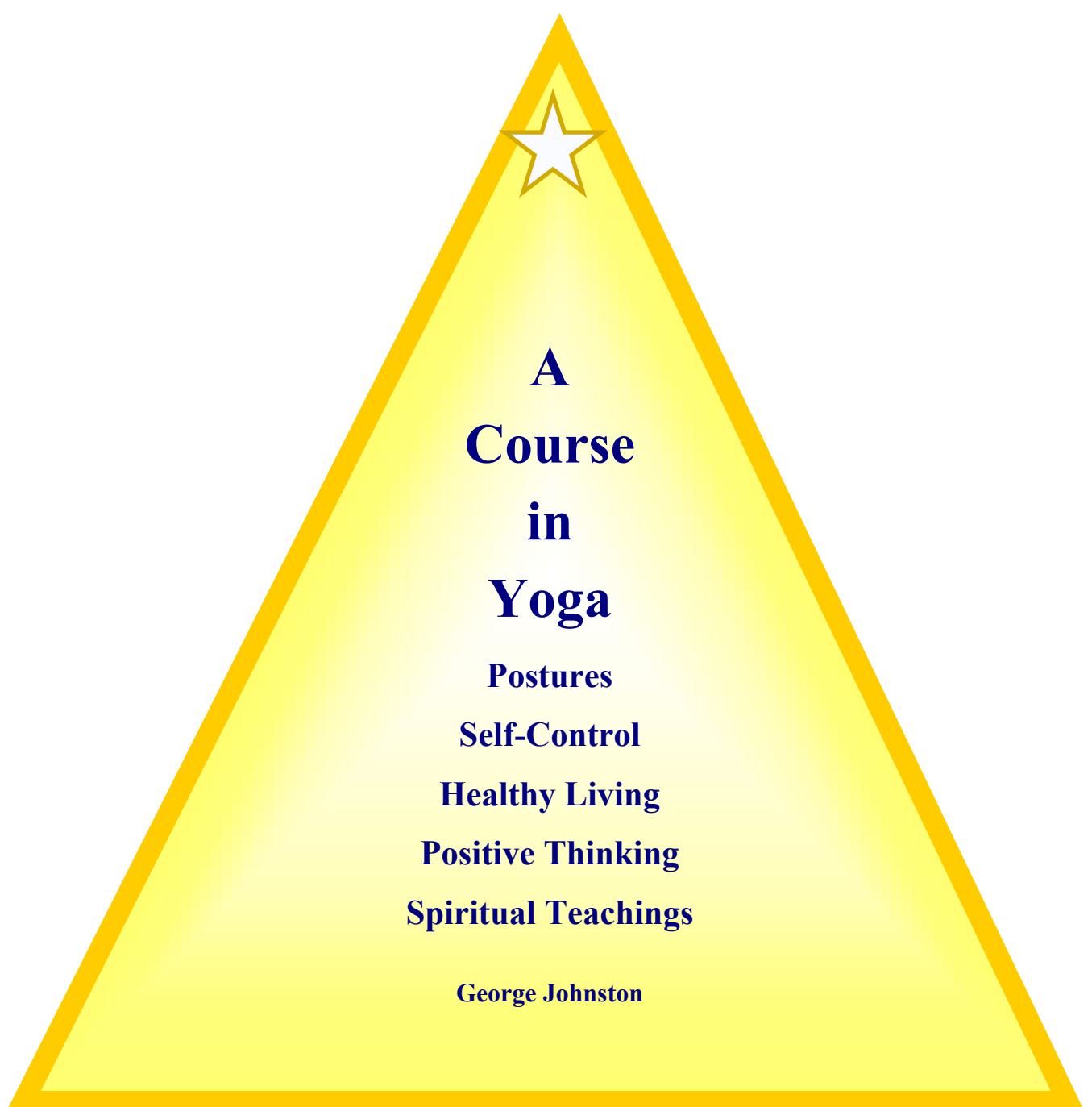


George wrote *A Course in Yoga* many years ago for a comprehensive, college course in yoga he was teaching. His course included hatha yoga, principles of healthy living, spiritual teachings and the benefits of yoga.

He wrote that he avoided the words “God” and “Christ” and instead used “Self,” “soul,” and “Spirit” so yoga wouldn’t be confused with religion and the manual could be used in a public, educational institution.

He said, "Recently, I realized *A Course in Yoga* would be excellent for introducing Christians to yoga because many aspects of the way of life and teachings of yoga, for example, love, self-discipline, morality and positive thinking, are essential, foundational aspects of Jesus’s teachings. The course could be an eye-opener for many Christians since it includes truths that, in his time, Jesus could only hint at. Later on, these truths were written about by saints and sages who had experienced them."



