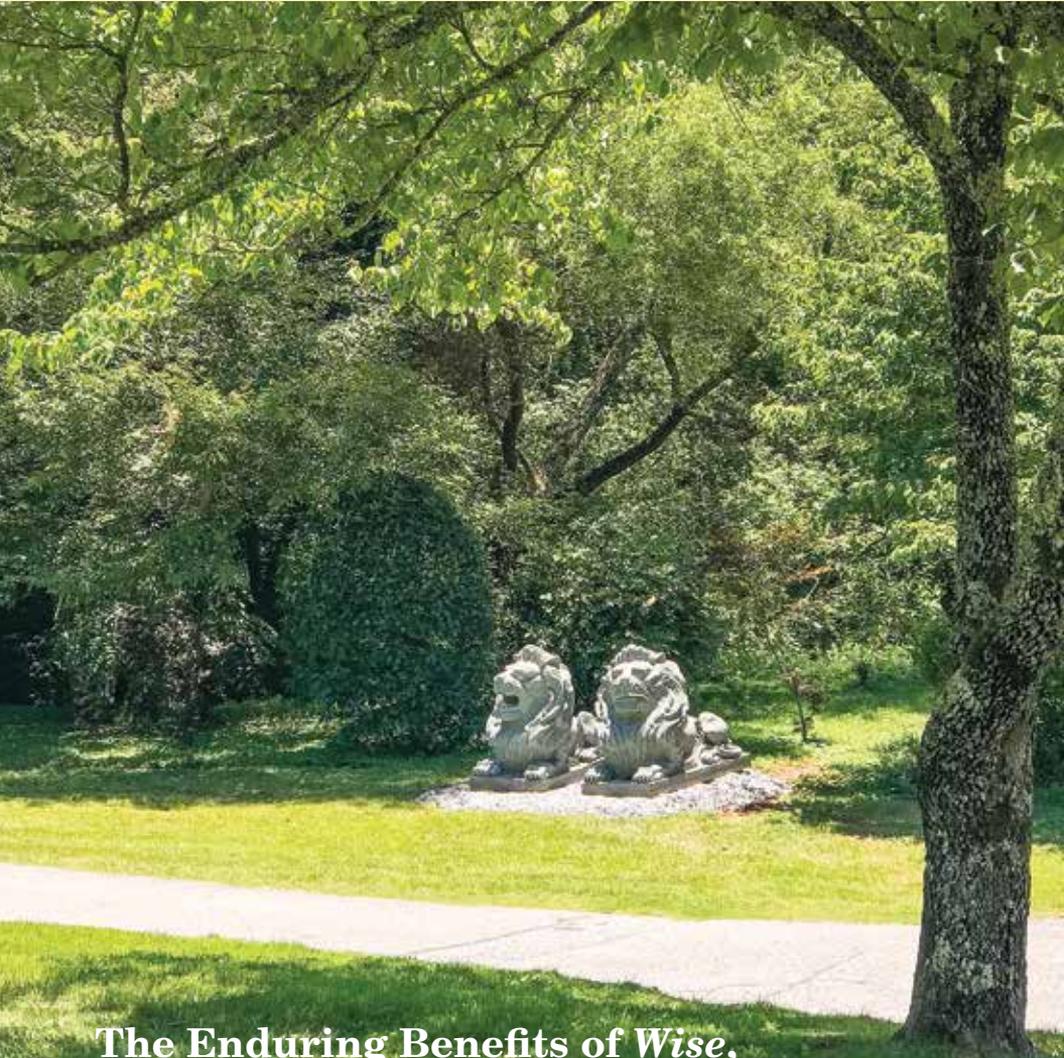


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For Individual and Global Spiritual Enlightenment



**The Enduring Benefits of Wise,
Dedicated Spiritual Discipleship – page 4**

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**PARAMAHANSA
YOGANANDA
*As I Knew Him***

by Roy Eugene Davis

Quality Paperback
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Revised Second Edition 2018

**PARAMAHANSA
YOGANANDA
*As I Knew Him***
Experiences and Reflections of a Disciple
ROY EUGENE DAVIS

In this book the only ordained disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda who is actively teaching describes his experiences with him. Many of the author's observations of his guru—what he was like and what he taught—differ from what other people have said because their experiences and perceptions were different.

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Beginnings — Early Experiences With My Guru
Observations and Reflections of a Disciple
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Answers to Questions About the Spiritual Path
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Glossary

