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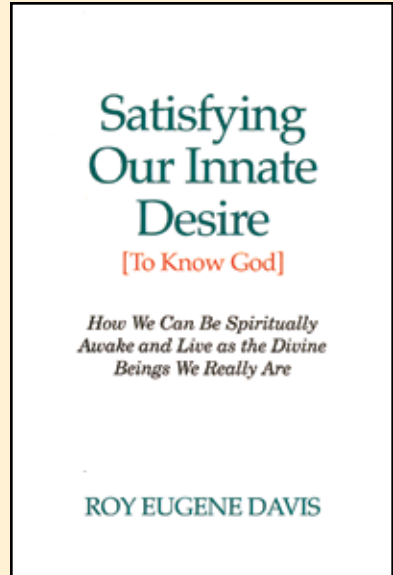
How to Know When
“Spiritual” Perceptions
and Experiences
Are Authentic - 5

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Glossary

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Roy Eugene Davia class during a meditation retreat
at CSA Headquarters. *Summer 2012*

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Without Boundaries or Limits and on Our
Pure, Immortal Essence of Being**



ROY EUGENE DAVIS

How to Know When “Spiritual” Perceptions and Experiences Are Authentic

spiritual Of or relating to ultimate Reality (God), souls, and/or the real, enduring essence of things.

perceptions Apprehension acquired through the senses or by intellectual discernment, reasoning, or intuition.

experiences 1. Perceptions of things, thoughts, emotions, or events.
2. Knowledge or skills acquired by learning or participation.

authentic Real, actual, conforming with facts, thus worthy of trust or belief.

We may *presume* that at least *some* of our spiritual perceptions and experiences are authentic when we are constantly happy and optimistic, living is purposeful and enjoyable, and knowing that we will eventually depart from this world does not disturb our mind or emotions.

In this article I will encourage you to learn to *know* what is authentic rather than to presume, guess, hope, or be inclined to fantasize. Truth seekers should aspire to be fully spiritually enlightened rather than partially conscious with their mind blurred and modified by erroneous ideas.

The Importance of Being Accurately Informed About the Facts of Life

Whether you are just starting to explore higher Realities or have been doing it for several years, examine the information, beliefs, and ideas that you now have. Decide what is true and what should be discarded because it is not true. Your mind will not be blurred with false information and you will be more conscious and freely functional. Being informed can be useful. Having accurate knowledge that is intellectually discerned and intuitively known to be authentic is more useful. When you are more receptive to the emergence of your innate Self- and God-knowledge, it will arise from within you and be experienced as expanding throughout your being, mind, and body.

Many people who have gradually acquired a large amount of metaphysical information can skillfully talk about it and impress their friends. A close examination of their circumstances may reveal that very little of what they learned has improved their lives, enabled them to have permanent peace of mind, or illumined their consciousness.

Some facts to know:

- There is a nameless, formless ultimate Reality (commonly referred to as God) which has a pure essence without attributes and an expressive nature with attributes and qualities that can emanate and nurture universes.
- Souls are units of the pure aspect of ultimate Reality. It is only at the surface of their awareness that blurring, faulty perceptions, and confusion might occur. The consciousness of all souls will eventually be restored to its original wholeness. Ultimate (the farthest possible extent of) realization occurs gradually or fast according to our capacity to be conscious, the quality of our aspiration (whether mild or fervent) to be spiritually enlightened, and the intensiveness (concentrated right endeavor) of our spiritual practice.
- Spiritual awakening and progressive spiritual growth are the result of Self-revelation: the unveiling and emergence of our innate capacities and flawless knowledge of our true nature and of ultimate Reality and its expressive processes.

Spiritual growth is likely to be more satisfying and faster when we live *holistically* by harmoniously integrating our spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, social, and environmental circumstances. It can be done by being privately dedicated to our chosen course of wholesome, productive actions without attracting the attention of people whose ideas and aims differ from ours or appearing to be odd or eccentric. If our habitual appearance, behaviors, style of dressing, and ways of speaking proclaim to others that we have a “new age” lifestyle or think we are on a spiritual path, our understanding of spirituality is superficial and our actions are misguided.