A
Course
in
Yoga

Postures
Self-Control
Healthy Living
Positive Thinking
Spiritual Teachings

George Johnston

YOGA

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THE SCIENCE OF YOGA

Thousands of years ago in ancient India the rishis (seers) sought to understand the mystery of life: the nature of the Reality that underlies the physical world. They did not have the instruments of modern science, but were able to penetrate to spiritual realms beyond matter by fine-tuning the instrument of the mind. They developed practices that enabled them to eliminate the distraction of physical sensations and wandering thoughts, focus the mind steadily on a single thing, and mentally unite with it. In this way, they were able to perceive spiritual light and energy—the loving intelligence and vibratory power of Spirit, which permeate and sustain the entire creation and are the life in every living thing.

These practices and also their ultimate purpose, union with Spirit, are called “Yoga” (from the Sanskrit word “yuj,” “to unite”). As a system of practices, yoga includes techniques for relaxing the body, withdrawing the mind from sensations, and experiencing realities beyond the reach of the physical senses. When one is able to go deep within and focus the mind on Spirit, one can catch glimpses of one’s true nature as pure, omnipresent consciousness (the Self) and in time unite with Spirit.

In *Yoga Sutras*, a profound exposition of the science of yoga, Patanjali, an enlightened sage of ancient India, wrote that the following eight limbs (branches or components) of yoga enable one to restrain the modifications of the mind, such as sensations, thoughts and emotions, and go beyond them. Through steadfast practice of these limbs, dormant faculties of your soul are activated, and you begin to experience yourself as immortal Spirit and know you came from Spirit.

- 1) Moral conduct
- 2) Religious observances
- 3) Steady, comfortable posture
- 4) Control of life force
- 5) Withdrawal of the mind from the senses
- 6) Concentration (focusing the mind on one thing)
- 7) Meditation (unwavering concentration)
- 8) Oneness with the object of concentration

These eight aspects of yoga are often referred to as the “Eightfold Path of Yoga.” They work together, and each limb supports the ones that follow it. They free one from the causes of earthly suffering and lead to enlightenment—blissful awareness of and union with one’s higher, immortal nature (the Self), other manifestations of Spirit, and Spirit beyond vibration. One who is enlightened can assist devotees in following this path, and if a devotee is guided by Spirit to do so, he or she can introduce others to its basic principles and practices. The eight limbs purify the mind and expand awareness. They include various aspects of morality and self-discipline, study of spiritual truth, devotion and surrender to Spirit, and techniques for stilling the mind in meditation. Although the seventh limb, dhyana, is translated “meditation,” for most people “meditation” simply means quieting the mind and concentrating on a spiritual thought or perception.

PREREQUISITES FOR PRACTICING MEDITATION OR POSTURES

- Reasonably quiet surrounding
- An empty stomach
- Comfortable clothing

One does not have to be robust or athletic, but restrictions due to a health problem or physical condition should be discussed with a physician.

BENEFITS OF POSTURES

The asanas (postures or poses) of hatha yoga (the path of physical, mental and spiritual well-being made possible by physical discipline) stretch and relax muscles and nerves, reduce tensions, and improve health. Thus, it becomes easier to sit still, rest the heart and lungs, and forget the body while practicing meditation. The asanas alleviate many spinal irregularities and tensions that cause back pain. They improve digestion and elimination. By relaxing the body and calming the mind, they help to normalize bodily functions.

However, they do not strengthen the heart and circulatory system as much as sustained physical activity in which the heart beats faster and the body perspires. For this reason, vigorous physical exercise is beneficial for most people under the age of forty. Those who are older should get professional advice as to the kinds of physical activity that would be best for them.

DIVINE LOVE

Divine love is felt in the heart and is unconditional, freely given without necessarily expecting something in return. It is essential for happiness; without it, we feel deprived. It is cultivated in meditation and in relationships with others when we genuinely care for the other person above and beyond our own self-interest. As a power, divine love fills one with peace, joy, and harmony and drives away anger, fear, and gloom. It dissolves the conflicts, prejudices, and tensions between people that are barriers to true friendship. It heals wherever it goes.

PREPARING THE WAY FOR MEDITATION

If we spend most of our free time absorbed in entertainment that fills us with material desires, excitement, and violent emotions, it becomes difficult to settle down and awaken the subtle forces of the soul in meditation. A hurried lifestyle where one activity crowds in upon another also agitates the mind, causing us to behave mechanically, like robots, controlled by outer circumstances and restless habits of thought and action.

