

FOURTEEN LESSONS IN  
YOGI PHILOSOPHY



By YOGI RAMACHARAKA

# FOURTEEN LESSONS

in

# Yogi Philosophy

and

# Oriental Occultism

By YOGI RAMACHARAKA

Author of "Science of Breath," "Hatha Yoga," etc.



"Know, O disciple! that those who have passed through the silence, and felt its peace, and retained its strength, they long that you shall pass through it also. Therefore, in the Hall of Learning, when he is capable of entering there, the disciple will always find his master." — *Light on the Path.*



## The Yoga Publication Society

Chicago 10, Illinois

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ISBN #0-911662-01-4

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## THE FIRST LESSON.

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### THE FIRST THREE PRINCIPLES.

It is with no ordinary feelings that we address ourselves to our students of the Yogi class of 1904. We see, as they perhaps do not, that to many of them this series of lessons will be as seed planted in fertile soil, which will in due time put forth sprouts which will force their way gradually into the sunlight of consciousness, where they will put forth leaves, blossom, and fruit. Many of the fragments of truth which will be presented to you will not be recognized by you at this time, but in years to come you will recognize the verity of the impressions which will be conveyed to you in these lessons, and then, and then only, will you make these truths your own.

We intend to speak to you just as if you were gathered before us in person, and as if we were standing before you in the flesh. We feel sure that the bond of sympathy between us will soon grow so strong and real that as you read our words you will feel our presence almost as strongly as if we were with you in person. We will be with you in spirit,

and, according to our philosophy, the student who is in harmonious sympathy with his teachers really establishes a psychic connection with them, and is in consequence enabled to grasp the "spirit" of the teaching and to receive the benefit of the teacher's thought in a degree impossible to one who merely reads the words in cold print.

We are sure that the members of the class of 1904 will get into harmony with each other, and with us, from the very start, and that we will obtain results that will surprise even ourselves, and that the term of the class will mark a wonderful spiritual growth and unfoldment for many of the class. This result would be impossible were the class composed of the general public, in which the adverse thought vibrations of many would counteract, or at least retard, the impelling force generated in the minds of those who are in sympathy with the work. But we will not have this obstacle to overcome, as the class has been recruited only from that class of students who are interested in the occult. The announcements sent out by us have been worded in such a way as to attract the attention only of those for whom they were intended. The mere sensation-hunters and the "faddists" have not been attracted by our call, while those for whom the call was intended have heard and have hastened to communicate with us. As the poet has sung: "Where I pass, all my children know me." The members of the

class having been attracted to us, and we to them, will form a harmonious body working with us to the common end of self-improvement, growth, development, and unfoldment. The spirit of harmony and unity of purpose will do much for us, and the united thought of the class, coupled with our own, will be a tower of strength, and each student will receive the benefit of it, and will be strengthened and sustained thereby.

We will follow the system of instruction of the East, rather than that of the Western world. In the East, the teacher does not stop to "prove" each statement or theory as he makes or advances it; nor does he make a blackboard demonstration of spiritual truths; nor does he argue with his class or invite discussion. On the contrary, his teaching is authoritative, and he proceeds to deliver his message to his students as it was delivered to him, without stopping to see whether they all agree with him. He does not care whether his statements are accepted as truth by all, for he feels sure that those who are ready for the truth which he teaches will intuitively recognize it, and as for the others, if they are not prepared to receive the truth, no amount of argument will help matters. When a soul is ready for a spiritual truth, and that truth, or a part of it, is uttered in its presence or presented to its attention by means of writings, it will intuitively recognize and appropriate it. The Eastern teacher knows that

much of his teaching is but the planting of seed, and that for every idea which the student grasps at first there will be a hundred which will come into the field of conscious recognition only after the lapse of time.

