

How-to-Live Series

*Healing by God's Unlimited Power* is one of a series of pocket-size booklets on the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, author of *Autobiography of a Yogi*. These informal talks and essays offer inspiring and practical guidance for living our lives in a spiritually harmonious way — with grace and simplicity, with an inner equanimity in the face of life's seeming contradictions, and above all with joy, secure in the knowledge that we are at every moment in the embrace of a loving Divine Power.



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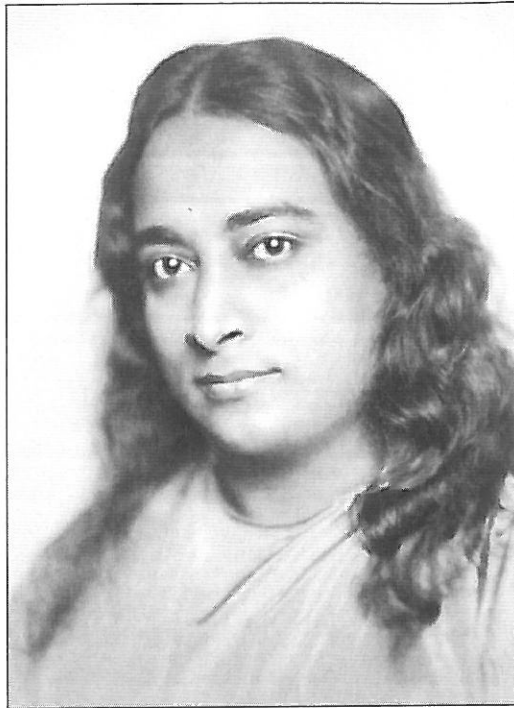
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Paramahansa Yogananda

# Healing by God's Unlimited Power



Self-Realization Fellowship  
FOUNDED 1920 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA  
(1893–1952)

# Healing by God's Unlimited Power

by  
Paramahansa Yogananda

**“How-to-Live” Series**  
No. 1706

  
*Self-Realization Fellowship*  
FOUNDED 1925 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



A publication of  
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ABOUT THE "HOW-TO-LIVE" SERIES: These informal talks and essays were originally published by Self-Realization Fellowship in its quarterly magazine, *Self-Realization*. Some have also appeared in anthologies and on recordings produced by the society. The "How-to-Live" series was created in response to requests from readers for pocket-size booklets presenting Paramahansa Yogananda's teachings on various subjects. The series offers guidance by Sri Yogananda and some of his longtime disciples, Self-Realization Fellowship monks and nuns, many of whom had the opportunity to receive the spiritual direction and training of this beloved world teacher over a period of many years. New titles are added to the series periodically.



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Self-Realization Fellowship was founded by Paramahansa Yogananda as the instrument for the worldwide dissemination of his teachings. The Self-Realization Fellowship name and emblem (shown above) appear on all SRF books, recordings, and other publications, assuring the reader that a work originates with the society established by Paramahansa Yogananda and faithfully conveys his teachings.

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*There is a Power that will light  
your way to health, happiness,  
peace, and success, if you will  
but turn toward that Light.*

—PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

- ❖ -

# Healing by God's Unlimited Power

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

*A talk given at the Self-Realization Fellowship  
Temple, Hollywood, California, August 31, 1947*

There are three kinds of illness: physical, mental, and spiritual. Physical sickness is due to different forms of toxic conditions, infectious disease, and accidents. Mental sickness is caused by fear, worry, anger, and other emotional inharmonies. Soul sickness is due to man's ignorance of his true relationship with God.

Ignorance is the supreme disease. When one banishes ignorance he also banishes the causes of all physical, mental, and spiritual disease. My guru,\* Sri Yukteswarji, often said, "Wisdom is the greatest cleanser."

Trying to overcome various kinds of

\* See glossary.

suffering by the limited power of material curative methods is often disappointing. Only in the unlimited power of spiritual methods may man find a permanent cure for the "disease" of body, mind, and soul. That boundless power of healing is to be sought in God. If you have suffered mentally over the loss of loved ones, you can find them again in God. All things are possible with His help.

Unless one really knows God, he is not justified in saying that only mind exists, and that one does not need to obey health laws or to use any physical aids for healing. Until actual realization is attained, one should use his common sense in all he does. At the same time one should never doubt God, but should constantly affirm his faith in God's omnipresent divine power.

