SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE

COLLECTED TALKS AND ESSAYS ON REALIZING GOD IN DAILY LIFE, VOLUME IV

by

Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

Yogoda Satsanga Society of India
FOUNDED 1917 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

CONTENTS

Preface . . . . . *xvii*

Introduction. . . . . *xxi*

Expanding Your Consciousness for All-Round Success 3

The Limitless Spiritual Power Within Us. *3*

True Success: To Make Your Life a Glory and a Happiness to Yourself and Others. *4*

Activate the Divine Law for Progress and Success *6*

Overcoming Obstructions Around You and Within You . . *8*

Strengthening the Success-Producing Power of the Mind. . *9*

Break Out of the Cubicle of Your Limitations. *10*

The Antidote for "Can't Consciousness" *11*

God Has Given You Mental Dynamite. *12*

Material Achievements Do Not Constitute Real Success . . *13*

Don't Be Enslaved by Temptation to Live Beyond Your Means *15*

Analyse Your Desires Before Acting on Them *16*

The Successful Person Is Characterized by Self-Control . . *17*

Remain Unconquered in Spirit Through All Challenges and Trials *18*

Success Means Creative Power to Attain What You Need *19*

Three Creative Powers: The Conscious, Subconscious, and Superconscious Minds *20*

Using the Instrument of the Subconscious Mind *21*

The All-Knowing Power of the Superconscious Mind. *21*

Practical Application of Intuition *22*

Enlarge Your Success by Helping Others to Help Themselves *23*

The Ultimate Success: To Be With God All the Time *24*

Feel the Power of Spirit Moving Through You *25*

Solving the Mystery of Life 26
The Self-Realization Approach to Life's Essential Questions 26
Never Be Afraid to Question 27
The Mystery of Good and Evil 27
Do Not Dislodge Your Mind From Divine Consciousness . . 29
The Mystery of Life Is Solved by Right Attitude and Detachment 30
Where Are the Souls Who Are Sincere in Their Search for God? 32
Understanding the Purpose in Tests and Crises 33
God's Mysterious Purpose Will Be Accomplished Without Fail 35
Concentrate on Knowing God 36
Keep God Always in Your Heart 37
The Art of Right Action 39
Are You Governed by Calmness or Restless Impulses? . . . 39
Pay Mindful Attention to Every Situation You Are In 40
Transforming Yourself From a Material Being to a Spiritual Being 40
Be in the World but Not of the World 41
Live More Within Your Self 42
The Power to Shape Your Own Life 43
Use Self-Analysis to Gauge Your Progress 44
You Can Be One With God in This Life 44
From Selfishness to Self-realization 46
Two Kinds of Selfishness 46
Discriminating Between Spiritual Selfishness and Mean Selfishness for Soul Progress 48
Humility and Love Reveals the Truth About Others 48
National Selfishness Is a Cause of War 49
Selfishness Disappears as God Is Realized 51
Wisdom Is the Fuse That Destroys the Bomb of Ego 52

The Virtue of Won't Power **54**
What Is "Won't Power"? Why Is It Necessary? *54*
Discrimination and Won't Power Go Together *55*
The Importance of Childhood Training *56*
Training Your Power of Discrimination *59*
Be Understanding and Compassionate Toward Others . . . *62*
Exercise Your Won't Power With a Spirit of Humility *63*

Different Forms of Love for God **65**
The Devotee Can Enjoy Various Relationships With God . . *65*
Devotion and Love Combined Is the Supreme Form of Expression Toward God *67*
Divine Law Is Very Exacting Without Love and Devotion *68*
God Has Already Given Himself to Us *68*
Talk With God After Meditation *69*

The Devotional Way to God **70**
How Devotion Reveals the Hidden Presence of God *71*
Attitudes for Victory Over Your Obstacles *72*
Receiving God's Freely Offered Abundance *73*
Yoga Uncovers the Inner Dimension of Outer Worship . . . *76*
Commune With God Enthroned in the Depths of the Heart *79*
"The Most Wonderful Existence You Can Imagine" *80*

Divine Devotion **82**
Attachment to Materiality Takes Us Away From God *82*
Devotion and Adherence to Divine Law Free Us From Attachments *85*
Seek God Until He Comes *86*
The Joy of Communing With God Through Devotion *88*
The Purpose of Life Is to Teach Us to Seek God Willingly *89*
Self-Realization Fellowship [Yogoda Satsanga Society of India] Has Been Sent to Help You Find God *91*

Cultivate Friendship With God 93
Constantly Bring Your Thoughts Back to God 94
God Is Found in Stillness and Calmness 94
A Guided Meditation to Experience God 96
Persevere Until God Is Found 97
God Is the Joy and Happiness We Seek 98
Establishing the God of Bliss in the Temple of Your Soul 99
Strive Always to Help Others 99
Commune With God in the Temple of Meditation 100
Practise the Techniques of Meditation Religiously 101
Everyone Can Attain Cosmic Consciousness 103
Connecting Your Life With the Astral World 106
Why Should We Try to Connect With the Astral World? . . 107
Meditation Frees Us From the Limitations of Material Existence 109
The Nature of Delusion in the Material World 110
The Astral Heaven 112
Live in Astral Freedom Now 113
How to Materialize Your Cherished Dreams and Goals . . . 115
The Spiritual Eye: Portal to the Higher Realms 117
Spirituality Does Not Mean to Be Otherworldly 118
Harmonizing Your Life With Spiritual Vibrations 121
The Sound of the Universe 122
Tuning Your Mind-Radio to Receive Divine Vibrations . . . 123
Understand and Apply the Law of Vibration 124
What Kind of Vibratory Environment Are You Creating? . . 125
Develop the Ability to Discern the Vibrations of Other People 126
Conquer Wrong Vibrations in Your Environment 127
Harmonizing Vibrations of Reason and Feeling 128
Become a Person of Strong Soul Vibration 129
Charge Your Mind-Radio for Higher Perception 129
See and Feel the Divine Templed Everywhere 130
Radiate Peace and Harmony Wherever You Go 131
Spirituality Has Never Been More Important Than Now . . 132

Every Minute Is a Link Between You and God 134
Prayer and Technique for Receiving God's Vibrations 134

How to Guide Your Life With Correct Thinking 136
Look for the Hidden Spirit in All Creation 136
Learn to Distinguish Between Truth and Fallacy 138
Using Reason and Discrimination to Advance Consciously Toward Life's Goal 140
Recognizing the Limitations of Reason 142
Don't Base Your Thinking on Faulty Premises 143
Correct Thinking Is Guided by the Soul 144
Developing the Power of Intuition 146
March Confidently Through Life With the Light of Intuition 148

Mastering Your Moods With the Thought-Sword of Wisdom . . 150
Moods Cloak the Soul 150
The Wisdom-Realization That God Has Become Your Self 151
The Power of Thought Can Create Miraculous Changes . . 153
Freedom From Moods Is Found in Inner Calmness 156
Be Free of Moods and You Will Get Along With Everyone 157

Destroying the Consciousness of Fear 160
Train Your Children and Yourself to Be Fearless 161
Fear Attracts the Very Thing of Which You Are Afraid . . . 162
Healing the Body Through Fearlessness 163
Yoga Overcomes the Fear of Death 166
Replacing Fearfulness With Contentment and Security in All Situations 167

How to Succeed in Finding God 170
The Divine Power of Concentration 170
The Factors Impeding Success 172
Concentration and Will Power Can Overcome Subconscious Compulsions 173
Meditation Connects You With God 174

How to Convince God to Answer Your Call 176
Everything You Seek Is Found in God. 177
The Soul Can Only Be Satisfied by God 179
We Are All God's Children. 180
How to Be Successful With God 182

Training the Conscious and Subconscious Minds for Success 185

The Greatest Success: Achieving an Evenminded State of Inner Joy. 185
Your Subconscious Mind: Helper or Tyrant? 186
Using the Conscious Mind to Break Out of Subconscious Limitations. 189
Discriminate Between Good and Evil Actions 191
Training Your Subconscious Mind. 192
Conscious and Subconscious Tools for Success. 193
Limitations of the Conscious and Subconscious Minds . . . 195
Using the Superconscious Mind for Success. 195
Self-Control Is the Greatest of All Accomplishments. 197
How to Achieve the Transcendence of Nonattachment . . . 199
Third Stage of Detachment: The Transcendent Calmness of Superconsciousness 200
The Meditation Practice That Brings Contact With God and Fulfilment of All Desires. 201
Surrender to the Divine: The Highest Consciousness. 203
Seek God Through Self-Realization. 204

