ramana ordered Emperor Bharata to stand with his back against the trunk of a large tree. Ramana then opened his mysterious bundle and drew out two pieces of rope. With one of them he securely tied the emperor to the tree trunk. Bharata meekly submitted to this surprising action. Several yards away was another large tree. Ramana asked his father to stand against it, facing Bharata. Ramana then securely fastened his father to the tree with the second piece of rope. The priest was dumbfounded; he fully expected that the imperial wrath would fall upon him and his son if the experiment failed to produce the desired results.

Ramana said: "Your Majesty, please address my father in the following words: 'Royal priest, you and your forefathers have been maintained by the state treasury for rendering religious services to the royal line. Now, according to my royal decree, I grant you seven days from the present moment to extricate yourself from your present plight and to release me from my own bondage.'"

The emperor mechanically repeated what he was told, looking meanwhile at the securely tied priest. There was a brief silence. Then Ramana's anguished father cried out: "Your Majesty, how can I release you from bondage when I myself am bound?"

Bharata glared indignantly at the helpless priest; then, turning his gaze toward Ramana, said: "It is ridiculous for me to ask your father to release me when he too is bound. Let me out of this absurd predicament!" Ominously he added, "I will slay you both when I am free."

Ramana gazed steadfastly at the puzzled and suspicious Bharata, who continued to thunder abusive threats. Waiting until the emperor paused for breath, Ramana finally said: "Your Majesty, wake up! Understand the meaning of this experiment. Behold, it is not my father who can release you from the bondage of ignorance; for he, like you, is bound to the tree of life with cords of delusion. It is I, who am spiritually free, who can unbind you both--not only from these tree trunks, but also from the tree of worldly life."

Bharata was overwhelmed with gratitude as he realized the importance of the lesson. As soon as he was released, he forgave the royal priest and sought to press upon Ramana a reward of land and money. But Ramana steadfastly refused the gift. Bharata then reverentially knelt down on the green earth before the saint and humbly spoke: "Master, I feel sure that I shall find God-realization through you, for you have indeed opened my eyes. Please accept me as your disciple. I will do everything you ask of me until I find God. Only a free soul like yourself could free me, also, from the bondage of delusion."

Every student of Self-Realization Fellowship should take to heart the moral of the foregoing story: only a deep and thorough study of truth, as found in the scriptures of East and West, under the guidance of an enlightened teacher, can lead the spiritually blind from darkness to light. And such study is valuable only when the teaching is practiced in daily life. Divisions, denominations, and variously interpreted and misinterpreted teachings have greatly confused truth-seekers and have prevented them from following the true path of meditation according to scientific spiritual techniques. They have been sidetracked instead into dogmatism, sectarianism, and extremes of credulity and skepticism in the course of their search. But the enlightening SRF Lessons' instructions show you the true path to the Infinite: scientific meditation.

Follow the teachings of a true guru and you will be free. If you remain loyal and attuned to Christ and the masters of India who are the gurus of the SRF path, you will find, through your spiritual receptivity, prayers, and spiritual efforts at meditation, that the cords of your ignorance ultimately will be untied, and you will be set free to roam at will in the kingdom of immortality.

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, it is Thy smile
which is in the dawn, on the lips of
roses, and on the smiling faces of
noble and good men.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities.

2. It then outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

3. The next section describes the results of the study, highlighting the key findings and their implications for practice.

4. Finally, the document concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

5. The overall goal of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research process and findings.

6. It is intended for use by researchers, practitioners, and students interested in the field of study.

7. The document is organized into several sections, each focusing on a different aspect of the research.

8. The first section provides an overview of the research and its objectives.

9. The second section describes the methods used to collect and analyze data.

10. The third section presents the results of the study and discusses their implications.

11. The fourth section concludes the document with a discussion of the limitations and future research.

12. The document is written in a clear and concise style, making it accessible to a wide range of readers.

13. It is hoped that this document will provide valuable insights and information to those who read it.

14. The author would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance and support:

15. [Name], [Title], [Organization]

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY DEVOTION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Thou Mother of all conscious things,
Be Thou consciously receptive to my prayers.
Through Thee I know all that I know;
And Thou knowest all I know,
So Thou knowest my prayers.
And knowing and feeling Thee constantly thus,
I know Thou art I, I am Thou.
My little wavelet has vanished in Thee.
I know Thou alone existed;
~~And Thou alone dost exist now and ever shall.~~
Thou art impersonal, invisible,
Unseen, formless, omnipresent,
But forever I want to worship Thee
As both personal and impersonal.
By my devotion, I behold Thee
Sometimes as Krishna,
Sometimes as Christ,
Personal, visible and imprisoned
In the little space
Hidden within the temple of my love.
O, Invisible, just as Thou didst freeze
Thine unseen Infinitude
Into the sea of cosmic finitude,
So do Thou appear unto me,
Visible and living,
That I may serve Thee.
I want to see Thee as the ocean of life
With and without the ripples
Of finite creation.
O, Creator of all things,
I want to worship Thee both as personal
And impersonal.

PRAYER

Infinite Spirit, Thine all-revealing great light hides behind the darkness of matter-revealing lights. Take this darkness away! When I sit with eyes closed, surrounded by my own darkness, cause to blaze upon me in splendor the aurora of intuition, that in its light I may watch Thee with worshiping eyes.

ADVANCED SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

OUR GOD-GIVEN REASONING POWERS God has given us independence, power, and the ability to reason. Of all God's creatures, only man can realize God, because he alone has been given the power to reason. Therefore a human incarnation is most precious. To spend one's time just playing with life, without seeking and finding God, is to waste the divine power within you. The great masters of India determined that reason--not chance--governs everything in the universe. And the reason within us tells us that we cannot properly conduct our lives without exercising its power. God gave us reason that we might use it to solve the mystery of His presence behind the veil of maya and, finding Him, find freedom from maya.

Self-Realization Fellowship is teaching you how to awaken and exercise the divine discriminative reason by which you will be able to distinguish between life-transforming spiritual truths and mere theological beliefs. Learn to develop good judgment. Millions of people do not sufficiently exercise this power. To discriminate does not mean to become biased; rather it means to perceive the truth and hence to be free of prejudice. It is not enough that truth be perceived; it is necessary to act upon it. When you have boiled down your facts by reason to form a right conclusion, harness that reason to will power and act according to your conclusion. Discrimination is of little value unless it is accompanied by activity along the line indicated. To be discriminative is to be awake and very much alive; you will be able to perceive the truth in any situation; no one will be able to deceive you.

Divine communion of the soul with God will enable you to realize your immortality and to express yourself in a divine way. Otherwise you become so entangled in mortal delusions of earthly life that you forget to use your will properly. The divine soul is really free like the lark in the sky.

How much do we know about this earth on which we live? A little tremor in it and our homes and loved ones may perish. If God were to destroy this little cell of the world in which we live, where would we be today? We are literally floating on the outside of a ball, which God is directing in its rotation through the heavens. How little we know about our world! And how dare we forget God, to whom we are indebted for our existence!

WE MUST HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE Be master of yourself. Then you can create at will whatever you need. If it be health, you shall have it; if it be money, you shall have it. Do not be lured by unnecessary "necessities," however. You must exercise your discrimination and not be influenced by anything but your own good habits and reason. No one should be able to tempt you to do anything that you don't want to do. You must not be a slave to anything. Have you that power?

Most of us act like the little worm in the cocoon, sleeping in delusion; but there are some worms that develop wings, cut through the cocoon, and fly. In a few years you will be gone from this earth. Why live in uncertainty? Cut through the cocoon of ignorance and become a divine butterfly before death overtakes you.

So many people scarcely know that they are living. They are part of the cog-wheel of the machine of activity, but they do not know the purpose of life. They eat, live, multiply, and are gone; such an existence is little better than an animal's. Most people think that to have good clothes, fine cars, plenty of money, and so on, is keeping up with the times. Far from it! Such people are living behind the times.

Do not sacrifice your soul on the altar of indifference to the Lord. Do your duty to God first, and through attunement with Him, do your duty to your family. Once a man said to me: "I have no time for God." "Wait a minute," I replied. "God is the busiest of all. Suppose He had no time for you? You would be dead." We come alone on earth and alone we will go from its shores. Find God first, then everything that you need in life will come to you, and you will not fear death.

Remember the parable of the master and the servants. The master said he was going away for a while. While he was gone the servants took a rest--all except one, who said: "The master might return at any moment; I will go on with my work." The master did return unexpectedly, and found all his servants idling their time away. So he kept the conscientious one and discharged the rest.

So it is with God. You should always be ready to serve Him. Do not idle your time away. Some people accomplish very little that is constructive. Theirs is a mechanical existence: eating, sleeping, and doing a little ordinary work. As human beings, divinely endowed with reason, will, and choice, you should do more than this. Use discrimination in your thoughts and actions every day. Accomplish something worthwhile. Do not waste your time. Find out what you are and why you are here.

To acquire all the wisdom in the world would be impossible in one lifetime if you had to get it from books, but there is another angle of approach. To have cosmic consciousness means to know all things. The soul within you is the divine link with the cosmic consciousness of God. You really contain all wisdom within yourself; but it is necessary to know how to be aware that you have it.

Instead of trifling away your time, your highest duty and privilege is to spend it in seeking to know God. Follow the path that leads you to His infinite presence. Life is meant to be lived in a worthwhile way. When you came into this world, you cried and everyone else smiled. You should so live your life that when you leave, everyone else will cry, but you will be smiling. Many live like the moth attracted to a flame. They are temporarily attracted to the fire of pleasures, only to burn their wings of happiness. But those who embrace the everlasting fires of wisdom will find dark ignorance burned forevermore.

IMITATE A The yogi strives to be one with others. To him this is not just
YOGI'S LIFE a mental concept or a matter of being courteous and helpful
 to others. He tries to forget his little self and to so merge his
identity in the selves of others that he feels his consciousness moving through all.
Unselfish sympathy is the bridge that connects each soul with other souls. Sym-
pathy is the door to all hearts. It must be impersonal and must not exclude one
in preference to another. One must first practice sympathy--purely, perfectly--
with a few persons, then extend it to all hearts.

To help in realizing the universality of consciousness and feeling, the devotee has to practice. He should mentally try to feel the tremor of the leaves on a tree, and flow of the wind around his body and in his lungs. He should try to feel the oxygenic vitality of God in his blood cells, and his consciousness moving with the breeze, entering the lungs of people, and sustaining life. He should mentally feel himself omnipresent with the whole atmosphere around the earth. He should feel the sun's rays as his muscles. He should feel the moonlight as his love, beautifying everyone and everything on which its beams fall. He should feel himself sailing in the clouds, waking in the buds, trembling in the blades of grass. He should feel himself as the cushion of earth, offering his services to others who may walk upon him. The yogi must ultimately feel himself in the temples of all souls, in the temples of all hearts, in the temples of all minds.

INTUITION As the ocean cannot be given to you in a cup, so the ocean of
AWAKENED BY wisdom cannot be poured into a small cup of intelligence. In
MEDITATION order to hold infinite truth, intelligence must be expanded or
 enlarged by meditation until it becomes a boundless cup of
intuition. Intuition is that power of Spirit inherited by the soul, by which the soul
can perceive all things directly without the medium of any other faculty. Man
ordinarily uses the powers of sight, hearing, and the other senses, and of the
mind, in order to know about any truth. The senses and mind do not always give
a true picture of things, however; and then reason builds a wrong conclusion from
their impressions. The soul--Spirit's reflection in man--does not require the
senses or the mind to perceive substance. It sees into things through the directly
perceiving power of intuition.

To study scriptures only from an intellectual standpoint keeps the truth locked up in the mind, unassimilated and undigested. One should study the scriptures with Self-realization, which produces the spiritualized brain and the intuitive heart by which you may directly absorb divine truths. The best way to study the

scriptures is to feel their truth as an actual intuitive experience in the body, in the mind, and in the soul.

Since scriptural truths can be perceived only through intuition, the intuition should be awakened by the power of meditation before study. A restless mind, or a highly intellectual mind, cannot absorb truth. Just as sugar cannot be tasted through intellectuality or mental imagination, so the sweetness of spiritual perceptions cannot be received through the intellect.

DEVOTION If you work all the time, you may become too mechanical and
PLUS WORK sacrifice God to your work; and if you rely too much on dis-
 criminating and reasoning, you may lose sight of God that
way; and if you have devotion for God without working for Him, your devotion may
dissipate into emotion. Meditation balances all of these factors.

Close your eyes to shut out immediate contact with the world and matter. Know that God is in everything. Then, forgetting all matter, feel God in meditation.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

~~The average mind is like a water-soaked matchstick. Scratch it and it won't light. A concentrated mind is like a good dry match. Strike it and it is immediately aflame with burning love of God, the flame of happiness.~~

FOLLOW THE PATH OF THE GREAT ONES!

Spirituality cannot be bought in a marketplace. When you are very desirous of God, He sends you a guru. You must have regard for the link of gurus and must follow the way they show if you want to reach God. Some don't follow the teachings yet they expect the result just the same. It won't work. Never go to bed without giving God your deepest attention. You won't die! But die for God if it be necessary.

Control the body until you are its master. Then when you sit to meditate you will not nod. Practice Kriya Yoga and you will make your body a fit temple to receive God. Your body has to be ready to receive the divine power. Your consciousness has to be right. Then God will automatically steal into you!

God may not respond to you for years. Only when He is convinced that you seek Him, not for temporal glamour and glory, but to be unconditionally His, forever, will He open the door. It is those who go all the way, not just halfway, for whom He opens the door. But only He can tell when He will open the door.

Don't demand that God appear before you just because you have meditated ten years, or whatever you consider a proper time. God has disappointed many saints who have meditated incarnations. But as soon as you make no demand, and just say, "God, I will wait for you, no matter how long it takes," He will come. The greatest thing is to have that resolute desire. Krishna said: "Out of a thousand, one seeks Me, and out of a thousand that seek Me, one knows Me." Those who last to the end of the path will be the first to find Him.

How shall you seek Him? Through Self-Realization Fellowship, the greatest dispensation sent to the world by Christ and Babaji. All credit belongs to the great Jesus Christ and to Babaji, who together sent this work to unite the original Christianity and the original Yoga. Christ felt the lack of real God-communion in the churches. They are all doing good, but they must show people how to seek God. That is why Christ and Babaji sent me here, and why Self-Realization Fellowship is the new dispensation that was promised in the scriptures. Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost after he had departed. Where is it? Holy Ghost means the sacred cosmic vibration that is the structure of all creation, the vibration you can hear by the SRF meditation technique. SRF is bringing that which has never before been given in the churches. When you practice that technique and hear and commune with that sacred vibration, you will be one with the Lord through the Christ Consciousness.

You are with the greatest religion in the world. If you follow it and the masters, you won't want anything else; for Self-Realization Fellowship will take you to your highest goal--our own Beloved--God!

I want to remain steadily in the spirit of God, that I can give you something, that I can saturate you, bathe you, and change you forever, forever, and forever in this infinite ocean of Light that I behold. Jesus, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, I bow to you all again and again. It is your message from Him that has permeated me, and he who shall receive that message from me with open heart shall never go away unfulfilled. His or her heart shall be a wonderful cup that will gradually expand into an eternal vessel to receive the ocean of Infinity and the power of Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

Heavenly Father, discouraging darkness, barbed fences of habit, stone embankments of indolence, mountains of indifference, oceans of unfaithfulness, sirens of sense, may stand in my path to prevent my march to Thy palace, but even the promise of a million kingdoms and sextillions of years of untrammelled worldly happiness would not tempt me to forsake my search for Thee.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE GIFT OF THYSELF

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Spirit, Thou art more vitally enjoyable than the combined vitality of all youth, for Thou art the fountain of perpetual youth.

To acquire Thee is greater than to become a millionaire, for Thou art security throughout eternity, whereas the security of material riches is only temporary and of uncertain value.

Thy cosmic bank of all-providing power never fails. Material riches are given to be used during this life only; they are useless after death because they are too heavy to be carried on the astral body-car.

Hunger of the body is strong and clamoring. Hunger of the soul is meek and hidden. That is why people prefer to chase the rainbow of elusive material riches rather than pursue the true prosperity, which consists in the peace of communion with God.

I will seek Thee from now on until I find Thee. Finding Thee, I shall love to receive whatever wholesome gifts it is Thy desire to offer me, though I ask nothing and prefer to be completely satisfied throughout eternity with the gift of Thyself.

PRAYER

O Cosmic Vibration, reverberate through me as the cosmic, intelligent sound, and lead me to intuit the Christ Consciousness in Thee. O omnipresent Holy Vibration--cosmic sound of Aum or Amen--expand my consciousness from the body to the universe, and teach me to experience in Thee the all-permeating perennial Bliss.

METAPHYSICAL WAYS OF OVERCOMING DEATH--Part 1

IS DEATH DESIRABLE? Just as a very ripe orange separates easily and naturally from its stem on the tree and falls to the ground, so also a person of ripe old age dies without difficulty. If a green orange is torn from its branch by a storm, then that unripened orange is prevented from carrying out its purpose of existence: to become mature and ready to serve a human being with health and the joy of tasting its sweetness. If a human being is torn away from life by the storm of sickness, that too is unnatural and undesirable. An untimely death by illness is painful and obstructive. It prevents the fulfillment of that individual's past karma and cuts short his present-life opportunity to carry out the wish of God for which he is on earth: to seek and find his Creator.

Until the soul has completely worked out the effects of egoistic prenatal and postnatal actions, and has found liberation, one should not deliberately seek exit from the bodily house; he would still have to come back to finish the karma he left undone. But if death comes suddenly in spite of one's desire to stay on earth, one should not then resist or be unwilling to depart. Young people rebel when they suddenly have to make an exit owing to sickness or accident. They are full of hope and enthusiasm to work out a program of life according to their inner urge; they are not ready or willing to face an untimely death. The aged person usually has worked out his physical, mental, and spiritual impulses and is ready to leave the body when the time comes. Aged people who have lived properly find that the mind and life force slip out of the bodily case without much suffering or difficulty.

IS DEATH FORCED UPON US? Man takes up life upon earth for two reasons:
 1. Because of the will of God, and
 2. because of the necessity of consummating the effects of his past actions in other lives.

All unfulfilled desires create rebirths. The only way to liberation is to find the all-desire-quenching divine Bliss in ecstatic meditation. Then God is attained; the purpose of earthly living is completed. Then, and then only, can those who are united with Him stay on earth as long as they want to--for a little while or for a long time. All souls are sent on earth to find truth; that is, to know God and His purpose in creation. When that is attained, they are liberated. Souls who come on earth and misuse their God-given free will

become caught and have to roam in labyrinthine pathways of rebirths, experiencing all kinds of painful deaths and mysterious reincarnations. But if souls seek the guidance of saints and meditate and lead the right kind of life according to the will of God, they become liberated. The liberated apparently die like any other person; but they do not suffer the mental agony of death. To them the experience is only a transition of the soul from a limited body to a limitless kingdom of omnipresent Spirit.

The undesirability of an untimely death becomes quite obvious when we consider that if a soul-prisoner is forced by some disease to leave the bodily jail he will be obliged to work out his term of flesh confinement in another life. The soul's home is omnipresent, blissful space--there it dwells with its Father, Spirit. The prodigal soul is jailed in flesh, and must work out its term. As some prisoners who live long in the confinement of jail grow accustomed to it and even begin to like it, so some souls, long caged in the bodily prison, grow attached to the body and feel exceedingly great pangs of fear and sorrow when the time to leave it arrives. The pain in death is due more to the psychological factor of egoistic attachment to the body than to physiological suffering.

The liberated man does not have to experience death attended by unconsciousness, oblivion, pain, and fear. He joyously, consciously, fearlessly, and painlessly leaves the body. To be released from a prison one must first have entered the prison. When the soul enters and becomes identified with the body, it forgets about the unlimited kingdom of Spirit which it forsook in order to incarnate on earth; and it is because of that forgetting that it finds the exit from the body at the time of death painful and unpleasant.

To liberate the soul it is necessary to avoid dying in ignorance. But to free itself from the experience of death, the soul must first avoid entering a body-prison; and the way to avoid that is to cease creating and pursuing material desires which cannot be satisfied anywhere except on the material plane, and which therefore make it necessary for the soul to reincarnate.

METAPHYSICAL WAY OF OVERCOMING DEATH

The metaphysical way of overcoming death is to live "in the world, but not of the world"; to act upon the world stage, but remain unaffected by the role one has to play. Therefore, desirelessness should be practiced. Desirelessness means, not supine inactivity or spinelessness, but performing only good actions to please God instead of acting mainly to satisfy some desire of the self. Performing all actions for humanity in order to please God is the way to overcome rebirths, and consequently the pain, fear, and attachment involved in death. He who is born must die; and he who lives ignorantly must die and be born again. He who is born in ignorance and escapes the prison of flesh while still in ignorance must experience life and death again and again. When one performs all actions for God, he thereby obviates the rebirth-making effects of his actions and so becomes free.

The second way of liberating the soul from its bondage to the body is to practice the step-by-step techniques of Yoga, as you are being taught in these Self-Realization Fellowship teachings. An advanced yogi may consciously and at will switch off or on the life force in the bulb of flesh. And just as the light in an electric bulb can be switched through various stages of brightness, so also the mind and life force can be controlled and directed by the switch of will.

By practice of the following stages of mind and life control, together with Kriya and the other Self-Realization yoga techniques given in these Lessons, the advanced yogi may gain control over death.

1. Sit straight on a chair, or lie down upon a mat on the floor, with the face up.
2. Tense the entire body.
3. Relax, withdrawing all life force and mind from the muscles.
4. Close the eyes; shut off by the command of will the senses of hearing, smell, taste, sight, and touch.
5. Exhale the breath; let the lungs remain motionless.
6. Quiet the heartbeat.
7. Mentally transfer the life force and mind from the heart to the base of the spine; draw them upward, through the coiled, circular passage through the coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, dorsal, and cervical plexuses to the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows; and thence through the brain and out the door of the medulla oblongata into the freedom of space. Feel that you and your body have become one with all space, and watch the little physical body, untenanted for the moment by you, your life force, or your mind.
8. Now center your mind and life force on the physical body once more, passing them through the medulla and brain into the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows; then through the medulla and down into the cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal regions, and finally back to the heart. Set the heart at work again.
9. Take the life force and energy into the lungs.
10. Inhale, resuming the breathing activity of the lungs.
11. Tense the body and open the eyes.

(Lesson to be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Do not beg at the door of matter; do not beg from the limited source of mortal consciousness or the subconscious mind. Go deeper within and you will find Him in all His glory, and once you are in touch with that Power, all the divine forces of nature will wait on you. Become one with the Father. Do not be a prodigal child any longer; go back to God; feel your unity with the Spirit, and feel behind your flesh the throb of His power, behind your blood the throb of His life, behind your brain His all-knowing wisdom, behind your feelings His all-embracing love.

THE WAVELET OF LIFE

Someday, when I remove the mystery cork from this bottle of flesh, I shall slip this long-imprisoned, wistful sigh of life back into the ocean of breath. Then, O Mystery, I shall tear aside Thy deluding veil which has hidden from me the liberating knowledge that the all-solacing bliss-sea lies just beneath my life's wave. Long has this little wavelet been tossed and buffeted by the storms of rebirth, moving from shore to shore, hiding in the phosphorescent bosom of pearls, or throbbing beneath waving fronds of algae, or dancing with amoebas and sea urchins, or gliding among silver-finned fish, or dashing past star bubbles in the sky ocean, or dancing on the shores of planetary life. Many times this wavelet tarried for a time in the heart of the Great Life. And yet after a short slumber this wavelet, mischievous and spritely, became truant again, and leaped out onto the rocks of shattering sorrow.

"Come back, My prodigal wavelet," called a Voice. "Return and sleep in My cradle of eternal calm." But I replied: "I cannot rest for so long; and I do not want to fall asleep, never to awaken again. I am Life. I must live and not sleep only. I must dance, I must throb and move over the ocean of everywhere." Then I heard the roaring wisdom-call again, bounding over infinity:

"Dear wavelet, you can never be happy without Me, for the big waves will dash and sweep over you. You need not sleep all the time, but may whirl with Me anon in the dance of omniscience on the sea of omnipresence, embraced in Mine arms of starry rays, or holding my petaled hands of flowers, or clasping Me in the bosom of human friends. Come, together we will dance over the windy waves and trip along the billows of incarnations.

"My wavelet, learn to dance, but only with Me. Feeling the joy of My one vastness in your bosom, dance with Me as you dream the dream of this charming, decorative, magic hall of creation. O wavelet, imprison yourself not in a little tract of life, in fleshly selfishness, but dance with Me the cosmic dance over Mine infinite bliss-sea."

In the ultimate experience of merging with the ocean of Spirit, our little soul waves do not lose their individuality. In God, we expand, and perceive that it is He who has become the individual soul. The tiny soul wave, tossed by the storm of dark ignorance, finds itself isolated from the ocean of Spirit; but when the sunshine of highest wisdom comes, the little soul wave finds that it is and has always been a part of the vast ocean of Spirit.

VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

Look at a light and close your eyes. Forget the darkness around you and watch the bright red color within your eyelids. Look intently into that violet-red color. Meditate on it and imagine that it is becoming bigger and bigger. Behold around you a dimly shining sea of violet light. You are a wave of light, a ripple of peace floating on the surface of the sea.

Now watch carefully. You, the little wave, are tossing on an ocean of light. Your tiny life is a part of the all-pervading Life. As your meditation deepens, you, a little shallow wave of peace, are becoming the deep, wide ocean of peace.

Meditate on the thought: "I am a wave of peace." Feel the vastness just beneath your consciousness. The wave should feel the sustaining life of the vast ocean beneath it.

AFFIRMATION

I am no longer a mortal man; I am a child of God.
No more limitations! I do not live by the power of man;
the power of God sustains me. I am immortal, for I
am a child of God.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Good-by, blue house of heaven. Farewell, stars and celestial celebrities and your dramas on the screen of space. Good-by, flowers with your traps of beauty and fragrance. You can hold me no longer. I am flying Home.

Adieu to the warm embrace of sunshine. Farewell, cool, soothing, comforting breeze. Good-by, entertaining music of man.

I stayed long reveling with all of you, dancing with my variously costumed thoughts, drinking the wine of my feelings and my mundane will. I have now forsaken the intoxications of delusion.

Good-by, muscles, bones, and bodily motions. Farewell, breath. I cast thee away from my breast. Adieu heartthrobs, emotions, thoughts, and memories. I am flying Home in a plane of silence. I go to feel my heartthrob in Him.

I soar in the plane of consciousness above, beneath, on the left, on the right, within, and without, everywhere, to find that in every nook of my space-home I have always been in the sacred Presence of my Father.

PRAYER

The orphans and the stricken have heard of Thy healing power. They have come to Thy door. Wilt Thou turn them away empty-handed? Those whose hearts are breaking with sadness and despair: may Thine invisible hand dry their scalding teardrops. Those who are lost in delusion: to whom shall they turn but to Thee? Lift Thine unseen veil of silence and appear in all Thy divine compassion. With the advent of the dawn of Thy presence, their dark troubles will take wing.

METAPHYSICAL WAYS OF OVERCOMING DEATH--Part 2

DECAY IS SIGN OF DEATH The birth and death of cells goes on all the time in the human body. It is only when life retires from the spine, brain, and particularly from the medulla oblongata, that death occurs and decay commences. When decay starts in the outer body, it also begins inside the body and death becomes a fact. Neither the cessation of breath and pulse, nor inertness of muscles, limbs, and cells is a certain sign of death. Before the science of embalming was widely known, people whose heart and breath apparently had ceased were sometimes cremated or buried while life was still present in the spine. In such cases, life could have been brought forth again from the spine.

MAN'S LIFE FORCE IS CENTRALIZED IN BRAIN AND SPINE The "tree of life" is the spinal cord in man's body; the roots of this tree are the hairs of the head, its branches are the afferent and efferent nerves connecting all parts of the body with the life in the spine. The life in this tree is centralized in the medulla oblongata at the top of the spine. If anything happens to the medulla, death of the physical body ensues. In some plants life is not thus centralized; one may cut off part of a root or a stem and from that grow a new plant. But a severed limb of the complex human body-plant is incapable of producing a new body; it is dependent for life upon the central source in the medulla oblongata.

THE VARIOUS STATES OF PHYSICAL DEATH In the human body death occurs by stages in the following way:

1. Muscular paralysis or inertness due to the retirement of life force from the muscles, and paralysis of motor (movement-making) nerves.
2. Muscular and sensory relaxation due to deterioration of tactual sensory nerves carrying sensations of touch to the brain.
3. Paralysis of the olfactory and gustatory nerves; the dying man ceases to be able to smell or taste anything.

4. Functional failure of the optic nerves; the dying man can no longer see.
5. The shutting-off of the auditory nerves; the dying man becomes deaf.

When the tactual nerves of a dying person cease functioning, preventing the consciousness of touch sensation, he can no longer feel his body, the bed on which it is resting, or even the atmosphere. Almost everyone has had the experience of having a leg or an arm "go to sleep." The whole body of a dying person undergoes this experience. A person whose leg has "gone to sleep" is aware of and sees that limb, but is unable to move it. So also the dying man is aware of his body and sees it (until the optic nerves and muscles are paralyzed); but he is powerless to act with it. His condition is very much the same as that of a completely paralyzed invalid; conscious but unable to move at will.

Even when paralysis has extended to the heart, lungs, and liver, as well as the limbs, death is not complete. The life force first retires from the muscles, then from the heart and senses; and remains locked up in any of the seven spinal plexuses--coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, dorsal, cervical, cerebral, and medullary. Painless consciousness, like a deep sleep state, may be retained for a time in the spine.

~~A man whose arm is paralyzed does not feel anything even if the arm is severely burned. So also a dying man experiences no pain from the gradual paralysis of his feet, arms, abdomen, liver, stomach, chest, and head. Only the paralysis of the lungs causes pain, through the sense of suffocation. This is, in fact, a mental pain.~~

THE SOUL'S EXISTENCE
IS NOT CONDITIONED
BY BREATH

Most of the time a man is not conscious of his breath, even though he breathes constantly. So it is with the spiritually wise man during death: when paralysis of the lungs ensues, he does not feel suffocation because he knows that the soul's existence is not conditioned by breath. The spiritually ignorant man thinks that his soul, or life, is dependent on breath, so he feels the pain of suffocation, just as in nightmares one may experience the stifling sensation of asphyxiation, while in peaceful sleep there is no consciousness of the indispensability of breath.

PAIN OF DEATH

Pain is not felt during sleep; and when the final sleep of death occurs there is no pain. Death is the cessation of all bodily suffering; it is a parole from the prison house of flesh. Death automatically dismisses all bodily pain, just as sleep banishes the weariness and aches of the hard-worked body.

A paralyzed man may inwardly grieve because he cannot move his limbs or stir up life in his helpless body. A dying man may be similarly aware of

the body without being able to exercise any power over it; he begins to experience mental agony, which is gradually offset by his dwindling sense awareness.

**MENTAL PAIN IS
SELF-CREATED,
SELF-INFLICTED
SENSITIVENESS** Death is transition of the soul from a physical body to an astral body. In death the soul merely lays aside its fleshly garment.

Death is feared mostly because people all through the ages have come to regard it as a dreadful finality. "Men fear death as children fear to go into the dark." As the fear of ghosts is increased by hearing or reading about others' alleged experiences with them, so also is the fear of death awakened and increased by stories about the agonies supposedly suffered by the dying.

Death is but the switching off of life force from the coil of flesh.

Death is a transfer from a physical auto into an astral airplane for travel in the luminous astral world.

Death is the jumping of the grasshopper of life from the grassblade of one existence to that of another.

Death is a short circuit ordered by prenatal and postnatal karmas to put out the bulb of the senses of sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing; and the muscles, heart, spine, brain, and medulla oblongata.

Death is a counterfeit sleep.

Death is the greatest happiness and freedom from all tortures of flesh. Those who are shattered by bombs in war do not know what the pain of death means.

Death is a consummation in which life wants to take rest.

**METAPHYSICS
OF DEATH** In a dream one can see a baby born, cry, grow, feel emotion, become sick, groan with pain, become paralyzed, and die. Similarly man's birth, growth, trials, and death are nothing but dreams of God, added to which are our own nightmares, which we create out of ignorance of our soul nature.

**DEATH AS A
METAPHYSICAL
EXPERIENCE** To men of ordinary mortal consciousness, death is a mental and physiological experience merely; but to men who have realized their immortal consciousness through Self-realization, death is a beautiful metaphysical experience.

The physical body is made of electrons; at death the flesh, liquid, gas, and energy in the decaying body dissolve into dust, gas, and light. All energy

and everything in creation is consciousness or the thought of God. Hence birth, breath, heartbeat, circulation, digestion, even death--are all mental acts suggested by God in the consciousness of man.

As in a dream, man's consciousness may be controlled and made to duplicate any earthly experience, so man's waking consciousness, being a manifestation of and hence controlled by God, may be made to experience the dualities and seeming paradoxes of human life.

As a dreamer, upon awakening, realizes that all his experiences in the dream-life--cold, heat, night, day, pain, pleasure, good, and bad--were merely different idea-vibrations of the dreaming mind, the wise man who has awakened from his sleep of ignorance into God awareness perceives all ether, fire, gas, electricity, life force, mind, intelligence, intuition, and events, as different vibrations and acts of the consciousness of God.

To know God is to be free from the cosmic dream-delusion of life. All the various stages of death described above--muscular paralysis; motor- and sensory-nerve paralysis; paralysis of the heart, lungs, and other bodily organs, and of the spine, brain, and medulla oblongata; and the subsequent setting in of physical decay and various delusive mental vibrations--are banished from the consciousness of the yogi; in life or death, he remains in the joyous wakefulness of ecstasy in God.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Material entanglements, sweet and mysterious, keep us dreaming so that we forget to wake up before the dream of life vanishes into the Infinite. When you have ample time, steadiness, good health, and determination, then wavering suspicions and doubts are walls in the way. They have to be dynamited by faith. Reestablish your dreaming mortal consciousness in immortal wakefulness in God. Do it before the lotus leaf of your life withers and lets the dew-drop of consciousness slip unaware into the ocean of Infinity.

WHAT IS THIS LIFE?

I lay on a bed of blossoms and dreamed that all was beauty. My head was cushioned on the lap of tall, thick, green grass, which fanned me with a fragrant breeze. I touched the flesh of my body with my hands and wondered who made it. Why, when I was so sure of myself in it, did it have to be thrown into the fire of cremation in the end? Ah, the flesh which is so cold and pale and mute at death, yet so alive with a hundred sensations--a garden of a million thoughts and a sextillion of fancies--in life!

The body is a stage where the mystery drama of life is played; where smiles welcome us at birth and the tragedy of death is unfailingly enacted. And here, hidden behind the mask of a beautiful skin, in the ugliness of flesh, bones, blood, and entrails, is the hound of disease and hell. Here too, beneath the mountain of flesh, lies somewhere secreted the temple of heaven.

Certain it is that my body must melt when the master, Soul, leaves this homestead forevermore. And why not, if the luminous Soul, tired of living in a house of slimy matter, bound with strings of nerves which need constant care, prefers to build a home somewhere in the land of immortality--a home in Omnipresence, where the musk of ever-new joy blows anon? Soul, the immortal, plays the drama of life and death with an immortal smile and then departs for his immortal Home.

Why should the audience stay forever in the picture house when the show is over? The people must go home. Souls come on earth to enjoy this movie dream-life, then depart. They come again; they love to watch the play, and when they become tired of all the shows that in all their fancies they dreamed about, they go back to rest forever in the Home of eternal immortality.

AFFIRMATION

Thou and I are one. I am
Thou, Thou art I. I am Thy
child. I am free. Away, away,
away, darkness, disease, igno-
rance; away, away, away!

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE HONEYCOMB OF MY HEART

By Paramahansa Yogananda

In the summer days of life I gather nectar
from blossoms of sweet qualities that grow in
the garden of human souls.

~~I store the essence of tall flowers of for-~~
giveness, of faint-scented buds of humility,
and of rare blooms of lotus thoughts.

When snowflakes of wintry experiences and
earthly separations swirl around me, I seek
warmth and joy in the honeycomb of my heart.
There I have often discovered Thee, O Bee
Divine, sipping the hoarded sweetness of my
devotion. In the hive hallowed by Thee I find
my nook of solace.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

I may lose my way and roam in darkness, but O Divine Mother! see that the tiny taper of my remembrance of Thee be never extinguished by gusts of disbelief.

I sought all earthly things, finally to discover that I crave only Thee. Come, be with me always!

DEVELOPING THE SIXTH SENSE--INTUITION

GOD IS KNOWABLE
THROUGH INTUITIVE
PERCEPTION

God is the most familiar word we have, yet very few people, realize its import. Even though the scriptures say that God is beyond the comprehension of the mind and senses, He is knowable--through the intuitive perception in man. In the world men are taught from childhood to develop the powers of the senses; few learn of the sixth sense--intuition--and how to develop it.

Sage Patanjali said that the ultimate proof of substance--the Noumenon--consists in Pratyaksha (direct sensory perception), Anuman (inference), and Agama (intuition), "that which comes of itself."

Agama is sometimes assigned the limited meaning, "authority of the scriptures." But this is untenable, for both reformers and real prophets have claimed that they perceived truths and received their bibles from God Himself. An intelligent bandit might write a good book and through the power of his intellectuality convince readers that he has received it from God. How can one find out whether the Bhagavad-Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, the Buddhist scriptures, or any other intellectually precipitated bible, is of divine origin?

No one scripture can be taken as the perfect authority, for all scriptural data has to be conceived through the limited power of the senses. The real truth and divine origin of a scripture may be proved only by divine perception.

All scriptural revelations should therefore be tested with the intuitive perception developed by meditation. All scriptural truths recorded through the intuitive perception of real saints can be proved true by any person of realization in any age.

INTUITION TRANSCENDS THE
LIMITATIONS OF REASON

Kant in his "Critique of Pure Reason" shows the limitation of reason, which ultimately depends upon delusive sense perceptions; hence the power of inference can not bring out much more of truth than already has been supplied by the senses. If the sense perception is wrong, the inference

depending upon it is erroneous. Hence intuitive perception is required to find the ultimate proof of truths.

INTUITIVE PERCEPTION COMES THROUGH CONTACT WITH AUM Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, Krishna, Jesus, Buddha--all true sons of God realized the presence of God through their intuitive perception and declared Him and His manifestation on earth. Thus all who meditate and interiorize their minds will likewise intuit the presence of God. "The way to the Ultimate can be traversed by pursuing the line of intuitive perception as followed and practiced by men of realization." Sage Patanjali said that God can be realized through meditation with the intuitive perception (and not by the restless mind). He speaks of God as "Aum," that is, Cosmic Intelligent Vibration.

The Bible speaks of God as the Word (John 1:1) and as the Holy Ghost (holy, ghostlike vibration, which is the creator of all things) and as the Amen, "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). The cosmic sound of the Amen accompanies all creation, as sound accompanies a running motor. The Bible also says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). That is, in the beginning of the creation of solids, liquids, gases, energy, and mental manifestations was the Word, or the Cosmic Vibration. The Word, or Cosmic Vibration, came from an intelligent God, and the Word is God; that is, God is Intelligent Cosmic Vibration.

Science testifies to the truth of the above saying with its discovery that solids, liquids, gases, energy, matter, and mind are all manifestations of different rates of vibrating energy. Without the intelligence imbedded in the womb of vibration there might be only solids, or everything might be liquid, or there might appear gross inequalities in nature, such as human beings, but no food. The harmonious relation between man and his ordered cosmic environment--sunshine and showers--shows that the universe, all matter, is governed according to an intelligent scheme. Science and religion can both agree to the presence of God as the Intelligent Cosmic Vibration that creates all things perceptible by the senses. The storm of Cosmic Vibration has chopped the ocean of Infinity into waves of finite creations.

The Word, or the Cosmic Name as it is sometimes called in the Hindu scriptures, is the vibratory physical manifestation of the transcendental God. God the Father is the Sat (transcendental Absolute existing beyond all creation). And the Tat is the intelligence of the transcendental God actively reflected in all vibratory creation. This Tat is spoken of as the Christ Intelligence. The "only-begotten Son" of the Christian scriptures is this Christ Consciousness (Kutastha Chaitanya)--the only reflection of the Father's intelligence manifesting in Creation. The Hindu Aum is the Cosmic Name. Aum, the Christian Amen, the Mohammedan Amin, and the scientist's cosmic intelligent vibration, all represent the physical manifestation of Satchidananda (the ever-present, ever-conscious, ever-blissful God).

Sage Patanjali speaks of the definite manifestation of God as the Pranava, or Aum. Pranava has been described in the Upanishads as Nirabacchinna (continuous), Taila dharamiba (like the smooth-flowing oil), Deerghaghanta (long peal of gong), Hinadabat (sound), Abachyam (unutterable), Pranava (ever-new, ever-inspiring); Bangam jas-tam-bada (he who knows that) Sa Badabit (knows Veda or all Truth to be known).

The Aum sound is the lullaby of cosmic Christna (God manifesting as Christ Consciousness) continuously oozing out of the pores of space like smoothly flowing oil; it is like the peal of a cosmic gong, reverberating, energizing all creation. The Divine Bard produces His cosmic symphony on the harpstrings of atomic creation.

He who has heard and become one with the cosmic song of creation knows the practical way of contacting God. This song, emanating from countless flutes of electrons, is unutterable by the human voice. Many people think that Patanjali's counsel to: "Think of that sound and chant it" means to chant "Aum" with the human voice. But the Aum sound, having a very high rate of vibration, cannot be uttered by the human voice. Of course, one may try to imitate Aum by chanting, and the scriptures speak of loud chanting, whisper chanting, mental chanting, and superconscious chanting of Aum. Loud, whisper, and mental chanting are performed by imitating the real Cosmic Sound with the voice, aloud or mentally, and have very little real meaning. But when by Pratyahara (interiorizing the attention) and Pranayama (life-force control, switching off the five sense telephones) one disconnects his mind from the senses and contacts God as Aum, then he perceives the inner world; his first discovery of God is through the Cosmic Sound.

But chanting the Cosmic Name with the mind on bodily perceptions, is of little use. Jesus asked devotees not to take the name of God in vain. No one may gain divine perceptions by parroting the name of God--Aum--while the mind is on something else. When the devotee repeatedly puts his flagging and runaway attention upon the real, intuitionally heard cosmic sound of Aum emanating from the Cosmic Motor, that is called superconscious chanting and meditating upon Aum's cosmic significance--which Patanjali asked his followers to do.

That devotee who by eightfold Yoga finds God as Aum really contacts God and solves the riddle of his Self and of the Cosmos. A name consists of a sound, a significance, a thought, and the energy required to utter it. All this is involved in uttering the word "Rama" for instance. The Cosmic Name signifies cosmic sound, cosmic intelligence, cosmic energy.

Further, it should be realized that this cosmic sound emanates from all atoms, for where there is activity there is sound. The cosmic motor is working and Aum is the resulting sound. The human ear can perceive a certain range of vibrations only, and the human voice can utter sounds of a certain range only. The Aum sound, being the emanation of countless high and low vibrations, is inaudible to physical ears and unutterable by the human voice.

But the unspeakable Cosmic Sound can be heard by closing the ears and concentrating, first upon the inner sounds of the physical body, then by deeper attention on the inner astral sounds emanating from the activity of the astral or energy body hidden within the physical body. When by deep concentration one draws the consciousness away from outer physical noises and from the inner physical sounds of blood and heart, and then raises it above the astral sounds of the bumble bee, flute, and harp in the spine, one can go beyond the limitations of the physical and astral bodies and listen to the cosmic symphony of Aum.

Advanced yogis, by concentrating upon this Aum, find that in His aspect of the Cosmic Sound God also manifests as cosmic ever-new Bliss, cosmic Wisdom, cosmic Love, cosmic Light, and cosmic Life Force. These are definite qualities of God.

Jesus' disciples, on the day of Pentecost were filled with the Holy Ghost, or Cosmic Sound, and could talk in many languages. They were drunk with the new wine of divine joy. Anyone who is in tune with this Cosmic Sound through deep meditation knows that it is a great and comforting sound, the greatest permanent salve for all human sorrows. This Cosmic Sound, being the fountain of all sounds, is therefore the fountain of all languages and inspirations. Jesus, Patanjali, and all great masters who know God, speak of the Holy Ghost or Aum or God and His Name.

Only those can know God who, through meditation and samadhi (ecstatic communion) superconsciously utter His Cosmic Name with the lips of intuition. He who knows God as the Cosmic Sound finds himself free from all the limitations of human miseries and death in this world. A true knowledge of God and His Name, as described above, is the only way to ultimate freedom.

"LOTUS FOOT" AND HIS MASTER As told by Paramahansa Yogananda

Swami Shankara, who reorganized the ancient monastic Swami Order, lived and taught in the latter part of the eighth century. He was the greatest commentator on Vedanta philosophy, and a practical yogi. He expounded God as positive, eternal, ever conscious, omnipresent, ever new Bliss.

Swami Shankara performed many Christlike miracles. The following story is told about him and Padmapada, "Lotus Foot," one of his highly advanced disciples.

One day while meditating with a group of disciples Shankara broke the silence, saying: "Only Spirit exists." One of the group, wishing to test him, said, "Master, doesn't your body exist?" "No," Shankara replied.

"Well then," the disciple persisted, "what is it that I am seeing?"

"You are just dreaming; it is a delusion," his guru answered.

Now the devotee made a sly request. "Master," he said, "if your body is not real to you, and is of no use to you, let me use it."

"What do you want to do with it?" his guru inquired.

"Let me sacrifice it," said the disciple. "I want to make a human sacrifice."

"All right," said Shankara calmly. The great teacher was ready to surrender to his sceptical follower just to prove his philosophy! So, according to the custom, Shankara bathed and was fastened to a block for execution.

Now Shankara's devoted disciple Padmapada, who loved him dearly, happened to be meditating far from the scene where this drama with his guru was being enacted. Padmapada saw in a vision his Master Shankara about to be killed, and heard the sceptical disciple asking his Master: "How does your philosophy feel now?" as he raised his hand to kill Shankara.

Padmapada had great powers. In an instant he was at his Master's side, and with a glance electrocuted the would-be killer.

"Master! Master!" Padmapada cried in relief. But Swami Shankara demanded to know what the excitement was all about.

"He was going to kill you!" Padmapada explained, as he released his Guru.

"I am so disappointed in you," Shankara said sadly. "Don't you realize that man couldn't kill me? Why did you kill him?"

"Well," Padmapada replied, "if his killing you was a dream, then my killing him is a dream also!" And they both laughed and walked away.

AFFIRMATION

O Divine Refuge! With every powerful stroke of my prayer I am moving nearer to Thee. I shall never give up, for I know Thou dost eagerly look for my coming.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MY BASKET OF GOODWILL

By Paramahansa Yogananda

As my love's dawn burst forth from the folds of nocturnal indifference, I strolled out with the basket of my goodwill to gather the falling blossoms of sorrow and joy around the trees of other lives.

I gathered the withered and the feebly palpitating blossoms and sprinkled over them the dews of my sympathy. Thirstily they drank of my joy and revived. The drooping ones came to life. The fresh ones wore a new smile.

Then I poured the bluebells of sadness and the red roses of joy on Thine altar of smiles within me, and there all the blossoms breathed Thine immortal life, and remained as unfading flowers to decorate my temple.

In my basket of goodwill I hold the blossoms of my goodwill and the goodwill of all, saturated with Thy blessings, and I am outpouring them on the heart-altars of devotees, so that all souls may be ready to give Thee a floral welcome into the temple of our reverence.

PRAYER

O Spirit, I care not if suffering comes to me or if all things are taken from me; I pray only that my love for Thee never fade through my negligence. May the taper of my devotion for Thee burn forever on the altar of my memory.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

When you are in direct contact with the Creator of this universe, you are in direct contact with all wisdom and understanding. The first stage of development is physical; then comes intellectual development; and lastly, concentration on the spiritual goal of life. The difference between the Eastern and Western approach to education is this: The East says: "Expand the intuitive power to receive truth." The West says: "Pump ideas and the contents of books into the brain." Concentration and the intuitive faculties have to be developed in order to expand the power of the mind so that it can assimilate the facts you feed it.