Doctors try to learn the causes of disease and to remove those causes so that the illnesses do not recur. In their use of many specific material methods of cure, doctors are often very skillful. However, not every

disease responds to medicine and surgery, and therein lies the essential limitation of these methods.

Chemicals and medicines affect only the outer physical composition of the bodily cells and do not alter the inner atomic structure or life principle of the cells. In many cases no cure of disease is possible until the healing power of God has corrected, from within, the imbalance of "lifetrans" or intelligent life energy in the body. The two basic causes of disease are underactivity and overactivity of the life energy, *prana*, that structures and sustains the body. The improper functioning of any one (or more) of the five governing pranic currents—*vyana*, circulation; *udana*, metabolism; *samana*, assimilation; *prana*, crystallization; and *apana*, elimination—adversely affects bodily health. When the natural harmonious balance of these subtle energies is restored by God's divine power, the atomic balance of the physical cells they nourish is restored; the healing is perfect, and often

instantaneous. So long as balanced vitality is maintained by right living, proper diet, and *pranayama* meditation (life-energy control techniques), the body's own life energy "electrocutes" disease before it can develop.

### Balanced Development Is Essential

Injury and disease are more often the cause of death than is old age. Most people die before true old age has set in. In some cases, and they are exceptional, all parts of the body grow weak at once; such persons die, without pain, like ripe fruit that falls in due time from the tree. But the majority are plucked from the tree of life before they are really ripe for death.

In most cases of death, one bodily part had ceased functioning before the rest. It may also happen that if one part is stronger or more developed than another, the resulting imbalance of the life force in the body may cause suffering and even death. For example, someone with a weak heart in a strong-muscled body may injure his heart by

overuse of his muscular strength. Sandow,\* "the strong man," died at fifty-eight when a blood vessel in his brain burst as a result of his having raised a car singlehanded. Over-exercise that leads to unbalanced development may thus have harmful consequences.

The Self-Realization Fellowship Energization Exercises† place the least strain on the heart and provide for a uniform development of the body. Simple outdoor exercise, such as walking; balanced diet and moderation in eating; and quiet meditation are all conducive to health.

### Obey Nature's Laws and Have More Faith in God

A master may ignore, without ill effect,

\* Eugene Sandow (1867-1925), advocate of physical culture and wrestling, noted for his physique and physical prowess. The famous athlete traveled widely to expound his ideas on physical fitness.

† These exercises, for energizing the body through conscious direction of *prana* by will power, were developed by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1916. They are taught in the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons*. (Publisher's Note)

dietary and other rules for health. The ordinary individual, however, should be careful to maintain physical well-being by right observance of the laws of nature.

One's diet should be wisely chosen. The body requires for health certain amounts of starch, protein, and fat, but in excess they can be harmful. Very little starch is necessary; bread is no longer held to be the "staff of life." Too much starch in the diet, especially from white flour, causes an over-accumulation of mucus in the body. (A certain amount of mucus is necessary, of course, to prevent the entry of harmful microbes into the mucous membranes.) Eat abundantly of foods that contain a high proportion of mineral salts, such as fruits and vegetables. This type of diet prevents constipation, which, when present, predisposes the body to many diseases.

Nature tries by reflex action to remove causes of physical distress. When dust gets into the eye, we involuntarily try to wink the dust away. When dirt or dust enters the nose, we sneeze. If we eat something unwholesome,

we get rid of it by regurgitation. When disease attacks any internal organ of the body, nature provides many means by which the organ may protect, defend, and renew itself. However, owing to various habits of living that alienate most men from nature, their innate powers of recuperation and rejuvenation become impaired and are prematurely lost.

Harmful microbes are ceaselessly attacking the body; good ones are ceaselessly defending it, aided sometimes by diet, herbs, medicines, and other health measures. *But an unlimited source of protection for man lies in his strong thought that, as a child of God, he cannot be affected by disease.*

Mind has much greater power than medicine. But to deny any power to medicine is unreasonable, because if drugs have no power, a man could take poison and not die. While one should not deny the potency of medicines and drugs, one should understand that continuous dependence on them will prove their limitations; a time will come when they will lose their former efficacy in restoring the

body to health. The only infinite power of healing lies in man's mind and soul. The body cannot be healed by spiritual means if the mental power and faith are weak. Permanent healing comes through the boundless power of the mind and through God's grace.

