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THE AMERICAN MEDITATION INSTITUTE'S
Empowering Self-Care Program
for a Happy, Healthy, Joyful Life

SECOND EDITION — REVISED AND EXPANDED

LEONARD PERLMUTTER
with Jenness Cortez Perlmutter

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Author Statement

Jenness and I have continually immersed ourselves in the study and practice of Yoga Science, Philosophy and Psychology since 1975. Over the years we have used our individual mind-body-sense complexes as laboratories to experiment with the principles we've learned—applying them to the full range of life's relationships in a practical, commonsensical, discriminating manner. As a result of this personal experimentation we began to feel better: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Our health improved, our fears faded, our creative insights deepened and life became more beautiful and rewarding. This practice has given each of us an inspiring sense of purpose and the still-growing ability to make beneficial choices in every situation. Because it has worked so well for us, we now share with you what we have learned. May it guide you on your own journey to a happy, healthy and joyful life.

The Bridge of Yoga

There is no path to peace. The path is peace.

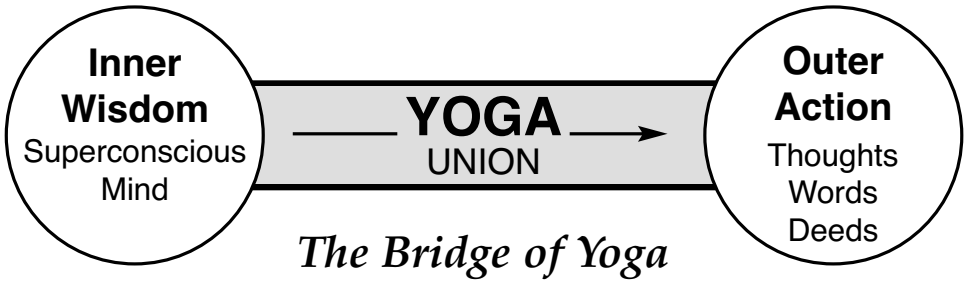
MAHATMA GANDHI

The realization of a happy, healthy and joyful life begins with the recognition that you are a citizen of two worlds. Clearly, you are a citizen of the ever-changing material world of animal, vegetable and mineral matter. In this familiar environment, the body is your vehicle for action and your mind is your most powerful instrument for evaluating circumstances and motivating your body into action. For every action your mind-body-sense complex takes, a consequence results.

You are also a citizen of the distinctly non-material, yet profoundly real world of consciousness. Within this subtle world exists an intuitive library of knowledge that unerringly identifies which of your possible actions will lead you to realize health, happiness and freedom from fear and which will lead to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dis-ease.

When, as a citizen of the material world, your outer actions reflect the perfection of your inner, subtle wisdom, you will be led for your highest and greatest good. The choice to base your outer action on your own inner wisdom is the essence of all forms of Yoga. Yoga means union, and *The Heart and Science of*

Yoga provides a reliable blueprint for building a trustworthy, ever-accessible bridge to your own inner wisdom.



The Bridge of Yoga

Yoga means union. It represents a bridge between inner wisdom and outer actions. When your outer actions (thoughts, words and deeds) are based on your inner wisdom, you are always led for your highest and greatest good. There is no cause for worry.

The *Bridge of Yoga* is a very practical tool that can be applied easily in every circumstance and relationship. By using it regularly, you will learn to deal confidently and skillfully with common, everyday situations. Take worrying for example.

To one extent or another, we all worry. If the truth were known, most of us squander a tremendous amount of creative energy attending to notions of what the future might or might not hold. Just as Gulliver was hopelessly bound by the Lilliputians' slender threads, many of us are held captive by habitual thoughts generated from our own fertile imaginations.

How alluring that unending train of hypothetical "what if" situations can be! "What if this should happen? Oh, dear, what if that should happen? And what if neither happens?" So much of life is spent imagining things that never were and never will be. Because of all our concerns, we often can't even get a good night's sleep. And the more attention we give our worries, the worse we feel—physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

But this need not be the case.