The Importance of Choosing the Right Spiritual Path and Being Totally Committed to It

A spiritual path that is “right” for us is compatible with our psychological temperament, the practices are effective and satisfying, and the philosophical concepts can be verified by careful examination and personal experience. Effective means of nurturing progressive spiritual growth are of little or no value to us if our commitment to use them is not resolute.

If you have discovered your spiritual path, be true to it. If it has not yet been found, do your best to think rationally, live right, and pray for guidance and revelation. Knowledge that you need to have will be provided for you in ordinary ways or emerge from within you. Don’t go from one teacher to another, attend “fast enlightenment” seminars, read hundreds of books in which various opinions are promoted, listen for several hours to recorded talks about impractical metaphysical ideas, or talk a lot about higher realities and spiritual practices with people whose understanding of such matters is limited or flawed.

If you sincerely want to be spiritually enlightened and are willing to examine trustworthy philosophical systems and test reliable spiritual practices, and at the innermost level of your being firmly believe that you will be fully enlightened in your current incarnation—you can be completely Self-realized.

Brief realizations of our true nature and of ultimate Reality do not immediately purify the mind or enlarge our capacities to have exceptional powers of perception and functional abilities. They may provide useful insights and inspire us to be more highly motivated on our spiritual path.

Right living that enables us to be physically healthy, psychologically balanced, and constructively expressive provides a firm foundation for spiritual growth. Prayer, affirmation, meditation, self-examination, and other helpful practices, routines, or techniques that we use can improve our receptivity to having spontaneous (effortless) Self-revelations that illumine our mind and neutralize troublesome subconscious influences.

How to Know When Spiritual Perceptions and Experiences Are of Enduring Value

All meditative perceptions and experiences other than pure consciousness are impermanent. While they might occasionally be helpful if they inspire us to stay alert and attentive, they cannot illumine our mind or liberate our consciousness.

Common meditative perceptions and experiences:

- *Visual perceptions.* When attention is turned inward and external conditions no longer influence the mind or brain, the mind and brain may produce “pictures” of geometric designs, space, clouds, nature scenes, things, people, and places to compensate for the lack of sensory input. Similar visual perceptions may be had as we begin to go to sleep and are still partially conscious. Meditative perceptions of light that may attract our attention inward are produced by the region of the brain associated with vision and are not supernatural events or a sign of spiritual growth. Changing visual perceptions should be ignored because they will distract attention from the primary purpose of meditation practice, which is to be Self-knowing. If a clear light is seen—perhaps blue, gold, or brilliant white—looking at it for a while can focus attention and calm the mind.
- *Sounds.* As attention is turned inward, subtle sounds may be discerned. Some may be echoes of sounds in the environment that are usually not heard. By listening to the subtle sounds, it is possible to eventually hear a single, constant or unchanging sound that can be used as a mantra to focus attention. It can be imagined as representing the omnipresent Om vibration. Alertly listen to it. Blend or merge attention and awareness with it. Then be inclined to “go beyond” it to experience pure-existence-being. Trying hard to transcend subjective perceptions, thoughts, or feelings is self-defeating. Instead of trying to make something happen, surrender your mind-supported, personality-oriented sense of self-identity. Let go of a small sense of self to realize your true Self.

- *Feelings, sensations, and awareness.* Some meditators say they experience deep peace; energy and/or emotional arousal along with feelings of ecstasy; an awareness of a benevolent presence; joyousness with awareness of purity; expanding or being very large; or a vivid sense of communion with God, a Larger Reality, or the wholeness or oneness of “everything.” While such perceptions can be examined, experienced, and their causes understood, they should not be allowed to attract our interest to the extent that we become preoccupied with them or think they represent final stages of meditation. My guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, told me that I should go beyond them to be spiritually enlightened, and assured me that it was possible to do so.

Visual and sound perceptions, various feelings, sensations, and clear or modified states of awareness may occur at different times during a meditation session or may occur together. As concentration improves and subliminal influences that activate the mind and arouse emotions are quieted, they are not usually perceived or experienced. Until Self-realization is flawless, during meditation there may be occasions when subliminal influences that are not completely quieted may temporarily activate* thoughts and arouse emotions. Whatever then occurs should be ignored and attention restored to pure consciousness.