We do not mean that the Eastern teachers insist upon the student blindly accepting every truth that is presented to him. On the contrary, they instruct the pupil to accept as truth only that which he can prove for himself, as no truth is truth to one until he can prove it by his own experiments. But the student is taught that before many truths may be so proven he must develop and unfold. The teacher asks only that the student have confidence in him as a pointer-out of the way, and he says, in effect, to the student: "This is the way; enter upon it, and on the path you will find the things of which I have taught you; handle them, weigh them, measure them, taste them, and know for yourself. When you reach any point of the path you will know as much of it as did I or any other soul at that particular stage of the journey; but until you reach a particular point, you must either accept the statements of those who have gone before or reject the whole subject of that particular point. Accept nothing as final until you have proven it; but, if you are wise, you will profit by the advice and experience of those who have gone before. Every man must learn by experience, but men may serve others as pointers of

the way. At each stage of the journey it will be found that those who have progressed a little further on the way have left signs and marks and guide-posts for those who follow. The wise man will take advantage of these signs. I do not ask for blind faith, but only for confidence until you are able to demonstrate for yourselves the truths I am passing on to you, as they were passed on to me, by those who went before.

We ask the student to have patience. Many things which will appear dark to him at first will be made clear as we progress.

#### THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

Man is a far more complete being than is generally imagined. He has not only a body and a soul, but he is a spirit possessing a soul, which soul has several vehicles for expression, these several vehicles being of different degrees of density, the body being the lowest form of expression. These different vehicles manifest upon different "planes," such as the "physical plane," the "astral plane," etc., all of which will be explained as we proceed.

The real self is pure spirit—a spark of the divine fire. This spirit is encased within numerous sheaths, which prevent its full expression. As man advances in development, his consciousness passes from the lower planes to the higher, and he becomes more and more aware of his higher nature.

The spirit contains within it all potentialities, and as man progresses he unfolds new powers, new qualities, into the light.

The Yogi philosophy teaches that man is composed of seven principles—is a sevenfold creature. The best way to think of man is to realize that the spirit is the real self, and that the lower principles are but confining sheaths. Man may manifest upon seven planes, that is, the highly developed man, as the majority of men of this age can manifest only upon the lower planes, the higher planes not having as yet been reached by them, although every man, no matter how undeveloped, possesses the seven principles potentially. The first five planes have been attained by many, the sixth by a few, the seventh by practically none of this race at this time.

#### THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAN.

The seven principles of man, as known to the Yogi philosophy, are herewith stated, English terms being substituted for Sanscrit words, so far as may be:

7. *Spirit.*
6. *Spiritual-Mind.*
5. *Intellect.*
4. *Instinctive-Mind.*
3. *Prana, or Vital Force.*
2. *Astral Body.*
1. *Physical Body.*

We will briefly run over the general nature of each of these seven principles, that the student may understand future references to them; but we will defer our detailed treatment of the subject until later on in the lessons.

#### 1. *The Physical Body.*

Of all the seven principles of man, the physical body is of course the most apparent. It is the lowest in the scale, and is the crudest manifestation of the man. But this does not mean that the physical should be despised or neglected. On the contrary, it is a most necessary principle for the growth of man in his present stage of development—the temple of the living Spirit—and it should be carefully tended and cared for in order to render it a more perfect instrument. We have but to look around us and see how the physical bodies of different men show the different degrees of development under mental control. It is a duty of each developed man to train his body to the highest degree of perfection in order that it may be used to advantage. The body should be kept in good health and condition and trained to obey the orders of the mind, rather than to rule the mind, as is so often the case. The care of the body, under the intelligent control of the mind, is an important branch of Yogi philosophy, and is known as “Hatha Yoga.” We are preparing a little text-book upon “Hatha Yoga,” which will