It would take millions of years to study all the various types of knowledge to be investigated in the world; the average lifetime is not long enough. The masters of India found that it is possible to assimilate wisdom from the infinite "Book of Knowledge" or universal consciousness of God, provided the power of reciprocity is increased. Geniuses are persons born with superior brains owing to development of the mind in past incarnations. It is necessary to be well advanced mentally at birth in order to become a genius in this life.

Jesus Christ had knowledge of life, of the earth, of everything that is to be known. How did he obtain this knowledge? Not through blind prayer. Jesus was a true yogi; he had so developed his soul-faculty of intuition in past lives that his consciousness was in tune with the consciousness of God that pervades the whole universe. Jesus knew and operated spiritual laws which were known and taught by masters of ancient India.

You should learn the intuitive method of study. You would then be able to assimilate in a few days knowledge that would otherwise take years to acquire. Geniuses are made by developing the power of intuition. Overcome the limitations of your mind and expand the power of your meditation so that truth will not have to be gained solely through the intermediaries of eyes, ears, and brain, but may be received directly through intuition.

NATURE IS LIKE A BOOK We are supposed to learn from history, and the most absorbing history is that of life itself. You were sent here to study the "Book of Nature." One page is about ocean life. All life started in the watery depths. Under the seas are valleys, mountains,

gardens, rivers, and yawning abysses--different vibratory regions inhabited by multitudinous forms of marine life. There are vast pastures of life in the ocean. Its arrangement is actually patterned after this earth. As land animals move in the air, so marine life moves in the water. And as air-breathing animals struggle for existence, so marine life battles for survival. Some fish have lights--others throw off poisons to blind their enemies. And there are deep-sea creatures of various colors that are able to assume the appearance of the rocks and vegetation around which they live, as a protection against predators.

The second page of nature is about the strata of the earth. Its various layers contain the history of our planet. The different kinds of animals and birds, the different kinds of mammals, and signs of man's development can all be found in the earth's strata.

Then comes the history of the heavens--the Milky Way, and the thousands of galaxies. There are innumerable solar systems moving in space like so many swarms of mosquitoes! There are lights still traveling through space from stars now long dead. Imagine! Island universes swimming in eternal void, apparently without anything to guide them. Man sits before the "Book of Nature" and is unable to comprehend very much of its meaning.

Now think of human life--how vast a subject is humanity itself, and how complex! The ethical state of man, the historical man, the biological man, the soul of man--all these are different pages in the "Book of Man" that you should study. To live by truth is what Christ taught. That truth is given to you in these Lessons. We should all study these tremendous subjects since God gave man intellect and scientific curiosity that he might explore His mysteries. Most important, we should insure the development of our intuition (the direct perception of truth about anything). Intuition comes by practicing meditation and by cultivating and expressing soul qualities in our daily life; humility, desire to serve others, sweetness, lack of egotism, and so on.

Why live behind the times? You should study the "Book of Nature" and the hidden truths you have been taught by the Self-Realization Fellowship Gurus. You have chosen the route you wish to follow; now follow the methods and practice regularly, never wavering, and you will attain the goal. Never cease striving. The fire of Self-realization must be fed with the fuel of daily practice.

GOD ANSWERS
THROUGH
HIS LAWS

The realization of God's presence is one of the greatest blessings. To forget God is the worst of all sins. When you are thinking of life everlasting, when you remain conscious of God all the time, when you know that beneath the wave of your life is the great Ocean of Life, and beneath your joy the bliss of God--then you are really living.

Think of God as your environment. Be one with God and nothing can harm you. You should not be superstitious; if you are subject to irrational beliefs, owing to past karma, overcome that weakness.

True love and devotion to God can only come by meditating in the right way. To those who are just waiting for the visitation of divine love, it will never come. God responds through law. He does not answer blind prayers.

Do not live bound by the attachments of worldly life and then leave these shores a poor soul, without God. This is not to suggest that you fly away to the jungles. It means that you should bring God into your daily life. Through divine law we can know Him. With great conviction and determination say: "I and my Father are One. I have no other desire but for Him, for in my oneness with Him I am every human being who lives, my brain is every brain, I work through all hands, I feel through all feelings. I am all life, I am all flowers, I am all stars. I have everything."

Realize that you are an immortal child of God sent on earth to pass the great examination of life so that you may go back to Him and say: "Lord, I know the history of nature and I am ready for Thee. I know, because I have felt Thee in my heart. I have come to enjoy eternally from Thy lips the fountain of all love. O Divine Father, I have come back not as a prodigal son, but as an immortal. I have come to stay."

SAGE VYASA AND THE GOPINEES

Once upon a time, many centuries ago, Sage Vyasa was seated in lotus posture in deep contemplation by the heaving gray waters of the sacred river Jumna. Rain clouds had been playing in the sky, pouring a great deal of water into the ordinarily peacefully flowing Jumna. The trampling rain made her as boisterous as an excited mare, and she tossed and threatened to sink any boat that ventured to ride upon her.

When finally the rains' myriad feet had ceased their pattering on the watery floor of the river, the angry roar of the water could still be heard. At this moment the melodious voices of several women saints, the angelic gopinees, distracted the sage from his meditations.

Laying down their baskets full of milk-made sweetmeats, the gopinees seated themselves around the sage, looking helplessly at the raging river they wished to cross. Vyasa addressed them in a kindly voice, saying: "Sacred souls, what can I do for you? Please command."

The gopinees answered: "Honored Sage of almighty power, please do something so that we can get to the other bank of the turbulent Jumna. No boat will take us across."

"Why are you in such a hurry to reach the other side of the Jumna while it is yet in a storm-tossed state?" Vyasa asked. "Can't you wait and go tomorrow when the river may display a calmer mood?"

"Ah, no, we must go now. Krishna's magic flute of divine compassion is calling us. We must get there some way for we are carrying freshly made sweetmeats for him," the gopinees replied.

There appeared on the face of the sage a mysterious, mischievous little smile as he retorted: "Aha! I see you all think of Krishna alone and not of me. I won't do anything until you have allowed me to share in those sweets."

As one, the gopinees exclaimed: "How dare you blasphemously ask to taste the sweets now, when they are meant first to be blessed by the sacred lips of our guru, Lord Krishna?"

But Vyasa was stubborn, and kept repeating: "Nothing will I do to help you unless I participate in the pleasurable taste of those delicate sweets."

Seeing no other way, and being possessed with an irresistible desire to pay their respects to Krishna, the holy gopinees at last offered some of the sweets to the sage, who kept on eating until he could eat no more! Some of the gopinees were inwardly criticizing the all too-healthy appetite of the sage and his disrespectful act of eating the sweets before his guru, Lord Krishna, had tasted them.

Finally Vyasa, stuffed with food, somehow moved himself to the brink of the boisterous river and loudly exclaimed: "O River Jumna, made holy by the sacred feet of my omnipresent Krishna, if I have not eaten anything, divide and part!" Behold! the Jumna parted, leaving a smooth sandy road to the other bank between two walls of water.

The gopinees were amazed at the miracle and bewildered by Vyasa's contradictory words, "If I did not eat," after he had just gorged himself with sweets. And they were even more astonished at seeing the river obey the sage's request on the strength of an apparently untruthful plea. However, wasting no time in puzzlement, they raced pell-mell through the water-walled pathway to the other side of the river, even as the followers of Moses passed through the miracle-made road between two sea-walls when pursued by the angry Pharaoh.

Upon reaching the other shore safely, the gopinees looked back and saw the river Jumna once more flowing between its silvery sandbanks. They waved their thanks to the meditation-merged Sage Vyasa.

When the gopinees finally reached Krishna's side they found him lazily dozing apparently after a heavy meal. Slowly he rose and welcomed them, without

uttering a word of thanks for the delicious sweetmeats presented to him. The gopinees were surprised, and inwardly hurt, because Krishna did not display even in the slightest degree his usual keen interest in his favorite sweetmeats. After a long while, looking at the half-sleepy Guru and the untouched sweetmeats, the gopinees finally spoke: "How strange, Lord, that after we took so much trouble to make these sweets and bring them to you, knowing how well you like them, you are not a bit interested."

With a smile and an understanding look in his eyes, Krishna calmly replied: "Well, I have eaten quite a few sweets already." "How? When?" the gopinees asked. "Why, that hoary fellow on the other side of the river has already fed me those sweets that you gave him. It was I who ate through his mouth. He is a great prankster! He pretended to taste the sweetmeats, but he had transferred my omnipresent consciousness to the taste in his own mouth! So I ate those sweets, not he. I will eat the rest tomorrow. I am quite satisfied at present."

Then the gopinees understood what Sage Vyasa meant when he said: "O Jumna, if I did not eat, divide and part!" and why the river obeyed. The Jumna had responded to God's command, for the Lord's omnipresent mind had instantly become aware of the implicit plea for His help in the words of his devotee, Vyasa.

In the state of divine ecstasy the devotee finds complete oneness with God. He then realizes that God is seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting through him. In that state he no longer feels, as one does in ordinary human consciousness, that he (that is, the ego) rather than God, is responsible for actions.

Jesus knew he was one with the Father; that is why, whenever he made statements such as : "The Heavenly Father make thee whole," or "I say unto thee, arise," he did not feel any difference between the two statements. For the "I" he referred to was not a limited ego, but the real "I," or soul, that is one with the Father ("I and my Father are one"--John 10:30). In the state of divine unity, it matters little whether a master says: "May the Heavenly Father in me make thee whole," or "I (as one with the Father) command thee to be whole."

The story of Vyasa contains the moral that all true lovers of God should so meditate upon Him, and be in such ecstatic joyous communion with Him, that He will be considered responsible for all their actions. Of course, before this divine union is attained, it is wrong to say: "God is doing everything, not I." For by this excuse one could approve of all his wrong actions, pretending they are the actions of God. One's conscience must not be made blunt. When your conscience tells you that an action is wrong, it is wrong. If you are really one with God, you will see God working through you in everything. Meanwhile, it is all right to pray in the following way:

"O God, I know the sacred bliss-producing laws of virtue; but I cannot always abide by them, although I am extremely eager and willing to do so. And I know the terrible effect of vice; but I cannot always avoid being influenced by it, even though I abhor it. Celestial Father and Lord of all my senses, I commend unto Thee all my good and evil actions. I will try to act only as Thou dost inspire me. I will perform good actions with the thought of Thee, and even when I am under the spell of temptation and the compelling charm of will-paralyzing evil, still I will call on Thy Name.

"Thinking of Thee equally in all activities, my evil actions will change into good actions, and my evil habits will change into good habits. Then, at last, when I see, hear, smell, taste, touch, think, reason, will, and feel only with the unshakable thought of Thee, I shall know myself to be ever protected by Thine omnipresent goodness. I shall behold Thee reigning in my heart forever. Receive my perpetual prayers of gratefulness."

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Every service you do for your fellow man brings you nearer to Cosmic Consciousness. When a man lives for all, his consciousness is commingled with all. When you actually love all, then you have expanded your consciousness into Cosmic Consciousness. Think of the happiness of your fellow beings first, and your own happiness will be included in it. Give your love equally to all. Even if a person is evil, he will change by the power of your love.

If you too closely identify yourself with a family or nationality, you will have to come back in that family or in that nationality. Do not hate any nationality or anyone, for if you do, you will draw that nationality or person to yourself. You will have to come in contact with them in another life. Both stubborn attachment and hatred are detrimental to the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness. You should love all, impersonally and impartially, because all belong to God.

AFFIRMATION

O Father, I am a wave of consciousness
on the bosom of Thy Cosmic Consciousness. I
am the bubble; make me the Sea.



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I WILL BE THY NAUGHTY BABY, O DIVINE MOTHER!

By Paramahansa Yogananda

On the playground of the earth, adorned in careless grace with mountains, plains, and seas, I have frolicked long.

O Divine Mother, each time I tired of play and loudly cried for Thee, Thou didst quiet me by dropping, through one of the open windows of my selfish desires, a glittering new toy: amusements, admirers, possessions.

This time I will be Thy naughty baby; I will sob unceasingly. Never again shall I be silenced by trinkets of transient pleasures. Thou wouldst best come soon, or with my clamor I shall rouse all creation! Thy sleeping children will wake and join me in a chorus of wails.

O Eternal Mother, forsake the busyness of Thy universal housework! I demand attention. I want no more playthings; I want Thee!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Patient Heart, teach me to revive by meditation my old friendship with Thee. May I realize that in my journey toward divine expansion, incarnation after incarnation Thou and Guru have been and will be my only Eternal Friends.

FROM MATERIAL DESIRES TO SELF-REALIZATION

Material desire and ego or body consciousness go together. In a psychological battle between the habit of yielding to temptation and the habit of self-control, the latter may easily subdue the former, but it is very hard for good habits to overcome the newly created, constantly evolving material desires of the body-bound ego. Material desires are due not only to bad habits but also to the ego's attachment to the body. Therefore, body consciousness gives rise to material desires. If body consciousness or ego is conquered by the consciousness of omnipresence in Spirit, then King Material Desire and all his armies of sense tendencies are instantly slain. Desires and egoistic attachment to the body flee like darkness before the light of the soul's consciousness of Omnipresence.

In the psychological battle between good and evil tendencies, bad habits think themselves of sufficient importance to crush good habits. The bad habits do not realize the strong part that material desire and ego play in their existence. An invading good habit can distract the mental tendencies of a bad habit so that they have no time to pay attention to King Material Desire and his tendency to cling to the ego or body consciousness.

It is a fact that in meditation the devotee finds his body consciousness resisting the consciousness of Omnipresence. He also finds that the ego consciousness often wants to make an encouraging noise, as in breathing fast, thus inviting the senses to destroy the breathlessness of meditation. The minute the ego induces the breath to come fast (described in the Hindu scriptures as the blowing of the conch shell which produces material sounds through the action of the air), then material desire is awakened and cheered, and fights to drive away the vast Spirit Consciousness which is born of our stillness and meditation.

During meditation, any material vibration sent forth by the ego helps to awaken the material desire to revive the consciousness of the body, and to dispel the consciousness of the vastness in Spirit. After ego creates a material vibration, the senses also begin to create different vibratory sounds in order to drown out the musical astral sounds of the discriminative tendencies in the cerebrospinal centers.

During the earlier state of meditation, when ego consciousness is awake and blows the conch shell of breath, the heart, circulation, and lungs make many peculiar thumping, throbbing, and purring sounds to drown out the fine astral music emanating from the astral body.

Throughout the ages, the majority of mankind has emphasized the material aspect of life, overlooking for the most part the development of the spiritual. Is it not time now that the spiritual should be given its proper place in the development of the threefold nature of man? Owing to that great need, let us see if we cannot find a definite method of procedure which will aid materially in the development of a spiritual consciousness.

FREE YOUR SOUL FROM THE BONDAGE OF DESIRE We must all put forth our best efforts now to prepare for a better life hereafter. The Hindu scriptures declare that after about eight million lifetimes in animal and lower forms you have now become a human being. You should make full use of your opportunity. Do not waste your time in idleness, nor forget the higher things of life and plunge like the moth into flames of material desire. When you plunge in, the lure is sweet, but after a while you will realize your mistake. He is cleverest who seeks God.

When you lose attachment for material things, then you are free. When you can eat with the consciousness of eating in order to build God's temple, then your consciousness is not limited by attachment to the food; but if you eat like a greedy man you are limited by that desire for food for its own sake. Do not be bound by material attachments. Anything that overclouds your divine consciousness is a detriment to your welfare. I learned from my Master how to be free, how to enjoy good things in life and yet not become attached. Anything that you become too much attached to, or bound to, will cause your downfall from the soul consciousness that is your divine birthright.

All our present troubles are the result of our own wrong actions in this life or in past lives. We must be given time to work out our imperfections and desires by returning to earth in a physical body again and again. When we are purified, we can go back to God. Our imperfections cannot be worked out in one lifetime, but we can quicken our evolution in one lifetime if we desire to do so. Just as you can go around the world by cart and boat in a certain number of years, or you can take an airplane and go around the world in a day or two, so by the methods taught by the great sages of India you can work out your desires, free your soul from bondage to desire, and thus go back to God sooner.

REINCARNATION IS BASED UPON DESIRES This world is a cosmic show. Do not leave it with material desires. According to the law of cause and effect, if you die with unfulfilled desires you will have to incarnate again to satisfy them. If you could but realize the amount of trouble that goes with attachments, you wouldn't burden yourself with them.

God originally made man in His image, but--although the soul is immortal-- man lost awareness of that soul image because of misuse of his God-given power of reason. Those who are ignorant of their soul-nature now have broken some of God's laws in the past. What a man is today is the sum total of all his past actions. In order to overcome the limitations that he ascribes to himself in the ego-conscious state, man has to return to earth again and purify himself.

Reincarnation is based upon desires. The average person requires several incarnations to work out all desires, once he has determined to shed them.

The soul, being superior to the body, survives it and passes into another body, so that it may work out on this earth plane the earthly karma of past lives spent in the ego-conscious state and present-life karma of egoistic material desires.

Reincarnation is made necessary because of unfulfilled desires. So long as we have mortal desires we shall have mortal incarnations. But once you have experienced the presence of God there will be no other desire, for the desire to know God counteracts all longings pertaining to the material world.

DO ALL THINGS FOR GOD Never become attached to anything. Convince yourself that death will not deprive you of anything, as you are going home to God. When the last day comes, if you are not afraid of death or pain, then whatever you wish to be you can be; but you won't want anything. You will say: "Father, may Thy will be done. Guide my desire to do Thy will. Guide my reason, will, and activity to the right thing that I should do." That is the secret of real happiness. Then God will give you what He wants you to have. Spiritualize your desires and ambitions and only desire to please God in everything you do.

The Bhagavad-Gita says: "Those who forsake action and yet are always desiring to perform actions are not free; but those who act in the best way to please God, they are free." If you do your work feeling that you are doing it to please God, then you will be happy. Work for Him; then you will leave no trace of desire behind you. Once you gain this power over reincarnation, then you can come on earth of your free choice to bring others back to the shores of Omnipresence.

When you wake up in another life, you will be exactly what you were before death. Unless you practice being in a high state of consciousness now, you will not attain it after death. Those who think that just by dying they will become angels are mistaken. Become an angel now and you will be one after death. Someday you will wake up in God and see that you are not a fleshly being but life eternal. So do away with the necessity for further incarnations by performing all actions for God.

The great Masters have given you these truths that you may find salvation. All those souls that leave the body with desires born of ego consciousness must come back again to work out those desires. Break all cords of desires and gain freedom. Be without desires, yet filled with ambition to please God in all your actions, enjoying everything yet depending upon nothing, working out your destiny yet not depending on your destiny, desiring nothing, for you have everything in Spirit.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

The soul has suffered itself to be lured away from the vast kingdom of the Spirit and to be trapped in the little physical body. As the soul forsook its vast kingdom of Omnipresence, it passed through many smaller realms of life, until it finally entered through the trap door of material attachment and found itself imprisoned in the body, unable to get out and return to its home of Omnipresence.

The bird of paradise has become the bird encaged behind the prison bars of flesh. Hence, every soul prisoner that has gone through the gates of ideational, astral, and physical confinements into the trap of body consciousness must learn to open these inner prison gates before it can find freedom and return to the Spirit.

I BEHOLD THEE THROUGH MANY DOORS

The unborn chick lives imprisoned in a little world within its milk-white oval shell, and then mysteriously cracks it and steps out into the vaster earth. So also is man held to this little brown ball of earth, encircled by the elliptical skyey shell until the flame of silence bursts open the opal blue tunnel of the inner eye and the soul chick is born in an endless eternal empire of light.

I lost myself in the prison hall of this earth, bedecked with green hills, starry canopy, pictures of scenery, and portraits of friendly memories painted with life's many colors on the canvas of my heart.

As I wandered in an ecstatic daze through this wondrous prison, I loved to live behind its prison bars of limitations, in death, in struggle, in quest of temporal fame, in broils of karma, and in pursuit of fickle prosperity. Suddenly I wearied and became aware of something more, and cast away the playthings of this beloved, charming mortal prison and sought some way to escape from it into eternity.

As I lay behind the mystery wall of five hundred miles of breath that hugs the throbbing bosom of the globe, encompassed by the mighty moat of chill space, I wistfully sought to break through and escape into my own lost kingdom

of endless ever-new joy. I kept looking and searching intently, with a burning desire for a way out.

In secret, I obtained steel saws of silence and wisdom and silently began to saw through the bars of earthly desires. Lo! I escaped beyond the walls of flesh and beheld open doors before me everywhere. Through the portals of open petals, through the molten discs of solar and inner rays, through every atomic pore, through every door of devotion, through life and death, all my living children of thought and feelings open mystic doors for me everywhere. Through them I beheld a glimpse of Thee. Finding Thee, I found my lost kingdom of freedom at last.

AFFIRMATION

I will remain in all hearts as the unknown friend, ever arousing their flaming feelings, and silently urging them through their own noble thoughts to forsake their slumber of earthliness. In the light of wisdom I will dance with all their joys in the unseen bower of silence.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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TURNING BACKWARD

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I was a prisoner, carrying a heavy load of bones and flesh,
But I have broken the chains of my muscle-bound body by the power of relaxation.

I am free! Now I shall try to go within.

Bewitching scenic beauties, stop your dance before my eyes!
Lure not my attention away!
Enchanting melodies, lead not my mind astray
Nor enthrall it in the revels of material songs!

Haunting siren of sweet sensations,
Paralyze not my sacred intuitions by your enticing touch!
Let my meditation race for the sweet bower of eternal divine love.

Luring aroma of lilacs, jasmine, and roses,
Stop not my homeward marching mind!

The tempting enchantresses of the senses are now gone.
The cords of flesh are broken.
The grip of the senses is loosened.
I exhale and stop the storm of breath; the ripples of thought melt away.

I am sitting on the altar of my throbbing heart. I watch it.
I turn backward to the spine.
The roaring, shouting torrent of life force
Moving through the heart into the body,
The beat and roar of the heart--all are gone.
Like a sacred hidden river
My life force flows in the gorges of the spine.
I enter a dim corridor of omnipresence through the door of the spiritual eye,
And speed on until at last
My life force flows into the ocean of life and loses itself in bliss.

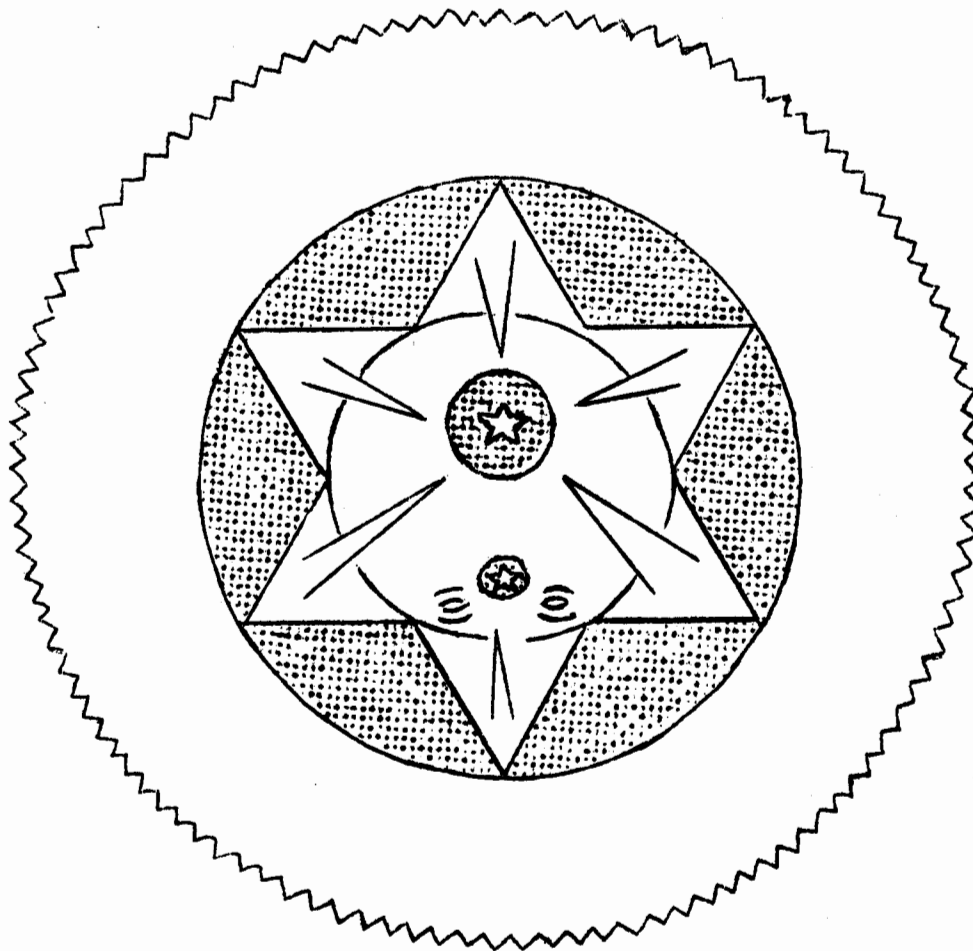
PRAYER

O Bliss God, lift all the curtains of light that I may behold Thee in the glory of Bliss. Bless me that I may reach Thee through the spiritual eye which is the tunnel through all veils of light leading straight to Thee.

HOW TO ENTER THE METAPHYSICAL COSMOS

SPIRITUAL EYE In order to behold the kingdoms of astral phenomena, the Christ-pervaded cosmos and eternity beyond, the human soul has to withdraw the matter-circumscribed vision of the two physical eyes and penetrate it through the telescopes of the astral eye, the Christ eye, and the Cosmic eye.

DIAGRAM OF THE METAPHYSICAL COSMOS



The physical eyes can see only a little segment of the whole world; but when the vision of the two mundane eyes is made single and the consciousness penetrates through the star in the opal-blue astral eye (as represented by the little white star just above the human eyes in the diagram of the metaphysical cosmos) then the vision is enlarged, and the devotee beholds his astral body and other astral visions.

When human consciousness--after penetrating the astral eye--races through the Christ eye, the star of Christ intelligence whose light and wisdom pervades all creation (as illustrated by a larger white star within a larger globe) then one can feel Christ Consciousness spread through all the earth, through solar systems, star bubbles, and the Milky Way; and he will actually behold all these planetary families swimming in the eternal void.

After penetrating the astral and Christ eyes, human consciousness flies through the eye of Cosmic Consciousness (as represented by the largest white star encased in the largest globe) into the eternal Omnipresence (represented in our drawing by the outer ring of white-tipped flames).

Through the two physical eyes the soul perceives only the little physical body and its limited earth surroundings. The astral, Christ, and cosmic eyes enable the soul to behold its eternal kingdom of Christ Consciousness in all universes and in eternity. By deep study of the teachings in the SRF Lessons, all that has been stated above can be realized.

The astral eye seen in meditation is spoken of as the "spiritual eye," or the "third eye" or "single eye." It is also referred to as the "star of the East," the "star of wisdom," "kutastha," "cave of wisdom," "cave of silence," "cave of peace"--that is, the cave of inner calmness whereto the yogi withdraws his astral body and lives in secret.

Jesus saw the spiritual eye as a starry "dove descending from heaven," when his guru John the Baptist baptized him. (Your spiritual teacher, or guru-preceptor, helps you to open your spiritual eye.) The little star in the center symbolizes the mouth of the "dove" and its two "wings" are a blue and a golden light.

The spiritual eye consists of a white star palpitating in the heart of an opal-blue light surrounded by a golden ring. The spiritual eye is the epitome of the Holy Spirit (Holy vibration and Cosmic Energy) in the human body. The golden ring represents Cosmic Energy; the blue, Christ Consciousness. Piercing the blue tunnel one can enter into the white star tunnels in the Christ eye and the Cosmic eye, by whose rays the devotee penetrates the walls of matter to reach the Absolute--the unmanifested kingdom of pure ever-new blessedness of Spirit.

The two physical eyes are a correct materialization of the spiritual eye,

which has three factors:

1. A little star in the center, corresponding to the pupil of the physical eye. This five-pointed white star is the door to Infinity.
2. A dark blue circle around the star, corresponding to the iris of the physical eye. This circle of blue is a reflection of the soul's light.
3. A golden white halo around the blue light corresponds to the white of the physical eye. This golden ring is the light of Cosmic Energy, or the light of nature.

POWER IN THE
SPIRITUAL EYE

One cannot enter the star in the spiritual eye until, by the practice of Kriya (or by the practice of the Hong-Sau technique given in Lessons 18 to 23) one is able to become breathless; to control the heart beat at will; and to withdraw all energy and concentration from the five telephones of the senses. It is then that the advanced student can understand that his body, the earth, stones, trees, all animal life, stars, and every speck of space, are controlled by the power in the star of the spiritual eye.

STAGES REFLECTED
IN SENSATIONS

When reversing the outward flow of life force through the senses inward to the spiritual eye, the first state experienced consists of crawling, electric sensations through the muscles and spine. The second state consists of an intense, pleasurable feeling as the eyes become automatically fixed in the superconscious center between the eyebrows. The third state consists of feeling a cool-warm sensation between the eyebrows, attended by the sound of Om heard without closing the ears and felt all over the outer surface of the body and the inner lining of the body and spine. The fourth state consists of seeing the white light revolvingly increase like an aurora in the spiritual eye --with closed or open eyes. Then, when the breath disappears and the life force movement retires from the nerves, eyes, and the nuclei of the cells, the current becomes deeper and becomes projected into the Infinite, creating a dark blue tunnel in the center of the spiritual eye. This current looks blue because the inwardly turned searchlights of life current spread into the bottomless heart of Infinity, revealing an endless tunnel of dim light through which the soul must pass. Regular and earnest practice of the technique given at the end of this lesson will enable you to go through this tunnel of blue light.

By looking through the physical eyes, one beholds one's body as a wave of life separate from the Ocean of Life; whereas by looking into the spiritual eye, one sees the ocean of Spirit becoming the wave of life. That is why Jesus said: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light (cosmic energy)" (Matthew 6:22). The Bible tells us that the shepherds and the wise men saw a star and followed it to see Jesus Christ. This is an historical fact, but it has a deep interpretation. No star from the sky came

to earth and entered the place where Jesus was born; it was the light of the star in the spiritual eye that the wise men saw and were guided by. It led them to the baby Jesus, in whose body Christ Consciousness was manifested. The guiding star can also be interpreted as our discrimination, the shepherd that leads our sheepish thoughts homeward on the proper path of life and into the fold of wisdom.

The soul's spiritual consciousness is hidden behind the star in the spiritual eye, beholding Infinity on the inner side. Its material consciousness, as the ego, travels outside beyond the star and remains in the medulla oblongata, watching through the sense channels the body and the world of matter which is limited by form, space, time, and so forth. If the mind withdraws its attention from the outside world and enters the star in the spiritual eye, it will perceive only the kingdom of Infinity; but when the mind remains outside the spiritual eye, it perceives only the world of matter vibrations with dimensions.

SPIRITUAL EYE-- RECEIVING AND BROADCASTING MEDIUM

The spiritual eye should be developed so that it will not only see true visions of this earth life, but also visions of the luminous astral forces and universes that constitute the subtle astral cosmos. By increasing will power, and by concentrating it between the eyebrows, one can convert the spiritual eye into a mental and astral broadcasting station. The advanced student who is able to penetrate the star in the spiritual eye can project his consciousness into the spiritual eye of another person. He can send helpful thought vibrations to his friends or relatives in the astral world, or in the physical world, through their spiritual eyes. By the application of intuition, the spiritual eye and the heart become radiolike receiving stations, and by concentration of will power they become astral broadcasting stations.

Voices, music, and songs pass through the ether. Our thoughts similarly move through the ether of Cosmic Consciousness. But just as no sounds can be dug out of the ether without a radio, so, without the "radio" of the spiritual eye, the senses cannot register tactual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory, or optical sensations. The spiritual eye can perform two functions: it can act as a radio receiving apparatus, and as a broadcasting station. Intuition passing through the heart into the spiritual eye transforms it into a receiving station. Intuition and feeling tune the spiritual eye to receive the messages of the five senses; or any message or thought passing through the ether; or the vibratory "picture" of distant or future events. All auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactual vibrations can be changed by concentration into visible, optical visions in the spiritual eye. The vibratory thought patterns of an incident that is to happen in the future may be present in the ether now, owing to the action of the law of cause and effect; if these fine vibrations are made to pass through a heart tuned by intuition, and are relayed to the spiritual eye, they vibrate in myriads of life atoms, organizing and arranging them into definite designs, forms, or visions of the future. Then the advanced student sees prismatic lights and little images materialized from the ether, or from the subconscious mind.

Likewise, the vibratory images of distantly situated persons, the electronic vibrations of their bodies and of their thought-perceptions, are passing through the ether. By thinking of and intuitively visualizing these persons in the heart, one can materialize their images in the spiritual eye, which then acts as a highpowered camera that photographs the vibrations coming through the senses and passing through the ether and the pores of the body. Intuition opens the shutter of the opal-blue light and the star in the spiritual eye, and photographs any desired gross or subtle vibration as a direct image.

EYES INDICATE You are accustomed to sleep with closed eyes, and when
 MENTAL STATE you open your eyes, you are accustomed to beholding
 material phenomena; but spiritual vision is accompanied
 by half-open eyes; that is, the eyes are neither fully closed nor fully open.
 The eyes in this state are fixed on the superconscious center at the point between the eyebrows, and the lower lids are drawn up to close the eyes halfway.

When we are looking at material things, our eyes are open three fourths of the way; when we stare at something, the eyes become circular and fully open. During the subconscious state (as in sleep), our eyes are fully closed, generally with the eyeballs turned downward. The eyes of young children are usually turned upward to the superconscious center during sleep. As they grow up and begin to concentrate their vision more and more on the material world about them, their eyeballs turn downward when they are asleep. But in time of death, the eyeballs of animals and people turn upward as the soul and life force pass unconsciously out through the medulla oblongata.

The spiritual or single eye is actually the reflected light of the medulla. Union of the two searchlight currents of ordinary sight at the spiritual eye creates desire for God and lifts the consciousness into the superconscious state. The same two searchlight currents, when concentrated downward on matter, create desire for material things, and draw the consciousness toward the subconscious state.

The medulla oblongata is the switch of life force which throws current into the two headlights of the eyes. When the two eyeballs are upturned and their gaze fixed at the point between the eyebrows, they become supernaturally still; then the two parallel searchlight currents in the two eyes are focused on one point, producing the vision of the single eye, which is the reflection of the light in the medulla. When this light is seen in the forehead and when it remains still for a long time, or can be held as long as one wants it to stay, then the optical current of the eyes, which is accustomed to playing on matter, becomes reversed and centralized, first between the eyebrows; then it becomes transferred to the medulla. In fact, in spiritual vision there is no dimension. We often erroneously think we see the light between the eyebrows, whereas we may actually be seeing it in the medulla.

CONFINED CONSCIOUSNESS If you were born and grew up within the

confines of a large room whose doors and windows had been sealed so that you could not look out at all, that room would appear to you to be your only world, and it would represent the largest space you could comprehend. But if after twenty years of residence confined in that room you were told that there is a vast space beyond its walls, you would probably laugh and not believe it. However, if suddenly a little window in that room were opened, you would certainly be extremely surprised to see the vastness of the sky outside.

EVEN THE CHICK EXPANDS HIS WORLD To a chick living in the yolk beneath the eggshell, the space within the shell is all the space there is. But when the chick breaks through the shell, it comes into a larger world. You are a human chick, living on the yolk of the world and surrounded by the star-studded blue shell of the sky. You think that this world, with its confining sky, is the biggest place there is. But suppose you could pierce the shell of the sky with your consciousness and peer into the territory of your own Heavenly Father; then you would be able to see myriads of solar and stellar systems with their worlds floating like dust particles, tier upon tier, in the eternal expanse of space.

FORGET LIMITATIONS As often as you gaze on your little body, you cannot help but think that you are confined in a few feet of form and that you weigh so many pounds. This idea is what binds you to the body, to its tribulations, limitations of poverty, sickness, and ignorance. ~~Spirit is the endless chamber of wall-less space, which is decorated with flickering stars and myriad lamps of planetary lights.~~ You are made in the image of God, and you must forget your limitations. Make yourself one with the limitlessness of God, and thus end all your sorrow and suffering.

Your omnipresent consciousness is enclosed in the little cage of your body. When you love your family, neighbors, and the world, your consciousness flies beyond the limiting cage of your physical body. And when, by deep meditation, you can watch the sky and feel yourself spread over all that vast space, your consciousness grows bigger still. The more you worry about the little things your body needs, the smaller and more limited you will become, until eventually you will die of unfulfilled desires. It is the law that a beggar gets only the beggar's pittance that he asks for, and that he receives through chance bounty; but a divine son gets his birthright, which consists of the entire omnipresent kingdom of God with all created things in it.

EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world." He was more prosperous than all the rich men of the world. He was able to feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, and he could perform other miracles. Jesus could produce material abundance because he had God and, having Him, he had everything. When Jesus said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20), Jesus was not lamenting that he had no place to

live; he was speaking of his omnipresent soul, which could not be caged in a nest or a house. He lived everywhere, on the tract of Eternity and in every little speck of space. Living everywhere, he could not confine his head of eternal wisdom and consciousness into a small space.

YOUR DIVINE BIRTHRIGHT You must change your status from that of a mortal beggar to that of a divine son. Instead of supplicating, you must demand what belongs to you by right, as a divine child who is born in the image of God. You must seek the lost kingdom of God first; then all the material and spiritual things you need and want will be added unto you as your divine birthright.

As a mortal being and a beggar you have sought bread and money first; therefore you have had great difficulty in securing even these. God and His gifts do not come to you with the attainment of material gain; they come only by seeking and knowing God first. Bread, and all other things come to you automatically, like willing slaves, when you have found God. This is the truest and surest way by which you can fulfill your desires.

The following technique will strike at the roots of your mortal limitations and will make your consciousness the king of the eternal kingdom of God, who is your own Father.

THE TECHNIQUE

POSTURE Sit upright on a woolen blanket that has been placed over a straight, armless chair. The blanket should run down under your feet to insulate your body from distracting earth currents. Place hands on thighs with palms upward at the juncture of the thighs and the abdominal region.

INNER PICTURIZATION Close your eyes and imagine that you are peering down millions of miles below you. Mentally fly upwards millions of miles. Mentally fly trillions of miles behind, then in front of yourself. Mentally picture yourself as the chamber of eternity, in which all things--stellar and solar systems, the world, your body--are floating. Feel that this chamber of eternity is filled with bliss. Reflect that you are this ever-happy, ever-living chamber of eternity.

COSMIC PHYSIOLOGY Picture in your mind's eye, and try to become aware of the inside of the fleshy walls of your small body. See that on top of it is the brain; at the back are vertebrae; and inside the torso are lungs, heart, liver, pancreas, intestines, and so forth. Now feel that the vast chamber of skyey space is your cosmic body, and that within that cosmic body are closely situated the convolutions of your brain in the Milky Way. See the sun and moon as your eyes, and perceive the love of all creatures of all worlds as your heart. See all life as your circulation,

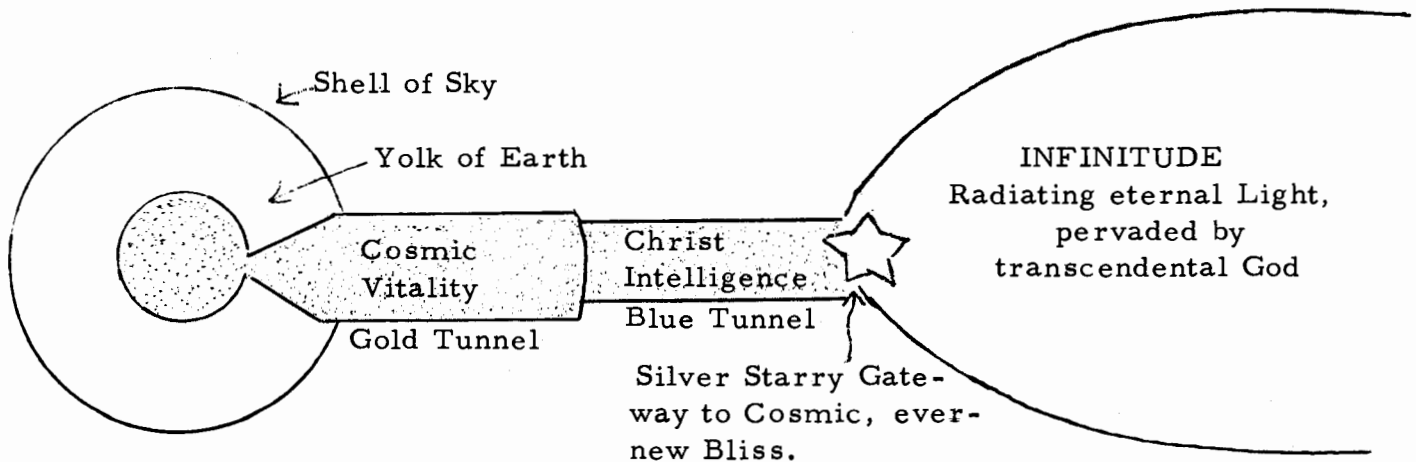
with the nebulae as your intestines. See star rivers as your cosmic body cells, the sky as your skin, and the mountains as your bones.

COSMIC EXPANSION Meditate on the idea that your mind is the accumulated minds of all human beings, that your heart encompasses the hearts of all, your life is the totaled lives of all creatures, your love is the sum of all the loves of all living things.

THE TUNNEL TO ETERNITY

PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT With your eyes closed, think of yourself as a soul-chick sitting on the yolk of the earth trying to burst through the shell of the sky into the kingdom of your infinite Father. (Your mind can travel from America to Jupiter in a second, faster than electricity or light.)

Visualize in front of you a portion of the white shell of the sky. Then picture in it a big golden tunnel with a fifty-foot mouth. Mentally enter this tunnel, feeling the presence of Cosmic Vitality. It will take only an instant to travel a hundred miles through the golden tunnel. At its end you will see an opening twenty-five feet wide into a blue tunnel. Mentally travel a thousand miles instantaneously through this blue tunnel, feeling yourself surrounded by Christ Intelligence. At the end of the blue tunnel see a five-pointed silver star, which is a five-foot gate to Infinitude. Your feeling, saturated with cosmic ever-new Bliss, passes through this silver gate and travels instantaneously along a million miles of silver path. As you come out of the gold and blue tunnels and travel past the silver gate, feeling power, intelligence, and ever-new joy, you leave the shell of the sky and enter the vastness of Eternal Light.



BE ONE WITH ETERNAL LIGHT Behold in front of you the vastness of living, joyous, ever-expanding silver light. Merge yourself--your body, mind, and soul--into the light, and melt them into the consistency of this solid vastness of ever-blissful, intelligent silver light. Go on expanding with it: above, beneath, in front, and behind, on all sides equally, limitlessly, until you feel that you and that infinite light are one.

TWO CHAMBERS Behold in this visualization of eternity two chambers: one is spaceless eternal void, the realm of transcendental God the Father, who is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The other chamber of the cosmos is ruled by Christ Consciousness, and contains all created things--solar and stellar systems, star rivers, your little earth, your little homestead, and your little body peacefully residing in it.

SON OF SPIRIT Your name henceforth will be "Son of Spirit." Your country is infinity. You live in the United States of the Cosmos and your home is the love of all races and of all living creatures. Your color is purity. Your possessions, O Son of the Cosmic King! include the entire cosmos.

AFFIRMATION

I shall close my physical eyes and dismiss the temptation of matter. I shall peer through the darkness of silence until my eyes of relativity open into the one inner eye of light. When my two eyes of good and evil become single, and behold only the divine goodness of God in everything, then I shall find my body, mind, and soul filled with His omnipresent light.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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I SHALL CATCH THEE IN THE NET OF DEVOTION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I cast my net of devotion in the vast sea of my mind.
Thou hast fled from me many times, diving deeper into
the farthest depths of my peace.

I am unceasingly casting bigger nets of devotion,
everywhere--over the surf, on the wavelets of life, over
the waves of stars, and all over the billows of souls--
with the conviction that some time Thou wilt be caught in
the deep net of my adoration.

All I know is that I am a fisherman, and that I must
keep fishing for Thee until I find Thee.

Storms and gales of trials rock my boat of unceasing
effort. I am being tossed, but I shall keep casting my
net of love until Thou dost get entangled in it, and, unable
to escape again, Thou wilt surrender Thyself unto me.

I know that some time I shall catch Thee in the net
of my devotion.

PRAYER

O Divine Teacher, let me realize that though the gloom of my ignorance be age-old, with the dawn of Thy light the darkness will vanish as though it had never been.

EXERCISES IN CONCENTRATION FOR SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT

By mastery of the exercises taught in this Lesson you can become owner of the three phenomenal worlds, even as your Heavenly Father is.

The yogis anciently discovered that in sleep man enjoys in a semiconscious way the blissful nature of his own soul. By unraveling the mystery of sleep, man can learn the nature of his true being and realize his oneness with the Source of all being. God--in the unmanifested aspect of Spirit--is omnipresent, ever-conscious, ever-newly joyous, limitless Being. Soul--the image of God --is ever-conscious, ever-newly joyous individualized Being, confined in the mental, astral, and physical bodies by rebirth-making mortal habits and desires. In the ecstasy of Self-realization the soul knows itself to be a perfect but body-confined reflection of God, like a reflection of the moon seen clearly in a pot of water undisturbed by any breeze. So by yoga the individual soul may behold itself as a reflection of God's ever-newly joyous Being, undisturbed by the breeze of desires.

If a pot of water in which the moon is reflected is broken, then the confined image of the moon becomes one with the big skyey moon. Similarly, when the little soul-reflection completely destroys its identification with the ego--the body-bound pseudo-soul or "I" of one's wakeful hours--then the soul has learned how to liberate itself from the three bodies (physical, astral, and mental) and becomes established in its real, perfect nature as the blissful image of God, omnipresent and ever blissful.

During waking hours, through the ego, everyone except a true yogi perceives himself as a man or a woman and as owner of various material things. At night, while in a passive state, the body-identified soul or ego realizes its own true invisible joyous nature. By practice of yoga and nonattachment, the yogi may behold himself always, at night or by day, as the perfect image of ever-blissful God. By meditation and conscious ecstasy the soul becomes established in its true nature and is liberated from its mortal nature or ego.

A strong man slept and dreamed he was a weakling. He cried because he was weak and diseased. Somebody woke him up and asked him, "Do you know you were praying for muscles and strength?" "How silly," the strong man said, "that I dreamed myself to be a weakling, when actually I am strong as a Sandow." The soul is drunk with delusion, the somnambulism of daily wakefulness, and acts and grieves like a mortal man. This body-identified state

of the soul is called ego. This ego, or mortal state of the soul, is partially forgotten during sleep and entirely forgotten during ecstasy. That is why you want to practice ecstasy--to get rid of the ego, the nest of all your imaginary troubles, and remember that you are made in the image of God.

GOD EXPLAINED God is Cosmic Consciousness, Cosmic Love, Cosmic Bliss, Cosmic Wisdom, and so on. God sees, hears, smells, tastes, touches, feels, thinks, and knows everything solely by intuition. Soul in its perfect state is superconscious, body-confined love and joy, and knows all things by intuition also.

The ant feels its body. Its small eyes perceive a little territory around it. The average man knows his body, house, and family. The superman knows that his body is part of all the human family; his mind holds the universe in its mental and perceptive boundaries. He realizes that "on a little speck of thought rests the cosmic lot." If you rub out your thoughts with sleep, unconsciousness, conscious ecstasy, or even anesthetics--the universe will vanish into nothingness. Your thought gives reality to the universe; without it the cosmos cannot be real to you.

As a mortal man you have learned to remain awake and become entangled with all the little and big miseries and problems of life, or to go to sleep and forget the world. As a child of God, as a man made in the image of God, you must learn (by ecstasy) to cast body consciousness and sleep consciousness into the superconscious ever-new, ever-increasing joy of God. After you can easily remain awake or go to sleep, then you must learn to achieve consciously a state similar to but infinitely more enjoyable than sleep--that is, to go into ecstasy at will with half-open eyes. Don't keep memorizing your mortal habits of sleep or wakefulness, but learn to experience the joys of the sleep state consciously, at will, anytime, anywhere.

