

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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KRIYA 1

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LEAD ALL TO THE PATH OF SELF-REALIZATION

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, I invoke Thy presence. May those who are seeking find Thee through these sacred instructions. Thou dost not reveal Thyself to those who only blindly pray to Thee. O God of Universal Order, Thou dost appear unto those who obey Thy laws of concentration and meditation. Bless all Thy children that they use these redeeming laws to find Thee.

Heavenly Father, Giver of all power and riches of mind, Thy children, like prodigal sons, have run away from their home of omnipresence and have squandered their wealth of wisdom and peace. Show them now the path that quickly leads to Thee.

The path is there: Thou hast sent this divine teaching of Self-Realization on earth for them. May those who are sincere find this path that leads straightway to Thee.

PRAYER

Teach me, O Divine Father, to become a true yogi. Instead of finding cessation of life and joy, in my union with Thee I shall become the fountainhead of eternal life and bliss. Reveal Thyself, for by knowing Thee I shall not lose anything, but will gain everything.

GRADATED METHODS OF YOGA--Part 1

RELEASING THE
MOTION-BOUND SOUL
TO UNITE IT WITH
THE MOTIONLESS
INFINITE BY YOGA

The word "yoga" is an ancient word which comes from the Sanskrit root, "yuj," signifying union. The word "yoga" in Hindu philosophy is usually used to signify union of the individual soul with Spirit by scientific psychophysical methods of meditation.

A yogi is one who practices a scientific yoga technique of meditation in order to unite himself with God. He may assume worldly responsibilities, or he may choose the path of complete renunciation.

The science of yoga (or scientific union with God) includes various methods which may be classified as follows:

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| 1. Hatha Yoga | 4. Mantra Yoga |
| 2. Laya Yoga | 5. Raja Yoga |
| 3. Karma Yoga | |

1. Hatha Yoga is a system of physical exercises whose purpose is to render the body fit for meditation; particularly, for the higher states of ecstatic God-communion during which the body absorbs a greater-than-usual voltage of God's cosmic energy. Fortunately for the average person, it is not necessary to perform all the various tortuous body twistings of the yoga postures in order to prepare the body for meditation. Nevertheless, meditation is not possible without some bodily control, and some of the simpler postures of Hatha Yoga are very good indeed for this purpose. They may be practiced, in conjunction with a commonsense dietary regimen, with benefit to health and to mental concentration.

Occasionally, older persons in an excess of zeal hurt themselves in attempting difficult postures and then foolishly condemn Hatha Yoga. The eighty-four basic body postures are most effectively done by children and young adults. Men and women over forty should not practice the more difficult poses, because at that age the bones, muscles, and nerves are seldom sufficiently pliable. The SRF Energization Exercises taught in Lesson 8-A may be performed by all and benefit the body in much the same way as the system of Hatha Yoga.

The yogi should not keep the soul busy only with discipline of the body and thus forget the real purpose of yoga, the uniting of soul and Spirit. The body discipline of Hatha Yoga is meant only for preparing the physical vehicle for spiritual growth; it is not an end in itself. Body discipline promotes spiritual peace, and incidentally good health. Avoid becoming absorbed only in those methods that cultivate temporal physical and mental power and prowess and thereby attract public attention, curiosity, and commendation. Search deeper.

2. Laya Yoga signifies complete absorption or "melting" of mind in any mental concept of the Divine or in inner astral sounds. It consists of listening to the Cosmic Sound of Aum emanating from the universe on the superconscious plane of concentration. Mantra Yoga teaches one to utter such potent vibratory sounds aloud or mentally. Laya Yoga teaches one to concentrate upon and be merged in the real astral sounds emanating from the various inner creative forces of God in nature, rather than in those astral sounds as imitated by the human voice.

All actions on the physical or astral or causal planes are vibratory in nature, and therefore produce sounds: a whisper produces a physical sound; astral bells produce music that can be heard with the inner ear; and the countless thoughts emanating from the causal plane to structure the universe can be heard as the Cosmic Vibration, the spiritual sound of Aum.

3. Karma Yoga signifies union with God through good works and right activity, primarily, and through meditative action secondarily.
4. Mantra Yoga consists in uniting soul and Spirit by concentrating--through loud chanting, soft chanting, whisper chanting, mental chanting, and superconscious chanting--on the root word sounds that are vibrating in the physical world and in the astral world.
5. Raja Yoga is the "royal" yoga. It is the yoga method that is best and most inclusive. It combines simple methods of body discipline with a very high meditation technique of spiritual realization, techniques such as you are being taught in these Lessons. Self-Realization Fellowship methods teach Raja Yoga techniques of uniting soul and Spirit and combine in one teaching all that is best in the highest forms of yoga.

India's great sage Patanjali outlined the yoga system of Hindu philosophy as an eightfold path. The first steps,

1. yama and 2. niyama,

require observance of five proscriptive moralities and five positive prescriptions.

The next steps are

3. asana (right postures); the spinal column must be held straight, and the body firm in a comfortable position for meditation;
4. pranayama (control of prana, subtle life currents); and
5. pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from external objects).

The last steps are forms of yoga proper:

6. dharana (concentration), holding the mind to one thought;
7. dhyana (meditation); and
8. samadhi (superconscious perception).

FIRST STEP: Yama means rules that are prohibitive, and refers to
 PROSCRIPTIVE thoughts and actions from which the devotee should ab-
 RULES--YAMA stain. The proscriptions of yama are avoidance of in-
 jury to others, of untruthfulness, of stealing, of incon-
 tinence, or gift-receiving (which brings obligations).

SECOND STEP: Niyama means that which the devotee should do. The
 PRESCRIPTIVE niyama prescripts are purity of body and mind, con-
 RULES--NIYAMA tentment, self-discipline, self-study (contemplation),
 and devotion to God and guru.

All religions agree to these two phases or foundations of religious practice. To meditate a great deal without at the same time practicing yama-niyama is to build a large superstructure on a loose foundation.

Yama-niyama--the "do's and dont's"--are the foundation principles of all religions. Many religionists are contented just to practice these proscriptive and prescriptive rules: "I have never done anything wrong; I have done only good things in my life and I am satisfied." The person whose spiritual endeavors are circumscribed by such reasoning receives some inner satisfaction and some good karma, but he does not progress much beyond that.

The Eightfold Path of salvation outlined by Patanjali is what all devotees of yoga, all pursuers of the spiritual path, must follow, basing their spiritual attainment on the solid foundation of yama-niyama. When nirbikalpa samadhi (the highest state of God-realization) has been attained, one goes beyond the necessity of practicing the proscriptive and prescriptive rules of yama-niyama; but not before. "One who is united to cosmic wisdom in this life goes beyond virtue and vice" (Bhagavad-Gita 2:50). Having reached the Goal, one no longer needs the path.

THIRD STEP: Patanjali says that in addition to yama-niyama the devotee must practice asana, or posture--correct PRACTICES IN posture. The purpose of posture is to enable the MOTIONLESSNESS devotee to rise above or stop the motions of the OR ASANA body that cause restlessness in the ego-identified soul. The soul is a part of the calm Infinite, and the body is a part of restless nature. But the soul identifies itself with the restless body and forgets its nature of infinite calmness. Therefore, in order to send the prodigal soul from the land of restlessness to its home in the kingdom of infinite calmness, it is necessary to have correct posture--that is, a posture wherein the body is still and free from restlessness and the spine is erect. An erect spine allows the life energy and consciousness to flow freely from the lower centers of the senses, through the spine, to the higher centers of spiritual realization in the brain.

CONCENTRATE UPON ENDS Patanjali always points to the purpose of FOR WHICH DIFFERENT spiritual actions and tells the devotee not TECHNIQUES ARE USED to become identified with any process of salvation but only to use that process until salvation is attained. Patanjali warns the devotee not to be so engrossed with the process that he forgets the purpose for which that process or technique was prescribed. Many devotees remain within the confinement of asana. They concentrate upon the physical gymnastics of Hatha Yoga, enjoying the suppleness and mastery of the body that asana brings, forgetting that the purpose of asana is to attain freedom of the mind and soul. Therefore, Patanjali does not prescribe lengthy concentration on the practice of various postures; but he says that any comfortable posture in which the spine is erect, the body is steady and fairly restful, and the mind is peaceful, is the correct posture, or asana.

FOURTH STEP: DISCONNECTING THE MIND FROM THE SENSES BY SWITCHING OFF THE LIFE FORCE FROM THE SENSE "TELEPHONES." THIS IS PRANAYAMA, OR LIFE CONTROL (NOT BREATH CONTROL). Stillness is the altar of Spirit and Patanjali says that right posture is necessary for stillness. When motion ceases, Spirit begins to manifest. After having attained a steady posture and a steady mind, the devotee is advised by Patanjali to practice pranayama with the object of attaining pratyahara. Pranayama means conscious control of the life force, to be able ultimately to switch off at will the life force from the five sense "telephones."

Various schools of breath control, meditation, chanting, devotional singing, concentration on the prayer wheel, holy rolling, concentration by discrimination, concentration by diversion, and so forth, are variants of the real science of pranayama or switching off the life force.

PRANAYAMA--THE There are various indirect methods of diverting the mind from the senses to God; HIGHEST TECHNIQUE OF for example, chanting, negative silence, UNITING SOUL AND SPIRIT prayer, emotional singing, intellectual discriminative meditation, social and religious work. But the pranayama

life-control technique of yoga teaches the scientific way of disconnecting the mind from the sensations of touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste by switching off the life current, that the freed consciousness may be united to God. All scientific techniques that bring about union of soul and Spirit may be classified as yoga, and pranayama is the greatest yogic method for attaining this divine union.

SLEEP-- The state of sleep is unconscious pranayama, or the unconscious process of switching off the life force from the five sense telephones. In sleep one practices the mortal posture or savasana. In this posture the body is still, the muscles have stopped working, venous blood is reduced, the heart slows down, the energy in the heart becomes quiet; therefore, the energy from the five senses is switched off. Then the mind attains unconscious pratyahara, or unconsciously returns within and becomes absorbed in an unconscious state of peace. Patanjali's statement of the direct use of pranayama is very significant, since he does not beat about the bush but tells one to adopt that scientific measure by which sensations can be consciously disconnected from the mind. What is attained during sleep, the unconscious switching off of the life current, can be attained consciously by adopting the scientific methods of pranayama.

(To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

One sign that you have control of your life force is the ability to calm at will the heart, eyes, and breath. Control of this life force means getting control of the force that binds you to the world. Without training in life-force control, pranayama, you can never go into deep silence. It is useless to tell students to remain silent without their knowing first the methods by which they can control this life force.

Holding the breath for a little while is all right because you oxygenate the system and purify your blood, but that is not control over your breath. Pranayama does not mean just holding the breath in the lungs; it means control of the life force that activates the lungs and the heart. If you can control the heart by pranayama, you can switch off the energy from any body function at will. If you know how to do this, you can practice deep silence. Without that, you cannot know God. You must have life-force control over your breath and heart.

AFFIRMATION

O Father, when I was blind I found not a door which led to Thee; but now that Thou hast opened my eyes, I find doors everywhere: through the hearts of flowers, through the voice of friendship, through sweet memories of all lovely experiences. Every gust of my prayer opens an unentered door in the vast temple of Thy presence.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSONS

Kriya Step

(Part 1)

LESSONS	NUMBERS
Patanjali's Eight Steps of Yoga	K-1, 2
Kriya Yoga--the Higher Initiation	K-3 - 9, incl.
Historical Basis and	
Purpose of Kriya Yoga	K-3
How Kriya Quickens Soul Evolution	K-4
Kriya Yoga Technique	K-5
Maha Mudra Technique	K-6
Jyoti Mudra Technique	K-6
Aids to Kriya Practice	K-7
A Step-by-Step Outline of Kriya	K-7A
Control of Cosmic Energy	
(Pranayama) by Kriya	K-8
Physical and Spiritual	
Benefits of Kriya Practice	K-9
Kriya Lesson Summaries, 1-9 incl.	K-9A

TEACH US TO RECLAIM OUR BIRTHRIGHT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Father, twinkling in the stars, spread over the vast blue, make us realize Thy nearness! Make us realize that everything is saturated with Thee. Father, destroy the gloom in the temples of our minds with Thine omnipresent light! Under the canopy of Thy love we are playing near the fountain of life and death. Teach us to sing Thy song of changeless Bliss while we are playing this drama of life and death. No more dancing helplessly on the waves of incarnation, no more torture of goading desires, no more troubles, beholding the clashing waves of change through aeons of mortal existence!

Mighty Spirit, Thou didst make us Thy children, but we made ourselves beggars. Take us away from this beggary. Father, allow us no more to beg for a little health and wisdom, only to die in an anguish of unrealized hopes. Father, teach us to reclaim our birthright and to live as immortals. Bring us to Thy home of health and happiness. Into Thy temple of power, O Spirit! bring all Thy prodigal children and let them sing a chorus of unity and vitality. Bring the stars, bring the whippoorwill, bring all souls, and let them sing to Thee the song of Oneness.

PRAYER

O heavenly Trinity, Om, Tat, Sat, through my self-effort and knowledge of the law, let me climb the precious ladder of realization--to stand at last on the shining summit of attainment, face to face with the One Spirit Divine!

GRADATED METHODS OF YOGA--Part 2

KRIYA YOGA The ancient technique of Kriya Yoga, which was reintroduced in modern times by Lahiri Mahasaya, is the greatest form of pranayama, control of subtle life currents. Kriya establishes a continuous process of oxygenation that burns out the waste carbon in the venous blood, thus obviating the necessity for the heart to pump venous blood through the lungs for this purpose. The heart is thus able to become quiet; as a result, the energy is switched off from the five senses and the mind attains a conscious state of pratyahara, or awareness of inner forces.

FIFTH STEP: MIND Pratyahara signifies the state of the mind when
INTERIORIZATION it is disconnected from the five sense "tele-
BY PRATYAHARA phones." Those who practice pranayama or any
 other method of breath and life-energy control
without bearing in mind the purpose for which they are practicing do not attain pratyahara. Patanjali states that the purpose of pranayama must be pratyahara, or making the mind return within. All devotees who seek Self-realization must be able to practice pranayama so successfully that they can use it to attain pratyahara, or interiorization of the mind, immediately. Thousands of students are satisfied with yama-niyama (rules of morality); many are satisfied with asana (posture); and some are satisfied with practicing pranayama alone. Best results come from the practice of all three--yama-niyama, asana, and pranayama.