soon be ready for the press, that will give the Yogi teachings upon this most important branch of self-development. The Yogi philosophy teaches that the physical body is built up of cells, each cell containing within it a miniature "life," which controls its action. These "lives" are really bits of intelligent mind of a certain degree of growth, which enable the cells to perform their work properly. These bits of intelligence are, of course, subordinate to the control of the central mind of the man, and will readily obey orders from headquarters, given either subconsciously or consciously. These cell intelligences manifest a perfect adaptation for their particular work. The selective action of the cells, extracting from the blood the nourishment needed and rejecting that which is not required, is an instance of this intelligence. The process of digestion, assimilation, etc., shows the intelligence of the cells, either separately or collectively in groups. The healing of wounds, the rush of the cells to the points where they are most needed, and hundreds of other examples known to the student of physiology, all mean to the Yogi student examples of the "life" within each atom. Each atom is to the Yogi a living thing, leading its own independent life. These atoms combine into groups for some end, and the group manifests a group-intelligence, as long as it remains a group; these groups again combining in turn, and forming bodies of a more complex nature, which

serve as vehicles for higher forms of consciousness.

When death comes to the physical body the cells separate and scatter, and that which we call decay sets in. The force which has held the cells together is withdrawn, and it becomes free to go its own way and form new combinations. Some go into the body of the plants in the vicinity, and eventually find themselves again in the body of an animal; others remain in the organism of the plant; others remain in the ground for a time, but the life of the atom means incessant and constant change. As a leading writer has said: "Death is but an aspect of life, and the destruction of one material form is but a prelude to the building up of another."

We will not devote further space to the consideration of the physical, as that is a subject by itself, and, then, our students are no doubt anxious to be led into subjects with which they are not quite so familiar. So we will leave this first principle and pass on to the second, wishing, however, again to remind the student that the first step in Yogi development consists of the mastery of the physical body and its care and attention. We will have more to say of this subject before we are through with this course.

#### *The Astral Body.*

This second principle of man is not nearly so well known as its physical brother, although it is

closely connected with the latter and is its exact counterpart in appearance. The astral body has been known to people in all ages, and has given rise to many superstitions and mysteries, owing to a lack of knowledge of its nature. It has been called the "ethereal body"; the "fluidic body"; the "double"; the "wraith"; the "Doppelganger," etc. It is composed of matter of a finer quality than that composing our physical bodies, but matter none the less. In order to give you a clearer idea of what we mean, we will call your attention to water, which manifests in several well-known forms. Water at a certain temperature is known as ice, a hard, solid substance; at a little higher temperature it assumes its best-known form, which we call "water"; at a still higher temperature it escapes in the form of a vapor which we call "steam," although the real steam is invisible to the human eye, and becomes apparent only when it mixes with the air and has its temperature lowered a little, when it becomes vapor visible to the eye, and which vapor we call "steam."

The astral body is the best counterpart of the physical body and may be separated from it under certain circumstances. Ordinarily, conscious separation is a matter of considerable difficulty, but in persons of a certain degree of psychical development the astral body may be detached and often goes on long journeys. To the clairvoyant vision the astral body is seen looking exactly like its counterpart, the phys-

ical body, and united to it by a slender silken cord.

The astral body exists some time after the death of the person to whom it belongs, and under certain circumstances it is visible to living persons, and is called a "ghost." There are other means whereby the spirits of those who have passed on may become manifest, and the astral shell which is sometimes seen after it has been sloughed off by the soul which has passed on is in such cases nothing more than a corpse of finer matter than its physical counterpart. In such cases it is possessed of no life or intelligence, and is nothing more than a cloud seen in the sky bearing a resemblance to a human form. It is a shell, nothing more. The astral body of a dying person is sometimes projected by an earnest desire, and is at such times seen by friends and relatives with whom he is in sympathy. There are many cases of this kind on record, and the student probably is aware of occurrences of this kind. We will have more to say about the astral body and astral shells in other lessons in this course. We will have occasion to go into further detail when we reach the subject of the astral plane, and, in fact, the astral body will form a part of several lessons.

The astral body is invisible to the ordinary eye, but is readily perceived by those having clairvoyant power of a certain degree. Under certain circumstances the astral body of a living person may be seen by friends and others, the mental condition of

the persons and the observer having much to do with the matter. Of course, the trained and developed occultist is able to project his astral body consciously, and may make it appear at will; but such powers are rare and are acquired only after a certain stage of development is reached.