Precise definitions and explanations of more than 150
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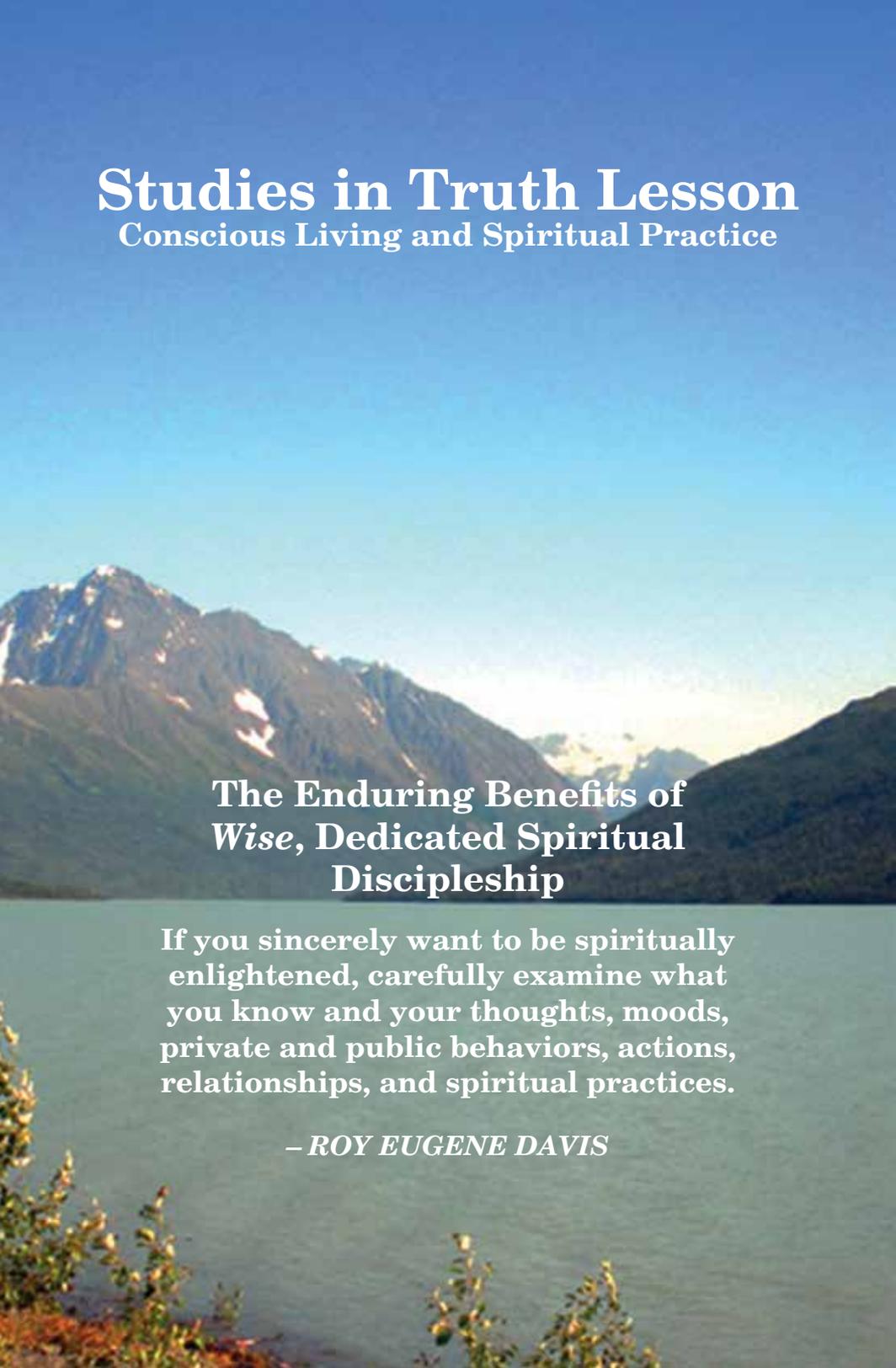
Front Cover: Newly acquired granite stone lions.
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Below: CSA Headquarters Meditation Hall



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Studies in Truth Lesson

Conscious Living and Spiritual Practice

The Enduring Benefits of *Wise, Dedicated Spiritual Discipleship*

If you sincerely want to be spiritually enlightened, carefully examine what you know and your thoughts, moods, private and public behaviors, actions, relationships, and spiritual practices.

– ROY EUGENE DAVIS

enduring Lasting for a long period of time.

spiritual Of, relating to, or affecting one's pure essence and one's relationship to higher realities. Spiritual enlightenment is conscious experience and accurate knowledge of one's pure essence and ultimate Reality.

wise Characterized by well-informed intellectual discernment and rational thinking.

dedicated Completely devoted to a cause, ideal, or purpose.

discipleship Commitment to learning and wise, effective use of what is learned.

The Importance of Being Well-Informed About the Processes of Life, How to Live, and How to Nurture Total Well-Being and Emotional and Spiritual Growth

Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom:
and with all of your getting, get understanding.

— *The Book of Proverbs 4:7*

Successful discipleship is possible when we have trustworthy information that enables us to make right choices and perform effective actions.

Knowing about the categories and processes of cosmic manifestation, the highest purpose of human life, and how to be Self-realized even if understanding is not flawless, is helpful. Trying to experience spiritual growth while having erroneous ideas and emotional conflicts that blur and distort awareness and interfere with rational thinking will result in frustration and disappointment.

Until you are fully enlightened, remember and acknowledge that you are an immortal spiritual being, a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality commonly referred to as God.

The nameless, formless pure essence of ultimate Reality outside of space and time supports the expressive aspect of ultimate Reality with attributes that manifest universes and empower their processes. Truth seekers who know that one Reality exists can avoid mental confusion and nonuseful spiritual practices.

When you say “God” or contemplate an ultimate Reality, do you imagine a nameless, formless, eternal Reality or do you

think about a cosmic thing or person with personality characteristics, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and likes and dislikes? Do you think of it as love, bliss, joy, peace, or other pleasant perceptions? Do you hope that it cares about you? That it will assist you when you need help, come to you or reveal itself to you when you prove your devotion to it, forgive your mistakes, or assure your eternal well-being?

Although ultimate Reality is not what many people imagine it to be, it can be thought about and related to in a variety of ways until mistaken ideas about it are outgrown. Many people who pray to it or perform rituals to invoke its influences say they are more mentally and emotionally peaceful, have better health, and experience harmonious circumstances after they pray or perform rituals.

Several hundred years ago people in many parts of the world sacrificed animals to please their ideas of the gods, tried to control the forces of Nature, or have their faults forgiven. Some people still use rituals (or pay to have them performed) hoping to attract good fortune or weaken imagined harmful astrological influences. Others ask spiritual teachers, angels, or saints to intercede with God for their well-being or ask mediums or individuals who say they have highly developed psychic (soul) powers for advice and guidance.