CLIMBING TO THE KINGDOM There can be many steps to a comprehen-
OF GOD--SAMADHI--ON THE sive theological understanding of the laws
SEVEN-STEP LADDER OF of God described in various philosophies
SELF-REALIZATION and religions; there are but seven steps
 on the ladder of Self-realization that
lead to the actual perception of the Infinite. To master each step, one must obtain not only new ideas about God, but also a distinct change of consciousness and increase in Self-realization until, in the seventh step, he will be directly contacting God as ever new Bliss.

Followers of the paths of devotion, meditation, chanting, and praying should so deeply follow their respective methods that the mind becomes engrossed within (pratyahara) and is undisturbed by sensations and restless thoughts. Those who practice some form of meditation, or a pranayama technique, have not arrived at the fifth step of the ladder of Self-realization until they are able quickly to interiorize the mind (pratyahara). Each step should yield definite signs of Self-realization.

- STEP 1,2. Yama-niyama yields self-control and mental calmness.
- STEP 3. Asana brings mental and physical calmness, so that the yogi-devotee can sit for hours in one meditation position without fatigue or mental restlessness.
- STEP 4. Pranayama should yield heartbeat control, pulse control, awareness of the cool and warm life currents in the spine, life-force control, and mind control.
- STEP 5. Pratyahara yields freedom of mind from physical sensations; it is the power of mental interiorization, or withdrawal of the mind from the senses.
- STEP 6. Dharana is the power to use the interiorized mind one-pointedly to concentrate upon God.
- STEP 7. Dhyana gives the conception, by feeling or intuition, of the vastness of God. The ultimate realization is samadhi or complete union with God.

IMPORTANT NOTES Only after mastering pratyahara are dharana (concentration) and dhyana (meditation) possible. Many people think it is easy to meditate, but true meditation is actually impossible without first climbing the steps of yama-niyama, asana, pranayama, and pratyahara. Only those who have practiced these five steps can control the body and moods and habits; and exercise the ability to switch off the current from the five senses so that the attention, which is ordinarily tied to sensory experiences, is freed through pratyahara to go within and meditate on God.

Such a devotee has scientifically attained an expanded state of consciousness and understands what meditation means. Only by pratyahara, when the mind goes within, is it possible to concentrate completely upon God. Otherwise the mind will be experiencing sensations and the thoughts arising from them. Some spiritual teachers ask their students to meditate without explaining that meditation involves the achievement of oneness on the part of the meditator; the process of meditation, in which the mind is withdrawn from the senses by interiorization; and the object of meditation (God).

Patanjali says: "Meditate upon God (Iswara)." He understood that the average person has no conception of God, and explains that the symbol of God is Aum, the Cosmic Vibration or Cosmic Sound. Patanjali took it for granted, however, that people would know the meaning of Aum. The Upanishads tell us that as oil flows continuously from a barrel, so does Aum flow continuously from the cask of Spirit. It is a cosmic sound, an all-permeating sound, somewhat like a bass voice or a continuously sounding gong. Aum can be heard first in the body; then by dhyana, or expanded perception, it can be heard emanating from all creation. It is the sound oozing out of all atomic vibrations.

When Patanjali advises the yogi to concentrate on Aum, to chant Aum, and to understand the meaning of Aum, he means more than mere chanting of Aum aloud, or in a whisper, or mentally; rather that the yogi should engage the mind repeatedly upon the Aum sound that is emanating from Cosmic Vibration, which is present in the body and can be heard within by the practice of certain techniques. The techniques by which this can

be done are taught in Lesson No. 27 and 30 inclusive (particularly in Lesson No. 29), and in other Lessons throughout the Seven Steps of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons. Those who chant Aum aloud, or in a whisper, merely create a sound of their own through the voice and imagination, and their consciousness of Aum is limited by that sound. But one must strive to hear the real Aum sound that is going on in the cosmos, which is unlimited, omnipresent, and omniscient--the Holy Ghost or vibration emanating from the transcendental God, the Father, and containing as its guiding principle the Christ or omnipresent Intelligence.

Patanjali says that in superconscious chanting the devotee keeps his attention riveted to the cosmic sound of Aum and tries to understand and feel this vibration of Aum as the representative of God in every atom of the universe. The Word (Cosmic Vibration) was made flesh (i.e., matter, the physical body of God). Many people do not understand the significance of Patanjali's instruction to meditate on Aum, and go on chanting loudly without trying at the same time to feel the cosmic presence of the real Aum sound. This Aum sound is the cosmic "trumpet" heard by St. John and described in the book of Revelation; it is the "Amen," the "faithful witness" of the beginning of God's creation.

Patanjali says that by superconscious chanting or inner perception of the Aum sound, and by thinking of the significance of Aum, one begins to identify his consciousness with Aum as heard in the body, and also with Aum as expressed in the universe. When Patanjali instructs the devotee to chant Aum, he means to listen to the Aum sound that is going on in the temple of meditation. When he says, "Think of its significance," he means, "do not limit Aum by boundaries of your concentration on the sound within the body; but try to feel Aum beyond the boundaries of the body, in all things, in eternity."

IMPORTANT NOTES After dharana, or concentration, comes dhyana, which means attainment of the conception of the magnitude of Aum. Dharana means meditation on Aum with an interiorized mind. Arthabhabanam (thinking of the meaning of Aum) and dhyana (conception of the Aum sound as present in the body and in the cosmos) are the same thing, conceiving of the perception of Aum not only in the body but also in the universe. By doing this, the devotee attains sabikalpa samadhi; that is, he deliberately (not unconsciously, by diversion) forgets the wave of the body in order to concentrate upon the ocean of Spirit. In sabikalpa samadhi the devotee concentrates so that his consciousness of material things is completely obliterated, but he is supersensitively conscious of the Spirit within. Sabikalpa samadhi has many forms.

SAMADHI TAKES MANY FORMS When the devotee becomes one with the cosmic sound of Aum, that state is called Aum samadhi. When the devotee is one with the cosmic life in this vibration of Aum, that state is called mahaprana, or oneness with the cosmic life force. In this samadhi the devotee is conscious of the cosmic vital forces. When the devotee perceives cosmic light, that state is astral samadhi. In astral samadhi the devotee is one with the cosmic light. Then comes ananda samadhi, or oneness with the cosmic joy in

everything. After this comes jnana (sometimes called gyana) samadhi, wherein the devotee is one with the cosmic wisdom or intelligence in everything. Then comes devotional samadhi, in which the seeker attains divine devotion. Then comes prema samadhi, which is to be one with the cosmic love in all creatures and in everything, and in God. Then comes sundara samadhi, wherein one becomes one with all glory and beauty in Spirit.

In sabikalpa samadhi, the devotee is conscious of these various manifestations of God as sound, light, devotion, bliss, beauty, and so on, to the exclusion of the consciousness of the body and the world. After the devotee attains sabikalpa samadhi, which means bodily immobility combined with inner divine realizations, by further meditation he passes to the higher state of nirbikalpa samadhi.

ULTIMATE REALIZATION In nirbikalpa samadhi the soul becomes simultaneously conscious of the ocean of Spirit with its manifesting waves--the body, the mind, and the soul. Perfection in these various steps on the ladder of realization ultimately produces nirbikalpa samadhi. The devotee therefore must not remain confined to one step, but should climb all the seven steps of salvation until he reaches the pinnacle of spiritual Self-realization--nirbikalpa samadhi.

STEPS TOWARD SELF-REALIZATION

Free yourself from bad habits such as anger, greed, jealousy, and so forth. This is the first step toward God.

Acquire good habits, such as sincerity, loyalty, and poise. Learn to interiorize the mind, and introspect.

Practice asana, or correct posture. Your body must be under your control.

Next is pranayama, or breathlessness. Your breath must be calm and the mind interiorized in order to contact God.

Meditate. Learn to live in that eternal happiness and peace which is God.

Last is samadhi, or Oneness with God: The meditator, meditation, and the thing meditated upon become one.

AFFIRMATION

I will realize that praise does not make me any better, nor blame any less. I am what I am before my own conscience and God. I will travel on, doing good to all and pleasing God, for thus have I found my only true happiness.

WITH THE TORCH OF OUR DEVOTION
BLAZE OUR DARK INDIFFERENCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, let all the slaps of our trials wring from us only the one cry for Thy love. Transmute our trial-born wails into unceasing cries for Thee.

O Divine Mother, teach the voice of our pain to sing only Thy soothing songs of joy. Melt our pride in the furnace of Thy purifying flames, and transmute it into pure gold of humbleness.

Divine Mother, shatter the small hamlet of our selfishness, in which lie huddled all the urchins of ignorance, and build Thy temple of omnipresence for Thy votaries of devotion, reverence, soul-love, to find sanctuary there and to worship Thee with songs of heart-whispers.

In the golden temple of Thy whispers, they will offer to Thee their ever-fragrant frankincense of unceasing soul-chants.

O Divine Mother, we lay at Thy feet all the new-grown, fresh-cut flowers of our eager devotion.

Divine Mother, place Thine omnipresence on the little altar of our united hearts...Be Thou the only love of our souls...Ignite our earthliness with the flame of infinity. With the torch of our devotion, blaze our dark indifference, our restlessness, and our ignorance...Inflame our minds with Thy thoughts! Inflame our hearts with Thy love! Inflame our souls with Thy joy!

PRAYER

O Heavenly Father, free my spiritual path from all difficulties,
and lead me to the shores of eternal wisdom and bliss.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

Words are inadequate to express the soul-revealing power of Kriya Yoga. Whether or not you understand the theory, if you conscientiously practice this supreme technique your all-accomplishing power of concentration will increase, as will your creative inspiration and ever new happiness.

He who practices Kriya is a Kriya Yogi, a true Brahmin ("knower of Brahma" or God), a twice-born Christian. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). A Kriya Yogi is born again by baptism in Spirit.

Physical birth is given by the father and mother; spiritual birth is given by the guru, the spiritual preceptor sent by God to awaken divine consciousness in true seekers. The guru is he who is able to lead the disciple, through a definite spiritual teaching and discipline, to God Consciousness. One may have many teachers, but when he finds his guru, he should follow only that guru's teaching throughout life. A true guru is a vehicle of God, through whom the Heavenly Father teaches the devotees in order to recall them to Himself.

HISTORICAL BASIS The evolution-quickenning technique of Kriya is an ancient science. Lahiri Mahasaya received it from his guru, Babaji, who rediscovered and clarified the technique after it had been lost in the Dark Ages. Babaji, a deathless avatar, lives secretly in the Himalayas with a band of highly advanced disciples. He possesses Christlike powers. At the time of imparting the technique of Kriya to Lahiri Mahasaya, Babaji said:

"The Kriya Yoga that I am giving to the world through you in this nineteenth century is a revival of the same science that Krishna gave, millenniums ago, to Arjuna; and that was later known to Patanjali; and to Christ and his disciples St. John, St. Paul, and others."

It was to Swami Sri Yukteswar, one of Lahiri Mahasaya's most highly advanced disciples, that I came, as a youth, for spiritual training. From Sri Yukteswarji I learned that Babaji has chosen me to bring Kriya Yoga to the western world. Babaji knew that many truth-seekers in the West would be receptive to the scientific approach to God as given by India's ancient science of Yoga. Thus it was that Kriya Yoga, an ancient sacred technique, has been made available to the world, that the devotee may learn the exact method by which he may expand the boundaries of his mental chalice to hold the ocean of omnipresent Christ Consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness.

The Kriya Technique will be the foundation, the continuously expanding base of your own Self-realization. So you must be true to yourself and to the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship by faithful practice of the liberating soul-science. SRF is resolved to show you that Cosmic Consciousness is attainable in one lifetime if you properly and continuously cooperate in this divine endeavor.

Your fervent prayer for a new life, filled with the happiness that is the birthright of every soul, is answered by these Kriya lessons. With proper and persistent practice of these principles and techniques, the devotee may attain the supreme goal of Self-realization. That goal was reached by Lahiri Mahasaya, who toiled in the world, but remained anchored in the Infinite Bliss; as well as by many other determined Kriya Yogis.

KRIYA IS THE INITIATION INTO COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS	Man's consciousness is ordinarily identified with the senses. By Kriya practice the consciousness is transferred to the spine and brain and thus transmuted into superconsciousness and ultimately into Cosmic Consciousness. Through the faithful practice of Kriya you may contact Christ and other prophets and masters, and through them find union with God, the Infinite Spirit.
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In your search for God through past incarnations you may have passed through states of worshiping idols or other material symbols, and may ~~have pursued many paths~~ of blind belief. But at last you see that the highest truth actually is to be found only within yourself. At last, perhaps after aeons, you have been led to a guru who can show you how to find God within yourself, in the centers of life force and consciousness in the spine. This great initiation is given to you so that by Kriya Yoga you may awaken the divine consciousness in the spine and create there an altar of God-perception. Then you will understand that although God dwells even in restless and changeable material forms, He is to be found in the greatest measure within yourself, in the calm stillness of your eternal soul. Worship God on the altar of the spine; then you will behold Him in the temple of every thought, every activity.

Just imagining that you are in Cosmic Consciousness does not make it true; you are still bound to the consciousness of flesh. But when you disconnect your mind from the senses through the Kriya Technique the thread of mortal or bodily consciousness is temporarily cut; your consciousness becomes attuned to centers of higher perceptions in the spine. When a certain blissful sensation (to be described in detail later) is felt in the spine, currents of life energy are withdrawn from the sensory nerves and concentrated in the spine, producing perfect sensory relaxation. By practice of this technique the yogi may control sensory perception as simply as one turns on and off a light switch. The yogi does not lose consciousness in switching off the senses; he may "turn on" the sensory perceptions again at will.

Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). That is, until a man born of flesh ("water"--blood) undergoes the birth of the Self as

Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That is why in India the higher castes are called "twice-born" (dvija). "Twice-born" refers to the second birth or the attainment of higher states of consciousness in the spine. This awakening is the baptism by Spirit, the true initiation.

Conscious life is marked by restlessness. Even when you are thinking your mind is only partially active in the brain; the mind remains chiefly concentrated on the body and the senses, which continue to report bodily sensations to the brain. Consciousness functions strongly in the tongue when you are tasting food; in the skin when you are aware of heat or cold; in the eardrum when you are hearing sounds; in the nostrils when you are smelling odors; and in the retina when you are seeing objects. When your feeling is moved, your heart is the center of awareness; when you are expressing will power, your mind is concentrated at the point between the eyebrows (the center of will), and in muscular movements.