The adept sees the astral body rising from the physical body as the hour of death approaches. It is seen hovering over the physical body, to which it is bound by a slender thread. When the thread snaps the person is dead, and the soul passes on carrying with it the astral body, which in turn is discarded as the physical body has been before. It must be remembered that the astral body is merely a finer grade of matter, and that it is merely a vehicle for the soul, just as is the physical, and that both are discarded at the proper time. The astral body, like the physical, disintegrates after the death of the person, and persons of a psychic nature sometimes see the dissolving fragments around cemeteries, in the shape of violet light.

We are merely calling attention to the different vehicles of the soul of man, his seven principles, and we must hasten on to the next principle. We would like to speak to you of the interesting phenomenon of the ego leaving the physical body in the astral body while one is "asleep." We would like to tell you just what occurs during sleep, and how one may give orders to his astral self to gain

certain information or to work out certain problems while he is wrapped in sleep, but that belongs to another phase of our subject, and we must pass on after merely whetting your appetite. We wish you to get these seven principles well fixed in your mind, so that you may be able to understand the terms when we use them later on.

### 3. *Prana, or Vital Force.*

We have said something of Prana in our little book, "The Science of Breath," which many of you have read. As we said in that book, Prana is universal energy, but in our consideration of it we will confine ourselves to that manifestation of Prana which we call vital force. This vital force is found in all forms of life—from the amœba to man—from the most elementary form of plant life to the highest form of animal life. Prana is all-pervading. It is found in all things having life, and as the occult philosophy teaches that life is in all things—in every atom—the apparent lifelessness of some things being only a lesser degree of manifestation, we may understand that Prana is everywhere, in everything. Prana is not the Ego, but is merely a form of energy used by the Ego in its material manifestation. When the Ego departs from the physical body, in what we call "death," the Prana, being no longer under the control of the Ego, responds only to the orders of the individual atoms or their groups,

which have formed the physical body, and as the physical body disintegrates and is resolved back to its original elements, each atom takes with it sufficient Prana to enable it to form new combinations, the unused Prana returning to the great universal storehouse from whence it came. Prana is in all forms of matter, and yet it is not matter—it is the energy or force which animates matter. We have gone into the matter of Prana in our little book previously referred to, and we do not wish to take up the students' time in repeating what we said there.

But before taking up the next principle, we wish to direct the student's attention to the fact that Prana is the force underlying magnetic healing, much of mental healing, absent treatment, etc. That which has been spoken of by many as human magnetism is really Prana.

In "Science of Breath," we have given you directions for increasing the Prana in your system; distributing it over the body, strengthening each part and organ and stimulating every cell. It may be directed toward relieving pain in one's self and others by sending to the affected part a supply of Prana extracted from the air. It may be projected to a distance so far as to affect other persons. The thought of the projector sends forth and colors the Prana gathered for the purpose, and finds lodgment in the psychic organism of the patient. Like the

Marconi waves it is invisible to the eye of man (with the exception of certain persons who have attained a high degree of clairvoyant power); it passes through intervening obstacles and seeks the person attuned to receive it.

This transferring of Prana under the direction of the will is the underlying principle of thought transference, telepathy, etc. One may surround himself with an aura of Prana, colored with strong positive thought, which will enable him to resist the adverse thought waves of others, and which will enable him to live serene in an atmosphere of antagonistic and inharmonious thought.

We advise students to re-read that portion of "Science of Breath" which deals with the use of Prana. We propose going into great detail regarding this phase of the subject, during the course of these lessons, but "Science of Breath" gives a good fundamental idea of the nature of Prana and the methods of its use, and students will do well to refresh their minds on this subject.

We do not wish to weary you by this description of each of the seven principles, and we are aware that you are impatient to enter into the more interesting phases of the subject. But it is absolutely necessary that you obtain a clear idea of these seven principles, in order that you may understand that which follows, and to obviate the necessity of your being "sent back" to relearn the lesson which you

have "skipped." We had this idea in mind when we started this class in November, 1903, instead of waiting until January, 1904, and we give you the November and December lessons as "good measure," so as to be able to reach the more interesting part of the subject by the January lesson.