#### **Fruits, Vegetables, and Nuts Superior to Meat**

According to one school of thought, some diseases may be cured by eating the organs of animals. A savage devours the heart of a lion in the belief that his own heart will thus be invigorated. The tissues of chicken hearts are known to have a strengthening effect on the heart of man; and the liver helps those who are anemic. However, many health authorities state that iron- and vitamin-rich foods such as eggs, cashew nuts, soybeans, molasses, dried apricots, dried lima beans, dried peas, parsnips, spinach, and parsley may successfully be substituted for liver in overcoming anemia. Pepsin taken from animal organs is useful in cases of stomach

ulcers; but papain, a substance very similar to pepsin, is present in the fruit of the papaya, which is a valuable healing aid to those who suffer from any form of impaired digestion.

When man is sick he may feel justified in eating anything that has healing value, but animal flesh is not actually necessary for this purpose; indeed, it may increase the bodily burden by contributing toxins to the bloodstream. Thus, while flesh foods may aid in healing one illness, they sometimes create a condition whereby another disease may develop elsewhere in the body. That is why the safest diet for man is fresh fruits, vegetables, finely ground nuts, and vegetable and dairy proteins. In certain cases the system may not tolerate raw fruits and vegetables, but the average person will benefit by including them daily in his diet.

In vegetables and fruits God has infused medicinal power to help in overcoming disease. Even these, however, have but a limited



potency. The organs of the body are essentially sustained by the energy of God, and the person who employs various methods to increase this energy will have at his command a greater power for healing than is afforded by any medicine or diet.

#### **Purify the Body of Harmful Toxins**

Three-fourths of the body consists of water; hence the bodily demand for water is much greater than that for food. (Death by thirst is a suffering more acute than death by starvation.) It is important to give the body plenty of water. Drinking unsweetened fruit juices also is good. In localities where water has a calcium content high enough to dispose toward hardening of the arteries in man, he should take, instead, fruit juices and watermelons, cantaloupes, and similar juicy fruits. Some health researchers say, however, that persons who have sinus trouble should not take citrus juices.

Make it a point to drink plenty of liquids (and I do not mean soda-water beverages!)

to wash away toxins in the body. But avoid drinking liquids with meals, as this can be injurious to digestion. One tends to wash down the food without chewing it properly. If starches are not partially digested in the mouth, they often do not digest fully in the stomach. To chew food well is important—the stomach has no teeth. Hasty eating is harmful; particularly if large amounts of liquid are taken with the meal, thus diluting the gastric juices. Also, drinking liquids with meals gives a tendency to obesity.

It is important to keep the bloodstream healthy. Beef and pork may release into the bloodstream toxic poisons and microbes. The white corpuscles try to destroy the microbes, but if the latter are strong and if the white corpuscles are insufficient to resist them, toxic reactions set in. For meat eaters, fish, chicken, and lamb are preferable to beef and pork, which are highly acid-producing.

The most important principle in connection with eating is to avoid any form of

overindulgence. As one learns to restrain himself he becomes healthier. It may often happen that one's desire for a certain food is so great that he thinks he cannot resist it. His senses dictate to him, saying that he must eat that food, even when he knows it may be harmful to him. If he refuses to perpetuate his bad habits, he will find that he comes to dislike what is injurious and to like what is beneficial. Greedy people fill themselves and still they are looking for more food. By overeating, they dare to strain a heart-pump that has been overworked for perhaps forty years!

Many persons thoughtlessly eat late at night. Usually sleep soon follows, during which man's internal machinery slows down. The food may lie in the stomach without being properly digested. Eating shortly before the nightly rest is therefore unwise.

There is nothing worse for body and mind, however, than drinking intoxicating liquors. Under their influence a man may

do things that in his right mind he would be ashamed to do. Violence, greed, lust for money and sex, even murder, may result from drunkenness. The belief that wine, sex experiences, and money will bring happiness is said by the sages to be the chief delusion that man must overcome in order to realize his true nature.

Liquor increases man's desires for money and sex, and it is therefore the worst evil of the three. It is an unnecessary and extremely dangerous indulgence, because it stifles reason. A drunken man is no longer a true man. It is wisdom to strive to maintain only normal appetites.