In sleep, however, the consciousness and energy are centered in the vital organs and the spine rather than in the sensory nerves and the muscles. The state of sleep is marked by peacefulness felt subconsciously. However, when consciousness and energy are withdrawn from the sensory nerves and muscles into the spine by Kriya meditation, the yogi consciously enjoys a state of calm awareness and peace.

The purpose of Kriya is to magnetize the spine by circulating life current lengthwise around it, thereby withdrawing life current temporarily from the sensory nerves and involuntary organs, and concentrating it in the centers of life and consciousness in the spine. This practice helps to effect a permanent change in the center of consciousness, liberating it from preoccupation with the mortal body and establishing the mind on the spinal altar of eternal spiritual consciousness.

Spine and brain are the insulated altars whereon the divine electricity of life first comes to rest when it descends into the body. From seven cerebrospinal centers the life force branches out into the sensory nerves, keeping the soul busy with material perceptions. By the practice of Kriya, consciousness and energy again become centralized in the spine; the yogi feels there a boundless ever-new joy, proof of the presence within him of the Divine.

PRANA MEANS The Sanskrit term for life energy is prana. Its point of
LIFE ENERGY entry and principal seat in the human body is the medulla
 oblongata. There are two kinds of prana:

- (a) cosmic energy, the source of all living things;
- (b) the specific prana or energy pervading each human body.

Cosmic energy is the cause of the creation of planets and of all living organisms. The life energy in the bodies of all organisms is secretly supplied from cosmic energy. But this divine supply is diminished as the life energy in man becomes more and more individualized, selfish, and body-bound, ignorant of its universal connection.

Cosmic energy is finer than electrons or than any other vibratory force existing in nature, and is conscious (but not self-conscious). It is the missing link between consciousness and matter.

The first outward manifestation of Spirit is the vibration of Cosmic Consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness manifests in progressively grosser states of vibration until it becomes conscious cosmic energy; finally, in its grossest form, Cosmic Consciousness manifests as material vibration or matter. Thus the connecting link between human consciousness and the gross physical body is specifically established by life energy or prana.

The soul is a microcosmic image of Spirit. As such, the soul first manifests the vibrations of superconsciousness; that consciousness vibrates into life energy, which in turn vibrates into the gross human body. Ignorance of the manner in which life energy functions has led many to suppose that there is a great difference between mind and matter, or even to deny the existence of matter. Mind exists; matter exists; both are vibrations of Spirit. Invisible mind vibrating as life energy is converted into gross matter. Matter does not exist as it appears to us; it is merely vibrations of life energy, which are vibrations of consciousness. If one could understand and control the functions of life energy he could dematerialize the body into its original constituent principles of consciousness and vibration.

AFFIRMATION

When cannons of uncertainties are booming,
and shells of suffering are falling fast around
me, still I am protected in the impregnable
trench of Thine immortal arms.

THE LIGHT SHINES BEHIND DARKNESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Daily seeing the material sunlight, you
are blinded and unable to see the magic world
of eternally spread luminous electrons shining
behind the darkness born of closed eyes.

Open your eyes, O blind one! See how
tiny your bird of ego is. Close your physical
eyes and keep your spiritual eyes wide open in
the sunlight of new understanding.

See how big YOU are, spread over Infinity
and Eternity.

PRAYER

O God, teach me to worship Thee on the altar of the spine, then I will behold Thee in the temple of every thought, every activity.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

SPIRITUAL BENEFIT The purpose of practicing Kriya is to unite
 OF PRACTICING KRIYA the limited human consciousness with the unlim-
 ited or Cosmic Consciousness of God. Cosmic
 Consciousness, Spirit, Brahma, the Absolute, all are one and the same.

Even when creation was not, Spirit was. Creation has beginning and end and is subject to categories of time, space, relativity, dimension, cause and effect; whereas Spirit is beyond all categories--beginningless, endless, changeless, unconditioned. All the conditions of existence as we understand it are contained in Spirit, yet It is unaffected by them.

Spirit is Self-born. Spirit is ever conscious; its attention is equally distributed everywhere, and is fully concentrated everywhere. We also, being made in the image of Spirit, have latent within us the power to concentrate our attention and to feel our existence everywhere, through attunement of our consciousness with the cosmic or all-pervading consciousness of Spirit. Actually our human consciousness is Cosmic Consciousness, bottled up in a phial of flesh, corked with ignorance, and floating isolated in the ocean of Spirit. Because of maya, the cosmic delusion, this bottled-up human consciousness, although living and moving in Spirit, cannot contact Spirit, just as salt water that is corked in a bottle and floating on the sea cannot contact the sea.

Cosmic Consciousness is spread all over the universe and pervades everything in it. Human consciousness is limited by the human body and its environment. To attain Cosmic Consciousness it is necessary to expand the consciousness that resides in every living cell of the body and brain. Through following proper laws of living and by faithful practice of Kriya Yoga man can thus enlarge his consciousness and receive the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness, or Spirit.

Correct practice of the Kriya Technique will bring you to the Source of all creative inspiration. By opening the spiritual eye of intuitive knowledge it will give you answers to all your questions. Kriya practice clears and stimulates the brain and strengthens the medulla oblongata; it also greatly magnetizes the body, saturating and feeding all its physical cells with undecaying light and keeping them in a magnetized state.

The deep student of Self-Realization Fellowship is able to live more by the "word of God," or cosmic energy, and less by the bread of life--oxygen, sunshine, and solid and liquid foods. As the life current is circulated up and down in the spine, the Kriya yogi experiences higher

perceptions of God in the spine and brain. When body consciousness is shut off by Kriya (duplicating consciously the freedom from body consciousness experienced in the state of sleep), the yogi becomes aware of the subtle spinal centers of light and energy.

When you can withdraw the energy from the senses, you can place your mind upon God, and you are then ready for the practice of Kriya. Control of life force produces a conscious state of deep silence. In sleep you experience complete silence. Why? Because the energy is withdrawn from the eyes and all the senses.

Kriya Yoga and its variations are exercises in the control of prana--life force--and are not ordinary breathing exercises. The Kriya Technique has been practiced by many students of Self-Realization Fellowship with the greatest benefit to their spiritual, mental, and moral growth.

Your soul is seeking an experience of God that is tangible. The Kriya Technique will give you mathematical results according to how much, how deeply, and how exactly you practice. The sincere Kriya yogi will find also that when he experiences occasional states of spiritual stagnation, he can receive immediate help by the practice of Kriya.

Twenty-four hours of ordinary silence will not produce as much spiritual benefit as one hour of deep meditation, and the Kriya Yoga Technique produces more results in daily practice than twenty-four hours of ordinary meditation. The Kriya Yoga that my master Sri Yukteswar taught is the greatest of pranayama techniques.

You can be sure that each time you practice Kriya correctly your entire system is being divinely changed; that your brain power and mental receptivity are expanding. You will come to realize that in the sacred technique of Kriya Yoga the masters of India have given you everything you need to reach the supreme Goal of life. The time limitation of ordinary human evolution is overcome by Kriya practice. The attainment of wisdom and Self-realization, which ordinarily requires a million years of normal, diseaseless evolution, is possible, through deep devotion and right practice of Kriya, in one lifetime. The human brain may be perfected sufficiently, by Kriya, to express Cosmic Consciousness, which otherwise might require many more irksome human incarnations to achieve.

Kriya is a fundamental method. The Kriya yogi mentally directs his life energy to revolve, upward and downward, around the sensitive spinal cord. The spine becomes magnetized; the life force, instead of being wasted and abused in the senses, is constrained to reunite with subtler spinal energies. By such reinforcement of life force the advanced student of Self-realization hastens physical and mental regeneration and rejuvenation. His body and brain cells are electrified with the spiritual elixir. Specifically, the Kriya Technique transfers the attention from the sensations of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch to the spine and brain where, by the intuitive perception of the soul, the yogi perceives God reigning in all His glory. The distractions of sensations and the resulting thoughts they evoke bar God-contact by diverting the

life force from the spinal altar of God-perception and directing it outward through the senses toward matter. But when the yogi returns the life force to the spine by Kriya practice and becomes concentrated solely on the subtle spinal perceptions, he is blissfully unaware of the body, his consciousness having become established once again on the spinal altar whereon he is aware only of his soul and God.

QUICKENING The evolutionary progress of the human body, mind,
SOUL EVOLUTION and soul keeps pace with the revolutions of the
 earth around the sun. (This natural progress is retarded if disease, accidents, undue despondency, ignorance, or sense attachment be permitted to invade the threefold kingdom of body, mind, and soul.) The six spinal centers (medullary, cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal plexuses) in man correspond to the twelve astral signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man. The astral system of a human being, with six (twelve by polarity) inner constellations revolving around the sun of the omniscient spiritual eye, is interrelated with the physical sun and the twelve zodiacal signs. The great yogis of India discovered that man's earthly and heavenly environment, in twelve-year cycles, push him forward on his natural path of evolution.

But although the outer influences of rays and vibrations, food and solar energy, do refine the mind in this twelve-year period, the spiritual progress is nevertheless very slight. Calculated according to these twelve-year cycles, one million years would be required for a human being to attain Cosmic Consciousness. The ancient rishis therefore set about finding a way to attain Cosmic Consciousness in one lifetime. They discovered that to effect a change in the brain by means of refinement of the physical brain cells is a slow process, but that the effect on man of brain-changes is immediate. They concentrated therefore on developing a method of hastening the evolution of the brain.

They found that what is accomplished by outer influences during ordinary evolution could be brought about by internal methods of pranayama, or life-force control, that energize the sensitive spinal centers and render them receptive to spiritual currents. The rishis developed a technique of revolving the life force (the source of physical energy in the body) in an elliptical path upward and downward around the six spinal centers, thus directly quickening the evolution of the spine and brain centers. This quickening of evolution can be accomplished by faithful practice of Kriya Yoga, provided the body is kept free from diseases and accidents, and the mind free from disbelief and error.

By revolving the life force once around the spine, as the Kriya yogi is taught to do, man can effect a change in the brain and body that is ordinarily possible only by one year of diseaseless existence, careful eating, and absorption of solar energy. The passing of this current once around the spine corresponds to the effect of 365 days of sunlight. So any time the life current revolves around the spine, human evolution is advanced by one solar year.

By understanding the theory of Kriya Yoga, as explained in Kriya Lessons 1-2-3-4, the student will receive more benefit from the actual

practice of the Kriya Technique that will be given in the next Lesson.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AND SPIRIT

Is Spirit knowable? When we speak of Spirit as the Creative Principle, or God, that does not get us anywhere. Spirit, in order to be real, must be real to us in a definite way. To describe Spirit negatively, saying that He--God--is neither mind, nor intelligence, conception nor cognition, sense perception nor thoughts, sky nor earth, ego nor chitta (feelings), does not describe Him. By the negative method it is impossible to explain God. He is beyond conception, but that does not prove that He is not in conception, for if God is not in it too, He would not be omnipresent.

If we are made in the image of God, why do we not reflect Him? We are in God, surrounded by God, God is within us, yet why do we not feel Him? There are several reasons. One is, because our attention is directed to the limitations of flesh and earthly things, with which we have identified ourselves.

As the sun reflects itself in many bodies of water, so the one Spirit reflects in many souls. Or, rather, this one Spirit is reflected in us as souls. When you break the waves of the water holding the image, the reflected image goes back to the sun; in the same way, when we are emancipated from the body, we go back to Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

I shall seek God first, last, and
all the time.

TEACH ME TO FIND FREEDOM IN THEE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, transfer my consciousness from the physical body to the spine, and from the spine through the seven centers to Cosmic Consciousness, where Thy glory and light reign in the fullness of Thy manifestation, and where the life force reigns in all Thy power. May Thy glory abide with me evermore. O Eternal Ball of Bliss, revolve within my consciousness and make me as Thou art.

Father, Thou and I are one. I am the ball of vibration. I am the cosmic ball of sound. I am the cosmic ball of light in which the planetary systems and universes are floating. My body, the earth, and the sun are flickering like glowworms within me. I am the Eternal Light. I am the Om vibrating in the little body and in the whole universe.

Heavenly Father, do not keep me a prisoner of incarnations, but teach me to find freedom in Thee, that I may know that on the earth nothing belongs to me, but all belongs to Thee. Teach me to know that my home is Omnipresence. O Thou Father of Vastness, sitting on the throne of the blue, adorning the throne of Omnipresence, I bow to Thee everywhere.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, ignite our earthliness with the flame of Infinity. With the torch of devotion blaze our dark indifference, our restlessness, and our ignorance. Inflame our minds with Thy thoughts! Inflame our hearts with Thy love! Inflame our souls with Thy joy!

KRIYA YOGA -- THE HIGHER INITIATION

This most sacred of spiritual techniques, Kriya Yoga, must be practiced with exactitude for the highest results. There should be no deviation from any of the instructions given in this initiation. The rules are few; obey them strictly.

Choose for your meditation seat a straight, armless chair (or a firm bed) over which a woolen blanket has been placed so that it runs down under the feet, providing insulation from earth currents. Face East, the direction from which helpful subtle solar currents are always flowing.

Sit correctly with spine erect; feet flat on the floor; chin parallel to the ground; inside edges of the shoulder blades as close together as possible; chest out; abdomen in; hands (with palms upturned) resting on the thighs where they join the abdominal region. There should be no feeling of tension in maintaining the correct erect meditation posture; the muscles and limbs should be relaxed. But if you unconsciously allow the spine to bend forward (owing to bad postural habits of the past) you should straighten the spine as often as it bends, in order to gain the best results from Kriya practice.

SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR KRIYA PRACTICE

1. Lubricate the throat with a few drops of olive oil or melted unsalted butter or any vegetable oil. Place the oil on the tongue; then let it trickle slowly down the throat.
2. The following preliminary exercise gives an idea of the soothing warm and cool sensations that the student will experience when circulating the life energy in the spine during actual Kriya practice.

PRELIMINARY EXERCISE

Clench each fist lightly so as to form a small tubelike hollow. Hold the thumb-end of the right fist against the little-finger end of the left fist; then place the left fist against the open mouth (as though the two fists were a hollow flute-like tube held to the lips for blowing).

Slowly inhale through the mouth, drawing in air through the tube created by the loosely clenched fists. Notice the cool, refreshing sensation within the fists as the air passes through. Then exhale (through the mouth), giving careful attention to the sensation of trickling warmth felt inside the fist-formed tube. These two sensations (of coolness and warmth) will be felt in the spine during practice of the actual technique of Kriya Yoga.