When you have done all that you can do in a situation, but still find yourself plagued by worries, use this checklist to transform the power of those worrisome thoughts into reserves of energy, will power and creativity. But remember,

perennial happiness is never realized by simply dismissing your concerns for the future, nor by repressing them. Rather, when you become a Yoga scientist, you can face thoughts that tempt you to worry, as they arise, by experimenting with a gentle and loving time-tested procedure.

First-Aid Kit for Worries

1. Before you address your anxiety, ask yourself the question, "Who am I?" Through this form of quiet contemplation, your attention becomes centered in the peace and fullness of the Eternal Witness who is the Perfect wisdom at the core of your personality.

2. Attend to the inhalation and exhalation of your breath at the bridge between the two nostrils.

3. As you remain centered in the equanimity of the Eternal Witness, practice detachment and dispassionately welcome, witness and honor your concerns—allowing yourself to be present with these thoughts, desires and emotions without being controlled by them.

4. Listening to the inner wisdom of your conscience, willingly surrender the worrisome thought back to its Origin—the Origin of every person, every thing and every thought (the Supreme Reality).

5. Lovingly direct your attention to your *mantra* (the name of the Supreme Reality).

6. If it's possible, go for a *mantra* walk. Take a brisk fifteen to twenty minute walk just listening to the silent repetition of your *mantra*.

7. Try to recognize an opportunity (it's probably in front of you right now) to engage in some selfless service. This transforms the energy of worry into the energy of love, fearlessness and strength.

Throughout history, the profound insights of Yoga Science and philosophy (such as this *First-Aid Kit for Worries*) have been taught and re-experienced within the culture and idioms of changing times, so that their healing and nurturing effects can be embraced anew by each successive generation. Whenever their inner wisdom has been realized and relied upon, individuals have experienced the greatest freedom of all: the freedom from worry and fear. When you learn to embrace this freedom, your life will become a great and meaningful adventure—in which you naturally blossom to your fullest potential.

Because this ageless truth is intrinsically universal and democratic, many people in every age have realized the freedom of enlightenment without ever having heard the word "Yoga" or knowing anything about Eastern philosophy. Yet, the science and philosophy of Yoga have always provided quiet, reliable encouragement and concrete guidance to seekers in every culture, tradition and religion.

The American experiment that aspires to this wisdom began in 1776 with rebellion against the tyranny of rule by a distant, sovereign monarch. True freedom, the founding fathers insisted, rests on the bedrock of the self-evident truth that all people are "created equal . . . endowed by the Creator with (the) unalienable rights of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." This noble truth is not only the ideal upon which our republic was founded, but is also the heart of Yoga Science. According to the ancient sages, realizing those precious, inherent and unalienable rights in our daily lives is the surest evidence of union with the Divine. That conscious union is the singular goal of all Yoga.

Now, from within the cultural milieu of twenty-first century America, *The Heart and Science of Yoga* presents a practical, modern interpretation of the perennial yogic wisdom.

Our promise to you is simple. If you are willing to follow *The Heart and Science of Yoga*, you can live your life joyfully, free from worry and dis-ease, and supported by an imperishable wellspring of loving, creative, health-enhancing energy.

CHAPTER 16

Systematic Procedure for AMI Meditation

Still your mind in Me, still your intellect in Me, and without doubt you will be united with Me forever. If you cannot still your mind in Me, learn to do so through the regular practice of meditation.

SHRI KRISHNA (BHAGAVAD GITA)

Since the early 1970s, Jenness and I have been experimenting with the practices of Yoga Science. During these many years we have added or subtracted preparatory practices based on what was comfortable and effective for us at each stage of our developing *sadhana*. It's not that we weren't disciplined. We were. Even so, in the very beginning, we found it nearly impossible to meditate every day. Instead, we began with *japa*. Then we learned *pranayama* and *Easy-Gentle Yoga* and eventually committed to daily morning meditations. It was not until a few years later that we added evening meditation.