#### **Increase Your Natural Resistance to Disease**

Fasting is a natural method of healing. When animals or savages are sick, they fast. The bodily machinery thus has an opportunity to cleanse itself and to obtain a much-needed rest. Most diseases can be cured by judicious

fasting.\* Unless one has a weak heart, regular short fasts have been recommended by the yogis as an excellent health measure. Another good method of physical healing is through suitable herbs or herb extracts.

In using medicines, one often finds that they are not powerful enough to bring about a healing, or that they are so powerful that they irritate the bodily tissues instead of healing them. Similarly, exposure to certain

\* In Armenia, Dr. Grant Sarkisyan has successfully used fasting to treat patients for a variety of disorders, including bronchial asthma, skin diseases, the initial state of arteriosclerosis, hypertension, stenocardia, and digestive tract diseases. A selective diet is to be followed after discharge from the hospital, the preference being for vegetable and fruit dishes, which Dr. Sarkisyan feels are important for longevity.

In the Soviet Union, Dr. Uri Nicholayev has given fasting therapy during the past twenty-three years. He states that sixty-four percent of his patients have been helped. Their illness is mental: schizophrenia.

At George Air Force Base, Victorville, California, twenty-five patients underwent fasting treatment for up to eighty-four days for obesity. Sixteen completed the program, with weight losses of forty to one hundred pounds. Dr. Robert M. Karns, who conducted the experiment, also reported that a forty-eight-year-old diabetic patient, who

types of "healing rays" will burn the tissues. There are so many limitations in physical methods of healing!

Better than medicines are the rays of the sun. In them is a wonderful healing power. One should take a ten-minute sunbath every day. Ten minutes a day is better than only occasional exposure for longer periods.\*

was receiving twenty-five units of insulin daily before the fast, was able to discontinue the insulin treatment after the fast. A sixty-year-old patient reported improvement of an arthritic and heart condition.

In experiments with mice, which are often the testing ground for treatment of man's disorders, it was demonstrated that the life span could be increased by fifty percent. The treatment? Fasting.

Fasting for longer than three days at a time should be done under the supervision of someone well trained in the science of fasting. Persons suffering from a chronic ailment or an organic defect should fast only upon the advice of a physician experienced in fasting procedures. (*Publisher's Note*)

\* It is wise to restrict sunbathing to the early and late hours of the day. Precautions should always be taken to protect sensitive skin against overexposure. If one has any questions regarding exposure to the sun, one should consult and follow the advice of one's doctor or a dermatologist. (*Publisher's Note*)

A short sunbath daily, reinforced by good health habits, will keep the body supplied with sufficient life energy to destroy all harmful microbes.

Healthy persons possess a natural resistance to disease, and particularly to infections. Illness comes when the resisting power of the blood has been diminished by wrong eating or by overeating, or when overindulgence in sex has depleted the vital energy. To conserve the physical creative energy is to supply all the cells with vibrant life energy; the body then possesses a tremendous resistance to disease. Sexual overindulgence weakens the body and renders it vulnerable to illness.

#### **You Can Increase Your Life Span**

One naturally has a better chance to overcome sickness in youth than in old age. (There are always exceptions, however, owing to karmic conditions.) The average length of life today\* is sixty years. Many doctors

\* I.e., in 1947, when this talk was given.

agree that it is easily possible to increase one's life span by careful living.

Mahavatar Babaji and a number of other great masters have lived for several hundred years. Life may be prolonged indefinitely—not by food, medicine, exercise, sunbathing, and other limited means, but by contact with the immeasurable power of God. We should think not only of the body but also of the Spirit. If we attain perfection in oneness with Spirit, we shall find perfection in body also.\*

Many persons are continually busy looking after their physical welfare but neglect the development of their minds. The key to all power lies in the mind. If one fails to cultivate that power, when serious disease comes he may die without making any resistance, regardless of his age.

\* Great ones who have attained the perfection of oneness with Spirit may nevertheless endure intense bodily suffering—not because of any failure on the part of Spirit, but because they choose, with divine permission, to work out on their own bodies some of the karmic effects of others' wrong actions, in order to help those persons.