Repeat several times the inhalation and exhalation of the breath through the fists, concentrating on the alternating sensations of coolness and warmth as the breath is inhaled and exhaled.

Continue inhaling and exhaling, but mentally transfer the sensations of coolness and warmth to the throat, taking the fists away from the mouth and letting the relaxed hands rest palms upward on the legs where the thighs join the abdominal region. Go on inhaling and exhaling, and mentally transfer to the spine the sensations of coolness and warmth felt in the throat. This latter transition of attention and feeling is not difficult, as the spine is directly behind the throat. The initial concentration on mentally transferring the sensations of coolness and warmth from the fists to the throat to the spine is intended to stimulate the movement of the actual life-energy currents in the spine. When, through the practice of Kriya Yoga, you begin to feel the alternately cool and warm currents in the spine, these currents will be the object of your concentration.

The foregoing exercise with the fist-formed tube is not the actual technique of Kriya. Its practice may be dispensed with once the student becomes proficient in the practice of the actual Kriya Yoga technique.

VISUALIZE THE SPINE AS A HOLLOW TUBE

Now visualize the spinal column as a hollow tube extending upward from the base of the spine (coccyx) to the base of the brain (medulla oblongata), where it bends forward in an arc extending through the cerebrum and ending at the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows. The practice of Kriya Yoga enables the student to feel the life force ascending (with a cool, soothing sensation), and descending (with a warm, trickling sensation) within this imaginary hollow cerebrospinal tube.

TECHNIQUE OF KRIYA YOGA

With eyelids half closed, or completely closed, turn the eyeballs upward and fix the gaze, without strain, at the point between the eyebrows.

EXPAND THE THROAT

Expand the inner opening of the throat by rolling the tongue back toward the palate as far as possible. (Do not strain; the expansion of the throat will

come naturally with practice in rolling back the tongue.) Let the tongue return to normal position, but retain the expansion of the throat that results from turning the tongue backward.

INHALATION (FEELING ASCENDING CURRENT)

Now inhale calmly and slowly, through the mouth and nose simultaneously, making the barely audible sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat. During inhalation of the breath the sound should be continuous, "AAAWWW" (not jerkily made, i. e., not "AW, AW, AW"). The duration of one inhalation should be ten (or up to fifteen) counts. (When done correctly the inhaling breath will have an aspirated "AW" sound, and will produce a cool sensation deep in the throat.)

Imagine that the breath is ascending quietly and smoothly through the inside of the imaginary hollow cerebrospinal canal (rather than going in and out of the lungs). As you draw in the breath, feel the coolness in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "AW," and mentally transfer both the sensation of coolness and the sound of "AW" to the spine. Feel that the cool breath is rising from the coccyx at the base of the spine with a sound of "AW," and that it is moving upward through the spine to the medulla, from there arching forward through the cerebrum until it reaches the top of the imaginary cerebrospinal tube, at the point between the eyebrows (the Christ Consciousness center). Feel this ascent of the breath in the spine as a cool sensation (similar to that produced when you drew in breath through the clenched fists).

The first part of Kriya, then, consists in the following:

Inhale calmly and slowly (to a count of ten or up to fifteen) making the aspirated sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat, but feeling that the breath is a cool current that you are drawing up the spine through a hollow tube from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center with a sound of "AW."

Having drawn the cool current up to the Christ Consciousness center, pause briefly; a count of three should be long enough.

EXHALATION (FEELING DESCENDING CURRENT)

Slowly exhale through mouth and nose to a count of ten (or up to fifteen), making the barely audible, continuous aspirated sound of "EEEE" high in the expanded throat. Feel that the breath is a tepidly warm, trickling stream flowing back through the hollow tube from the Christ Center through the cerebrum to the medulla oblongata; and soothingly flowing downward through the spine to the coccyx. Feel the warmth in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "EE," and mentally transfer both the sensation of warmth and the sound of "EE" to the spine, imagining the warm breath to be going down through the spine with the fine sound of "EE."

One "Kriya" means one practice of inhalation and exhalation of the breath in the spine (as just described). Practice continuously, without a stop, until

you have finished fourteen Kriyas. If you are very restless, however, practice the "Hong Sau" technique of concentration until your breath and mind have become quiet. Then resume Kriya practice. If you fail to practice correctly one Kriya, start anew and do that one Kriya correctly from the beginning.

Remember the following key points in the practice of the Kriya technique:

1. Get mentally inside the spine. Put the whole mind and feeling there.
 2. Keep inhalation and exhalation equal and slow.
 3. Don't allow any break in the breath, such as "AW, AW, AW." The sound should be steady: "AAAWWW," "EEEEEE." The sound is made with the breath, not the voice. The "AW" sound is made deep in the expanded throat. (Note: pay no attention to whether the breath is coming and going through the mouth or the nose, or both. The important point is to draw the breath in from deep in the throat and to expel it from high in the throat, as instructed.)
 4. Be relaxed; do not strain. Enjoy the accession of peace and the soothing sensations of regenerative effect in the spine that accompany Kriya practice from the very beginning.
 5. Be attentive to your practice; do each Kriya with a sense of its importance. On the scale of spiritual advancement, one Kriya rightly practiced is equivalent to a year of natural or evolutionary spiritual progress.
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WHEN TO PRACTICE

Fourteen consecutive Kriya practices in the morning and fourteen consecutive Kriya practices in the evening are all that are permitted to the beginning Kriya Yoga student. The morning practice of fourteen Kriyas should be always before breakfast; the evening practice of fourteen Kriyas may be before dinner, or a minimum of three hours after a full meal, or before going to bed. Never practice on a full stomach, but at the times specified above. If you cannot practice Kriya either before or at least three hours after a heavy meal, then during that meditation, practice six Kriyas only.

MEDITATE AFTER KRIYA PRACTICE

After practicing the Kriya technique, remain in the meditation posture for at least ten or fifteen minutes (the longer the period, the better the result) endeavoring to feel mentally the life current going up and down the spine. Through your continued concentration you will begin to feel the magnetization of the spine, and to attain without any exertion or strain a breathless state wherein meditation can more easily produce the consciousness of Cosmic Joy and Bliss. Depth of concentration is more important than length of meditation, but both are necessary for advanced spiritual development. Try to arrange your schedule in such a way that on at least one day a week you can have a long meditation (three hours if possible) in which you can practice the other

Self-Realization Fellowship techniques ("Hong Sau" and listening to the Aum sound) before doing your fourteen Kriyas, and afterward sit long in deep silence. By this time it should be your habit to precede any period of meditation with fifteen minutes' practice of the Energization Exercises (Lesson 8-A) and with a prayer such as the following:

"O Spirit, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Guru-preceptor Paramahansa Yoga-nanda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. May Thy love and wisdom manifest through me forever and ever. Free my spiritual path from all difficulties and lead me to eternal wisdom and bliss. Heavenly Father, may Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Permission to increase the number of Kriyas practiced daily must be secured from Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, and can be had only after several months of faithful practice and after you have made a satisfactory report to the Mother Center on your progress.

KRIYA--PROCESS OF MAGNETIZATION

If one wishes to move his forefinger, he sends energy there by means of his will. Similarly, in the practice of Kriya, will and imagination transmute the oxygen of breath into life energy and, reinforcing it with the subtle spiritual currents of the spine, make that life energy revolve around the spine.

When you inhale and exhale continuously as in Kriya, oxygen is quickly converted into life force that recharges with vital sustenance the entire body, especially the blood and lungs. When you focus your eyes and will power at the point between the eyebrows, and when you strongly visualize the circulation of the breath up and down the spine, a positive and a negative pole are established at the opposite ends of the imaginary hollow cerebrospinal tube between the Christ Consciousness center and the coccyx; the magnetic pull between the two poles brings about the actual circulation of the spinal current.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER The way to God is like a razor's edge. We are the waves of life in the ocean of Spirit. The wave has come out of the ocean and into the ocean once more it has to go. So long as you play with delusion the wave of your life will be storm-tossed by lashing winds of misery, troubles, and muffled hopes. That is why more and more you should devote yourself to that great, joyous communion with Spirit. You will feel my soul in tune with Christ and the Masters if you go deep, knowing the true way of communion with the Divine--Kriya Yoga.

AFFIRMATION

O Christ, Thou art risen in the garden of my love,
in the garden of my sacred devotion, in the garden of
my Kriya Yoga meditation.

THE MANSION OF MY LIFE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Divine Teacher, train me to recognize the difference between my soul's lasting happiness and the passing pleasures of the senses. Keep my eyes open, that the senses deceive me not by wearing stolen royal trappings and the mirage-cloak of sacred happiness, and so disguised, enter the mansion of my life.

Discipline my unwise, wayward senses, that they may spiritualize their pleasures, and ever look beyond the illusion of glittering, visible form; to find divine pleasure hidden behind simplicity's white robe.

PRAYER

Like a sacred hidden river my life force flows in the gorge of the spine. Help me to enter a dim corridor through the door of the spiritual eye, and speed on until at last the river of my life flows into the ocean of Thy life and loses itself in bliss.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

MAHA MUDRA

The purpose of the Kriya technique given in Lesson K-5 is to magnetize the spine by consciously circulating life force (currents of life energy) upward and downward within the spinal column. Extra oxygen is taken into the body during the special breathing that accompanies practice of the Kriya technique. That extra oxygen becomes transmuted into life force. Continuously ascending and descending in the spine, the life force creates a dynamo of energy that, like a magnet, attracts into the spine certain currents of life energy from the sensory nerves. The mind, thus disconnected from bodily sensations, is able to transfer its center of consciousness from the physical body to the spinal altar of God. By disconnecting the sensory perceptions of the limited territory of matter, the yogi becomes aware, through subtle spinal perceptions, of the unlimited sphere of Cosmic Consciousness.

PURPOSE OF MAHA MUDRA Maha Mudra consists of the practice of Kriya Yoga in a certain pose (described below). Maha Mudra is a simple but immensely effective method for straightening the spine and for encouraging the right distribution of prana (life currents) along the spine. Correct practice of Maha Mudra equalizes the flow of life energy to all parts of the body. It should be performed three times in the morning and three times in the evening, just before your regular practice of fourteen Kriyas. (However, because of the effectiveness of Maha Mudra in magnetizing and adjusting the spine, this technique may be practiced at any time the body requires adjustment.)

PREPARATION Since the practice of Maha Mudra involves also the practice of Kriya proper (which instruction you have already received, in Lesson K-5), make preparations as you would for Kriya, lubricating the throat with a few drops of olive oil or melted unsalted butter or vegetable oil.

Spread a woolen blanket on the floor or on a hard bed that does not sag.

TECHNIQUE OF MAHA MUDRA

(See Sheet of Illustrations, Lesson Kriya 6-A, attached.)

MAHA MUDRA--Part 1 Sit erect. Bend the left leg back under the body so that the sole of the left foot supports the left hip. Draw the right leg up against the body, so that the upper part of the leg is as close to the torso as possible, and the sole of the foot is flat on the floor. Place hands, with fingers interlocked, around the right knee. (See Fig. 1 on Kriya 6-A.)

Inhale, as Kriya proper, making the sound of "AAAWW" deep in the expanded throat and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube to the Christ-consciousness center between the eyebrows.

Holding the breath, bend the head until the chin touches the chest; at the same time unclasp the hands and stretch the right leg forward until it lies straight on the floor. Continuing to hold the breath, grasp with both hands the toes of the right foot and pull them gently toward you, mentally counting from one to six in this bent posture. (Fig. 2.)

Sit up, straightening the spine and lifting the right knee upward until the leg is again in the first position (drawn up close against the body). Exhale, making the sound of "EEEEEE" high in the expanded throat, and sending the warm current downward through the cerebrospinal tube to the coccyx.

MAHA MUDRA--Part 2 Repeat the foregoing, with leg positions reversed so that the right foot is tucked under the right hip, and the left leg is drawn up close against the body. (Figs. 3 and 4.)

MAHA MUDRA--Part 3 Sit with both legs drawn up against the body, and clasp the hands around the knees. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AAAWWW" deep in the throat, and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube. (Fig. 5.)

Holding the breath, bend the head until the chin touches the chest; at the same time unclasp the hands and stretch both legs forward until they are straight out in front of you. Still holding the breath, grasp the toes of the left foot with the left hand, and the toes of the right foot with the right hand, and pull them gently toward you, counting one to six as you do so. (Fig. 6.)

Resume upright position, with spine straight, both legs drawn up close to the body, and hands clasped around the knees. Exhale, making the sound of "EEEEEE," and sending the warm current downward through the spine to the coccyx.

Practice of the foregoing three-part instruction constitutes one performance of Maha Mudra. Perform the complete Maha Mudra three times before practicing Kriya proper in the morning and in the evening.

JYOTI MUDRA

SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE The two physical eyes reveal matter; the single spiritual eye reveals Spirit. The purpose of practicing Jyoti Mudra is to see the light of the single eye, by one's own effort, and to find through this spiritual eye the guidance of the omnipresent, omniscient Christ Consciousness. Seeing the spiritual eye is not accomplished through suggestion; it is an actual experience. When the yogi's mind and eyes are calmed and concentrated one-pointedly at the Christ-consciousness center between the eyebrows, he beholds there the light of the single eye. Jyoti Mudra gives you this spiritual baptism of light.

Our flesh is nothing more than condensed electricity. Beholding the light of the spiritual eye of infallible intuition you will understand what Jesus meant when he said, "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light... Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness" (Luke 11:34,35).

The purpose of Jyoti Mudra is to prevent the escape of life force through the head-openings of ears, nose, and mouth; and to use the "captured" life force to illuminate the single eye. But in order to get results you must follow steadfastly on the path of Self-Realization, practicing all the meditation techniques faithfully and with devotion.

Before practicing Jyoti Mudra, offer the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, guide me with Thy wisdom through the star in the spiritual eye. May my consciousness follow to its Source the dove of light descending from heaven, that I be baptized in Christ Consciousness. Heavenly Father, show me always the single eye; meet me always through the spiritual eye."

TECHNIQUE OF JYOTI MUDRA

(See Fig. 7 on Sheet of Illustrations, Lesson Kriya 6-A.)

Sit in the meditation posture: spine erect; feet flat on the floor; chin parallel to the ground; inside edges of shoulder blades as close together as possible; chest out; abdomen in.

Put the thumb of the left hand lightly over the tragus of the left ear, and the thumb of the right hand lightly over the tragus of the right ear. (The tragus is the fleshy prominence in front of the opening or hole in the ear.)