Before you read the entire systematic procedure for meditation, remember that *ahimsa* is the highest precept of Yoga Science. This means you should not take on too much too soon. Without question, your meditation will be enhanced by some preliminaries to help calm and focus both the body and mind. Yet, above all else, you must be kind to yourself. Because of its length and specificity, it would be unreasonable and unkind of us to expect you to memorize and practice this complete procedure immediately. Instead, we suggest that you

familiarize yourself with the instruction we present. Then begin with whatever portions of the procedure you enjoy and that come easily to you. Over time, your personal practice will develop on its own.

Each preliminary practice prior to your meditation is intended to progressively narrow the range of distractions that come into your awareness. Collectively, these practices engage your mind, body, and senses while focusing your attention down to one point.

Systematic Procedure for Meditation

1. PREPARE THE BODY PHYSICALLY

It's always a good idea to prepare the body physically prior to meditation. When the body is refreshed, comfortable, relaxed and clean, you have taken positive steps to assure an effective meditation. Washing your face, hands, wrists and feet, or taking a shower will give you a fresh feeling and clear the mind. Your body will be more comfortable in meditation if you empty your bladder. Also, if it is your custom, empty your bowels after you rise, in preparation for morning meditation.

2. PRAYERS

If prayers are part of your tradition, include them at this time. Remember that you are following your own path. This systematic procedure is merely a group of suggestions. If the suggestion feels comfortable and fits into your lifestyle, then by all means make it a part of your practice. Every aspect of your systematic procedure for meditation must resonate in your heart. So, consider these suggestions and then fashion your own path. (See *Contemplation, Repentance and Prayer*, Chapter 39).

3. RELAX AND STRETCH THE MUSCLES

It's important to stretch the body prior to your meditation. The longer you sit still for meditation, the more movement your body will require at other times of the day. Chapter 37 will present *Easy-Gentle Yoga*—a complete program to stimulate and massage the joints, glands, lymphatic system, muscles and internal organs. Once learned, these exercises can take as little as fifteen minutes to complete and will create a vast improvement in your overall health and meditation practice. If you already are committed to your favorite *Hatha* or stretching exercises, feel free to substitute your current program for ours.

Always consult with your health care professional before starting any new exercise program.

4. *PRANAYAMA*
Alternate Nostril Breathing (*Nadi Shodhana*)

Seated in your chosen meditation posture with your head, neck and trunk straight, eyes and mouth gently closed (see step 6), complete three cycles or rounds of *Alternate Nostril Breathing* (see Chapter 29). This practice clears and purifies the subtle energy channels from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. It enhances one-pointed attention, calms the mind, oxygenates the blood and energizes your entire body.

5. SURVEY THE BODY

This relaxation practice is unlike common stress-reduction exercises that ask you to consciously relax certain parts of your anatomy. While that kind of practice can ease bodily tension, it also reinforces the duality of a subject-object relationship. When you ask the shoulders to relax, you are the subject, the shoulders are the object, and an expectation is created that the shoulders will, or should, relax as directed.

The form of relaxation practice that we recommend reminds us of the 1960s science fiction movie *Fantastic Voyage*. In that film, scientists were treated with a secret serum that

buttocks. Experiment with position and thickness of blankets or pillows to relieve pressure on the knees and feet, and to keep a slight inward curve in the lower back. If your thighs, calves or hips are tight and disturb your meditation, give extra attention to those muscle groups in your daily stretching exercises.