We will leave the subject of Prana and will pass on to the next principle; but we trust that you will not leave this part of the lesson until you have acquired a clear idea of Prana and its qualities and uses. Study your "Science of Breath" until you understand something of Prana.

#### THE MENTAL PRINCIPLES.

The Western reader who has studied the writings of some of the recent Western psychologists will recognize in the Instinctive Mind certain attributes of the so-called "subjective" or "subconscious" minds spoken of so frequently by the said writers. These writers discovered in man these characteristics, as well as certain higher phases of the mind (coming from the Spiritual Mind), and without stopping to investigate further, they advanced a "new" theory that man is possessed of two minds, *i.e.*, the "objective" and "subjective," or as some have termed them, the "conscious and "subconscious." This was all very well so far as it went, but these investigators set the "conscious" mind aside and bundled all the rest into their "subconscious"

or "subjective" mind, ignoring the fact that they were mixing the highest and lowest qualities of mind and putting them in the same class, and leaving the middle quality by itself. The "subjective mind" and the "subconscious" theories are very confusing, as the student finds grouped together the most sublime flashes of genius and the silliest nothings of the man of low development, the mind of the latter being almost altogether "subjective."

To those who have read up on these theories, we would say that such reading will materially help them to understand the three mental principles of man, if they will remember that the "conscious" or "objective" mind corresponds very nearly with the "Intellect" principle in the Yogi philosophy; and that the lowest portions of the "subjective" or "subconscious" mind are what the Yogis term the "Instinctive Mind" principle; while the higher and sublime qualities, which the Western writers have noticed and have grouped with the lower qualities in forming their "subjective mind" and "subconscious mind" theories, is the "Spiritual Mind" principle of the Yogis, with the difference that the "Spiritual Mind" has additional properties and qualities of which these Western theorists have never dreamed. As we touch upon each of these three mental principles, you will see the points of resemblance and the points of difference between the Yogi teachings and the Western theories.

We wish it distinctly understood, however, that we do not desire to detract from the praise justly earned by these Western investigators; in fact, the Yogis owe them a debt of gratitude for preparing the Western mind for the fuller teachings. The student who has read the works of the writers referred to will find it very much easier to grasp the idea of the three mental principles in man than if he had never heard of any division in the functioning of the mind of man. Our principal reason for calling attention to the mistake of the Western dual-mind theories was that to the mind of the Yogi it is painful to see that which he knows to be the highest manifestation of mind, that which is the seat of inspiration and flashes of genius, that which touches the pure Spirit (the Spiritual Mind), which is just beginning to awaken in men of development and growth—confused and confounded with and placed in the same class with the lowest mental principle (the Instinctive Mind) which, while most necessary and useful to man, under the direction of his higher principle is still something which is common to the most undeveloped man, even to the lower form of the animal kingdom—yea, even to the plant life. We trust that the student will free his mind of preconceived ideas on this important subject, and will listen to what we say before forming his final opinion. In our next lesson, we will go into detail regarding each of the three Mental Principles.

## THE SECOND LESSON.

### THE MENTAL PRINCIPLES.

IN our First Lesson we called your attention briefly to the three lower principles of man—*i.e.*, (1) the physical body; (2) the astral body; (3) Prana, or vital force. We also led up to the subject of the mental principles, which form the fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively, of the seven principles of man.

For convenience' sake, we will again enumerate the four higher principles:

- (7) Spirit.
- (6) Spiritual mind.
- (5) Intellect.
- (4) Instinctive mind.

This terminology is more or less unsatisfactory, but we adopt it in preference to the Sanscrit terms which prove so puzzling and elusive to the average Western student.

The three lower principles are the most material, and the atoms of which they are composed are, of course, indestructible, and go on forever in countless forms and aspects; but these principles, so far as