

*Eara Mata*

A  
Forerunner  
of the  
New Race



*Self-Realization Fellowship*  
FOUNDED 1920 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA  
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# A Forerunner of the New Race

by  
Tara Mata

“How-to-Live” Series  
No. 1976



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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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*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

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# A Forerunner of the New Race

BY TARA MATA

*Not long after Tara Mata had met Paramahansa Yogananda in 1924, she wrote the following article about a "man" who was blessed with the experience of cosmic consciousness. Though she humbly avoided identification with the person mentioned, the experiences Tara Mata describes were her own.*

Those who have read Dr. R. M. Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness* and Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy*<sup>1</sup> know that these authors believe that cosmic consciousness is a natural faculty of man, and that a future race of men on this earth will be born with this faculty well developed, and not merely latent as it is now. Bucke's theory is that, just as man advanced from the state of simple consciousness, which he shared with the animal kingdom, into a state of self-consciousness, peculiar to man alone, and marked by the development of language, so he must inevitably come into a higher state of consciousness, distinguished by a cosmic or universal understanding.

Bucke maintains that the increasing number of people who have attained some degree of cosmic consciousness in the past few centuries is proof that these persons constitute the vanguard or forerunners of the new race. Among those whom Bucke believes to have had the cosmic sense more or less well developed (in recent centuries) are St. John of the Cross, Francis Bacon, Jakob Boehme, Blaise Pascal, Spinoza, Swedenborg, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Alexander Pushkin, Honoré de Balzac, Emerson, Tennyson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Edward Carpenter, and Ramakrishna.

Besides these famous men, it is doubtless true that many hundreds of men and women in each century, unknown to fame, have been exalted to some degree of cosmic consciousness. There is no doubt in my mind that the message of Self-Realization Fellowship (founded by Paramahansa Yogananda) in this century has been the means by which hundreds and perhaps thousands of students throughout the world have achieved, through the meditation practices taught them, a glimpse of divine consciousness. Some few students have gone farther and attained very high illumination. Here we have an example of how the cosmic sense is being developed in larger and larger numbers, paving the way for the great race of the future.

One selection from Bucke's book is well worth quoting here:

"In contact with the flux of cosmic consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionized. Religion will absolutely dominate the race. It will not be believed and disbelieved.

"It will not be a part of life, belonging to certain hours, times, occasions. It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of priests. It will not dwell in churches and meetings and forms and days. Its life will not be in prayers, hymns nor discourses. It will not depend on special revelations, on the words of gods who came down to teach, nor on any Bible or Bibles. It will have no mission to save men from their sins or to secure them entrance to heaven. It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory will exist in the here and now. The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence; the evidence of each will be the same. Religion will govern every minute of every day of all life. Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual man and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakable intercourse. Sin will no longer exist nor will salvation be desired. Men will not worry about death or a future, about the kingdom of heaven, about what may come with and after the cessation of the life of the present body. Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it forever. The world peopled by men possessing cosmic consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this is from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness....This new race is in the act of being born from us, and in the near future it will occupy and possess the earth."

#### **A Definite Way to Contact God**

The fact that there is a technique, such as Self-Realization Fellowship teaches, whereby cosmic consciousness can be attained, is in itself proof that this higher sense is indeed an inherent faculty of all men, needing but the necessary training to call it forth. Most people believe that divine knowledge comes to only a few chosen ones, and that the average man can approach no nearer to God than his "faith" will take him. Realization that



there is a definite way to contact God, a technique usable by all men in all circumstances, has come as such a liberating shock to a number of Self-Realization students that they feel they have undergone a new birth.

I have one such case in mind — a man who, as soon as he had heard the Self-Realization message, was swept up into cosmic consciousness. He is the only such person, aside from Paramahansa Yogananda, whom I myself have known, though I have heard or read of a number of other Self-Realization students who have had a more or less similar experience.

This man was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well-read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindus, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony; it did not feed the soul-hunger within him. He did not wish merely to read about spiritual food, but to taste it. Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair — despair that he was worthy of any direct contact with God, since no such experience was given to him. He finally came to doubt, not God, but the possibility that he would ever be able to have more than an intellectual comprehension of Him. This conviction struck at the roots of his life, and made it seem a worthless and meaningless thing.

Into this dark night of his soul came the light of Self-Realization. After attending a few of the public lectures by Paramahansa Yogananda, and before taking the class lessons, this man felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way, he had become a different person. An impulse urged him to look into a mirror in his room, that he might see the new man. There he saw, not his own face, but the face of Paramahansa Yogananda, whose lecture he had attended that evening. The floodgates of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before — bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love — became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality. Realization that these deep, everlasting fountains of joy existed in every heart, that this immortal life underlay all the mortality of humanity, that this eternal, all-inclusive love enveloped and supported and guided every particle, every

atom of creation, burst upon him with a surety, a divine certainty that caused his whole being to pour forth in a flood of praise and gratitude.