* The mistaken sense of Self disappears when the distinction between modified states of consciousness and one’s pure essence is discerned. Awareness is then inclined to flow serenely in the direction of absolute freedom. Interruptions [of concentration] may occur when the mind and awareness are disturbed by subliminal influences. They [subliminal influences] should be returned to a dormant state. – *Patanjali’s Yoga-Sutra 4:25 – 28*

If you are inclined to identify with meditative perceptions or sensations as a way to temporarily withdraw from stressful circumstances, or because of an emotional need to feel nurtured, be curious about what might be possible to realize by aspiring to be more Self- and God-aware.

Insights and changes of states of consciousness and mental attitudes that enable us to live more effectively, improve our overall well-being, and enhance our awareness and knowledge of our true nature indicate authentic spiritual growth.

Some other indications of authentic spiritual growth:

- *Powers of discriminative intelligence improve.* Blurring of the faculty of intelligence causes units (souls) of pure consciousness to “forget” their true nature, assume a mistaken sense of self-identity, and experience the results of their temporary deluded condition. Use discriminative intelligence to discern the difference between what you observe and you as the observer, especially between you and a small sense of self-identity. By using it to discern the truth of all that you examine, you will not have any delusions (false beliefs or ideas) or illusions (inaccurate perceptions).
- *Mental abilities improve.* Thinking is rational and constructive; memories are easily viewed; it is easy to concentrate; imagination is creatively used.
- *Our moral thoughts and behaviors* provide a firm foundation for holistic living and spiritual practice and can nurture harmonious relationships with others, all forms of life, and the environment.
- *Control of thoughts, emotions, and impulses, and appropriate responsiveness to events and various situations* is easier.
- *We are compassionate.* We endeavor to help others who are in need and daily pray for their well-being. We know that our spiritual enlightenment is not only for us—it benefits everyone and all life.
- *Our aspiration to be fully spiritually enlightened is pure and constant and we are self-motivated to faithfully adhere to our effective spiritual practices.* By right living and faithful right spiritual practice, we have the full support of the processes of nature, and grace, as we awaken from egocentric states of consciousness to superconsciousness, cosmic consciousness, Self- and God-realization, spiritual enlightenment, and complete liberation of consciousness.

Every few months, review the following aspects of your life and make constructive changes when it is necessary.

- *Lifestyle*. Is it holistic, well-ordered, satisfying, and ideal for your purposes?
- *Habitual mental attitudes*. Are you cheerful, optimistic, self-confident, thankful for the good fortune that you now have, and enthusiastic about near and future possibilities to experience and express excellence in all aspects of your life?
- *Habitual emotional states*. Are you as emotionally calm, stable, and mature as you want to be?
- *Spiritual studies*. Are you intent on having accurate information? Is your understanding of your true nature and of higher realities steadily improving?
- *Meditation practices and experiences*. Do you look forward to your meditation practice? Are you alert and attentive during meditation? Do you intend to be fully Self-realized in your current incarnation?
- *Work and/or other activities*. Do you work and perform other activities as skillfully as you can? Do you enjoy the work you do? Are most of your other activities necessary or of value to you, others, or the environment?
- *Relationships*. Are they wholesome and meaningful (of real value) to you and to others? Are they as harmonious and mutually satisfying as they can be?
- Write a list of very important or essential aims, purposes, and actions to which you will devote most of your attention. Focus on what is important or essential; ignore or reduce involvements with what is not important or essential.

You can definitely know what is worth knowing and be Self-realized. Go forward with confidence and faith.

Decisively Affirm

I am intent on having progressive, authentic spiritual growth that illumines my mind and fully liberates my consciousness.

Isn't it easier to experience authentic spiritual growth when we have a guru to guide us?

If a wise guru (spiritual teacher) is available, being guided can be helpful. If a guru is not sufficiently enlightened, it is better not to rely on that relationship. We can then trust the inner guru—our innate knowledge that will emerge. A truth seeker who has a relationship with a wise guru must be willing and able to learn and to intensively apply what is learned.