Proper Posture

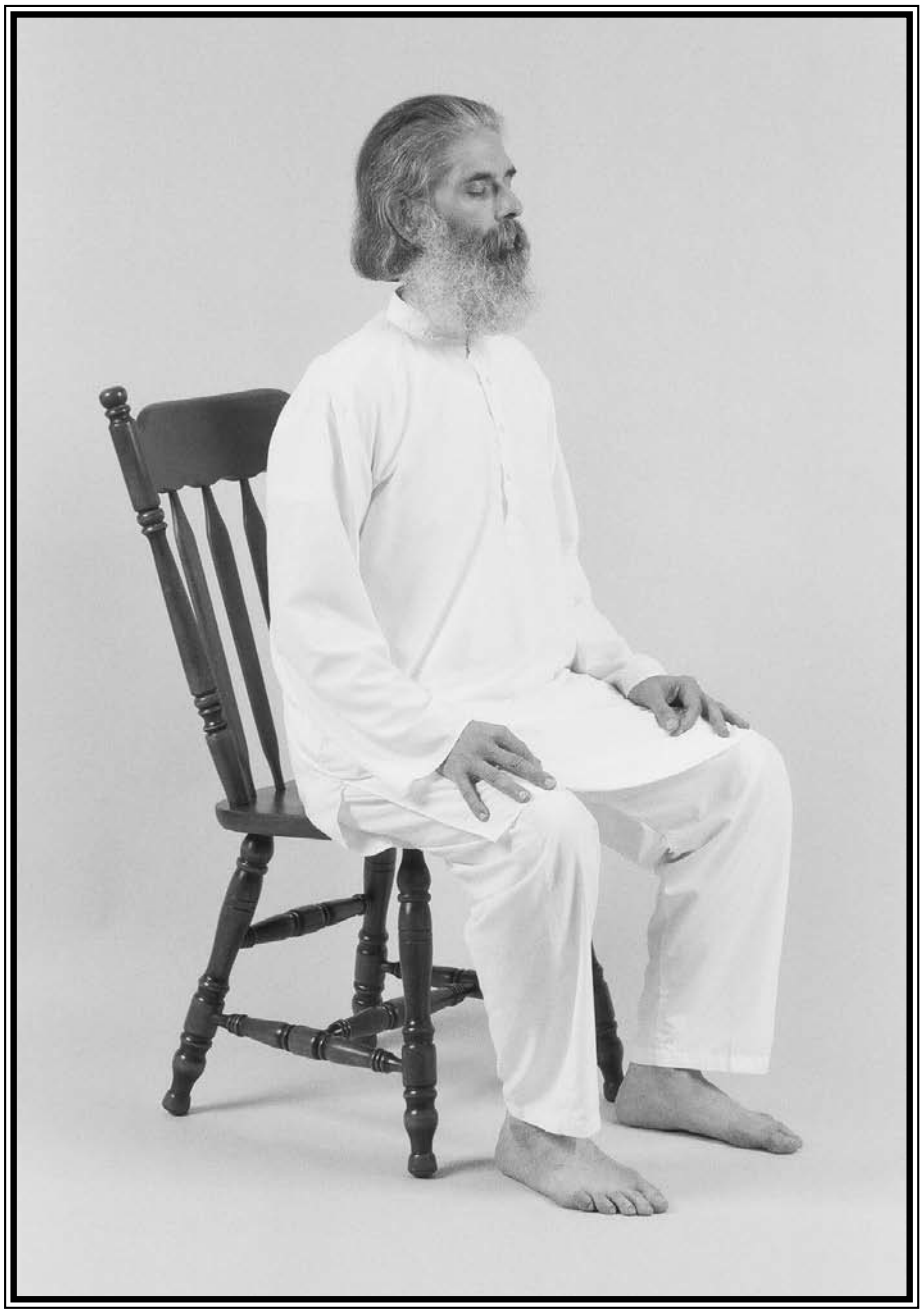
To align your head, neck and trunk, begin by rolling your shoulders forward and backward three times. Then, raise your shoulders up toward your ears, squeeze them gently for a few seconds and let them drop quickly by their own weight into a comfortable position. There should be a slight inward curve at the small of the back and the head should be held upright rather than forward. Avoid sitting in a stiff, military posture. Keep the head, neck and trunk straight by establishing a relaxed balance.