By contrast, if we set aside time each day to enjoy the beauty in nature and read devotional writings, or listen to uplifting music and sing devotional songs, we become more peaceful and loving. Such activities prepare the way for us to still the mind and awaken the heart in meditation.

OUR STATUS AS EGOS

The ego is our lower nature. It is temporary and finite, like a graft on the soul, which in essence is perfect and immortal. As the ego, we identify with our physical body and are unaware of our indestructible infinitude. We put on the limitations of the body, owing to our identification with it, and suffer from pain, anger and worry due to actual or potential accidents, diseases, and poverty. Sometimes, through identification with the body, we become moody or proud. Our attachment to the body and other possessions makes us fear their loss.

Meditation frees us from spiritual ignorance and consequent suffering by restoring our omnipresent awareness as the regal soul. By practicing meditation, we begin to perceive our oneness with the hearts and minds of all. The grip of the ego is loosened, and the innate wisdom and love of the soul begin to manifest.

BASIC MEDITATION PROCEDURES

- 1) Sit with spine erect, holding body, neck, and head motionless.
- 2) Breathe slowly, relax and observe the flow of breath.
- 3) With the eyes closed or half opened, lift them gently and concentrate on the forehead just above the point between the eyebrows.
- 4) Refuse to think about worries, fears, desires, and problems. While observing the inflow and outflow of the breath, mentally repeat, over and over, a sacred word, phrase, sentence, or chant, and/or concentrate on a spiritual thought, image or perception. For example, in cadence with the breath, repeat the name of a holy being. Breathe slowly, and refocus the mind whenever it wanders.

KEY POINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

Sit up straight, with the chin level, the shoulders back, and the chest out; seated on the floor with legs crossed, or on a straight-back (armless) chair. Stay alert and do not passively let the mind go blank. Keep the eyes turned upward in order to bypass the subconscious mind and eventually attain superconsciousness—the highest form of consciousness. The superconscious mind directly experiences Spirit, through oneness with It. By practicing meditation procedures that enable you to concentrate and still the mind, dormant faculties of superconscious perception are awakened.

If one is extremely tense, practice of several postures and the corpse pose helps prepare one for the practice of meditation, in which deeper states of calmness and peace are achieved. After relaxing lying down, one should sit upright for meditation, in order to be fully alert and better able to control the mind. When the mind becomes still in deep meditation, a profound vibration of peace permeates one's entire being, sweeping away tensions, disharmonies, and conflicts.

PRIMARY PURPOSES OF MEDITATION

A yogi meditates to enjoy the peace, love, light, wisdom, and bliss of the soul and Spirit. As one's consciousness expands and becomes more and more permeated with these realities, one experiences the infinite power and glory of the omnipresent, higher Self (the essence of the soul) and Spirit as the source of the Self. This blissful state of consciousness is known as Self-realization, and those who attain it are said to be fully enlightened or Self-realized.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

From the beginning, one becomes happier and more productive because meditation develops mental calmness, concentration, intuition, empathy, mental efficiency, self-control, constructive attitudes, freedom from tension and inner conflicts, and physical and emotional well-being.

SUBCONSCIOUS PERCEPTIONS

Subconscious perceptions do not transcend earthly experience. They occur as ordinary dreams or as hypnotically-induced recall of past events.

SUPERCONSCIOUS PERCEPTIONS

(Experienced in deep meditation; sometimes when dreaming or awake)

- Light—pure and uplifting; not from any material source
- Knowledge that comes from within (not through the senses or reason)
- Unity with cosmic life and intelligence
- Love and joy that far surpass ordinary emotions in depth of feeling and blissfulness
- Sights and sounds, of great beauty and power, that transcend earthly experience

THE MIND AS A RECEIVER AND TRANSMITTER

By deep concentration, an enlightened yogi can adjust the radio of his or her mind to tune out the static of distracting thoughts and sensations and receive the thoughts of another person in order to be of service to them. All thoughts are present as subtle vibrations in the ethers and affect the consciousness of humanity. Thoughts that are pure and loving are of great benefit to everyone.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

By making one more aware of the soul and its omnipresent, eternal nature, meditation helps one to overcome loneliness, fear, guilt, and a poor self-image. The soul, in its essence, is perfect, and as our awareness of its all-satisfying, infinite love and bliss increases, we find the perfect, unfading love and happiness that we seek in human affection. Pure, unconditional love is what we are and always will be, even though earthly illusions may veil our awareness of it. Love makes it possible for us to forgive ourselves and others. It is an uplifting, transforming power that attracts goodness and brings forth harmony and peace. It infuses relationships between friends, family members and couples with purity, selflessness, and joy.