LEARN TO GO TO SLEEP AT WILL One cannot sleep so long as he is actively using the body, as in running, or so long as he is engrossed in sensory perceptions: smelling, tasting, touching, hearing, or seeing. Therefore the first step in going to sleep is to close the eyes and cease bodily activity.

To practice going to sleep, either lie down flat on your back, or sit straight in a comfortable chair with your spine touching the back of the chair. Tense the body; then quickly relax it. Throw the breath out in a deep exhalation, "huh, huh," and then forget about breath, whether it remains quiescent or continues to flow.

(Forgetting breath is a condition of sleep; while you are asleep you are unaware of the breath, as it flows less frequently and more rhythmically. As soon as you awaken you are again conscious of breathing, and you also become aware of your body and your surroundings.)

After casting out the breath, try to stop the restless thoughts. Be indifferent to sounds or to the feeling of the body; ignore the taste in your mouth and any odors that come to your nostrils. Put sensory and body awareness out of your mind. Make your mind feel as if you haven't had any sleep for a week and that you are so drowsy you could drop off instantly, no matter where you are or what time it is. Dissolve your body consciousness entirely in the subconscious sleep state. Ordinarily sleep is an involuntary occurrence, but by practice the yogi can control his mind and can enter the sleep state anywhere, anytime, consciously and at will. Practice until you can go to sleep anywhere, anytime, at will.

LEARN TO WAKE AT WILL The next step is to learn to wake at will, after having gone to sleep at will. Upon awakening thus, open the eyes halfway. Keep awake by holding them half-open, for about thirty seconds or so, at first; then close the eyes and try to go to sleep at will once more. When you have become about three-fourths sleepy, open your eyes halfway and again remain awake for half a minute or so; then close your eyes and become three-fourths asleep again. Then open your eyes and remain awake for a little while.

Make yourself alternately half asleep and half awake, at will, as many times as you can. Then practice until you can close your eyes and instantaneously sleep soundly for five minutes and, at a mental command, wake yourself up and remain awake with half-open eyes for a minute; and then go back to sleep. Learn to do the foregoing--sleep and wake alternately many times--anywhere, while relaxing in either a quiet or a noisy place.

MAKING THE EVER-WAKEFUL SUBCONSCIOUS MIND WORK FOR YOU After mastering the above technique, your mind will be able to let you sleep fifteen minutes to six hours or more and wake you up at a definite time. Before you go to sleep at night, command your subconscious mind to wake you up at five or six or at any time you wish, and it will do so. When you are ready to go to sleep, suggest to your never-sleeping subconscious mind that it wake you at a certain time. You can also make other helpful suggestions to the subconscious mind before sleep. For example, suggest that it get rid of a bad habit. You must make your specific wish very intense, and concentrate on it until you fall asleep. Then it will work.

LEARN TO GO INTO ECSTASY AT WILL (Try this first in a quiet place and then in a noisy place.) Inhale and exhale deeply twelve times. With half-open eyes look upward, focusing the gaze at the point between the eyebrows. Expel the breath, forgetting it entirely. Immediately dissolve body consciousness, thoughts, and feelings of sleepiness, if any, into the superconscious, ever-increasing joy of deep inward concentration at the spiritual eye. Practice until you can instantaneously, consciously, enjoy and be intoxicated with the bliss-cocktail of many sleeps, whenever you turn your gaze within to the spiritual eye.

In sleep you become aware in a negative way that you are neither man nor woman, but an invisible, joyous soul made in the image of blissful God. You are not unconscious when you sleep, but semiconscious; when you wake up you can always tell whether you were sleeping lightly or soundly, or in a disturbed way or blissfully. The enforced state of soul peacefulness comes to you every night to make you know that you are not just flesh and bones, but a vast, invisible soul, sleeping blissfully in space.

Why not learn the lesson God gives to you through sleep? God wants you to know that you are a happy soul, sleeping in a little nook in space, just as He is the omnipresent Oversoul or manifested Spirit sleeping consciously in all space, beyond all material vibrations. By learning to sleep consciously at will, with half-open eyes, you will feel a greater and greater joy or ecstasy as the semiconscious awareness of joy felt in the subconscious state of sleep is superseded by the conscious awareness of joy felt in the superconscious state of intuitive awareness of the soul. You will gradually learn that you are one with the Infinite Soul, consciously, quiescently, blissfully sleeping in all space.

Death is a deeper form of subconscious sleep, and when you wake up from it you are not in the same body, but in some other human form, somewhere else. In ordinary sleep you "die" daily, coming back into the same bodily house when you wake up. Every night you die, every day you are reborn. In ~~one year alone you die and are reborn at least three hundred and sixty-five~~ times. You wake after sleep because of your desire to fulfill your duties in life. So also, unless you drop all your mortal desires you will actually die and reincarnate many times in many different forms--until liberation is reached by working for God and by knowing Him in the temple of meditation, no longer impelled by your own rebirth-making mortal desires.

DEFINITE TECHNIQUE OF ATTAINING ECSTASY

As you are falling asleep each night, keep your eyes half-open and focused at the point between the eyebrows; consciously enjoy in a relaxed non-chalant way the state at the border of joyous sleep as long as you can hold it without falling asleep, and you will learn to go into ecstasy at will. That ecstasy is a multimillion times more blissful than sleep. Do not use conscious nervous will, for then you will be wide awake; rather use passive will to prolong the enjoyment of the half-awake, half-asleep state every night at bedtime. Try to remain in this state from five minutes to one hour, then you will know about yoga: conscious communion of your soul with God.

Sleep is the negative, semiconscious way of uniting soul and God. Ecstasy or yoga or conscious communion between soul and God--union of the little joy of your soul with the unending joy of omnipresent God--are the same. Ecstasy can be practiced with closed eyes, or with eyes open looking straight ahead, or looking up at the Christ Consciousness center. But as fully open eyes suggest wakefulness and closed eyes suggest sleep, so half-open eyes signify the physiological state of the eyes during ecstasy.

As it is hard to sleep and keep the eyes closed when one is fully awake, and hard to awaken and force the eyes open when one is asleep, so it is difficult to keep the eyes upturned with the lids half-open and half-closed. But by practice, you will find your eyes naturally focused at the point between the eyebrows. The light of your spiritual eye will help you to keep your eyes half-open and half-closed indefinitely during ecstasy. When you practice looking at the point between the eyebrows during the state of half-sleep and half-wakefulness, you will learn to enjoy the state of ecstasy naturally with the half-open eyes without strain. After you master the above state by practicing every night, then anytime, anywhere, when you look at the point between the eyebrows and think of and feel the joyous state of being half-awake and half-asleep, you will be able to go into ecstasy at will. There are various states of ecstasy, and by deeper and deeper concentration you will learn the highest ecstasy of feeling the unending, ever new joy of final union of soul and God in sabikalpa samadhi (without the consciousness of the universe) or in nirbikalpa samadhi (fully conscious of God and the universe) like seeing the ocean without waves or with waves. To see and feel God in stillness first and then in motion is the highest state of ecstasy. Students who follow the entire Seven Steps and make this work a part of their life's work, seeking God-union and helping others to find it, will ultimately attain this highest ecstasy.

SEAT OF SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

When your eyes are in this half-open state, you will notice that the top part of your limited field of vision is dark, representing the state of subconscious sleep, and the lower part is light, representing the state of wakefulness. The yogi desiring to go into the superconscious state, or into the fourth dimension (which is neither in the state of wakefulness nor in the state of sleep), must concentrate on the horizon line of the superconsciousness which divides the darkness above and the light below, as evidenced when the eyes are thus fixed at the point between the two eyebrows (Christ Consciousness center).

Put your finger at the point between the eyebrows; quickly fix your gaze there and feel the state of half-sleep and half-wakefulness and try to enter the divine ecstatic state at once. Practicing at night before sleep will make it possible for you to go into ecstasy anytime.

The light of the spiritual eye is the light reflected from the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain. The one light becomes two as the current separates and flows through the two physical eyes, as one electric current lights the two headlights of an auto. When yogis concentrate at the point between the eyebrows, the one light of the medulla-Christ center, which has been separated into two in the physical eyes, flows together again and becomes visibly one as the tri-colored spiritual eye in the center of the forehead, between the eyebrows.

When the two eyes man uses to behold three-dimensional matter are concentrated at the point between the eyebrows to permit limited human vision to sense the fourth dimension, then the spiritual eye becomes visible: an eye of

light, with a silvery star encased in an opal-blue disc surrounded by a golden disc. These three discs are subtle telescopes into omnipresent space (one within the other). The yogi's vision, penetrating the golden disc, will bring a vision of all vibrating matter. The yogi's mind and vision penetrating the blue will bring a vision of Christ Intelligence in all vibratory creation. The yogi's mind and vision penetrating the star will bring a vision of God the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness beyond all vibratory creation. It takes time, years of practice, to receive the lost, delusion-paralyzed vision of the spherical spiritual eye of the soul. The soul as ego, having identified itself with the limited vision through the little lens of human eyes, has lost the use of its spherical, spiritual eye, which can look into everything from all sides. One is fortunate to behold this omnipresent eye of the soul during meditation. In ecstasy this eye always remains open in the yogi, and through it he can see into everything, above, beneath, left and right, into all directions of eternity.

First learn to go into ecstasy at will with half-open eyes, then the spiritual eye and its wonders will be revealed to you. Don't look for phenomena or miracles--you won't find them. Learn to love God by going into ecstasy; He will show you all the things you want to see.

TECHNIQUE OF OWNING THE THREE WORLDS

A true yogi must be able to shift his being from the kingdom of sleep to the land of wakefulness, and thence to the superconscious sphere of ecstasy. Practice continuously closing and opening the eyes wide; then practice keeping the eyes alternately closed and half-open.

When you are practicing looking straight ahead, you should concentrate on the world about you. To shut out the consciousness of that troublesome world, shut your eyes and try to go quickly into the pleasanter sleepland. If you then wish to go beyond the dopey joy of sleepland, half-open and close your eyes alternately several times, concentrating on the point between the eyebrows, until you escape from the sleepland into ecstasy. When you want to return to body consciousness, open and close your eyes several times in quick succession and keep looking hard at some object without winking.

By keeping the eyes straight ahead and open without winking, the advanced yogi can remain awake several days. By keeping the eyes closed he can sleep for days. By keeping the eyes half-open and half-closed and fixed at the Christ Consciousness center, the yogi can remain in ecstasy (samadhi) from a few minutes to days, or even hundreds of years. The yogi is not compelled to remain in ecstasy with God, for he can bring back his body consciousness any-time by will, as he remains inwardly conscious during short or long periods of ecstasy.

I have gone into samadhi for forty-eight hours and sometimes for weeks. In highest ecstasy I have felt God-union without interruption for months, uniformly during sleep, wakefulness, or samadhi. As an alcoholic can remain drunk during wakefulness, light sleep, or deep slumber, the true yogi in

highest ecstasy can remain uniformly intoxicated with ever new Divine Bliss during wakeful hours of movement, the inert state of sleep, or the motionless state of sabikalpa samadhi.

The student who masters the foregoing technique will find Kriya producing the greatest results in God-union. Practice it whenever you have leisure time, instead of doing nothing. You will find the temple of Self-realization established within you whenever the omnipresent blessed God consciously manifests to you. You will feel the ever joyous God equally present in you in the temple of slumber, in the temple of activity, and in the temple of Self-realized, unending, joyous ecstasy.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

In the conscious state one is restless and the mind is more or less concerned with the breath, heart, sense perceptions, and so forth. In the subconscious state you can create a world of your own fancy. In the superconscious state everything is calm, the eyes do not wink, and the breath is stilled.

God makes you infinite in your sleep. It is His way of taking your mind within, toward soul consciousness. When you are asleep, you don't know your body weight, or your nationality, or anything about this body. But you come back to consciousness of these limitations again every day.

The eyes reflect everything. When you are angry, your eyes show it. When you are asleep, your eyes show it. When you are in love, your eyes show it. The eyes change according to the state of the mind. When one is conscious, the eyes are straight ahead; when one is asleep, they go down; and when one is in the superconscious state, the eyes go up.

To be able to live in three worlds is a marvelous thing. When you don't like this world of consciousness, go back to the subconscious; and when you don't like to dream, go to the superconscious, the land beyond your dreams. When you lift your eyes, this world is shut out, the subconscious is shut off, and you are swimming in the ocean of God.

AFFIRMATION

O King of the Universe, Thou art my Father.
I am the prince-successor to all Thy kingdom.

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ELECTRIFY ME WITH THY PRESENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The glory of the stars, the luster of the sun's rays, the tiny flashing drops of rain, and the glimmer of my thoughts and devotion I have gathered to offer unto Thee, O Spirit. Saturate my heart with Thy presence, my mind with Thy divine consciousness, my soul with Thy wisdom, and my being with Thy vitality.

All my devotion, all my love, all my soul's craving, all my ambitions I lay at Thy feet. Rouse my devotion, rouse my love; and in the light of Self-realization teach me to behold Thy face within and without, in every thing. Teach me to demand Thy presence until I actually know that Thou art with me in the temple of activity, in the temple of silence, in the temple of every thought, every feeling, and above all, in the temple of my love.

May Thy presence and consciousness fill my heart. May I realize that Thou art the only Reality. Father, I do not want to offer a mechanical prayer to Thee: I demand Thy presence, for Thou art my Father; I am Thy child. Teach me to pray with Thy love and to demand with Thy consciousness. Thou art not hiding from me, I am hiding from Thee; make me realize this. Thou art just behind my heart all the time silently listening to my prayers and thoughts.

Bless me, that I may walk the path of Self-realization until I reach Thee. Teach me to see the lightning flash that glimmers in Thy face of Omnipresence. Lead me away from temptation; but if it is Thy will to test me, O Father! may I find Thee more tempting than any other temptation. My soul is Thine!

PRAYER

Our One Father, bless us, that hands clasped, hearts interwoven, we may walk the path of Self-realization until we reach Thee.

RELIGION PLUS SCIENCE EQUALS SELF-REALIZATION

Nowhere except in India has there been any real research, in a truly scientific way, to discover a pragmatic, life-molding universal religion. About the nature of water and electricity all scientists are agreed, because they have thoroughly investigated the constituents and properties of these two phenomena, but who is sure whether Hinduism, or Buddhism, or Judaism, or Confucianism, or Mohammedanism, or Christianity, is the real means to ultimate salvation and the right solution of the problems of life. Religion has never been taken seriously by real scientists (except in India in ancient times); it has never been made a matter of lifelong research and scientific study in a practical way that would show the origin, end, and purpose of human life on earth.

Religion has too often been promulgated by dogmatists, self-chosen reformers, and self-elected members of God's mystic counsel. Religion has even been peddled with unscientific but profuse advertisements of its efficacy by quack spiritual doctors. "Mine is the only one, the best one," is the declaration of most denominations and cults. But there should be a standard for judging what is best, just as the standard of the quality of goods sold there determines which store is the best in town, even though all claim to be the best.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD? What is the proper standard for judging the value of any religion? Beliefs, big temples, hymns, and prayers do not necessarily signify that a religion is true, good, or lasting. Beliefs should be tested by experience; the hives of temples should be filled with the honey of God-realization; hymns should be sung to a Lord whose presence is truly felt; and prayers made to a God who we know is listening.

The good that religion has done through the ages, by reminding people of an ideal, whether through intuition and reason, or through fear and fanaticism, can never be denied. Yet unscientific religion has also been the cause of the tyranny of the caste system and priestcraft in the East, and of the class system, Spanish Inquisition, and burning of martyrs in the West.

UNSCIENTIFIC RELIGION Cruel wars have been fought in the name of God. To classify as "heathen," without discrimination or investigation, all religions at variance with one's own is an example of unscientific religion. Unrealistic and unscientific attitudes are also responsible for inconsistencies within a given religion. Why does not the orthodox Brahmin of India eat with the pariah (outcast) when his scriptures say: "He is

a man of realization who looks upon an elephant, a dog, a pariah, a Brahmin, in the same way"? Why were there inquisitions and burning of people at the stake for their religious convictions, in the name of the Bible, when Jesus taught such tolerance that he said his followers should offer the other cheek when one cheek was hit?

And we sometimes hear people say: "Oh, we have a nice class of people in our church," meaning well-dressed, well-to-do people. Are not religion and God for both the rich and the poor, the intelligent and illiterate, the strong and the weak alike--a panacea for their common disease of spiritual ignorance?

Since many people eagerly go to motion picture theaters, and throng into other places of amusement instead of going to church, it is sometimes suggested and even urged that dancing, festivities, films, dramatics, and sermons keyed to worldly affairs be employed in the hope of drawing similar crowds to church. Some good may come of it, but the point is, why seek substitutes for true religion, deluding with spurious joys the unsatisfied Self? Religion should not try to compete with ordinary recreational activities; it should rather offer a distinct, individual and characteristic form of spiritual social service giving peace, enlightenment, and spiritual strength, and not merely offer temporary pleasure or outward stimulation, for these can be better presented by the theaters and other entertainment agencies.

Churches and temples, and all religious organizations should be united in their efforts to find their goal instead of being torn by mutual jealousies and sectarianism. Church funds, instead of being completely tied up in heavy mortgages and ornamental edifices, should above all be employed in inducing the greatest scientists of the East and West to make real spiritual investigations, testing practical techniques of more quickly developing the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of man toward a state wherein he is perfect, harmonious, strong, constant, and happy. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Scientists could test the methods offered by all religions in the lives of growing children and thus discover, by practical application, the methods that work the best and bring the greatest good to the greatest number. The knowledge thus acquired could be broadcast in the name of Truth.

Such is the ideal of Self-Realization Fellowship instructions which offer techniques for a balanced development of body, mind, and soul. For the first time these techniques for the threefold simultaneous development of body, mind, and soul, are being freely offered to the world.

The truth should be tested by the government of each people, standardized, and introduced into schools, societies, and universities, in order to bring the maximum results. (Count Keyserling, who believed that scientific Yoga practices should be taught in all centers of learning, introduced these methods into

his schools in Germany after learning the Yoga techniques in India.)

The opinions and belief of men about religion are many, the real spiritual experiences of any human being, of whatever religion or school of thought, will be discovered in the course of realizing God or Truth to be one and the same. There is only one truth, there cannot be two or more truths, or Gods. Real experience of His presence is the goal of all religions.

LIFE STILL With all the modern inventions and comforts of present-day
UNCERTAIN civilization, man's life is still uncertain, unsafe. He does
 not know when he is going to be unhappy, or die without ful-
 filling his desires.

In India many scientific principles about truth have been discovered by yogis and swamis in religious experimentations; they urge all men to follow "dharma," which means "those immutable principles which protect man permanently from the threefold suffering of disease, unhappiness, and ignorance." Destruction of suffering, according to the Hindu Sankhya philosophy, involves the permanent destruction of all possibility of any return of suffering.

The day when man is able to dematerialize or convert his human body into its constituent electrons and basic consciousness, and then materialize it again into an organized living physical being--as Jesus did, and as Hindu yogis do-- he will be free, and will suffer no more from collisions with other forms of matter, which result in pain, disease, accident or death.

Religious effort must be applied to the conversion of our consciousness from its belief in a mortal, perishable body into realization that "solid" flesh is composed of immortal, imperishable energy "frozen" into a human form. And that form is sustained by God's intelligent Cosmic Energy within and around us. Hence the scriptures say, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (medulla oblongata)."

Pure energy cannot be hurt by automobile accidents, rheumatism, appendicitis, cancer, or tuberculosis--nor can it be stabbed by swords, shot by guns, or burnt by fire. We need practical religion to teach us how to become aware of ourselves as souls encased in bodies of luminous eternal energy; then shall we reclaim the lost image of God in us and attain immortality--and not until then.

God made us angels of energy, encased in solids--with the current of life shining through the material bulb of flesh--but we are now concentrating upon the frailties and fragility of the bulb, and have forgotten how to feel the immortal, indestructible properties of the eternal life energy within the changeable flesh. Even protoplasm is immortal. So is thought. Everything is indestructible, even in the world of matter or atomic structure. Then why this illusion of mortality and death?

Listening to the muffled cries of millions of people stricken with a consciousness of disease, mental suffering, and soul ignorance, let us cast aside sectarian prejudices and formalities; let us unite our hearts to fight ignorance, the great Satan of all religions. Let science, instead of devising more articles for impermanent material comfort for human beings, be engaged in making man himself invulnerable to the destruction arising out of his inventions--such as death by airplanes and automobile accidents, or by electricity or bombs--and more conscious of his own superior power over pain, disease, drowning, or any kind of tragic death. Let science discover and teach the method of consciously leaving our bodies, so that we may like Saint Paul "die daily." Then we shall pass from this world to the next world consciously and without struggle, pain, or regret. Let us separate the dross of superstition from real religion by placing religion in the furnace of scientific investigation and realization; then let us apply to our lives the results obtained.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Mahatma Gandhi was the spokesman of the age, a world reformer, a great political savior who came on earth to conquer the world with the invincible weapon of love and understanding, and to establish a United States of the World with the God of truth as its President. By his suffering, renunciation, and universal love Gandhi made many men in different nations feel that they are brothers, and that as brothers they must harmonize their differences. He said that the teachings of Jesus Christ, Krishna, and Tolstoy exercised a great influence in molding his life; that the Sermon on the Mount, in particular, was the means of leading him to an understanding of Christian teachings. In an interview he made the following statement:

"My acquaintance with the Christian Bible began nearly forty-five years ago, and that was through the New Testament. I could not then take much interest in the Old Testament, but when I came to the Sermon on the Mount I began to understand the Christian teachings. These teachings of Jesus echoed something I had learned in childhood, something which seemed to me a part of my being which I felt was being acted up to in the daily life around me.

"This teaching was non-retaliation to evil persons, and resisting evil by spiritual force. As my contact with real Christians, that is, men living in the fear of God, increased, I saw that the Sermon on the Mount was the whole of Christianity for those who wanted to live a Christian life. It is that sermon which has endeared Jesus to me. I may say that I have never been interested in an historical Jesus. I would not care if it were proven by someone that the man called Jesus never lived, and that what was narrated in the Gospels was a figment of the writer's imagination, the Sermon on the Mount would still be true for me.

"As long as peace remains a hunger still unsatisfied, as long as Christ is

not yet born in us, we shall have to look forward to him. When real peace is established, we will not need demonstrations, but it will be echoed in our life, not only in individual life, but in corporate life. Then we shall say Christ is born. Then we will not think of the birth of Christ as a particular day in the year, but as an ever-recurring event that can be enacted in every life."

In speaking of "resistance by love," Gandhi said: "If you have a revolver and your powerful enemy has another, and you flee, saying: 'I forgive him' then you are a coward." He said also that it is better to use the gun than to be a coward, but he advised the use of a superior weapon--instead of either running away or shooting--when confronted by an armed enemy who has done wrong. This superior weapon is "resistance by love and non-cooperation with the enemy's evil ways."

Practice of this will make you a real, victorious, spiritual man. If God with all His miraculous power punished man, where would man be? God does not use crude material force to influence us, but the self-reforming power of love. By His love God makes Himself our Father, the dearest object of all our aspirations.

SEEK GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF SILENCE

Whether the world slips away from its orbit or not, fix your heart upon the eternal Polestar of life--God. The time you spend trying to satisfy trivial desires should be spent with God. Then see what will happen!

All the things that I tell you of the glory of heaven and the vastness of Spirit, and all other beautiful things, are not just descriptions of poetical imagination. A poet is a man who is drunk with feeling. He is a dreamer, but the man of realization is one who knows truth and who is one with truth. Scientists are looking into truth from without to within, but the spiritual teacher is looking into truth from within to without. Unless you have traveled both ways you cannot find their unity.

AFFIRMATION

I shall watch the working of Thy hands in the laws of gravitation and all other forces. In the feet of all living creatures I shall hear Thy footsteps.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE HOME-COMING

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Thy mansion of the heavens is lit by perennial auroral displays
of mystic light.
The stellar system swings across the endless dark highways
of eternity which lead to Thy mystic home.
The comet-peacocks spread their plumes of rays, and dance in
wild delight in Thy garden of many moons.
I sit on a little patch of the Milky Way and watch the glory of Thy
kingdom spread endlessly everywhere.
The festivities of the heavens are dazzling with the fireworks of
meteors and meteorites.
Shooting stars are hurled across the blue vaults by Thine unseen
band of obedient, devoted forces.
Everybody, everything, every atom, rejoices during Thy
coronation as the uncrowned king of the universes.
Every day the trees drop flowers in Thine honor, and the skyey
vase sends wisps of fire-mist incense to Thee.
Candlesticks of heavenly powers hold the burning stars to light
Thy temple.
The planetary dance glides in stately rhythm awaiting Thy
home-coming.
Heavenly lights have opened their gates. Bonfires of nebulous
mists are heralding Thine approach. The speedy sentinels
of sun and moon patiently are awaiting for Thy home-coming.
And I am running wild, dancing in my little body on my little earth,
or skimming over the Milky Way, coaxing everything, every
atom of space, every speck of consciousness, to open its gates
and let Thy light shine through completely and drive darkness
evermore from the lonesome wilderness of matter.

PRAYER

O Cosmic Idol, the finite cosmos with elliptical solar systems, blue skies, countless stars! Thou art the finite symbol of Infinity. Make me aware of this always!

THE INNER MEANING OF SYMBOLS

All true symbols represent some vast perception of God. That is why we should understand the symbolism of both Eastern and Western religions. Since each symbol represents some great truth, when we become attached to a symbol without understanding the truth behind it our concentration on that symbol becomes idol worship, which leads to superstition and dogmatic teaching. The worship of symbols exemplifies a primitive state of understanding. The whole universe consists of symbols that have to be studied and understood by man. The physical cosmos with its elliptical solar systems, blue skies, and countless stars constitutes the finite symbol or "body" of the Infinite. The cosmos has a finite manifested side and an unmanifested region. This unmanifested region is the "invisible mind" of God, working in the finite "brain" of the manifested, finite region of cosmic creation. In the manifested cosmos, space can be spoken of as the "body" of God. The "skin" of the Cosmic Idol is blue and orange. Through every pore of blue space God is breathing life.

SYMBOL OF THE CROSS First of all, we must distinguish between true religion and religious superstition. Everywhere we find that true religion has slipped away more or less from real religious practices. Every symbolical ceremony represents certain religious principles, but the practice of religious rites, forgetting the principles for which they stand, leads to idolatry. For instance, if you worship the cross and polish it every day and love it, forgetting the main thing for which the cross stands, that is idol worship. But if you carry the cross and it reminds you of the suffering of Jesus on the Cross and that he said of his persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," then you are using that symbol in the right way.

The cross is a symbol of man as a combination of duality, as the consciousness between the Infinite and the finite. The horizontal line represents the finite world, or nature, and the vertical line represents the Infinite; when these lines are crossed they symbolize the cross between nature and Spirit. We are the product of both the finite and the Infinite. The Cross was made famous because Jesus was hung upon it, but it symbolizes to Christians his triumph over death. But the cross symbol really signifies a combination of the finite and the Infinite.

SYMBOL OF THE TRIANGLE The symbol of the triangle means "God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The triangle also represents the three gunas --the good, evil, and activating qualities that make up man's character. All the life currents have to have three qualities to create our physical body. When our existence becomes pure, free of the gunas, then we are in Spirit.

SYMBOL OF THE SPIRITUAL EYE The spiritual eye is the symbol of life. It is the epitome of all the cosmic energy in the universe. The entire cosmos appears as the blue light of Christ Consciousness, and around this blue light, the golden halo of cosmic energy, and in the center of the blue light a little silvery star, which represents Spirit. First, Spirit was the little star; then it vibrated, and that intelligent vibration became the blue light of Christ Consciousness, which is present in all finite creation; and finally it manifests as the golden light of astral energy.

The central part, or core, of this earth is very, very hot, whereas its outer surface is much cooler. The energy is centralized in the center. Likewise, the central part of the spiritual eye is the most powerful. The symbol of the spiritual eye is very important. Everything that has been made was made after the pattern of the spiritual eye. In every atom, in every electron, there are three parts, or layers. We do not know what is inside the very central core. But if we could explore the heart of everything, we would know God.

The sun is the symbol of the spiritual eye. As the sun is the life of the cosmos; so the spiritual eye is the life of man's body. Behind the light of the sun is the Cosmic Energy. Behind the light of the spiritual eye is Cosmic Energy. The sun will burn the retina of your physical eyes, but seeing the spiritual eye won't burn you, though it is brighter than a million suns. All the light of this world is only darkness compared to what we can see and realize through the spiritual eye.

LINES AND CIRCLES Why do we like straight lines, and circles, and all round things? The horizon, the earth, and the ocean are all round. Our body is made after this pattern. The head, the eyes, the fingers, the lungs, the ears, and other parts of the body are all round. Every straight line, when put in all directions becomes round. The straight line is more creative because it has both a positive and a negative pole, and when you elongate both ends, it becomes eternal. The symbol of the Infinite is the straight line and the sphere. The symbol of earth and other planets is round. Why? Because force, when it scintillates itself from a central point, always takes an even radius and creates a sphere. So the symbol of roundness is a real symbol; and from this, crystal worship originated.

The first vibration from God was a sphere with a central nucleus. That is the meaning of the round symbol on tops of temples in India. Eternity is also thought of as a sphere. You go round and round and you do not find the end.

There are two forces in Spirit, one projecting and one attracting. The projecting force creates finite forms and the attracting force withdraws them into the Infinite.

SYMBOL OF THE INFINITE Every symbol in nature is a materialization of the rays of God. We are not simple in make-up. Man is a condensed conglomeration of molecular solar systems, of electronic and protonic systems. It is relativity that makes us feel small. The earth is tiny in comparison to the sun, and we are small in comparison to the earth. Solar systems upon solar systems are moving about in the ether. We are a dream within a dream. The body belongs to the earth, which is a part of the solar system, and the solar system belongs to the cosmic system. So although we are different in appearance, we are all symbols of the Infinite, of that vast force of God.

SYMBOL OF RAYS Mountains, oceans, volcanoes, trees--all have been trying to get away from the limitations of their earth existence, and the highest attempt is found in the man of realization. In such a man the locked-up body rays find freedom in Omnipresence.

Each flower is a symbol of the Infinite trying to express Itself. Fragrances are luminous rays of Omnipresence. Everything is trying to get out of the bondage of finite matter. The fragrance of the flowers and the expanding thoughts of men are all attempts of the locked-up life force in matter to find its home in Omnipresence.

The symbol of a tree, the symbol of an animal--both represent different forms of life. Earth is a symbol representing the first stage of evolution in finite creation. The nebulae as a symbol represent a mass of vapors. The emergence of nature, stones, metals, and so forth, are the first symbols of God's beauty expressed in crude earth. Metals and stones are all symbols of beauty and power; gems symbolize not only beauty and power but healing force as well. The tree was the first symbol of life, signifying its first emergence out of matter; therefore, the tree symbol is spoken of as the "tree of life"--a nervous system projected out of matter.

The spirit of God wants to come out of the earth symbol. So Spirit becomes the gems and the stones, and then it becomes the trees and plant life. The roots represent the inner condensed rays projecting out of the universal rays of cosmic energy. The branches represent the condensed outer rays emanating from the inner rays. In the animal and human nervous system the condensed rays of the nervous system become apparently free from cosmic energy. Man's outer nervous system was created out of the soul's desire to free itself from the bondage of the cells, and to be released in Omnipresence. The outer nervous system of man keeps the soul busy with the limitations of matter. The superman withdraws all rays from the nervous system and floats them through the spine and lets them out through the medulla oblongata into the infinite sphere of Light.

SAINT MADUSKI'S FAITH IN GOD

The sky was checkered with fleecy clouds and the wind howled across the long savannas of the blue just at the time Saint Maduski wanted to fly to Geneva to attend an important peace conference. Saint Maduski's friends repeatedly warned him not to risk his life by venturing a flight through the turbulent heavens in the face of an approaching storm. Maduski himself had a premonition that he would come across some kind of trouble if he carried out his determination to attend the conference, upon which depended the welfare of many nations. He debated in his mind, repeating to himself: "God is the essence of all goodness, and since my purpose is good, I ought to surmount all difficulties that I may meet with during my flight to Geneva."

Then again he reflected: "But there are so many people with good intentions who have performed good deeds but who have met with disaster during their effort to do good; God apparently did not protect them. And there are some people who are treacherous and sinful but who apparently have continued to wander freely along the pathway of life without being punished by God's laws."

Finally, however, Saint Maduski's sunny faith in God reappeared, brilliantly shining from beneath the dark clouds of doubts. His wife, his friends, and his neighbors came to protest his venturing through the menacing skies, but their remonstrations were of no avail. As if possessed by a higher power, Saint Maduski hurriedly climbed into the cockpit of his monoplane, started the motor, and flew off.

He shot through the sky like a rocket in the hope of racing ahead of the impending storm. After two hours of continued battering by the pursuing gale, he reached a clear calm spot in the sky. Then he heaved a sigh of relief, thinking that his faith had won and God had smiled upon his destiny to protect him. But in a few minutes his joy turned into dismay as he heard and dimly saw a big rat gnawing at one of the vital electric wires that controlled the entire mechanism of his monoplane. No matter how he twisted the plane in its course, the big rat went on with his nefarious work. Saint Maduski could not reach the creature, yet he realized that if he let the rat's sharp teeth continue to chew the wire, he would have a short circuit; and that meant he would encounter the danger of a forced landing and crashing on the mountain over which he was flying.

In desperation, he tried to seek a solution, and at last received an inspiration from within. Shooting his plane upward from 10,000 to 20,000 feet, he kept going higher and higher into the region of the stratosphere, until he could see that the rat had become powerless and had expired, unable to stand the rarefied atmosphere in which the plane was now moving. Much relieved and happy, knowing that God had answered his prayer, Saint Maduski went on his way rejoicing, finally reaching Geneva safely to accomplish his task.

The foregoing story illustrates that most devotees are subject to repeated doubts until they have reached the ultimate goal and found the answers to all life's problems and questions from the lips of God. Some aspiring devotees are not discouraged by their doubts but instead salvage their faith from the sea of dubiousness. Although God usually does not protect devotees in the way they want Him to help them, still He, in His subtle ways, always sends help from unexpected directions to true devotees who continue to believe in Him.

The story also illustrates that those who have a firm faith in God will be inspired to receive conscious directions in regard to overcoming their problems. True devotees learn from God how to overcome menacing evils by lifting their consciousness to higher and better spheres of existence. The principal moral of the whole story emphasizes that you must conquer evil, not by doing evil, but by lifting yourself to the sphere of goodness and conquering greed by self-control, restlessness by calmness, hatred by love, evil habits by good habits, revengefulness by forgiveness, and habits of mental distraction by continued meditation. As the rat was killed in the finer etheric atmosphere, so all wicked mental habits that are gnawing at the vital happiness of the soul can be automatically eliminated by transferring the mind to a higher level of consciousness established by continued deep meditation.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

It isn't God who hides from us, but we hide from Him in suffering and sorrow. Forget the nightmare of present limitations. Before sleep at night and on waking at dawn affirm: "I am a son of God, even as Jesus and the Masters are. I shall not hide from Him behind the curtain of ignorance. I shall sparkle with wisdom, so that I may fully receive His all-perfect light through my ever-increasing spiritual transparency. Receiving His light fully, I shall know myself to be a son of God, which I always was, being made in His image."

He is the wisest who seeks God. He is the cleverest who knows how to seek God; he is the most prosperous who has found God. He is the happiest who has the happiness of God within his soul.

AFFIRMATION

O Fountain of Flame, ignite all darkness within us. Let Thy light be established forever within us, about us--everywhere. O Infinite Energy, Infinite Wisdom, electrify us with Thy spiritual vibration.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

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SHOW US THAT THOU ART THE PATH WE SHOULD SEEK

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, Thou who art manifest in Jesus and in our great Gurus and the saints of all religions, bless us. Let the understanding of Jesus and the great ones inspire us to understand Thee. Show us that Thou art the path and the goal. Thou art the desire and ambition which we should seek at all times. Bring to us the aroma of Thy love, the devotion of Thy being, the wisdom of Thy personality. Make us feel that Thou art living on the altar of every cell, in our will power, in every desire, and on the altar of our souls.

Mighty Being, spread Thy fire over all the earth and over all souls, and dispel the darkness from within us and make us realize that Thy living flame is within and without. On the altar of our hearts be Thou present evermore!

With all the devotion of our being, with all the love of our hearts, we invoke Thy presence. May those who are earnest find Thee through the secret door of their hearts and in the inmost nook of their minds.

Divine Father, the aroma of flowers and all the beauty of the dawn, and all thoughts, we gather together to worship Thee in the temple of silence. Receive our devotion on the altar of the dawn. Receive our devotion on the altar of the noon-day sun. Receive our devotion at the portals of night. Father, be Thou the only love reigning on the throne of our desires.

PRAYER

Our One Father, let that consciousness which was in Christ Jesus be awakened in us also.

THE OMNIPRESENT CONSCIOUSNESS OF JESUS

Jesus Christ came centuries ago, and he has gone. But has he gone just like other people who cannot be approached after death? No. He ever lives. Why don't you know him? Because you do not know the way by which you can bring him into your perception. To spiritual people Jesus is ever living. You must understand who Jesus Christ was and why he came on earth. You must know how to contact him.

From time to time, throughout the annals of history, we find God manifesting Himself through the consciousness of saints and great reformer prophets of God. God may reflect Himself through one person or through many, but He does not become wholly manifest in any one person. A Christ is known by his actions. There are two kinds of saints--those who do qualitative good, and those who do quantitative good. To do qualitative good is to liberate another soul completely. The greatness or spiritual development of liberated souls, or saints, cannot be compared, for when they are liberated, they are all equal.

God sent souls on earth and as they manifest different degrees of consciousness they may be said to be greater, or higher, or lower. We were all created equal, but according to the kind of lives we have lived we have created these different degrees of consciousness. Jesus, at the end of his life, was able to reflect perfectly his true soul nature as the image of God. He had risen completely from all earthly ties and desires after three days in the tomb.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "JESUS" AND "CHRIST" Because Jesus the man fully reflected the Christ Consciousness that is in all creation, he was called "Jesus the Christ." If someone touched you on the head, or the arm, you would know it immediately. Similarly, Jesus could feel everything in creation. His consciousness was expanded into Christ Consciousness.

The ordinary consciousness of Jesus the man was bound by his body occupying a little speck of vibratory region on the earth. But in the Holy Ghost state, in oneness with the Cosmic Vibration of Om, the consciousness of Jesus expanded from the small territory of the body to all vibratory regions of creation. By meditation and by feeling cosmic vibration in every particle of vibratory space, Jesus the man became Jesus the Christ.

(Simply listening to the Cosmic Sound will not do. By higher and higher meditation techniques given by your Guru-Preceptor in these Lessons you must learn to actually feel the soul in plants or stars-- in any portion of space--at will.)

Christ Consciousness manifests through different souls in varying degrees. Sunlight is not reflected by charcoal, but reflects perfectly in a diamond. Through the experience of inner peace, Christ comes to you. In happiness, he talks to you. Through every blessing, Christ tries to awaken you with the call of his bliss. Anytime a warning comes through your conscience or through others, leading you to the right thing you should do, in that guidance you can hear the voice of Christ. Christ Consciousness was manifested in Jesus many years ago, and now it must come a second time in your own consciousness. When Christ Consciousness is fully reflected in one body, many people are redeemed; but there were also many who saw Jesus but never realized who he was. They saw him just as a man.

WE ALSO Many people cling to the erroneous idea that God made Jesus
MAY REACH perfect and then sent him here. Jesus had to attain that state
PERFECTION of Christ Consciousness. He reached that Christ state after
 many incarnations of spiritual development. Does that not
give hope to us all that we too eventually may reach a state of perfection, even
as he did? This is why John said: "But as many as received him (Christ Con-
sciousness), to them gave he power to become the sons of God (even as he had
become a son of God)." ¹

Even on the last day, the consciousness of Jesus faltered for a moment when he said: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" ² And when Mary came to touch Jesus, he said: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." ³ His karma was not entirely burned up; he was not yet thoroughly purified of all karma, hence he said, "Touch me not."

Jesus successfully stood the test of life by saying: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." ⁴ In doing this, Jesus teaches mankind one of the greatest methods of actually knowing that the body lives principally by God and only secondarily by bread. Jesus said that the body does not live by the little condensed solidified energy of bread alone, but by the "word" of the unlimited vibrating cosmic energy of God. ("Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.") ⁵

Jesus said, referring to the body: "For the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." ⁶ The soul, he knew, could never be crucified. But when he said: "I and my Father are One," ⁷ he was speaking of the Son of God.

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <u>John</u> 1:12 | 2. <u>Matthew</u> 27:46 | 3. <u>John</u> 20:17 | 4. <u>Revelation</u> 21:6 |
| 5. <u>Matthew</u> 4:4 | 6. <u>Luke</u> 9:44 | 7. <u>John</u> 10:30 | |

The body is perishable, but the consciousness in the body is not. Jesus appeared before his disciples after being in the tomb for three days, and they saw him and touched him in the flesh.

DEVELOP THROUGH DEEP MEDITATION You have the same opportunity that Jesus had to express Christ Consciousness. To teach you how is the purpose of these sacred instructions. Christ must come a second time, into your consciousness. If you want to know God before you leave the shores of this earth, stop deceiving yourself and give more time to meditation. You must know that Christ is, was, and shall be hereafter. How are you going to know? Different degrees of Christ Consciousness lead you to that goal. Free souls like Jesus are incarnations of God.

To gain Self-realization you must acquire through meditation now everything that you expect to have hereafter. The only way you can be happy is to bring Christ into your consciousness now. You must meditate deeply. Books and sermons may inspire you to want to know Christ, but they cannot bring Christ into your life. That only comes through meditation. In the time of Jesus thousands of people saw him but did not know him as a Christ. Only those who are highly developed can know Christ. You can only know Christ by meditating in the right way. Then, when your mind begins to expand, you will feel his presence.

If you know Christ in meditation by expanding your consciousness, you will realize that you are a Christ on earth. You will live that life and enjoy that life and be able to help others who are making their lives miserable by forgetting Him. You will show them that there is nothing to be afraid of. You are immortal children of God. That is what meditation will do for you. Meditate! Follow these methods! While you are willing and able, do not wait! I urge you because I desire to help you. I want to bring God and Christ into your life.

The more you meditate, the more transparent will your mind become. God cannot reflect through those who do not commune with Him. Jesus reflected Him because he was highly developed. You must develop that mental transparency also. The sun can be brightly reflected by a mirror, but not by a dark glass. Similarly, in your ordinary consciousness Christ cannot come. You have to expand your consciousness. Many who helped to bring about the death of Jesus did not know who he was. They only knew Jesus the man, not Jesus the Christ. Even today many who think of themselves as Christians do not fully know Christ. One who may think himself a Christian, may not be accepted by Christ when he goes beyond. God is the knower of all. He is the knower of our souls. It is He who judges through our actions what we are to be. Again I say--meditate! Your heart will burst with joy and you will remember God again. Behind your heart throbs the Cosmic Heart, behind your thoughts throbs God's intelligence, behind your wisdom throbs God's wisdom. You are God's child. Remember this!

Only true devotees can know who is a Christ and to what extent another

person manifests the Christ Consciousness. If you follow these instructions, you will be able to recognize the different gradations of spiritual consciousness in others.

A Christlike person must love all living creatures and actually feel Christ's presence in every portion of the earth or vibratory space simultaneously. When one has reached this state, he does not need to concentrate in order to know something. He already knows all things because he intuitively feels all finite creation, the stars, and all specks of space, as living cells of his own body.

YOU ARE THE CONTROLLER OF YOUR OWN DESTINY We are the makers of our own destiny and we reward ourselves by our own efforts. God is the greatest giver of all because He gave us the power to find Him; and yet He gave us freedom to seek Him or not, as we please. He does not expect anything from us. And God is not hiding from us.

He is speaking to us through the flowers, through our thoughts, through all creation. Seeing the intricate mechanism of a watch, we may marvel at the skill of the watchmaker; yet we constantly see all God's creation without giving a single thought to Him. It is our own delusion and errors that make us forget God. Let us find Him again through meditation.

HOW A SAINT SATISFIED AN EMPEROR'S LUST FOR MIRACLES

Long, long ago there lived in India a mighty emperor, whose chief characteristics were self-will and inquisitiveness. He brooked no resistance to his tyrannical will; anyone who displeased him, whether it was one of his own political servants or a helpless visitor, was sure to meet his doom.

There also lived at this time in India a great saint named Teghbahadur, who was known far and wide because of numerous miracles he had performed at the direction of the divine Spirit. Many physically afflicted persons received instantaneous healing, and souls steeped in the darkness of spiritual ignorance beheld the all-freeing Light through contact with this great saint.

Stories and testimonials about Saint Teghbahadur's healing power percolated throughout India, until finally they reached the emperor's curious ears. The emperor sent for him. When Saint Teghbahadur arrived, the emperor said: "People are raving about your so-called miraculous powers. If you are a saint, I command you to demonstrate some miracles in my presence. Otherwise you will have to die."

But Teghbahadur, who was guided solely by divine will, did not feel disposed to cheapen his divine powers by uselessly displaying them; he maintained silence. Repeatedly, with unreasonable insistence, the emperor pressed the saint to perform some miracle, but to no avail. The adamant silence of

Teghbahadur angered the emperor beyond endurance. He seized his sword and, brandishing it, declared: "No one stands against my will. Be assured that this unsheathed sword of mine will sever your head from your body if you do not satisfy my desire for a miracle."

Gently but firmly, Saint Teghbahadur spoke at last: "Swiftly sever my head, curious king! Not before that will your lust for miracles be satisfied. This I will do in order to cure you of your wicked nature. But meanwhile I defy your will; not until you have slain me will you behold a miracle. This supreme sacrifice of my body I will perform in order to heal your ignorance. My miracle will satisfy your curiosity about the presence and miraculous power of God. Be quick! Let your sword sever the head from my mortal body."

Carried away with impatience at the saint's continued defiance, the emperor wrathfully swung his sword through the neck of Saint Teghbahadur. Holding the blood-dripping blade, the emperor stood aghast, nearly frozen with fear, as he beheld what followed. For Saint Teghbahadur truly kept his word. His severed head began to dance around the king's feet, on the marble floor of the palace, and without the help of the lungs or any other part of the body, it began to speak loudly, at the same time writing in blood on the floor: "Cruel emperor, I have given you my head, but not the secret of my religion. Even though you have severed my head, I can still talk, for I am alive evermore in Spirit."

Great masters who are in tune with the Infinite, as Jesus Christ was, will readily give up their lives rather than act contrary to a divine principle. No devotee of God ever plans to do anything against the will of the Divine Father. As God with His infinite miraculous powers does not impose upon the free will of His human children by using miracles to demonstrate His presence, so does He expect all His devotees to behave with equal restraint. By a display of His powers God could easily frighten man into mechanical submission to His will, but this is farthest from the Divine Father's wish. Instead, He lays before the eyes of His children the whole miraculous panorama of the universe, and He expects them to use His gifts of wisdom, love, and free will to seek Him, and to love Him.

Thus a true devotee of God never displays divine miracles when challenged by ignorant people, as we have just seen in the life of Saint Teghbahadur. Jesus also refused to give signs to prove his divinity to those who challenged him with a wrong attitude. He only demonstrated his miracles, even resurrection, under divine sanction in a unique, divine way, to increase the faith of those who are real spiritual seekers.