### The Power of a Smile

Conserve the vital energy, follow a balanced diet, and always smile and be happy. He who finds joy within himself discovers that his body is charged with electric current, life energy, not from food but from God. If you feel that you can't smile, stand before a mirror and with your fingers pull your mouth into a smile. It is that important!

The healing methods I have touched on briefly in connection with food and the cleansing of the body by herbs or fasting are limited in their effectiveness; but when one is joyful within, he invites the help of the inexhaustible power of God. I mean a sincere joyfulness, not that which you feign outwardly but do not feel within. When your joy is sincere you are a smile-millionaire. A genuine smile distributes the cosmic current, *prana*, to every body cell. The happy man is less subject to disease, for happiness actually attracts into the body a greater supply of the universal life energy.

There are many things to talk about on this subject of healing. The main idea is that we should depend more on mind power, which is illimitable. The rules for guarding against disease should be: self-control, exercise, proper eating, drinking plenty of fruit juices, occasional fasting, and smiling all the time—from within. Those smiles come from meditation. You will find then the eternal power of God. When you are in ecstasy with Him you consciously bring His healing presence into your body.

### Permanent Healing Comes From God

Mind power carries with it the unfailing energy of God; that is the power you want in your body. And there is a way to bring in that power. The way is communion with God by meditation. When your communion with Him is perfect, the healing is permanent. When the causative power of God comes, the healing effect is instantaneous; no time is required for cause to ripen into effect.

Many people in distress try to evoke that

power, but when they are not healed at once they lose faith in the Lord instead of continuing to try to enlist His aid. The man who clings to the Divine is bound to be healed; because God knows that the devotee is praying, and He cannot but respond. But when you give up, the Father says, "All right. I see that you can do without Me. I shall wait for you."

The Supreme Power may be invoked by continuous faith and unceasing prayer. You should eat rightly and do whatever else is necessary for the body, but continuously pray to Him: "Lord, Thou canst heal me because Thou dost control the life atoms and subtle conditions of the body that doctors cannot reach with medicines." The external factors of medicines and fasting have a certain beneficial effect on the physical body, but they do not affect the inner force that sustains the cells. It is only when you go to God and receive His healing power that the life energy is directed into the atoms of the bodily

cells and produces instantaneous healing. Wouldn't you rather depend more on God?

But the attempt to change one's dependence from physical to spiritual methods should be gradual. If a man accustomed to overeating falls sick and, with the intention of trying to achieve a mental healing, abruptly starts fasting, he may be discouraged if success is not forthcoming. It takes time to change one's way of thinking from dependence on food to dependence on mind. To be responsive to the healing power of God, the mind must be trained to *believe* in divine aid.

Out of that Great Power all atomic energy is throbbing, manifesting and sustaining every cell of the physical universe. As moving pictures are sustained by a beam of light coming from the projection booth of a movie house, so are all of us sustained by the Cosmic Beam, the Divine Light pouring from the projection booth of Eternity. When you look to, and find that Beam, you will behold Its unlimited power to rebuild the atoms and

electrons and lifetrans in all body cells that may be "out of order." Commune with the Great Healer!



**PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA**  
**(1893–1952)**

*“The ideal of love for God and service to humanity found full expression in the life of Paramahansa Yogananda....Though the major part of his life was spent outside India, still he takes his place among our great saints. His work continues to grow and shine ever more brightly, drawing people everywhere on the path of the pilgrimage of the Spirit.”*

—from a tribute by the Government of India upon issuing a commemorative stamp in Paramahansa Yogananda’s honor

Born in India on January 5, 1893, Paramahansa Yogananda devoted his life to helping people of all races and creeds to realize and express more fully in their lives the true beauty, nobility, and divinity of the human spirit.

After graduating from Calcutta University in 1915, Sri Yogananda took formal vows as a monk of India’s venerable monastic Swami Order. Two years later, he began his life’s work with the founding of a “how-to-live” school—since grown to seventeen educational institutions throughout India—where traditional academic subjects were offered together with yoga training and instruction in spiritual ideals. In 1920, he was invited to serve as India’s delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals in Boston. His address to the Congress and



subsequent lectures on the East Coast were enthusiastically received, and in 1924 he embarked on a cross-continental speaking tour.