When we taste the all-satisfying sweetness of the soul, which is eternal, we no longer walk in fear and dread on the pathway of life, for we know that, no matter what happens, the kingdom of love and joy is within us. And, even if our loved ones are taken away, we know that, in some other way, we will find fulfillment.

A yogi contacts the all-accomplishing power of the soul, and knows that as the perfect soul unfolds its true nature all human imperfections will be overcome. By realizing the greatness of your soul—its innate purity, love, and oneness with all other souls—feelings of unworthiness, guilt, or lack gradually melt away.

PHYSICAL AND ETHEREAL NOURISHMENT

In order for food to be utilized by the body, it must be digested (broken down into easily absorbed substances), and these substances, along with life energies in the food, absorbed into the blood stream and the cells, tissues and organs. Each cell is a living entity, nourished not only by the substances and energies from the food we eat, but by energies supplied by us as links between the ethereal realm of thought, power, and love and the material world of substances.

Our health, which is determined by the vitality of our cells, tissues and organs, depends on the flow of energy into the body from our consciousness operating through the brain, as well as energies and substances from the food we eat. Positive thoughts of good health and abundance flood the body with light and energy so that it functions more efficiently, with better health and less fatigue. Negative thoughts disrupt the functions of its cells, tissues and organs, and weaken their resistance to harmful microbes and infectious agents. Therefore, our thoughts influence the body in a very substantial way.

OUR THOUGHTS SHAPE OUR FUTURE

The events in our life are shaped by the thoughts we habitually think. If we harbor thoughts of ill will or failure, these thoughts have the power to attract negative consequences in our life. Ill will magnetically attracts ill will from others, and negative thoughts block the power of good thoughts to attract real friends and success. The more we infuse our minds with thoughts of abundance, good health, and friendship, the better our lives will become.

ASANAS

Hold each posture for whatever length of time feels right. Try to be guided intuitively in your practice. Remember to inhale when bending backward and to exhale while bending forward. Always concentrate on what you feel as you perform each posture.

The seated poses and neck exercises may be practiced after eating. The plow pose limbers the upper part of the spine and relieves tension in the neck and shoulders. During pregnancy or if one has high blood pressure (hypertension) the upside-down postures (reverse pose, shoulder stand, plow) should be avoided or held only for a short period of time.

Backward-bending poses generally strengthen the back muscles and improve posture, breathing habits, and self-confidence. By alternating those that bend the spine backward with ones that bend the spine forward, for example, the cobra with the yoga mudra, a harmonious balance of contrasting qualities, such as self-confidence and humility, is engendered. When learning the postures, you should relax after each one for about as long as you held it.

Yoga improves one's physical appearance by cultivating attractive qualities of body and soul. Physical health improves, one becomes more poised and graceful, and one radiates peace, love, happiness, and vitality.

LIFE FORCE FOLLOWS ATTENTION

In practicing each yoga posture, one should breathe slowly and concentrate on the parts of the body where one's attention is drawn. This sends healing life energy there. Always perform each posture with deep concentration.

SOURCES OF LIFE ENERGY

The chief source of life energy is the will, operating through the brain, drawing on the etheric power that sustains life. But air (especially fresh air), food, and outdoor sunlight also are important sources. When we perform yoga postures, they distribute life force throughout the body, helping it to flow evenly, without interruption or blockage. For this reason, they give one a feeling of calmness and vitality. Tension interrupts the even flow of life force throughout invisible energy channels in the spiritual body, but yoga postures relax the nervous system and restore a balanced distribution of energy to all the body parts. Fatigue that is the result of stress can often be alleviated by practicing hatha yoga for 20-30 minutes each day.

JUDGMENTS AND COMPARISONS

Instead of judging and comparing people, send them loving thoughts. Realize that the true identity of every person—the Self—is perfect, and ultimately, no one is better than another. Judging ourselves as better than others blocks awareness of the good in them. It is a feeble attempt to boost our own self-esteem by creating the false illusion that we are superior. It fails because it keeps us from knowing the true worth of everyone, ourselves as well as others.

Bending forward while kneeling, especially if the hands are placed, palms together, in front of the chest or forehead, also counteracts excessive pride. Bowing to others while focusing on the good in them, or revering an enlightened being causes us to feel humility and respect. It awakens devotion and drives away egotistical thoughts. Through humility and observation of the changing nature of human beliefs, we realize that the human mind is limited and is far from infallible. Thus, we become less attached to our beliefs and are willing to consider other ones and seek the subtle, inner guidance of Spirit.