Awakening Will Power for Success and Divine Accomplishment 206

Difference Between "Wish" and "Will" 206
Why Do People Fail in Life?. 207
By Will Power, Charge Your Success Thoughts With Dynamic Force 208
How to Develop Your Will and Guide It by Wisdom 209
Your Development of Will Power Carries Over to Future Incarnations. 210

Technique of Increasing Your Will Power Day by Day 210
The Value of "Won't" Power 211
The Highest Use of Will Power Is to Find God 212

How to Smile Away Your Troubles **214**
The Spiritual Purpose of Trials and Suffering 214
Observe Yourself in the Mirror of Introspection 215
God Wants Us to Stop Misusing Our Freedom 216
If You Are Unhappy, Try to Find Out Why 217
Applying Your Reason Rightly 218
Introspection Changes Us Immediately 220
Happiness Requires a Clear Conscience 221
Learn to Smile From the Depths of Your Being 222

How to Get Out of Mental Ruts **224**
Analyse Your Progress in Life: Are You in a Rut? 224
The Purpose of Death in the Soul's Journey 226
Are You a Psychological Antique? 227
Practical Advice for Getting Out of Mental Ruts 227
The Ultimate Purpose of Existence Is Attainment of God . . 230
A Comparison of East and West 232
Manifest Your Divinity by Leaving All Mental Ruts Behind 234

God-Communion: Man's Greatest Necessity **236**
In Communion With God, We Realize We Are All One . . 236
This World Will Always Have Imperfections 237
God Is Moved Not by Our Praise, but by Our Love 238
We Are on Earth to Find God 240
The Most Precious Possession Is Love for God 241
True Freedom Lies in Finding God 243

Man's Highest Achievement **244**
A Plan for Your Spiritual Awakening 244
What Is Man's Highest Achievement? 245
Have You Found Happiness? 245

SRF [YSS] Teachings Show You How to Be Master of Yourself 247
Solving the Mystery of Life and Death 248
Wisdom, Understanding, and Help With All Needs 248
Study the Lessons Each Day 249
The Help and Blessings of the Masters 250
Prayer for God's Blessing 252
Be Castled in Self-realization, and Be Free 252

When Will God Come to You? **254**
The World Both Suggests and Veils the Presence of God . . 254
Don't Allow the World and Its Temptations to Distract You From God 255
The Realm of the Soul, and of God, Is Not in This World 257
Use Discrimination in the Face of Desires 260
Steps in Conquering Delusion 261
When God Will Come to You 262

Live the Life Shown by the Great Ones **265**
Don't Be Busy With the Faults of Others 265
Seek the Certificate of God's Approval 267
Even a Moment of Yearning for God Will Ultimately Save You 267
Finding God in Your Busy Life 268
Heed the Wisdom-Call of Divine Awakening 269
God Will Guide You in Everything 270

Living the Divine Existence God Planned for You **272**
Yoga: Scientific Way to Realize God 273
Four Stages of Spiritual Seeking 275
Persevere to Advance Through the Progressive States of Calmness 276
God's Plan for Harmony Among the Nations 279
Give Your Time and Concentration to What Is Truly Important 281

Why Choose to Remain in Spiritual Darkness? 282
If You Follow These Teachings, You Can Know Him 283

Self-realization: Knowing Your Infinite Nature **285**
Refining Your Consciousness for Cosmic Perception 287
The Scientific Highway That Leads to God 288
The Inner Heaven of Oneness With God 290

The Divine Art of Erasing Age and Creating Vitality **296**
Cleansing the Body From Within 296
Healthy Blood Is Necessary for Optimum Vitality 298
Divine Principle Behind the Human Heart 301
The Cells of Your Body Adopt the Mood of Your Mind . . . 304

The Cardinal Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity **306**
Hope Is an Eternal Light on the Pathway of Incarnations . . 306
Faith Is the Proof of Things Unseen 307
Faith Versus Belief 307
"The Greatest of These Is Love" 309

Christ Consciousness Versus Human Consciousness **310**
Realize the Consciousness of Universal Brotherhood 311
Make Sure of the Love of God 313
Human Consciousness Is Bound by Attachment to Possessions and Family 316
The Most Practical Teaching for World Peace 318
Characteristics of Christlike Behaviour 321
Meditate to Realize the Infinite Consciousness 322

The Mystic Tree of Life **325**
Understanding the True Meaning of the Scriptures 325
How the Physical Cosmos Materializes From Intelligent Life and Energy 326
The Tree of Life in the Human Body 327
The Fall of Man and How We May Return to Divine Consciousness 328
Concentrate on the Spiritual Eye 329

Cultivating Right Thoughts and Feelings on the Tree of Consciousness 332
Reap the Good Fruits From Your Tree of Life. 333
The Self-Realization Way to God 335

The Spiritual Celebration of Christmas **338**

Know the Real Meaning and Joy of Christmas **342**

How to Perceive the Infinite Christ **345**
With Each Breath We Imbibe the Spirit 346
Indifference Hides the Jewel-Presence of God 346
Divine Love Is Matchless 347
Beholding in Vision a Blue-Eyed Christ 348
God—Source of All Happiness 348
Meditation Strengthens Desire for God 349
Seeking God Should Be a Relentless Pursuit 349

"In the Cradle of Our Consciousness, the Eternal Christ Is Born Today" **351**

Resurrect Your Spirit **367**
The Eternal Cycles of Creation and Cosmic Resurrection 367
The Resurrection of Jesus Christ 368
The True Celebration of Easter Is to Resurrect Yourself 369
Proof of Resurrection in Modern Times 370
Become Christlike Yourself! 370

The Easter Message of Immortality **372**
Jesus Was an Ideal Example Sent for Us to Follow. 372
God Reveals Himself Through Our Devotion and Meditation 374
"Today You Can Have a New Birth" 377

Follow the Path of the Great Ones! **379**
Understand the Help That Comes From the Gurus 379
Be the Master of Your Body and Mind 380

When We Love God, We Become Brothers and Sisters of All 381
The Futility of Life Without God 382
Commune With God in Meditation and Serviceful Activity 382
Realize Your True Self, One With God 384
Original Christianity and Original Yoga 385
"Whoever Shall Receive This Message Shall Not Go Away Unfulfilled" 385

"I Have Wished for You the Highest" **387**

How to Weave God Into Your Daily Life **394**
Why Desire to Know God? 395
Single-Hearted Effort Is Necessary 396
Your Only Eternal Relationship Is With God 397
Find the Answer to the Mysteries of Existence 399
Be Determined When Restless Thoughts Invade the Mind 400
God Intended You to Live in Joy 401
Two Worthy Ambitions 402
Surrender Yourself to God 402
In the Background of Your Mind, Keep the Desire for God Alive 403
The Way of Freedom and Bliss 405

About the Author 406
Paramahansa Yogananda: A Yogi in Life and Death 410
Commemorative Stamps and Coins in Honour of Paramahansa Yogananda and Lahiri Mahasaya 411
Additional Resources on the Kriya Yoga Teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda 412
Yogoda Satsanga Lessons 413
Aims and Ideals of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India 414
Yogoda Satsanga Society of India Publications 416
Glossary 420

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, Los Angeles, 1950

Facing page

Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda *(Frontispiece)*

Sri Yogananda at a banquet in Los Angeles, 1950 70

With students at his class on the science of Kriya Yoga in Los Angeles, 1925 71

Paramahansa Yogananda in conversation with India's Ambassador to the U.S., Sri Binay R. Sen, 1952 71

Paramahansa Yogananda presents award to Dr. John A. Somerville, Hollywood, California, 1951 71

Paramahansa Yogananda, Encinitas, California, 1937. 102

In front of the SRF Golden Lotus Temple, Encinitas, 1937 . 103

On the Hermitage lawn in Encinitas, 1938 103

Yogoda Satsanga Math, Dakshineswar, Kolkata 292

Yogoda Satsanga Sakha Math, Ranchi 292

Paramahansa Yogananda, 1929 293

With Rajarsi Janakananda, Encinitas, 1938 293

Sri Yogananda at the SRF International Headquarters, Los Angeles, 1933 324

Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters . . . 325

Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine 325

PREFACE

The following was written by Sri Sri Daya Mata (1914–2010), third president and spiritual head of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India/Self-Realization Fellowship, to introduce the first published volume of lectures and informal talks by Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, Man's Eternal Quest.