Over the next three decades, Paramahansa Yogananda contributed in far-reaching ways to a greater awareness and appreciation in the West of the spiritual wisdom of the East. In Los Angeles, he established an international headquarters for Self-Realization Fellowship—the nonsectarian religious society he had founded in 1920. Through his writings, extensive lecture tours, and the creation of Self-Realization Fellowship temples and meditation centers, he introduced hundreds of thousands of truth-seekers to the ancient science and philosophy of Yoga and its universally applicable methods of meditation.

Today, the spiritual and humanitarian work begun by Paramahansa Yogananda continues under the direction of Brother Chidananda, president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India. In addition to publishing his writings, lectures, and informal talks (including a comprehensive series of *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* for home study), the society also oversees temples, retreats, and centers around the world; the Self-Realization Fellowship monastic communities; and a Worldwide Prayer Circle.

In an article on Sri Yogananda's life and work, Dr. Quincy Howe, Jr., Professor of Ancient Languages at Scripps College, wrote: "Paramahansa Yogananda brought to the West not only India's perennial promise of God-realization, but also a practical method by which spiritual aspirants from all walks of life may progress rapidly toward that goal. Originally appreciated in the West only on the most lofty and abstract level, the spiritual legacy of India is now accessible as practice and experience to all who aspire to know God, not in the beyond, but in the here and now....Yogananda has placed within the reach of all the most exalted methods of contemplation."

## HOW-TO-LIVE SERIES

### GLOSSARY

**ashram.** A spiritual hermitage; often a monastery.

**astral world.** The subtle world of light and energy that lies behind the physical universe. Every being, every object, every vibration on the physical plane has an astral counterpart, for in the astral universe (heaven) is the "blueprint" of the material universe. A discussion of the astral world and the still subtler causal or ideational world of thought may be found in Chapter 43 of Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

**Aum (Om).** The Sanskrit root word or seed-sound symbolizing that aspect of Godhead which creates and sustains all things; Cosmic Vibration. *Aum* of the Vedas became the sacred word *Hum* of the Tibetans; *Amin* of the Muslims; and *Amen* of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians. The world's great religions state that all created things originate in the cosmic vibratory energy of *Aum* or *Amen*, the Word or Holy Ghost. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....All things were made by him [the Word or *Aum*]; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1, 3).

**avatar.** From the Sanskrit word *avatara* ("descent"), signifying the descent of Divinity into flesh. One who attains union with Spirit and then returns to earth to help humanity is called an avatar.

**Bhagavad Gita.** "Song of the Lord." Part of the ancient Indian *Mahabharata* epic, presented in the form of a dialogue between the avatar (*q.v.*) Lord Krishna and his disciple Arjuna. A profound treatise on the science of Yoga and a timeless prescription for happiness and success in everyday living.

**Bhagavan Krishna (Lord Krishna).** An avatar (*q.v.*) who lived in India many centuries before the Christian era. His teachings on Yoga (*q.v.*) are presented in the Bhagavad Gita. One of the meanings given for the word *Krishna* in the Hindu scriptures is "Omniscient Spirit." Thus, *Krishna*, like *Christ*, is a title signifying the spiritual magnitude of the avatar — his oneness with God. (See *Christ Consciousness*.)

**Christ center.** The center of concentration and will at the point between the eyebrows; seat of Christ Consciousness and of the spiritual eye (*q.v.*).

**Christ Consciousness.** The projected consciousness of God immanent in all creation. In Christian scripture it is called the "only begotten son," the only pure reflection in creation of God the Father; in Hindu scripture it is called *Kutastha Chaitanya*, the cosmic intelligence of Spirit everywhere present in creation. It is the universal consciousness, oneness with God, manifested by Jesus, Krishna, and other avatars. Great saints and yogis know it as the state of *samadhi* (*q.v.*) meditation wherein their consciousness has become identified with the intelligence in every particle of creation; they feel the entire universe as their own body.

**Cosmic Consciousness.** The Absolute; Spirit beyond creation. Also the *samadhi*-meditation state of oneness with God both beyond and within vibratory creation.

**guru.** Spiritual teacher. The *Guru Gita* (verse 17) aptly describes the guru as “dispeller of darkness” (from *gu*, “darkness” and *ru*, “that which dispels”). Though the word *guru* is often misused to refer simply to any teacher or instructor, a true God-illuminated guru is one who, in his attainment of self-mastery, has realized his identity with the omnipresent Spirit. Such a one is uniquely qualified to lead others on their inward spiritual journey.