INSPIRATION

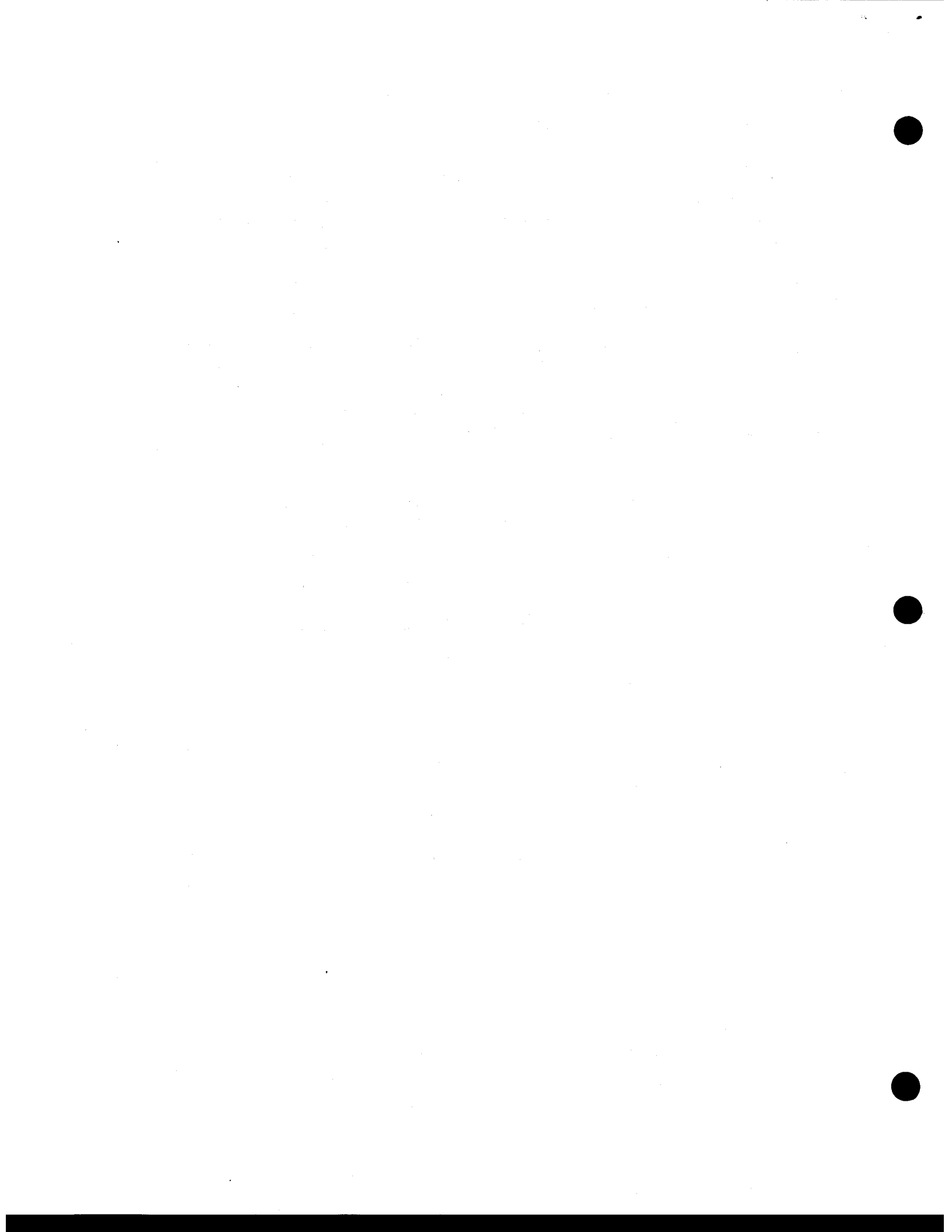
Heavenly Father, make our hands busy doing good to ourselves by serving others. Keep our thoughts ever busy in serving Thee in the temple of all minds. Divine Beloved, keep our days peacefully busy with only those works that remind us of Thee.

Bless us, that only the architects of proper, living food cells pass by the gates of our lips to help build Thy temple of health.

Keep our eyes busy beholding Thee through the beauty-windows of flowers, through the nooks of star spaces, through the portals of souls. Keep our voices enraptured with the songs of our love for Thee. Make our fingers play the chords of our inmost feelings, creating a virginal music of devotion as Thou comest into the temple of our daily silence.

AFFIRMATION

As Christ resurrected himself, so will I resurrect myself into the freedom of Spirit by living rightly, by kindness and sympathy to others, and by loving all as I love God and myself.



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I VALIANTLY STRUGGLE TOWARD THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Eternal Polaris! where'er I roam, the
magnetic needle of my mind compass ever and
ever points to Thee.

Buffeted by gusts of chance or drenched by
rains of misfortune, I nevertheless direct my
mind to look always toward Thee.

The dove of my love, winging through clouds
of bewilderments, storms of distractions, and
whirlwinds of destiny, yet will infallibly discover
the way to Thee.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

Fierce foes, obstinate habits of restlessness, have entrenched themselves in the territory of my mind. May I overcome my enemies, bent on robbing me of my wealth of peace. Lead Thou my battling-power to victory!

RAISING YOUR MENTAL STANDARDS

We should learn to do our best and let the results take care of themselves. We cannot please all, however we may try; someone is sure to find fault and criticize. Certain ones may fail to see the purpose and object of our work. Others may not appreciate the efforts we have put forth to please all. We must therefore place ourselves above the likes and dislikes of people and go on doing our work, leaving no stones unturned in our effort to bring about success. We should not seek refuge in inaction, thinking "Of what avail are these painful works if their fruits be not desired?" Nor should we be fatalists, believing that what is to be will be, whether we put forth our best efforts to bring it about or not. Nor should we expect to be successful in all our attempts. Some ventures may fail, but others will be successful. Success and failure are inter-related; one cannot exist without the other. Life would not be pleasant if we had either success or failure all the time. So we should not become egotistical and overpowered with pride if we find abundant success; nor should we lose heart and become discouraged if we meet with failure. We must cultivate strength and will power, so that we will not be overwhelmed by failure. We should approach our nearest problem or duty with concentrated energy and execute it to perfection. This should be our philosophy of life.

Keep away from trivialities, and instead stock your mind with knowledge that is worthwhile. Often men who are absorbed in business show such a rare quality of culture that we are surprised by it. The reason is that there is no room in such lives for inferior mental occupation. Concentration on great books, great men, great problems, great doctrines, and great facts and their lessons cannot but result in high thinking. The busier we are, the more severe should be our selection of mental fare. Facts are only material for thought. The thoughts themselves--that is to say, the illumination produced in our minds by the presence of rich facts--should be preserved even more carefully. Educated people look for the relation between ideas or between facts, and never see anything without visualizing another idea or fact which relates to or is behind it. To keep no account of what one learns or thinks is as foolish as it would be to till and seed one's land with great pains and, when the harvest is ripe, turn one's back upon it and think of it no longer. Decide to develop the capacity to have your own opinion about an idea, a poem, doctrine, or a work of art, and see it clearly enough to give it forcible expression. Comprehension is criticism, and criticism or judgment is a synonym for thought.

You may lead your life so that your thoughts dwell chiefly on matter, on thought, or on consciousness. Under a predominantly material standard of living, the higher joys and sorrows of existence are denied to man. When the standard shifts from matter to consciousness, the higher life begins to evolve with all its attendant happiness. Therefore live in ideal thoughts; shape your activities according to their standards instead of allowing yourself to be pushed haphazardly in all directions by the impulses of life without any definite and substantial goal. You are the creator, the preserver, the transformer of your life, and your will is the director; but never forget that you are the director of your will. All things, all conditions, all time, all mental qualities, all emotions are but temporal belongings you have acquired. You alone are the enduring one.

CONTROL If we could but realize the effect on ourselves of the burdens
YOUR MIND we often place upon the mind, we might wonder that we have
 not had a breakdown long ago. Taxing our minds with all
kinds of worries and anxieties, we are soon overwhelmed by the load. Fear creeps in as a result and we lose our mental poise and spiritual balance. The trouble with us is that instead of living only in the present, we try to live in the past and in the future at the same time. These loads are too heavy for the mind to carry, so we must restrict the amount of the load. The past is gone. Why continue to carry it in the mind? Let the mind take care of its burdens one at a time. A swan eats only the solid content from the liquid he scoops up in his bill; similarly we should keep in mind only the lessons we have learned from the past and forget unnecessary details. This will relieve the mind to a great extent; and it will eliminate worries. Worry may be compared to an insect that eats away at the inside of a flower. When the petals close in, both the flower and the insect die. Worry consumes all our inner vitality without our conscious knowledge. When we wake up to what is happening, the damage, which may have a far-reaching effect on the nervous system, is already done.

Mental victory over the changing conditions of life is fruitful of happiness and is also essential for the furtherance of life's work. In fact, lack of success in life is caused by failing to hold one's mentality on the plane of the conquering ego (soul in the body-conscious state). The untamable heart may sometimes bleed, but the mind should never succumb. Hopes may be shattered, but do not let the ego accept frustration. Defeat of the ego is the only real defeat for man. In the battle of life he has to learn to be a hero. Heroism is not egoism. It is an expression of the native dignity of the ego wedded to the Infinite.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Christ-fragrance is ascending from the living graves of material human consciousness, and descending upon the devotion of true devotees everywhere. Wash the altar of your heart with tears of repentance, so that Christ Con-

sciousness, and the love of all races, all creatures, may be resurrected within you.

When your body is crucified with disease, ascend into the consciousness of health. When your mind is crucified with trials and temptations, awaken into the sphere of self-control. When you are entombed in sorrow, resurrect yourself into happiness. When you are buried beneath restlessness, resurrect your mind into continued deep silence.

Your God-love has long been crucified by your hidden inner indifference. Waken it! By daily deep concentration resurrect it into the consciousness of Absolute Bliss.

GRANDMOTHER'S BITTER LESSON

There was once a certain boy who lived in a little village with his rich and overindulgent grandmother. His parents had both died when he was very young, leaving him wholly dependent on the grandmother's care. She was so greatly attached to him that she tried to fulfill his every desire. Being so blinded by her love for the grandson, she thought he was perfect and could do no wrong, even when he misbehaved.

After a while the little boy began to attend the village school. He was so mischievous that in a short time the whole school was astir with the exploits of this naughty little pet. The teachers wrote to the grandmother in regard to her grandson's demoralizing conduct, but she turned a deaf ear to the complaints of the teachers and scolded them for finding fault with her boy--so pure in her estimation!

Under the protection of the grandmother's approval of everything he did, the boy grew worse and worse and finally turned from playing pranks and performing other trivial misdemeanors, into perpetrating offenses of deeper gravity. After imitating other boys in the use of profane language, and so forth, the boy started stealing different articles from his school mates. One day he stole a costly fountain pen from a classmate. He hurriedly got away from the school and raced for the welcoming arms of his grandmother. She began to shower him with kisses and embraces; he could scarcely get her attention, so great was the impetuosity of her affection.

At last, when grandmother's effusion of affectionate words ceased, the boy said: "Grandmother, I tried to tell you, but you would not let me, that I wanted a fountain pen and so, cleverly and unnoticed, I picked one from my classmate's pocket." The grandmother just gave the remorseful grandson a great big hug and said: "You must have wanted it very much, and so I cannot scold you for taking it." The grandson was extremely astonished that he received caresses instead of the expected and well-deserved scolding. Encouraged, the boy started stealing books, pens, and other valuables from his

classmates.

Matters grew so bad that the village teachers called a special meeting of all instructors, and after a heated discussion, even the most unscrupulous teachers voted to get rid of the spoiled child. The grandmother's intentions were all right, but due to her erroneous methods, the boy, as he grew older, developed into a professional thief. When he grew to manhood, he became a full-fledged criminal and joined a crime syndicate, scientifically planning and working out many crimes. The neighbors began to find their cattle and chickens missing, and other neighboring villagers began to lose their silverware and other valuable articles from their homes. There was a great commotion, and vigilantes were appointed to apprehend the thief. The grandson, now an expert thief, became bolder and bolder because he was able to elude detection.

As no one can forever hide his wrongdoing, and no one can fool all the people all the time, the criminal ran into a trap laid for him by the outraged villagers. He was flogged by the angry villagers and remanded to jail. There was a hasty hearing and all the rich grandmother's attempts to save him failed. Her wicked grandson was sentenced to ten years of rigorous imprisonment for his confessed crimes of about forty thefts.

But as the grandson was being led to jail, he made a last request that he wanted to whisper a secret in his grandmother's ear. The grandmother, being called, came to her grandson in sorrowful tears, and stooped down and placed her right ear in front of her grandson's mouth. No sooner was this done than the grandson sprang upward like a mastiff and held the right ear of his howling grandmother in between his clenched sawlike teeth. After many punches and kicks from the policemen, the grandson at last let go of his grandmother, after biting off a piece of her ear. As the grandmother cursed and wailed, the grandson triumphantly, with great satisfaction in his eyes, cried out: "Remember, if you had scolded me when I stole the first fountain pen, today I would not have to go to jail and serve ten years at hard labor."

The moral is: it is not only bad for you personally to do evil, but it is extremely pernicious for you to tolerate evil in your dear ones by sanctioning their evil deeds. Evil actions attract evil consequences. The grandmother's evil tolerance resulted in her losing the affection of her grandson for ruining his life.

THE GARDEN OF SOULS

If you have wisdom people will come to you. There is a lot of difference between being learned and being illiterate. A saint once said: "I prefer the company of an illiterate man who is humble, to the man who is proud and does

not know how spiritually illiterate he is. Still better, I admire one who is intelligent and knows how to act. "

When your actions are bad, you are acting like the man who climbed to a bough of a tree and started sawing off the bough on which he sat. He forgot that when the bough would be entirely sawed off, he would fall.

AFFIRMATION

Every day I will endeavor to establish a new temple of Self-realization in the soil of new friendship.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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O SPIRIT, REVEAL THYSELF AS THOU ART

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Spirit, Thou art just behind my vision, with which I see Thine outward beauty. Thou art just behind my hearing, with which I listen to the medley of earth sounds. Thou art just behind my touch, with which I feel the objects of Thy world.

Thou art just behind the veil of Nature's splendors. In the sympathetic glances of flowers, in the zest of sustaining food, and in all Thine other bounties lies hidden the essence of Thy Being, Thine eternal sweetness.

As I invoke Thee, Lord, Thou art just behind my awe-trembling voice. Thou art just behind the mind with which I pray. Thou art just behind my deepest feelings. Thou art just behind my sacred thoughts. Thou art just behind my cravings for Thee. Thou art just behind my meditations. Thou art just behind my tender love.

Wilt Thou not come out from behind the screens of human feelings and creation's elaborate displays? O Inscrutable by Mortals! open my divine eye that sees Thee as Thou art.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O God, as I meditate on Thee day and night may I intuitively perceive Thine all attracting divine magnetism.

TYPES OF MAGNETISM

Magnetism is the attractive force inherent in varying degrees in all finite bodies. The human soul also is imbued with the divine power of attraction.

To create the finite cosmos, God exerted an opposing force of repulsion: dualities such as heat and cold, and multifarious finite beings and objects He created by sending forth vibratory forces from within His own Being. The ideational vibratory force emanating from the Infinite, materialized first into cosmic energy which, in turn, materialized into matter, to create the finite universe.

Originally the universal creative force rested, or remained quiescent, in the bosom of Spirit. But upon being cast out (i. e., projected) from Spirit, it acted as a conscious independent force, capable of creating delusive finite dualities contrary to the single pattern of the one universal Spirit. As God is conscious, the creative force that went out of Him also is conscious.

SATANIC FORCE The creative force that went forth from Spirit to fashion the universe is spoken of as Satan, in the Christian scriptures. It is said that Satan "fell from heaven"; that is, the satanic force or universal energy was expelled, like outgoing lightning, from the bosom of Cosmic Spirit. The Cosmic Delusion or Satan is the originator of all finite beings and objects, and in this sense is the creator of evil--the delusion of finiteness and mortality that keeps finite creatures ignorant of their original oneness with God.

Satan is impersonally described in the Hindu scriptures as Maya or Illusion. In projecting creation God is said to have given all power over the universes to Maya; Maya or Satan is said to be "independent" in the sense that God per se cannot be connected with or reflected in anything limited, mortal, created, or subject to growth and decay. Such things are contrary to God's nature. Anything that is finite is opposed to God the Infinite; in this sense Maya is the devil or evil. "The devil... was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

But Spirit by Its very nature exerts Its own universal attractive force and

thus continuously resists the delusive creative force that It has given to Satan. Thus Spirit is continually drawing back into Itself all beings and objects created out of Its own Being by the universal satanic force of repulsion.

The satanic force is responsible for all the anomalies and evils with which this finite world is burdened. Satan desires that creation and all its inhabitants continuously reincarnate--and thus remain in the finite state--separated from Spirit. Hence Satan encourages in all beings slavery to instinct, conscious and unconscious desires for finite experience, and material attachments. If Spirit had not given consciousness and independence to the universal repulsive power called Satan, all human beings and inanimate objects would, after a certain period of finite existence, lose the cohesive creative power engendered and maintained by delusive attachment to confining physical forms and experiences, and evaporate into their original state of Infinitude.

However, to perpetuate His "lila" or play of creation, Spirit made the universal satanic force conscious and "independent." As a result, Satan is able to keep everything and everybody deluded with the unspiritual consciousness of finiteness and separateness for many, many incarnations. That is why even inanimate objects go through a process of evolution. Souls reincarnate through the law of cause and effect, which is operated by the power of desire born of the contact with finite matter. The satanic repulsive force is thus said to keep up a steady fight with Spirit, whose emancipating attractive force constantly ~~tries to call back all separately created beings and objects, to dissolve in con-~~scious, blissful Unity.

Though God is ever trying to recall His children to Himself, the trouble is, they become truants from Him, lured by the delusive satanic force to continue reincarnating and going through dualistic earthly experiences. Meditation is the only way to escape the clutches of universal delusion and go back to God. It is the conscious way of going into the Infinite, where limiting concepts of race, religion, family, fame, name, possessions--all that belongs to the delusive little finite body and its finite world--are forgotten.

The human soul is made in the image of God, but the body in which it is encased is partially created and maintained by the finite-creating power of the satanic repulsive force. God had a divine purpose in creation, and in giving Maya or illusion independent power to perpetuate itself, and to form objects just as it pleases, even though they be contrary to the perfect pattern intended by God. Man too has freedom to create a perfect or an imperfect life. Hence each individual life is a scene of tug-of-war between God's indrawing attractive magnetism and Satan's outgoing repulsive magnetism. Man's mind and senses are attracted to finite matter; his discrimination and intuition are attracted to soul-pleasing actions and Spirit. The soul, by the power of discrimination and intuition, tries to pull to itself, and to put into harmonious actions, all unifying noble bodily and mental forces. The satanic force inspires desires that keep the body away from the influence of divine soul-magnetism, and influences

the mind to cling to finitude and inharmony.

SOUL MAGNETISM The soul's power of moving toward God is called soul magnetism. By it the soul attracts all good-reminding human experiences. It is by soul magnetism that an individual draws to himself friends and the objects of desires that are basically important to him; and acquires the power to know everything about everything. This soul attraction is God's universally distributed magnetic power, which is seated in every heart.

UNIVERSAL MAGNETISM Because Spirit is in everything, has in Itself this drawing power, all things created out of Spirit have something of Its nature and Its drawing power, in an individualized state. Thus the sun keeps the planets tied to itself by rays of magnetism, and the nucleus of an atom magnetically holds the tiny constituent particles of the atom together. The magnetic power of life force in plants attracts to them the necessary carbon dioxide, water, and so on, necessary for maintaining their existence.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM This term may refer either to the force that holds the animal organism together, or to the magnetic attracting power by which some snakes, for example, charm and draw to themselves little animals. Man is a rational, moral, aesthetic, spiritual animal, and each of these qualities possesses its own particular magnetism. By animal magnetism a man draws to himself physically-minded people. It is almost hypnotic in its effect. Often the exchange of animal magnetism between young people of opposite sexes living on the material plane awakens blinding emotions and passions; thus they draw to themselves all kinds of destructive evil habits.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM AND HYPNOSIS Hypnosis is a crime in the sense that the hypnotizer robs his subject of free will, judgment, and consciousness. Hypnosis practiced repeatedly on a subject for any length of time may affect his brain and make his mind mechanical, guided automatically by enslaving suggestions. Never allow yourself to be under the influence of any one's animal magnetism, which is a semi-hypnotic power. There is only a shade of difference between animal magnetism and hypnosis. When an individual exercises his animal magnetism on another person, the influenced one is constantly blinded and prejudiced by the wrong or right judgment of the stronger personality.

A person under the influence of another's animal magnetism may perform actions consciously, apparently not under any hypnotic influence, yet his consciousness is nevertheless secretly guided and prejudiced by the other person's instincts and habits.

One who is under the influence of hypnosis, on the other hand, becomes unconscious of his surroundings, and is instead aware only of the suggestions of the hypnotizer. A hypnotized person is guided by his subconscious mind,

and his conscious mind becomes almost entirely inactive. In allowing himself to be hypnotized, he permits the trespass of another into the territory of his consciousness. This is why no one should want to be influenced by animal magnetism or to be hypnotized. Repeated subjection of the mind to the hypnotic state brings a negative psychological effect that in time deranges the brain cells.

ILLUSTRATION OF HORSESHOE MAGNET

The ordinary horseshoe magnet has two poles--positive and negative--as well as a neutral area.

Through its positive-negative hands, the magnet draws to itself pieces of iron within a certain range. Furthermore, when a magnet is rubbed on a piece of nonmagnetic iron, the iron becomes magnetic. Likewise, another person's magnetism can be absorbed by close association and loving respectful attention. But if you wish to develop magnetism by this means, you should first make up your mind what kind of magnetism you want. The next thing is to choose the type of magnetic person from whom the specific magnetism that you need is to be acquired. If you think that you are a failure and you want the magnetism of business success, you should try to associate closely with successful businessmen; seek opportunities to shake hands with them and mingle with them.

In hand-shaking two magnets are formed. The upper spiritual magnet is formed with two heads as the two poles, and the lower magnet is formed with the two pairs of feet as the two poles. The junction of hands in the hand-shake forms the common neutral point: the common curve of the two magnets. Since you exchange magnetism when shaking hands with anybody, it is not wise to associate with undesirable persons, with whom you might have to shake hands often.

RULES FOR DEVELOPING MAGNETISM

When there is an exchange of magnetism between two people, the good or bad qualities of the person with the stronger magnetism affect the consciousness of the weaker person. When both persons are of the same inclination, their good or bad tendencies are reinforced.

SPIRITUAL MAGNETISM

In the case of exchanging moral, mental, aesthetic, and spiritual magnetism, immediate contact is not always necessary. Such magnetism can be derived from a distance by meditating on the visual images and mentalities of various persons possessing different magnetisms. One who deeply meditates on the image and mentality of a spiritual man attracts his nature and partakes of his spiritual magnetism.

When electricity passes through a wire, it becomes magnetic; so also if a man continuously thinks, lives, and dreams about morality, aesthetic objects, spirituality, and friendship, he can develop moral, aesthetic, and spiritual magnetism from within.

By meditating upon God and Om, God's conscious, intelligent, cosmic

vibration, one can develop spiritual vibratory magnetism. This magnetic power has limitless range and power. If morning, noon, and night you keep yourself dreaming, feeling, and sensing the all-attracting divine magnetism, you will develop a spiritual power that can draw objects of desire from a distance; that can uplift other people by the mere contact of sight, or even by your simple wish or your powerfully directed uplifting concentration. By this power you can draw friends from afar--those who were real friends in a past life. By this power you can make the elements bow to your wishes. By the invitation of the divine magnetism, you can draw angels, all the luminous creative forces, sages and saints of the past, to come and dance in your joy. By this divine magnetism you can draw all rays of knowledge to come and sparkle and scintillate around your being.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Places and people have various vibrations. That is why places of pilgrimage are so wonderful, for in them many people have thought of God and have left there the uplifting vibrations of their spiritual thoughts. God is using the power of love, the purity and sweetness of love, to draw you to Him. Every time your conscience speaks to you, every time you reason, every time you perform a good action--that is when God is working through you. Every noble thought that you have means God is thinking through you. Why not always receive and reflect magnetism from God? Matter was created, not to repress God, but to express God. Realize this!

You should not only seek to acquire magnetism from spiritual people and places; you must get the magnetism that comes from within through deep concentration and by going beyond through the portals of meditation. Beyond the land of peace, beyond the land of dreams, beyond the land of silence lies the garden of Self-realization. When God's power is flowing through you, you will be a divine magnet.

CALMNESS CONQUERS ANGER

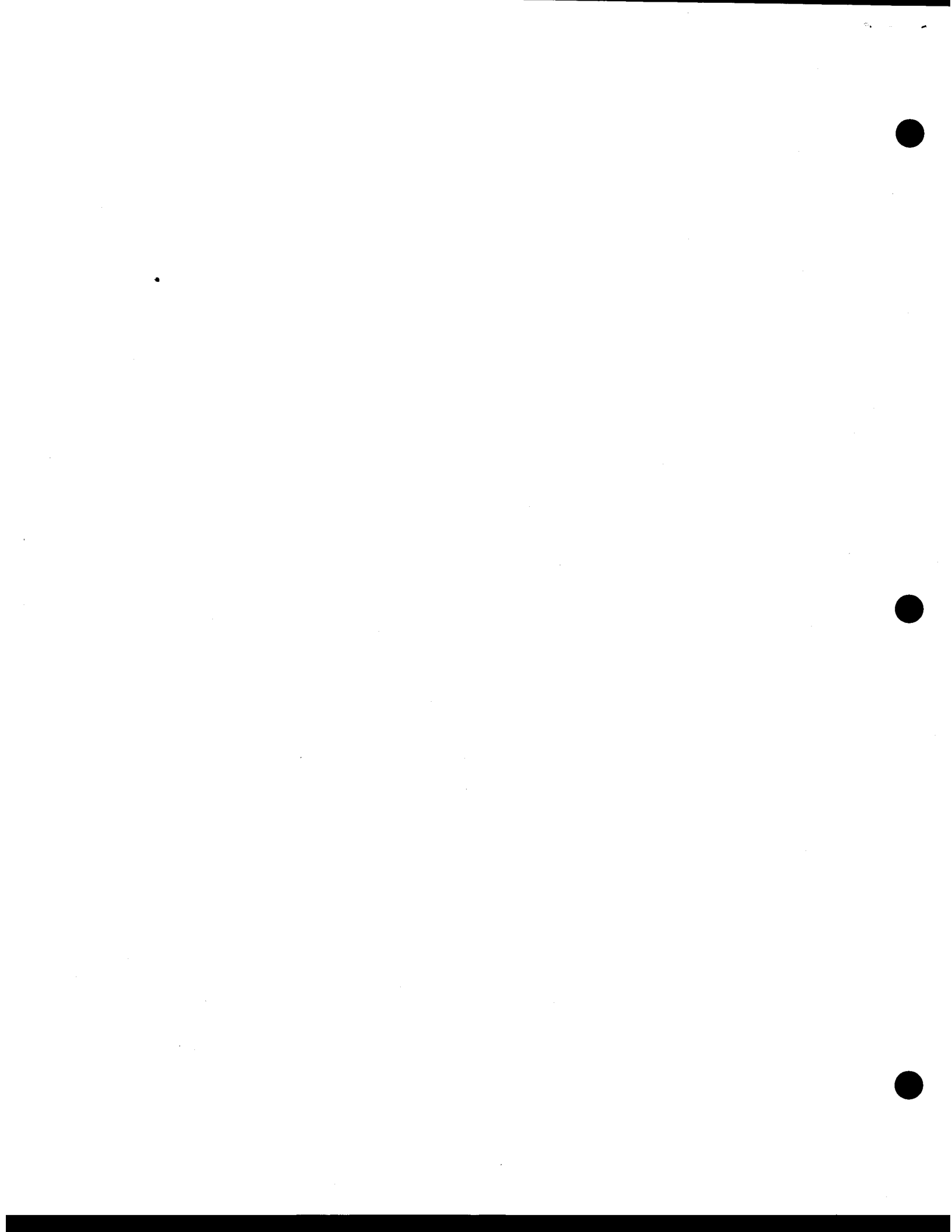
Once a man came to me in the hotel where I was staying, and in front of all my friends began to insult me. My friends became very angry at the injustice done to me and wanted to throw him out, but I remained calm and let him rave. Finally he said, in great surprise: "Why, I have said all kinds of things to you but you are not angry." Then I replied: "Why should I become angry? Blame does not make me any worse, and praise does not make me any better." Truly I felt very sorry for him; he had not succeeded in defaming me, only in revealing his own lack of character. I knew intuitively that he made a business of criticizing everyone but himself. He was a slave to his own hateful emotions.

Do not allow anyone to take away your peace and happiness. Sometimes little puffs of breath have more power to hurt than big blows. Inharmony destroys the nerves. Keep quiet, rather than argue. Be safe in the fortress of your own peace. The minute anyone wants to fight with you, take a walk. If anyone insults you, just answer with your eyes.

Remember, if you are calm you will open the doors to God's presence. Then you will be able to say: "My body is well, and my mind is like a telephone, through which I talk to God. I have withdrawn my energy and senses and the electricity of life to the brain, and my brain has become the telephone of God through which I hear His perfect song in my body, in my mind, and in my soul."

AFFIRMATION

As I radiate love and good will to others, I open the channel for God's love to come to me, for divine love is the magnet that will draw all good unto me.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE STAR THAT LEADS TO THE CHRIST CHILD

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Lord, I have long been engrossed in material things. Enthralled by their outward forms, I failed to perceive within them Thy creative Spirit. The starry single eye of my soul insight is now being opened. Through it may I behold creation ashine with Thy glory.

Bless me, that I ever see the Eastern star of wisdom. May it gleam before my human eyes, alike in daylight and in gloom.

Let my wise thoughts follow the wondrous star that leads to the Christ Child of Infinity.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

The arms of our spiritual resistance are weak. O Master Cleaner, switch Thy power into our limbs, that we may cleanse away the dark vapors which settled on our transparency and dared to prevent the free entry of Thy light. Make us unmarred, bright mirrors, reflecting Thee.

THE THIRD EYE, OR COSMIC MIRROR

The harmonization of the neuter, positive, and negative qualities is spoken of as Prakriti (Cosmic Nature). By the differentiation of these three qualities--spiritual, activating, and obstructing (or sattvic, rajasic, and tamasic)--this Cosmos is created. These three qualities are found in varying proportions in the five elemental vibrations of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Through the instrumentality of these five vibrations, a mortal being enjoys the qualities of matter. If he knows their real nature and knows how to act wisely with them, he will find ultimate freedom.

The good sattvic quality expresses calmness; the dark tamasic quality inertia and lethargy; and the activating rajasic quality, being impregnated with mobility, expresses itself variously, activating good or evil. The devotee, through the calmness of meditation, feels at the Christ or Krishna center (the all-perceiving consciousness at the point between the eyebrows) the presence of the five vibrations that direct human nature.

A material mirror reflects only material objects, but cannot reflect the mind or intelligence as the body does. The Hindu scriptures also speak of the body as a place of pilgrimage and an abode for all the gods and demons of good and evil qualities. The body is the epitome of all knowledge. In it, at the Christ Consciousness center, is the ideal introspective mirror. Herein all the physical, subtle, and astral qualities and vibrations of nature are perceived.

Through this magic mirror of the third eye, hidden in the forehead, man may behold Spirit and all the subtle and gross forces of creation. In this mirror the past, present, and future destiny of all peoples and the cosmos are infallibly shown. When one's spiritual eye is open and when one's soul can look into this inner mirror, one need not depend upon the limited knowledge of astrology, or other predictive arts, to learn about oneself, or about one's future.

The great scripture writers, knowing that the study of books could never directly produce ultimate knowledge, followed the path of self-discipline and the knowledge gained by peering through the inner eye. Owing to the manifestations of the five vibrations (earth, water, fire, air, and ether) many elemental vibratory changes arise in the material, astral, and spiritual bodies of man. In that way many changes of experience occur between the perceiving

ego and its surrounding objects of the senses.

DIFFERENT
ELEMENTS
AND VIBRATIONS
DESCRIBED

How all the different elements and vibrations are perceived in the body is described below. When by meditation the devotee opens one of the five spiritual centers or plexuses, he experiences definite changes in his breath flow, breath length, and breath direction, which indicate exactly what center has been opened by his meditation. Each of the spiritual centers also has a characteristic color, taste, and form. Thus, by knowledge of changes in breath flow and by experiencing definite colors, tastes, and forms in meditation, the devotee knows which center he has succeeded in contacting.

When the earth vibration in the coccygeal plexus is manifest in meditation, then, untouched by either end of the nostrils, the breath flows through the exact middle of the nasal passages for about thirty inches--from the lungs to the point outside the body where a breath ends. Sweet juice is tasted in the throat and attachment to sweet juices accrues. The mind perceives yellow colors and becomes attached to these colors. In the Christ Consciousness or Krishna center, a yellow figure with four angles is perceived. When the mind of the perceiving devotee is pure, the above experience of the earth vibration remains for twenty minutes.

During the perception of the water vibration in the sacral plexus (reflected in the Christ Consciousness center) the breath flows through the base of the nostrils, and the length of its course is about ten inches. A mildly bitter taste is then experienced in the throat and attachment to such a taste grows. The mind perceives the color of white, and the desire to see the color grows. In the Christ Consciousness center, at the point between the eyebrows, one sees a white half-moon. One of purified mind perceives the water vibration for sixteen minutes.

During the manifestation of the fire vibration in the lumbar plexus, the breath flows through the upper part of the nostrils, and its course is up to ten inches in length. A bitter taste is experienced in the throat and attachment to a bitter taste grows. The mind perceives a blood-red color and becomes attached to blood-red colors. In the Christ Consciousness center, at the point between the eyebrows, one perceives a blood-red triangular figure. If the devotee's mind is purified, this fire vibratory state lasts for twelve minutes.

During the sojourn of the air element, or life force, in the dorsal plexus, the breath flows through the sides of the nostrils and its course is up to twenty inches in length. A sour taste is experienced in the throat and the desire for a sour taste grows. The mind perceives a blue color, and a desire for blue grows. In the Christ Consciousness center, a round ball of palpitating blue is perceived. The devotee whose mind has been purified perceives this vibration of life force for eight minutes.

During the perception of the etheric vibration in the cervical plexus, the breath flows through the nostrils without any force whatsoever. An extremely bitter taste is experienced in the throat and attachment to such a taste grows. Smoke color visits the mind and the mind becomes attached to such a color. In the Christ Consciousness or Kutastha center the smoke color checkered with luminous specks of lights is perceived. The devotee whose mind has been purified can retain this vibratory etheric state for four minutes.

The aforesaid elemental vibrations--the principal states of consciousness enthroned in the different plexuses and ganglia in the body and in the Christ, or Kutastha, universal consciousness--all are relatively permanent substances, not created with the physical cosmos, and are not destroyed during the influence of cosmic delusion, but remain equilibrated in the everlasting Spirit.

THE HIDDEN PERFECTION OF GOD IN NATURE Just as the image of the moon reflected in a pool is ruffled by a flowing breeze, so also the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, or God Consciousness reflected in the delusion-ruffled ocean of Cosmic Vibration (Prakriti, or Cosmic Nature) appears distorted when it manifests as imperfect Cosmic Nature. God's inner spiritual nature is perfect, ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss, whereas His outward nature, as reflected in Cosmic Nature and delusion (maya), appears to be full of imperfection. God is perfect. All nature is imperfect.

As human beings, we constantly watch the war between the hidden perfection of God in nature (Para-Prakriti) and the delusion-created apparent imperfection in nature (Apara-Prakriti). Nature is wonderful, but nevertheless it is full of contradictions. It looks as if the hidden perfection is trying to express itself through imperfect nature.

When the breeze ceases to flow over the pool, then the image of the reflected moon in it assumes its natural undistorted face. Likewise, when the storm of delusion is removed from the ocean of mind by meditation, then the natural undistorted image of God reflected in it is perceptible to the meditating devotee.

To the average mind comes the eternal question: If God is perfect, why is it that Cosmic Nature, emanating from Him, appears to be imperfect? The answer lies in the fact that, as the reflected moon in a breeze-stirred pool is distorted only in appearance but not in reality, so the perfect God, mirrored in delusive nature, appears to manifest the delusion of imperfection. In reality God is ever perfect, both in His unmanifested state (when the cosmos was not created) and in His manifested state (after creation).

The advanced devotee does not concentrate upon the delusive contradictory imperfect state of nature, but keeps his attention focused upon the perfect nature of God. As revealed to the devotee, God in His inner nature is immortal,

perfect, pure wisdom; He is ever-new bliss, ever-conscious Being. God as expressed in nature is unknown, mysterious, elusive, and indifferent to the affairs of man. God as revealed to the devotee is intimate, sociable, indescribably lovable, and consciously and directly interested in removing all the miseries of man. So, in order to interest God in your affairs you must meditate deeply and go beyond the domain of cruel, indifferent, unsympathetic Nature. The prodigal devotee must cease wandering in the mire of material desires and must return to the home of immortality.

After a little meditation, the bird of paradise wants to come back to its small cage of sensibility. After a little flight in meditation or vaster space sensibility, the bird of omnipresence wants to come back to its small cage of the body. Even a great soul, when his last day comes, feels a momentary attachment to the body just as does a little bird who lives long in a cage and then is let out. It flies around for a while and then it suddenly feels that it is lost and says: "O Lord, where shall I stay? I must go back to the cage." The bird of omnipresence has its home in all space, but it forgets about its true nest, having loved the little cage of the body; and even on the day of approaching freedom, it has the desire to return to the cage.

Remember, all space is alive with God's flaming presence. Many people think that absence of bodily consciousness signifies only a void. This is not so. ~~On the contrary, in deep meditation space can be felt as one's own body.~~ The greater the depth of meditation, the greater the spread of consciousness in space. Men of the world seek bread only, forgetting God, thereby suffering unending woes; but those who by meditation seek the kingdom of God and ever-new bliss within, find added unto them health, prosperity, and complete fulfillment of all desires.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Possession of material riches without inner peace, is just like dying of thirst while bathing in a lake. If material poverty is to be avoided, spiritual poverty is to be abhorred, for the latter is the cause of all human suffering.

Every tomorrow is determined by every today. Analyze your life, as if in a laboratory. Find out what it really amounts to, then devise means to make it what it ought to be. Do not look for your spiritual flower every day. Sow the seed, water it with prayer and right endeavor; and when the sprout comes, busy yourself with the health of your plant, picking out the weeds of doubt, indecision, and laziness. Some morning you will suddenly behold your long-looked-for spiritual flower of realization.

The Satan of the spiritual path has claws of bad habits in which he tightly holds his victims in the rut of sense pleasures, isolated from the joys of eternal life. Do not be tempted by him to forget God and your daily meditation. On the altar of prayer and meditation, lay your offering daily to God, and soon the Satan of bad habits will have no power over you. Before your strength his hold

will weaken and relax. There is hidden strength within you to overcome all obstacles and temptations. Bring forth that indomitable power and energy.

I DISCOVER THE SUN OF COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

I sat on a mound with eyes closed, peering into the inky darkness within. I seemed to be seeking something unknown, yet familiar. I opened my eyes. The gay world of splendor--richly decorated with a measureless sheet of twinkling moonbeams, sublime stars teeming with mysteries unspoken, myriads of flowers, green velvet grass, chains of shining peaks, light-bejeweled waves of heaving seas, and the mighty power of cities--the proud world mocked me and called me a dreamer. Its voice seemed to laugh and say: "Foolish dreamer--why shut your eyes and banish my beauty from your sight and live in empty darkness?"

I silently said within myself: "Audacious intruder, thy beauty would forever remain unappreciated without the invisible inmates of my dark mental chamber." Even as I thought this, I felt the thrilling call of some mysterious charm within. I closed the doors of my eyes. Then again I was confronted with the same abysmal darkness. I watched with steady vision, looking and seeking in all directions. Sometimes bewildered, I felt that I caught glimpses of opaque thought, which became half visible in that deep mystic chamber.

I steadily watched in the dim but growing light of my concentration. The gloom became softer and revealed its hidden glory. I found that I could see without my eyes; see each glimmering thought, like dream lightning, flash and disappear or come bursting like star shells, with revealing showers of light, and vanish in the mental sky. I could count each flash, each outburst, and could recognize their intensity, their duration, and their meaningful splendors.

I found that I could hear without my ears the muffled chafing roars of loud powerful thoughts, softer sweet suggestions of conscience, and the quiet voice of reason. I heard distinctly all they said, as I had never heard before.

Thus, for the first time, I felt the presence of these living inner invisible blood relatives. These, my own, had long lived so near in this dark chamber, planning, organizing, molding my destiny, yet unassuming, unnoticed, unseen, unheeded.

What charm you cast around, what stupendous work you do, invisible friends. Are you afraid to plainly appear in the crude scorching gaze of human minds? Do you fear to be hurt by twilight-pale unthinking mentalities, or choked by the gross vibrations of noisy matter?

Yet how stealthily you go out of the dark chamber to build the huge skyscrapers, the mighty bridges, and all daring material achievements, then slip away, unknown, unthanked, unhonored, unsought. The coursing train in the gloom, the whirling airplane, the floating steel village with small cabins, the

triumphs of art, the Parthenon and Taj Mahal, all man-made miracles, all remind me of you only and your powers, O mighty thoughts!

But when I see the sparkling lake welcoming me to quench my thirst, the dark cloud bursting with eagerness to pour its rivers of rain to fill our life-giving green paddy fields and nectar fruit trees, the moon's light switched on at the approach of darkness, the changing round of the seasons, the hall of the world beautifully carpeted with soft green grass, and the sunlight-painted clouds on the canvas of the sky--all these matchless scenic pictures--I begin to question whose is the cosmic hand that works so wisely powerful everywhere. I wonder whose all-pervading voice commands the sun, moon, planets, earth, nature, the seasons, all blind forces, the ebbing and flowing seas, man, life, and death; and who receives their obedience? Is there an infinite chamber of mystery in which one limitless luminous mind hides and secretly reaches forth to decorate the universe with endless charms?

Through the window of memory I looked. I recalled the early hours of my childhood, when gradually the sun of my consciousness first began to appear. As it slowly rose out of the darkness of the unconscious mind, it dimly lighted only one part of my little mental horizon encompassing my mother, playthings, and a few multicolored candies.

~~Later, as my consciousness grew brighter I found that a greater part of~~ my mental horizon became illumined. I saw in it many other things--my friends, relatives, neighbors, my country--all these were revealed and included. Now, as I look within, at my mental sky, the sun of my consciousness seems to be shining brighter than ever in its supreme power. It no longer lights one direction, or only a portion of my mental horizon, or only a few friends, or one nation, but all nations, nay, all creatures, and nature, all planets, all stars, all shining electrons, all universes, all space. I did not know that out of the inky darkness of my mind I would discover the sun of Cosmic Consciousness.

AFFIRMATION

God is within me, around me
protecting me, so I shall banish the
gloom of fear which shuts out His
guiding light and makes me stumble
into the ditches of my own error.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE LARK THAT DRINKS THY RAINDROPS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

I am Thy lark that ascended the skies of Thy cosmic presence, ever seeking the raindrops of truth. Deeply I prayed that Thou release from cruel clouds of silence Thy mercy showers. Parched and craving, gratefully I drank each sacred drop of perceptions of Thee.

I yearned to feel Thee within and without. My age-old thirst ceased only when Thy touch cooled my fiery soul and zeal-warmed body.

The drought of despondency has passed. The dryness of my unfulfillment was banished by Thy downpour of peace. Now I soar serenely, cascading Thy song of contentment.

I am Thy lark, imbibing only the secret waters of solace that fall unfailingly from the heavens of Thy Being.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, with the veil of Thy presence teach me to wipe the dream fears of pain, sadness, and ignorance from my soul's face of silence.

HOW TO OVERCOME PAIN AND SORROW

"Ideas of cold and warmth, pleasure and pain, O son of Kunti, arise from the contact of the senses and matter. They come, fade away, and are short-lasting. Endure them thou, O Bharata."

-- Bhagavad-Gita 2:14

ADVICE IN GITA Because of its inner contact with the soul, the ego hides within itself a dormant expectation of permanent equilibrated states of consciousness. By identifying itself with the body the ego becomes disturbed, for it then cognizes only impermanent experiences. Thus the ego is deceived when it fixes its expectations upon the fickle senses instead of upon the permanent joy-giving soul. So the Gita warns the spiritual aspirant not to confuse his soul by close association with the senses, which will make him miserable and forgetful of his innate blessed state. The ideas of heat, cold, pleasure, and pain are suggested by the senses and cannot be felt by the ego if it keeps a strong undisturbed matter-disengaged mind.

The word titiksha (endurance) does not imply that one should rashly expose the body to intense cold or heat and thus endanger physical existence. If the body is sense-enslaved and unspiritualized, you should protect it from extremes, at the same time mentally disciplining it to rise above its slavery. It is only when the spiritually developed mind realizes its aloofness that the suggestions of suffering, born of the senses, do not register in the consciousness. Ultimately, when one sees the body as condensed Spirit, through realization (and not through imagination, as many try to do), one finds that Spirit is above suffering.

To protect the body from extreme heat or cold is not wrong. Artificially cooled or steam-heated apartments can temporarily comfort the body and remove physical suffering arising from high or low extremes of temperature. These are the methods generally adopted by modern man; but constant ministrations to, and changes adapted to the demands of the body often enslave it to the impositions of environment. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the East and the West in their methods of combating suffering. The Gita gives unique advice as to what one should do when invaded by sensations of heat or cold, pain or pleasure. It states that an environment-enslaved body is a constant trouble to the mind. An enslaved body is apt to enslave the all-powerful mind, whereas: "The soul that with a strong and constant

calm takes sorrow and takes joy indifferently, lives in the life undying!"

PSYCHOLOGY OF PAIN A deep metaphysical problem is involved in understanding the psychology of pain. Stimuli of cold, heat, hardness or softness, etc., touch the nerve endings of the body and are transmitted through the nerve electricity and nerve wires as sensations. No one knows exactly what sensations are. We experience them as the immediate feelings produced by the contact of the senses with matter. Sensations of cold and heat are entirely different from the objects which produce coldness or warmth. Contact with ice or with hot water is experienced only as an idea. A sensation, or first-flowing feeling, produced in the mind through contact with material objects, is elaborated in perception. It is expanded into conception, and lastly, conception changes into feeling.

Feeling is that faculty which passes judgment upon the experiences of the senses. It expresses itself in terms of pain or pleasure of the body, or sorrow or happiness of the mind. Sensitive feelings become so accustomed to passing quick judgments upon the nature of specific sensations they experience that the all-powerful mind succumbs to these disturbances. Sensitive feelings magnify sensations. Instead of academically and impartially experiencing the variety of sensations permeating the body, they create pleasure or pain out of the attitudes of likes and dislikes that they whimsically form in their hasty judgment of the nature of specific sensations. In short, feeling classifies all experiences as being pleasurable or painful, according to its own preconceived likes and dislikes. If its judgment could be neutralized, that is, made impervious to short-lasting excitations or ephemeral pleasures and pains, then all experiences would be merely intellectually cognized. Most wild animals (not those that become sensitive through domestication), savages or other persons living close to nature, and children suffer far less than other people from cold or heat or pain owing to their lack of magnifying mental sensitiveness.

Consciousness of pain, either physical or mental, is solely a mental experience and is created by the ego and feeling. One may reason: "If anyone hit the shinbone of my leg with a hammer, I'd cry out with pain. I would not be imagining that pain." Or, "Imagination of pain, as in the hurt in a dream, and pain itself are certainly different." However, the only difference between imaginary and physical pain is that the former may be roused by imagination and the latter roused by feeling born of a sensation. Both of them are mind-born. Dream-born pains hurt as much in the subconsciousness as actual physical pain in the waking consciousness.

DETACHED MIND FEELS NO PAIN Some people have the opinion that sensation is the feeling, or consciousness, or a certain state existing in the nerves and flesh. Even if this were so, sensations cannot be felt without the action of the mind. A knife may be thrust into the flesh of a person under chloroform, but, though the stimulus is present, there is no sensation, nor is there any feeling to create pain. This proves

that when the mind is detached by deadening of the nerve centers, it cannot feel the nature of a stimulus as an inharmonious sensation, nor can it create the feeling of pain. Sensation is only a mental attitude born of the state a particular stimulus creates in nerves or flesh. Of course, the birth of a mental attitude as sensation must exactly correspond to the nature of a stimulus applied to the body. Sensations of cold, heat, and distinctions between various stimuli visiting the body, give rise to different states of consciousness, or sensations.

Careful attention should be given to the idea of the genesis of pain or pleasure. Let us go over this again. All stimuli applied to the body at first just report themselves in the brain as distinct sensations cognized by the discriminative faculty of man. Gradually, the mind begins to recognize the sensations in terms of utility. That is, after its appearance in the body a sensation begins to reveal whether it is harmonious or inharmonious to the conditions of the body. Thereupon the feeling becomes roused and begins to develop likes or dislikes in connection with the various sensations. This innate feeling (known in animals as instinct) instead of intellectually cognizing body sensations as merely harmonious or inharmonious, begins to feel pleasure or pain. A strong attraction toward a certain set of sensations produces the satisfied mental state called "pleasure." A strong aversion to a certain train of sensations develops pain. That is why people in whom feeling is predominant suffer heat and cold more than evenly balanced mentalities. Physical pleasure and pain are derived through a long-continued mental habit. That is why harmful, distasteful drugs give imaginary joy to some, and the first taste of a wholesome, delicious fruit is sometimes repugnant to other people.