How can we more easily awaken through higher or advanced stages of spiritual growth?

The so-called higher stages of spiritual growth are the more pure states of superconsciousness. At the core of our essence of being we are always superconscious. When we are too involved with objective (outer) and subjective (mental-emotional) conditions, our awareness is usually modified and blurred by what we observe and experience, thoughts, memories, and moods.

The direct way to be spiritually enlightened is to 1) discern the difference between our small sense of self-identity and our true, changeless essence which observes; 2) withdraw attention and awareness from objective and subjective conditions to experience pure being or existence. Discerning the truth and detaching attention and awareness from external conditions can be done when quietly meditating or whenever we are inclined to be fully conscious of our true nature. Revealing insights and realizations can suddenly emerge when we are not engaged in introspective contemplation. Ordinary (modified, fragmented) awareness may be unexpectedly clarified, enabling us to know what we could not know a few moments before.

We can allow our spiritual growth to be easier by replacing false beliefs and ideas (when we are aware of them) with true information, accurately perceiving what we experience, and staying focused on our spiritual path. Clinging to false ideas and

traditional beliefs or being inclined to generate fantasies prevents spiritual growth. We can improve meditation practice by observing what is occurring while aspiring to transcend all subjective conditions and fluctuations (wavelike movements) in the mind and awareness.

Regarding meditative perceptions and experiences: How can we know what is real and of value and what is produced by the mind and/or brain?

Mind and/or brain-produced hallucinations may occur when a person is extremely tired; stressed; or deprived of sleep, food, or sensory input. Neurological problems, an imbalance of some of the body's chemicals or hormones, alcohol poisoning, or use of drugs or substances that cause altered states of consciousness may also contribute to hallucinations.

Hallucinations that seem to have reality of their own when they are being experienced originate in the mind and brain of the person who experiences them. During meditation, when attention is internalized, mild visual hallucinations of "feeling" or "awareness" of a *presence* that may occur should be understood to be the result of the mind and brain compensating for lack of sensory input and perhaps mild emotional arousal that either activates or quiets certain regions of the brain. When observing such occurrences, it is not personally useful to consider them to be meaningful spiritual experiences. They are not symptoms of mental or emotional illness. Doing things to cause them or being fascinated by them if they occur, will keep the mind deluded and intelligence blurred.

Meditative perceptions and experiences that are of value to us improve our discriminative intelligence, illumine all levels of our mind, refine our nervous system, clarify our awareness, develop our brain's capacities to accommodate refined states of consciousness, enable us to have exceptional powers of perception, and empower our extraordinary functional abilities.

Until we know for certain that we are fully enlightened, we should examine our thoughts, behaviors, and consciousness to be certain that we are as conscious and free as we can be.

I have been reading and thinking about spiritual matters for a few months and am starting to meditate. What can I do to have the most beneficial results during the next few months?

Read only trustworthy metaphysical books. Avoid reading superficial philosophical ideas or writings by people who offer to help you to be quickly enlightened. Live a well-ordered life. Avoid situations that cause much stress or mental or emotional unrest. Maintain a cheerful, optimistic outlook. Meditate every day until your mind is calm and your awareness is clear, then aspire to be increasingly aware of your pure essence of being. Adhere to wholesome living and spiritual practice routines and let emotional and spiritual growth occur naturally through the many years that are before you. There are no secrets to learn from anyone. Just use practical, effective procedures that are easy to learn—and patiently persist.

Enlarge your capacity to experience higher (clear) states of consciousness. Just as, when you are thirsty you may want to drink a large quantity of water but will be restricted to what your stomach can contain, so you may want to quickly be Self-realized but will have to wait until you have the capacity to be Self-realized. By patient right endeavor, you will progressively awaken to spiritual maturity.

To adhere to a meaningful spiritual path we have to be comfortable being alone with our thoughts and practices without wanting or needing approval or encouragement from others. We can have normal wholesome, personal relationships and pleasurable activities that we consider to be appropriate. No one can know the extent of our commitment to our spiritual path, the beneficial changes that occur in our mind and consciousness, or the insightful realizations that emerge from within us from that level of our immortal being where we are one with the Infinite.