Place the index finger of each hand lightly, but with a gentle pressure, over the outer corners of the closed eyelids.

Place the middle fingers on the sides of the nose, near the nostrils.

Place the fourth fingers above, and the little fingers below, the corners of the mouth.

With the fingers held lightly in these positions, inhale with the sound of "AAAWWW" as in Kriya proper, drawing the cool current upward through the cerebrospinal tube from the coccyx to the spot between the eyebrows, at the same time gazing upward, without strain, and focusing the closed eyes at the Christ-consciousness center or spiritual eye.

Holding the breath, knit the eyebrows tightly and quickly, and simultaneously exert a firm but gentle pressure with all the fingers, thus completely closing the ear, nose, and mouth openings and holding the eyeballs fixed in the upward-gazing position.

While continuing to hold the breath for a mental count of one to twelve (or more, if you can hold the breath longer without discomfort), watch the revolving light of the spiritual eye--the spiritual aurora borealis.

Release the pressure of the fingers (without removing them from their positions) and exhale, sending the current downward through the spinal tube with the sound of "EEEEEE."

The foregoing constitutes one practice of Jyoti Mudra. Perform Jyoti Mudra three times after your morning practice of fourteen Kriyas, and three times in the evening, after your evening practice of fourteen Kriyas.

THE TELESCOPIC DOORWAY TO COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS In the beginning the spiritual eye may appear differently to different people; but when it is seen perfectly, it will appear (as described in earlier lessons) as a star in the center of a blue sphere that is encircled by a golden halo. The outer golden halo represents in terms of astral color the vibration of the Cosmic Energy or Holy Ghost; the blue sphere represents the vibration of the Christ Consciousness that pervades all creation. To penetrate the blue disc is to enter the telescopic doorway to Christ Consciousness. The little white star in the middle represents that pure light of God beyond creation; the yogi who penetrates the star enters Cosmic Consciousness.

We know from the Bible that the wise men followed the "star of the East" to find the Christ child. Each was following the star in his own spiritual eye. You also may learn to see and to follow the star of the spiritual eye, through whose universal sight the wise men were able to perceive Christ Consciousness manifesting in a human form--that of the little baby Jesus. Unless a person takes his consciousness through the spiritual eye, he cannot possess Christ Consciousness.

The human body is an externalization of the powers within the little five-pointed star in the spiritual eye. Man's head, two hands, and two feet are symbolized in the five rays of the star in the spiritual eye. These rays have materialized into the five elements (ether, air, fire, water, and earth) of which the human body is composed.

We are living like chicks inside an eggshell: earth is the yolk and sky is the shell. As the chick is confined in the egg until it grows strong enough to break the shell and come out into a larger world, so the average person is confined to this sky-bound world until he discovers the telescopic spiritual eye through which he can pierce the skyey shell and scan the spheres beyond. Using the spiritual telescope of the single eye, he projects his consciousness through the shell of the material universe and enters subtler realms whose beauty no tongue can describe. His vision extends throughout the cosmos into Infinity.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The "three wise men" of the East lived continuously in the highest spiritual consciousness. Through intuition they knew of the coming of the prophet Jesus; and by the guiding "star of the East" or God Consciousness in the spiritual light of the single eye, they were led to the Christ child.

Like those truly wise men, let us realize the spiritual values of life--the realities. We should not be deluded by the seeming reality of matter and visible things--things not of the Spirit. Rather we should live with heart and consciousness uplifted, in the region of spiritual Reality, where we are sure of our path, and where our true heritage as sons of God is to be attained.

To progress spiritually we must dwell constantly with the thought of Christ. We must work with Him, rejoice with Him, serve with Him, and behold Him in every object and in every person we meet. How can we expect to attain Christ Consciousness unless we live perpetually in Him? In Him we may have every legitimate wish fulfilled in this life and may enjoy our friends and possessions with the consciousness of God. We should love all our dear ones, and enjoy their comradeship by seeing Him in them. We should strive always to realize that they are manifestations of God. We are Spirit; they are Spirit. Spirit loves Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

Peace eternal, joy eternal, is the glory of my being. On the altar of peace and ever-new happiness I invoke the Blessed Lord of Aum.

Illustrations of Maha Mudra, Parts I, II, and III;
and of Jyoti Mudra

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP LESSON, STEP 7, Lesson KRIYA 6-A



MAHA MUDRA
(Part One)

Fig. 1
(left)

Fig. 2
(right)



MAHA MUDRA
(Part Two)

Fig. 3
(left)

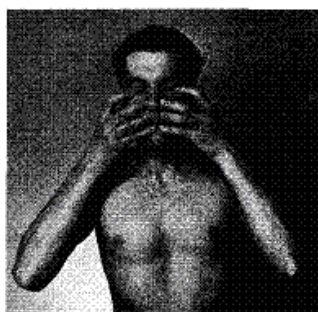
Fig. 4
(right)



MAHA MUDRA
(Part Three)

Fig. 5
(left)

Fig. 6
(right)



Jyoti Mudra

Fig. 7
(left)

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Think of God before performing an action. Think of Him while you are active. And think of Him after the action is performed.

Feel God as love in all hearts. Feel God in the impartial love you feel for all human beings and in the tender love you feel for all created things.

Create Godlike habits by thinking of Him as beauty and fragrance in the flowers; color in the rainbow; love, wisdom, and power in all human minds; and vastness in the ocean and sky.

Think of Him as life in the breeze; vitality in the sunshine; as peace in the moonbeams; reason in the mind; rest in dreams; joy in sleep; perennial, ever new Bliss in meditation; and love in all hearts.

PRAYER

The breeze of Thy love wafts through me, O Father, and the leaves of the tree of my life gently tremble in response to Thy coming. The leaves of my soul are just awakening. Their rustling murmur, floating through the ether, calls the weary ones to rest in the shade of my peace, which comes from Thee.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

Long before this you should have solemnly dedicated a small room, or a part of your bedroom (perhaps a corner screened off, or even a ventilated closet) to serve as your temple of meditation. If you have not done so, delay no longer. Sanctify this temple by devoting it exclusively to the practice of Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, especially Kriya Yoga. Consider yourself the priest of your temple, a spiritual disciplinarian who corrects and instructs the congregation of your diverse untrained thoughts and feelings, that you may become an example of ideal spiritual living.

Each member may thus create in his own home a private experimental laboratory in which to weigh, test, and practice the Self-Realization Fellowship techniques. Progressing logically and scientifically in his understanding of the true laws of yoga, he may attain the pinnacle of Self-realization. Kriya is the scientific way of changing material body-consciousness into spiritual Cosmic Consciousness.

Kriya is mathematical in its results. All who practice it correctly and regularly will learn this truth for themselves. By the correct morning and evening practice of Kriya, the spine, brain, and mind become beneficially changed or spiritualized. It requires one year to bring about through natural evolution a change equivalent to that produced by one completed Kriya breath. By practicing Kriya twenty-four times daily, the devotee may achieve in one day the equivalent of twenty-four years of natural spiritual evolution.

After practicing Kriya and resting for a time in the inner peace that comes from meditation, one is better fitted to do creative work in connection with literature, art, or science. Stimulated by Kriya, intuition develops of itself, without effort, because one's consciousness is then transferred from the outward senses inward to the spine and brain. Self-realization can come only through the development of one's intuition. While practicing Kriya, feel the power of God in the spine. Through regular, deep practice of the Kriya Technique you will contact Christ and the other great Gurus of this path, and they will help you to attain union with God, the Infinite Spirit.

As a child just learning to walk must walk slowly before learning to run, so it is with Kriya. This advice should not cause you to harbor any fears. Kriya is the highest technique given by spiritual special-

ists for destroying all physical, mental, and spiritual ills. But you should carefully follow the instructions for practice of the technique, and make a sincere daily effort to adhere to the laws of ideal living. The following suggestions will be helpful to the Kriya yogi who is carrying out the prescribed daily routine of Kriya practice.

- (1) The practice of a few preparatory exercises has been found to be invigorating and effective (although not absolutely essential) to condition the body for Kriya. If for some reason you are unable to precede your Kriya practice with the complete routine of SRF Re-charging Exercises given in Lesson 8-A (these take about fifteen minutes), the three following exercises may be practiced in their stead.

Exercise A:

Stand erect, with shoulder blades together, chest out, chin up, hands down at the sides. Exhale slowly, dropping the head on the chest, and bend forward at the waist until the hands touch the floor. Then inhale, slowly straightening the body, at the same time raising the arms upward over the head and bending the body backward with head and hands as far back as you can stretch. Hold breath to a comfortable count. Then exhale slowly, repeating the exercise. Practice this three times.

Exercise B:

This exercise should be performed in bare feet before an open window. Stand erect, with shoulders back, chest out, chin up. Raise the hands and feet up and down in alternate succession, as in ordinary walking, while remaining in one place. Practice this walking exercise for three minutes or longer.

Exercise C:

Practice Exercise B at a moderate running gait for one minute or longer.

- (2) Eat very little or no meat; never beef or pork. Include in your diet plenty of fruits, raw vegetables, and ground nuts.
- (3) Never practice Kriya on a full stomach. Practice before meals, or at least three hours after meals. Partial fasting (on fruit juice, for a day), is beneficial and effective in cleansing the body of restlessness-producing toxins. Naturally one should fast only with the approval of his or her physician.

If you cannot arrange your time so as to practice Kriya either before or at least three hours after eating, then practice not more than six Kriyas at one time.

- (4) Practice the Kriya Technique mentally only if you have a heart ailment or a respiratory difficulty (even if it is just a cold), or if you are having any serious, temporary physical health problem. The practice of Kriya can bring no harm; however, because of its direct effect on the life currents in the spine, it is better not to prac-
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tice the technique when the spinal currents are being affected by some temporary, serious malfunctioning of the body.

Entertain no fear, suspicion, or doubt. Write to the SRF Mother Center if you have any questions concerning the practice of Kriya.

- (5) After the first three months of pregnancy, practice only six Kriyas and one Jyoti Mudra twice daily, and omit Maha Mudra. It is very beneficial to your child that you continue to meditate during pregnancy, regularly practicing the Hong-Sau and Aum Techniques. But after the first three months of pregnancy, discontinue Maha Mudra and reduce the number of Kriyas performed to six in the morning and six in the evening meditation, followed each time by one Jyoti Mudra.
- (6) Bear in mind that the practice of a highly advanced technique such as Kriya Yoga is incompatible with unbalanced living. The benefits of Kriya will be enhanced by the practice of even-mindedness and the avoidance of excessive excitement or emotionalism, wrong habits of diet, and so on. Observe strict moderation in everything, particularly in sex life. Self-control strengthens the mind and life force and brings happiness and peace of mind.
- (7) Do not discuss or divulge any technique without first consulting with SRF headquarters, which reserves the sole right to give Kriya instruction, or to appoint a qualified SRF member to give such instruction. If you know of someone who you feel should have the benefit of certain SRF Techniques, encourage him to become an SRF student that he may receive the full benefits of study. If some difficulty stands in the way of his becoming a member, advise him to write directly to Self-Realization Fellowship, explaining his situation and affirming his sincere desire to receive instruction in specific SRF Techniques.

The next Lesson in this series, K-7A, consists of a brief step-by-step outline of the techniques of Maha Mudra, Kriya proper, and Jyoti Mudra, with brief listings of the key points to be remembered in connection with each.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Lessen your worldly burdens by meditating deeply; practice Self-Realization Fellowship teachings and Kriya Yoga. God tests your love for Him. Because His test of delusion is so very strong, millions in the world today are not interested in Him. That is why they are suffering the ravages of wars, famines, and natural calamities. The Lord did not create this world that we build here a temple of lasting happiness. Our home is in Him. As the wave's home is in the ocean bosom, so our home is in the bosom of Spirit.

YOU ARE A PERFECT REFLECTION OF SPIRIT

You are, and ever shall be, a perfect reflection of Spirit. You were Spirit, though now you imagine yourself to be mortal. But by meditation on your true Self, and by performing God-reminding actions constantly, you can remember your forgotten Spirit-nature and remain in that divine consciousness of ever new bliss through all futurity. Forget the nightmare of present limitations. If you have assurance of the Infinite; if you know that God is protecting you; then, whether nature shatters your body or not, you are still on the lap of immortality, still on the lap of that infinite assurance. As the ocean is the wave and the wave the ocean, so affirm: "Spirit is I, and I am Spirit." Forget your dream-born mortal weakness. Wake up and know that you and God are one.

AFFIRMATION

I am Thy babe of eternity,
rocking in the cradle of Thine
omnipresent bosom.

SRF TECHNIQUE OF KRIYA YOGA

"Even a little practice of this religious rite will save you from dire fears (mahato bhayat, the colossal sufferings inherent in the repeated cycles of life and death)." This stanza from the Bhagavad-Gita (2:40) was quoted by Babaji for the encouragement of all Kriya Yogis. Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya, is the param-param-paramguru of all SRF-YSS members who practice Kriya Yoga. The deathless master has promised to guard and guide all sincere students.

TECHNIQUE:

1. Sit in the meditation posture, on a chair, feet flat on the floor; or cross-legged on the bed or floor. Hold the spine erect; chin parallel to the ground; shoulders drawn well back; chest out; abdomen in; hands (with palms upturned) resting on the thighs where they join the abdominal region.
2. With eyes closed or half-closed, concentrate the gaze at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead, between the eyebrows.
3. Think of the spine as a hollow tube that extends upward from the coccygeal center at the base of the spine to the medulla center at the base of the skull, where the hollow tube curves forward through the cerebrum to the Christ Consciousness center in the middle of the forehead.
4. Expand the throat. To do this, first turn the tongue backward toward the throat. Do not strain. Then let the tongue return to normal position, but retain the expansion of the throat that results from turning the tongue backward.
5. Inhale through the mouth and nose, calmly and slowly making the sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat. As you are drawing in the breath, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), feel a cool current being drawn up the spine from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center. Feel the coolness in the throat, and hear the sound of "AW," and mentally transfer both feeling and sound to the spine, as though the cool breath were coming up inside the spine with a sound of "AW." The sound of "AW" should be audible, but not loud.