Two children of the same age and health, but varying in the degree of sensitiveness, made to walk ten miles under the hot sun, or to undergo a minor, painful operation without the use of chloroform or local anesthetic, will behave differently. The child in whom feeling predominates may collapse during the walk, or cry or become hysterical during the operation; whereas the child in whom reason predominates may smilingly walk the ten miles and not be afraid to do the same thing all over again. He may calmly watch the operation upon himself as something wonderfully interesting. A doctor once cheerfully performed upon himself a complicated operation for hernia. Mahatma Gandhi underwent an appendectomy without any anesthetic, chatting cheerfully with his disciples during the operation. He was able to detach his mind at will from sensations.

Pain or physical pleasure, although they accompany body sensations, are not created by the stimuli or the sensations, but are created by feeling, imagination, and mental habits born of environmental and hereditary influences. Just as bad or good habits may be transmitted from generation to generation, so the consciousness of pain is bequeathed to mankind from erring predecessors. As formerly the whole world believed the earth to be flat, so a belief in pain has been inherited by modern man from his ancestors, who were not sufficiently versed in psychology to check the growth of the mental disease of belief in pain.

In India, where there is a general belief that eating ice cream in winter predisposes one to catch cold, a Hindu friend of mine used to catch cold whenever he ate ice cream in winter. When he came to America, he was surprised to find Americans eating ice cream in winter without any ill effects. He forthwith followed their example and suffered no more colds, which had previously been brought on by his own expectations. Anyone can bring to mind numerous instances of such self-imposed troubles.

PAIN IS A MAN-MADE DELUSION Being made in God's image of joy, we never were meant to suffer pain. It appeared in man first in the nature of a mild desire to warn himself of the advent of an inharmonious sensation detrimental to the interest of the body. Instead of proving itself such a friend and guide to the body, pain turned out to be a veritable tyrant-torturer that caused the tears of mankind to flow.

This hereditary terror of pain has brought forth fears and cries from self-hypnotized souls, much as the imagined sight of a ghost makes a child cry out in panic. The absent consciousness of a chloroformed person cannot create pain; on the other hand, a well-balanced mind may recognize the presence of an inharmonious sensation in the body without being sensitive to it and thus creating pain. That is the purpose of the spartan Boy Scout method of training and of the Yoga systems of bodily discipline and endurance. They are not forms of self-torture, but practical methods for lessening the suggestion of pain by developing the resisting power of the mind.

IMAGINATION-BORN SORROWS Sensitiveness is the root cause, the primeval mother of all pain and mental sorrow. Inharmonious physical sensations--for instance, that of a thorn in the foot--give rise to the imagination of pain, just as the inharmonious thought of the loss of a loved possession or friend may cause sorrow. Some imagination-born sorrows cause more suffering than excruciating pain-giving body sensations. I know of a man who died of corroding mental agony over the death of his beloved. Though he walked, talked, and took food, he declined as rapidly as if he were suffering from some dread disease. He soon pined away to his death, though there was no sign of physical sickness.

Thus it is wrong to acknowledge pain or sympathize with misery-making sensitiveness in people, for it strengthens the delusion of pain and sorrow. All wrong ideas must be gradually overcome by the mind first, then by the body. The Gita says that instead of catering all the time to the whims of cold or warmth, one should learn to endure them, by mental control. The Gita does not advise rashness such as putting one's hand in fire or lying unclothed upon snowy ground. It does suggest that the body, though trademarked with mortality by limitations of the maya-guided human mind, is actually materialized Cosmic Consciousness. Since fire and ice are also materialized Cosmic Consciousness, how can they engender suffering in the body? The human soul must break away from the self-imposed imaginary limitations of the body in order to learn that everything in the phenomenal universe is made

of the condensed consciousness of Spirit.

However, a matter-sensitive person should avoid rashness. He should not follow a method that is powerful but which may kill him when he uses it. The cure should not be worse than the disease. He should train himself gradually. One should first realize that sitting in a draft does not produce a cold. Practice using less heat. Never be afraid of the outdoors. Know that snow and the burning sun are but materialized God Consciousness, the same as your body. By reason we can understand that these similar forces cannot hurt the body or cause pain. We must realize that nothing but life exists, and that pain comes only through permitting one rate of vibration, or state of consciousness, to affect another.

Pain comes through identification. Just as a mother suffers at the sight of her child's suffering through an accident, the mothering mind suffers if any inharmony is present in the body child. It transfers its suffering to the body and vice versa. Another person, witnessing the above-mentioned accident, may feel scarcely any of the pain that the mother feels. Sympathy, or identification, causes pain. One must be impartial, and not excited. This does not mean that one should neglect an accident to the body, or think that attending to its cure is detrimental to the interest of the body; the idea is not to concentrate on the sensation of pain.

UNCHANGING A mentally sensitive man, a "touchy" person, is always feeling hurt by material contacts and by his conversations with
 QUALITIES people. If the weather is bad he moans and makes a personal
 OF SPIRIT tragedy of it. Or after a conversation he says, "Oh, I
 'read between the lines' of Mr. John's words, and he has hurt me terribly." A cheerful person, understanding the way of the world, may ignore the inclement weather; in spite of persecutions he wears a soul-warming smile and loves his fellowman as much as ever.

That is why stimuli and sensations of heat and cold, or of body wounds, should be cognized by the mind only as ideas. The mentally sensitive person always is troubled by suggestions of a hot summer day, or a very cold night, or a slight operation. Man's body must be made pain-proof, until in it are found--not the decaying, hurting, changing qualities of matter--but the invulnerable, unchanging qualities of Spirit. Consciousness cannot hurt consciousness without acceptance. It is very difficult to hurt an ever-smiling wise man who considers all the injury done to him as due to ignorance. He refuses to allow his consciousness to acknowledge or accept the inharmonious ideas of other people. He knows that the ego's process of cognition and any hurt-suggesting thought can be linked only by feeling. Thought can never be hurtful unless feeling overpowers it; that is, consciousness cannot be hurt by consciousness without conscious acceptance. Certain conditions in the body, being inharmonious, suggest pain, but that does not mean that they should be given the opportunity to be successful in producing pain.

Feeling, mental dislikes, haunting suggestions of ancestral habits, lack of mental training, ever increasing sensitiveness and nervousness--all these give birth to pain. Continued sensitiveness nurtures pain, and in turn produces mental sorrow. Whereas, a steely mentality, which cannot be dented by the blows of accidents and physical and mental trials, can remain untarnished, ever shining, ever piercing the veil of dark ignorance, destroying the vitals of the apparition of pain.

As awakened immortals, breathing the ever living life and primeval happiness, let us by endurance and discipline of body and mind destroy this reign of terror, this haunting superstition of the imagination-born Emperor of Pain. God made man and God made joy. Man made pain, and he will have to know joy in order to be a part of God again.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING PAIN

When pain arrives in the body through cold or heat, hurt or disease, remember the following:

1. Your mind manufactures pain. When under the influence of chloroform, you do not feel pain because the mind is otherwise occupied and is unresponsive to sensory impressions.
2. Pain is a friend that warns you of bodily troubles, and is not intended to be a torturer. While adopting the proper remedies against inharmonious conditions in the body, do not give way to the suggestions of pain by allowing the mind to become identified with the body's condition. Pain is comparatively short-lasting and has its limitations.
3. Divert your mind during pain by directing it into engrossing work. Keep calm and do not dwell upon the sensations.
4. Association with stronger-minded, or less pain-sensitive people is beneficial.
5. The best way to overcome sorrow is to know that it springs from identification. Sorrow is not overcome by sorrow, but by joy. Some sorrows we like to indulge in, but do not let sorrow stay with you too long, for it will rob you of the richest of your soul's possessions--perennial bliss.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

To be one with God is to own the entire kingdom of Omnipresence. This earth is a little dot compared to the sun, and the sun is only a little dot in the vast sky; and how small is this sky compared to the universe, God's kingdom!

An earthly king may be a slave; but a king of infinity is a real monarch, for he has true freedom. The king of infinity is king even without any material wealth at all. A real king is he who loves God.

When you wear the crown of peace you will have everything; but unless your heart is pure, unless you find your soul in attunement with God, you will never reach that state of peace.

The more you meditate, the more helpful you can be to others, and the more deeply you will be in tune with God. Selfish people remain spiritually hidebound, but the unselfish expand their consciousness. When you find your omnipresence in meditation you will find God. If He is pleased with you, all nature will work in harmony with you. Learn to talk to Him with all your soul.

AFFIRMATION

I will seek the kingdom of God first, and make sure of my actual contact with God; and then, if it is His will, all things--wisdom, abundance, and health--will be added unto me as part of my divine birthright, since He made me in His image.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION As in preceding Steps, these summaries consist of quick general reviews, and some new explanatory notes. Some knowledge of the inner laws of the cosmos should by now have become part of your own realization, gained by your expanding intuition in meditation. You are making a daily, conscious effort to tune in with divine will. The nature of prana has been made known to you, and you are now ready to learn control of this divine energy. You know that the altar of God in the body is in the spine. You are ready to taste of His bliss, which is beyond anything you have yet known. You are on the threshold of awareness of eternity.

Greater than ever before is the need for purity of living and one-pointed determination and never ceasing vigilance. The kingdom of God is within you, and the portals are open wide to the expansion of all your being in full consciousness of its glory. There is no end, no limit, to its bliss. Press on--and on!

LESSON NO. 131 Evolutional reincarnation progresses from crystals to the human sphere of existence. The true image of Spirit --that is, individualized Spirit or the immortal Soul--survives the physical body and gathers to itself another body through which to work out the traces of former desires and actions that have lodged in the subtle bodies accompanying the soul in its passage through incarnations. Matter suppresses the Spirit as Spirit tries to reform or raise matter by evolutional coaxing and expansion.

Reincarnation represents the successive stages through which the Spirit returns to Itself--from manifestation as the many to reunion in the One (Itself). Reincarnation cannot be fully understood intellectually; it must be realized. One must become conscious of this process within one's self, through meditation and through becoming aware of the source of desire, which is the root cause of action that turns the wheel of cause and effect. Reincarnation is scientific and is an accepted doctrine of many religions, representing more than half of the human race. One very definite reference to reincarnation in the Christian Bible is found in Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." That is, he that overcomes bodily desires will not have to reincarnate on the physical plane to go out in pursuit of the fulfillment of desires. "He that hath an ear, let him hear

what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7) also refers to reincarnation. The Bhagavad-Gita says, "I, the Spirit, incarnate myself again and again in order to uplift the oppressed and redeem the virtuous."

Great souls may reincarnate of their own free will in order to help other souls to freedom. Compulsory reincarnation, through desire and wrong action, is man's punishment to himself. You must learn to reverse the searchlight of your attention from the senses to the Spirit so that you may be free to live as a master, no longer subject to the law of reincarnation.

Thoughts, like words, send out vibration; that is, they direct energy. These vibrational waves of energy go on and on, and eventually, like boomerangs, they return to the sender. Watch your thoughts. Make God alone your goal.

LESSON NO. 132 Before man's soul, an individualized wave of Spirit, can mingle and become one with the ocean of Spirit, it must break the imprisoning walls of the causal, astral, and physical bodies. The illustration of the three jars of salt water, each one within another, floating in the ocean, clarifies this point.

Man has three bodies, as follows:

1. a physical body of sixteen chemical elements;
2. an astral body of nineteen elements (mind, ego, chittwa, intelligence, ten senses, five pranas);
3. a spiritual or idea body of thirty-five elements (seed ideas corresponding to the sixteen elements of the physical body and nineteen elements of the astral body).

The soul is encased in the "bottle" of the idea body, which is stopped with the cork of spiritual ignorance. After death of the physical body, the astral body carries the discordant vibration of unfulfilled desires which must be resolved in other physical embodiments. The ten astral senses are the real organs. The ten physical senses are their instruments or modes of expression. The astral body must take on another physical body in order to manifest the tendencies of action and desire created by the senses.

Desire directs energy. Unfulfilled desires form energy whose momentum is directed toward fulfillment. Since the astral body lacks instruments of expression, it must be "reborn" in another physical body to materialize these tendencies. Material desires thus create an outgoing force that carries the smothered soul on and on through many lives of experience and suffering. This force must be reversed toward God in order to free the soul, which has forgotten its birthright and has identified itself with the body. This consciousness of the soul in connection with the body is termed ego. Man must use his free

choice to calm the storm of delusion by the magic wand of will, allowing his desire-tossed soul wave to rest again on the bosom of ever-blessed Spirit.

LESSON NO. 133 The scientist is right in declaring that all animal bodies are interrelated. Nevertheless the "missing link" between animal and man has never been found. Because man has animal characteristics it is assumed that he has evolved from the animal. This is not correct. Man is a special creation. All minerals, plants, and animal bodies are made of intelligence and electrons. Spirit is the intelligence in all matter, always conscious, but not self-conscious until it becomes individualized in man. After passing through progressive experiences--through the various mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms--it transmigrates for further advancement in specially created human bodies. This began with Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. Animal characteristics are soul memories, or instincts, that cling to the disembodied astral vehicle of the soul after physical death, and impel rebirth in a physical body so that they may be fulfilled on the material plane. Adam and Eve, although empowered to create immaculately after their own kind, awakened the sex instinct in the tree of life, the cerebrospinal centers. By indulging in the sense of touch, and ignoring the warning of God, Adam and Eve lost the power of creating immaculately, and had to reproduce their own kind in the animal way.

Action through ignorance, desire, selfish craving, and instinctive reaction to self-created environment forms a vicious circle, which carries the beclouded soul on and on through thousands of incarnations until it becomes conscious of this process, and Self-consciously reverses it. Actions performed in full understanding, and without material desire, bring the process to an end and turn the soul toward its infinite home, God. Even the highest earthly desire of the soul is limiting in comparison to the eternal kingdom of the cosmos. To be desireless does not mean to be negligent and without ambition. That would result in stagnation. Man must be divinely ambitious to do God's will, and to perform all duties for Him without selfish attachment and craving. He need not go to the forest, for earthly desires can follow him there. He can be in the world but not of it--nonattached--using all his faculties and powers in playing out his role in life for God, in perfect understanding of His will.

LESSON NO. 134 At physical death the disembodied soul seeks its own vibratory level; it is drawn where those of like qualities are grouped together. Not all souls can go wherever they like in space. Virtuous souls with deep realization have greater freedom and do not have physical rebirth forced upon them. They may come or go from earth as they wish.

The usual understanding of the term "disembodied soul" is a soul that has lost the physical body. Metaphysically defined, the term should mean a soul liberated from the three bodies: physical, astral, and causal.

All human relationships are but chemicals of life for the purification and conversion of human love into divine love. Immortal divine love is trying to

awaken the all-perfect divine love in souls through various processes of divine, conjugal, parental, friendly, brotherly, sisterly, fatherly, and motherly love. Divine love is clouded by veils of selfishness, physical attachment, emotional excitement, mechanical family relations, and sex madness. If human love fails to purify itself in one soul, it will keep on seeking in this span of life and beyond until it finds the expression of all perfections of divine love. When perfect pure love and unconditional friendship are expressed between two souls, that love will be registered as one divine love. After finding divine love in one, you will suddenly find that your heart will feel the same divine love for all the members of your family and for every other being in the world.

LESSON NO. 135 Just as electricity does not "die" with the breaking of the bulb into which it flows, so the death of the body is merely the switching off of the nerve current from a particular body bulb. Death is a passive state of involuntary relaxation.

According to the quality of the subtle body, disembodied souls exist in different vibratory regions of pranic or life energy. After a day of worries you are apt to have bad dreams; so if you have lived in fear and worry and evil activities, your soul will not be at rest after death and will have nightmares in the astral world.

It is dangerous practice to contact any disembodied souls except those of saints and great masters. Highly developed souls can be invoked consciously, but they respond only to love and the high vibrations of those who practice the breathless silence. Study carefully the techniques. This is important.

LESSON NO. 136 Every action mentally or physically performed, consciously or unconsciously, has a specific effect on the life of man. This law of action, or cause and effect, is termed karma. Your present body and mind, and the cumulative effect of environment and experiences, represents the germination of the seeds of past desirous action. Present human action arises from the impulses of this accumulation, the effect in its turn becoming cause, and thus the accumulation continues, until Self is deeply hidden and there is little or no true freedom of action.

The Springs of Action are:

1. Impulses acquired in previous states of existence.
2. Influence of present environment.
3. Impartial reason of man.
4. Acquired habits of present life.

Independent action can arise only when the mind frees itself from the clutch of habits, desires, and influences of every kind, and becomes aware of its own processes. Knowledge of the law gives freedom. Right action performed through understanding and without desire for specific results frees one. Also, you can, by understanding the law and acting within the law, build good

karma consciously. You are the architect of your destiny. Nothing rules you unless you let it. Souls re-embodiment to work out the seed tendencies. Souls freed of parasitical karma realize their unity with their God-source.

You have no right to judge another person unless you yourself are without fault. Inquire deeply by introspection to become aware of your own shortcomings so that you may intelligently improve yourself.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings.

Then see a second set of questions under the heading, "Your Personal Report." Answers to the questions listed under "Your Personal Report" are the only ones that you are asked to send to Headquarters for this step.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP SIX

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 131

1. Define reincarnation.
2. Quote two scriptural passages which refer to reincarnation.

Lesson 132

1. What is it that reincarnates? Explain.
2. Explain the difference between astral senses and physical senses.
3. Explain why earthly desires cause rebirth.
4. Upon what will the environment of your next life depend?

Lesson 133

1. If man is a special creation, why does he have animal characteristics?
2. How should you perform all actions in order not to develop attachments?

Lesson 134

1. What is a disembodied soul, metaphysically defined?
2. Explain the divine purpose of human love in its various relationships.
3. Name the limitations that mar love's divine purity.

Lesson 135

1. Where do souls live after they shed the physical body?
2. Describe the technique for contacting physically disembodied souls.
Name an essential requirement for contacting them.
3. What is the best remedy when sorrow comes?

Lesson 136

1. What is karma?
2. How can one win freedom from karma?

YOUR PERSONAL REPORT TO MOTHER CENTER

STEP VI

We at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters will be happy to hear from you at your convenience regarding the following questions:

1. To what extent have you been able to apply the Self-Realization teachings in your daily life?
2. What improvement do you feel that you have made in your life physically, mentally, and spiritually through the study and application of the Self-Realization techniques and principles?

NOTE:

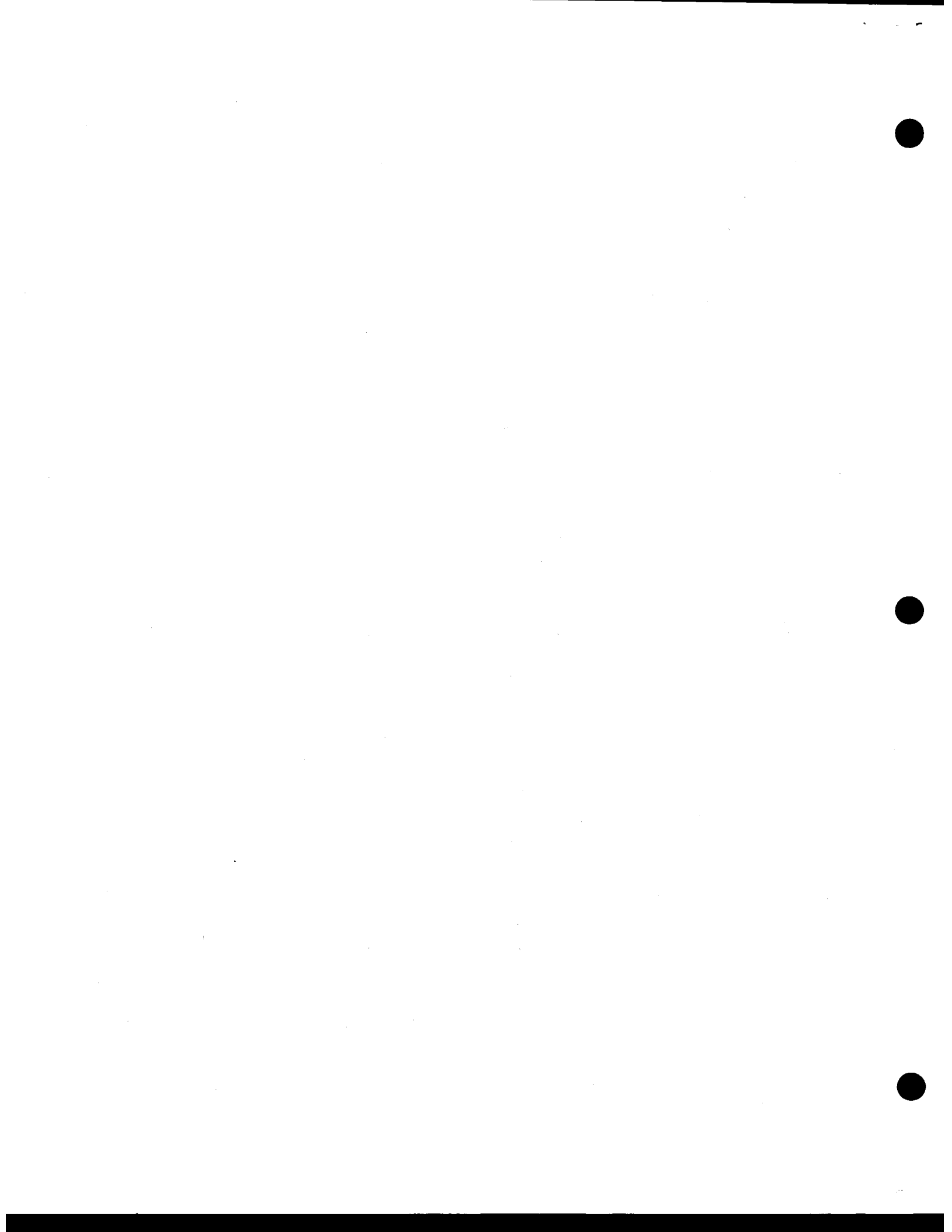
As you probably know, "Self-Realization Magazine" occasionally prints excerpts from students' letters indicating the benefits they have received from practicing the teachings. No names are ever used, only initials and name of city and state, for example: --M J., San Francisco, California.

Would you be willing for Self-Realization Fellowship to quote any statement made by you in this personal report, for the encouragement of other students on the path?

()Yes. ()No.

(Name)

(City and State)



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 137 You yourself must destroy the undesirable karma (fruits of past actions) you have created. You should understand the cause of your present conditions, and put forth definite effort to destroy any undesirable tendencies. Your present state is determined by seed tendencies of past lives, and your comprehensive will-efforts of this life. When in meditation the vital power is felt, that ray of vital sense must be switched to the brain and held there to scorch out the lurking seeds of failure or disease.

No matter how great a failure one may seem to be, one should remember that there are always success tendencies buried somewhere in the subconscious mind, and that it is possible to rouse them by repeated judicious, initiative effort. A yogi may not possess much, but through his ability to focus his mind he learns to create at will whatever he needs at any given time. Of course, true yogis do not entertain personal desire. Their one desire is that God's love shall reign on the shrine of their souls, and that they may kindle His love in the hearts of others.

Blind selfishness is the root cause of unbalanced prosperity. Those rich people who, having themselves acquired success, ignore the agonies of others that fail, do much to upset the balance.

LESSON NO. 138 In order to comprehend methods of rejuvenation intelligently, one should have some understanding of what a human body really is: a bundle of forces whirling together in ultra-rapid motion. All the tiny cells are grouped together by a chemical force to form the various tissues of the body. These cellular molecules are in turn made of whirling atoms, protons, and electrons. These in their turn are made of condensed semi-intelligent sparks of vital force. Below the surface of the vital sparks lie the waves of sensation, and beneath them are waves of thought, feeling, and will force. Hidden below all the layers of vibratory waves is the ego.

The vital force is a manifestation of the vast force that expresses itself in all forms of subconsciousness, waking consciousness, superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. The body as a solid substance occupies externally a very small space, but since that "substance," on the internal side, is actually condensed Cosmic Consciousness, it is essentially vast and omnipresent.

The nature of matter is change, constant motion. From birth on, the body is undergoing constant decay and renewal. The body, being motion, cannot live without motion. It has to be stirred with life externally by food, liquids, oxygen and sunlight, and internally with vitality derived from Cosmic Consciousness.

It would be entirely possible to keep the body flooded with vitality from the inner source of Cosmic Consciousness. God's omnipresent electric energy is flowing into our bodies all the time; we should become conscious of the process and, knowing the law, depend more upon it and less upon the limited physical source.

Death is only a temporary cessation of the body state until inner motions of the vital forces of ego, soul, and karma can reappear as materialized motion in a new body. The mind is king of the body. The body as a manifestation of Spirit is the ever-youthful Spirit. If a soul is powerful enough, it can vitalize an old body, instead of discarding it in death. Through meditation, bring peace and harmony into every cell of your body.

LESSON NO. 139 During the season of youth, man should be making life beautiful, instead of sowing seeds of disease as so many do; but it is never too late to begin to correct mistakes. Man can retain youth but to do so he must know how to connect his will power with God's energy in his body. Infinite powers are at his command, but he must observe certain details:

1. Take care of bodily health by observance of correct diet and exercise.
2. Keep the mind busy with creative interests.
3. Connect the body, mind, and will to evolve energy by using the techniques given in this Lesson.
4. When one is conscious of a discordant condition in the body, he should direct God's electric energy, through thought and will power, to the seat of disturbance. Life force is the all-healing x-ray of the soul.
5. The highest form of rejuvenation is to unite the human consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness through meditation. Just as soon as the body is understood to be not isolated from Spirit, but a number of rising, falling waves of vibrating currents in the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, then the perpetual rejuvenation of the Spirit can be implanted in the body if so desired.

Food is merely condensed atomic energy. The action of the chemical, vital, and mental forces upon the stomach and intestines changes food into energy. Learn to depend more and more upon the limitless supply of the inner finer sources of body energy.

Carefully study the two techniques given in this Lesson, and practice sending energy through your hands. You can use this both for healing yourself and

for healing others.

If you seek the kingdom of God first, and love Him above everything else, divine harmony will perfect all things in your life, fulfilling all your good desires. It is better to cut off everything in your life that shuts you off from God than to have all earthly possessions without God. All love springs from the fountain of love, God.

LESSON NO. 140 Every man is a physical being, a mental being, and a spiritual being. The needs of each must be supplied. In order to discriminate as to the real needs of each, we should understand the true purpose of life. Then we should know how to withdraw attention and energy from objects of distraction, and to concentrate upon the fulfilling of our definite needs.

Prosperity plays a very important part in our consciousness, but we should know wherein lies real prosperity. Bodily health is conducive to increased mental efficiency. Mental efficiency nourishes intelligence, whereby we may release the power to create at will what we need. Every thought is a tube, a channel, through which the divine light is passing. Physical and mental efficiency help to clear the path of understanding, so that our hearts may be opened to the divine flood of God's light and love. True prosperity, therefore, lies in the possession of health, and of the power of mental efficiency by which you can create at will the things you need, gain wisdom through understanding, and find happiness.

Every line of business is an art for dispelling certain human miseries. Choose a vocation for which you are physically and mentally fitted, one in which you can fasten yourself with a deep interest, so that you receive happiness in the doing; then do it better than it has ever been done before.

Even a saint may need to use money in his work. It is the manner in which one uses money that is of importance. It is better to be able to buy your food and physical necessities than to depend upon charity. Money is a medium of exchange. Money in itself does not possess intelligence. You must direct it with your intelligence to bring happiness and blessings in its path. Only as wealth gives happiness is it of value.

The more you improve yourself, the more you can be a friend to man. God has given you independence to shut out His power or to let it in. First you must make up your mind to do a thing, and then have your will power so balanced that you will stick to it to completion. You can remedy your mistakes because reason and will have been given to you. You have more power to overcome than you have troubles to be overcome. There is no such thing as fate. You make your own destiny. Claim your divinity. Unite yourself with God, and receive your blessings direct from His hand.

LESSON NO. 141 Spirit is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy. In order that there be someone besides Itself to enjoy and appreciate Its almighty Bliss-nature, Spirit differentiated Itself into many individual souls, creatures, and objects. Because It created everything out of Itself, Spirit became triune: It is the Knower, the process of Knowing, and the thing Known. Spirit accomplished this seeming division of Itself by the law of relativity, or cosmic delusion, by which everything and every being in creation holds the appearance of finiteness and separateness from the Infinite Spirit. The many were supposed to find the Bliss of Spirit by Self-seeking, independent effort.

The cosmic delusion, or Satan--the cosmic conscious force repulsed from Spirit in the act of creating the universe--holds the essential qualities of Spirit; hence it has independent creative power and free choice in using it. Individualized souls, evolved out of Spirit by the subtle force of cosmic delusion, instead of being conscious of their true identity as living waves of the cosmic sea of Life, essentially immortal, were deluded into believing themselves isolated from Spirit, having "birth" and "death," or "origin" and "decay." They were further deluded into a feeling of attachment to their passing states of existence as they evolved upward on the creative evolutionary scale. Lack of comprehension of his true nature, plus finite attachment, forms the real cause of all man's suffering.

The satanic force, in transforming the appearance of the Infinite into the finite, evolved the law of propagation by cellular division and sex creation to keep everything vibrating away from the Infinite. Self-defense, its cruelties, the desire to kill in order to eat, were suggested to man by the cosmic law of delusion. Thus satanic delusion took advantage of its independence to pull all things away from God. Until humanity awakens, it is under the influence of this cosmic satanic dream.

This infinite cosmic dream of finitude does not affect Spirit, but it does affect the individualized souls. The power of the Infinite wants all the individualized points of consciousness to enjoy Its bliss consciously, and is constantly trying to call back everything to merge into this bliss consciousness. This process is called "the law of evolution and reincarnation." All substances are constantly changing into finer substances: inorganic into organic, mineral into vegetable, vegetable into animal, animal into man. In Man is the power to comprehend his divine nature, by which he may release himself from cosmic delusion. He must awaken in God through meditation and cease to reinforce satanic delusion by belief in disease and death. Awake in joy!

LESSON NO. 142 Man's Godlike quality is free choice. He always has the power to accept or refuse, to act for either good or evil. Before he acts he has freedom; but after he acts, the effect of the action will follow him. That is the law of karma. Just a mental conception of good will not make one good. Both virtue and vice require activity. So a choice must

be made. Temptation has power because:

1. Lack of spiritual experience makes comparison between spiritual and material happiness impossible.
2. It appeals to the outward flowing current of the senses.

The best way to destroy temptation is to be so merged in the happiness of God that all other happiness will be only secondary to that sublime state. Get out of the tempting environment in order to give your wisdom a chance to guide you. Why should you let evil wreck you for just a moment of false happiness? When you meditate you will see what life is meant to be, and will find completion of love and happiness therein.

Keep good company. Good company stimulates your actions and thoughts in the right direction. It is a hedge around your good habits.

LESSON NO. 143 To produce good violin music, a player must be equipped with a good violin and bow, mastery of technique, and mental skill; so also is it necessary in good singing and speaking for one to have both mastery of technique and inspiration. The daily practice of specially selected, graded vocal exercises is highly important in development of the speaking and singing voice. Inspiration must be the principal guiding force in speaking or singing.

Necessary to the mastery of good technique are:

1. breath control
2. strengthening of the lungs
3. strengthening of the chest
4. care and exercise of the throat
5. toning and calming of the nerves
6. banishment of stage fright

The technique of speaking and singing should be practiced until mastered without fault or blemish so that it becomes of natural use; then it should be forgotten; inspiration should be the outstanding guide and power behind speech and song. Speech and song without soul originality are mechanical and do not touch the hearts of the hearers. Technique should be acquired to open the channel to the perfect, harmonious expression of soul inspiration.

Practice regularly the exercises given in this Lesson for the purpose of gaining mastery of technique. Even if public speaking is not your goal, a good speaking voice will help you immeasurably in your daily contacts with people by stimulating self-confidence and concentration. Faulty, halting speech can be corrected.

LESSON NO. 144 All our faculties have to be cultivated for all-round

development, and the memory is no exception. It is that power by which you recollect your past experiences. Unless you have a developed memory you are not an educated person. It is eternal, elastic, and can record many things. If you limit your memory, you limit your soul's expression.

Memory was given to us so that we may:

1. learn the lessons taught by experience, and thus profit by them;
2. discriminate between good and bad, and eliminate the bad;
3. lead the soul through the garden of beautiful and divine memories, so that it will at last remember God, the Essence of all good things.

Factors important to the development of good memory are:

1. association of events or ideas
2. the art of visualization
3. deep attention
4. deep impression through feeling
5. repetition
6. meditation

Since memory is mechanical and an imitator, you should never repeat anything wrong. Do not let anything wrong remain in the consciousness. Take the attention immediately away from things you do not want to remember. Destroy all records of evil, and recall only the good and beautiful. Meditation leads you to remember that you are one with God. Meditation means dropping the body consciousness and remembering who you are, and then coming back and ruling the body. If you can make your garden produce the blossoms of beautiful thoughts, then in the flowering of beautiful memories you will at last remember God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP SIX

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 137

1. What is the spiritual way to burn the seeds of past failures or disease?

Lesson 138

1. What is the actual nature of the physical body? Explain.

Lesson 139

1. Describe in detail the two techniques of sending healing vibrations through the hands.

Lesson 140

1. What is real prosperity?

Lesson 141

1. Discuss the tug-of-war between satanic delusion and God. What is delusion, and what is the nature of this tug-of-war?

Lesson 142

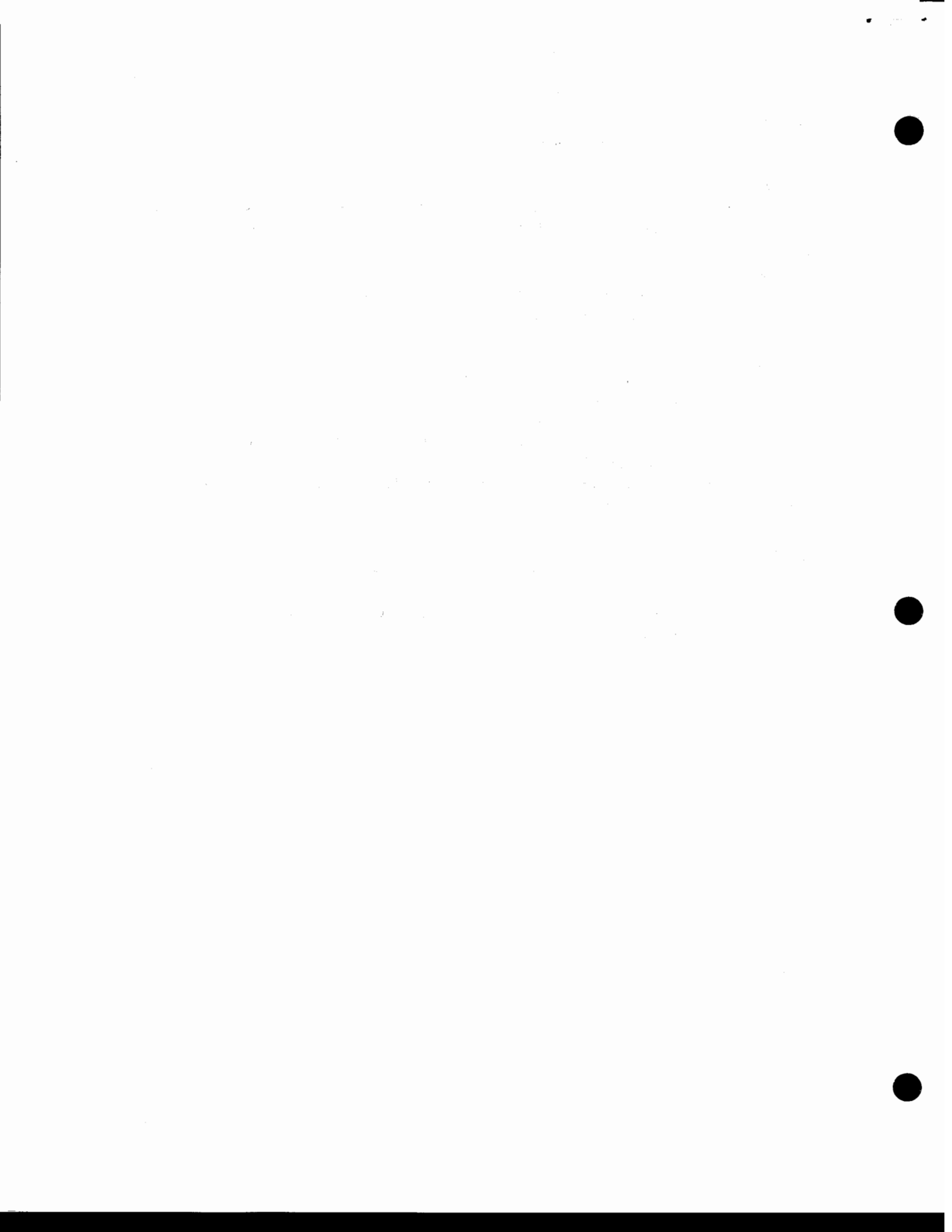
1. Why is temptation tempting?
2. What is the value of good company?

Lesson 143

1. Why is proper breathing important for good singing?
2. What is the breathing exercise given in this Lesson in connection with developing the voice?
3. What is the soothing drink recommended as an aid to overcoming nervousness?
4. Name the factors necessary to the development of good technique of vocal power.

Lesson 144

1. Name several factors necessary in the training and development of memory.
2. Name the principal purposes of memory. What is its divine purpose?



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 145 "What is That, knowing which, I shall know all?" Indian sages, instead of identifying themselves with dogmatic beliefs, go straight to the heart of spiritual investigation by approaching God or truth through practical scientific methods. Truth must be understood, experienced in one's own being. One who has not so experienced truth cannot teach it to others. Only he can lead you to God who has himself experienced God and who lives the life in that consciousness of truth.

In India, those people with an intense desire to know God seek out the great teachers who live a life of Self-realization in quiet places. The disciple seeks the teacher. A devotee whose heart is ready, who is truly desirous of knowing God, directing all the effort of his heart and mind toward realization of the Spirit, will eventually meet saints or behold them in vision, and recognize them; those who are not spiritually ready for the teaching and discipline of a God-knowing saint may meet holy men and yet not recognize them.

Churches should be laboratories of spiritual experience. Division-creating dogmas should be discarded, and only the truth garnered by actual realization retained. Religionists should realize that the time has come to let the mind of God flow freely through searching hearts. Bliss is the altar on which God stays forever. Those who find God in this life are already rich in joy.

The pantheistic conception of God is a teaching of Yoga philosophy. It teaches that God is everything, and in everything, and so can be known by Self-realization.

Meet your Beloved in the temple of ecstasy; be one with Him who has everything. Knowing Him, you do not need to supplicate for anything from anyone.

LESSON NO. 146 Delusion means seeing everything as apart from God. Delusion might be defined as "dual vision." For when one sees in unity with God, one knows that all is God, that God exists in all, that without God nothing exists. So-called matter is God in motion. God is love, the eternal divine magnetism of energy and substance holding the universe in order; holding all forever within Itself.

India's teachings show you how to become conscious of your identity with God, how to overcome delusion, or dual vision, and know your sonship with God the Father. In this lies the vital quality of India's message.

God lays before the eyes of His children the whole panorama of the miraculous universe, but He does not display miracles when challenged by ignorance. Neither do His true devotees give signs to "prove" His divinity. True devotees, such as Jesus, will readily give up their lives rather than act contrary to a divine principle.

LESSON NO. 147 God gave us reason that we might find freedom. We cannot live without that power of reason. Independence, reason, discrimination accompanied by will power directed into activity--these, balanced by meditation and vitalized by devotion, lead to freedom.

In reality, you contain all wisdom within yourself; you must know how to become aware that you have it. To acquire all the wisdom in the world in one lifetime from books would be impossible. But there is another angle of approach: By intuition, that power of Spirit inherited by the soul, we can perceive all things directly without any other faculty. To have conscious knowledge of all things in nature, unselfish sympathy with all hearts, to see and feel yourself omnipresent in all and behind all, is to perceive all with Cosmic Consciousness. A yogi does not take this as a mental concept, but really merges his little self in the selves of others so that he feels his consciousness moving through all.

Have a purpose in life. Do not sacrifice your soul on the altar of indifference. Cut through the cocoon of ignorance; develop your wings of intuition and fly to the Infinite Beloved. You should neither be content to be an unreasoning part of the cogwheel of the machine of activity, nor yet become lost in devotion without activity. Devotion without work may turn into mere emotion. Meditation balances all. Find out what you are and why you are here. Make the search for God your purpose in life.

LESSON NO. 148 Release from a prison is conditional to the fact that one must first have entered the prison. All unfulfilled desires create necessity for rebirth. Souls that come on earth and misuse their God-given free will become caught on the wheel of karma, the law of cause and effect, and have to roam in the labyrinthine pathways of rebirths, and consequently experience painful deaths. The only way to liberation is to find the all-desire-quenching God-Bliss in ecstatic meditation. Through forgetfulness of its Source, a soul identifies itself with its body-cage; thus the pain of death is due more to the psychological reason of the soul's attachment to the body than to physiological reasons.

Untimely deaths are undesirable because premature death by sickness or accident:

1. obstructs the working out of individual karma and necessitates rebirth;
2. prevents one from carrying out spiritual impulses or the will of God.

Death is not undesirable when a soul:

1. has completely worked out its prenatal and postnatal effects of actions;
2. has found liberation in God-bliss;
3. has become desireless through understanding of its true nature;
4. has learned to perform all actions in full divine awareness, to please God and to uplift humanity.

LESSON NO. 149 Death is a release from the flesh body, a transition of the soul from one plane of existence to another. The fear of death by the unenlightened is partly due to simple fear of the unknown-- as a child's fear of the dark--and the ego's instinctive rebellion against the seeming finality of death; also to the fear of pain, although death is really cessation of all bodily pain. The only pain is mental, and the momentary feeling of suffocation in the lungs. The enlightened one who has learned that the soul's existence is not dependent upon breath, may watch without fear or sorrow the retirement of the life force from muscles, sensory nerves of smell and taste, ~~and from the optic and auditory nerves.~~ Consciousness is last retained in the spine, and the actual death or decay of the body does not result until the consciousness retires from the medullary plexus. The enlightened one rejoices in this freedom, and even the ignorant one will awaken from the bondage of the dream life to immortality. To know God is to be free from the cosmic dream delusion of mortal life.

You are sent to this plane to express the Infinite consciously. The Infinite is ever new, inexhaustible in Its creativeness. Through you It seeks to express a unique phase of Itself. Examine yourself deeply, and try to determine whether you are thwarting or freeing the divine creative impulse of your being. Consciously make the effort to harmonize with this divine principle of life and so use this infinite self-renewing power which is yours. You and your Father are One.

LESSON NO. 150 According to the sage Patanjali of India, ultimate proof of substance consists in sense perception, inference, and intuition. Since inference is dependent upon the limitations of sense perceptions, both may err. Therefore the intuitive perception in man is required to find the ultimate proof of Truth. It is through this intuitive perception that God may be known to man. That is why the development of his sixth sense, or intuition, is of supreme importance. The way to the Ultimate can be traversed by pursuing the line of intuitive perception, as followed and practiced by men of realization.

Science and religion can both agree to the presence of God as intelligent

cosmic vibration, or "Word." A word consists of a sound, a significance, a thought, and the energy required to utter it. There is activity where there is sound. The cosmic motor is working and Aum is its resultant sound--the cosmic Name. The cosmic Name signifies the cosmic sound, cosmic intelligence, cosmic energy. He who has heard and become one with the cosmic song of creation knows the scientific, practical way of contacting God. This sound is unutterable by the human voice and is inaudible to the human ear. But when, by interiorizing the attention and switching off the senses, one can disconnect his mind from the senses, and can perceive the inner world, his first discovery of God is through the cosmic sound. Aum as uttered by the human voice is not the true sound, but is as near as the human voice can imitate it. The cosmic Name, or "Word," is the vibratory physical manifestation of the transcendental God. Those who concentrate upon Aum find that this cosmic sound, or God, also manifests as cosmic ever-new bliss, cosmic wisdom, cosmic love, cosmic light, and cosmic life force. These are definite qualities of God. A true knowledge of God and His Name, thus superconsciously or intuitively perceived, is the only way to ultimate freedom.

Thought creates according to its own nature. You are always demonstrating according to the kind of thoughts you entertain. Cosmic energy, through the will, feeds the medulla oblongata, which in turn feeds the five sense plexuses. As the cells are but condensed will and energy, they can be renewed by the power of your strong, unflinching will. Never energize destructive or negative thoughts. Establish positive, constructive habits of creative thought.

LESSON NO. 151 You must bring God into your daily life. God answers through law; you will not find Him by blind prayer and just waiting for the visitation of love. Right meditation, as well as love and active devotion, is necessary to contact and know God. You are one with the Father; therefore, you are one with all minds, all hands, all feelings, all beauty, all life. There is no separation except in consciousness, by lack of understanding.

All nature is a textbook of knowledge from which we may study the ocean, the earth, the heavens, and mankind. The average life span is not long enough to acquire all knowledge through book study and experimentation. However, the "book" of knowledge may be assimilated by increasing the power of reciprocity. It has been said that geniuses are born, not made. This would indicate that one must have been far advanced in a previous life to be a genius in this one. But geniuses can be made by developing the power of intuition. When by actual Self-realization, consciousness is gained of oneness with all love, all wisdom, all power, there comes a spiritual rebirth, and genius is born. To become a genius should mean to become a channel for the highest expression of God, and this aim should be considered the sacred responsibility of every individual.

LESSON NO. 152 Like attracts like, as water seeks its own level. This is why the outflowing energy qualified by thought and

desire vibrations attracts to itself like qualities, and thus becomes involved in a self-sustained and self-fed magnetic force, which carries the ego on through countless reincarnations in order to fulfill its desires. By mental and emotional attachment one is bound within such limitations until he becomes conscious of this process and lets go of attachments and desires. When one realizes that material desires are caused by body consciousness or ego, in forgetfulness of the shining unpolluted soul hidden beneath the desire accumulations, it becomes obvious that body consciousness is the source of the vicious circle and is therefore the foe to be vanquished.

Habit tendencies are stubborn soldiers, not realizing that their existence depends upon the state of consciousness of their host. Good habit tendencies, however, by blasting out ignorance, can so encroach upon the attention that evil tendencies, although putting up a stubborn fight through the senses, can be completely routed. They cannot stand before the spiritual rays of the consciousness of omnipresent Spirit.

Meditation is the law of laws, by which it is possible to mine the buried gold of unsullied soul qualities. The soul has come through aeons of time and experience to the human state of self-consciousness, whereby it is now equipped to act in full awareness of the law, unattached but using all things in good actions, wisdom-prompted, to complete God's plan of heaven upon earth, God's perfect idea made manifest. Pray unceasingly: "Father, may Thy will be done. Guide my reason, will, and activity to the right thing that I should do."

LESSON NO. 153 The astral eye is often spoken of as the "spiritual eye" or the "third eye." The astral eye must first be penetrated before human consciousness can fly through the blue telescopic Christ eye to perceive the Christ-pervaded cosmos, and finally through the white star of the cosmic eye, through which it beholds eternity. The two physical eyes are a correct materialization of the spiritual eye. Study carefully the diagram of the metaphysical cosmos. The little white star just above the human eyes represents the astral eye. The encasing blue globe represents the tunnel of consciousness to the Christ eye--the second star. Through the Christ eye, the star of Christ intelligence, the soul enters the tunnel of Christ Consciousness, as represented by the second blue globe, and flies through the eye of Cosmic Consciousness, as represented by the third larger white star encased in the third larger blue globe, and thence into omnipresent eternity, represented by white-tipped orange flames.