Devotion to a higher power enables us to progress spiritually. As we grow in love and wisdom, we expand from narrow self-interest to joyous awareness of our oneness with all.

A YOGI'S DIET

Meat is a good source of certain minerals, B-complex vitamins, and protein but is generally avoided or eaten in small amounts by yogis. If consumed in large amounts, red meat tends to unbalance the system and may increase the risk of cancer, heart attack, high blood pressure and stroke. Moreover, excessive meat eating requires needless killing of animals.

However, many people need some meat in order to be healthy and should not feel guilty eating it if they feel they need it. Yogis usually avoid beef and pork, but some eat fish or poultry from time to time.

In general, yogis eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, milk and its products, raw seeds and nuts, and cooked legumes (dry beans and peas).

PROTEIN FOODS

Eggs, fish, and cheese are good sources of the essential amino acids (protein constituents the body cannot synthesize but which are needed for good health and to replace worn out body cells). However, fruits and most vegetables contain few or none of these essential nutrients. By eating nuts and seeds (for example, almonds or pumpkin seeds) or whole grains, along with cooked legumes, one obtains substantial amounts of all of the essential amino acids.

If you have unpleasant symptoms after eating wheat, rye or barley, other grains may be eaten instead. Nuts and seeds should be thoroughly masticated. Otherwise, they should be freshly ground or purchased as nut butter.

DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

If one wishes to eat foods, such as white bread, that are made with white flour, they should not be eaten in large amounts and thus crowd natural foods out of the diet. The same is true of candy, sugar and soft drinks, which in large amounts can be harmful. Foods fried at high temperatures in polyunsaturated oil also should be avoided.

DIET AND DISEASE PREVENTION

By eating plenty of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and whole grains, instead of highly processed and refined foods, there is less risk of cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (hardening of arteries, heart attacks, and strokes). Fiber is abundantly supplied, as are vitamins and minerals (provided the diet is well-balanced). Disease of the colon, constipation, and osteoporosis are less likely, and one has greater vitality and resistance to infection.

BEST FOODS FOR CERTAIN TYPES

Sour, oily, sweet, and salty foods may be beneficial for thin, restless people who are jumpy, garrulous, and prone to indigestion. Oily, sweet, and salty foods, however, are best avoided by people who wish to lose weight. These people should eat plenty of leafy salad greens with low-calorie dressing, and cooked green vegetables.

Hot or warming spices, such as red or black pepper, ginger, cinnamon, and nutmeg, improve circulation and digestion and may be needed by people who have cold hands and feet, dislike cold weather, and are prone to indigestion. However, people who tend to be overheated, dislike hot weather, and have a fiery disposition may benefit from avoiding hot spices and excessively sour or salty foods.

INDIGESTION

Foods that are not completely broken down in the digestive tract tend to putrefy or ferment, producing gas, and toxins that deplete one's energy and can cause headaches and long-term health problems. Although ancient grains and many varieties of corn, oats, and rice are healthy, many people suffer from indigestion and intestinal inflammation caused by gluten or fructan (a fermentable carbohydrate) in wheat, barley and rye. Moreover, incompletely digested proteins can trigger food allergies and cause unpleasant, often severe, reactions in almost any part of the body. If eating certain foods, large quantities of foods, or combinations of foods eaten at the same meal causes you to have indigestion or fatigue or to be overweight, you should avoid doing this because it can lead to serious illness.

IMPROVING DIGESTION

By seasoning foods with hot spices, the digestive fire is enkindled, and large meals are less likely to cause gas. Drinking one or two glasses of water (not iced) or a warm beverage with meals also improves digestion. However, raw foods, which can be very beneficial for and eaten in abundance by most people, may need to be limited to small portions if one has poor digestion.

Cooking destroys some of the vitamins in food but makes it easier to digest.

By avoiding combinations of foods that do not digest well together, indigestion can often be prevented. Avoid eating fruit with cooked vegetables or legumes. The best time to eat fresh fruit is between meals.

The abdominal contraction exercise stimulates the digestive organs and may improve their functioning.

REGULATING APPETITE AND ASSIMILATION

Hasty, obsessive eating causes overweight and dietary disease. One's state of mind during eating may be as important as the food chosen, for it influences how much food is eaten and how well the body utilizes it. To regulate your appetite and enable your body to utilize food in a healthy manner:

- Keep the mind engaged in worthwhile activities;
- Exercise regularly, which helps convert food into lean tissue and regulates appetite in accordance with need;
- Practice slow, deep breathing, outdoors if possible;
- Do not eat while watching TV;
- Bless and send loving energy into your food before eating it;
- Eat in a loving, peaceful atmosphere and frame of mind;
- Eat slowly, with appreciation and gratitude, chewing the food thoroughly.