The first time I beheld Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, he was speaking before a vast, enraptured audience in Salt Lake City. The year was 1931. As I stood at the back of the crowded auditorium, I became transfixed, unaware of anything around me except the speaker and his words. My whole being was absorbed in the wisdom and divine love that were pouring into my soul and flooding my heart and mind. I could only think, "This man loves God as I have always longed to love Him. He *knows* God. Him I shall follow." And from that moment, I did.

As I felt the transfiguring power of his words on my own life during those early days with Paramahansaji, there arose within me a feeling of the urgent need to preserve his words for all the world, for all time. It became my sacred and joyous privilege, during the many years I was with Paramahansa Yogananda, to record his lectures and classes, and also many informal talks and words of personal counsel—truly a vast treasure-house of wondrous wisdom and God-love. As Gurudeva spoke, the rush of his inspiration was often reflected in the swiftness of his speech; he might speak without pause for minutes at a time, and continue for an hour. While his hearers sat enthralled, my pen was flying! As I took down his words in shorthand, it was as though a special grace had descended, instantly translating the Guru's voice into the shorthand characters on the page. Their transcription has been a blessed task that continues to this day. Even after such a long time—some of my notes are more than forty years old—when I start to transcribe them, they are miraculously fresh in my mind, as though they had been recorded yesterday. I can even hear inwardly the inflections of

Gurudeva's voice in each particular phrase.

The Master seldom made even the slightest preparation for his lectures; if he prepared anything at all, it might consist of a factual note or two, hastily jotted down. Very often, while riding in the car on the way to the temple, he would casually ask one of us: "What is my subject today?" He would put his mind on it, and then give the lecture extemporaneously from an inner reservoir of divine inspiration.

The subjects for Gurudeva's sermons at the temples were set and announced in advance. But sometimes his mind was working in an entirely different vein when he began to speak. Regardless of the "subject for today," the Master would voice the truths engrossing his consciousness at that moment, pouring forth priceless wisdom in a steady stream from the abundance of his own spiritual experience and intuitive perception. Nearly always, at the close of such a service, a number of people would come forward to thank him for having enlightened them on a problem that had been troubling them, or perhaps for having explained some philosophical concept in which they were particularly interested.

Sometimes, while he was lecturing, the Guru's consciousness would be so uplifted that he would momentarily forget the audience and converse directly with God; his whole being would be overflowing with divine joy and intoxicating love. In these high states of consciousness, his mind completely at one with the Divine Consciousness, he inwardly perceived Truth, and described what he saw. On occasion, God appeared to him as the Divine Mother, or in some other aspect; or one of our great Gurus, or other saints, would manifest in vision before him. At such times, even the audience would feel deeply the special blessing bestowed on all present. During such a visitation of Saint Francis of Assisi, whom Gurudeva deeply loved, the Master was inspired to compose the beautiful poem, "God! God! God!"

The Bhagavad Gita describes an enlightened master in these words: "The Self shines forth like a sun in those who have banished ignorance by wisdom" (V:16). One might have been overawed by Paramahansa Yogananda's spiritual radiance, were it not for his warmth and naturalness, and a quiet

humility, which put everyone instantly at ease. Each person in the audience felt that Gurudeva's talk was addressed to him personally. Not the least of the Master's endearing qualities was his understanding sense of humour. By some choice phrase, gesture, or facial expression he would bring forth an appreciative response of hearty laughter at just the right moment to drive home a point, or to relax his listeners after long and intense concentration on a particularly deep subject.

One cannot convey in the pages of a book the uniqueness and universality of Paramahansa Yogananda's vivid, loving personality. But it is my humble hope, in giving this brief background, to afford a personal glimpse that will enrich the reader's enjoyment and appreciation of the talks presented in this book.

To have seen my Gurudeva in divine communion; to have heard the profound truths and devotional outpourings of his soul; to have recorded them for the ages; and now to share them with all—what joy is mine! May the Master's sublime words open wider the doors to unshakeable faith in God, to deeper love for that One who is our beloved Father, Mother, and Eternal Friend.

Daya Mata

Los Angeles, California
May 1975

INTRODUCTION

Ask yourself what is the purpose of your life. You have been made in the image of God; that is your real Self. Realizing the image of God within you is the ultimate success—infinite joy, fulfilment of every desire, victory over all difficulties of the body and incursions of the world.

—Paramahansa Yogananda

This is the fourth anthology of talks and essays by Paramahansa Yogananda—a sequel to *Man's Eternal Quest* (1975), *The Divine Romance* (1986), and *Journey to Self-realization* (1997). The wisdom in these volumes is not the studied learning of a scholar; it is the empirical testimony of a dynamic spiritual personage whose life was filled with inner joy and outer accomplishment, a world teacher who lived what he taught, a *Premavatar* whose sole desire was to share God's wisdom and love with all.

Meditation has entered the mainstream in the years since the publication of *Journey to Self-realization,* the previous volume in this series of Paramahansa Yogananda's *Collected Talks and Essays*. According to the National Institutes for Health (the primary federal agency for medical research in the United States), the percentage of U.S. adults who practise meditation has more than doubled since the beginning of the 21st century; and in 2024 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution to declare December 21 as World Meditation Day. Many of course come to meditation for its health benefits, but Paramahansa Yogananda points out that meditation can do much more for us than help to alleviate anxiety and stress. More importantly, he says, it can reveal to us our true nature as immortal souls, made in the image of God. And he explains why experiencing this for ourselves—in reality, not as a merely inspiring thought—is the ultimate purpose of life.

This great purpose of life does not minimize the importance of and the joy that can be found in our everyday lives. Indeed, in this volume Paramahansaji shows how all our daily

activities—whether relating to family, career, personal growth, or relationships with others—can be infused with a greater meaningfulness and sense of achievement when we understand our lives in the context of this overarching purpose.

Even as meditation has become more popular, the perception lingers among some that meditation is a way to avoid or escape one's responsibilities to society. On the contrary, Sri Yogananda explains that to seek God within is to simultaneously come to the understanding that God is within *everyone*—all those we encounter in our daily life—friend and "enemy" alike. And with that we realize what we can do to help build a better world, one based on the true source of our common humanity. It is this combination of ideals—to seek God inwardly in meditation, and outwardly in our daily life and in our fellow world citizens—that inspired Paramahansa Yogananda to name his organization *Self-Realization Fellowship.*

"We are all part of the One Spirit," Paramahansaji said. "When you experience the true meaning of religion, which is to know God, you will realize that He is your Self, and that He exists equally and impartially in all beings….Do not settle for intellectual satisfaction about truth. Convert truth into experience, and you will know God through your own Self-realization."

A Unifying Spirituality for the Global Family

Today the world is in a pivotal place. People are faced with countless outer challenges related to rapidly proliferating change and complexity in the fabric of daily life. There is also a rise in the inner challenges related to loneliness, mental illness, and family instability. Many are seeking new ways to amplify healing and find direction through meditation, yoga, positive psychology for personal growth, spirituality that unites rather than divides—and through a more purposeful life of compassion, empathy, and service to causes that contribute to a better world.

In countless awakening souls, there is growing recognition of the need for a more balanced way of living, both individually and as a world civilization. Increasing world interdependencies are revealing the critical need to learn to live as one global family.

Recently there has been tremendous growth in the number of people drawn to the Kriya Yoga teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda from all parts of the world—of all ages, religious affiliations, and cultural backgrounds. This is one sign of the authentic spiritual awakening taking place today around the globe, an awakening that is crucially vital for our world so often in a state of struggle, turmoil, and uncertainty.

All around us, in every department of life, we see how powerfully the non-sectarian "how-to-live" teachings brought by Paramahansaji are resonating with the spiritual needs of the 21st-century global family.

About the Teachings in This Book

Paramahansa Yogananda came from his native India to the United States in 1920.* For the next thirty years he taught the spiritual science of Kriya Yoga meditation and the art of balanced spiritual living to hundreds of thousands, not only in America but in India (during a return visit in 1935–36) and around the globe. He founded Self-Realization Fellowship, with headquarters in Los Angeles, to publish and disseminate his teachings worldwide—and to perpetuate, through disciples trained by him, the spiritual legacy entrusted to him by his lineage of enlightened masters. He described his life's work in his renowned *Autobiography of a Yogi,* which was published in 1946 and remains a best-selling spiritual classic to this day.