Guidelines for wholesome, effective living are easy to understand. Intentionally live with a clear sense of purposes that are of value to you, others, and the environment. Think and act constructively. Examine your pure essence with discriminative intelligence and your meditation practice that provides personal experience. Rise above a small, mistaken sense of self-identity. Do things that will weaken and remove conditions that interfere with growth to emotional and spiritual maturity.

Superconsciously affirm:

I am an immortal unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Superconsciousness is clarified awareness that is other than ordinary awake and subconscious states of awareness modified by active or conflicted mental and emotional states.

To affirm *superconsciously*, speak an affirmation with conviction a few times, then quietly, then mentally, then be more fully aware of the truth or reality of what was affirmed. *Aspire to awaken to experience and knowledge of what was affirmed* rather than try to further modify the mind with ideas, beliefs, feelings, or habits.

Think Constructively

One mind is common to everyone and everyone is an inlet to all of it. What Plato has thought, we may think; what a saint has felt, we may feel; what has been experienced by any person, we can understand. All who have access to this universal mind can be a party to [involved with] all that is or can be done.

– *Adapted from an essay by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882)*

Just as your permanent nature is a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality, your mind is a unit of its cosmic or universal mind. In the early stages of emanation of a universe an omnipresent mental field is produced. When soul-units of the pure essence of ultimate Reality are individualized, they attract a sheath or covering of fine material substance that enables them to discern what is objectively observed and a sheath or covering of universal mind that enables them to relate to the realm of Nature, store and be aware of memories, reflect, reason, and imagine.

Habitual and intentional thoughts, imaginings, desires, hopes, feelings and thoughts of personal needs, expectations, and emotional states can influence cosmic mind to create, produce, or attract corresponding results. Thoughts that are mixed, weak, or not precisely and firmly intentional don't produce obvious results. The habitual or disordered thoughts and moods of most people result in their disordered lives and circumstances. We don't have to have psychic (soul) powers to understand the relationships between emotional and mental states and personal experiences and circumstances.

Experiment to observe and experience effects of mental states. Notice positive effects of rational, optimistic, decisive

thinking in contrast to uncontrolled, pessimistic, and confused thinking. Avoid negative thinking and sad or morbid moods. Mentally “see” and *feel* yourself as a happy, intelligent, freely functional, spiritually conscious, very successful person, and constantly think and live like that.

Notice the difference between your self-awareness as a calm observer and what is observed, between you and your thoughts, moods, external conditions, and relationships. Apart from all of your thoughts, moods, external conditions, and relationships you are permanently unchanging as fully Self-aware, joyous, pure conscious existence. When your real essence is consciously experienced, there is nothing more to experience or know. You can then live without being confined by time or circumstances.

During the early stages of meditation, remove attention and awareness from external conditions, moods, thoughts, and your ordinary sense of self-identity. You will then be able to easily abide in serene, superconscious silence. After meditation, your thoughts will be better organized and awareness of your pure essence will enable you to avoid being unduly influenced by emotions, memories, habits, or subconscious inclinations.

Avoid restless, purposeless activity; worry; anxiety; excessive talking; and desire for frequent sensory stimulation. Write a list of meaningful short-term and long-term goals to achieve and purposes to accomplish. Be optimistically higher purpose-directed rather than unconsciously drift through the days, weeks, months, and years of your current incarnation.

Superconsciously affirm:

I intentionally think calmly, wisely, and rationally with clearly defined constructive purposes. I am alertly receptive to the full support of the responsiveness of cosmic mind of which my mind is a unit.

Cultivate Emotional Stability and Maturity

We have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past ... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the

one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our attitudes.

– William James (1842 – 1910)

Emotions are natural, instinctive states of mind and awareness influenced by a person's circumstances, moods, or relationships with others. In 1890, William James, a psychologist, described four basic emotions as fear, grief, love, and anger.

Others may be: addictive inclinations, aggressiveness, awe, bipolar disorders (mood shifts from excessive elation to deep depression), boredom, contentment, compassion, confidence, competitiveness, compulsions, depression, disappointment, disgust, disinterest, dislike, despair, egotism, elation, enthusiasm, envy, friendliness, happiness, hopefulness, impulsiveness, inspiration, irritability, insecurity, jealousy, joy, loneliness, narcissism, optimism, passion, pessimism, resentment, restlessness, sadness, satisfaction, selfishness, surprise, thankfulness, thoughts or feelings of self-worth or of unworthiness, and uncertainty. *Narcissism* is a term used to indicate excessive pride or preoccupation with one's appearance, importance, abilities, or accomplishments. It is not the same as self-esteem or recognition of one's spiritual essence and the freedom to experience and express excellence in all aspects of one's life.

Mental-emotional states may have mild, medium, or strong influences that are either helpful, harmful, or troublesome.

Some mental-emotional states may be influenced by brain chemicals or neurotransmitters believed to help regulate mood and social behavior, appetite and digestion, sleep, memory, and sexual desire and function. Although such conditions may be improved or managed by medicines, it should not be believed that they are incurable.

Most unwanted or troublesome mental-emotional conditions can be controlled or changed by choosing to do it. Competent professional advice or help may be needed to control or change some debilitating mental-emotional conditions.

Optimism, enthusiasm, friendliness, hopefulness, peace of mind, confidence, faith, and thankfulness can strengthen the

body's immune system, contribute to overall well-being, and improve intellectual, mental, and functional abilities.