6. Having drawn the cool current up to the Christ Consciousness center, pause briefly; a count of three should be long enough.
7. Exhale through the mouth and nose, slowly and calmly, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), making the sound of "EE" high in the expanded throat. Feel that the breath is a warm, fine (threadlike) current flowing down from the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead through the spine to the coccygeal center at the base of the spine. Feel the warmth in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "EE," and mentally transfer both the sensation of warmth and the sound of "EE" to the spine, imagining the warm breath to be going down through the spine with the fine sound of "EE."
8. The initial concentration on the idea of transferring the sensation and sound from the throat to the spine is practiced merely to stimulate the movement of the actual currents of life-energy in the spine. As you begin to feel the actual currents, concentrate only on the currents, cool or warm.
9. Repeat 14 times, morning and evening.

KEY POINTS:

1. Practice the SRF Recharging Exercises beforehand to purify the body. Begin your meditation with practice of the SRF concentration technique (Hong-Sau), to calm the mind; follow this with practice of the SRF meditation technique (listening to the Om sound). Then you are ready to begin your Kriya practice.
2. Before starting Kriya, make a loose fist with each hand. Hold the two fists close together, with the thumb of one hand pressed against the little finger of the other, to create a hollow tube like a shepherd's pipe. Place the fist nearest you to the lips as though to "play" the "pipe." Inhale through the mouth and feel the sensation of coolness inside the hollow tube of the fists. Exhale (through the mouth), and feel inside the fists the sensation of warmth. Practice this several times, concentrating on the alternating sensations of coolness and warmth as the breath is inhaled and exhaled. Quickly transfer this sensation to the throat, taking the fists away from the mouth and letting the relaxed hands rest palms upward on the legs at the juncture of the thighs with the abdominal region. From the throat, transfer the sensation felt in the throat to the spine; this is not difficult, as the upper part of the spine is directly behind the throat. At first, breathe quickly a few times, feeling the current moving a short distance up and down the spine in the region of the throat; gradually, breathe more and more slowly, and feel the currents going farther up and down the spine. Finally, breathe the full Kriya count, feeling the currents flowing all the way from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center, and back again. (Don't break the transition of sensation from fists to throat to spine. The transitions should be smooth, flowing, unbroken.)

3. The eyeballs, upturned in steady gaze toward the Christ Consciousness center, should not move. The beginner should practice with eyelids half-closed for best results; because, when the eyelids are completely closed, the eyes have a tendency to relax from the upturned gaze at the Christ Consciousness center. However, once the meditator has succeeded in keeping the eyes fixed in their upturned gaze at the Christ Consciousness center, it does not matter whether the eyelids are half-closed or completely closed.
4. Use a little olive oil, or unsalted butter, or any vegetable oil to lubricate the throat. Place oil on tongue, let it trickle slowly down.
5. Get mentally inside the spine. Put the whole mind and feeling there.
6. Inhalation and exhalation should be equal and slow. There should be only slight movement of the chest.
7. Don't allow any break in the breath, such as "AW, AW, AW." The sound should be steady: "AAAWWW," "EEEEEE."
8. The sounds of "AW" and "EE" must be distinctly made, not too loudly nor too softly (i.e., the sounds should be barely audible to the meditator); and correctly made (not with the mouth but with the breath in the expanded throat). The right sounds are necessary for success in Kriya.
9. Practice continuously, without a stop, until finished with your Kriyas. If you are very restless, however, practice the technique of concentration (Hong-Sau) for a time to calm down. Then resume Kriya practice.
10. If you fail to practice correctly one Kriya, start the Kriya breath anew and do it correctly.
11. Do not be absentminded (this may be a tendency with the first few Kriyas). Do each one with a sense of its importance; on the scale of spiritual advancement, one Kriya rightly practiced is equivalent to a year of natural evolution.
12. Be relaxed. Very important; don't strain. Enjoy the accession of peace and the soothing sensations of regenerative effect in the spine that accompany Kriya practice from the very beginning.
13. Be regular. Do fourteen Kriyas morning and evening, every day, regardless of any circumstances that may arise to interfere.
14. Sit for a long time after practicing Kriya, praying and experiencing the joy-contact of God. Do not get up and leave immediately after Kriya practice.
15. In addition to your regular morning and evening periods set aside

for Kriya, you may also practice a few Kriyas (up to, but not more than, six) whenever you have free moments during the day. But your regular morning or evening practice should not exceed 14 Kriyas, and your occasional practices during the day should not exceed six Kriyas.

Kriya should always be performed with deepest concentration and complete detachment from outer distractions. Depth of concentration is more important than length of practice; but both are necessary for advanced spiritual development. Therefore make it a point to set aside at least one day a week when you will have time for a long meditation (three hours if possible) after your regular morning or night performance of 14 Kriyas.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Eat very little or no meat; never beef or pork. Include plenty of fruits, raw vegetables, and ground nuts in your diet.
2. Never practice Kriya on a full stomach. Practice before meals, or wait at least three hours after meals. Partial fasting is beneficial and effective. If you cannot manage your time so as to practice Kriya either before eating or three hours after eating, then practice not more than six Kriyas at a time.
3. If you are in poor physical health, especially at times of heart or respiratory difficulties, practice Kriya mentally only.
4. After the first three months of pregnancy, practice only six Kriyas twice daily. But do continue to meditate regularly and to practice the Hong-Sau and Aum Techniques.
5. Do not exceed the specified number of Kriyas without first having obtained the approval of SRF headquarters.
6. Entertain no fear, suspicion, or doubt. Write to the SRF Mother Center if you have questions.
7. Do not lead an unbalanced life; observe strict moderation in everything, especially in sex life. Self-control strengthens the mind and life force.
8. Practice even-mindedness at all times.
9. Do not discuss with others nor divulge to them any of the SRF techniques, without first having obtained permission from SRF headquarters (which reserves the right to give such instruction, or to appoint SRF members who may give such instruction). If you think someone should know the techniques, encourage him to become an SRF student; or, if some difficulty stands in his way, advise him to write to SRF about the situation.

OUTLINE OF MAHA MUDRA

1. Sit erect on the floor or on a bed that is quite firm.
2. Bend left leg back under body, so that the sole of left foot supports left hip.
3. Draw right leg up against body, so that the upper part of leg is as close to torso as possible and the sole of the foot is flat on the floor.
4. Place hands, with fingers interlocked, around the right knee.
5. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat and bringing the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube to the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows.
6. Holding the breath, bend the head forward and downward until the chin touches the chest, at the same time releasing the hand-hold on the right knee and stretching right leg forward until it lies straight on the floor.
7. Continuing to hold the breath, grasp with the interlocked fingers of both hands the big toe of the right foot and pull it gently toward you, mentally counting from one to six in this bent posture.
8. Sit up, straightening the spine and lifting the right knee upward until the leg is again in the first position (see items 3 and 4 above).
9. Exhale with the sound of "EE," made high in the expanded throat, sending the warm current downward through the cerebrospinal tube to the coccyx.
10. Repeat the foregoing with leg positions reversed, so that the right foot is tucked under the right hip and the left leg is drawn up against the body.
11. Sit with both left and right legs drawn against body; clasp hands around knees.
12. Inhale, as in Kriya proper, making the sound of "AW" deep in the throat and bring the cool current up inside the cerebrospinal tube.
13. Holding breath, bend head forward and downward until chin touches chest, at the same time releasing the hold of the clasped hands and stretching both legs forward until they are straight out in front of you.
14. Still holding breath, grasp the great toe of left foot and the great toe of the right foot with clasped hands and pull the toes toward you, counting one to six.

15. Resume upright position with spine straight, both legs drawn up close to the body, and the hands clasped around the knees.
16. Exhale, making the sound of "EE" and sending the warm current downward through the spine to the coccyx.
17. Perform the foregoing steps (1-16), in the order given, three times.

KEY POINTS:

1. Practice Maha Mudra before Kriya proper and at any time that the body requires adjustment, for this practice magnetizes and adjusts the spine.
2. Make same preparation for practice of Maha Mudra as you do for Kriya proper.
3. Practice on a woolen blanket spread on the floor; or, better still, on blanket spread over a firm bed.
4. There is a natural tendency to tense the muscles in the back during the forward bend (see step 6 in outline), thus creating resistance to the stretching motion. The benefits of practice will be greatly increased, however, by keeping the muscles along the spine relaxed.
5. It is essential that the spine be stretched not only in its upper but in its lower part; this is accomplished only if the outstretched leg is kept straight while one is pulling on the great toe (steps 6 and 7 in outline). Those who cannot reach the toe without bending the knee should instead pull on the foot or even the ankle, if by doing so they can avoid bending the knee and still accomplish the vital stretching of the spine.
6. After the first three months of pregnancy, discontinue performance of Maha Mudra.

OUTLINE OF JYOTI MUDRA

1. Sit erect on a straight chair with feet flat on the floor (unless you prefer the lotus posture or the ordinary cross-legged posture).
2. Put the thumb of the left hand lightly over the tragus of the left ear, and the thumb of the right hand over the tragus of the right ear. (The tragus is the cartilaginous prominence in front of the opening or hole in the ear.)
3. Place the index finger of each hand lightly, but with a gentle pressure, over the outer corners of the closed eyelids.
4. Place the middle fingers on the sides of the nose, near the nostrils.

5. Place fourth fingers above and the little fingers below the corners of the mouth.
6. With fingers held lightly in these positions, inhale with the sound of "AW," as in Kriya proper, drawing the cool current upward through the cerebrospinal tube from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center between the eyebrows, and at the same time gazing upward (without strain) and focusing closed eyes at this point.
7. Holding the breath, knit eyebrows tightly and quickly, and simultaneously exert a firm but gentle pressure with all the fingers, thus completely closing the ear, nose, and mouth openings and holding the eyeballs fixed in the upward-gazing position.
8. While continuing to hold the breath for a mental count of 1 to 12 (or as long as you can hold the breath without discomfort), watch the revolving light of the spiritual eye--the spiritual aurora borealis.
9. Release the pressure of the fingers (without removing them from their positions) and exhale, sending the warm current downward through the spinal tube with the sound of "EE."
10. Practice this exercise three times, morning and evening, after the practice of Kriya proper.

KEY POINTS:

1. Before you practice Jyoti Mudra, offer the following prayer:

"Heavenly Father, guide me with Thy wisdom through the star in the spiritual eye. May my consciousness follow to its Source the dove of light descending from heaven, that I be baptized in Christ Consciousness. Heavenly Father, show me always the single eye; meet me always through the spiritual eye."
2. When you see the spiritual eye perfectly, you will see at the center a five-pointed star, surrounded by a blue light, which in turn is encircled by a halo of golden light. This vision will come with faithful practice of this technique.
3. In holding the breath during Jyoti Mudra (see point 8 in outline), one involuntarily tenses the rib cage in order to maintain the resulting expansion of the chest. The Kriya yogi can gain better results by voluntarily relaxing the chest during this part of Jyoti Mudra. In so doing he may find, if his concentration is deep and calm, that the epiglottis also relaxes (i.e., opens), allowing air into the mouth. However, as the fingers hold the mouth and nose openings tightly closed, the escape of air (and subsequent deflation of the chest) is prevented.
4. After the first three months of pregnancy, practice just one Jyoti Mudra twice daily (after six Kriyas morning and evening).

THE BOAT OF MY ZEAL

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Father, many a net in silence I wove with the golden tassel of my devotion, and yet You have so often fled from me down the sea of time. Beloved, with deliberate insistency I am pursuing You in the boat of my zeal. I am casting upon You vaster nets of my burning inner peace.

Millenniums have slipped by and I have been voyaging on the sea of incarnations. Now I cast all my nets away. I plunge in Your omnipresence, swiftly swimming after You with powerful strokes of love inspired by You. I am racing up and down into the innermost spaces of Your love, and yet You seem to elude me.

As I cried with the broken hearts and concentrated sobs of many lives, at last You broke the vow of Your silence and whispered to me: "Why, your boat of devotion, your net of zeal, your silken tassel of peace, your swimming over the cosmic sea or the waves of life, and the innermost spaces of perceptions--all, all I Am. Wherefore do you pursue Me in vain? I was always with you and in you in your pursuing and in all the places you pursued Me."

PRAYER

Many doors opened of themselves before me because of Thy coming. O Lord, everything shone with life when Thou camest. Everywhere dumb matter spoke, Spirit-resurrected by Thy touch. Everywhere throbbed the incense-breeze of stillness, bearing to me Thy perfume of Bliss. I beheld Thy sanctuary, hidden beneath the broken rocks of silence.

KRIYA YOGA -- THE HIGHER INITIATION

These techniques should be kept strictly confidential. Do not misuse them, and do not tell your experiences to others, as they will not understand unless they are spiritually developed. It is better to write to Self-Realization Fellowship Mother Center about your progress. Only through great good karma does one earn the opportunity to receive advanced techniques such as Kriya Yoga for the liberation of the soul from mortal bondage. It is necessary to observe the divine laws in order to attain God Consciousness. Blessed are those who have followed and who will continue to follow the path of Self-Realization Fellowship to the end of life.

CONTROL OF COSMIC ENERGY Owing to the circulation of the life currents up and down the spine during Kriya Yoga practice, the Christ Consciousness Center (will power center) becomes a positive pole and the coccygeal center becomes a negative pole. Passing up and down the spine between these two poles, the life current becomes a magnet of energy that draws into the spine various currents from the nervous system and attracts into the body, through the medulla oblongata, fresh supplies of life energy from the cosmic Source. The various currents of life energy in the body, freed from the limiting necessity of supplying the heart, lungs, and other organs, mingle and become identified with the subtle currents in the spine and finally become transmuted into cosmic energy. This is what is meant by pranayama, or control of life force in the heart, spine, and nervous system. Pranayama results in breathlessness, which calms the heart and lungs and which is favorable for one's longevity. In the breathless state the life force, which ordinarily is dependent on oxygen for its manifestation and perpetuation in the human body, finds freedom from its slavery to the breath (i. e., oxygen) and moves Spiritward. Breathlessness is deathlessness.

Many people erroneously believe that pranayama (control of life force) is accomplished by control of breath. The opposite is true: control of breath is a result of controlling the life force. The real meaning of pranayama, according to Patanjali, foremost exponent of Yoga, is the gradual, unforced cessation of breathing. The discontinuance of inhalation and exhalation can be brought about by Kriya Yoga, a form of pranayama wherein the human blood is decarbonized and recharged with oxygen; the atoms of this extra oxygen are

then transmuted into life current, rendering breathing unnecessary for certain periods. The Bhagavad-Gita describes Kriya Yoga thus:

"Offering inhaling breath into the outgoing breath, and offering the outgoing breath into the inhaling breath, the yogi neutralizes both these breaths; he thus releases the life force from the heart and brings it under his control."