The spiritual eye sends a current into the brain and the six centers of the spine and provides the current of the five telephonic senses. It works the vital organs and carries on all functions of the body. It is the power that crystallizes energy into flesh. When the mind remains outside the spiritual eye, it perceives vibrations with dimensions. If the mind enters the spiritual eye, thus reversing the life force, it perceives Infinity. Everything is controlled by the power in the spiritual eye. By the application of intuition, the spiritual eye and the heart become like receiving radio stations. By concentration of will

power, they act as broadcasting astral microphones.

By reversing the life force from the senses to the spiritual eye, progressive states are experienced. First there is a crawling electrical sensation through muscles and spine; next, an intense, pleasurable feeling of the eyes' becoming automatically fixed in the superconscious center between the eyebrows, attended by the sound of Om felt all over the surface and inner lining of the body, and in the spine. Finally, one sees a white light revolvingly increase like an aurora in the spiritual eye, with closed or open eyes; then the breath disappears and the life force retires from the nerves, eyes, and nuclei of cells and this current becomes deeper, becomes projected into the Infinite, creating a dark blue tunnel in the center of the spiritual eye.

Spiritual vision is accompanied by half-open eyes. The gaze should be fixed between the eyebrows on the superconscious center, and the lower lids should be pulled up to close the eyes halfway.

The real You is the prolific source of all the power that exists. Your worth as an individual is measurable by the extent you manifest power within, as well as by what you exhibit on the surface of your life and activity.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP SIX

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 145

1. What is the meaning of pantheism?
2. Who can lead you to God?

Lesson 146

1. Does matter exist? Explain.

Lesson 147

1. Of what use is reason?
2. What part should activity play in our lives?

Lesson 148

1. Under what conditions is death desirable?
2. Under what conditions is death undesirable?

Lesson 149

1. Whence arises the fear of death? the pain?
2. Where is the final seat of consciousness in the body before physical death and decay really occur?

Lesson 150

1. Through what faculty in man is God knowable?
2. Explain why the superconscious utterance of the cosmic Name brings freedom to man.

Lesson 151

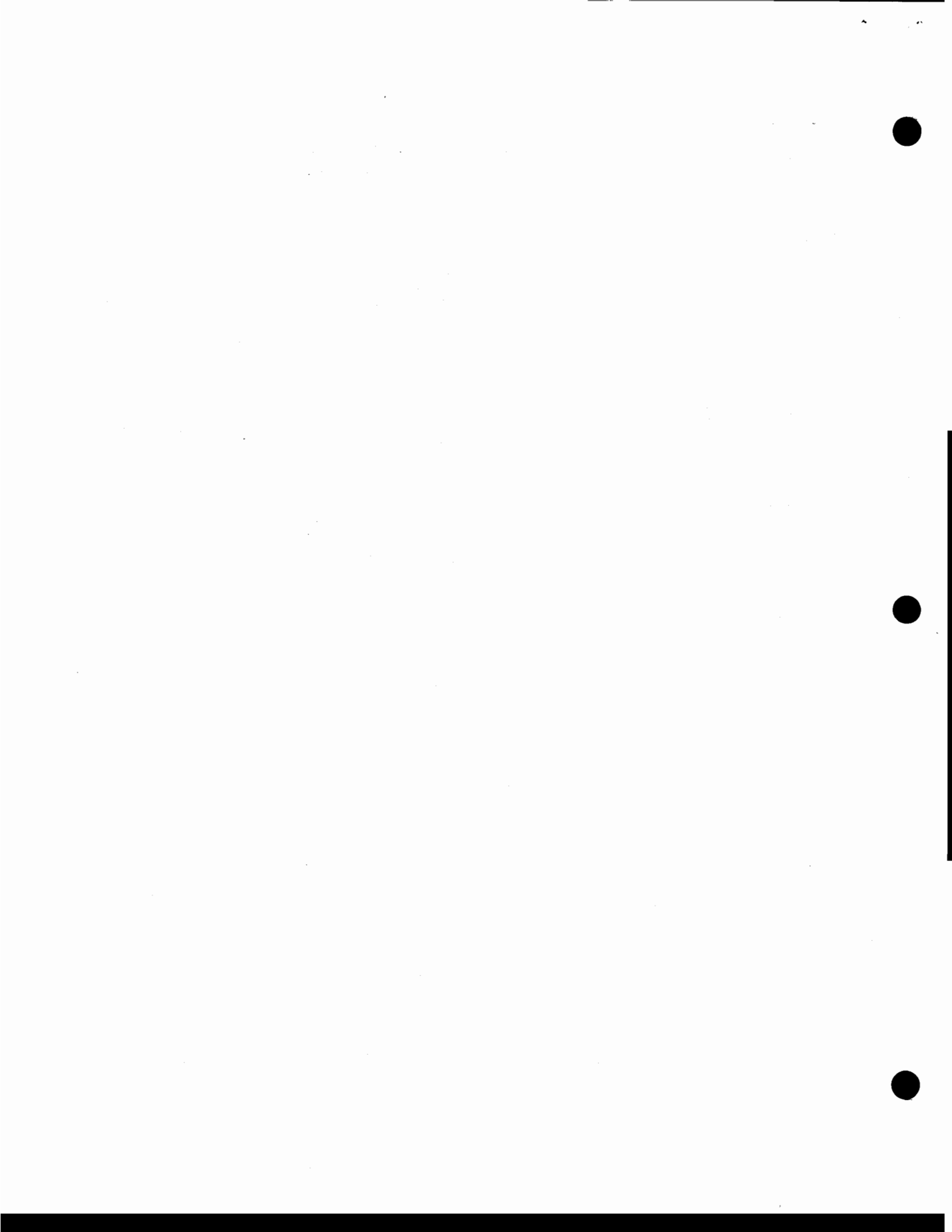
1. From what textbook of life may we all learn?
2. What are the two different approaches to education in the East and in the West?

Lesson 152

1. What is the source of material desire?
2. In what way does attachment affect reincarnation?

Lesson 153

1. Describe the spiritual eye and its function.
2. To what state must one have progressed before he may enter the central portion of the spiritual eye?
3. Describe one of the "Tunnel to Eternity" techniques.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 154

1. Learn to go to sleep at will--anytime--anywhere--by relaxing and being indifferent to sound, touch, etc.
2. Learn to wake at will by alternately half-sleeping and half-waking, then by sleeping soundly for five minutes, having first directed your mind to waken you at the end of that time.
3. Before you fall asleep at night, command your subconscious mind to wake you at a specific time the next morning, or command it to get rid of a bad habit. Make your command specific and intense.
4. Learn to go into ecstasy at will by inhaling and exhaling twelve times, then expelling the breath and forgetting it, while looking up at the point between the eyebrows.

Sleep is a negative way of knowing you are not a man or woman, but a soul, made in the image of God. Death is only a deeper sleep, and an awakening in another place and body. Ecstasy is the conscious, positive way of knowing you are one with the omnipresent Spirit.

God may be compared to the dynamo of a city (with individual souls as lights), or to the flame under a gas burner (with souls as the pores of the burner), or to the moon in the sky (with souls as the moon's reflections in many pots of water). God is omnipresent, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The individualized soul--in its real, perfect nature--is the blissful image of God; but in its deluded, body-bound nature is the pseudo soul or ego. This mortal ego is partially forgotten during sleep and entirely forgotten during ecstasy.

Every night, as you are about to fall asleep, practice remaining on the borderline between sleep and ecstasy, with half-open eyes, using only passive will to prolong the state. Keep your eyes raised to the point between the eyebrows, the seat of superconsciousness. When the eyes are half open, the dark space at the top represents subconsciousness, the light lower part represents the state of wakefulness, and the horizon line between the two represents superconsciousness.

When the spiritual eye becomes visible, you see a white star encased in an opal disc surrounded by a gold disc. These are three telescopes into omnipresent space. Penetrating the gold disc brings visions of all vibrating matter; penetrating the blue brings visions of Christ Intelligence in all vibratory creation; while penetrating the star brings visions of God the Father, or Cosmic Consciousness beyond all vibratory creation.

Practice in succession three states of consciousness, undergoing consciously and at will the transition from sleep to wakefulness to ecstasy: Look straight ahead, and concentrate on the world about you. Look down, and slip into the subconscious world of sleep. Look up, at the point between the eyebrows, and reach superconsciousness. By keeping the eyes straight ahead, open and without winking, a developed yogi can remain awake several days; or by keeping the eyes closed, he can sleep for days; or by fixing the half-opened eyes at the point between the eyebrows, he can remain in ecstasy.

LESSON NO. 155 Primeval religion was the result of man's unscientific seeking for the origin of the mysteries of his being, and for an explanation of the phenomena observed in his life experiences. A few prophets have risen during the ages exhorting people to believe in their doctrines, but science has been slow to verify these doctrines by research. As a result, untested beliefs, cults, and superstitions have prevailed, and much cruelty and exploitation have taken place through fear and fanaticism.

Scientists should test the methods offered by religions, and should thus discover by practical application the best method, that which brings the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Then they should broadcast the knowledge they have acquired, in the name of truth. Church funds would be well employed in inducing great scientists to make investigations to discover the most practical technique for applying those immutable principles that protect man permanently from the threefold suffering of disease, unhappiness, and ignorance. Science should engage in making man himself invulnerable to the destruction arising from his own inventions, and make him more conscious of his own powers over disease and tragic or premature death. Superstition should be burned in the furnace of scientific verification and Self-realization.

Religious effort should be applied to the conversion of the human body into life energy. Electricity, or pure energy, cannot be diseased or injured. When we learn by practical religion how to realize that we are bundles of energy or life force, we shall become aware of our immortality. The day when man is able to dematerialize his human body, by converting it into its constituent electrons and basic consciousness, and materialize it again as Jesus did and as great Hindu yogis do, he will be free from suffering, death, and disintegration.

Only one who is himself spiritually free can show the way to freedom and help to free others from the bonds of ignorance.

LESSON NO. 156 The whole universe consists of symbols that should be studied and understood by man, for each symbol represents a truth. Each symbol in nature is a materialization of rays of God. Man is a condensed conglomeration of microscopic solar systems. On the other end of the scale, the whole finite universe may be spoken of as the "body" of the Infinite. It is only the relativity of systems, the variation in scale, that makes us feel large or small. We are all symbols of the Infinite, all symbols of the vast force of God.

Out of the earth symbol the spirit of God wants to come. A flower is the symbol of the Infinite trying to express Itself. Everything is trying to free itself from limitations. Rays are the locked-up forces in matter trying to find freedom in Omnipresence. In one who has attained Self-realization the locked-up body rays find freedom. Man's spinal nervous system was created out of the soul's desire to free itself from the bondage of cells and be released in Omnipresence. The superman withdraws all rays from the nervous system and floats them through the spine, letting them out through the medulla oblongata into the infinite sphere of Light.

We are a product of both the finite and the Infinite. The cross is a symbol showing that man is a combination of duality, a cross between nature and Spirit. The horizontal line represents the finite, or nature, and the vertical line represents the Infinite.

The triangle is a symbol of "God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost." It also represents good, evil, and activating qualities.

The symbol of the spiritual eye is very important. In every atom, in every electron, there are three parts as in the spiritual eye, the symbol of life. It is the epitome of cosmic energy that enlivens the universe. Everything is made after the pattern of the spiritual eye. The sun is the symbol of the spiritual eye. As the sun is the life of our universe, so the spiritual eye is the life of this body.

The sphere represents eternity. You go round and round and there is no end. Straight lines criss-crossed in all directions become a sphere; when you elongate both ends of a straight line it becomes eternal. Force forming at a central point scintillates from that point in an even radius, creating a sphere. The first vibration emanating from God was a sphere with a central nucleus. The symbol of the Infinite is the straight line moulded into a sphere.

Crucify your ignorance and evil habits and rise into the freedom of cosmic brotherhood. Ascend into the consciousness of health; awaken in the sphere of self-control; resurrect yourself into happiness.

LESSON NO. 157 Jesus the man became Jesus the Christ when the Christ Consciousness manifested fully through him. Christ

Consciousness is the spirit of God reflected throughout the created universe. When the human consciousness of Jesus expanded into Christ Consciousness, his consciousness became present in all vibratory regions, and God's love and light expressed fully through him.

Jesus had to attain that state of consciousness through many incarnations of development. In that knowledge lies our hope. We too have the opportunity of expressing Christ Consciousness, even as Jesus did. Liberated souls or saints are equal. Their greatness and spiritual development cannot be compared, as though some might surpass others. They are one in God. The spiritually awakened can perceive Jesus the Christ now. In Christ Consciousness he is universal.

Each human being should strive to dissolve all obstacles to this pure reflection of Christ Consciousness. The more you meditate, the more transparent your mind will become. God reflects brilliantly in the "diamond" soul but not in the undeveloped "charcoal" personality. Meditation opens the door to Christ Consciousness. We should be persistent and sensitively alert, and let God's love and light expand in us from the spark of Christ Consciousness that is cradled in each of us. God gave us the power to find Him, yet He gave us freedom to choose. Behind your heart throbs the Cosmic Heart, behind your thoughts throbs God's intelligence, behind your soul throbs God's wisdom. Know your divine Self. Become the Christ you are potentially.

LESSON NO. 158 You are the creator, the preserver, the transformer, of your own private world, and your will is the director; but never forget that you are the director of your will. The past is gone, the future is to come; the present is here. Today is the time to start. Your spiritual development should enable you to harmonize all the activities and duties of life. Your inability to solve a problem as it arises is acceptance of defeat in life at that particular instant. The gradual simplification of problems that press upon life from within and without paves the way to freedom. Keep away from trivialities. A mind and heart occupied with high ideals, great facts, great problems, has no room for inferior mental occupation. The busier we are, the more severe our selection should be.

We should develop the capacity to have our own opinion about an idea, a poem, a doctrine, or a work of art, and see it clearly enough to give it forcible expression. Comprehension arouses judgment, and judgment or reasoning is a synonym for thought. Facts are only the material for thought. Look for relations between ideas or between facts.

Life itself is unending in its scope and measureless in its expression. Planes of life correspond to levels of thought. Mental victory over the conditions of life is fruitful of happiness, and also is essential for the furtherance of life's work. Life unfolds its wealth and beauty according to the unveiling or expansion of consciousness. It is better to be unhappy in your own struggle

than to be content, like an ostrich, with your head buried in the sand of ignorance. Inner happiness comes through that struggle, as higher consciousness is realized. You must roll the stones aside, climb over obstacles, wade the forbidding streams, and go straight on with the Divine Light as your guidance. Place yourself above the likes and dislikes of people, and go on doing your work. Success will not come all the time. Success and failure are interrelated. You learn by your failures and press on to success. The untamable heart may sometimes bleed, but the mind should never succumb. Soar in the plane of silence over the peaks of highest wisdom, and roam in the land of endless beauty and happiness. Arise, awaken your spirit, and with determination and will power encounter the internal and external difficulties.

LESSON NO. 159 Study especially the explanation of Satan. His magnetic power to deflect us from our true purpose--to find God--is very real. We must believe what Jesus and other great masters said of him in such sure terms. To know how Satan tempts you is to see the way to defeat him.

Remember that you are a free agent standing midway between Satan and God. None can influence you except yourself. Whenever you misuse your free choice by doing an evil act, Satan pulls you toward his side and you feel a greater desire to do wrong. Whenever you use free choice to do right, then God pulls you toward His side. Remember, Satan tempts you by assuring permanent happiness from the senses; but Satan loses out because he gives sorrow in the end instead of happiness. Satan cannot keep an erring soul forever within his sinful fold of delusion. God is almighty and can destroy evil, but He has chosen to bring all creation back to Him through love and free will.

The greatest way to be victorious over evil is not to deny it or try to explain it away as a psychological error, but to persist in substituting for the lesser illusive pleasures of evil the greater joys of good.

If you form good habits, they will keep your soul magnetized to them, just as a horseshoe magnet holds and will not release a piece of iron that clings to it. Evil magnetism, on the other hand, keeps you enslaved and away from good.

Hypnosis over a period of time robs the hypnotized person of the full use of his free will and thus leads to mental weakness and deterioration. It is best not to let anyone hypnotize you.

Magnetism should be exchanged among good persons. Failures should not mix with failures, but should mix with successful businessmen. In attentive handshaking and devoted discussion magnetism is unconsciously exchanged between yourself and your associates; hence you should be conscientious about the kind of company you keep. Carefully read and practice the rules of developing magnetism.

LESSON NO. 160 The "third eye" or Kutastha, hidden in the forehead in the body, is a cosmic mirror. In it the Spirit and all the subtle and gross forces may be perceived. When the spiritual eye is open, and the soul can look into this inner mirror, there is no need to depend upon the limited knowledge of astrology or other predictive sciences. Through the instrumentality of the five elemental vibrations, a mortal being enjoys the qualities of matter. If he knows their real nature, and knows how to act wisely in harmony with them, he will find ultimate freedom.

When by meditation a devotee opens one of the five spiritual centers, he experiences definite changes that indicate which center has been opened:

1. Coccygeal plexus: earth vibration.
 - a. Breath flows through exact middle of nostril, thirty inches in length.
 - b. Sweet juice is tasted and desired.
 - c. Yellow color perceived and found attractive.
 - d. In Christ-consciousness center is perceived a four-angled yellow figure.
2. Sacral plexus: water vibration.
 - a. Breath flows through base of nostrils up to ten inches.
 - b. Mildly bitter taste experienced and desired.
 - c. White color perceived and found attractive.
 - d. Figure perceived at Christ-consciousness center is white half-moon.
3. Lumbar plexus: fire vibration.
 - a. Breath flows through upper part of nostrils up to ten inches.
 - b. Bitter taste and attachment intensified.
 - c. Red color perceived and desired.
 - d. Figure perceived at Christ-consciousness center, blood-red triangle.
4. Dorsal plexus: air vibration.
 - a. Breath flows through side of nostrils up to twenty inches in length.
 - b. Sour taste perceived and desired.
 - c. Blue color perceived and desired.
 - d. At Christ-consciousness center is perceived a palpitating ball of blue.
5. Cervical plexus: etheric vibration.
 - a. Breath flows without any force whatever.
 - b. Extremely bitter taste experienced and desired.
 - c. Smoke color perceived and desired.
 - d. At Christ-consciousness center smoke color checkered with luminous specks of light.

All space is alive with God's flaming presence. God's inner spiritual nature is perfect, ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new bliss, although His outward nature differentiated in cosmic vibration as perceived by human beings appears distorted and imperfect. God as expressed in nature is unknown, mysterious, elusive, indifferent. God as revealed to the devotee is intimate, sociable, indescribably lovely, and consciously interested in removing all man's miseries. All pursuits of life offer only partial joy, although crowned with utmost fulfillment. But when you have found God, you have found the reservoir of perennial, unending Bliss.

LESSON NO. 161 To overcome pain and sorrow the nature of their origin must first be understood. One should train himself gradually to rise above these sensations. Pain comes through identification of the ego with the senses. Stimuli of cold and heat touch the nerve endings of the body and are transmitted through the nerve electricity and nerve wires as sensations. A sensation, after its appearance in the body as the immediate feelings produced by the contact of the senses and matter, begins to reveal whether it is harmonious or inharmonious to the conditions of the body. Feeling is that faculty which passes judgment upon the experiences of the senses. A sense-enslaved body is apt to enslave the all-powerful mind. If feeling could be neutralized, that is, made impervious to ephemeral excitations, then all experiences would be merely intellectually cognized. A strong mind may recognize the presence of an inharmonious sensation in the body without being sensitive to it as pain.

Pain appeared first in man in the nature of a desire to warn himself of the advent of an inharmonious sensation detrimental to the interests of the body. Thus, a sensitivity was developed through wrong environment and hereditary influences, imagination, mental habits, and feeling. Sensitive feelings get so used to passing quick judgments upon the nature of specific sensations they experience that the all-powerful mind becomes deluded and succumbs to the disturbance. That is why feeling-predominant people suffer heat and cold more than evenly balanced mentalities.

One should not rashly impose a cure that may be worse than the disease. A sense-enslaved and unspiritualized body should be protected from extremes. All wrong ideas should be gradually overcome by the mind first, then by the body. Consciousness cannot hurt consciousness without acceptance. We must realize that nothing but life exists and that pain comes only through permitting one state of consciousness to affect another state of consciousness. Since pain comes through identification with the senses, this can be counteracted by the realization of the soul's inner identification with Spirit, for within the ego is hidden the expectation of permanent equilibrated states of consciousness. While adopting the proper remedies against inharmonious conditions in the body, do not give way to the suggestions of pain by allowing the mind to become identified with the bodily condition. Man should persistently strive to make his body pain-proof, until he knows it has its origin not in the decaying, hurting,

changing qualities of matter, but in the invulnerable unchanging qualities of Spirit.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP SIX

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 154

1. Define God, soul, and ego. To what may the relationship of the individual soul and the omnipresent Spirit be compared?
2. List the three mental states, and what position of the eyes accompanies each state.

Lesson 155

1. How could church funds be put to good spiritual advantage?

Lesson 156

1. Explain the symbolism of the following:
the cross, the triangle, the spiritual eye, and the line and sphere.

Lesson 157

1. Explain the difference between Jesus and the Christ.

Lesson 158

1. Name several points to be observed in finding a fuller and higher life.
2. What is the test of God-realization?

Lesson 159

1. What is magnetism?
2. Who is Satan?
3. What does Satan want?
4. What is the difference between hypnosis and magnetism?
5. Explain a general rule for developing different sorts of magnetism.
6. How does one develop spiritual magnetism?

Lesson 160

1. What is the "cosmic mirror" in the body?
2. (a) Name the elemental vibrations in relation to the respective centers in the body.

- (b) Give the taste and color vibration perceived by the complete manifestation of each in meditation.

Lesson 161

1. Explain what determines whether a sensation is painful or pleasurable.
2. Explain the process that leads to experience of pain.
3. Is enforced endurance and exposure beneficial to a body that is sense-bound?
4. Name several points to be observed in learning to overcome pain.



Self-Realization Fellowship

SERVICE READINGS

TEACHINGS OF PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

*For Reading at Devotional Services of Self-Realization Fellowship Centers
and for Personal Study by Graduate Students*

Devotion That Touches God

Volume II, No. 31



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Affirmation

In the solitude of my mind I yearn to hear Thy voice. Take away the dreams of earthly sounds that yet lurk in my memory. I want to hear Thy quiet voice ever singing in the silence of my soul.

(Metaphysical Meditations)

Bible Passage from St. Matthew

If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

(Matthew 5:23, 24)

Bible Commentary by Paramahansa Yogananda

(Excerpt)

Though God does not apparently receive material gifts that are presented on the altar of a temple, yet He receives the devotion of the heart which actuates one to offer a gift to Him. No one can really present a gift to God because all things belong to Him, but to give unto the Lord the gifts that are given by Him shows an appreciative heart. Better than material gifts offered in stone-made temples, God loves the gifts of love, peace, and devotion offered in the temple of one's own heart or through the temples of the hearts of others.

That is why Jesus said that, before you try to offer a gift to God in a temple of stones, you should offer Him a temple of harmony by becoming reconciled to an estranged brother. To please an estranged brother is to please God. It is good to please God in the heart of a reconciled brother first, and then offer a gift in a temple afterward.

Passage from the Bhagavad-Gita

The presentation to Me of a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, given with pure intention, is a devotional offering acceptable in My sight.

(Bhagavad-Gita IX:26)

Gita Commentary by Paramahansa Yogananda

(Excerpt)

Jesus said that the small gift of two mites, presented with devotion by a poor widow, was more pleasing to God than the wealth that was ostentatiously proffered by irreligious men.* The outpouring of heartfelt love is the only *sacrifice* the Lord desires from His creatures.

God says: "Great yogis are rare, so I seldom receive from earth dwellers the most precious gift—complete soul surrender to Me. Therefore I accept happily even a little flower, tear-sprinkled and devotionally fragrant, from those who have little time for Me, though I give My time and gifts to them."

This stanza also means that man's most fleeting thought and most trifling action may be used as steppingstones toward God's presence.

The Value of Devotion

The following anecdotes are from *Sayings of Yogananda*, a collection of inspiring counsel to his disciples.

A visitor spoke disparagingly of India's so-called idol worship. The Master quietly said:

"If a man, sitting with closed eyes in a church, allows his thoughts to dwell on worldly matters—the idols of materialism—God is aware that He is not being worshiped.

"If a man, bowing before a stone image, sees it as a symbol and reminder of the living omnipresent Spirit, God accepts that worship."

Every time that the Master saw a certain disciple, who was decidedly the intellectual type, the guru would say:

"Get devotion! Remember the words of Jesus: 'Father, thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.'"†

The disciple visited Master at his desert retreat shortly before Christmas of 1951. On a table lay some toys, intended for gifts. In a childlike spirit Paramahansaji played with them for a time, then asked the young man, "How do you like them?"

The disciple was still trying to get over his surprise; but he said, laughing, "They're fine, Sir." The Master smiled and quoted:

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, for such is the Kingdom of God."‡

* Mark 12:38-44. ‡ Luke 18:16.

† Matthew 11:25.

A sister of the Self-Realization Fellowship Order complained of a lack of devotion. "It is not that I don't want to know God," she said, "but I seem unable to direct love toward Him. What should one do, who like myself is experiencing a 'dry' state?"

"You should not concentrate on the thought that you lack devotion, but should work to develop it," the Master replied. "Why be upset because God hasn't shown Himself to you? Think of the long time you ignored Him!"

"Meditate more; go deep; and follow the hermitage rules. By changing your habits you will awaken in your heart the memory of His wondrous Being; and, knowing Him, there is no doubt that you will love Him."

Heavenly Hart, I Hunted Thee in the Forest of Consciousness

Clad in the hunter's green of selfish desires, I pursued Thee in the forest of consciousness, O Divine Hart! The sound of my loud prayers startled Thee; Thou didst swiftly flee. I raced after Thee; but my erratic chase, the hue and cry of my restlessness, caused Thee to retreat still farther.

Stealthily I crept toward Thee with my spear of concentration, but my aim was unsteady. As Thou didst bound away I heard in secret echoes of Thy footfalls: "Without devotion thou art a poor, poor marksman!"

Even when I held firmly my meditation missile, Thine echo resounded: "I am beyond thy mental dart; I am beyond!"

At last, in submissive wisdom I entered the silent cave of selfless love. Lo! Thou, the Hart of Heaven, camest willingly within.

(Whispers from Eternity)

Devotion That Touches God

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

If you saturate with devotion a thought of God, and by your concentration impress that thought deep within you, then in the temple of superconsciousness the Lord of the universe will come to receive that loving thought.

You think sometimes that God is somewhere away from you. That is why you seldom call on Him. But those who think Him near find Him to be the nearest of the near, dearest of the dear.

Activity for God

One way to achieve unbroken devotion is to do everything for the Lord. Every day I am active for Him. This path is wonderful! After a little while you see that God is continuously playing hide-and-seek with you.

The Lord is found through unceasing devotion. When you want only the Giver, and not His gifts, then He will come to you. He has given you free choice and will power in order that you may experience and know the difference between the lesser gifts of the world and the greater gift of His presence. When you understand that you should be tempted only by the bliss of God, then you will conquer. Merely wishing for God is not sufficient; your actions must conform to your desire. You must materialize your wish into right activity. Then you will find Him.

Connect all your activities with God. Follow the law with devotion and there cannot be any failure, there cannot be any sidetracking; for remember, much is forgiven that person who has devotion. If you have devotion, you shall be free. Follow the law with devotion. When you are devoted to your Heavenly Father and at the same time do your best according to the principles of concentration and meditation, then the result comes; for God measures through law, although He is beyond all laws.

Where there is real devotion, God surrenders Himself. It gives the finishing touches to your spiritual development. But devotion without obedience is not honored by God; His laws must be followed. The spiritual laws of emancipation, plus devotion, are necessary. You are a child of the Divine. You are a prince of the cosmos. Don't treat yourself like a beggar, but like a child of God.

Through your loyalty to Him, you can establish your Oneness with Him. God is equally present in all, but in the heart of the spiritually minded, loyal person, who thinks only of Him, God is most definitely expressed. Realize your soul's perfection. Be loyal, as loyalty attracts the Divine Attention. By your loyalty, you will be able to reach God.

If you say: "When will I find God?" you are not yet a true devotee. The true devotee says: "I have found Him. He is listening to me; my Beloved is always with me. He is moving my hands; He is digesting my food; He is gazing at me through the stars."

Without God you can't live even for a second! He is caressing you through the breeze and giving you life through the sunshine. He is in the food you eat, He is in the hearts of all the people around you, He is the only one that you can call your own.

That is why you should use all the strength of your soul to find God. He is not the monopoly of any one person; nor may He be bribed. God doesn't need our praise. That approach to Him implies some strain and effort, like a lover's praising the beloved all the time just to keep her pleased. God doesn't want that kind of relationship with you. But divine, unconditional love is beautiful. There is no other gift you can give Him but the gift of your love. If God could ever be said to beg from us, it is for our love. If He wants anything at all from us, it is our love.

Real Devotion Manifests Within

Real devotion is internal. Day and night the devotee thinks of nothing but God, and secretly tells Him how dearly he loves Him. The devotee seldom talks about his love for the Lord; he lives it. He keeps it within, for true love shuns outward demon-

strations. Lovers seek privacy. Devotees of God express their love in the seclusion of the soul temple within, and do not parade it before others. What is external is not deep.

The true devotee's heart is always saying: "My Lord, my Lord, I do not want to become ensnared in the delusory drama of Thy creation. I want no part of it except to help in establishing Thy temple in the souls of men. My heart, my soul, my body and mind—everything belongs to Thee." Such devotion reaches God. That devotee knows God.

We all should be like little children before God. He must come first, middle, and last. When we find God, then all our desires are fulfilled.

To the one who is very deeply devoted, God talks. He is invisible, but if you have enough devotion, you can find Him, for He becomes frozen into manifestation by devotion's power.

No matter what you are doing, say inwardly, "I am Thine, I want to know Thee before I leave this body." If you try, He will receive you. Love Him—that is why we are here. Cry for Him and never go to sleep until you feel Him. When you cry and cry for God, and an answering joy comes over you, then you will know that He has heard you.

He is purposely hiding. If we talk to Him without love, He is only pestered to death; that is why He remains quiet. To make Him talk you have to give Him the "third degree" of your love. Then He will talk. And I assure you, if I didn't know that He talks I wouldn't tell you. It is so touching, because it is He who has become all human beings. When you see Him, you see Him working through all. The Gita says, "Behold Him through every niche of space, on the altar of every heart, and He shall behold you wherever you see Him." It is only by loving God that we can love others as God.

You must be very secret about your love for God, and you have to be very silent about your love. You must not speak about His being with you. Be like the great ones, who inwardly think constantly of the Beauty behind the flowers, the Light behind the sun, the Life that twinkles in all eyes, that beats in every heart; the Motion that walks in all feet, that works in all hands; the Mind that is working through all brains, the Love that is behind all loves.

God is so great, so marvelous! To live in the realm of divine consciousness is to see this mundane world, ignorant of God, as a nightmare and to have eternal freedom from its terrors.

You waste precious time each day. Every little moment you spend with God will be spent to your best advantage; and whatever you achieve with the desire to please God in your heart will stand unto eternity. God is freedom from all misery. God is the wealth and the health you seek. God is the love you seek. The desire of the soul for God is behind all other desires. Worldly desires camouflage the longing of the soul to be reunited with God-bliss. Only God can satisfy all the desires of this life and of past incarnations. I have found it so.

Let Your Devotion Shine Eternally

Don't be satisfied with a little peace born of your meditation, but hunger again

and again for His bliss. Day and night, while others are sleeping or spending their energy in fulfilling desires, you should whisper: "My Lord, my Lord, my Lord!" And in time He will burst through the darkness and you will know Him. Remove the obstacles that lie before you by cultivating determination, faith, and devotion.

The greatest mistake in life is to fail in devotional aspirations. Do not let it become weak and worthless, like a pale candle burning low and flickering out. Let all the heart's love be the plenitude you shower on the Lord. The intensity of love within each human heart can be like an indestructible spiritual radium. Let it glow deathlessly, with healing rays!



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 1

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LEAD ALL TO THE PATH OF SELF-REALIZATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, I invoke Thy presence. May those who are seeking find Thee through these sacred instructions. Thou dost not reveal Thyself to those who only blindly pray to Thee. O God of Universal Order, Thou dost appear unto those who obey Thy laws of concentration and meditation. Bless all Thy children that they use these redeeming laws to find Thee.

Heavenly Father, Giver of all power and riches of mind, Thy children, like prodigal sons, have run away from their home of omnipresence and have squandered their wealth of wisdom and peace. Show them now the path that quickly leads to Thee.

The path is there: Thou hast sent this divine teaching of Self-Realization on earth for them. May those who are sincere find this path that leads straightway to Thee.

PRAYER

Teach me, O Divine Father, to become a true yogi. Instead of finding cessation of life and joy, in my union with Thee I shall become the fountainhead of eternal life and bliss. Reveal Thyself, for by knowing Thee I shall not lose anything, but will gain everything.

GRADATED METHODS OF YOGA--Part 1

RELEASING THE
MOTION-BOUND SOUL
TO UNITE IT WITH
THE MOTIONLESS
INFINITE BY YOGA

The word "yoga" is an ancient word which comes from the Sanskrit root, "yuj," signifying union. The word "yoga" in Hindu philosophy is usually used to signify union of the individual soul with Spirit by scientific psychophysical methods of meditation.

A yogi is one who practices a scientific yoga technique of meditation in order to unite himself with God. He may assume worldly responsibilities, or he may choose the path of complete renunciation.

The science of yoga (or scientific union with God) includes various methods which may be classified as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Hatha Yoga | 4. Mantra Yoga |
| 2. Laya Yoga | 5. Raja Yoga |
| 3. Karma Yoga | |

1. Hatha Yoga is a system of physical exercises whose purpose is to render the body fit for meditation; particularly, for the higher states of ecstatic God-communion during which the body absorbs a greater-than-usual voltage of God's cosmic energy. Fortunately for the average person, it is not necessary to perform all the various tortuous body twistings of the yoga postures in order to prepare the body for meditation. Nevertheless, meditation is not possible without some bodily control, and some of the simpler postures of Hatha Yoga are very good indeed for this purpose. They may be practiced, in conjunction with a commonsense dietary regimen, with benefit to health and to mental concentration.

Occasionally, older persons in an excess of zeal hurt themselves in attempting difficult postures and then foolishly condemn Hatha Yoga. The eighty-four basic body postures are most effectively done by children and young adults. Men and women over forty should not practice the more difficult poses, because at that age the bones, muscles, and nerves are seldom sufficiently pliable. The SRF Energization Exercises taught in Lesson 8-A may be performed by all and benefit the body in much the same way as the system of Hatha Yoga.

The yogi should not keep the soul busy only with discipline of the body and thus forget the real purpose of yoga, the uniting of soul and Spirit. The body discipline of Hatha Yoga is meant only for preparing the physical vehicle for spiritual growth; it is not an end in itself. Body discipline promotes spiritual peace, and incidentally good health. Avoid becoming absorbed only in those methods that cultivate temporal physical and mental power and prowess and thereby attract public attention, curiosity, and commendation. Search deeper.

2. Laya Yoga signifies complete absorption or "melting" of mind in any mental concept of the Divine or in inner astral sounds. It consists of listening to the Cosmic Sound of Aum emanating from the universe on the superconscious plane of concentration. Mantra Yoga teaches one to utter such potent vibratory sounds aloud or mentally. Laya Yoga teaches one to concentrate upon and be merged in the real astral sounds emanating from the various inner creative forces of God in nature, rather than in those astral sounds as imitated by the human voice.

All actions on the physical or astral or causal planes are vibratory in nature, and therefore produce sounds: a whisper produces a physical sound; astral bells produce music that can be heard with the inner ear; and the countless thoughts emanating from the causal plane to structure the universe can be heard as the Cosmic Vibration, the spiritual sound of Aum.

3. Karma Yoga signifies union with God through good works and right activity, primarily, and through meditative action secondarily.
4. Mantra Yoga consists in uniting soul and Spirit by concentrating--through loud chanting, soft chanting, whisper chanting, mental chanting, and superconscious chanting--on the root word sounds that are vibrating in the physical world and in the astral world.
5. Raja Yoga is the "royal" yoga. It is the yoga method that is best and most inclusive. It combines simple methods of body discipline with a very high meditation technique of spiritual realization, techniques such as you are being taught in these Lessons. Self-Realization Fellowship methods teach Raja Yoga techniques of uniting soul and Spirit and combine in one teaching all that is best in the highest forms of yoga.

India's great sage Patanjali outlined the yoga system of Hindu philosophy as an eightfold path. The first steps,

1. yama
- and
2. niyama,

require observance of five proscriptive moralities and five positive prescriptions.

The next steps are

3. asana (right postures); the spinal column must be held straight, and the body firm in a comfortable position for meditation;
4. pranayama (control of prana, subtle life currents); and
5. pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from external objects).

The last steps are forms of yoga proper:

6. dharana (concentration), holding the mind to one thought;
7. dhyana (meditation); and
8. samadhi (superconscious perception).

FIRST STEP: Yama means rules that are prohibitive, and refers to
 PROSCRIPTIVE thoughts and actions from which the devotee should ab-
 RULES--YAMA stain. The proscriptions of yama are avoidance of in-
 jury to others, of untruthfulness, of stealing, of incon-
 tinence, or gift-receiving (which brings obligations).

SECOND STEP: Niyama means that which the devotee should do. The
 PRESCRIPTIVE niyama prescripts are purity of body and mind, con-
 RULES--NIYAMA tentment, self-discipline, self-study (contemplation),
 and devotion to God and guru.

All religions agree to these two phases or foundations of religious practice. To meditate a great deal without at the same time practicing yama-niyama is to build a large superstructure on a loose foundation.

Yama-niyama--the "do's and dont's"--are the foundation principles of all religions. Many religionists are contented just to practice these proscriptive and prescriptive rules: "I have never done anything wrong; I have done only good things in my life and I am satisfied." The person whose spiritual endeavors are circumscribed by such reasoning receives some inner satisfaction and some good karma, but he does not progress much beyond that.

The Eightfold Path of salvation outlined by Patanjali is what all devotees of yoga, all pursuers of the spiritual path, must follow, basing their spiritual attainment on the solid foundation of yama-niyama. When nirbikalpa samadhi (the highest state of God-realization) has been attained, one goes beyond the necessity of practicing the proscriptive and prescriptive rules of yama-niyama; but not before. "One who is united to cosmic wisdom in this life goes beyond virtue and vice" (Bhagavad-Gita 2:50). Having reached the Goal, one no longer needs the path.

THIRD STEP: PRACTICES IN MOTIONLESSNESS OR ASANA Patanjali says that in addition to yama-niyama the devotee must practice asana, or posture--correct posture. The purpose of posture is to enable the devotee to rise above or stop the motions of the body that cause restlessness in the ego-identified soul. The soul is a part of the calm Infinite, and the body is a part of restless nature. But the soul identifies itself with the restless body and forgets its nature of infinite calmness. Therefore, in order to send the prodigal soul from the land of restlessness to its home in the kingdom of infinite calmness, it is necessary to have correct posture--that is, a posture wherein the body is still and free from restlessness and the spine is erect. An erect spine allows the life energy and consciousness to flow freely from the lower centers of the senses, through the spine, to the higher centers of spiritual realization in the brain.

CONCENTRATE UPON ENDS FOR WHICH DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES ARE USED Patanjali always points to the purpose of spiritual actions and tells the devotee not to become identified with any process of salvation but only to use that process until salvation is attained. Patanjali warns the devotee not to be so engrossed with the process that he forgets the purpose for which that process or technique was prescribed. Many devotees remain within the confinement of asana. They concentrate upon the physical gymnastics of Hatha Yoga, enjoying the suppleness and mastery of the body that asana brings, forgetting that the purpose of asana is to attain freedom of the mind and soul. Therefore, Patanjali does not prescribe lengthy concentration on the practice of various postures; but he says that any comfortable posture in which the spine is erect, the body is steady and fairly restful, and the mind is peaceful, is the correct posture, or asana.

FOURTH STEP: DISCONNECTING THE MIND FROM THE SENSES BY SWITCHING OFF THE LIFE FORCE FROM THE SENSE "TELEPHONES." THIS IS PRANAYAMA, OR LIFE CONTROL (NOT BREATH CONTROL). Stillness is the altar of Spirit and Patanjali says that right posture is necessary for stillness. When motion ceases, Spirit begins to manifest. After having attained a steady posture and a steady mind, the devotee is advised by Patanjali to practice pranayama with the object of attaining pratyahara. Pranayama means conscious control of the life force, to be able ultimately to switch off at will the life force from the five sense "telephones."

Various schools of breath control, meditation, chanting, devotional singing, concentration on the prayer wheel, holy rolling, concentration by discrimination, concentration by diversion, and so forth, are variants of the real science of pranayama or switching off the life force.

PRANAYAMA--THE HIGHEST TECHNIQUE OF UNITING SOUL AND SPIRIT There are various indirect methods of diverting the mind from the senses to God; for example, chanting, negative silence, prayer, emotional singing, intellectual discriminative meditation, social and religious work. But the pranayama

life-control technique of yoga teaches the scientific way of disconnecting the mind from the sensations of touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste by switching off the life current, that the freed consciousness may be united to God. All scientific techniques that bring about union of soul and Spirit may be classified as yoga, and pranayama is the greatest yogic method for attaining this divine union.

SLEEP-- The state of sleep is unconscious pranayama, or the unconscious process of switching off the life force from the five sense telephones. In sleep one practices the mortal posture or savasana. In this posture the body is still, the muscles have stopped working, venous blood is reduced, the heart slows down, the energy in the heart becomes quiet; therefore, the energy from the five senses is switched off. Then the mind attains unconscious pratyahara, or unconsciously returns within and becomes absorbed in an unconscious state of peace. Patanjali's statement of the direct use of pranayama is very significant, since he does not beat about the bush but tells one to adopt that scientific measure by which sensations can be consciously disconnected from the mind. What is attained during sleep, the unconscious switching off of the life current, can be attained consciously by adopting the scientific methods of pranayama.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

One sign that you have control of your life force is the ability to calm at will the heart, eyes, and breath. Control of this life force means getting control of the force that binds you to the world. Without training in life-force control, pranayama, you can never go into deep silence. It is useless to tell students to remain silent without their knowing first the methods by which they can control this life force.

Holding the breath for a little while is all right because you oxygenate the system and purify your blood, but that is not control over your breath. Pranayama does not mean just holding the breath in the lungs; it means control of the life force that activates the lungs and the heart. If you can control the heart by pranayama, you can switch off the energy from any body function at will. If you know how to do this, you can practice deep silence. Without that, you cannot know God. You must have life-force control over your breath and heart.

AFFIRMATION

O Father, when I was blind I found not a door which led to Thee; but now that Thou hast opened my eyes, I find doors everywhere: through the hearts of flowers, through the voice of friendship, through sweet memories of all lovely experiences. Every gust of my prayer opens an unentered door in the vast temple of Thy presence.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS

Kriya Step

(Part 1)

LESSONS	NUMBERS
Patanjali's Eight Steps of Yoga	K-1, 2
Kriya Yoga--the Higher Initiation	K-3 - 9, incl.
Historical Basis and	
Purpose of Kriya Yoga	K-3
How Kriya Quickens Soul Evolution	K-4
Kriya Yoga Technique	K-5
Maha Mudra Technique	K-6
Jyoti Mudra Technique	K-6
Aids to Kriya Practice	K-7
A Step-by-Step Outline of Kriya	K-7A
Control of Cosmic Energy	
(Pranayama) by Kriya	K-8
Physical and Spiritual	
Benefits of Kriya Practice	K-9
Kriya Lesson Summaries, 1-9 incl.	K-9A



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KRIYA 2

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TEACH US TO RECLAIM OUR BIRTHRIGHT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, twinkling in the stars, spread over the vast blue, make us realize Thy nearness! Make us realize that everything is saturated with Thee. Father, destroy the gloom in the temples of our minds with Thine omnipresent light! Under the canopy of Thy love we are playing near the fountain of life and death. Teach us to sing Thy song of changeless Bliss while we are playing this drama of life and death. No more dancing helplessly on the waves of incarnation, no more torture of goading desires, no more troubles, beholding the clashing waves of change through aeons of mortal existence!

Mighty Spirit, Thou didst make us Thy children, but we made ourselves beggars. Take us away from this beggary. Father, allow us no more to beg for a little health and wisdom, only to die in an anguish of unrealized hopes. Father, teach us to reclaim our birthright and to live as immortals. Bring us to Thy home of health and happiness. Into Thy temple of power, O Spirit! bring all Thy prodigal children and let them sing a chorus of unity and vitality. Bring the stars, bring the whippoorwill, bring all souls, and let them sing to Thee the song of Oneness.

PRAYER

O heavenly Trinity, Om, Tat, Sat, through my self-effort and knowledge of the law, let me climb the precious ladder of realization--to stand at last on the shining summit of attainment, face to face with the One Spirit Divine!

GRADATED METHODS OF YOGA--Part 2

KRIYA YOGA The ancient technique of Kriya Yoga, which was reintroduced in modern times by Lahiri Mahasaya, is the greatest form of pranayama, control of subtle life currents. Kriya establishes a continuous process of oxygenation that burns out the waste carbon in the venous blood, thus obviating the necessity for the heart to pump venous blood through the lungs for this purpose. The heart is thus able to become quiet; as a result, the energy is switched off from the five senses and the mind attains a conscious state of pratyahara, or awareness of inner forces.

FIFTH STEP: MIND INTERIORIZATION BY PRATYAHARA Pratyahara signifies the state of the mind when it is disconnected from the five sense "telephones." Those who practice pranayama or any other method of breath and life-energy control without bearing in mind the purpose for which they are practicing do not attain pratyahara. Patanjali states that the purpose of pranayama must be pratyahara, or making the mind return within. All devotees who seek Self-realization must be able to practice pranayama so successfully that they can use it to attain pratyahara, or interiorization of the mind, immediately. Thousands of students are satisfied with yama-niyama (rules of morality); many are satisfied with asana (posture); and some are satisfied with practicing pranayama alone. Best results come from the practice of all three--yama-niyama, asana, and pranayama.

CLIMBING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD--SAMADHI--ON THE SEVEN-STEP LADDER OF SELF-REALIZATION There can be many steps to a comprehensive theological understanding of the laws of God described in various philosophies and religions; there are but seven steps on the ladder of Self-realization that lead to the actual perception of the Infinite. To master each step, one must obtain not only new ideas about God, but also a distinct change of consciousness and increase in Self-realization until, in the seventh step, he will be directly contacting God as ever new Bliss.

Followers of the paths of devotion, meditation, chanting, and praying should so deeply follow their respective methods that the mind becomes engrossed within (pratyahara) and is undisturbed by sensations and restless thoughts. Those who practice some form of meditation, or a pranayama technique, have not arrived at the fifth step of the ladder of Self-realization until they are able quickly to interiorize the mind (pratyahara). Each step should yield definite signs of Self-realization.

- STEP 1,2. Yama-niyama yields self-control and mental calmness.
- STEP 3. Asana brings mental and physical calmness, so that the yogi-devotee can sit for hours in one meditation position without fatigue or mental restlessness.
- STEP 4. Pranayama should yield heartbeat control, pulse control, awareness of the cool and warm life currents in the spine, life-force control, and mind control.
- STEP 5. Pratyahara yields freedom of mind from physical sensations; it is the power of mental interiorization, or withdrawal of the mind from the senses.
- STEP 6. Dharana is the power to use the interiorized mind one-pointedly to concentrate upon God.
- STEP 7. Dhyana gives the conception, by feeling or intuition, of the vastness of God. The ultimate realization is samadhi or complete union with God.

IMPORTANT NOTES Only after mastering pratyahara are dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation) possible. Many
 RE: SIXTH STEP people think it is easy to meditate, but true meditation is actually impossible without first climbing the steps of yama-niyama, asana, pranayama, and pratyahara. Only those who have practiced these five steps can control the body and moods and habits; and exercise the ability to switch off the current from the five senses so that the attention, which is ordinarily tied to sensory experiences, is freed through pratyahara to go within and meditate on God.

Such a devotee has scientifically attained an expanded state of consciousness and understands what meditation means. Only by pratyahara, when the mind goes within, is it possible to concentrate completely upon God. Otherwise the mind will be experiencing sensations and the thoughts arising from them. Some spiritual teachers ask their students to meditate without explaining that meditation involves the achievement of oneness on the part of the meditator; the process of meditation, in which the mind is withdrawn from the senses by interiorization; and the object of meditation (God).