This is the noble truth of the way that leads to the ending of sorrow: right understanding; aspirations; speech; conduct; livelihood; endeavor; mindfulness [awareness]; and contemplation.

—Attributed to the Buddha (one who is enlightened)

I have recently read about “mindful” meditation. Is it like other forms of meditation, or very different?

Mindful indicates awareness of something while not being influenced by it. *Disinterested awareness* might be a more accurate way to describe that form of meditation practice because the aim is to be detached from mental states rather than involved with them. Being aware of environmental sounds, thoughts, memories, and/or emotions without being involved is a way to be peaceful. Just sitting, relaxed, poised, and alert, without striving to cause anything to occur, can eventually result in clarity of awareness and effortless insights into our essence or true nature.

The various forms of meditation (prayerful, affirmative, mantra, pranayama, listening to subtle internal sound, visualization, focused contemplation) can be helpful when they are compatible with our psychological characteristics and/or capacity to use them. Regardless of the form used, it is always helpful to be disinterested in objective and subjective conditions while staying alert and observant. When fluctuations (wavelike movements) in the mind and awareness stop, our consciousness can be clear and Self-knowing can be effortlessly experienced.

When we know how to meditate, it is not useful to be restlessly preoccupied with varieties of meditation practices or excessively talk about them with others. It is more important to skillfully use what we know to be helpful. Whether we are still physically young or have been incarnated for several decades, our major purpose should be to awaken to Self-knowing as soon as possible. The choices we make, the things we do, and how we live should be supportive of that major purpose.

By equally seeing the essence of ultimate Reality in all things,
and all things in it, its Self-effulgent nature is known.

– ancient Sanskrit text

Guidelines to Inspired Living

Speak the Affirmations With Conviction

March 31 – April 6

Reclaim Your Divine Nature

When you notice that you have forgotten to be Self- and God-aware, immediately acknowledge your true nature.

I am an immortal, spiritual being.

April 7 – 13

Acknowledge the Omnipresence of Ultimate Reality

Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, the wholeness of ultimate Reality is always fully present.

I live in the wholeness of ultimate Reality.

April 14 – 20

Expand Your Awareness

Don't allow yourself to be confined or limited by a small, mistaken sense of self-identity.

I am not limited by false ideas and am freely expressive as I become increasingly cosmic conscious.

April 21 – 27

Think Constructively and Act Decisively

Constructive thoughts can produce positive effects and attract life-enhancing events and circumstances.

I always think constructively and act decisively.

April 28 – May 4

Choose to Be Optimistic

Expect the best possible outcomes for all emerging situations, projects, and creative endeavors.

I am always fortunate and successful.

May 5 – 11

Always Be Cheerful and Courteous

Let your soul-joyousness express as cheerfulness and demonstrate your respect for others by kind, thoughtful, helpful behaviors.

*Always cheerfully spiritually conscious,
I honor the innate divine nature of everyone.*

May 12 – 18

Demonstrate Prosperity

To be prosperous is to thrive and flourish in all aspects of your life. Wisely manage your material resources while relying on the Source of all things to abundantly provide for you.

I am always prosperous because I am spiritually conscious, physically healthy, mentally alert, intellectually insightful, creatively expressive, and in a continuous flow of supportive events and circumstances.

May 19 – 25

Meditate Profoundly

Profound meditation is deep, focused, peaceful, joyous, insightful, and revealing.

Detaching my attention from all external and subjective conditions, I go to the depths of my being. There, in absolute silence, I am completely soul-satisfied.

May 26 – June 1

Bring Forth the Best Qualities in Others

Your spiritual awareness, positive mental attitude, wholesome behaviors, and constructive actions will effortlessly bring forth the best qualities in others.

The radiance of my essence of being beneficially influences everyone in my immediate environment and far beyond it.

Fresh Fruit Plate

Serve plain or with thick yogurt or cheese. Add a handful of walnuts if you or your guests are not allergic to nuts.