Anger, frustration, worry, pessimism, resentment, feelings of unworthiness, and psychological conflicts can weaken the body's immune system, contribute to physical problems, and interfere with intellectual, mental, and functional abilities.

Some mental-emotional conditions may result from pleasant or unpleasant experiences. Having a history of pleasant events can contribute to self-confidence and emotional stability. Having been mistreated, rejected, or impoverished can impress painful memories in conscious and deep unconscious levels of the mind and produce psychological conflicts.

Harmful states can be renounced or be replaced with helpful states. Troublesome states can be regulated by making right choices and performing constructive actions. Because you are superior to your mind and emotions, you can think, feel, and do what elicits positive thoughts and feelings.

Insufficient knowledge about higher realities, one's spiritual nature, human nature, and how to live effectively is a major obstacle to being able to think rationally and live effectively.

Many people on a spiritual path need to acquire more information about the facts, be more emotionally mature, and be more responsible for how they think, feel, and act. If they are not willing, or able, to learn how to live effectively and do it they will be inclined to continue to experience limitations and problems. Asking a competent doctor, skillful mentor, or wise spiritual teacher for advice, then refusing to use it is a common cause of failure to experience healing, lifestyle improvement, or spiritual growth.

I recently talked with a man who forcefully said that "all of the evil things" he saw and heard made him hurt and angry, then asked for a technique or exercise to help him avoid his mental and emotional pain. When I explained that one way to do it was to constructively change the way he saw the world and his feelings about what he saw and imagined, he resisted. He wanted a simple, magical solution that didn't require him to be responsible for his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

In several spiritual enlightenment teaching traditions it is taught that three kinds of grace (beneficial influence) can help us be more fully conscious and functional. 1) Support freely provided by life-enhancing influences pervading the universe. 2) Wise advice provided by others. 3) Constructive effects of our own skillful actions. When I was a boy, older family members and neighbors in our farming community often said, “The good Lord helps those who help themselves.”

To allow steady growth to emotional and spiritual maturity to more easily occur, it is helpful to nurture emotional stability and be decisively responsible for our choices, actions, reactions to situations or events that occur, and the results that we produce or attract by what we do.

Alert experimentation can enable almost anyone to adjust mental attitudes and emotions rather than be a helpless effect of mental and emotional states. Mental attitudes and moods can constructively or harmfully influence others.

As spiritual beings, when we are sufficiently aware and self-determined, we can choose our emotions and mental states. Our intellect enables us to discriminate. Our mind receives and records impressions of perceptions and enables thinking. Our personality-oriented sense of self-identity is a “mask” through which we may view external conditions and relate to them.

If we are reasonably physically and psychologically healthy, we don’t have to let mental confusion and/or emotional unrest or conflicts interfere with our thinking, behaviors, intentional actions, relationships, or circumstances.

A basic spiritual practice is to be inwardly calm at all times and in all situations. To do this, be Self-aware and observant without allowing uncontrolled emotions or mental states to disturb your inner peace or dull your awareness.

Superconsciously affirm:

Constantly established in awareness and knowledge of my immortal, spiritual essence I am steadily and gracefully growing to complete emotional maturity.

Adhere to Holistic Lifestyle Routines

holistic Emphasis on interrelationships of all parts of a whole. Total well-being can be nurtured by living in harmony with physical, mental, emotional, social, and environmental conditions and the rhythms and processes of Nature.

Along with mental and emotional well-being do what is best for your physical well-being by adhering to lifestyle routines that strengthen your immune system and vitalize your body.

Balance periods of activity with sufficient rest. Sleep enough to allow your body to be rejuvenated, your brain cleansed of toxic matter, and daily perceptions and thoughts processed and integrated with your memories.

Eat a variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, and other foods that will provide an adequate amount of protein, fat, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients that are needed. Avoid “popular” food plans that are said to be extraordinarily beneficial and soon are replaced with other “new” or “unique” food plans. The vitamins and minerals your body needs are best provided by foods rather than by pills or other forms of supplementation.

In the wellness system of *ayurveda* (life-knowledge) it is said that tastes of foods are also influential. To balance and to help maintain a balance of the body-mind constitution, five “tastes” are recommended for most meals: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, pungent, and astringent (the last two are sensations rather than actual tastes). Some foods are said to have a sweet post-digestive effect rather than taste sweet when eaten. The “tastes” and effects of mental-emotional states, when they are experienced, and later, are also influential.

You may have read or been told that ordinary salt (sodium chloride) “brings out” the flavors of foods (tomatoes and other vegetables, apples, melons and other fruits). What really occurs is that salt dulls or partially blocks bitterness. Sweet and other tastes can then be more easily experienced.

Aggressiveness, hostility, and anger have sour, bitter, or pungent effects, arouse strong emotions, stress the nervous system, cause mental confusion, raise blood pressure, cause confusion,

and disturb normal physical functions. People who are frequently angry or easily become angry are said to be “hot headed” or to have a “short fuse” (be impatient and quickly react) when they are frustrated, disappointed, or challenged by something that is said or done.

During occasions when your thoughts are disturbed or your emotions are aroused, try to discern what they “taste” like.

Friendly, kind, thoughtful, appropriate words and behaviors are “sweet.” They cool the mind, emotions, and body.

A soft answer turns away wrath
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

– *Proverbs 15:1*

Obstacles to having Self-knowledge are doubt, negligence, confusion, instability, addictions and attachments, misperceptions, and distraction of attention. They can be overcome by profoundly meditating. The mind is purified by cultivating thoughts and feelings of friendship for others, compassion for those who are suffering, happiness for the well-being that others have, and mental and emotional calmness regardless of what is observed.