The Guru's talks in the earliest years of his ministry were recorded only spasmodically. But when Sri Daya Mata became a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda in 1931, she undertook the sacred task, faithfully recording, for the generations to come, all of her Guru's talks and classes. This volume is but a sampling: under the direction of Paramahansa Yogananda, many transcriptions—particularly those containing private instruction and meditation techniques and principles given to Self-Realization class students—were compiled along with some of his writings into a series of *Yogoda Satsanga Lessons;* other talks appear as a regular feature in *Yogoda Satsanga* magazine.

Most of the selections in this volume are lectures or classes

* See "About the Author," page 406.

given at Self-Realization Fellowship temple services or at the international headquarters in Los Angeles. A few of the talks were given at informal gatherings or *satsangas* with small groups of disciples; or at meditation services in which the Guru experienced ecstatic communion with God, affording all present a glimpse of that blissful consciousness.

Glossary and Notes for the Reader

As most of the talks set forth in this book were presented before audiences familiar with Yogoda Satsanga/Self-Realization teachings, some clarification of terminology and philosophical concepts may be helpful to the general reader. To this end, many footnotes have been included; also a glossary explaining certain Sanskrit words, and other philosophical terms, and giving information about events, persons, and places associated with the life and work of Paramahansa Yogananda.

It may be noted here that unless otherwise indicated the quotations from the Bhagavad Gita in this volume are from Paramahansa Yogananda's own translations, which he rendered from the Sanskrit sometimes literally and sometimes in paraphrase, depending on the context of his talk. For most Gita quotations we have used the definitive version given by Paramahansaji for his comprehensive translation and commentary: *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita—Royal Science of God-Realization* (published by Yogoda Satsanga Society of India in 2002). In talks where he was rendering a Gita passage more freely in order to emphasize a specific point, the paraphrase has been retained and noted as such in the footnote citation.

Revealing the Mystery of Life and the Essence of All Religions

Paramahansa Yogananda honoured all the great religions and their founders, and held in respect all sincere seekers of God. Part of his world mission was to reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna and original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ (see *Aims and Ideals of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India*, page 414). This goal saw significant progress with the publication in 2004 of his monumental 1,600 page commentary on the Gospels,

The Second Coming of Christ: The Resurrection of the Christ Within You. In his writings on the teachings of Jesus, as well as his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita mentioned above, he showed that the practice of yoga establishes an inner attunement with God that constitutes the universal basis of all religions. Abstractions of theoretical religion pale before actual experience of God. Truth cannot be wholly proved to any seeker by another; but by the practice of yoga meditation all of us can prove truth for ourselves through the irrefutable assurance of our own direct experience.

"What is the use of life's difficult journey if we have to go to the grave with still unanswered questions?" Paramahansa Yogananda asks in the title talk for this volume, "Solving the Mystery of Life." "We must find out what life is all about. If we concentrate on God, we find that He had a definite purpose in creating us. We ought to understand that purpose, and it can be understood by meditating on our souls. Right within us is the key to the mystery of everything."

May this volume help you in your search for the Truth that lies within you.

Yogoda Satsanga Society of India/
Self-Realization Fellowship

January 2025

SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE

Expanding Your Consciousness for All-Round Success

Compilation from talks on this subject given in October–November 1939, Self-Realization Fellowship Golden Lotus Temple, Encinitas, California

The door to the kingdom of heaven is in the subtle centre of transcendent consciousness at the point between the two eyebrows. If you focus your attention on that seat of concentration, you will find tremendous spiritual strength and help from within. Feel that your consciousness is expanding in divine consciousness. Feel that there are no barriers, no attachments to the body, but that you are moving on and on into the kingdom of God, which can be entered through the spiritual eye.*

Pray with me: "Heavenly Father, open my spiritual eye so that I can enter into Thy kingdom of omnipresence. Father, do not leave me behind in this mortal world of misery; lead me from darkness to light, from death to immortality, from ignorance to endless wisdom, from sorrow to eternal joy."

The Limitless Spiritual Power Within Us

As you march along the twisting and branching pathways of life, seek foremost to discover the path that leads to God. In the time-tested methods of India's illumined *rishis,* the universal way has been shown how to conquer uncertainty and ignorance by following the trail of light divine they have blazed, straight to the Supreme Goal. The teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship

* The single eye of intuition and omnipresent perception at the Christ (*Kutastha*) centre (*ajna chakra*) between the eyebrows. The spiritual eye is the entryway into the ultimate states of divine consciousness. By awakening and penetrating the spiritual eye, the devotee experiences successively higher states: superconsciousness, Christ Consciousness, and Cosmic Consciousness. The methods of doing so are part of the Kriya Yoga science of meditation, whose techniques are taught to students of Paramahansa Yogananda's *Yogoda Satsanga Lessons* (see glossary). *(Publisher's Note)*

[Yogoda Satsanga Society of India] are the voice of India's masters, the voice of truth, the voice of scientific God-realization, through which the new world will find understanding, emancipation, and salvation.

It is only in God-consciousness that we attain ultimate freedom, complete redemption. As such, we must try our utmost until we receive from the hands of heaven the certificate of our Heavenly Father's acknowledgment, with which He gives us victory over all things. This world is only a testing place of God wherein He is trying us to see whether we will develop the limitless spiritual power within us or limit ourselves to material attractions. He has remained silent, and it is up to us to choose. I think we will not make a mistake if we follow the teachings that India has given, and in which her masters have specialized. Her supreme gift to the world is the knowledge of how to find God, through step-by-step methods. If you follow the Self-Realization [Yogoda Satsanga] teachings I have brought to you from the Masters of India, you can find God in this life. This I declare unto you. Begin now, before the opportunity is lost and you are whisked away from this earth.

Each word that is coming to you through me is coming from God. And what I tell you, I have experienced. If you practise these truths you will see for yourself that what I am saying is real. I am giving you golden nuggets of truth; they will make you rich in Spirit if you use them to their fullest potential. While the world rushes along, knowing not where, waste not your time in short-sighted pursuits. Why chase after a little money or a little health? These are blind alleys. We appear to be so weak: something goes wrong and we collapse. But behind every bone and fibre, behind our every thought and volition, is the infinite spirit of God. Seek Him, and you shall attain complete victory. You will smile at the world with a smile from within, showing that you have found something far greater than material treasures.

True Success: To Make Your Life a Glory and a Happiness to Yourself and Others

Very few persons understand the expansion of consciousness that constitutes true success. You have come into this

world without knowing what marvellous faculties you possess, and most of you live without trying scientifically to develop their potential. As a result, your life on this planet is more or less uncertain. But instead of living an uncontrolled existence, blown about by the winds of seemingly capricious fate, you can live a controlled existence by which you can schedule your life and make it yield what it should yield: an expansion of consciousness that unfolds in all-round development of the divine potentials within you.

Success is when you have so expanded your consciousness that your life is a glory and happiness to yourself and to others. Success is not something achieved at the expense of others. You have seen, when travelling by car, invariably there are some "road hogs"—those who drive too slowly and won't let anyone pass them. On the highway of life, some people are road hogs. They are stubborn in their selfish ways; they neither progress themselves nor give others a chance to go ahead. Miserly persons are one such example, hoarding their wealth instead of using it to create opportunities and well-being for others. Of all the weaknesses of man,* selfishness is one of the meanest demons. By the magnanimous spirit of one's soul it should be conquered.

Real success, rather than being a contraction into self-interest, extends itself in serviceful expansion. The flower, though bound to a stem, by its fragrance and beauty expands its sphere of usefulness. Some blossoms waft their perfume a little distance; others lack fragrance, but still reach out with their beauty to bring us happiness. Trees give of their expansion by providing cool shade and luscious fruits, and converting the waste of carbon dioxide into oxygen for us to breathe. The faraway sun, seemingly small in the sky, radiates beyond its sphere to give us light

* In his talks and lectures, Paramahansa Yogananda generally used the masculine gender, as was the custom of his time. His usage, however, was rooted not in the narrowly exclusive sense of the word man, denoting only half of the human race, but in its broader original meaning; the word is derived from the same root as Sanskrit *manas,* mind—the uniquely human capacity for rational thought. The science of yoga deals with human consciousness from the point of view of the essentially androgynous Self (*atman*). As there is no other terminology in English that would convey these psychological and spiritual truths without excessive literary awkwardness, the use of man and related terms has been retained herein.

and warmth. The stars share with us the joy of their jewel-like lustre. All of God's expressions in nature send out a vibration that in some way serves the world. You are His highest creation; what are you doing to reach out beyond yourself? Your soul is a beacon of infinite power. You can expand that power from within and give light and health and understanding to others.