SELF-CONTROL

By controlling physical desires and restraining the impulse to overindulge in food, drink, or sex, we develop great will power and strength of character. Our minds become stronger, and we are able to make intuitive, clear-minded choices as to what goals and activities to pursue. Instead of being influenced by desires for the temporary pleasures of physical indulgence, we are able to objectively evaluate possible courses of action and determine what activities are best for us and others in the long run.

Our ability to meditate improves because self-control brings peace and stability into our lives. No longer are we so disturbed by fear and anxiety, which plague and unsettle the minds of those who do not control themselves.

People who have developed self-control enjoy better health because they do not overstrain their capacity to digest food and drink and eliminate toxic residues left behind. They do not waste their vital energies in excesses of all kinds. However, they may easily become intolerant of those who are still under the sway of bad habits, and fail to see their good qualities. Therefore, while not condoning the faults of others, one should be compassionate.

HEALING AND DIET

If one is ill and has a fever, one should drink plenty of water, and red meat, fried foods, and foods one has difficulty digesting should be avoided. Bitter herbs may help the body to eliminate toxic wastes and stimulate the colon. Elimination of waste is assisted by keeping the colon active.

NATURAL REMEDIES AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Other natural therapies that help to cleanse the system are used by yogis to restore or improve health. One of the basic premises is that poorly digested or impure foods cause an accumulation of toxins in the blood stream and bodily tissues. Drinking a properly prepared salt-water solution to cleanse the alimentary canal, fasting on fruit or vegetable juices for one to three days at a time, and partial fasting on fruits and raw vegetables all help the body to reject toxins and wastes. While fasting or partially fasting one should drink plenty of pure water. Exercise also purifies the body, in addition to energizing and strengthening it.

FASTING

Although food is important and should be chosen wisely, the life energy flowing into the body through the brain is even more important. Some people have benefitted by abstaining from solid food for many days without ill effects, fasting on fruit juice and water, and strengthened and sustained by life energy. However, such fasting requires proper guidance. A beneficial routine for most people is to fast one day each week or three consecutive days each month.

The effects of fasting are as follows. The digestive organs are rested, and, guided by the life force, the body then sets about its work of actively cleansing itself, removing toxic substances and eliminating them via the lymph and blood stream, which in turn are cleansed by the kidneys, lungs, liver, colon and skin. By removing toxic wastes that accumulate in the tissues over a period of time fasting improves health.

In releasing toxins, fasting may cause one to experience weakness, nausea, or headache, due to their temporary accumulation in the blood. As soon as the organs of elimination can keep pace with the wastes being dumped into the lymph and blood, one begins to feel better. However, one may wish to assist this process by cleansing the colon, and by bathing to keep the pores open.

One of the major benefits of fasting is the clarity of mind and spiritual awareness it generates. Fasting for physical health should be limited to no more than three consecutive days, but for spiritual purification it can be of longer duration. As one's soul is purified of negative emotions one becomes more loving. This strengthens the immune system, and physical health also improves.

BREAKING A FAST

When breaking a fast of more than three days, it is important not to jump right back into eating three square meals a day. The digestive organs need to be gradually set into motion again, and one should not break a long fast by eating a large amount of food right away. A fast lasting more than three days should be broken by eating fruit first, then vegetables, preferably at separate meals.

SELF-EXPANSION

As we give of ourselves to others in friendship and good will, we grow spiritually. We expand the horizons of our awareness beyond the desires and needs of our physical self to encompass the feelings, thoughts, and needs of others. Thus, we include the welfare of others in the expanded territory of our mind. This is the true meaning of magnanimity, or large-mindedness. Such expansion of awareness may require giving something away, but it develops our capacity to give and receive love, attracts goodness from others, and brings us great happiness. The miser's heart is dry as dust, but by caring for others, the heart is purified and becomes an oasis of love and joy.

MORAL CONDUCT LEADS TO HAPPINESS

A parent's love for their child must be combined with wisdom. The child's future happiness depends on its self-control and ability to act in accord with spiritual laws governing conduct. If the child is taught to obey its parents and follow moral guidelines such as not stealing, lying, or desiring to hurt others, it will be able to live at peace with society and its own higher Self. Otherwise, there will be disharmony in the child's outer and inner life.