– *Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras 1:30–33*

Deep, superconscious meditation calms the mind and emotions, purifies awareness, and unveils our Self-knowledge. Retain the tranquil peacefulness of meditation after the session rather than fall back into negative or habitual modes of thinking and feeling. Attentive monitoring and control of mental attitudes and emotions at all other times is also necessary.

Resentment and cynicism are “sour” and disappointment is “bitter.” Disappointment mixed with happiness or satisfaction is “bittersweet.” (Example, a child or dear friend is going to a distant place for an extended period of time to accomplish purposes or realize their hopes or dreams. You think that you will miss them while also being happy for their good fortune.)

Sadness or depression are said to be dark “blue.” Thus, one may be in a “blue mood” or “sing the blues” when talking about real or imagined troubles or misfortune. Some people refer to a dark blue color of paint used by artists who were emotionally

depressed—such as the Dutch impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh (1853 – 1890)—as “the blue of madness.”

Just as a person who doesn't adhere to holistic lifestyle routines doesn't really want to be healthy and freely functional, so a person who neglects daily practice of superconscious meditation isn't sincerely committed to a spiritual path. They unwisely let their moods, whims, impulsiveness, and habits harmfully influence their thoughts and behaviors.

Superconsciously affirm:

I wisely, regularly, and enjoyably adhere to holistic lifestyle routines that strengthen my immune system, vitalize my body, improve my intellectual and mental abilities, clarify my awareness, and enhance my total well-being and personal circumstances.

Note: Basic principles of ayurveda are described in the glossary (pages 164 – 165) of *Paramahansa Yogananda As I Knew Him*. A comprehensive explanation is in my book *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda*. Both are published by CSA Press.

Constructive Actions Produce Ideal Results

Decide what is necessary and important to do and skillfully do it. Decide when to perform duties and how much time will be needed for each of them. Should they be done daily, weekly, monthly, or annually? Decide how much time and resources you will devote to self-care, maintenance of the place where you live, your work, family and social interactions, study to acquire useful information, meditation, or volunteer service.

Decide how much of your income (or available money) to use for necessary things or purposes, save and wisely invest, and give to worthy causes.

Know what is best for you to do, and why. Your life will then be higher purpose-directed and you will be constantly inspired, happy, enthusiastic, and energetic.

Superconsciously affirm:

I plan realistically, make wise choices, and perform all duties skillfully and effectively to experience and express excellence in all aspects of my life.

Use Spiritual Practices Effectively

Spiritual practices that calm the mind and clarify awareness will allow your true nature to be experienced and known as a unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality.

Being informed about your true nature is helpful; believing it to be what it is will inspire you to want to experience it; right endeavor can enable you to be fully spiritually enlightened.

When meditating, aim to experience clarity of awareness to the extent that your attention is completely removed from all mental and emotional states, allowing you to experience pure-conscious-existence or being. That transcendent oneness will further purify all levels of your mind, improve the capacities of your brain and nervous system to accommodate refined states of awareness, and enable you to be constantly Self-knowing at all times when you are appropriately engaged in your everyday duties. When your mind and awareness are completely pure, you will be liberated (free from all conditions that may have formerly confined your awareness and limited your ability to know your true nature and ultimate Reality).

Superconsciously affirm:

I effectively use spiritual practices to calm my mind, clarify my awareness, and be Self-realized.

Recommended Reading:

Examine the philosophical concepts and English and Sanskrit words in the glossary of *Paramahansa Yogananda As I Knew Him* until they are fully understood.

Guidelines to Inspired Living

In a notebook, write what you discover and what you will do (or are doing) to improve or constructively change your thinking, moods, behaviors, and personal circumstances.

Speak the Affirmations With Conviction

September 30 – October 6

Examine Your Mental Attitudes

Are they always constructive? Are you always cheerful, optimistic, and Self-confident?

Choose and control your mental attitudes.

I am always cheerful, optimistic, and Self-confident.

October 7 – 13

Examine Your Moods

Are you always calm, peaceful, and happy?

Choose to be like that. Avoid dark moods and negative thoughts and feelings.

I am always calm, peaceful, and happy.

October 14 – 20

Examine Your Physical Condition

Are you always vitally alive and freely functional? What can, and will, you do to be as healthy as possible?

I consistently adhere to life-enhancing routines.

October 21 – 27

Examine Your Habitual Behaviors

Are your behaviors always appropriate, proper, and constructive?

I always behave constructively and appropriately.

October 28 – November 3

Examine Your Daily Routines

Are you always well-organized and efficient.
Wisely schedule your activities and duties.
Live in harmony with the rhythms of Nature.

I am well-organized and creatively expressive.

November 4 – 10

Examine Your Personal Relationships

Are you on friendly terms with everyone?
Are you thankful for their good fortune and
compassionate towards others who suffer?
Love and respect everyone equally.

*My personal relationships are harmonious
and satisfying.*

November 11 – 17

Examine Your Environment

Is it clean, well-ordered, harmonious, and
fully supportive of you and your purposes?
Wisely use and manage material resources.

My environment is always in divine order.

November 18 – 24

Examine Your Spiritual Ideas and Practices

Are your spiritual ideas accurate and are your
spiritual practices ideal for you, and effective?

I think rationally and meditate skillfully.

November 25 – December 1

Open Your Mind and Essence to the Infinite

Nurture conscious awareness of your true nature
and higher realities.

I am fully aware of my relationship with the Infinite.