Patanjali says: "Meditate upon God (Iswara)." He understood that the average person has no conception of God, and explains that the symbol of God is Aum, the Cosmic Vibration or Cosmic Sound. Patanjali took it for granted, however, that people would know the meaning of Aum. The Upanishads tell us that as oil flows continuously from a barrel, so does Aum flow continuously from the cask of Spirit. It is a cosmic sound, an all-permeating sound, somewhat like a bass voice or a continuously sounding gong. Aum can be heard first in the body; then by dhyana, or expanded perception, it can be heard emanating from all creation. It is the sound oozing out of all atomic vibrations.

When Patanjali advises the yogi to concentrate on Aum, to chant Aum, and to understand the meaning of Aum, he means more than mere chanting of Aum aloud, or in a whisper, or mentally; rather that the yogi should engage the mind repeatedly upon the Aum sound that is emanating from Cosmic Vibration, which is present in the body and can be heard within by the practice of certain techniques. The techniques by which this can

be done are taught in Lesson No. 27 and 30 inclusive (particularly in Lesson No. 29), and in other Lessons throughout the Seven Steps of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. Those who chant Aum aloud, or in a whisper, merely create a sound of their own through the voice and imagination, and their consciousness of Aum is limited by that sound. But one must strive to hear the real Aum sound that is going on in the cosmos, which is unlimited, omnipresent, and omniscient--the Holy Ghost or vibration emanating from the transcendental God, the Father, and containing as its guiding principle the Christ or omnipresent Intelligence.

Patanjali says that in superconscious chanting the devotee keeps his attention riveted to the cosmic sound of Aum and tries to understand and feel this vibration of Aum as the representative of God in every atom of the universe. The Word (Cosmic Vibration) was made flesh (i.e., matter, the physical body of God). Many people do not understand the significance of Patanjali's instruction to meditate on Aum, and go on chanting loudly without trying at the same time to feel the cosmic presence of the real Aum sound. This Aum sound is the cosmic "trumpet" heard by St. John and described in the book of Revelation; it is the "Amen," the "faithful witness" of the beginning of God's creation.

Patanjali says that by superconscious chanting or inner perception of the Aum sound, and by thinking of the significance of Aum, one begins to identify his consciousness with Aum as heard in the body, and also with Aum as expressed in the universe. When Patanjali instructs the devotee to chant Aum, he means to listen to the Aum sound that is going on in the temple of meditation. When he says, "Think of its significance," he means, "do not limit Aum by boundaries of your concentration on the sound within the body; but try to feel Aum beyond the boundaries of the body, in all things, in eternity."

IMPORTANT NOTES After dharana, or concentration, comes dhyana,
RE: SEVENTH STEP which means attainment of the conception of the
 magnitude of Aum. Dharana means meditation on
Aum with an interiorized mind. Arthabhabanam (thinking of the meaning of Aum) and dhyana (conception of the Aum sound as present in the body and in the cosmos) are the same thing, conceiving of the perception of Aum not only in the body but also in the universe. By doing this, the devotee attains sabikalpa samadhi; that is, he deliberately (not unconsciously, by diversion) forgets the wave of the body in order to concentrate upon the ocean of Spirit. In sabikalpa samadhi the devotee concentrates so that his consciousness of material things is completely obliterated, but he is supersensitively conscious of the Spirit within. Sabikalpa samadhi has many forms.

SAMADHI TAKES When the devotee becomes one with the cosmic sound
MANY FORMS of Aum, that state is called Aum samadhi. When the
 devotee is one with the cosmic life in this vibra-
tion of Aum, that state is called mahaprana, or oneness with the cosmic life force. In this samadhi the devotee is conscious of the cosmic vital forces. When the devotee perceives cosmic light, that state is astral samadhi. In astral samadhi the devotee is one with the cosmic light. Then comes ananda samadhi, or oneness with the cosmic joy in

everything. After this comes jnana (sometimes called gyana) samadhi, wherein the devotee is one with the cosmic wisdom or intelligence in everything. Then comes devotional samadhi, in which the seeker attains divine devotion. Then comes prema samadhi, which is to be one with the cosmic love in all creatures and in everything, and in God. Then comes sundara samadhi, wherein one becomes one with all glory and beauty in Spirit.

In sabikalpa samadhi, the devotee is conscious of these various manifestations of God as sound, light, devotion, bliss, beauty, and so on, to the exclusion of the consciousness of the body and the world. After the devotee attains sabikalpa samadhi, which means bodily immobility combined with inner divine realizations, by further meditation he passes to the higher state of nirbikalpa samadhi.

ULTIMATE REALIZATION In nirbikalpa samadhi the soul becomes simultaneously conscious of the ocean of Spirit with its manifesting waves--the body, the mind, and the soul. Perfection in these various steps on the ladder of realization ultimately produces nirbikalpa samadhi. The devotee therefore must not remain confined to one step, but should climb all the seven steps of salvation until he reaches the pinnacle of spiritual Self-realization--nirbikalpa samadhi.

STEPS TOWARD SELF-REALIZATION

Free yourself from bad habits such as anger, greed, jealousy, and so forth. This is the first step toward God.

Acquire good habits, such as sincerity, loyalty, and poise. Learn to interiorize the mind, and introspect.

Practice asana, or correct posture. Your body must be under your control.

Next is pranayama, or breathlessness. Your breath must be calm and the mind interiorized in order to contact God.

Meditate. Learn to live in that eternal happiness and peace which is God.

Last is samadhi, or Oneness with God: The meditator, meditation, and the thing meditated upon become one.

AFFIRMATION

I will realize that praise does not make me any better, nor blame any less. I am what I am before my own conscience and God. I will travel on, doing good to all and pleasing God, for thus have I found my only true happiness.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



KRIYA 3

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WITH THE TORCH OF OUR DEVOTION BLAZE OUR DARK INDIFFERENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, let all the slaps of our trials wring from us only the one cry for Thy love. Transmute our trial-born wails into unceasing cries for Thee.

O Divine Mother, teach the voice of our pain to sing only Thy soothing songs of joy. Melt our pride in the furnace of Thy purifying flames, and transmute it into pure gold of humbleness.

Divine Mother, shatter the small hamlet of our selfishness, in which lie huddled all the urchins of ignorance, and build Thy temple of omnipresence for Thy votaries of devotion, reverence, soul-love, to find sanctuary there and to worship Thee with songs of heart-whispers.

In the golden temple of Thy whispers, they will offer to Thee their ever-fragrant frankincense of unceasing soul-chants.

O Divine Mother, we lay at Thy feet all the new-grown, fresh-cut flowers of our eager devotion.

Divine Mother, place Thine omnipresence on the little altar of our united hearts...Be Thou the only love of our souls...Ignite our earthliness with the flame of infinity. With the torch of our devotion, blaze our dark indifference, our restlessness, and our ignorance...Inflame our minds with Thy thoughts! Inflame our hearts with Thy love! Inflame our souls with Thy joy!

PRAYER

O Heavenly Father, free my spiritual path from all difficulties, and lead me to the shores of eternal wisdom and bliss.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

Words are inadequate to express the soul-revealing power of Kriya Yoga. Whether or not you understand the theory, if you conscientiously practice this supreme technique your all-accomplishing power of concentration will increase, as will your creative inspiration and ever new happiness.

He who practices Kriya is a Kriya Yogi, a true Brahmin ("knower of Brahma" or God), a twice-born Christian. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). A Kriya Yogi is born again by baptism in Spirit.

Physical birth is given by the father and mother; spiritual birth is given by the guru, the spiritual preceptor sent by God to awaken divine consciousness in true seekers. The guru is he who is able to lead the disciple, through a definite spiritual teaching and discipline, to God Consciousness. One may have many teachers, but when he finds his guru, he should follow only that guru's teaching throughout life. A true guru is a vehicle of God, through whom the Heavenly Father teaches the devotees in order to recall them to Himself.

HISTORICAL BASIS The evolution-quickening technique of Kriya is an ancient science. Lahiri Mahasaya received it from his guru, Babaji, who rediscovered and clarified the technique after it had been lost in the Dark Ages. Babaji, a deathless avatar, lives secretly in the Himalayas with a band of highly advanced disciples. He possesses Christlike powers. At the time of imparting the technique of Kriya to Lahiri Mahasaya, Babaji said:

"The Kriya Yoga that I am giving to the world through you in this nineteenth century is a revival of the same science that Krishna gave, millenniums ago, to Arjuna; and that was later known to Patanjali; and to Christ and his disciples St. John, St. Paul, and others."

It was to Swami Sri Yukteswar, one of Lahiri Mahasaya's most highly advanced disciples, that I came, as a youth, for spiritual training. From Sri Yukteswarji I learned that Babaji has chosen me to bring Kriya Yoga to the western world. Babaji knew that many truth-seekers in the West would be receptive to the scientific approach to God as given by India's ancient science of Yoga. Thus it was that Kriya Yoga, an ancient sacred technique, has been made available to the world, that the devotee may learn the exact method by which he may expand the boundaries of his mental chalice to hold the ocean of omnipresent Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

The Kriya Technique will be the foundation, the continuously expanding base of your own Self-realization. So you must be true to yourself and to the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship by faithful practice of the liberating soul-science. SRF is resolved to show you that Cosmic Consciousness is attainable in one lifetime if you properly and continuously cooperate in this divine endeavor.

Your fervent prayer for a new life, filled with the happiness that is the birthright of every soul, is answered by these Kriya lessons. With proper and persistent practice of these principles and techniques, the devotee may attain the supreme goal of Self-realization. That goal was reached by Lahiri Mahasaya, who toiled in the world, but remained anchored in the Infinite Bliss; as well as by many other determined Kriya Yogis.

KRIYA IS THE
INITIATION INTO
COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Man's consciousness is ordinarily identified with the senses. By Kriya practice the consciousness is transferred to the spine and brain and thus transmuted into superconsciousness and ultimately into Cosmic Consciousness. Through the faithful practice of Kriya you may contact Christ and other prophets and masters, and through them find union with God, the Infinite Spirit.

In your search for God through past incarnations you may have passed through states of worshiping idols or other material symbols, and may ~~have pursued many paths~~ of blind belief. But at last you see that the highest truth actually is to be found only within yourself. At last, perhaps after aeons, you have been led to a guru who can show you how to find God within yourself, in the centers of life force and consciousness in the spine. This great initiation is given to you so that by Kriya Yoga you may awaken the divine consciousness in the spine and create there an altar of God-perception. Then you will understand that although God dwells even in restless and changeable material forms, He is to be found in the greatest measure within yourself, in the calm stillness of your eternal soul. Worship God on the altar of the spine; then you will behold Him in the temple of every thought, every activity.

Just imagining that you are in Cosmic Consciousness does not make it true; you are still bound to the consciousness of flesh. But when you disconnect your mind from the senses through the Kriya Technique the thread of mortal or bodily consciousness is temporarily cut; your consciousness becomes attuned to centers of higher perceptions in the spine. When a certain blissful sensation (to be described in detail later) is felt in the spine, currents of life energy are withdrawn from the sensory nerves and concentrated in the spine, producing perfect sensory relaxation. By practice of this technique the yogi may control sensory perception as simply as one turns on and off a light switch. The yogi does not lose consciousness in switching off the senses; he may "turn on" the sensory perceptions again at will.

Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). That is, until a man born of flesh ("water"--blood) undergoes the birth of the Self as

Cosmic energy is finer than electrons or than any other vibratory force existing in nature, and is conscious (but not self-conscious). It is the missing link between consciousness and matter.

The first outward manifestation of Spirit is the vibration of Cosmic Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness manifests in progressively grosser states of vibration until it becomes conscious cosmic energy; finally, in its grossest form, Cosmic Consciousness manifests as material vibration or matter. Thus the connecting link between human consciousness and the gross physical body is specifically established by life energy or prana.

The soul is a microcosmic image of Spirit. As such, the soul first manifests the vibrations of superconsciousness; that consciousness vibrates into life energy, which in turn vibrates into the gross human body. Ignorance of the manner in which life energy functions has led many to suppose that there is a great difference between mind and matter, or even to deny the existence of matter. Mind exists; matter exists; both are vibrations of Spirit. Invisible mind vibrating as life energy is converted into gross matter. Matter does not exist as it appears to us; it is merely vibrations of life energy, which are vibrations of consciousness. If one could understand and control the functions of life energy he could dematerialize the body into its original constituent principles of consciousness and vibration.

AFFIRMATION

When cannons of uncertainties are booming,
and shells of suffering are falling fast around
me, still I am protected in the impregnable
trench of Thine immortal arms.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 4

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THE LIGHT SHINES BEHIND DARKNESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Daily seeing the material sunlight, you are blinded and unable to see the magic world of eternally spread luminous electrons shining behind the darkness born of closed eyes.

Open your eyes, O blind one! See how tiny your bird of ego is. Close your physical eyes and keep your spiritual eyes wide open in the sunlight of new understanding.

See how big YOU are, spread over Infinity and Eternity.

PRAYER

O God, teach me to worship Thee on the altar of the spine, then I will behold Thee in the temple of every thought, every activity.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

SPIRITUAL BENEFIT OF PRACTICING KRIYA The purpose of practicing Kriya is to unite the limited human consciousness with the unlimited or Cosmic Consciousness of God. Cosmic Consciousness, Spirit, Brahma, the Absolute, all are one and the same.

Even when creation was not, Spirit was. Creation has beginning and end and is subject to categories of time, space, relativity, dimension, cause and effect; whereas Spirit is beyond all categories--beginningless, endless, changeless, unconditioned. All the conditions of existence as we understand it are contained in Spirit, yet It is unaffected by them.

Spirit is Self-born. Spirit is ever conscious; its attention is equally distributed everywhere, and is fully concentrated everywhere. We also, being made in the image of Spirit, have latent within us the power to concentrate our attention and to feel our existence everywhere, through attunement of our consciousness with the cosmic or all-pervading consciousness of Spirit. Actually our human consciousness is Cosmic Consciousness, bottled up in a phial of flesh, corked with ignorance, and floating isolated in the ocean of Spirit. Because of maya, the cosmic delusion, this bottled-up human consciousness, although living and moving in Spirit, cannot contact Spirit, just as salt water that is corked in a bottle and floating on the sea cannot contact the sea.

Cosmic Consciousness is spread all over the universe and pervades everything in it. Human consciousness is limited by the human body and its environment. To attain Cosmic Consciousness it is necessary to expand the consciousness that resides in every living cell of the body and brain. Through following proper laws of living and by faithful practice of Kriya Yoga man can thus enlarge his consciousness and receive the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, or Spirit.

Correct practice of the Kriya Technique will bring you to the Source of all creative inspiration. By opening the spiritual eye of intuitive knowledge it will give you answers to all your questions. Kriya practice clears and stimulates the brain and strengthens the medulla oblongata; it also greatly magnetizes the body, saturating and feeding all its physical cells with undecaying light and keeping them in a magnetized state.

The deep student of Self-Realization Fellowship is able to live more by the "word of God," or cosmic energy, and less by the bread of life--oxygen, sunshine, and solid and liquid foods. As the life current is circulated up and down in the spine, the Kriya yogi experiences higher

perceptions of God in the spine and brain. When body consciousness is shut off by Kriya (duplicating consciously the freedom from body consciousness experienced in the state of sleep), the yogi becomes aware of the subtle spinal centers of light and energy.

When you can withdraw the energy from the senses, you can place your mind upon God, and you are then ready for the practice of Kriya. Control of life force produces a conscious state of deep silence. In sleep you experience complete silence. Why? Because the energy is withdrawn from the eyes and all the senses.

Kriya Yoga and its variations are exercises in the control of prana--life force--and are not ordinary breathing exercises. The Kriya Technique has been practiced by many students of Self-Realization Fellowship with the greatest benefit to their spiritual, mental, and moral growth.

Your soul is seeking an experience of God that is tangible. The Kriya Technique will give you mathematical results according to how much, how deeply, and how exactly you practice. The sincere Kriya yogi will find also that when he experiences occasional states of spiritual stagnation, he can receive immediate help by the practice of Kriya.

Twenty-four hours of ordinary silence will not produce as much spiritual benefit as one hour of deep meditation, and the Kriya Yoga Technique produces more results in daily practice than twenty-four hours of ordinary meditation. The Kriya Yoga that my master Sri Yukteswar taught is the greatest of pranayama techniques.

You can be sure that each time you practice Kriya correctly your entire system is being divinely changed; that your brain power and mental receptivity are expanding. You will come to realize that in the sacred technique of Kriya Yoga the masters of India have given you everything you need to reach the supreme Goal of life. The time limitation of ordinary human evolution is overcome by Kriya practice. The attainment of wisdom and Self-realization, which ordinarily requires a million years of normal, diseaseless evolution, is possible, through deep devotion and right practice of Kriya, in one lifetime. The human brain may be perfected sufficiently, by Kriya, to express Cosmic Consciousness, which otherwise might require many more irksome human incarnations to achieve.

Kriya is a fundamental method. The Kriya yogi mentally directs his life energy to revolve, upward and downward, around the sensitive spinal cord. The spine becomes magnetized; the life force, instead of being wasted and abused in the senses, is constrained to reunite with subtler spinal energies. By such reinforcement of life force the advanced student of Self-realization hastens physical and mental regeneration and rejuvenation. His body and brain cells are electrified with the spiritual elixir. Specifically, the Kriya Technique transfers the attention from the sensations of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch to the spine and brain where, by the intuitive perception of the soul, the yogi perceives God reigning in all His glory. The distractions of sensations and the resulting thoughts they evoke bar God-contact by diverting the

life force from the spinal altar of God-perception and directing it outward through the senses toward matter. But when the yogi returns the life force to the spine by Kriya practice and becomes concentrated solely on the subtle spinal perceptions, he is blissfully unaware of the body, his consciousness having become established once again on the spinal altar whereon he is aware only of his soul and God.

QUICKENING The evolutionary progress of the human body, mind,
SOUL EVOLUTION and soul keeps pace with the revolutions of the
 earth around the sun. (This natural progress is re-
 tardated if disease, accidents, undue despondency, ignorance, or sense at-
 tachment be permitted to invade the threefold kingdom of body, mind, and
 soul.) The six spinal centers (medullary, cervical, dorsal, lumbar,
 sacral, and coccygeal plexuses) in man correspond to the twelve astral
 signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man. The astral system of a
 human being, with six (twelve by polarity) inner constellations revolving
 around the sun of the omniscient spiritual eye, is interrelated with the
 physical sun and the twelve zodiacal signs. The great yogis of India
 discovered that man's earthly and heavenly environment, in twelve-year
 cycles, push him forward on his natural path of evolution.

But although the outer influences of rays and vibrations, food and solar energy, do refine the mind in this twelve-year period, the spiritual progress is nevertheless very slight. Calculated according to these twelve-year cycles, one million years would be required for a human being to attain Cosmic Consciousness. The ancient rishis therefore set about finding a way to attain Cosmic Consciousness in one lifetime. They discovered that to effect a change in the brain by means of refinement of the physical brain cells is a slow process, but that the effect on man of brain-changes is immediate. They concentrated therefore on developing a method of hastening the evolution of the brain.

They found that what is accomplished by outer influences during ordinary evolution could be brought about by internal methods of pranayama, or life-force control, that energize the sensitive spinal centers and render them receptive to spiritual currents. The rishis developed a technique of revolving the life force (the source of physical energy in the body) in an elliptical path upward and downward around the six spinal centers, thus directly quickening the evolution of the spine and brain centers. This quickening of evolution can be accomplished by faithful practice of Kriya Yoga, provided the body is kept free from diseases and accidents, and the mind free from disbelief and error.

By revolving the life force once around the spine, as the Kriya yogi is taught to do, man can effect a change in the brain and body that is ordinarily possible only by one year of diseaseless existence, careful eating, and absorption of solar energy. The passing of this current once around the spine corresponds to the effect of 365 days of sunlight. So any time the life current revolves around the spine, human evolution is advanced by one solar year.

By understanding the theory of Kriya Yoga, as explained in Kriya Lessons 1-2-3-4, the student will receive more benefit from the actual

practice of the Kriya Technique that will be given in the next Lesson.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT

Is Spirit knowable? When we speak of Spirit as the Creative Principle, or God, that does not get us anywhere. Spirit, in order to be real, must be real to us in a definite way. To describe Spirit negatively, saying that He--God--is neither mind, nor intelligence, conception nor cognition, sense perception nor thoughts, sky nor earth, ego nor chitta (feelings), does not describe Him. By the negative method it is impossible to explain God. He is beyond conception, but that does not prove that He is not in conception, for if God is not in it too, He would not be omnipresent.

If we are made in the image of God, why do we not reflect Him? We are in God, surrounded by God, God is within us, yet why do we not feel Him? There are several reasons. One is, because our attention is directed to the limitations of flesh and earthly things, with which we have identified ourselves.

As the sun reflects itself in many bodies of water, so the one Spirit reflects in many souls. Or, rather, this one Spirit is reflected in us as souls. When you break the waves of the water holding the image, the reflected image goes back to the sun; in the same way, when we are emancipated from the body, we go back to Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

I shall seek God first, last, and
all the time.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 5

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TEACH ME TO FIND FREEDOM IN THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, transfer my consciousness from the physical body to the spine, and from the spine through the seven centers to Cosmic Consciousness, where Thy glory and light reign in the fullness of Thy manifestation, and where the life force reigns in all Thy power. May Thy glory abide with me evermore. O Eternal Ball of Bliss, revolve within my consciousness and make me as Thou art.

Father, Thou and I are one. I am the ball of vibration. I am the cosmic ball of sound. I am the cosmic ball of light in which the planetary systems and universes are floating. My body, the earth, and the sun are flickering like glowworms within me. I am the Eternal Light. I am the Om vibrating in the little body and in the whole universe.

Heavenly Father, do not keep me a prisoner of incarnations, but teach me to find freedom in Thee, that I may know that on the earth nothing belongs to me, but all belongs to Thee. Teach me to know that my home is Omnipresence. O Thou Father of Vastness, sitting on the throne of the blue, adorning the throne of Omnipresence, I bow to Thee everywhere.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, ignite our earthliness with the flame of Infinity. With the torch of devotion blaze our dark indifference, our restlessness, and our ignorance. Inflammé our minds with Thy thoughts! Inflammé our hearts with Thy love! Inflammé our souls with Thy joy!

KRIYA YOGA -- THE HIGHER INITIATION

This most sacred of spiritual techniques, Kriya Yoga, must be practiced with exactitude for the highest results. There should be no deviation from any of the instructions given in this initiation. The rules are few; obey them strictly.

Choose for your meditation seat a straight, armless chair (or a firm bed) over which a woolen blanket has been placed so that it runs down under the feet, providing insulation from earth currents. Face East, the direction from which helpful subtle solar currents are always flowing.

Sit correctly with spine erect; feet flat on the floor; chin parallel to the ground; inside edges of the shoulder blades as close together as possible; chest out; abdomen in; hands (with palms upturned) resting on the thighs where they join the abdominal region. There should be no feeling of tension in maintaining the correct erect meditation posture; the muscles and limbs should be relaxed. But if you unconsciously allow the spine to bend forward (owing to bad postural habits of the past) you should straighten the spine as often as it bends, in order to gain the best results from Kriya practice.

SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR KRIYA PRACTICE

1. Lubricate the throat with a few drops of olive oil or melted unsalted butter or any vegetable oil. Place the oil on the tongue; then let it trickle slowly down the throat.
2. The following preliminary exercise gives an idea of the soothing warm and cool sensations that the student will experience when circulating the life energy in the spine during actual Kriya practice.

PRELIMINARY EXERCISE

Clench each fist lightly so as to form a small tubelike hollow. Hold the thumb-end of the right fist against the little-finger end of the left fist; then place the left fist against the open mouth (as though the two fists were a hollow flute-like tube held to the lips for blowing).

Slowly inhale through the mouth, drawing in air through the tube created by the loosely clenched fists. Notice the cool, refreshing sensation within the fists as the air passes through. Then exhale (through the mouth), giving careful attention to the sensation of trickling warmth felt inside the fist-formed tube. These two sensations (of coolness and warmth) will be felt in the spine during practice of the actual technique of Kriya Yoga.

Repeat several times the inhalation and exhalation of the breath through the fists, concentrating on the alternating sensations of coolness and warmth as the breath is inhaled and exhaled.

Continue inhaling and exhaling, but mentally transfer the sensations of coolness and warmth to the throat, taking the fists away from the mouth and letting the relaxed hands rest palms upward on the legs where the thighs join the abdominal region. Go on inhaling and exhaling, and mentally transfer to the spine the sensations of coolness and warmth felt in the throat. This latter transition of attention and feeling is not difficult, as the spine is directly behind the throat. The initial concentration on mentally transferring the sensations of coolness and warmth from the fists to the throat to the spine is intended to stimulate the movement of the actual life-energy currents in the spine. When, through the practice of Kriya Yoga, you begin to feel the alternately cool and warm currents in the spine, these currents will be the object of your concentration.

The foregoing exercise with the fist-formed tube is not the actual technique of Kriya. Its practice may be dispensed with once the student becomes proficient in the practice of the actual Kriya Yoga technique.

VISUALIZE THE SPINE AS A HOLLOW TUBE

Now visualize the spinal column as a hollow tube extending upward from the base of the spine (coccyx) to the base of the brain (medulla oblongata), where it bends forward in an arc extending through the cerebrum and ending at the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows. The practice of Kriya Yoga enables the student to feel the life force ascending (with a cool, soothing sensation), and descending (with a warm, trickling sensation) within this imaginary hollow cerebrospinal tube.

TECHNIQUE OF KRIYA YOGA

With eyelids half closed, or completely closed, turn the eyeballs upward and fix the gaze, without strain, at the point between the eyebrows.

EXPAND THE THROAT

Expand the inner opening of the throat by rolling the tongue back toward the palate as far as possible. (Do not strain; the expansion of the throat will

come naturally with practice in rolling back the tongue.) Let the tongue return to normal position, but retain the expansion of the throat that results from turning the tongue backward.

INHALATION (FEELING ASCENDING CURRENT)

Now inhale calmly and slowly, through the mouth and nose simultaneously, making the barely audible sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat. During inhalation of the breath the sound should be continuous, "AAAWWW" (not jerkily made, i. e., not "AW, AW, AW"). The duration of one inhalation should be ten (or up to fifteen) counts. (When done correctly the inhaling breath will have an aspirated "AW" sound, and will produce a cool sensation deep in the throat.)

Imagine that the breath is ascending quietly and smoothly through the inside of the imaginary hollow cerebrospinal canal (rather than going in and out of the lungs). As you draw in the breath, feel the coolness in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "AW," and mentally transfer both the sensation of coolness and the sound of "AW" to the spine. Feel that the cool breath is rising from the coccyx at the base of the spine with a sound of "AW," and that it is moving upward through the spine to the medulla, from there arching forward through the cerebrum until it reaches the top of the imaginary cerebrospinal tube, at the point between the eyebrows (the Christ Consciousness center). Feel this ascent of the breath in the spine as a cool sensation (similar to that produced when you drew in breath through the clenched fists).

The first part of Kriya, then, consists in the following:

Inhale calmly and slowly (to a count of ten or up to fifteen) making the aspirated sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat, but feeling that the breath is a cool current that you are drawing up the spine through a hollow tube from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center with a sound of "AW."

Having drawn the cool current up to the Christ Consciousness center, pause briefly; a count of three should be long enough.

EXHALATION (FEELING DESCENDING CURRENT)

Slowly exhale through mouth and nose to a count of ten (or up to fifteen), making the barely audible, continuous aspirated sound of "EEEEEE" high in the expanded throat. Feel that the breath is a tepidly warm, trickling stream flowing back through the hollow tube from the Christ Center through the cerebrum to the medulla oblongata; and soothingly flowing downward through the spine to the coccyx. Feel the warmth in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "EE," and mentally transfer both the sensation of warmth and the sound of "EE" to the spine, imagining the warm breath to be going down through the spine with the fine sound of "EE."

One "Kriya" means one practice of inhalation and exhalation of the breath in the spine (as just described). Practice continuously, without a stop, until

you have finished fourteen Kriyas. If you are very restless, however, practice the "Hong Sau" technique of concentration until your breath and mind have become quiet. Then resume Kriya practice. If you fail to practice correctly one Kriya, start anew and do that one Kriya correctly from the beginning.

Remember the following key points in the practice of the Kriya technique:

1. Get mentally inside the spine. Put the whole mind and feeling there.
2. Keep inhalation and exhalation equal and slow.
3. Don't allow any break in the breath, such as "AW, AW, AW." The sound should be steady: "AAAWWW," "EEEEEE." The sound is made with the breath, not the voice. The "AW" sound is made deep in the expanded throat. (Note: pay no attention to whether the breath is coming and going through the mouth or the nose, or both. The important point is to draw the breath in from deep in the throat and to expel it from high in the throat, as instructed.)
4. Be relaxed; do not strain. Enjoy the accession of peace and the soothing sensations of regenerative effect in the spine that accompany Kriya practice from the very beginning.
5. Be attentive to your practice; do each Kriya with a sense of its importance. On the scale of spiritual advancement, one Kriya rightly practiced is equivalent to a year of natural or evolutionary spiritual progress.

WHEN TO PRACTICE

Fourteen consecutive Kriya practices in the morning and fourteen consecutive Kriya practices in the evening are all that are permitted to the beginning Kriya Yoga student. The morning practice of fourteen Kriyas should be always before breakfast; the evening practice of fourteen Kriyas may be before dinner, or a minimum of three hours after a full meal, or before going to bed. Never practice on a full stomach, but at the times specified above. If you cannot practice Kriya either before or at least three hours after a heavy meal, then during that meditation, practice six Kriyas only.

MEDITATE AFTER KRIYA PRACTICE

After practicing the Kriya technique, remain in the meditation posture for at least ten or fifteen minutes (the longer the period, the better the result) endeavoring to feel mentally the life current going up and down the spine. Through your continued concentration you will begin to feel the magnetization of the spine, and to attain without any exertion or strain a breathless state wherein meditation can more easily produce the consciousness of Cosmic Joy and Bliss. Depth of concentration is more important than length of meditation, but both are necessary for advanced spiritual development. Try to arrange your schedule in such a way that on at least one day a week you can have a long meditation (three hours if possible) in which you can practice the other

Self-Realization Fellowship techniques ("Hong Sau" and listening to the Aum sound) before doing your fourteen Kriyas, and afterward sit long in deep silence. By this time it should be your habit to precede any period of meditation with fifteen minutes' practice of the Energization Exercises (Lesson 8-A) and with a prayer such as the following:

"O Spirit, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Guru-preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. May Thy love and wisdom manifest through me forever and ever. Free my spiritual path from all difficulties and lead me to eternal wisdom and bliss. Heavenly Father, may Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Permission to increase the number of Kriyas practiced daily must be secured from Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, and can be had only after several months of faithful practice and after you have made a satisfactory report to the Mother Center on your progress.

KRIYA--PROCESS OF MAGNETIZATION

If one wishes to move his forefinger, he sends energy there by means of his will. Similarly, in the practice of Kriya, will and imagination transmute the oxygen of breath into life energy and, reinforcing it with the subtle spiritual currents of the spine, make that life energy revolve around the spine.

When you inhale and exhale continuously as in Kriya, oxygen is quickly converted into life force that recharges with vital sustenance the entire body, especially the blood and lungs. When you focus your eyes and will power at the point between the eyebrows, and when you strongly visualize the circulation of the breath up and down the spine, a positive and a negative pole are established at the opposite ends of the imaginary hollow cerebrospinal tube between the Christ Consciousness center and the coccyx; the magnetic pull between the two poles brings about the actual circulation of the spinal current.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER The way to God is like a razor's edge. We are the waves of life in the ocean of Spirit. The wave has come out of the ocean and into the ocean once more it has to go. So long as you play with delusion the wave of your life will be storm-tossed by lashing winds of misery, troubles, and muffled hopes. That is why more and more you should devote yourself to that great, joyous communion with Spirit. You will feel my soul in tune with Christ and the Masters if you go deep, knowing the true way of communion with the Divine--Kriya Yoga.

AFFIRMATION

O Christ, Thou art risen in the garden of my love, in the garden of my sacred devotion, in the garden of my Kriya Yoga meditation.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 6

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THE MANSION OF MY LIFE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Divine Teacher, train me to recognize the difference between my soul's lasting happiness and the passing pleasures of the senses. Keep my eyes open, that the senses deceive me not by wearing stolen royal trappings and the mirage-cloak of sacred happiness, and so disguised, enter the mansion of my life.

Discipline my unwise, wayward senses, that they may spiritualize their pleasures, and ever look beyond the illusion of glittering, visible form; to find divine pleasure hidden behind simplicity's white robe.

PRAYER

Like a sacred hidden river my life force flows in the gorge of the spine. Help me to enter a dim corridor through the door of the spiritual eye, and speed on until at last the river of my life flows into the ocean of Thy life and loses itself in bliss.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

MAHA MUDRA

The purpose of the Kriya technique given in Lesson K-5 is to magnetize the spine by consciously circulating life force (currents of life energy) upward and downward within the spinal column. Extra oxygen is taken into the body during the special breathing that accompanies practice of the Kriya technique. That extra oxygen becomes transmuted into life force. Continuously ascending and descending in the spine, the life force creates a dynamo of energy that, like a magnet, attracts into the spine certain currents of life energy from the sensory nerves. The mind, thus disconnected from bodily sensations, is able to transfer its center of consciousness from the physical body to the spinal altar of God. By disconnecting the sensory perceptions of the limited territory of matter, the yogi becomes aware, through subtle spinal perceptions, of the unlimited sphere of Cosmic Consciousness.

PURPOSE OF MAHA MUDRA Maha Mudra consists of the practice of Kriya Yoga in a certain pose (described below). Maha Mudra is a simple but immensely effective method for straightening the spine and for encouraging the right distribution of prana (life currents) along the spine. Correct practice of Maha Mudra equalizes the flow of life energy to all parts of the body. It should be performed three times in the morning and three times in the evening, just before your regular practice of fourteen Kriyas. (However, because of the effectiveness of Maha Mudra in magnetizing and adjusting the spine, this technique may be practiced at any time the body requires adjustment.)

PREPARATION Since the practice of Maha Mudra involves also the practice of Kriya proper (which instruction you have already received, in Lesson K-5), make preparations as you would for Kriya, lubricating the throat with a few drops of olive oil or melted unsalted butter or vegetable oil.

Spread a woolen blanket on the floor or on a hard bed that does not sag.

TECHNIQUE OF MAHA MUDRA

(See Sheet of Illustrations, Lesson Kriya 6-A, attached.)

MAHA MUDRA--Part 1 Sit erect. Bend the left leg back under the body so that the sole of the left foot supports the left hip. Draw the right leg up against the body, so that the upper part of the leg is as close to the torso as possible, and the sole of the foot is flat on the floor. Place hands, with fingers interlocked, around the right knee. (See Fig. 1 on Kriya 6-A.)

Inhale, as Kriya proper, making the sound of "AAAWW" deep in the expanded throat and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube to the Christ-consciousness center between the eyebrows.

Holding the breath, bend the head until the chin touches the chest; at the same time unclasp the hands and stretch the right leg forward until it lies straight on the floor. Continuing to hold the breath, grasp with both hands the toes of the right foot and pull them gently toward you, mentally counting from one to six in this bent posture. (Fig. 2.)

Sit up, straightening the spine and lifting the right knee upward until the leg is again in the first position (drawn up close against the body). Exhale, making the sound of "EEEEEE" high in the expanded throat, and sending the warm current downward through the cerebrospinal tube to the coccyx.

MAHA MUDRA--Part 2 Repeat the foregoing, with leg positions reversed so that the right foot is tucked under the right hip, and the left leg is drawn up close against the body. (Figs. 3 and 4.)

MAHA MUDRA--Part 3 Sit with both legs drawn up against the body, and clasp the hands around the knees. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AAAWWW" deep in the throat, and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube. (Fig. 5.)

Holding the breath, bend the head until the chin touches the chest; at the same time unclasp the hands and stretch both legs forward until they are straight out in front of you. Still holding the breath, grasp the toes of the left foot with the left hand, and the toes of the right foot with the right hand, and pull them gently toward you, counting one to six as you do so. (Fig. 6.)

Resume upright position, with spine straight, both legs drawn up close to the body, and hands clasped around the knees. Exhale, making the sound of "EEEEEE," and sending the warm current downward through the spine to the coccyx.

Practice of the foregoing three-part instruction constitutes one performance of Maha Mudra. Perform the complete Maha Mudra three times before practicing Kriya proper in the morning and in the evening.

JYOTI MUDRA

SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE The two physical eyes reveal matter; the single spiritual eye reveals Spirit. The purpose of practicing Jyoti Mudra is to see the light of the single eye, by one's own effort, and to find through this spiritual eye the guidance of the omnipresent, omniscient Christ Consciousness. Seeing the spiritual eye is not accomplished through suggestion; it is an actual experience. When the yogi's mind and eyes are calmed and concentrated one-pointedly at the Christ-consciousness center between the eyebrows, he beholds there the light of the single eye. Jyoti Mudra gives you this spiritual baptism of light.

Our flesh is nothing more than condensed electricity. Beholding the light of the spiritual eye of infallible intuition you will understand what Jesus meant when he said, "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light... Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness" (Luke 11:34,35).

The purpose of Jyoti Mudra is to prevent the escape of life force through the head-openings of ears, nose, and mouth; and to use the "captured" life force to illuminate the single eye. But in order to get results you must follow steadfastly on the path of Self-Realization, practicing all the meditation techniques faithfully and with devotion.

Before practicing Jyoti Mudra, offer the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, guide me with Thy wisdom through the star in the spiritual eye. May my consciousness follow to its Source the dove of light descending from heaven, that I be baptized in Christ Consciousness. Heavenly Father, show me always the single eye; meet me always through the spiritual eye."

TECHNIQUE OF JYOTI MUDRA

(See Fig. 7 on Sheet of Illustrations, Lesson Kriya 6-A.)

Sit in the meditation posture: spine erect; feet flat on the floor; chin parallel to the ground; inside edges of shoulder blades as close together as possible; chest out; abdomen in.

Put the thumb of the left hand lightly over the tragus of the left ear, and the thumb of the right hand lightly over the tragus of the right ear. (The tragus is the fleshy prominence in front of the opening or hole in the ear.)

Place the index finger of each hand lightly, but with a gentle pressure, over the outer corners of the closed eyelids.

Place the middle fingers on the sides of the nose, near the nostrils.

Place the fourth fingers above, and the little fingers below, the corners of the mouth.

With the fingers held lightly in these positions, inhale with the sound of "AAAWWW" as in Kriya proper, drawing the cool current upward through the cerebrospinal tube from the coccyx to the spot between the eyebrows, at the same time gazing upward, without strain, and focusing the closed eyes at the Christ-consciousness center or spiritual eye.

Holding the breath, knit the eyebrows tightly and quickly, and simultaneously exert a firm but gentle pressure with all the fingers, thus completely closing the ear, nose, and mouth openings and holding the eyeballs fixed in the upward-gazing position.

While continuing to hold the breath for a mental count of one to twelve (or more, if you can hold the breath longer without discomfort), watch the revolving light of the spiritual eye--the spiritual aurora borealis.

Release the pressure of the fingers (without removing them from their positions) and exhale, sending the current downward through the spinal tube with the sound of "EEEEEE."

The foregoing constitutes one practice of Jyoti Mudra. Perform Jyoti Mudra three times after your morning practice of fourteen Kriyas, and three times in the evening, after your evening practice of fourteen Kriyas.

THE TELESCOPIC DOORWAY TO COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

In the beginning the spiritual eye may appear differently to different people; but when it is seen perfectly, it will appear (as described in earlier lessons) as a star in the center of a blue sphere that is encircled by a golden halo. The outer golden halo represents in terms of astral color the vibration of the Cosmic Energy or Holy Ghost; the blue sphere represents the vibration of the Christ Consciousness that pervades all creation. To penetrate the blue disc is to enter the telescopic doorway to Christ Consciousness. The little white star in the middle represents that pure light of God beyond creation; the yogi who penetrates the star enters Cosmic Consciousness.

We know from the Bible that the wise men followed the "star of the East" to find the Christ child. Each was following the star in his own spiritual eye. You also may learn to see and to follow the star of the spiritual eye, through whose universal sight the wise men were able to perceive Christ Consciousness manifesting in a human form--that of the little baby Jesus. Unless a person takes his consciousness through the spiritual eye, he cannot possess Christ Consciousness.

The human body is an externalization of the powers within the little five-pointed star in the spiritual eye. Man's head, two hands, and two feet are symbolized in the five rays of the star in the spiritual eye. These rays have materialized into the five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) of which the human body is composed.

We are living like chicks inside an eggshell: earth is the yolk and sky is the shell. As the chick is confined in the egg until it grows strong enough to break the shell and come out into a larger world, so the average person is confined to this sky-bound world until he discovers the telescopic spiritual eye through which he can pierce the skyey shell and scan the spheres beyond. Using the spiritual telescope of the single eye, he projects his consciousness through the shell of the material universe and enters subtler realms whose beauty no tongue can describe. His vision extends throughout the cosmos into Infinity.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The "three wise men" of the East lived continuously in the highest spiritual consciousness. Through intuition they knew of the coming of the prophet Jesus; and by the guiding "star of the East" or God Consciousness in the spiritual light of the single eye, they were led to the Christ child.

Like those truly wise men, let us realize the spiritual values of life--the realities. We should not be deluded by the seeming reality of matter and visible things--things not of the Spirit. Rather we should live with heart and consciousness uplifted, in the region of spiritual Reality, where we are sure of our path, and where our true heritage as sons of God is to be attained.

To progress spiritually we must dwell constantly with the thought of Christ. We must work with Him, rejoice with Him, serve with Him, and behold Him in every object and in every person we meet. How can we expect to attain Christ Consciousness unless we live perpetually in Him? In Him we may have every legitimate wish fulfilled in this life and may enjoy our friends and possessions with the consciousness of God. We should love all our dear ones, and enjoy their comradeship by seeing Him in them. We should strive always to realize that they are manifestations of God. We are Spirit; they are Spirit. Spirit loves Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

Peace eternal, joy eternal, is the glory of my being. On the altar of peace and ever-new happiness I invoke the Blessed Lord of Aum.

Illustrations of Maha Mudra, Parts I, II, and III;
and of Jyoti Mudra

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSON, STEP 7, Lesson KRIYA 6-A

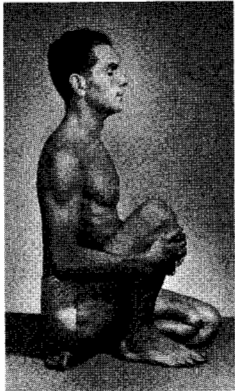


Fig. 1
(left)

MAHA MUDRA
(Part One)

Fig. 2
(right)

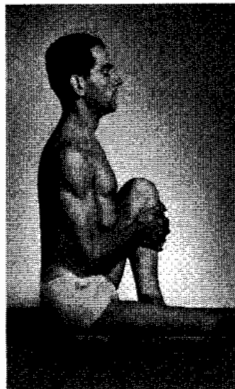


Fig. 3
(left)

MAHA MUDRA
(Part Two)

Fig. 4
(right)

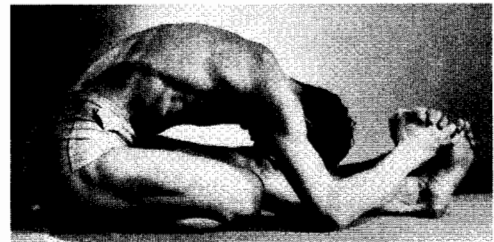
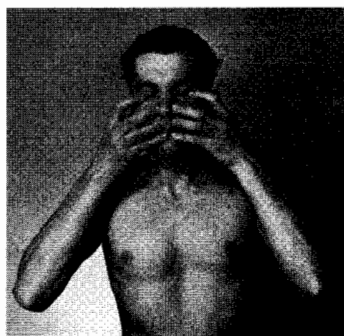
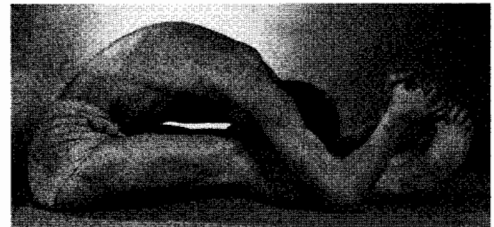


Fig. 5
(left)

MAHA MUDRA
(Part Three)

Fig. 6
(right)



Jyoti Mudra

Fig. 7
(left)





Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

BEADS FOR COUNTING KRIYAS

Many Kriya Yogis have found that a strand of beads is helpful in counting the number of Kriyas done during their daily practice. By using these beads, one does not have to count mentally, and may thus devote his or her full concentration to the practice of Kriya.

To adapt the beads for Kriya practice, first find the single bead that is tied and secured with a tassel. Starting from the tassel, count off the number of beads that correspond to the number of Kriyas you are normally allowed to practice. At that point tie a small ribbon or piece of yarn.

When you begin practicing your Kriyas, hold between two fingers the bead next to the ribbon and, with each succeeding practice, move your fingers to the next bead, going back toward the tassel. When the tassel is finally reached, you know that the proper number of Kriyas have been performed.

* * * *

Self-Realization Fellowship carries sandalwood beads and rudraksha beads, both imported from India. Please refer to our current catalog for descriptions and order information. (If you do not have a current catalog, one may be obtained at no charge by writing or phoning the Mother Center.)

SRI DAYA MATA, PRESIDENT

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



KRIYA 7

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GOD IS EVERYWHERE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Think of God before performing an action.
Think of Him while you are active. And think
of Him after the action is performed.

Feel God as love in all hearts. Feel God
in the impartial love you feel for all human
beings and in the tender love you feel for all
created things.

Create Godlike habits by thinking of Him
as beauty and fragrance in the flowers; color
in the rainbow; love, wisdom, and power in all
human minds; and vastness in the ocean and sky.

Think of Him as life in the breeze; vitality
in the sunshine; as peace in the moonbeams;
reason in the mind; rest in dreams; joy in
sleep; perennial, ever new Bliss in meditation;
and love in all hearts.

PRAYER

The breeze of Thy love wafts through me, O Father, and the leaves of the tree of my life gently tremble in response to Thy coming. The leaves of my soul are just awakening. Their rustling murmur, floating through the ether, calls the weary ones to rest in the shade of my peace, which comes from Thee.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

Long before this you should have solemnly dedicated a small room, or a part of your bedroom (perhaps a corner screened off, or even a ventilated closet) to serve as your temple of meditation. If you have not done so, delay no longer. Sanctify this temple by devoting it exclusively to the practice of Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, especially Kriya Yoga. Consider yourself the priest of your temple, a spiritual disciplinarian who corrects and instructs the congregation of your diverse untrained thoughts and feelings, that you may become an example of ideal spiritual living.

Each member may thus create in his own home a private experimental laboratory in which to weigh, test, and practice the Self-Realization Fellowship techniques. Progressing logically and scientifically in his understanding of the true laws of yoga, he may attain the pinnacle of Self-realization. Kriya is the scientific way of changing material body-consciousness into spiritual Cosmic Consciousness.

Kriya is mathematical in its results. All who practice it correctly and regularly will learn this truth for themselves. By the correct morning and evening practice of Kriya, the spine, brain, and mind become beneficially changed or spiritualized. It requires one year to bring about through natural evolution a change equivalent to that produced by one completed Kriya breath. By practicing Kriya twenty-four times daily, the devotee may achieve in one day the equivalent of twenty-four years of natural spiritual evolution.

After practicing Kriya and resting for a time in the inner peace that comes from meditation, one is better fitted to do creative work in connection with literature, art, or science. Stimulated by Kriya, intuition develops of itself, without effort, because one's consciousness is then transferred from the outward senses inward to the spine and brain. Self-realization can come only through the development of one's intuition. While practicing Kriya, feel the power of God in the spine. Through regular, deep practice of the Kriya Technique you will contact Christ and the other great Gurus of this path, and they will help you to attain union with God, the Infinite Spirit.