Parents, entrust your child's care to responsible persons and only when necessary. The child is given to you for care and guidance as representatives of the universal Father-Mother Principle in nature. Your wisdom and love must be combined for transforming the wayward tendencies of the child to act without thought or only out of self-interest. By channeling the child's thoughts into friendly concern for others, you will be instrumental in developing its strength of character so that, when the young bird leaves the nest, it will be able to soar in the skies of spiritual freedom, unhampered by materialistic or selfish weaknesses, with strong wings of self-control and love for all.

INNER GUIDANCE WE CAN TRUST

When we still the mind in meditation and remain inwardly calm afterwards while discharging our responsibilities in the world, we are more aware of the gentle suggestions of Spirit as an inner voice or knowing, quietly telling us what is best for us and for the good of all. This guidance is intuition. It honors our freedom of choice and never compels us to do anything. In paying attention to it, working with it and following our inner feelings and conscience, we learn to distinguish intuitive guidance from imagination and voices that cannot be relied upon. Intuition and reason are both necessary, but intuition comes from a higher level of consciousness. If we seek and follow its guidance, Spirit will help us make wise decisions and obtain whatever we need in order to fulfill our purpose in life.

MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE

If we become developed spiritually, we can be joyful and content even when confronted by difficulties. Whether alone or in the company of others, single or married, we can find happiness and fulfillment. By seeing the good in others and regarding all circumstances as golden opportunities for accomplishing something worthwhile, we can make the most of life and enjoy it.

AN ENLIGHTENED YOGI

An enlightened yogi—one who experiences the omnipresent light, vibratory sound, and intelligence of Spirit, which create and sustain the universe—is inwardly blissful. Finding contentment within, he or she is calm and even-minded, neither overly excited by success and good fortune, nor overly dejected by failure and seeming loss. Such a yogi does not seek the pleasures of the world, but finds happiness in helping others attain enlightenment. An enlightened yogi may occasionally suffer ill health, but is able to patiently endure whatever difficulties life may bring, with peaceful non-attachment to the body and material possessions.

WISDOM SPRINGS FROM EXPERIENCE OF TRUTH

By practicing meditation techniques taught by enlightened beings, one may eventually be able to go beyond physical sensations, material desires, and discursive thinking into the stillness and silence of deep meditation and, by means of spiritual faculties of higher perception, experience the truth of realities that exist beyond the reach of the five senses. Through such experience one attains the highest wisdom.

DISCUSSION VS ARGUMENT

In relationships with others, it is important to try to see the other person's viewpoint. If we calmly consider the other person's views without attachment to our own, it is easier to discuss differences of opinion rather than argue, we are more capable of unbiased, rational thinking and open to the guidance of intuition, and disputes are much more likely to be resolved.

CATERING TO THE SENSES LIMITS US

As long as we seek happiness only in material acquisitions and enjoyments, it will elude us. This is because only unconditional love, peace, and other eternal realities, not the passing pleasures of the senses, can provide the happiness we inwardly crave. By restraining the senses, frequently taking a break from material pursuits to quiet the mind and enter the silence within, and dedicating our life to fulfilling our purpose here on earth as it is revealed to us through the guidance of Spirit, we find inner peace, contentment and joy.

MIND AND LIFE FORCE LIGHT THE TEMPLES OF BLISS

By comparing a life devoted to Spirit with an ordinary life, one realizes that when one's mind and life force are constantly focused on material concerns and physical sensations, the heavenly bliss of Spirit is rarely if ever experienced. To experience this bliss, the mind should be focused on a spiritual goal and the life force directed into centers of light and consciousness in the brain and spine. Spiritual living and yoga meditation techniques make this possible. When life force is withdrawn from the sensory nerves during meditation, physical sensations cannot reach the mind. Then the mind is not easily distracted from focusing on a higher reality, and one's concentrated thought and life energy begin to remove blockages in one's spiritual centers in the brain and upper spine. These centers begin to function as the temples of bliss they were intended to be, and the light within them shines brighter.

BLOCKED DESIRE CAUSES ANGER

As long as we are limited by the ego, or lower mind, we tend to get angry if something gets in the way of the satisfaction of our desires. We may not swear or cast about, but there usually is a mental and physiological reaction, which we term anger. Perhaps we just fume and develop high blood pressure or heart disease, which certainly does us no good. However, as we awaken spiritually and experience the joys of Spirit, we become increasingly detached from the material desires of the ego, thus developing immunity to frustration, the underlying cause of anger.