Answers to Questions About the Spiritual Path

During meditation, I usually experience thirty or forty minutes of peaceful silence, but no great insights or exceptionally clear states of consciousness. How can I have better and more satisfying results?

Keep sitting on a regular schedule and be very alert and attentive. Start by acknowledging ultimate Reality as you know it to be or imagine it as omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient, and your true nature as a unit of its pure essence. Maintain that understanding as you meditate, remembering the usefulness of having mental and emotional calmness and clarity of awareness. Keep your attention and awareness in the forehead and higher brain, or at least from the dorsal chakra upward. That will help to keep your awareness removed from thoughts, moods, memories, and subconscious influences. When you are calmly focused, sit and wait, allowing your innate impulses to be spiritually awake to direct the meditation experience.

At all other times, endeavor to be Self-aware and alert. Have friendly thoughts and feelings about others and all forms of life. Be thankful for the good fortune that you and others have. Be mentally calm and emotionally stable regardless of what you experience, see, or hear. In these ways, live easily in the world without being disturbed by transitory events.

Acquire more knowledge of higher realities, how to live effectively, and philosophical concepts. You will be able to live more skillfully and experience progressive spiritual awakening. Conscious, effective living is just as necessary as regular, superconscious meditation practice.

When meditating, is it necessary to see the spiritual eye as a blue field with a gold halo and a white, five pointed star in the center? Are meditative perceptions or sensations of bliss, peace, or joyousness evidence of God's presence or reality?

I have known several people who said they could see it like that whose words and behaviors don't indicate a obvious degree

of spiritual awareness. Some meditators see bright white light, others see blue, gold, a mixture of colors, or nothing that seems to be of interest or value to them. Some meditators (and others who have had a near-death incident) have reported seeing a tunnel of light through which they seemed to quickly move and become aware of a luminous, peaceful realm which seems so safe and comfortable that they would like to stay there. Their instinctive urge to resume a former point of view brings their awareness back to their usual state of awareness.

Of more value than unusual perceptions, regardless of how pleasant they may seem to be, is the ability to rise above all conditions that confine and blur our awareness and be fully conscious of our pure, changeless essence.

Some spiritual teachers or their representatives say that people who use their “unique” meditation methods can know God. Is that true?

The purpose of spiritual practice is to experience and know our pure essence as a unit of ultimate Reality. What may seem to be an awareness of unification with ultimate Reality is an awakening to the realization of what we are. Thinking that we are separate from ultimate Reality is a major intellectual error to be corrected. What is needed is right understanding and actual realization (experience that provides knowledge). No one can guarantee that God can be known by practicing a specific meditation method. Having pleasant, peaceful perceptions is not God-perception or actual realization.

Do we need to try to awaken the kundalini (dormant) life force within us which is said to be mostly dormant in people who are not interested in spirituality or who are not yet receptive to its potential influence to be transformative?

Dormant life force is naturally aroused by aspiration to be spiritually conscious, cultivation of physical and psychological well being, our good will toward others, prayer and meditation, and improved mental and spiritual attunement with spiritually conscious people.

There is no need to use forceful or extreme methods such as excessive pranayama practice, fervent devotional chanting, a special diet, or fasting. Cultivate the virtues, be compassionate, cheerful, and optimistic. Read inspirational, informative literature. Contemplate (think about and aspire to be aware of) your true nature as an immortal unit of the pure essence of ultimate Reality. *Expect* to be Self-realized rather than only hope to be Self-realized. At the innermost level of being you are already as pure, serene, and Self-knowing as you will ever be. Whether awakening occurs quickly or over a period of time, as it usually does, it is destined to happen. Learn to do what will allow your true nature to be most easily revealed.

A few decades ago a few yoga gurus conducted retreats in America and some other countries at which participants were told to expect a transmission of spiritual energy (shakti). Most of the people who experienced some indications of what they were told to expect, eventually returned to their former states of consciousness and routine lifestyles and didn't continue to be committed to effective spiritual practices. Those gurus either eventually died or withdrew into seclusion.

Progress [in spiritual growth] is in accord with the intensiveness [concentrated right endeavor] of practice, whether mild, medium, or intensively focused.
— *Patanjal's Yoga-Sutras 1:22*

I am still somewhat confused about what God is, how I should think about or imagine God, and how to dismiss false or flawed ideas and opinions that I have either heard from others or have self-generated. How can I solve these problems?

The only problem to solve is the misunderstanding of what ultimate Reality is. When that is done, all other questions no longer exist.

When a formless ultimate Reality cannot be thought about or imagined, people are inclined to express ideas or opinions as descriptions of God. Some people think of God as an omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient cosmic being with human-like characteristics and inclinations who is good, kind, loving, and willing

to be helpful, or may sometimes punish or test people to encourage their obedience or help them grow to emotional and spiritual maturity. Because they may have feelings of devotion, awe, or bliss (joyousness and awareness of freedom) when they imagine or become somewhat aware of a larger Reality, they may say God is love, peace, or bliss instead of understanding that such feelings or states of awareness are their opinions about their perceptions. People in many cultures are intuitively aware of a formless ultimate Reality. Think of it as having an expressive aspect with attributes that enable universes to be produced. Think of your Self as a unit of the pure aspect of ultimate Reality with an intellect, mind, and modified sense of self-identity that enables you to relate to objective circumstances. Your pure Self is as pure as the absolute aspect of ultimate Reality of which you are a unit. To experience your true nature is to be Self-realized.

Realization resulting from knowledge and yoga practice is the same. The devotee who understands this perceives the truth.

– *Bhagavad Gita 5:5*



Morning Hatha Yoga class led by Lydia Garcia during the June 4th, 2018 retreat.