Some persons I have met, through the years have not changed at all. They remain always the same, like fossils. The difference between a fossil and a plant is that the fossil is the same now as it was millions of years ago, but the plant keeps on growing. You want to be a living seed. As soon as it is put in the ground, it begins pushing up and drawing sunlight and air, and then it throws out branches and eventually it becomes a sturdy tree and covers itself with flowers. That is what man is intended to be: an expanding spiritual plant, not petrified wood.

You have the capacity to throw flowering branches of power and success all around you, that the inspiration of your life may waft its influence over the entire cosmos. Henry Ford was only one little man who started his work in a small garage, but by his creative initiative he made himself felt all over the world. The same with George Eastman, who invented the Kodak. There is a place in heaven for successful people—and they enjoy that heaven. I am speaking of what I know from my own experience. Every great man who has made something of himself in this world by exercise of the God-like powers in the soul has recognition in heaven.

Activate the Divine Law for Progress and Success

This creation is not run by blind forces. It operates according to an intelligent plan. If God created hunger but didn't think of creating food to satisfy that hunger, where would we be? It is unreasonable to suppose that this world is just a chance result of different combinations of atoms, with no guiding intelligence behind those atoms. On the contrary, it is evident that there is law and order in the universe. Your life, and all life, is governed with mathematical precision by God's intelligently framed cosmic laws. So by the divine law of action or karma, cause and effect, everything that you do is recorded in your soul. Thus, according to the measure of your work, whatever

you accomplish through will power and creativity will be your passport after death to the heavenly regions earned by dutiful souls. And when you reincarnate in this world, you will be born with those mental powers developed by your previous efforts.

Suppose one is born in this life with a sickly body and a paucity of material goods and advantages, but still tries unto death to do everything to the best of his ability. His refusal to acknowledge failure creates a dynamic magnetism that will attract health, helpful friends, prosperity, and so on in his next incarnation. Or suppose one makes the determination: "I will do something magnanimous to serve humanity," but he dies before he has a chance to see through to completion his noble undertaking. When he comes back again, that determined resolution will carry over into his new life, along with those mental powers necessary to accomplish that goal. All so-called "hereditary" advantages and "lucky" opportunities in life are not the whims of chance but the lawful result of causes set in motion by one's own actions, sometime in the past. That is why you must start to achieve something now to insure your future success.

To activate that law of action you must be active. Exercise your powers, rather than ossifying in inertia. So many people are lazy and lacking in ambition—doing the bare minimum of work to somehow live and eat until they die. Such a slothful existence is hardly worthy of being called life. To be alive is to be on fire with purpose, to move forward with undaunted determination toward a goal. You must be enthusiastically active, make something of yourself, and give something worthwhile to the world. It is because my Master [Swami Sri Yukteswar] strengthened in me the conviction that I could be something that I made the effort to achieve, in spite of all the forces that tried to stop me.

Many individuals think great things, but do not act on them. However, it is the activity that creates the greatness. Unless you actually accomplish, you are not successful. It is not enough just to think success or think ideas; they must be demonstrated. To think you are virtuous does not make you virtuous. So thinking success does not make you successful. You may say, "I am an admirable spiritual person"; but only if

you behave spiritually are you spiritual. All action begins with thought, which is action on the plane of consciousness. To be manifested, thoughts must be charged with dynamic will by concentration and perseverance to rouse the indomitable power of the mind. Thus, to think greatness is a first step, but then you must empower the idea with will and set in motion the corresponding laws of action. "Understanding this, wise men who have sought after salvation, since pristine times, have performed dutiful actions. Therefore, do thou also act dutifully, even as did the ancients of bygone ages."*

Overcoming Obstructions Around You and Within You

It is inevitable in this world of relativity—light and darkness, good and evil—that whenever you try to expand, you will meet enemies. This holds true in all endeavour: The minute you try to accomplish anything, there is resistance. As soon as a plant tries to emerge from its seed, first there is resistance from the earth, and then the bugs go after it, and then it has to struggle against the weeds that compete for its food and water. The plant needs help from the gardener. And the same is true for human beings. If because of adverse circumstances or inner weaknesses you haven't the strength to put forth branches of success on the tree of your life, you need the assistance of a teacher, or guru, who can help you cultivate the power of your mind. The guru teaches you the art of meditation, of cauterizing the weeds of limiting habits and bad karma that are trying to choke your ground. You must resist these enemies; you must go on trying. Without battle you cannot achieve anything. But neither do you wilfully hurt anybody with ruthless tactics to get your way. You use the spiritual powers of mind and will to conquer the obstructing forces and circumstances around you and the self-engendered limitations within you. Then you can be what you want to be, and accomplish what you want to accomplish.

Remember, you have the power to be strong. Right behind your consciousness is the omnipotence of God. But instead of

* Bhagavad Gita IV:15.

utilizing that divine strength, you have built up a solid wall between yourself and His power. Your concentration is always focused outside, dependent on the material body and world, instead of inside on the Divine Indweller.* That is why you think you have limitations.

Strengthening the Success-Producing Power of the Mind

Then what is the way of expansion, the way of progress? It is to look within, to release your inner powers. Each one of you can do so. Start today. Mind is the principal thing; it is the instrument of God by which everything is created. It is most flexible; it will create according to any pattern of thought. Mind makes health and spirituality, disease and ignorance. What is disease but the thought of disease? What is ignorance but the thought of ignorance? What is failure but the thought of failure? I have studied all walks of life, and I see those who do not succeed are those who do not cultivate the power of the mind.

To try for success in any worthwhile endeavour is to increase the power of your mind. As your mind power develops, so does your magnetism, the attractive force generated within you that draws conditions and persons that promote success. Worthwhile relationships are important to you. You do not want the advantages of success without friends (be they family loved ones or supportive acquaintances) who will appreciate and help you, and with whom you can share your happiness. The high quality of your mind power and magnetism will attract those friends who contribute to the meaningfulness of your life. Do your part to make lasting friendships by being a true friend. Try to improve your own personality. The Lord has made you something unique. Nobody has anything quite like what you have. You have a face and a mind that no one else has. You should be proud of yourself and not indulge in envy and self-pity. Be a straight shooter, be fearless, be honest, be kind, compassionate, understanding, interested in others without being intrusively

* "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (*II Corinthians* 6:16, Bible).

curious. The silent vibrations of your mind power and magnetism will speak to others of your sterling qualities.

Break Out of the Cubicle of Your Limitations

The tendency is to think, "I am what I am. I cannot be different." Believe that, and you are doomed to stay that way! If you reason, "I have this much ability, and I can do no more," you are certain to remain just where you are. You forget that in your youth you were filled with ambition, afire with conviction that you could "conquer the world." But gradually the world closed in on you; you were captured by enemies of pessimism, inertia, and naysaying preconceptions that pigeonholed you and your capacities to achieve. Do not remain in that cubicle for the rest of your life.

There is a way to break free. For a small nation, surrounded by enemies, it is difficult to achieve independence or expand its territory; but that is because the barriers are outside. In achieving mental and spiritual independence, it is not a question of external obstructions. The confining barrier is yourself and the bad habits that you have created. You concentrate on your limitations and the mental hedges you have cultivated. By your own decree you have imprisoned yourself and precluded your development. But whatever boundaries you have created you can undo and destroy, provided you go about it in the right way.

The ordinary man's consciousness is like a small house; that is his kingdom. Perhaps he looks a little beyond, but he has no wish to expand. And some people mentally and spiritually are locked up in a tiny room, their aspirations closeted by a dogmatic conviction of ordinariness. These "walking dead" lack belief in any possibility of conquering new ground.