The yogi arrests decay in the body by an addition of life force, and arrests the mutations of growth in the body by apan (eliminating current). Thus neutralizing decay and growth, by quieting the heart, the yogi learns life control.

Trying to control the life force by holding the breath in the lungs is unscientific and unpleasant. Holding the breath in the lungs for uncomfortably long periods causes harmful pressure on the heart, lungs, diaphragm, and arteries, and should therefore be strictly avoided.

FROM MATTER TO SPIRIT

While inhaling and exhaling during Kriya practice, imagine that the inhaling breath is going upward from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows; and that the exhaling breath is moving downward through the spine to the coccyx. The breath itself really does not circulate in the spine; but the increased life force derived from the transmuted breath is mentally directed by visualization and ~~will power to circulate continuously up and down the spine during the practice~~ of Kriya. The magnetic pull of the circulating current draws the bodily currents away from the sensory nerves and organs. The five sense-telephones of touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing are thus disconnected, and the attention is freed from any possible invasion of sensory perceptions until the command of will sends the life current back into the sense telephones.

Kriya Yoga is the greatest psychophysical method for actually reversing the "searchlights" of life force, consciousness, and the senses from perceptions of matter to perceptions of the indwelling Spirit. The circulating life current in the spine quickly spiritualizes the spine and brain, which in turn spiritualize the whole body.

By this method of continuous, regulated breathing and by unswerving concentration of the thought of a cool current ascending and a warm current descending in the spinal column, the spinal cells become magnetized and sensitized. The awakened life force, circulating by mental direction up and down the spine, is converted into a dynamo that, by withdrawing the energy from the five sense telephones, produces a state of superconscious ecstasy. Hindu yogis state that the spiritual potency of this spinal current actually changes and refines the atomic composition of the body cells.

ALTAR OF THE SPINE

Those who conscientiously practice Kriya Yoga will never forsake this path; they will be held by their

own Self-realization. The joy and realization experienced in the spine by the Kriya yogi is boundless. Every magnetization of the spine through the properly effected circulation of the cool and warm currents gives unending inward realizations and joy. This joy stands supreme in comparison with any material pleasure. You will find this superior happiness more tempting than the pleasures craved by instincts and emotions. The technique of Kriya Yoga will change your consciousness from identification with momentarily pleasure-giving bodily sensations to identification with the ever-new, ever-lasting joy of superconsciousness that reigns on the altar of the spine.

When you become accustomed to the coolness and warmth felt in Kriya you will feel great happiness. Your brain will be clear and calm because your entire consciousness will be centralized in the spine. There is nothing in the world to equal the soothing sensation of joy felt in the spine. But you must practice. God will not respond unless you apply the law. Kriya Yoga will take you to His favorite haunt--the spine.

Before you increase the number of times that you daily practice the Kriya Technique, you must first ask Mother Center for permission. Kriya yogis who become deeply developed by intensive practice, and who, by virtue of their manifest progress, are given permission by the Mother Center to increase the number of Kriyas, may eventually fit the body to express the infinite potentials of Cosmic Energy by practice of this technique 108 times in slow succession. The current will then automatically move by itself, and the joy experienced will be indescribable.

The Kriya Yoga Technique is the foundation of Self-realization and must be practiced daily. "Where there's a will, there's a way." Your first and most important engagement is with God, for you cannot keep your engagements with the world without having first borrowed the power from God. If God draws your life away, you will then have abruptly to cancel all your engagements, whether with your family, your friends, your country, or the world in general. No duty is greater than your duty to find and know God, because no duties can be performed without using His gifts to you of various powers.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

The greatest of all sins is to forget God, your own eternal Being. To forget Him is to punish yourself with the supreme sin of ignorance--the cause of all physical, mental, and spiritual miseries.

ON THE THRONE OF OMNIPRESENCE

I sit in the superconscious chamber of bliss. Once in a while during the diurnal solar hour, I come down into my parlor chamber of consciousness. Then I open the doors of music, vision, fragrance, taste, and touch--and let the fairies of song, color, and tenderness come and dance before me. They make me laugh; they make me cry. When I cry too much and become bruised by the wounds of trials, I close the doors of the senses, lest even the aroma of the rose or the song of the nightingale divert me.

Then I race through immeasurable space into the chamber of sleep and dreams. There I lie quiet beneath the many sheets and quilts of darkness. After a while, perhaps when I have had enough of sleep, I open a secret anti-chamber and get into the chamber of dreams, and there I begin to play my home-made films of experiences in the movie house of the subconscious mind. There, in this movie house, I do just as I please. I weave the golden cloth of dreams with the silken threads of sweet memories, that I may write the name of God thereon.

I am His child, the prince of the cosmos, son of the Omnipotent. I tarry in the chamber of changes and play with the senses in the chamber of consciousness, or in the little cinema room of my dream movies. But when I am through with these two chambers, once in a while I roar through space in the ~~plane of my fancy into the region of unplumbed darkness.~~ Since darkness is something, I try to get beyond its yawning gulfs on to the shores of eternal void. There, in the land of oneness, no dualities, not even dreams, dare to disturb me. I am the king of all creation, the factory of the cosmos, the king of all things, the prince of intuition-omniscience. I am the prince of peace, the king of three worlds, sitting on the throne of my omnipresence.

AFFIRMATION

I shall do away with the mockery of
parroting prayer. I shall pray deeply
until the darkness of meditation burns with
Thy flaming presence.

BREAK BINDING THREADS OF FALSE DESIRES

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Again and again, with threads of false desires, you ignorantly bind yourself in the cocoon of mortal earthlife. Break those threads! Become a butterfly of eternity and fly away to the shores of immortality.

Do not crave earthly things; enjoy them in an unattached way, without desiring them, so that you will not miss them when they are gone. While the storm is on, the wave separates from the ocean, but as soon as the ocean is again calm, the wave goes back into the ocean. So it is with us. As soon as this storm of desire passes, we can go back into the ocean of God.

When God comes to you, you will have so much to be happy about that you will not mind the loss of all lesser desires. It is only by divine knowledge and wisdom that you can emancipate yourself.

PRAYER

O Spirit, teach me to find the fountain of infinite power within myself, that I may drink of its soothing waters and quench the thirst of all my needs.

KRIYA YOGA--THE HIGHER INITIATION

The magnetization of the spine accomplished by the devotee's neutralizing the process of inhalation and exhalation awakens his occult cerebrospinal centers of life and consciousness. The resulting higher states of consciousness are accompanied by a gradual, natural cessation of heartbeat and of lung activity; the ego or pseudo soul reawakens to the forgotten truth that "man shall not live by bread alone"; that is, bodily functioning is not an absolute condition for man's expression of life and consciousness.

The neutralization of inhalation and exhalation also transmutes oxygen into its basic constituents of atomic energy. This energy is further distilled into subtle life energy (intelligently guided electrical forces or prana) and mingles with the healing currents in the main brain region and in the six subdynamos of the spinal centers.

FUNCTION OF BREATH IS TO BURN CARBON	A continuous regularity of inhalation and exhalation charges the body with an increased supply of oxygen through the lungs; this oxygen "burns" or oxidizes the waste impurities, chiefly carbon, in the venous blood.
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The purifying effect on the blood of the increased oxygen intake during inhalation is enhanced by an accompanying large increase in the expulsion of waste carbon dioxide from the lungs during exhalation. As a consequence of this stepping up of the process of oxygenation and elimination by the devotee's continuous Kriya breathing, very little broken-down tissue remains in the blood as waste material. There is then less necessity for the heart to pump venous blood into the lungs for purification through release of carbon dioxide. The liberating result for the devotee is less need for breath.

IN TIME KRIYA TECHNIQUE BURNS OUT ALL CARBON FROM THE BLOOD	The continuous, regulated breathing practiced in the technique of Kriya removes the last residue of waste carbon occasioned by the activities of breathing and blood circulation. The venous blood, thus cleansed of dark impurities, ceases to flow to the lungs for purification. Hence the heart and the lungs are given an extraordinary rest.
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The inactivity of the muscles and limbs during meditation, by greatly lessening bodily carbon production, also is conducive to this restful state of the heart and lungs.

THE PURPOSE OF BURNING
CARBON IS TO QUIET THE
HEART AND THUS TO CONTROL
THE FIVE SENSE TELEPHONES
OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

The slowing down of heart, lung, and muscular activity having obviated the usual necessity for breathing, the life energy that flows outward through the five senses during bodily activity is now free to be diverted consciously to the spine, thus causing a switching-off of the sense telephones. A similar partial shutting down of life-force activity in the senses is accomplished unconsciously each night in the state of sleep.

SCIENTIFICALLY SWITCHING OFF
LIFE FORCE FROM FIVE NERVE
TELEPHONES AIDS CONCENTRATION

Sleep is an unconscious state of concentration wherein man's mind is involuntarily withdrawn from outer distractions. The thoughts in his subconscious mind remain dormant. Real concentration consists in the conscious withdrawal of the mind from outer distractions and from body consciousness, and in the focusing of the attention on a single object of thought. Such concentration may be accomplished scientifically by the practice of Kriya Yoga. By the stilling of muscular activity and by the decrease in activity of the heart and other internal organs, the Kriya yogi is able to switch off the life force from the five sense telephones.

The heart is the central switchboard connecting the five sense telephones with the brain. When the heart action slows down or stops completely during Kriya Yoga practice, the devotee becomes aware that life energy has been automatically switched off from his five senses; it is then impossible for perceptions of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell to enter his brain and thus to divert his attention by rousing past memories or by instigating new streams of thoughts. He has reached a peaceful "thoughtless" state of consciousness.

SLEEP VERSUS TECHNIQUE
OF CONSCIOUSLY SWITCHING
OFF THE NERVE CURRENTS

In sleep every night your attention is unconsciously disconnected from the senses, affording rest and refreshment to body and mind. The rejuvenating effect of sleep can be accomplished consciously by continuous, regulated Kriya breathing while the body is quiet in the meditative posture. Activity of mind, organs, and muscles is stilled without any loss of consciousness. By slowing down the heart and by preventing the outward dissipation of life currents in the sensory nerves, Kriya rests the heart and increases longevity.

A MIND THAT CAN FREE ITSELF
AT WILL FROM SENSATIONS CAN
EFFECTIVELY CONCENTRATE ON
ANY SUBJECT, OR UPON GOD

By deeply and correctly practicing the technique of Kriya even a few times one may decarbonize the blood, quiet the internal organs, and still the heart. Kriya enables you, consciously and at will, anytime, anywhere, to switch off the main life-current from the five sense telephones, thus freeing the mind from distractions and imparting to it the ability to concentrate single-pointedly on any idea, or upon God.

Whereas sleep, or unconscious quietness, leads to subconsciousness and its attendant state of partial peace, the Kriya Technique leads to a state of superconsciousness or divine awareness. The joy felt in this state is ever increasing, ever new. The Kriya yogi realizes (temporarily at first, then permanently) that by attaining superconsciousness he has passed beyond the need for nightly rejuvenation by sleep.

MOST PEOPLE REALLY The average life span of man is about
 "LIVE" ONLY FIVE YEARS sixty years. We may safely surmise that
 half of that time (or a total of thirty
 years) is spent in sleeping and eating; and that a total of approximately fifteen years is spent in making a living. This cuts down the "lifetime" of modern man to fifteen years, of which five are probably wasted in talking about other people; and another five may easily slip by in absentminded, unproductive pursuits. Since the purpose of life is to find God, man may be said not really to "live" even the five remaining years, unless he passes that time in Cosmic Consciousness.

It is necessary that every man fulfill his destined role in the drama of life, carrying his share of earthly duties and responsibilities. But his leisure time may be spent as he chooses, and his spiritual duty then is to seek God, to strive to express his soul possibilities. How may this ideal be accomplished in thirty years' time (assuming that at least thirty years are usually lost in sleep and foolishness)? The rishis calculated that even under ideal conditions it would normally take one million years of right living in body and mind before man could become a fit instrument to express Cosmic Consciousness. The rishis therefore sought, and found, a method of hastening brain evolution.

One cannot imagine knowing the meaning of all the words in the dictionary. Yet the entire four Vedas--those ponderous Hindu scriptures--were originally contained only in the minds of the great rishis of India, and were handed down by them for centuries by word of mouth. To express Cosmic Consciousness is to embrace the knowledge of everything contained in the united kingdom of God, on the pages of heaven and earth, in nature, and in human life. How may one so expand his mental capacity as to receive that knowledge within a single lifetime? THROUGH THE FAITHFUL PRACTICE OF KRIYA YOGA.

REALIZE THE POWER OF GOD WITHIN YOU

Try to realize the powers that are playing, like searchlights, within you! You can be a master only when you realize this power. You must persist with determined thoughts, so that you may realize that you are a child of God. When you realize that, you are saved. You must seek wisdom and power and prosperity from God. If you prefer to satisfy material desires rather than seek God, that is a travesty of life's true purpose, a grave error of judgment. Do not strive for unimportant things and reject the all-satisfying God.

God is not something mystical. He is tangible, because all tangible things come out of the Intangible. If you would only realize that! Why walk on the trail of life pursuing material desires, and so go on suffering? Even great and materially successful people will in the end realize the emptiness of their lives, but those who find God in this life are already rich in joy and power.

Students whose wills are governed by their whims, habits, and prenatal instincts wholly lack the self-control and power to do what is right, and consequently cannot obey. Disobedience to the wisdom of a guru, or the voice of conscience, leads to danger and misery, while obedience to the wise counsel of a God-realized guru leads to real freedom and to the attainment of the power to do at will what you think you should do and not what your uncontrolled instincts want you to do.

Make up your mind to follow the wisdom of spiritual specialists such as the great Masters who guide this movement--specialists who have scientifically studied all the mysterious problems of life and solved them.

How can the soul be satisfied by intellectual dogma? Listen to the clarion call of Self-Realization Fellowship to experience God for yourself, and follow this path. You will convince yourself now and forever, through your own daily experience, that you can commune with God and drown all your miseries in the nectar-sea of His omnipresence right within you.

AFFIRMATION

I will realize that I am a child of God. As a divine son I will seek wisdom and power and prosperity from my Heavenly Father.

KRIYA LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The following summaries of the Kriya Step constitute a quick general review of the most vital points of the theory and practice of the technique. Each time you review a lesson you may discover something that escaped you in your previous study, or a point whose importance may not have sufficiently impressed you before. It is through repetition that we learn the most.