He *knew*, not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendor and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries, millenniums, countless eons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means this bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow, death — these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

### **Physiological Changes**

He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the weeks which followed, of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed a rearrangement of molecular structure in his brain, or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels. This phenomenon is strong proof of Bucke's theory that cosmic consciousness is a natural faculty of man, for it gives evidence that the brain cells which are connected with this faculty are already present in man, although inactive or non-functioning in the majority of human beings at the present time.

Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several weeks, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored forever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of superhuman strength invaded him, and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver, or a sort of electrical, fluid light throughout his body.

During the weeks of his illumination, he felt no need of food or sleep. But he conformed his outward life to the pattern of his household, and ate and slept when his family did. All food seemed pure spirit to him, and in sleep he was pillowed on the "everlasting arms," awakening to a joy past all words, past all powers of description.

He had previously suffered from chronic catarrh; now his body was purged of all sickness. His family and friends were aware of a great change in his appearance and manner; his face shone with a radiant light; his eyes were pools of joy. Strangers spoke to him, irresistibly drawn by a strange sympathy; on the streetcar, children would come over to sit on his lap, asking him to visit them.

The whole universe was to him bathed in a sea of love; he said to himself many times, "Now at last I know what *love* is! This is God's love, shaming the noblest human affection. Eternal love, unconquerable love, all-satisfying love!" He knew beyond all possibility or thought of doubt that Love creates and sustains the universe, and that all created things, human or subhuman, were destined to discover this Love, this immortal bliss that was the very essence of life. He felt his mind expand, his understanding reach out, endlessly widening, growing, touching everything in the universe, binding all things, all thoughts to himself. He was "center everywhere, circumference nowhere."

#### **The Atom-Dance of Nature**

The air that he breathed was friendly, intimate, conscious of life. He felt that all the world was "home" to him, that he could never feel strange or alien to any place again; that the mountains, the sea, the distant lands which he had never seen, would be as much his own as the home of his boyhood. Everywhere he looked, he saw the "atom-dance" of nature; the air was filled with myriad moving pinpricks of light.

During these weeks, he went about his daily duties as usual, but with a hitherto unknown efficiency and speed. Typed papers flew off his machine, completed without error in a fourth of his customary time. Fatigue was unknown to him; his work seemed like child's play, happy and carefree. Conversing in person or over the telephone with his clients, his inward joy covered every action and circumstance with a cosmic significance, for to him these men, this telephone, this table, this voice was God, God manifesting Himself in another of His fascinating disguises.

In the midst of his work, he would suddenly be freshly overwhelmed by the goodness of God who had given him this incredible, unspeakable happiness. His breath would stop completely at such times; the awe which he felt would be accompanied by an absolute stillness within and without.

Underlying all his consciousness was a sense of immeasurable and unutterable gratitude; a longing for others to know the joy which lay within them; but most of all, a divine knowledge, past all human comprehension, that all was well with the world, that everything was leading to the goal of cosmic consciousness, immortal bliss.

This state of illumination was present with the man for about two months and then gradually wore away. It has never returned with all its pristine force, though certain features, especially the sense of divine peace and joy, return whenever he practices the Self-Realization meditation techniques.

We can well imagine, with Doctor Bucke, that a race of men, possessing as a normal and permanent faculty this sense of cosmic consciousness, would soon turn the earth into a paradise, a planet fit for Christs and Buddhas, a polestar for the wheeling universe.



<sup>1</sup> Richard Maurice Bucke, a physician, attended Walt Whitman during the latter part of his life, after the great poet had been stricken (in 1873) with paralysis. Dr. Bucke later wrote a biography of Whitman, the first of importance to describe him as a mystical superman; and edited several volumes of Whitman's letters and notes. The English author Edward Carpenter, after graduation from Cambridge, took holy orders and served as a curate in a Cambridge church. He was greatly disturbed by the existing social and religious order, and with the reading in 1868 or 1869 of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and *Democratic Vistas*, his view of life completely changed. He found his sympathies "flowing... westward across the Atlantic." In 1874 he left Cambridge to seek a life more in conformity with nature, but had to pass a number of years in uncongenial surroundings. His first successful literary work was *Towards Democracy*, which attracted the attention of many advanced thinkers. In 1884, the year following its publication, he went to the United States, where he spent some time with Whitman and met Lowell, Emerson, and others. After his return to England he became something of a recluse, but continued until his death to be sought out by persons of kindred spirit.



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

A direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda for more than forty-five years, Tara Mata was a member of the Board of Directors of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, SRF vice president, and editor-in-chief of SRF/YSS publications.

## ABOUT PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

*“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.

## BOOKS BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

*Available at bookstores or online at*

[www.srfbooks.org](http://www.srfbooks.org)

Autobiography of a Yogi

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[\*Autobiography of a Yogi\*](#) is at once a beautifully written account of an exceptional life and a profound introduction to the ancient science of Yoga and its time-honored tradition of meditation. The author clearly explains the subtle but definite laws behind both the ordinary events of everyday life and the extraordinary events commonly termed miracles. His absorbing life story thus becomes the background for a penetrating and unforgettable look at the ultimate mysteries of human existence.

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## How-to-Live Series

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*A Forerunner of the New Race* 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.



*The Spiritual Legacy of  
Paramahansa Yogananda*