BROODING ON OBJECTS OF DESIRE CAN SPELL DISASTER

If one becomes engrossed in the material side of life, they develop strong likes and dislikes, and their anger when something prevents them from having what they want may lead to reckless behavior. The cascade of events is as follows:

- a) One becomes attached to objects of pleasure, desiring them.
- b) Obstructed desire makes one angry.
- c) Anger causes loss of memory of one's higher nature and good intentions.
- d) Happiness and peace of mind evaporate.
- e) Good judgment is seriously impaired.

This cascade of ill happenings results from brooding on objects of sense pleasure and can spell disaster. Instead of getting angry, one should accept frustrations and disappointments, even one's own mistakes, as opportunities to learn lessons and thus make choices that lead to peace of mind and happiness.

UNSELFISH ACTION BRINGS CONTENTMENT AND PEACE

Those who leave the little self, or ego, behind and follow the guidance of Spirit come into the sphere of joyous neglect of personal motive, acting out of consideration of what is right, not "what is in it for me." By following their inner guidance and restraining the ego, unselfish habits of thought and action are developed. They grow spiritually and find contentment and peace of mind.

FREE CHOICE

In daily life, we can mindfully consider the results of different courses of action and, using wisdom, logical thinking, and intuition, decide which course to follow, or be led blindly by personal desires for material gain and pleasure. We are free to follow the path of physical pleasure but it leads to a state of mind in which one never finds fulfillment, whereas those who choose to make a practice of always acting in accordance with wisdom, reason, and intuition develop strength of mind and find joy in life.

PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS

To be a success in life, you should:

- a) Think deeply about what kinds of work or way of life will accord with your spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical needs, abilities and purpose in life.
- b) Choose goals and activities that contribute to the welfare of others.
- c) Never stop putting forth continuous effort to achieve your goals unless impartial analysis indicates that you should change them.

BALANCED LIVING

To live a balanced life is to bring spirituality into one's life. Through regular meditation, devotion to a supreme intelligence permeating creation, and wisdom, one's actions in the world become spiritualized; that is, they become selfless, guided by Spirit, and thus lead to happiness and peace of mind. Not an idle visionary or skeptical pragmatist, one combines spirituality with practical, well-thought-out actions and strives for balanced success in every department of life: spiritual, mental and physical. Unattached to the results of actions, remaining even-minded and content in all circumstances, good or bad, one keeps on striving for success, with an undaunted determination and confidence that spring from within.

PERCEIVING THE FORCES THAT MOTIVATE PEOPLE

Through steadfast practice of the principles of yoga, our awareness increases, and the motives of others are perceived through awareness of our oneness with them. Empathy reveals to us the emotions and desires that cause others to think and act as they do. And by studying the writings of enlightened teachers, we realize that life is a glorious battle between the soul and the ego, which sooner or later, depending on our willingness to follow the guidance of Spirit, the spiritual forces will win.

THE POWER OF LOVE AND JOY

Long-continued study and practice of yoga develop the ability to love friend and foe alike. By radiating kindness and good will to everyone we meet, we not only change them for the better, but we change ourselves. We become impervious to the negative attitudes and hostile feelings they may project at times, if we develop a strong, magnetic force of optimism and good cheer within ourselves. This inner power grows and becomes a permanent part of our personality as we return love for hate, cheer for gloom, and concern for indifference. Eventually, even the worst adversary softens if we feel respect and good will whenever we think of or meet that person. Always focus on the good in every soul, and you will uplift yourself as well as others.

LIFE'S MANY EXPRESSIONS

The infinite consciousness in nature expresses itself in many ways. These manifestations can only be perceived by one who is in tune with Spirit. The waves of light that spread over the vast creation take the forms of life, beauty, and intelligence. They cause all objects to evolve toward greater expression of life.

Thus, plants spread leaves to the sun and open blossoms of beauty that draw living creatures to them. As time marches on, the animal kingdom becomes the vehicle of expression for ever-evolving life and allows it greater opportunity for movement from place to place as well as sense faculties to perceive the material world. In its highest expression, in the human body, life not only perceives and thinks but, through superconscious faculties of the brain and spine, gives and receives unconditional love and has the ability to transcend earthly limitations and know itself.

The planets and stars in the sky, the meadows and forests all teem with life. In the case of inanimate objects, life expresses itself as magnetic power and other forms of energy. As planets collide and universes dissolve, life passes on into other galaxies and manifestations, ever expressing itself in terms of beauty and intelligence, which can be perceived by a developed yogi. Myriad forms of life fill the land and sea, dying and being created anew, while the intelligent power that infuses, shapes, and enlivens these forms is indestructible and never dies.