Do you realize that each one of you is potentially a spiritual giant, a spiritual counterpart to the powerful Genghis Khan, who was one of the most successful conquerors in history. Of course, earthly conquest is not so laudable if it brings in its wake bloodshed and suffering. One may conquer worldly dominions and reign over an opulent kingdom, but still be a slave to misery and fears. To be a conqueror of self is to be truly victorious—to conquer your circumscribed consciousness and expand your spiritual powers without limit. You can go as far

as you want to go, past all limitations, and live a supremely victorious existence.

Break out of the mental cell of ignorance that has you confined. Think differently. Refuse to be limited by thoughts of weakness or age. Who told you that you are old? You are not old. You, the soul, are eternally young. Impress that thought on your consciousness: "I am the soul, a reflection of ever-youthful Spirit. I am vibrant with youth, with ambition, with power to succeed." Your thoughts can limit you or they can free you. You are your worst enemy, and you are your best friend. You have all the power to accomplish what you want, if you motivate yourself, if you remove the mental kinks that are blocking the flow of conviction.

The Antidote for "Can't Consciousness"

I have seen persons who, despite ill health, have made up their minds to achieve something. Their ailing body was always trying to divert their attention, but they overcame that physical barrier and undeterred went on and on, realizing their goal by sheer strength of mind. And I have seen others with wonderful health, but peanut brains. No matter how you try to convince them, they say, "I can't do it." They are stopped by the mental barrier of feeling inadequate. And some people have both health and intelligence, but they do not succeed because they have spiritual barriers of bad habits. Whether from physical, mental, or spiritual causes, failure starts with the avowal, "I can't do it." Such is the force of the mind and the vibratory power of words. When you say to yourself, "I can't do it," no one else in the whole world can change that decree. You must destroy that paralysing enemy: "I can't."

There is an antidote for "can't consciousness": the affirmation "I can!" Create that antidote with your mind and administer it with your will.

The companionate impediment must also be vanquished: "I can do it, but I *won't* do it." Many people have this mindset, because it is much easier to sit and do nothing. The worst sin against your progress and success is to be mentally lazy. Physical laziness is sometimes forgivable because you have worked hard and the body wants to rest. But mental laziness

is absolutely inexcusable; it petrifies your mind. If you forsake "won't" laziness, if you make up your mind that "I have got to do it, and I must do it, and I will do it," success will surely materialize.

Throw out all negative thoughts. Overcome the idea that you cannot do a thing by simply starting to do it. And then continuously keep on doing it. Circumstances will try to slap you down, to make you become discouraged and again say, "I can't do it." If there is a devil, that devil is "I can't do it." That is the satan that has disconnected your dynamo of eternal power; it is the main reason you do not succeed in life. Throw that demon out of your consciousness by your indomitable conviction: "I *can* do it." Mean it, and affirm it as often as you can. Mentally believe it, and energize that belief by acting on it with will power. Work! And while you work, never give up the thought, "I can do it." Even if there are a thousand obstacles, do not relent. If you have that determination, then what you go after must inevitably come to pass; and when it does, you will say, "Well, it was so easy!"

So why should you surrender to inertia and live in a crust of ignorance? Isn't it better to burst that shell of "can't" into the free air of "I can"? Then you will know that mind is all-powerful; anything your mind can think can be materialized. There is no obstruction but your "can't" consciousness. See how wonderful is the way of expansion I am showing you. The words, "I can, I must, and I will"—that is the way to change yourself and achieve absolute victory.

God Has Given You Mental Dynamite

You will never win unless you make the effort. God has given you mental dynamite sufficient to destroy all your difficulties. Remember that. It is the most effective force you can use to be victorious in life, to break free of limiting weaknesses and habits into an all-accomplishing expansion of your consciousness. Are you going to remain a walking dead person, ready to be buried in the grave beneath the debris of your errors? No! Do something in this world—do something wonderful! Whatever you do will be recognized by God. And even if the world fails to recognize you, if you have done everything you

can, that infused mental power will remain with your soul. Wherever you go—in this life or beyond—you will have with you that invincible spirit. As the Lord Krishna exhorted the warrior-prince Arjuna: "O Scorcher of Foes, forsake this small weakheartedness! Arise!"*

I have used that power of mind throughout my life, and I have seen it work. You, also, when confronted by ill health and failure, should meditate deeply and mentally affirm: "Almighty Father, I am Thy child. I shall use my inherited divine powers of mind and will to shatter the causes of failure." Rally those mental forces at night, when the distractions of the world recede and your mind is highly focused and recharged in meditation, prayer, and God-communion.

What more shall I say to you? These thoughts are practical; they work. And if you make up your mind to use them, and get busy, they *will* work. You can demolish your difficulties; you can break down the ramparts of ignorance that have enclosed you for incarnations. You will know that as an immortal child of God, death cannot kill you, nor can birth in this fleshly cage completely inhibit the transcendent power within you.† By the soul you must redeem the soul, that no matter where you are, you have at your command the irresistible divine powers of mind and will to vanquish every obstacle in your path!

Material Achievements Do Not Constitute Real Success

Ask yourself what is the purpose of your life. You have been made in the image of God; that is your real Self. Realizing the image of God within you is the ultimate success—infinite joy, fulfilment of every desire, victory over all difficulties of the body and incursions of the world.

Human life is a constant confrontation with problems. Everyone has a different problem to face: fifteen hundred million people, and fifteen hundred million different problems to

* Bhagavad Gita II:3.

† "No weapon can pierce the soul; no fire can burn it; no water can moisten it; nor can any wind wither it. The soul is uncleavable; it cannot be burnt or wetted or dried. The soul is immutable, all-permeating, ever calm, and immovable—eternally the same" (Bhagavad Gita II:23–24).

be coped with every day. Some have heart trouble, some have colds; some have too much money, some have none; some have anger, some have a bland indifference; but who has happiness? The real measure of success is happiness: Whatever your position in life, are you happy?

The common idea of success means having wealth and friends and beautiful possessions—the so-called "good life." But material achievements do not necessarily constitute real success, because things and conditions are subject to change. Today you may have; tomorrow you may not have. So do not think that just by becoming a millionaire you can consider yourself successful.

You may work hard to reap success in business, but before you realize it your life becomes unbalanced, leaving you no freedom to enjoy the things you want to do, and giving you such worry and nervousness that your health breaks down. Suddenly all your success means nothing and you feel that you have wasted your life. Or by concerted effort you may develop a healthy body, and yet find yourself so poor that you are miserable in being unable to satisfy its needs. You may even have both health and money, but still feel that inner fulfilment has eluded you; catering only to the body and ego will never satisfy the soul. You may have everything, and yet find that ultimately it amounts to nothing at all, because you have no happiness. Unless there is happiness in the heart, you have no success.

However, very few can be happy without possessing at least an adequate quantum of money and health. Most persons must have something to be happy about; their happiness is conditional on outer circumstances, because the mind has not been trained to be unconditionally happy from within. You think you would be happy if only you could acquire all the things you feel you need in order to be happy. But desire begets desires; and satisfaction will never come if you go on multiplying your wants. Before you buy something, you think you cannot do without it; but once you have it, you think little of it as you begin to wish for something better. No matter how often you experience this, when you are in the grip of an impulse to buy something new, again you feel you must have it and will not

be happy until you do. Success lies in learning the art of inner contentment: Acquire what you need, and then be satisfied with what you have.

Don't Be Enslaved by Temptation to Live Beyond Your Means

Some people are habitual impulse buyers of things they don't need. They fritter away their funds. Get in the habit of shopping carefully and buying wisely. If you have some extra money, save it; don't "hark to the shark" who is always tempting you to hand over your earnings for some new "must-have" gadget or "guaranteed" investment. Whenever someone lures you with silver-tongued propositions, remember the story about the fox and the crow. The crow had a sweetmeat in its mouth and the fox wanted that titbit. The fox, being foxy, said: "Please sing for me, Mr. Crow; you have such a beautiful voice." The crow was flattered and started to sing; but as soon as it opened its mouth, it dropped the sweetmeat. The crafty fox picked it up and ran away. Beware of anyone who psychologizes you; he wants something from you. Never be cajoled by anybody's attempt to manipulate you to desire something unnecessary to your real happiness and success.

Simplify your life, so that you are not dependent upon too many possessions. To feed your every desire automatically creates unhappiness. I compare the American civilization with the Indian civilization: All the progressive advantages I wanted for India, to alleviate her poverty and physical suffering, I see here. But I find that most of the so-called successful persons here are just as miserable with their wealth as are the less fortunate in India without it.