INSPIRATION OF KRIYA STEP The ladder of the spine is the only way of true ascension, or upliftment, into Cosmic Consciousness. Physical and mental rejuvenation through adherence to harmonious divine laws of life and practice of the vital techniques of Kriya Yoga awaken latent supersensory powers and perceptions. Such discipline, with unflinching will and discrimination, estranges material desires and promotes not only control of emotions but control of the pranic forces. Intuitional wisdom-guided life energy then flows Godward in a purifying flood, as the "lotus petals," or rays of the cerebro-spinal centers are reversed from matter attention to absorption in the bliss of Spirit.

The results are definite and knowable as you follow the scientific steps you have been given. You will not be deceived by false prophets if you unswervingly practice these techniques and remain completely loyal to your Guru-Preceptor. The sacred relationship between guru and disciple is unending, for the guru watches over the disciple until his liberation is attained and they melt in God. Your footsteps are now firmly set on the path of Self-realization. It is up to you to go forward until you realize the Eternal Bliss.

KRIYA 1 The devotee should never become identified with any process leading to salvation, or freedom from reincarnation, but should use the process for its purpose of promoting spiritual growth. For instance, Hatha Yoga is a method of preparing the body for the advent of spiritual growth. One should not remain within its confines but go on to the attainment of freedom of mind and soul, as well as of body.

Raja Yoga is the royal road, as it combines the best of other yogic methods with its precepts of meditation. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches Raja Yoga techniques of uniting soul and Spirit. The SRF teachings also include the highest good found in other forms of yoga.

The foundational principles of all religions consist of Yama, the things a devotee should not do, and Niyama, the things a devotee should do. However, although the mere practice of the "shalts" and the "shalt nots" gives a certain satisfaction, it does not lead to further spiritual progress unless other steps follow.

The third important step is Asana or posture. The purpose of correct posture is to rise above, or to stop, the motions of the body whose restlessness prevents awareness of the soul. Stillness is the altar of Spirit. Where motion ceases, Spirit begins to manifest.

The fourth step is called Pranayama, or the switching off of the life force from the senses with the object of attaining Pratyahara. In Pratyahara the mind is disconnected from the five sense telephones.

Yoga comprises all the scientific techniques of uniting soul and God; and Pranayama is the greatest technique of uniting soul and God. Harness your actions to your resolutions. Those who make the right and continuous effort are the ones who find God. God says: "I silently and ever deeply respond to the devotional call of the devotee. My silent voice, calling him to ever-increasing bliss-joy in meditation, is my answer to the call of devotion."

KRIYA 2 Without the attainment of the fifth step of the ladder of Self-realization, further progress is impossible. The interiorization of mind, the state called Pratyahara, is an essential condition of freedom of the mind, and yields the power to use this interiorized mind. If you follow the meaning and understand the result of each separate step, you will see why this is so. Each step should yield a definite change in the state of consciousness, as:

- 1-2. Self-control and perfect equilibrium (practice of Yama-Niyama).
3. Mental and physical calmness (Asana).
4. Heart control, life-force control, mind control (Pranayama).
5. Freedom of mind from sensations, and power of interiorization (Pratyahara).
6. The power to use the interiorized mind to concentrate on one thought (Dharana).
7. The power to conceive the vastness of God by feeling or intuition (Dhyana).

The ultimate realization is samadhi, or complete union with God. Thus you may understand that true meditation is possible only after mastering Pratyahara.

Since the average person has no conception of God, how can he meditate upon God? Patanjali explains that the symbol of God is Aum, the Cosmic Vibration or Cosmic Sound. It is an all-permeating sound, oozing out of all atomic vibration. It is the unlimited, omnipresent, omniscient Holy Ghost, containing within itself the guiding principle of Christ Intelligence.

The Kriya Technique given by Lahiri Mahasaya is the greatest form of Pranayama; through its practice the heart becomes quiet, the energy is switched off from the five senses, and the mind attains the state of Pratyahara. The ultimate purpose for which these techniques are practiced should never be forgotten; the devotee should not be content to remain on one step, but climb to the spiritual pinnacle of Self-realization. Nir-bikalpa samadhi is the ultimate realization wherein the soul is completely conscious and aware of the ocean of Spirit and of its manifesting waves--the body, mind, and soul--at the same time.

KRIYA 3 The transmutation of the body consciousness, which is identified with the senses, into superconsciousness and Cosmic Consciousness is the "second birth," or rebirth into spiritual consciousness.

In meditation your consciousness and energy have to be consciously withdrawn from the senses and muscles to the spine. The practice of Kriya magnetizes the spine by circulating life current lengthwise around it, thereby withdrawing life current from the senses and involuntary organs and concentrating it in the spine. The spine and brain are the insulated altars where divine energy first descends into the body and goes out to the senses, keeping the soul busy with material things. Therefore, the Kriya Technique is the foundation and continuously expanding base of your own Self-realization, leading your consciousness through the spine to Cosmic Consciousness.

Prana means life energy. Prana is of two kinds: the creative Cosmic Energy that is the source of all living things, and the specific prana pervading each human body. The life energy vibrating outward becomes in man individualized, selfish, and body-bound, forgetting its cosmic connection. This cosmic energy is conscious (but not self-conscious) and must be consciously directed in order to become reconnected with its infinite Source.

In the human body, the seat of this life energy, or prana, is in the medulla oblongata. When through proper practice of Kriya Yoga (a technique of Pranayama, or life-control) you increase your perception and feeling; when the all-seeing eye is open, and when the all-absorbing power is felt; you will absorb truth not only through the limited power of the senses, but through the unlimited power of your soul perception and intuition.

KRIYA 4 Your soul is seeking an experience of God that is tangible. The Kriya Technique will give you mathematical results according to how much, how deeply, and how exactly you practice. These exercises are for control of prana. Every time you practice correctly, your entire system undergoes a change; your brain power and mental receptivity are expanded. By magnetizing the spine, you transmute the life force into radiant, all-accomplishing spiritual force, which in turn hastens physical and mental regeneration and rejuvenation. The Kriya Technique will transfer your attention from the sensations of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch, to the subtler perceptions in the spine and brain. The saints of India discovered that any bodily effect on the brain is a slow process, but a change effected by the brain on

the body is immediate. A process of sending the life force around the spine, which magnetizes the spine and brain, therefore produces an immediate effect and quickens evolution. As in science, so in religion, hidden truths are discovered by using concentration, systematic activity, and experimentation within the laws of nature emanating from God.

In order to reap the rich harvest of complete truth, you must faithfully make these practical instructions a part of your life now. Procrastination and postponement of effort lead to stagnation and retardation in the climb up the Seven Steps of Self-realization.

Through outside influences of rays and vibrations the mind and soul are quickened to a certain state in a year's time. The great ones of India found that it takes twelve years of solar evolution and right living to produce a certain change in mentality. By revolving the life force even once around the spine a change is effected in the brain and body which usually is possible only by a year of diseaseless existence, careful eating, and absorption of solar energy. The passing of this current once around the spine will therefore give you the equivalent of a year of solar evolution. Just as the earth's complete revolution around the sun produces one year's effect upon a human being, so the time of human evolution can be quickened by revolving the life force (the earthly physical energy) around the elliptical path of the spinal column and its six centers: upward from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows and downward from that point to the coccyx. In man's body, the soul is the central sun; and the six centers of the spine (apart from the seventh center in the head) make twelve points, corresponding to the twelve signs of the zodiac.

KRIYA 5 The Kriya Technique is the scientific, mathematical way of changing the material body consciousness into Cosmic Consciousness. The correct practice of Kriya fourteen times is equivalent to twelve years of natural progressive evolution.

There are few rules to follow, but these few should be strictly observed without deviation.

Always precede the practice of Kriya by a special prayer. This helps you to tune in with the great liberated Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship, who will help you in your efforts.

Essential preparation:

1. Moisten throat with olive oil or melted sweet butter.
2. Face east or north in straight armless chair over which a woolen blanket has been placed, running down under the feet.
3. Assume correct posture.
4. Maintain correct posture by vigilance, without becoming tense.
5. Experiment with the cool and warm currents of air through the closed fists, as described in this Lesson, in order to note the sensation that you are later to imagine passing around the spine.

The man of volition says: "I will use my dynamic volition until success or death." In this spirit practice your techniques, letting nothing interfere. Thus will your will merge with Divine Will and become wisdom-guided and limitless.

The contact of God is filled with treasures and power. This technique of Kriya helps to change the center of consciousness from the body and senses to the spine, the altar of God. You will find that you will be able to do creative work with ease in any line to which you apply yourself. Intuition will develop effortlessly.

Give great care to the study of the technique. Every detail must be observed. Practice each part until you are certain that you are doing it correctly. Refer frequently to your notes to be sure that you have not omitted any point.

First observe the preparatory rules, then begin Kriya proper, visualizing the spinal column as a hollow tube running from the coccyx to the point between the eyebrows. Inhale as directed, slowly, evenly, with the throat expanded properly to make the sound of "AW." Imagine a cool current passing up inside the spine, to the point between the eyebrows. Then make the sound of "EE" while exhaling slowly, and pass the current in a warm sensation back down through the hollow tube--through the brain, to trickle warmly and thinly on down the spinal column.

When you are sure that you have it right, practice the technique fourteen times in succession, keeping the current passing rhythmically and evenly around the spine. Imagine the cool current going up inside the spine, and the warm current coming down through the spine. Practice fourteen times in the morning and fourteen times in the evening. Do not increase the number of times without written permission from Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters. Always practice on an empty stomach: before breakfast, either before dinner or at least three hours after dinner, or before retiring.

Continue to sit in meditation after you have finished practicing.

KRIYA 6 The technique of Kriya has three main divisions: Maha Mudra, Kriya proper, and Jyoti Mudra, to be practiced in the order given. Maha Mudra, besides electrifying the spine, helps to straighten the spine, loosen the vertebrae, and distribute the life current into the organs. Jyoti Mudra is for the purpose of guidance through the spiritual eye, or will center, that you may see the spiritual light by your own effort: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). You must not only see the five-rayed star, but you must go through it, your wisdom must be shepherded through the star (the tunnel of light--of eternity). Through that star we may behold everything that is to be seen. The two physical eyes reveal only matter. The "third eye" reveals God and Spirit.

Study carefully the technique of Maha Mudra and Jyoti Mudra, making sure of each detail, and practice daily as directed. Regular practice must be maintained to produce results. Observe the simple cautions;

these are highly important: A vitalizing and nontoxic diet, a calm mind free from strain, moderation in all things, are essential. Hold the joy of contact with God after practice.

In rarefied spiritual atmosphere or vibration, evil tendencies and habits are electrocuted and expire. Evil tendencies and habits are rats gnawing at the vital wires of our mechanism, but they cannot live in rarefied spiritual consciousness. Meditation and practice of the Kriya Technique will automatically eliminate such tendencies.

KRIYA 7 Study with extreme care the summing up in Lessons K-7 and K-7A of the essential points to be observed in the practice of Kriya proper. This technique is the foundation of the Seven Steps to Self-realization. Let nothing interfere with your practice. "Where there is a will, there is a way." So, someday, you too may break through the darkness and perceive the sun of Cosmic Consciousness.

Helpful, but not essential, are the preparatory exercises A and B of this Lesson.

KRIYA 8 During practice of the Kriya Technique the entire spine is converted into a magnet that draws bodily currents away from the senses and nerves. The will center (point between the eye-brows) becomes the positive pole, and the coccygeal plexus becomes the negative pole. The current created by continuous inhalation and exhalation becomes a magnet of energy that draws into the spine more energy from the nervous system and from the Cosmic Source. Also, the carbon in the body is burned up during Kriya, and there comes a gradual cessation of breathing. This is the greatest psychophysical method for actually reversing the "searchlights" of the life force, consciousness, and the senses from perceptions of matter to perceptions of the indwelling Spirit. Hindu yogis state that the spiritual potency of this current actually changes the atomic composition of the body cells.

KRIYA 9 By the process of continuous Kriya breathing, the accumulation of carbon in the blood is "burned" and the impurities expelled from the lungs. In addition, this process changes oxygen into its basic constituents of atomic energy, which in turn is distilled into subtle life energy.

By continuous regulated breathing, as prescribed in the Kriya Technique, the entire carbon content of the body can be burned out. When that is accomplished, there is no longer any dark, impure venous blood flowing in the body to be pumped into the lungs for purification. Hence Kriya practice gives rest to the heart and lungs.

The purpose in burning carbon is to quiet the heart. The purpose in quieting the heart is to control the five sense telephones and divert the energy from them to the spine. The condition of sleep produces unconscious quietness and its attending peace. The Kriya Technique leads to an ever-increasing, ever-new joyous state of awareness.

The saints found out that if it were possible to live in health, without disease or old age, then by solar and chemical energy in one million years man could develop a brain that could express Cosmic Consciousness, or the entire knowledge of this universe.

The saints also learned that this evolutionary process can be speeded up by the proper method: changing the brain cells through magnetization. This can be accomplished by the use of the Kriya Technique, even to the extent of attaining Cosmic Consciousness in one lifetime.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The following review questions are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding lessons, put the summaries and the Lessons aside, and write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check on your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to show you how you are progressing in your understanding and practice of the teachings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTENSIVE STUDY OF KRIYA STEP (FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Kriya 1

1. Name and describe the various paths of yoga. Which method is taught by the Self-Realization Fellowship?
2. Name and describe the first four steps in Patanjali's outline of yoga.

Kriya 2

1. Name and describe the fifth, sixth, and seventh steps on the ladder of realization, as outlined by Patanjali.
2. What are the various kinds of samadhi which the devotee can experience? Which is the highest?

Kriya 3

1. Explain the process by which the practice of Kriya Yoga changes the center of consciousness.
2. What is prana?

Kriya 4

1. Explain why Kriya Yoga speeds up the natural evolutionary processes of the body, mind, and soul.

Kriya 5

1. Name the special rules in the preparation for practicing Kriya Yoga.
2. Write the procedure of the Kriya Technique, point by point.

Kriya 6

1. What is the particular purpose of Maha Mudra? of Jyoti Mudra?

Kriya 7

1. Describe how and when you should practice Maha Mudra and Jyoti Mudra.
2. List the simple precautions for those practicing Kriya.

Kriya 8

1. Explain how Kriya Yoga draws the bodily current away from the senses to the spine.

Kriya 9

1. Explain the physical process which takes place in the human body by the practice of Kriya Yoga.
2. What is the purpose in quieting the heart?
3. What is the difference in the state of rest caused by the sleep state and that caused by the practice of Kriya Yoga?