Examples

orange apple pineapple pear banana grapes peach
pitted cherries pitted dates



Fruit usually develops into three distinct layers: a thin outer protective skin, a thin inner protective layer around a central mass of seeds, and a thick, flavorful layer in between. The final stage of development is ripening, as the starch and acid levels decrease, sugars increase, and a characteristic aroma develops. Skin color changes; fruit becomes sweeter, softer, and tastier. Most ripening processes are caused by enzymes that change complex molecules into simpler molecules and generate new ones. Some fruits produce ethylene, a hydrocarbon gas, that triggers the ripening process. Bananas, for instance, will ripen faster if put in a bag or closed container with an almost ripe apple. Fruit is visually appealing, pleasant to eat, and provides a variety of beneficial nutrients. Wash them well before eating them. Avoid pesticide-treated fruits when possible. One benefit derived from choosing certified organic fruit (or vegetables) is that they were not treated with pesticides.

The Color of God's Name

I am dyed in the color of God's Name,
In a hue that can never fade.
There is no other color in the world
That can be compared with the color of God!
I am dyed in the color of God's Name,
A hue that can never fade.
All other colors are washed away
By the beautiful color of the Name.
The soul, once dyed in the color of the Lord's hue
Will never lose its luster.
I am dyed in the color of the Name,
The hue that never fades.
The Lord is the color
That has suffused me;
That glow will stay forever.
All the colors of the world
Will diminish and fade away.

– Kabir (1440 – 1518)

Kabir (from Arabic *El-Kabir*, “the Great,” 37th of 99 names of God in Islam) lived in Varanasi, India. A weaver, he sold cloth that he made, meditated privately, and wrote many prose poems to inspire others to nurture their spiritual growth.

From a teacher, Kabir learned to meditate in the Om vibration which he referred to as “God’s name.” Merging attention and awareness in Om is a way to be detached from external conditions and subjective (mental and emotional) states. Spontaneous awakenings through the remaining stages of spiritual growth to flawless Self-realization and liberation of consciousness can then occur.

The Om vibration emanates from the expressive field of ultimate Reality. That vibration with characteristics of space, time, and fine cosmic forces is the primordial (original, first) field of nature from which universes are produced.



Discovering the Sacred
in Everyday Life

**Accomplish Worthy Purposes
With Wisdom-Guided Will**

Ellen Grace O'Brian

Will is the ability to choose a course of action and do what is necessary to complete it. Some people are reluctant to use their will because they may not want to be responsible for the results of their choices and actions. Or they say they only want to follow divine will and avoid being self-centered or willful. There is a difference between using will for creative and wholesome purposes and using it to satisfy selfish motives.

Since we are all expressions of the Reality called God, we can ask to know whether or not our goals are useful or right for us. We can inquire: Are they worthy of us? Is working toward those goals and the fulfillment of them the wisest use of our time, energy, and resources? Will they bring joy to the heart and peace to the mind? We can also think about our goals, offer them to God, release attachment to them, and wait for an inner response. Goals that are in alignment with higher purposes can readily serve what is called divine will.

A sense of peace or well-being can be a good indication that we are moving in the right direction. If our mind is restless and we cannot find a sense of clarity, we may need to pray again or discern that something is not yet right about the situation. Often, intuitive knowing will arise some time later, perhaps when we are not expecting it. When it does, we can clearly know what our next step should be.

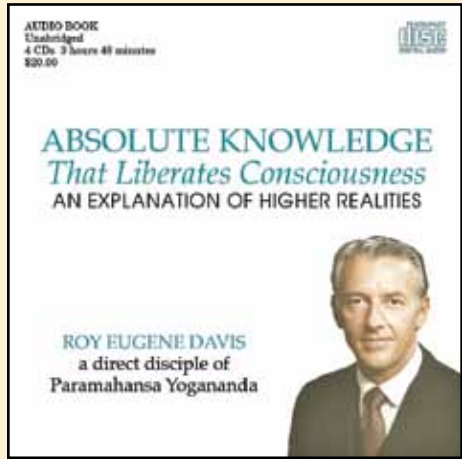
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Observations, Reflections & Discoveries

*Continuous Learning
and Skillful Living
Nurtures Emotional
and Spiritual Growth*



A placebo (Latin “I shall please”) is a neutral substance given as medicine to patients who are told that it is effective—and who may have positive results because they believe they will. *Nocebo* (not pleasing) effects may also be self-produced.