CONSCIOUS FOOD PREPARATION

Fresh Tomato Salad

Serves 4 (increase or decrease ingredients as preferred).

- 4 ripe but firm plum tomatoes sliced into 4 to 6 wedges
- 1 large handful of lightly chopped organic baby arugula, spinach, or fresh lettuce
- 1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice, or apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (*Note*: some imported olive oil is diluted with other oils. California-sourced olive oil is usually pure)

Optional:

- 2 green onions (chopped) and 2 garlic cloves (smashed)
- 1 small handful chopped parsley
- 4 boiled sliced eggs and/or a handful of walnuts

Mix oil with lemon or lime juice or apple cider vinegar. One teaspoon of mayonnaise or a 1/2 teaspoon of mustard (or both) will make the dressing a little thicker and stable.

Assemble ingredients, add dressing, and lightly toss. Add a little salt and black pepper if wanted.

Ingredients should be prepared just before serving to preserve vitamins and other nutrients and avoid wilting or loss of water.



Some Information About Tomatoes and Garlic

The word *tomato* is from Spanish *tomate*, from Nahauti (Aztec language) *tomati*. Said to be a fruit/berry and used as a vegetable, it originated in South America from where it was taken to Spain and Europe, then to Mexico and North America.

Before being widely eaten in Europe and America, tomatoes were mistakenly rumored to be poisonous. Composed of 95% water and 4% carbohydrates, a ripe tomato of medium size has a few calories and about 17% of a person's daily requirement of vitamin C.

Tomatoes contains *lycopene*, a chemical or *carotenoid* that produces red color and is also in watermelons, pink grapefruit, apricots, and pink guavas. The health benefits that have been claimed for it have not yet been fully verified.

Tomatoes are eaten raw, juiced, and used in soups, stews, sauces for pizza toppings, and a variety of pasta recipes.

In a region in Spain, the annual *Tomotini festival* on August 30, 2007, attracted 40,000 people who celebrated by harmlessly throwing 100,000 kg (254,000 pounds) of tomatoes at each other.

Garlic (*allium satium*), related to onions, originated in central Asia and northeastern Iran. It was widely used in ancient Egypt, China, and other parts of the world, and is pollinated by bees, butterflies, and other insects.

Among the several varieties of garlic, some, like onions, are more pungent than others. The sharp, pungent taste of garlic is more pronounced after it has been cut or smashed and specific chemical compounds are released and combined. The pungent taste can be greatly reduced by roasting garlic in an oven for 30 minutes or cooking it with soups or stews. When baked whole with the top trimmed off, it is softened and can be squeezed out and put on bread or crackers or used in salad dressings or for other purposes. Heating garlic is said to reduce the possible medicinal benefits.

Some religious traditions restrict the use of garlic: its strong flavor is thought to stimulate sensual inclinations. Others say it vitalizes the body and helps to prevent respiratory infections.



*Discovering the Sacred
In Everyday Life*

Consider the Effects of Ordinary Conversation

Ellen Grace O'Brien

Like a lovely flower bright and fragrant are
fine and truthful words sincerley spoken.
– *attributed to Siddhartha Gautama (a Buddha)*

When I was very young, when hearing unkind comments or slurs, I, and some of my friends, would sing, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” It was a way to try to soften or avoid the pain of hurtful words.

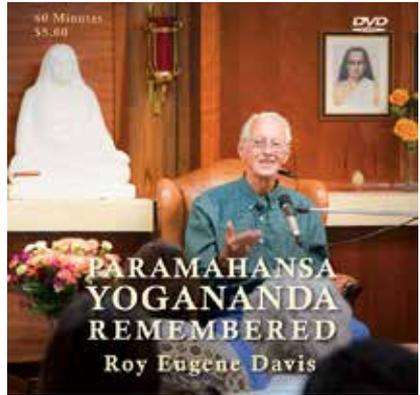
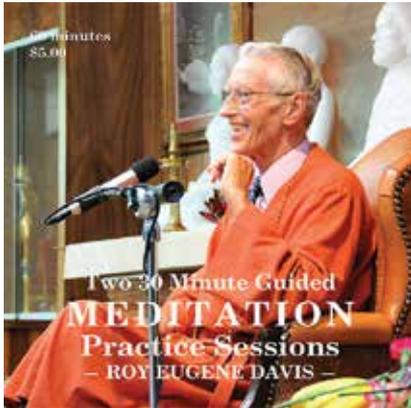
Words may harm, heal, or reveal our beliefs, intentions, and states of consciousness. Do we think and speak the truth? Do we think and speak from a consciousness of lack and limitation, or from a higher level of awareness? Being conscious of words we think and speak can be an effective way to adjust our mental attitude, moods, and consciousness, changing our lives, and contributing to the well-being of others.

We can learn to be aware of the meaning of words and use them as affirmations of what we believe. When we are aware of the relationships between them and our personal experiences, we can choose to live more constructively and enjoyably.