As a child just learning to walk must walk slowly before learning to run, so it is with Kriya. This advice should not cause you to harbor any fears. Kriya is the highest technique given by spiritual special-

ists for destroying all physical, mental, and spiritual ills. But you should carefully follow the instructions for practice of the technique, and make a sincere daily effort to adhere to the laws of ideal living. The following suggestions will be helpful to the Kriya yogi who is carrying out the prescribed daily routine of Kriya practice.

- (1) The practice of a few preparatory exercises has been found to be invigorating and effective (although not absolutely essential) to condition the body for Kriya. If for some reason you are unable to precede your Kriya practice with the complete routine of SRF Recharging Exercises given in Lesson 8-A (these take about fifteen minutes), the three following exercises may be practiced in their stead.

Exercise A:

Stand erect, with shoulder blades together, chest out, chin up, hands down at the sides. Exhale slowly, dropping the head on the chest, and bend forward at the waist until the hands touch the floor. Then inhale, slowly straightening the body, at the same time raising the arms upward over the head and bending the body backward with head and hands as far back as you can stretch. Hold breath to a comfortable count. Then exhale slowly, repeating the exercise. Practice this three times.

Exercise B:

This exercise should be performed in bare feet before an open window. Stand erect, with shoulders back, chest out, chin up. Raise the hands and feet up and down in alternate succession, as in ordinary walking, while remaining in one place. Practice this walking exercise for three minutes or longer.

Exercise C:

Practice Exercise B at a moderate running gait for one minute or longer.

- (2) Eat very little or no meat; never beef or pork. Include in your diet plenty of fruits, raw vegetables, and ground nuts.
- (3) Never practice Kriya on a full stomach. Practice before meals, or at least three hours after meals. Partial fasting (on fruit juice, for a day), is beneficial and effective in cleansing the body of restlessness-producing toxins. Naturally one should fast only with the approval of his or her physician.

If you cannot arrange your time so as to practice Kriya either before or at least three hours after eating, then practice not more than six Kriyas at one time.

- (4) Practice the Kriya Technique mentally only if you have a heart ailment or a respiratory difficulty (even if it is just a cold), or if you are having any serious, temporary physical health problem. The practice of Kriya can bring no harm; however, because of its direct effect on the life currents in the spine, it is better not to prac-

tice the technique when the spinal currents are being affected by some temporary, serious malfunctioning of the body.

Entertain no fear, suspicion, or doubt. Write to the SRF Mother Center if you have any questions concerning the practice of Kriya.

- (5) After the first three months of pregnancy, practice only six Kriyas and one Jyoti Mudra twice daily, and omit Maha Mudra. It is very beneficial to your child that you continue to meditate during pregnancy, regularly practicing the Hong-Sau and Aum Techniques. But after the first three months of pregnancy, discontinue Maha Mudra and reduce the number of Kriyas performed to six in the morning and six in the evening meditation, followed each time by one Jyoti Mudra.
- (6) Bear in mind that the practice of a highly advanced technique such as Kriya Yoga is incompatible with unbalanced living. The benefits of Kriya will be enhanced by the practice of even-mindedness and the avoidance of excessive excitement or emotionalism, wrong habits of diet, and so on. Observe strict moderation in everything, particularly in sex life. Self-control strengthens the mind and life force and brings happiness and peace of mind.
- (7) Do not discuss or divulge any technique without first consulting with SRF headquarters, which reserves the sole right to give Kriya instruction, or to appoint a qualified SRF member to give such instruction. If you know of someone who you feel should have the benefit of certain SRF Techniques, encourage him to become an SRF student that he may receive the full benefits of study. If some difficulty stands in the way of his becoming a member, advise him to write directly to Self-Realization Fellowship, explaining his situation and affirming his sincere desire to receive instruction in specific SRF Techniques.

The next Lesson in this series, K-7A, consists of a brief step-by-step outline of the techniques of Maha Mudra, Kriya proper, and Jyoti Mudra, with brief listings of the key points to be remembered in connection with each.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Lessen your worldly burdens by meditating deeply; practice Self-Realization Fellowship teachings and Kriya Yoga. God tests your love for Him. Because His test of delusion is so very strong, millions in the world today are not interested in Him. That is why they are suffering the ravages of wars, famines, and natural calamities. The Lord did not create this world that we build here a temple of lasting happiness. Our home is in Him. As the wave's home is in the ocean bosom, so our home is in the bosom of Spirit.

YOU ARE A PERFECT REFLECTION OF SPIRIT

You are, and ever shall be, a perfect reflection of Spirit. You were Spirit, though now you imagine yourself to be mortal. But by meditation on your true Self, and by performing God-reminding actions constantly, you can remember your forgotten Spirit-nature and remain in that divine consciousness of ever new bliss through all futurity. Forget the nightmare of present limitations. If you have assurance of the Infinite; if you know that God is protecting you; then, whether nature shatters your body or not, you are still on the lap of immortality, still on the lap of that infinite assurance. As the ocean is the wave and the wave the ocean, so affirm: "Spirit is I, and I am Spirit." Forget your dream-born mortal weakness. Wake up and know that you and God are one.

AFFIRMATION

I am Thy babe of eternity,
rocking in the cradle of Thine
omnipresent bosom.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 7-A

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SRF TECHNIQUE OF KRIYA YOGA

"Even a little practice of this religious rite will save you from dire fears (mahato bhayat, the colossal sufferings inherent in the repeated cycles of life and death)." This stanza from the Bhagavad-Gita (2:40) was quoted by Babaji for the encouragement of all Kriya Yogis. Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya, is the param-param-paramguru of all SRF-YSS members who practice Kriya Yoga. The deathless master has promised to guard and guide all sincere students.

TECHNIQUE:

1. Sit in the meditation posture, on a chair, feet flat on the floor; or cross-legged on the bed or floor. Hold the spine erect; chin parallel to the ground; shoulders drawn well back; chest out; abdomen in; hands (with palms upturned) resting on the thighs where they join the abdominal region.
2. With eyes closed or half-closed, concentrate the gaze at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead, between the eyebrows.
3. Think of the spine as a hollow tube that extends upward from the coccygeal center at the base of the spine to the medulla center at the base of the skull, where the hollow tube curves forward through the cerebrum to the Christ Consciousness center in the middle of the forehead.
4. Expand the throat. To do this, first turn the tongue backward toward the throat. Do not strain. Then let the tongue return to normal position, but retain the expansion of the throat that results from turning the tongue backward.
5. Inhale through the mouth and nose, calmly and slowly making the sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat. As you are drawing in the breath, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), feel a cool current being drawn up the spine from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center. Feel the coolness in the throat, and hear the sound of "AW," and mentally transfer both feeling and sound to the spine, as though the cool breath were coming up inside the spine with a sound of "AW." The sound of "AW" should be audible, but not loud.

6. Having drawn the cool current up to the Christ Consciousness center, pause briefly; a count of three should be long enough.
7. Exhale through the mouth and nose, slowly and calmly, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), making the sound of "EE" high in the expanded throat. Feel that the breath is a warm, fine (threadlike) current flowing down from the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead through the spine to the coccygeal center at the base of the spine. Feel the warmth in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "EE," and mentally transfer both the sensation of warmth and the sound of "EE" to the spine, imagining the warm breath to be going down through the spine with the fine sound of "EE."
8. The initial concentration on the idea of transferring the sensation and sound from the throat to the spine is practiced merely to stimulate the movement of the actual currents of life-energy in the spine. As you begin to feel the actual currents, concentrate only on the currents, cool or warm.
9. Repeat 14 times, morning and evening.

KEY POINTS:

1. Practice the SRF Recharging Exercises beforehand to purify the body. Begin your meditation with practice of the SRF concentration technique (Hong-Sau), to calm the mind; follow this with practice of the SRF meditation technique (listening to the Om sound). Then you are ready to begin your Kriya practice.
2. Before starting Kriya, make a loose fist with each hand. Hold the two fists close together, with the thumb of one hand pressed against the little finger of the other, to create a hollow tube like a shepherd's pipe. Place the fist nearest you to the lips as though to "play" the "pipe." Inhale through the mouth and feel the sensation of coolness inside the hollow tube of the fists. Exhale (through the mouth), and feel inside the fists the sensation of warmth. Practice this several times, concentrating on the alternating sensations of coolness and warmth as the breath is inhaled and exhaled. Quickly transfer this sensation to the throat, taking the fists away from the mouth and letting the relaxed hands rest palms upward on the legs at the juncture of the thighs with the abdominal region. From the throat, transfer the sensation felt in the throat to the spine; this is not difficult, as the upper part of the spine is directly behind the throat. At first, breathe quickly a few times, feeling the current moving a short distance up and down the spine in the region of the throat; gradually, breathe more and more slowly, and feel the currents going farther up and down the spine. Finally, breathe the full Kriya count, feeling the currents flowing all the way from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center, and back again. (Don't break the transition of sensation from fists to throat to spine. The transitions should be smooth, flowing, unbroken.)

3. The eyeballs, upturned in steady gaze toward the Christ Consciousness center, should not move. The beginner should practice with eyelids half-closed for best results; because, when the eyelids are completely closed, the eyes have a tendency to relax from the upturned gaze at the Christ Consciousness center. However, once the meditator has succeeded in keeping the eyes fixed in their upturned gaze at the Christ Consciousness center, it does not matter whether the eyelids are half-closed or completely closed.
4. Use a little olive oil, or unsalted butter, or any vegetable oil to lubricate the throat. Place oil on tongue, let it trickle slowly down.
5. Get mentally inside the spine. Put the whole mind and feeling there.
6. Inhalation and exhalation should be equal and slow. There should be only slight movement of the chest.
7. Don't allow any break in the breath, such as "AW, AW, AW." The sound should be steady: "AAAWWW," "EEEEEE."
8. The sounds of "AW" and "EE" must be distinctly made, not too loudly nor too softly (i.e., the sounds should be barely audible to the meditator); and correctly made (not with the mouth but with the breath in the expanded throat). The right sounds are necessary for success in Kriya.
9. Practice continuously, without a stop, until finished with your Kriyas. If you are very restless, however, practice the technique of concentration (Hong-Sau) for a time to calm down. Then resume Kriya practice.
10. If you fail to practice correctly one Kriya, start the Kriya breath anew and do it correctly.
11. Do not be absentminded (this may be a tendency with the first few Kriyas). Do each one with a sense of its importance; on the scale of spiritual advancement, one Kriya rightly practiced is equivalent to a year of natural evolution.
12. Be relaxed. Very important; don't strain. Enjoy the accession of peace and the soothing sensations of regenerative effect in the spine that accompany Kriya practice from the very beginning.
13. Be regular. Do fourteen Kriyas morning and evening, every day, regardless of any circumstances that may arise to interfere.
14. Sit for a long time after practicing Kriya, praying and experiencing the joy-contact of God. Do not get up and leave immediately after Kriya practice.
15. In addition to your regular morning and evening periods set aside

for Kriya, you may also practice a few Kriyas (up to, but not more than, six) whenever you have free moments during the day. But your regular morning or evening practice should not exceed 14 Kriyas, and your occasional practices during the day should not exceed six Kriyas.

Kriya should always be performed with deepest concentration and complete detachment from outer distractions. Depth of concentration is more important than length of practice; but both are necessary for advanced spiritual development. Therefore make it a point to set aside at least one day a week when you will have time for a long meditation (three hours if possible) after your regular morning or night performance of 14 Kriyas.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Eat very little or no meat; never beef or pork. Include plenty of fruits, raw vegetables, and ground nuts in your diet.
2. Never practice Kriya on a full stomach. Practice before meals, or wait at least three hours after meals. Partial fasting is beneficial and effective. If you cannot manage your time so as to practice Kriya either before eating or three hours after eating, then practice not more than six Kriyas at a time.
3. If you are in poor physical health, especially at times of heart or respiratory difficulties, practice Kriya mentally only.
4. After the first three months of pregnancy, practice only six Kriyas twice daily. But do continue to meditate regularly and to practice the Hong-Sau and Aum Techniques.
5. Do not exceed the specified number of Kriyas without first having obtained the approval of SRF headquarters.
6. Entertain no fear, suspicion, or doubt. Write to the SRF Mother Center if you have questions.
7. Do not lead an unbalanced life; observe strict moderation in everything, especially in sex life. Self-control strengthens the mind and life force.
8. Practice even-mindedness at all times.
9. Do not discuss with others nor divulge to them any of the SRF techniques, without first having obtained permission from SRF headquarters (which reserves the right to give such instruction, or to appoint SRF members who may give such instruction). If you think someone should know the techniques, encourage him to become an SRF student; or, if some difficulty stands in his way, advise him to write to SRF about the situation.

OUTLINE OF MAHA MUDRA

1. Sit erect on the floor or on a bed that is quite firm.
2. Bend left leg back under body, so that the sole of left foot supports left hip.
3. Draw right leg up against body, so that the upper part of leg is as close to torso as possible and the sole of the foot is flat on the floor.
4. Place hands, with fingers interlocked, around the right knee.
5. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube to the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows.
6. Holding the breath, bend the head forward and downward until the chin touches the chest, at the same time releasing the hand-hold on the right knee and stretching right leg forward until it lies straight on the floor.
7. Continuing to hold the breath, grasp with the interlocked fingers of both hands the big toe of the right foot and pull it gently toward you, mentally counting from one to six in this bent posture.
8. Sit up, straightening the spine and lifting the right knee upward until the leg is again in the first position (see items 3 and 4 above).
9. Exhale with the sound of "EE," made high in the expanded throat, sending the warm current downward through the cerebrospinal tube to the coccyx.
10. Repeat the foregoing with leg positions reversed, so that the right foot is tucked under the right hip and the left leg is drawn up against the body.
11. Sit with both left and right legs drawn against body; clasp hands around knees.
12. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AW" deep in the throat and bring the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube.
13. Holding breath, bend head forward and downward until chin touches chest, at the same time releasing the hold of the clasped hands and stretching both legs forward until they are straight out in front of you.
14. Still holding breath, grasp the great toe of left foot and the great toe of the right foot with clasped hands and pull the toes toward you, counting one to six.

15. Resume upright position with spine straight, both legs drawn up close to the body, and the hands clasped around the knees.
16. Exhale, making the sound of "EE" and sending the warm current downward through the spine to the coccyx.
17. Perform the foregoing steps (1-16), in the order given, three times.

KEY POINTS:

1. Practice Maha Mudra before Kriya proper and at any time that the body requires adjustment, for this practice magnetizes and adjusts the spine.
2. Make same preparation for practice of Maha Mudra as you do for Kriya proper.
3. Practice on a woolen blanket spread on the floor; or, better still, on blanket spread over a firm bed.
4. There is a natural tendency to tense the muscles in the back during the forward bend (see step 6 in outline), thus creating resistance to the stretching motion. The benefits of practice will be greatly increased, however, by keeping the muscles along the spine relaxed.
5. It is essential that the spine be stretched not only in its upper but in its lower part; this is accomplished only if the outstretched leg is kept straight while one is pulling on the great toe (steps 6 and 7 in outline). Those who cannot reach the toe without bending the knee should instead pull on the foot or even the ankle, if by doing so they can avoid bending the knee and still accomplish the vital stretching of the spine.
6. After the first three months of pregnancy, discontinue performance of Maha Mudra.

OUTLINE OF JYOTI MUDRA

1. Sit erect on a straight chair with feet flat on the floor (unless you prefer the lotus posture or the ordinary cross-legged posture).
2. Put the thumb of the left hand lightly over the tragus of the left ear, and the thumb of the right hand over the tragus of the right ear. (The tragus is the cartilaginous prominence in front of the opening or hole in the ear.)
3. Place the index finger of each hand lightly, but with a gentle pressure, over the outer corners of the closed eyelids.
4. Place the middle fingers on the sides of the nose, near the nostrils.

5. Place fourth fingers above and the little fingers below the corners of the mouth.
6. With fingers held lightly in these positions, inhale with the sound of "AW," as in Kriya proper, drawing the cool current upward through the cerebrospinal tube from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows, and at the same time gazing upward (without strain) and focusing closed eyes at this point.
7. Holding the breath, knit eyebrows tightly and quickly, and simultaneously exert a firm but gentle pressure with all the fingers, thus completely closing the ear, nose, and mouth openings and holding the eyeballs fixed in the upward-gazing position.
8. While continuing to hold the breath for a mental count of 1 to 12 (or as long as you can hold the breath without discomfort), watch the revolving light of the spiritual eye--the spiritual aurora borealis.
9. Release the pressure of the fingers (without removing them from their positions) and exhale, sending the warm current downward through the spinal tube with the sound of "EE."
10. Practice this exercise three times, morning and evening, after the practice of Kriya proper.

KEY POINTS:

1. Before you practice Jyoti Mudra, offer the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, guide me with Thy wisdom through the star in the spiritual eye. May my consciousness follow to its Source the dove of light descending from heaven, that I be baptized in Christ Consciousness. Heavenly Father, show me always the single eye; meet me always through the spiritual eye."
2. When you see the spiritual eye perfectly, you will see at the center a five-pointed star, surrounded by a blue light, which in turn is encircled by a halo of golden light. This vision will come with faithful practice of this technique.
3. In holding the breath during Jyoti Mudra (see point 8 in outline), one involuntarily tenses the rib cage in order to maintain the resulting expansion of the chest. The Kriya yogi can gain better results by voluntarily relaxing the chest during this part of Jyoti Mudra. In so doing he may find, if his concentration is deep and calm, that the epiglottis also relaxes (i.e., opens), allowing air into the mouth. However, as the fingers hold the mouth and nose openings tightly closed, the escape of air (and subsequent deflation of the chest) is prevented.
4. After the first three months of pregnancy, practice just one Jyoti Mudra twice daily (after six Kriyas morning and evening).



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



KRIYA 8

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THE BOAT OF MY ZEAL

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, many a net in silence I wove with the golden tassel of my devotion, and yet You have so often fled from me down the sea of time. Beloved, with deliberate insistency I am pursuing You in the boat of my zeal. I am casting upon You vaster nets of my burning inner peace.

Millenniums have slipped by and I have been voyaging on the sea of incarnations. Now I cast all my nets away. I plunge in Your omnipresence, swiftly swimming after You with powerful strokes of love inspired by You. I am racing up and down into the innermost spaces of Your love, and yet You seem to elude me.

As I cried with the broken hearts and concentrated sobs of many lives, at last You broke the vow of Your silence and whispered to me: "Why, your boat of devotion, your net of zeal, your silken tassel of peace, your swimming over the cosmic sea or the waves of life, and the innermost spaces of perceptions--all, all I Am. Wherefore do you pursue Me in vain? I was always with you and in you in your pursuing and in all the places you pursued Me."

PRAYER

Many doors opened of themselves before me because of Thy coming. O Lord, everything shone with life when Thou camest. Everywhere dumb matter spoke, Spirit-resurrected by Thy touch. Everywhere throbbed the incense-breeze of stillness, bearing to me Thy perfume of Bliss. I beheld Thy sanctuary, hidden beneath the broken rocks of silence.

KRIYA YOGA -- THE HIGHER INITIATION

These techniques should be kept strictly confidential. Do not misuse them, and do not tell your experiences to others, as they will not understand unless they are spiritually developed. It is better to write to Self-Realization Fellowship Mother Center about your progress. Only through great good karma does one earn the opportunity to receive advanced techniques such as Kriya Yoga for the liberation of the soul from mortal bondage. It is necessary to observe the divine laws in order to attain God Consciousness. Blessed are those who have followed and who will continue to follow the path of Self-Realization Fellowship to the end of life.

CONTROL OF COSMIC ENERGY Owing to the circulation of the life currents up and down the spine during Kriya Yoga practice, the Christ Consciousness Center (will power center) becomes a positive pole and the coccygeal center becomes a negative pole. Passing up and down the spine between these two poles, the life current becomes a magnet of energy that draws into the spine various currents from the nervous system and attracts into the body, through the medulla oblongata, fresh supplies of life energy from the cosmic Source. The various currents of life energy in the body, freed from the limiting necessity of supplying the heart, lungs, and other organs, mingle and become identified with the subtle currents in the spine and finally become transmuted into cosmic energy. This is what is meant by pranayama, or control of life force in the heart, spine, and nervous system. Pranayama results in breathlessness, which calms the heart and lungs and which is favorable for one's longevity. In the breathless state the life force, which ordinarily is dependent on oxygen for its manifestation and perpetuation in the human body, finds freedom from its slavery to the breath (i. e., oxygen) and moves Spiritward. Breathlessness is deathlessness.

Many people erroneously believe that pranayama (control of life force) is accomplished by control of breath. The opposite is true: control of breath is a result of controlling the life force. The real meaning of pranayama, according to Patanjali, foremost exponent of Yoga, is the gradual, unforced cessation of breathing. The discontinuance of inhalation and exhalation can be brought about by Kriya Yoga, a form of pranayama wherein the human blood is decarbonized and recharged with oxygen; the atoms of this extra oxygen are

then transmuted into life current, rendering breathing unnecessary for certain periods. The Bhagavad-Gita describes Kriya Yoga thus:

"Offering inhaling breath into the outgoing breath, and offering the outgoing breath into the inhaling breath, the yogi neutralizes both these breaths; he thus releases the life force from the heart and brings it under his control."

The yogi arrests decay in the body by an addition of life force, and arrests the mutations of growth in the body by apan (eliminating current). Thus neutralizing decay and growth, by quieting the heart, the yogi learns life control.

Trying to control the life force by holding the breath in the lungs is unscientific and unpleasant. Holding the breath in the lungs for uncomfortably long periods causes harmful pressure on the heart, lungs, diaphragm, and arteries, and should therefore be strictly avoided.

FROM MATTER TO SPIRIT While inhaling and exhaling during Kriya practice, imagine that the inhaling breath is going upward from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows; and that the exhaling breath is moving downward through the spine to the coccyx. The breath itself really does not circulate in the spine; but the increased life force derived from the transmuted breath is mentally directed by visualization and ~~will power to circulate continuously up and down the spine during the practice of Kriya.~~ The magnetic pull of the circulating current draws the bodily currents away from the sensory nerves and organs. The five sense-telephones of touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing are thus disconnected, and the attention is freed from any possible invasion of sensory perceptions until the command of will sends the life current back into the sense telephones.

Kriya Yoga is the greatest psychophysical method for actually reversing the "searchlights" of life force, consciousness, and the senses from perceptions of matter to perceptions of the indwelling Spirit. The circulating life current in the spine quickly spiritualizes the spine and brain, which in turn spiritualize the whole body.

By this method of continuous, regulated breathing and by unswerving concentration of the thought of a cool current ascending and a warm current descending in the spinal column, the spinal cells become magnetized and sensitized. The awakened life force, circulating by mental direction up and down the spine, is converted into a dynamo that, by withdrawing the energy from the five sense telephones, produces a state of superconscious ecstasy. Hindu yogis state that the spiritual potency of this spinal current actually changes and refines the atomic composition of the body cells.

ALTAR OF THE SPINE Those who conscientiously practice Kriya Yoga will never forsake this path; they will be held by their

ON THE THRONE OF OMNIPRESENCE

I sit in the superconscious chamber of bliss. Once in a while during the diurnal solar hour, I come down into my parlor chamber of consciousness. Then I open the doors of music, vision, fragrance, taste, and touch--and let the fairies of song, color, and tenderness come and dance before me. They make me laugh; they make me cry. When I cry too much and become bruised by the wounds of trials, I close the doors of the senses, lest even the aroma of the rose or the song of the nightingale divert me.

Then I race through immeasurable space into the chamber of sleep and dreams. There I lie quiet beneath the many sheets and quilts of darkness. After a while, perhaps when I have had enough of sleep, I open a secret anti-chamber and get into the chamber of dreams, and there I begin to play my home-made films of experiences in the movie house of the subconscious mind. There, in this movie house, I do just as I please. I weave the golden cloth of dreams with the silken threads of sweet memories, that I may write the name of God thereon.

I am His child, the prince of the cosmos, son of the Omnipotent. I tarry in the chamber of changes and play with the senses in the chamber of consciousness, or in the little cinema room of my dream movies. But when I am through with these two chambers, once in a while I roar through space in the ~~plane of my fancy into the region of unplumbed darkness.~~ Since darkness is something, I try to get beyond its yawning gulfs on to the shores of eternal void. There, in the land of oneness, no dualities, not even dreams, dare to disturb me. I am the king of all creation, the factory of the cosmos, the king of all things, the prince of intuition-omniscience. I am the prince of peace, the king of three worlds, sitting on the throne of my omnipresence.

AFFIRMATION

I shall do away with the mockery of parrotting prayer. I shall pray deeply until the darkness of meditation burns with Thy flaming presence.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



KRIYA 9

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BREAK BINDING THREADS OF FALSE DESIRES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Again and again, with threads of false desires, you ignorantly bind yourself in the cocoon of mortal earthlife. Break those threads! Become a butterfly of eternity and fly away to the shores of immortality.

Do not crave earthly things; enjoy them in an unattached way, without desiring them, so that you will not miss them when they are gone. While the storm is on, the wave separates from the ocean, but as soon as the ocean is again calm, the wave goes back into the ocean. So it is with us. As soon as this storm of desire passes, we can go back into the ocean of God.

When God comes to you, you will have so much to be happy about that you will not mind the loss of all lesser desires. It is only by divine knowledge and wisdom that you can emancipate yourself.

PRAYER

O Spirit, teach me to find the fountain of infinite power within myself, that I may drink of its soothing waters and quench the thirst of all my needs.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

The magnetization of the spine accomplished by the devotee's neutralizing the process of inhalation and exhalation awakens his occult cerebrospinal centers of life and consciousness. The resulting higher states of consciousness are accompanied by a gradual, natural cessation of heartbeat and of lung activity; the ego or pseudo soul reawakens to the forgotten truth that "man shall not live by bread alone"; that is, bodily functioning is not an absolute condition for man's expression of life and consciousness.

The neutralization of inhalation and exhalation also transmutes oxygen into its basic constituents of atomic energy. This energy is further distilled into subtle life energy (intelligently guided electrical forces or prana) and mingles with the healing currents in the main brain region and in the six subdynamos of the spinal centers.

FUNCTION OF BREATH IS TO BURN CARBON A continuous regularity of inhalation and exhalation charges the body with an increased supply of oxygen through the lungs; this oxygen "burns" or oxidizes the waste impurities, chiefly carbon, in the venous blood.

The purifying effect on the blood of the increased oxygen intake during inhalation is enhanced by an accompanying large increase in the expulsion of waste carbon dioxide from the lungs during exhalation. As a consequence of this stepping up of the process of oxygenation and elimination by the devotee's continuous Kriya breathing, very little broken-down tissue remains in the blood as waste material. There is then less necessity for the heart to pump venous blood into the lungs for purification through release of carbon dioxide. The liberating result for the devotee is less need for breath.

IN TIME KRIYA TECHNIQUE BURNS OUT ALL CARBON FROM THE BLOOD The continuous, regulated breathing practiced in the technique of Kriya removes the last residue of waste carbon occasioned by the activities of breathing and blood circulation. The venous blood, thus cleansed of dark impurities, ceases to flow to the lungs for purification. Hence the heart and the lungs are given an extraordinary rest.

The inactivity of the muscles and limbs during meditation, by greatly lessening bodily carbon production, also is conducive to this restful state of the heart and lungs.

THE PURPOSE OF BURNING CARBON IS TO QUIET THE HEART AND THUS TO CONTROL THE FIVE SENSE TELEPHONES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The slowing down of heart, lung, and muscular activity having obviated the usual necessity for breathing, the life energy that flows outward through the five senses during bodily activity is now free to be diverted consciously to

the spine, thus causing a switching-off of the sense telephones. A similar partial shutting down of life-force activity in the senses is accomplished unconsciously each night in the state of sleep.

SCIENTIFICALLY SWITCHING OFF LIFE FORCE FROM FIVE NERVE TELEPHONES AIDS CONCENTRATION

Sleep is an unconscious state of concentration wherein man's mind is involuntarily withdrawn from outer distractions. The thoughts

in his subconscious mind remain dormant. Real concentration consists in the conscious withdrawal of the mind from outer distractions and from body consciousness, and in the focusing of the attention on a single object of thought. Such concentration may be accomplished scientifically by the practice of Kriya Yoga. By the stilling of muscular activity and by the decrease in activity of the heart and other internal organs, the Kriya yogi is able to switch off the life force from the five sense telephones.

The heart is the central switchboard connecting the five sense telephones with the brain. When the heart action slows down or stops completely during Kriya Yoga practice, the devotee becomes aware that life energy has been automatically switched off from his five senses; it is then impossible for perceptions of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell to enter his brain and thus to divert his attention by rousing past memories or by instigating new streams of thoughts. He has reached a peaceful "thoughtless" state of consciousness.

SLEEP VERSUS TECHNIQUE OF CONSCIOUSLY SWITCHING OFF THE NERVE CURRENTS

In sleep every night your attention is unconsciously disconnected from the senses, affording rest and refreshment to body and mind. The rejuvenating effect

of sleep can be accomplished consciously by continuous, regulated Kriya breathing while the body is quiet in the meditative posture. Activity of mind, organs, and muscles is stilled without any loss of consciousness. By slowing down the heart and by preventing the outward dissipation of life currents in the sensory nerves, Kriya rests the heart and increases longevity.

A MIND THAT CAN FREE ITSELF AT WILL FROM SENSATIONS CAN EFFECTIVELY CONCENTRATE ON ANY SUBJECT, OR UPON GOD

By deeply and correctly practicing the technique of Kriya even a few times one may decarbonize the blood, quiet the internal organs, and still the heart. Kriya enables you, con-

sciously and at will, anytime, anywhere, to switch off the main life-current from the five sense telephones, thus freeing the mind from distractions and imparting to it the ability to concentrate single-pointedly on any idea, or upon God.

Whereas sleep, or unconscious quietness, leads to subconsciousness and its attendant state of partial peace, the Kriya Technique leads to a state of superconsciousness or divine awareness. The joy felt in this state is ever increasing, ever new. The Kriya yogi realizes (temporarily at first, then permanently) that by attaining superconsciousness he has passed beyond the need for nightly rejuvenation by sleep.

MOST PEOPLE REALLY
"LIVE" ONLY FIVE YEARS

The average life span of man is about sixty years. We may safely surmise that half of that time (or a total of thirty years) is spent in sleeping and eating; and that a total of approximately fifteen years is spent in making a living. This cuts down the "lifetime" of modern man to fifteen years, of which five are probably wasted in talking about other people; and another five may easily slip by in absentminded, unproductive pursuits. Since the purpose of life is to find God, man may be said not really to "live" even the five remaining years, unless he passes that time in Cosmic Consciousness.

It is necessary that every man fulfill his destined role in the drama of life, carrying his share of earthly duties and responsibilities. But his leisure time may be spent as he chooses, and his spiritual duty then is to seek God, to strive to express his soul possibilities. How may this ideal be accomplished in thirty years' time (assuming that at least thirty years are usually lost in sleep and foolishness)? The rishis calculated that even under ideal conditions it would normally take one million years of right living in body and mind before man could become a fit instrument to express Cosmic Consciousness. The rishis therefore sought, and found, a method of hastening brain evolution.

One cannot imagine knowing the meaning of all the words in the dictionary. Yet the entire four Vedas--those ponderous Hindu scriptures--were originally contained only in the minds of the great rishis of India, and were handed down by them for centuries by word of mouth. To express Cosmic Consciousness is to embrace the knowledge of everything contained in the united kingdom of God, on the pages of heaven and earth, in nature, and in human life. How may one so expand his mental capacity as to receive that knowledge within a single lifetime? THROUGH THE FAITHFUL PRACTICE OF KRIYA YOGA.

REALIZE THE POWER OF GOD WITHIN YOU

Try to realize the powers that are playing, like searchlights, within you! You can be a master only when you realize this power. You must persist with determined thoughts, so that you may realize that you are a child of God. When you realize that, you are saved. You must seek wisdom and power and prosperity from God. If you prefer to satisfy material desires rather than seek God, that is a travesty of life's true purpose, a grave error of judgment. Do not strive for unimportant things and reject the all-satisfying God.

God is not something mystical. He is tangible, because all tangible things come out of the Intangible. If you would only realize that! Why walk on the trail of life pursuing material desires, and so go on suffering? Even great and materially successful people will in the end realize the emptiness of their lives, but those who find God in this life are already rich in joy and power.

Students whose wills are governed by their whims, habits, and prenatal instincts wholly lack the self-control and power to do what is right, and consequently cannot obey. Disobedience to the wisdom of a guru, or the voice of conscience, leads to danger and misery, while obedience to the wise counsel of a God-realized guru leads to real freedom and to the attainment of the power to do at will what you think you should do and not what your uncontrolled instincts want you to do.

Make up your mind to follow the wisdom of spiritual specialists such as the great Masters who guide this movement--specialists who have scientifically studied all the mysterious problems of life and solved them.

How can the soul be satisfied by intellectual dogma? Listen to the clarion call of Self-Realization Fellowship to experience God for yourself, and follow this path. You will convince yourself now and forever, through your own daily experience, that you can commune with God and drown all your miseries in the nectar-sea of His omnipresence right within you.

AFFIRMATION

I will realize that I am a child of God. As a divine son I will seek wisdom and power and prosperity from my Heavenly Father.



Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



KRIYA 9A

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KRIYA LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The following summaries of the Kriya Step constitute a quick general review of the most vital points of the theory and practice of the technique. Each time you review a lesson you may discover something that escaped you in your previous study, or a point whose importance may not have sufficiently impressed you before. It is through repetition that we learn the most.

INSPIRATION OF KRIYA STEP The ladder of the spine is the only way of true ascension, or upliftment, into Cosmic Consciousness. Physical and mental rejuvenation through adherence to harmonious divine laws of life and practice of the vital techniques of Kriya Yoga awaken latent supersensory powers and perceptions. Such discipline, with unflinching will and discrimination, estranges material desires and promotes not only control of emotions but control of the pranic forces. Intuitional wisdom-guided life energy then flows Godward in a purifying flood, as the "lotus petals," or rays of the cerebro-spinal centers are reversed from matter attention to absorption in the bliss of Spirit.

The results are definite and knowable as you follow the scientific steps you have been given. You will not be deceived by false prophets if you unswervingly practice these techniques and remain completely loyal to your Guru-Preceptor. The sacred relationship between guru and disciple is unending, for the guru watches over the disciple until his liberation is attained and they melt in God. Your footsteps are now firmly set on the path of Self-realization. It is up to you to go forward until you realize the Eternal Bliss.

KRIYA 1 The devotee should never become identified with any process leading to salvation, or freedom from reincarnation, but should use the process for its purpose of promoting spiritual growth. For instance, Hatha Yoga is a method of preparing the body for the advent of spiritual growth. One should not remain within its confines but go on to the attainment of freedom of mind and soul, as well as of body.

Raja Yoga is the royal road, as it combines the best of other yogic methods with its precepts of meditation. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches Raja Yoga techniques of uniting soul and Spirit. The SRF teachings also include the highest good found in other forms of yoga.

The foundational principles of all religions consist of Yama, the things a devotee should not do, and Niyama, the things a devotee should do. However, although the mere practice of the "shalts" and the "shalt nots" gives a certain satisfaction, it does not lead to further spiritual progress unless other steps follow.

The third important step is Asana or posture. The purpose of correct posture is to rise above, or to stop, the motions of the body whose restlessness prevents awareness of the soul. Stillness is the altar of Spirit. Where motion ceases, Spirit begins to manifest.

The fourth step is called Pranayama, or the switching off of the life force from the senses with the object of attaining Pratyahara. In Pratyahara the mind is disconnected from the five sense telephones.

Yoga comprises all the scientific techniques of uniting soul and God; and Pranayama is the greatest technique of uniting soul and God. Harness your actions to your resolutions. Those who make the right and continuous effort are the ones who find God. God says: "I silently and ever deeply respond to the devotional call of the devotee. My silent voice, calling him to ever-increasing bliss-joy in meditation, is my answer to the call of devotion."

KRIYA 2 Without the attainment of the fifth step of the ladder of Self-realization, further progress is impossible. The interiorization of mind, the state called Pratyahara, is an essential condition of freedom of the mind, and yields the power to use this interiorized mind. If you follow the meaning and understand the result of each separate step, you will see why this is so. Each step should yield a definite change in the state of consciousness, as:

- 1-2. Self-control and perfect equilibrium (practice of Yama-Niyama).
3. Mental and physical calmness (Asana).
4. Heart control, life-force control, mind control (Pranayama).
5. Freedom of mind from sensations, and power of interiorization (Pratyahara).
6. The power to use the interiorized mind to concentrate on one thought (Dharana).
7. The power to conceive the vastness of God by feeling or intuition (Dhyana).

The ultimate realization is samadhi, or complete union with God. Thus you may understand that true meditation is possible only after mastering Pratyahara.

Since the average person has no conception of God, how can he meditate upon God? Patanjali explains that the symbol of God is Aum, the Cosmic Vibration or Cosmic Sound. It is an all-permeating sound, oozing out of all atomic vibration. It is the unlimited, omnipresent, omniscient Holy Ghost, containing within itself the guiding principle of Christ Intelligence.

The Kriya Technique given by Lahiri Mahasaya is the greatest form of Pranayama; through its practice the heart becomes quiet, the energy is switched off from the five senses, and the mind attains the state of Pratyahara. The ultimate purpose for which these techniques are practiced should never be forgotten; the devotee should not be content to remain on one step, but climb to the spiritual pinnacle of Self-realization. Nirbikalpa samadhi is the ultimate realization wherein the soul is completely conscious and aware of the ocean of Spirit and of its manifesting waves--the body, mind, and soul--at the same time.

KRIYA 3 The transmutation of the body consciousness, which is identified with the senses, into superconsciousness and Cosmic Consciousness is the "second birth," or rebirth into spiritual consciousness.

In meditation your consciousness and energy have to be consciously withdrawn from the senses and muscles to the spine. The practice of Kriya magnetizes the spine by circulating life current lengthwise around it, thereby withdrawing life current from the senses and involuntary organs and concentrating it in the spine. The spine and brain are the insulated altars where divine energy first descends into the body and goes out to the senses, keeping the soul busy with material things. Therefore, the Kriya Technique is the foundation and continuously expanding base of your own Self-realization, leading your consciousness through the spine to Cosmic Consciousness.

Prana means life energy. Prana is of two kinds: the creative Cosmic Energy that is the source of all living things, and the specific prana pervading each human body. The life energy vibrating outward becomes in man individualized, selfish, and body-bound, forgetting its cosmic connection. This cosmic energy is conscious (but not self-conscious) and must be consciously directed in order to become reconnected with its infinite Source.

In the human body, the seat of this life energy, or prana, is in the medulla oblongata. When through proper practice of Kriya Yoga (a technique of Pranayama, or life-control) you increase your perception and feeling; when the all-seeing eye is open, and when the all-absorbing power is felt; you will absorb truth not only through the limited power of the senses, but through the unlimited power of your soul perception and intuition.

KRIYA 4 Your soul is seeking an experience of God that is tangible. The Kriya Technique will give you mathematical results according to how much, how deeply, and how exactly you practice. These exercises are for control of prana. Every time you practice correctly, your entire system undergoes a change; your brain power and mental receptivity are expanded. By magnetizing the spine, you transmute the life force into radiant, all-accomplishing spiritual force, which in turn hastens physical and mental regeneration and rejuvenation. The Kriya Technique will transfer your attention from the sensations of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch, to the subtler perceptions in the spine and brain. The saints of India discovered that any bodily effect on the brain is a slow process, but a change effected by the brain on

the body is immediate. A process of sending the life force around the spine, which magnetizes the spine and brain, therefore produces an immediate effect and quickens evolution. As in science, so in religion, hidden truths are discovered by using concentration, systematic activity, and experimentation within the laws of nature emanating from God.

In order to reap the rich harvest of complete truth, you must faithfully make these practical instructions a part of your life now. Procrastination and postponement of effort lead to stagnation and retardation in the climb up the Seven Steps of Self-realization.

Through outside influences of rays and vibrations the mind and soul are quickened to a certain state in a year's time. The great ones of India found that it takes twelve years of solar evolution and right living to produce a certain change in mentality. By revolving the life force even once around the spine a change is effected in the brain and body which usually is possible only by a year of diseaseless existence, careful eating, and absorption of solar energy. The passing of this current once around the spine will therefore give you the equivalent of a year of solar evolution. Just as the earth's complete revolution around the sun produces one year's effect upon a human being, so the time of human evolution can be quickened by revolving the life force (the earthly physical energy) around the elliptical path of the spinal column and its six centers: upward from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows and downward from that point to the coccyx. In man's body, the soul is the central sun; and the six centers of the spine (apart from the seventh center in the head) make twelve points, corresponding to the twelve signs of the zodiac.

KRIYA 5 The Kriya Technique is the scientific, mathematical way of changing the material body consciousness into Cosmic Consciousness. The correct practice of Kriya fourteen times is equivalent to twelve years of natural progressive evolution.

There are few rules to follow, but these few should be strictly observed without deviation.

Always precede the practice of Kriya by a special prayer. This helps you to tune in with the great liberated Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship, who will help you in your efforts.

Essential preparation:

1. Moisten throat with olive oil or melted sweet butter.
2. Face east or north in straight armless chair over which a woolen blanket has been placed, running down under the feet.
3. Assume correct posture.
4. Maintain correct posture by vigilance, without becoming tense.
5. Experiment with the cool and warm currents of air through the closed fists, as described in this Lesson, in order to note the sensation that you are later to imagine passing around the spine.

The man of volition says: "I will use my dynamic volition until success or death." In this spirit practice your techniques, letting nothing interfere. Thus will your will merge with Divine Will and become wisdom-guided and limitless.

The contact of God is filled with treasures and power. This technique of Kriya helps to change the center of consciousness from the body and senses to the spine, the altar of God. You will find that you will be able to do creative work with ease in any line to which you apply yourself. Intuition will develop effortlessly.

Give great care to the study of the technique. Every detail must be observed. Practice each part until you are certain that you are doing it correctly. Refer frequently to your notes to be sure that you have not omitted any point.

First observe the preparatory rules, then begin Kriya proper, visualizing the spinal column as a hollow tube running from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows. Inhale as directed, slowly, evenly, with the throat expanded properly to make the sound of "AW." Imagine a cool current passing up inside the spine, to the point between the eyebrows. Then make the sound of "EE" while exhaling slowly, and pass the current in a warm sensation back down through the hollow tube--through the brain, to trickle warmly and thinly on down the spinal column.

When you are sure that you have it right, practice the technique fourteen times in succession, keeping the current passing rhythmically and evenly around the spine. Imagine the cool current going up inside the spine, and the warm current coming down through the spine. Practice fourteen times in the morning and fourteen times in the evening. Do not increase the number of times without written permission from Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters. Always practice on an empty stomach: before breakfast, either before dinner or at least three hours after dinner, or before retiring.

Continue to sit in meditation after you have finished practicing.

KRIYA 6 The technique of Kriya has three main divisions: Maha Mudra, Kriya proper, and Jyoti Mudra, to be practiced in the order given. Maha Mudra, besides electrifying the spine, helps to straighten the spine, loosen the vertebrae, and distribute the life current into the organs. Jyoti Mudra is for the purpose of guidance through the spiritual eye, or will center, that you may see the spiritual light by your own effort: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). You must not only see the five-rayed star, but you must go through it, your wisdom must be shepherded through the star (the tunnel of light--of eternity). Through that star we may behold everything that is to be seen. The two physical eyes reveal only matter. The "third eye" reveals God and Spirit.

Study carefully the technique of Maha Mudra and Jyoti Mudra, making sure of each detail, and practice daily as directed. Regular practice must be maintained to produce results. Observe the simple cautions;

these are highly important: A vitalizing and nontoxic diet, a calm mind free from strain, moderation in all things, are essential. Hold the joy of contact with God after practice.

In rarefied spiritual atmosphere or vibration, evil tendencies and habits are electrocuted and expire. Evil tendencies and habits are rats gnawing at the vital wires of our mechanism, but they cannot live in rarefied spiritual consciousness. Meditation and practice of the Kriya Technique will automatically eliminate such tendencies.

KRIYA 7 Study with extreme care the summing up in Lessons K-7 and K-7A of the essential points to be observed in the practice of Kriya proper. This technique is the foundation of the Seven Steps to Self-realization. Let nothing interfere with your practice. "Where there is a will, there is a way." So, someday, you too may break through the darkness and perceive the sun of Cosmic Consciousness.

Helpful, but not essential, are the preparatory exercises A and B of this Lesson.

KRIYA 8 During practice of the Kriya Technique the entire spine is converted into a magnet that draws bodily currents away from the senses and nerves. The will center (point between the eye-brows) becomes the positive pole, and the coccygeal plexus becomes the negative pole. The current created by continuous inhalation and exhalation becomes a magnet of energy that draws into the spine more energy from the nervous system and from the Cosmic Source. Also, the carbon in the body is burned up during Kriya, and there comes a gradual cessation of breathing. This is the greatest psychophysical method for actually reversing the "searchlights" of the life force, consciousness, and the senses from perceptions of matter to perceptions of the indwelling Spirit. Hindu yogis state that the spiritual potency of this current actually changes the atomic composition of the body cells.

KRIYA 9 By the process of continuous Kriya breathing, the accumulation of carbon in the blood is "burned" and the impurities expelled from the lungs. In addition, this process changes oxygen into its basic constituents of atomic energy, which in turn is distilled into subtle life energy.

By continuous regulated breathing, as prescribed in the Kriya Technique, the entire carbon content of the body can be burned out. When that is accomplished, there is no longer any dark, impure venous blood flowing in the body to be pumped into the lungs for purification. Hence Kriya practice gives rest to the heart and lungs.

The purpose in burning carbon is to quiet the heart. The purpose in quieting the heart is to control the five sense telephones and divert the energy from them to the spine. The condition of sleep produces unconscious quietness and its attending peace. The Kriya Technique leads to an ever-increasing, ever-new joyous state of awareness.

The saints found out that if it were possible to live in health, without disease or old age, then by solar and chemical energy in one million years man could develop a brain that could express Cosmic Consciousness, or the entire knowledge of this universe.

The saints also learned that this evolutionary process can be speeded up by the proper method: changing the brain cells through magnetization. This can be accomplished by the use of the Kriya Technique, even to the extent of attaining Cosmic Consciousness in one lifetime.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following review questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding lessons, put the summaries and the Lessons aside, and write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to show you how you are progressing in your understanding and practice of the teachings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTENSIVE STUDY OF KRIYA STEP (FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Kriya 1

1. Name and describe the various paths of yoga. Which method is taught by the Self-Realization Fellowship?
2. Name and describe the first four steps in Patanjali's outline of yoga.

Kriya 2

1. Name and describe the fifth, sixth, and seventh steps on the ladder of realization, as outlined by Patanjali.
2. What are the various kinds of samadhi which the devotee can experience? Which is the highest?

Kriya 3

1. Explain the process by which the practice of Kriya Yoga changes the center of consciousness.
2. What is prana?

Kriya 4

1. Explain why Kriya Yoga speeds up the natural evolutionary processes of the body, mind, and soul.

Kriya 5

1. Name the special rules in the preparation for practicing Kriya Yoga.
2. Write the procedure of the Kriya Technique, point by point.

Kriya 6

1. What is the particular purpose of Maha Mudra? of Jyoti Mudra?

Kriya 7

1. Describe how and when you should practice Maha Mudra and Jyoti Mudra.
2. List the simple precautions for those practicing Kriya.

Kriya 8

1. Explain how Kriya Yoga draws the bodily current away from the senses to the spine.

Kriya 9

1. Explain the physical process which takes place in the human body by the practice of Kriya Yoga.
2. What is the purpose in quieting the heart?
3. What is the difference in the state of rest caused by the sleep state and that caused by the practice of Kriya Yoga?

3. Jyoti Mudra _____

B. SPIRITUAL ROUTINE

1. Now that you have added Kriya Yoga to your regular meditation periods, how much time are you devoting to the practice of each of the following techniques morning and evening?

a. Energization Exercises _____

b. Hong-Sau Technique _____

c. Aum Technique _____

d. Kriya Proper and Mudras _____

2. How much time are you devoting to meditation and prayer after practicing the techniques? _____

3. How many Kriyas are you practicing during your morning and evening meditations? _____

How long have you been practicing this number? _____

C. In what ways do you feel you are benefiting from your practice of Kriya Yoga?

Name (please print)

Address

City

State

Zip (postal) code

Country

Reference Number