An article in the December 2012 issue of *Discover* magazine reported that a patient who had enrolled in a clinical trial for depression tried to overdose on his medication. After taking 29 pills, he began to feel faint, his blood pressure dropped very low, and doctors administered intravenous fluids to stabilize his condition. The pills he had swallowed were placebos. When he was informed of that fact, his symptoms soon vanished.

Troublesome psychosomatic symptoms that are blamed on medications are common. It has been reported that, in some clinical trials, people who are given placebos may have half as many side effects as those who take real drugs. Possible side effects of drugs dispensed in controlled studies are explained to participants, as well as possible benefits. Positive results from taking placebo medications are also commonly reported. Beliefs that people have regarding the possible effects of a medication might have determined the placebo effect.

In one study, some patients who were informed that they were being given a placebo, still had positive results, perhaps because of 1) being in a supportive environment; 2) being cared for by people who seemed to be interested in their well-being; or 3) taking a pill was a ritual that strengthened their faith in their body’s self-healing powers.

In other studies in various countries, colors of placebo pills resulted in different faith-responses according to expectations of individuals for whom they were prescribed.

Origins of names of our calendar months: **January**, from the Roman god *Janus*, portrayed as having two heads, thus able to see the past and the future. **February**, from the Latin word “to smoke” since it was the Roman month for purification. **March**, from *Mars*, the Roman god of war. **April**, from *Aphrodite*, the Greek goddess of love. **May**, from *Maia*, the goddess of growth. **June**, from *Juno*, goddess of women, marriages, and childbirth, and wife of Jupiter. **July**, for *Julius* Caesar, Roman emperor. **August**, for *Augustus* Caesar, Julius Caesar’s successor. **September**, from the Latin word for *seven*, since it was the seventh month of the Roman year. **October**, from the Latin word for *eight*, since it was the eighth month of the Roman year. **November**, from the Latin word for *nine*, since it was the ninth month of the Roman year. **December**, from the Latin word for *ten*, since it was the tenth month of the Roman year. January and February were added to the calendar about 700 BCE.

– Information from *Harris’ Farmer’s Almanac* 2013

Observations of Brains of Meditators reveal that calm, focused attention is associated with the prefrontal lobes which become more developed after one has meditated on a regular schedule for a few weeks. The ability to meditate can be acquired by almost anyone. Learning is faster when meditation is daily practiced and one is attentive, relaxed, and not overly concerned about having exceptional results. Trying hard to have results is self-defeating, as is allowing moods to influence the mind and behaviors during meditation and at other times. Some meditators may want to have their mind and senses stimulated by visions, ecstatic sensations, or dramatic “revelations.” The real purpose of practice should be to quiet the mind, clarify awareness, and experience one’s pure essence of being. When an effective meditation method has been learned, it should be daily practiced. The easiest way to maintain a daily practice schedule is to adhere to it for two or three weeks until it becomes an enjoyable habit—something that we routinely do because it is of personal value rather than only when we feel like it or are able to fit it into a busy schedule of activities.

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Timeless Wisdom

Authentic altruism ... flows spontaneously from the heart that is already at peace with itself, and to be at peace with oneself is to be at peace with God.

– *Frederick William Robertson (1816 – 1953)*

To have true peace, one needs to feel directed and sustained by a supreme power—to feel that one is on the right road ... in harmony with God and the universe.

– *Henri F. Amiel (1821 – 1881)*

The contemplation of one who is insightful is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all ... things in and through the Infinite.

Friederick Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834)

The Reality that is in every person can be known by entering the sanctuary of pure, illumined consciousness.

– *Lahiri Mahasaya (1828 – 1895)*

Let your devotion be like a wood fire that burns steadily for a long time; not like a straw fire that produces a bright flame, then quickly dies out.

– *Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952)*

If you see things in eternity, you are less likely to experience pain when they pass ... you can learn more easily not to grasp at them.