Western life is so full of complexities; you have no time to enjoy anything. But if you examine your life, you will find there are lots of ways that you can simplify without feeling deprived. Realize the folly of desiring more and more luxuries bought on instalment plans. Save up for what you need and pay for those needs outright—no instalment plans with high interest to worry about. Of course, there is value in giving business to others who must sell their goods to make a living. But don't be enslaved by temptation to live beyond your means; for when

you come to a tight corner, everything will be gone.

Save something out of each pay cheque. To live without capital is a weakness courting disaster. Better to have a smaller car and home and some savings in the bank for emergencies, which are bound to come. It is a great mistake to spend all you receive just to get something new or luxurious. I think both husbands and wives independently should have a little nest egg in the bank, as well as a joint savings, on which they can rely when an unexpected need arises.

Saving is an art, and it requires sacrifice. But if you buy frugally, and live simply, you will be able to save something every week or month. I see so many workers who spend on unnecessary things, and consequently they are always in debt. I remember a couple who had a beautiful home in Florida. Whenever they saw something they liked they immediately bought it on the instalment plan. But the time came when that home was only a terror in their minds. I said, "These are not your things. You don't own them. You have just borrowed them on instalments. Why are you afraid to lose them? Why not live more simply without this constant worry that is destroying all your peace and enjoyment?" Because of their indebtedness, they did finally lose everything. They had to go back to the simple life and start all over again.

It is possible to enjoy vicariously so many of the good and beautiful things in life without the terrible nervous depression of worry about how to pay for owning them. Lots of desires can be satisfied that way.

Analyse Your Desires Before Acting on Them

A worthwhile desire is like a divine steed which, instead of leading you to the valley of darkness, will lead you toward the kingdom of God. Analyse each desire as to whether it will contribute to your spiritual welfare and betterment. Anything that leads you away from material enslavement to the kingdom of true happiness is the right kind of desire. Every motivation is good that brings forth a flower of God's manifest qualities and understanding. If anyone hurts you and you forgive him, you are leading yourself to the kingdom of God. If anyone is quarrelsome and you give understanding, you are taking yourself to

the kingdom of God. If someone is suffering and you reach out with aid and compassion, you are moving into the presence of God.

True success is dependent on attainment of a proper desire—not when you are bent on acquisition at the cost of others' welfare. Riches achieved through reprehensible means may appear outwardly to be success; but inwardly your soul will not be at rest. Your conscience is like a shoe: When it doesn't fit, it may look nice outwardly; but no matter how carefully you walk, you know exactly where that shoe pinches. One who is good before his conscience is good before God as well. Do not stand convicted before your conscience. If your conscience is clear you can stand against the opinion of the world; no matter how dense the darkness around you, you shall pierce the gloom. Materially ambitious people pursue their passion for success and do not care if it comes by wrong means. Regardless of what they may achieve, they are never really successful, for they are never happy. If you want to succeed, do it in an honourable way.

True success achieves those things and fulfils those desires that are wholesome—beneficial to one's physical, mental, and spiritual welfare. As soon as you are confronted with some inner urge, ask whether that desire is wholesome or not. Know the difference between motivations that are good for you and those that are not. Use reason and discrimination when going after success in fulfilling your desires.

The Successful Person Is Characterized by Self-Control

Harmless pleasures are all right; but those that hurt your mind and body are bad. Anything that enslaves you is not good. The power for our well-being and lasting happiness lies in self-control, in being able to do what we ought to do when we ought to do it, and in totally avoiding what we should not do. The successful person is characterized by self-control; he is unbound by whims and habits. To have complete mastery is to eat when and what you should eat; and when you shouldn't eat, you don't eat. When you want to mix with people, you mix wholeheartedly; and when you need time to be alone, you don't

mix. If you use your time wisely in worthwhile activities, you and your life, as an extension of yourself, will be worthwhile. Worldly people want to sponge your time; they want to pull you to their level. Why settle for uselessness? Use your time in introspection for self-development, and in creative thinking and deep contemplation, and you will have great power over yourself.

If people persist in bothering you during your quiet times, or if you need respite from inharmonies at home, go to some peaceful place and stay alone for a while, listening to the soft sounds of nature and of God within. All the happiness you seek lies within you, in the image of God within you. Why settle for spurious imitations of happiness in drink, movies, and sensual gratifications? That is the way of the world. True happiness needs no supports. As a poet wisely philosophized: "Having nothing, yet having all."

Remain Unconquered in Spirit Through All Challenges and Trials

You can learn to be happy at will and to hold on to that happiness within, no matter what happens. Some people are absolutely crushed by their tests; others smile on in spite of their difficulties. Those who are unconquered in spirit are the real successes in life. If you can so train or condition your mind that you are content regardless of what you have or do not have, and if you can stand the challenge of all your trials and remain calm—that is true happiness. Suppose you are suffering from a terrible disease; when you are asleep you are happily rid of it. Resolve to have that mental aboveness at all times; make up your mind to be happy at all costs. Jesus had such success in controlling his mind that he could willingly endure crucifixion and even resurrect his body after death. That was a demonstration of supreme success. His unconditional joy in God is the kind of success everyone is ultimately to achieve. It lies in owning yourself; when you, the soul, are able to be the boss of your life.

Say to your mind, "I am the boss; I am happy now, not tomorrow—when all the 'if' conditions are fulfilled." If you can command yourself to be happy at will, God will be with

you, for He is the Fountainhead of all rivulets of joy. You don't know the power of the mind. If you are happy, it creates a positive vibratory attitude that can attract health and money and friends—everything you seek. Contrarily, when you are not happy, when you have a negative attitude, your will is paralysed. Success in anything is dependent on being able to attract what you need by a strong, positive, happy will.

Analyse whether you have made a success of yourself. If you are habitually depressed, it is because you haven't made a success of your life. Things you have been wishing for years since childhood remain unfulfilled, and your morose mind has adopted a what's-the-use attitude. Revive your worthwhile goals with an energized will.

Success Means Creative Power to Attain What You Need

Success is not to be measured by how much material wealth is possessed, but whether you are able to create at will what you need. Think of that power; it comes from the superconscious mind, the infinite capacity of the soul. If you use that power to infuse your creative ability, you can overcome any difficulty that obstructs your path.

Suppose you need a car and you have the power to get it (by right means)—that is success. Suppose you need a house and you have the power to acquire it—you are successful. Suppose you want to have the right companion to share your life, and you pray to God to guide you and you meet that person—that is success. But how to go about achieving the power that makes for that kind of success at will? How to control the conditions that promote success instead of being controlled by your self-created cause-effect destiny? Very few in the world put forth enough determination and will to control their destiny.

Consider your immediate needs and always pray to God that you might have the creative power and will to meet them. Remember that man has not invented anything; he only discovers what God had already created in His ideations and made manifest in the causal world of thought from which all things in heaven and earth come into being. Therefore, the secret of success is to get more and more in tune with God.

Three Creative Powers: The Conscious, Subconscious, and Superconscious Minds

You have three tremendous powers given to you by your Creator—your conscious mind, subconscious mind, and superconscious mind. You mostly use your conscious mind with its sensory input and its ability to reason. You are not that much acquainted with the other two minds, so their potential remains largely undeveloped.

Environment influences conscious effort. In a community someone creates a successful business and suddenly others see the area as holding a fertile opportunity to start similar rival businesses. As a result, some are bound to fail. One needs to employ all the power of discriminative reason at his command in considering the potential effects of environment in his field of endeavour. Ill-conceived hasty determinations are a sure formula for failure, and an insult to the willing-to-help abilities of the conscious mind.

There is always opportunity for success. Condition your conscious mind power to watch for opportunities—to recognize the little openings that take you where you want to go, and to seize those opportunities that are consistent with your goals.

By every honest effort, use your conscious mind to succeed. There is so much capacity in that mind—reason, discrimination, creative thought, will power, concentration. Search out opportunities by being more aware, and then apply yourself with concentration to your tasks. First, find out your abilities and then apply yourself. Whatever you are interested in, go after that; the seeds of success are best nurtured by an enthusiastic interest.