The nearest English equivalent to *guru* is the word *Master*. As a mark of respect, Paramahansa Yogananda’s disciples often use this term in addressing or referring to him.

**karma.** The effects of past actions, from this or previous lifetimes. The law of karma is that of action and reaction, cause and effect, sowing and reaping. By their thoughts and actions, human beings become the molders of their own destinies. Whatever energies a person has set into motion, wisely or unwisely, must return to that person as their starting point, like a circle inexorably completing itself. An individual’s karma follows him or her from incarnation to incarnation until fulfilled or spiritually transcended. (See *reincarnation*.)

**Krishna.** See *Bhagavan Krishna*.

**Kriya Yoga.** A sacred spiritual science, originating millenniums ago in India. A form of *Raja* (“royal” or

“complete”) *Yoga*, it includes certain advanced techniques of meditation that lead to direct, personal experience of God. *Kriya Yoga* is explained in Chapter 26 of *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and is taught to students of the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* who fulfill certain spiritual requirements.

**maya.** The delusory power inherent in the structure of creation, by which the One appears as many. *Maya* is the principle of relativity, inversion, contrast, duality, oppositional states; the “Satan” (lit., in Hebrew, “the adversary”) of the Old Testament prophets. Paramahansa Yogananda wrote: “The Sanskrit word *maya* means ‘the measurer’; it is the magical power in creation by which limitations and divisions are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable....In God’s plan and play (*lila*), the sole function of Satan or *maya* is to attempt to divert man from Spirit to matter, from Reality to unreality....*Maya* is the veil of transitoriness in Nature...the veil that each man must lift in order to see behind it the Creator, the changeless Immutable, eternal Reality.”

**paramahansa.** A spiritual title signifying one who has attained the highest state of unbroken communion with God. It may be conferred only by a true guru on a qualified disciple. Swami Sri Yukteswar bestowed the title on Paramahansa Yogananda in 1935.

**reincarnation.** A discussion of reincarnation may be found in Chapter 43 of Paramahansa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Yogi*. As explained there, by the law of karma (*q.v.*), the past actions of human beings set into

motion the effects that draw them back to this material plane. Through a succession of births and deaths they return to earth repeatedly to undergo here the experiences that are the fruits of those past actions, and to continue a process of spiritual evolution that leads ultimately to realization of the soul's inherent perfection and union with God.

**samadhi.** Spiritual ecstasy; superconscious experience; ultimately, union with God as the all-pervading supreme Reality.

**Satan.** See *maya*.

**Self.** Capitalized to denote the *atman*, or soul, the divine essence of man, as distinguished from the ordinary self, which is the human personality or ego. The Self is individualized Spirit, whose essential nature is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss.

**Self-realization.** Realization of one's true identity as the Self, one with the universal consciousness of God. Paramahansa Yogananda wrote: "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."

**spiritual eye.** The single eye of intuition and spiritual perception at the Christ (*Kutastha*) center (*q.v.*) between the eyebrows; the entryway into higher states of consciousness. During deep meditation, the single or

spiritual eye becomes visible as a bright star surrounded by a sphere of blue light that, in turn, is encircled by a brilliant halo of golden light. This omniscient eye is variously referred to in scriptures as the third eye, the star of the East, the inner eye, the dove descending from heaven, the eye of Shiva, and the eye of intuition. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

**Yoga.** The word *Yoga* (from the Sanskrit *yuj*, "union") means union of the individual soul with Spirit; also, the methods by which this goal is attained. There are various systems of Yoga. That taught by Paramahansa Yogananda is *Raja Yoga*, the "royal" or "complete" yoga, which centers around practice of scientific methods of meditation. The sage Patanjali, foremost ancient exponent of Yoga, has outlined eight definite steps by which the *Raja Yogi* attains *samadhi*, or union with God. These are (1) *yama*, moral conduct; (2) *niyama*, religious observances; (3) *asana*, right posture to still bodily restlessness; (4) *pranayama*, control of *prana*, subtle life currents; (5) *pratyahara*, interiorization; (6) *dharana*, concentration; (7) *dhyana*, meditation; and (8) *samadhi*, superconscious experience.

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