– *Gerald Vann (1906 – 1963)*

Affirmation

My aroused spiritual energies are freely expressive in and through me. They illumine my mind, renew my body, inspire my creative ideas, and empower my constructive actions.

NEWS and HIGHLIGHTS

In Fond Memory: Dr. Sid Williams (1928 – 2012)

Dr. Williams, founder of Life Chiropractic College in Marietta, Georgia, near Atlanta, died December 27, 2012. Now Life University on a 90-acre campus, since 1974 it has graduated many thousands of students. Dr. Williams was a longtime member and supporter of Center for Spiritual Awareness.

Truth Journal

Provided free to our members (see page 28), persons who attend our meditation retreats and seminars, truth teachers and organizations with similar aims and purposes, elderly or shut-in persons whose financial resources are limited, and some prison inmates. Others can subscribe. Published six times each year. \$10 in the U.S. Outside the U.S., \$15.00 (includes airmail postage). Order form on page 30; online (www.csa-davis.org); with credit card (info@csa-davis.org) or phone **706-782-4723** weekdays 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. East Coast Time.



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Above: One hundred and fifty orphan children were fed three meals on Paramahansa Yogananda's birthday, January 5th. Sponsored by CSA member Dr. Mahadevan, Tamil Nadu, South India.

Below: Partial view of CSA members and friends at a meditation seminar in West Palm Beach, Florida. *January 13, 2013*



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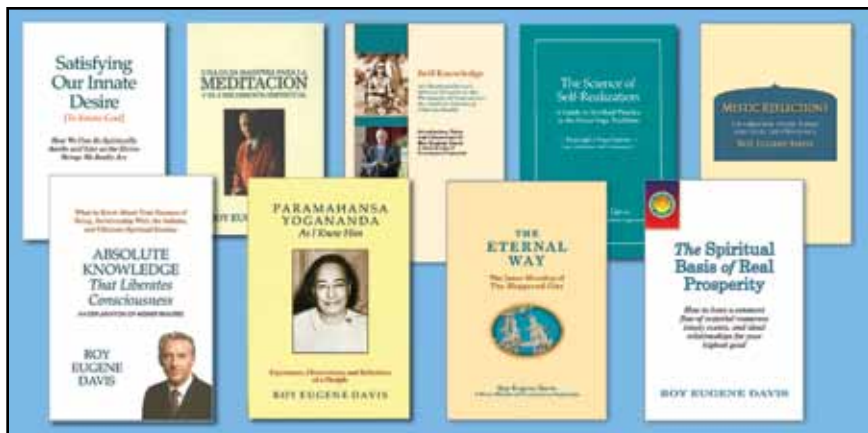
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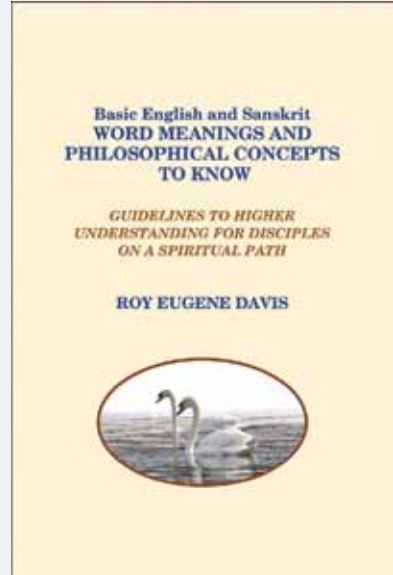
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Comprehensive understanding of words and philosophical concepts can help us 1) think rationally; 2) discern the truth of what we see, hear, and contemplate; 3) avoid delusions (false beliefs and opinions) and illusions (mistaken perceptions).

A person who cannot (or is unwilling to) accurately perceive may erroneously presume what is unreal to be real, what is true to be false, what is of great value to be insignificant, life to be meaningless and physical death to end it, and ultimate Reality to be nonexistent.

Having accurate knowledge of words and ideas can enable us to think and live more effectively, improve our awareness of our spiritual essence, enlarge our understanding of our world, and help us be more attuned to the orderly processes of life.

– from the Preface