Peace of mind, gentleness, silence, self-restraint
and mental purity are disciplines of the mind.
– *the Bhagavad Gita 17:16*

Ellen Grace O'Brien is senior minister and director of
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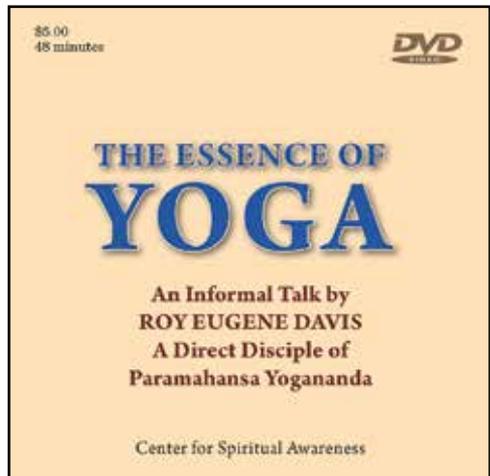
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**Recorded During a
Summer Meditation
Retreat at CSA
Headquarters**



News and Highlights

Large Granite Stone Lions Have a New Home at CSA Headquarters

Sometimes miscalled “Foo Dogs” in the West, in Asia a pair of majestic lion statues have traditionally been installed in front of temples, homes, and government buildings as symbolic guardians. They are now often placed in front of restaurants, stores, and homes. They may be viewed as representing *yin* (female) and *yang* (male) energy influences in Nature. The female is said to protect the people and environment in the building; the male is said to protect or preserve material things.

The idea of guardian lions came from India to China with Buddhist teachers several centuries ago and spread to other Asian countries. The male lion’s mouth, when opened wide, is said to represent exhalation of air, a roar, or in the Indian version, chanting of Om, the cosmic vibration that produces and maintains Nature.

Lions may be formed of carved granite stone, as seen here, or another kind of durable stone. A model may be carved and a casting made with bronze or another metal, such as iron.

These lions sat by the parking lot of an Asian restaurant for almost twenty years because another pair that had been placed at the entrance was sufficient. When the price was reasonable, we purchased them. Matthew Smith, a CSA member in Asheville, North Carolina, who constructs stone walls for clients, assisted with transferring them to CSA in early July. A local company provided a large fork lift with an operator to lift them on and off a truck. Each one weighs an estimated 4000 pounds (1818 kilograms), is 4 feet (121 centimeters) high at the front, and 5 feet (152 centimeters) long. They were washed to remove accumulated grime and dust and a concrete border was poured around the graveled site.



Above: Stone lions being unloaded from a trailer. July 7, 2018
Below: Final placement on the graveled site.



2019 Retreats

Attendance is limited to 20 participants who will have private sleeping rooms and prepare vegetarian meals in their guest house. Donate at the end of the week.

Schedule

- Early morning meditation Monday to Friday at 7 a.m. for approximately one hour followed by a short talk by Roy Eugene Davis. Local members are invited to the morning meditations. An afternoon meditation will also be scheduled.
- Thursday morning: Kriya Yoga initiation. Initiates may also attend for review and to reaffirm their commitment to their spiritual practices.
- Optional Hatha Yoga and/or qiGong sessions when teachers are here.
- Occasional educational videos.

Reservations and Guidelines

- Be here for one week or two consecutive weeks.
- Let us know when you will arrive Saturday or Sunday. Arrive before dark. Bedding, towels, and cookware are provided in the guest houses.
- Depart the following Saturday morning if attending only the first week. Rooms will be cleaned at 9 a.m.
- No alcohol, tobacco, “recreational” drugs, or pets.
- Don’t wear shorts, tank tops, or T-shirts with slogans. Help maintain the Retreat Center as a quiet place that supports everyone’s spiritual aspirations.
- Don’t bring friends or family members who aren’t interested in participating.
- Avoid unnecessary social interactions. Use free time to read, meditate, exercise moderately, rest, and reflect on your relationship with the Infinite.

**A travel map is on our web site: www.csa-davis.org
Click on Retreats page**

2018 Retreat Schedules & Application Information

Guest house location and room number will be on the bulletin board in the lower parking lot.

October to December 2018 Weekends:

October 20, 21. Three meals on Saturday. Sunday breakfast.
Arrive Friday

Saturday: 7 a.m. meditation. 10 a.m. class. 12:30 p.m. class.
6 p.m. meditation & video. Sunday: 10 a.m. meditation.

November 17, 18. Program like October (above).

December 1:

Saturday 10 a.m. Three hour meditation. Lunch 1:15 p.m.

2019 Private Retreats described on the previous page:

April 1 – 6 and 8 – 12 April 29 – May 3 and 6 – 10

June 3 – 7 and June 10 – 14 July 1 – 5 and 8 – 12

August 5 – 9 and 12 – 16 September 2 – 6 and 9 – 13

Retreat dates _____

Arrival date _____ Departure _____

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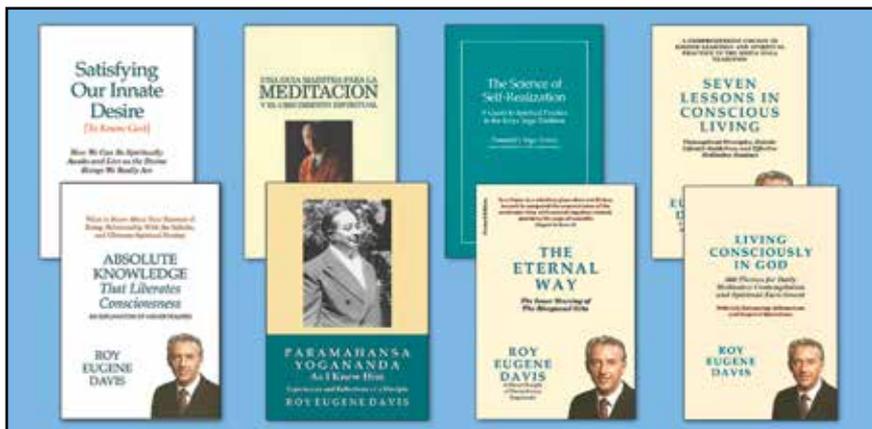
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