Do not get lost in wrong influences. The conscious mind is easily discouraged by the limitations imposed on it by environment and the suggestions of people. In the beginning I was considered useless by my family because I did not seek the offerings of the world. But I resisted their disparaging thoughts. As soon as you accept the limitations of external conditions and naysayers, your creativity and will to succeed become paralysed. That is the analysis applicable to everyone who has failed in life.

Using the Instrument of the Subconscious Mind

Next, in controlling destiny, is to employ the instrumentality of your subconscious mind; the mental faculty behind the conscious mind. That mind is the memory and habit mind. It stores all of your experiences and solidifies your thoughts and actions into habit patterns. Anything that you do with conscious attention, your subconscious mind saves in a blueprint in your brain. If you think you are a failure, a blueprint of failure is set in your subconscious mind. That preset conclusion is disastrous to the processes of success, a major reason for which people fail. No matter what your conditions in life, or the outcome of your efforts, you have no right to think failure, to hypnotize your mind with that belief.

Whatever you want to accomplish, affirm and believe in its attainment, in spite of contrary evidence. Create the pattern of success in your subconscious mind and make it work for you. Sit quietly and think deeply about your goal; concentrate on how to attain it. When you are still, when your restless and "can't do it" thoughts quiet down, the new convictions in your subconscious mind can help you. As you go deep into thought and begin to think a problem through, you go beyond the limits of the conscious mind and can feed into the conscious processes of reason valuable information from the memories and from the imaginative creativity of the subconscious mind.

The All-Knowing Power of the Superconscious Mind

Behind the subconscious mind is the superconscious mind. The power of God within you, the power of limitless control, lies in the superconscious mind. That mind cannot be suggested with failure, but it can be eclipsed by the suggestion of failure. The superconscious mind is the all-knowing intuitive consciousness of the soul. That mind can be tapped in deep concentration and in soul-contact in meditation.

Remind yourself always, no matter what comes, "I have the power to succeed. And though the conscious mind is conditioned to my environment, the Lord has given me unlimited power in the superconscious mind and the subconscious mind. As I begin to control them, I shall be able to control my destiny."

There is no jinx in your destiny except in lack of application of the powers of your conscious mind, and in the bad habits ingrained in your subconscious mind. You must never be discouraged; to be discouraged is to admit failure, to trademark yourself with failure. If your conscious mind says, "I can't do it," the subconscious mind records that failure thought; and the more you think negatively, the deeper you drive that failure idea into the library of your subconscious mind. Then you are done for—unless you again make the conscious effort to do away with the persistent conviction of failure by taking positive steps to think and act with a confident will.

When you think, "I can succeed," think it so deeply that you drive out any notion of failure. If nine times you try to succeed, but you fail, still you can try the tenth time! Do not give up; never admit failure.

Practical Application of Intuition

Begin every venture by asking for God's help: "Lord, I shall try my utmost, but guide me to do the right thing and to avoid mistakes." Then you must use your intelligence and reason to determine how to accomplish what you want to achieve. At every step, pray to God for guidance; feel His assurance in the intuition of inner calmness. That is what I do. After I use the intelligence of my conscious mind, I use my intuitive power as well as the other powers of my subconscious and superconscious minds; and I see that the creative divine light comes to guide me, without fail.

There is always uncertainty in depending only on the material ways of success. But the intuitive way of success is different. Intuitive perception can never be wrong. It comes by an inner sensitivity, a feeling by which you know in advance whether or not you are going to succeed by following your determined course.

The testimony of the senses and the rational mind may tell you one thing while the testimony of the intuition tells you otherwise. You should follow the testimony of the senses first—learn all you can about your goal and the practical steps needed to achieve it. Whether you are investing your money, starting a business, changing your occupation, after you have

investigated, compared, and applied your intelligence to the limit, don't rush headlong into it. When your reason and investigation points to one thing, then meditate and pray to God. In inner silence, ask the Lord if it is all right to go ahead. If you pray deeply and earnestly and find that something is turning you from it, don't do it. But if you have an irresistible positive impulse, and you pray and pray and go on praying and this impulse still persists, then go ahead. Your prayer for guidance must be sincere, so that whatever impulse you feel will be from God and not mere reinforcement of your own flawed desire.

That is the way I developed the practical application of my intuition. Before starting any endeavour, I sit in meditative silence in my room and go on expanding that power in my mind. Then I throw the concentrated light of my mind on what I want to accomplish. I know my thoughts have worked; what I perceive in that state must come to pass.

After all, we are the most powerful of receiving and broadcasting stations. The little barrier of flesh means nothing. Our thoughts are powerful creative forces floating in the ether ready to accomplish their purpose when they are concentrated and consciously directed. But most persons do not know how to make their thoughts work for them. Their minds are full of static. Concentration and meditation tunes those thoughts and focuses them on manifesting success.

Enlarge Your Success by Helping Others to Help Themselves

A selfish agenda limits success. You should express the universal consciousness of your soul. You don't have to work only through the hands and brain of your own body. You can make your influence so widely felt that your goodness works through thousands of hands and brains. You think of your little body, how to feed, clothe, and give it comfort. I think of how to better the lives of thousands of souls, of being successful in giving people their own power of strength and wisdom. The satisfaction this gives is beyond words.

The success I have found in helping people to help themselves is a success that no one can destroy. It has been fun to do things for God. I have no ambition for myself, but I have much

ambition for God, and for sharing Him with all. Unless you sacrifice some of your desires for the welfare of others, you can never be a real success. If you include the welfare of others in your efforts to succeed, you have a greater chance to be successful than if you think only of yourself. And above all else think of God and ask Him to guide you. I would have had a lot more trouble with the building of this society if I had not received inner divine direction, because each one who came wanted me to do it his way. This organization will succeed because I have followed God's way. Satan always tries to obstruct good works, but God shows the way to overcome all evils.

The Ultimate Success: To Be With God All the Time

Our purpose in life is to know the meaning of this universe. It is only a dream of God, just like a motion picture, which reveals great drama or comedy and then is over and forgotten. So is life. It seems so real and so permanent, but it will be over with shortly. All your problems and struggles will be forgotten when you leave this world for the better world of the afterlife. So do not take this life too seriously; look behind this drama to the Master of this universe, the Author of this dream play.

Many people say, "I will never be able to realize God." That is the hardest thought to remove. But as you pray and pray and never mind how many times God does not answer, if still you pray, still you love Him, then only will you succeed. Even aeons of seeking God are nothing compared to eternity with Him. When you continuously pour out your heart in demanding God-realization, you will surely find His answer.

Do not waste your time. The way to true success is to be with God all the time. Seek Him first. Do not remain stagnant; laziness is not happiness. At night be with Him. And awaken in the morning ready to battle with the world, with Him by your side. With faith in your power to succeed say, "Come along, world. I am ready!" You will control your destiny; one by one your shackles will fall away. You will know that you are no longer a prodigal wanderer on earth, but that you have reclaimed your heritage as a son of God.

The only reason I am here with you is to declare what God has given to me. Finding the Supreme Power, I found the thirst

of all my desires quenched forever. Don't delay; follow these teachings, that you may feel the wonderful things I have felt on this path. It has not only given me complete harmony in body and mind, but also contentment and happiness indescribable, and His constant guidance. You shall feel His presence in the caressing breeze; you shall see His bursting ever new joy in the ocean; He will warm you in the sunshine. He will watch you through the over-arching sky; and the heavenly bodies of stars and moon and sun will be windows to His presence. From His everywhereness you will see His benign eyes peering at you with love.

Every morning when you begin your day, think not only of serving your own welfare, but of how many others you can help. For their own betterment, interest them in the cause of Self-Realization Fellowship. If you are all interested in truth as much as I am, how great shall be our power to banish ignorance from the world. Everything that you do to help others in the way of this spiritual path will be remembered by the Father.

Feel the Power of Spirit Moving Through You

Now, close your eyes and concentrate within. Feel great peace within you. Feel peace all around you. Feel the power of Spirit moving through the calm portals of your mind; feel the peaceful glow of the Father within. He is hiding in every thought, in every cell, in everything within you. Feel Him.

Let us pray: "Heavenly Father, I am no longer surrounded by barriers of 'I can't.' I have within me Thy great explosive power of 'I can!' Lord, bless me that I develop that power, so that I may destroy all my barriers and expand my territory beyond the limitations of my existence until I conquer the forces of this earth and of Thy cosmos by being one with Thee."