Lower Back Support

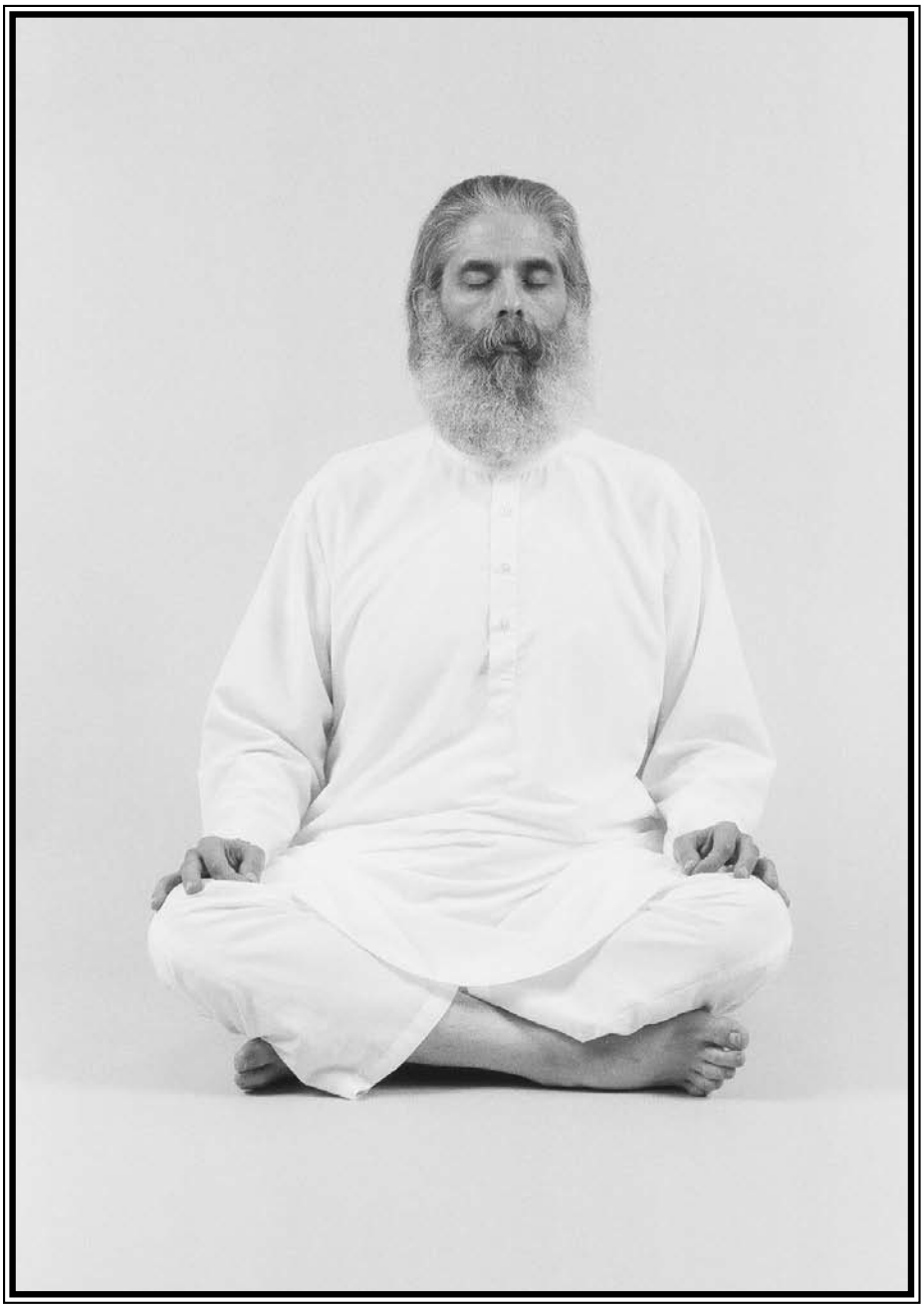
If you have a weak lower back, don't be shy about using pillows to fill in the space between your back and the back of the chair. Make yourself as comfortable as possible while keeping your head, neck and trunk straight. You may consider extra pillows as training wheels, but don't be overly concerned if you continue to feel the need for additional support as your meditations deepen. (On the other hand, don't become so dependent that every time you travel you need an extra suitcase for your favorite pillows!)

Positioning Elbows and Hands

As you sit firmly in your meditation posture, place your hands on your thighs. The exact placement will depend on the length of your arms. If you have long arms, your hands will rest closer to your knees. If your arms and torso are of average length, your hands will rest at mid-thigh. Hand placement can



Meditating in a Chair



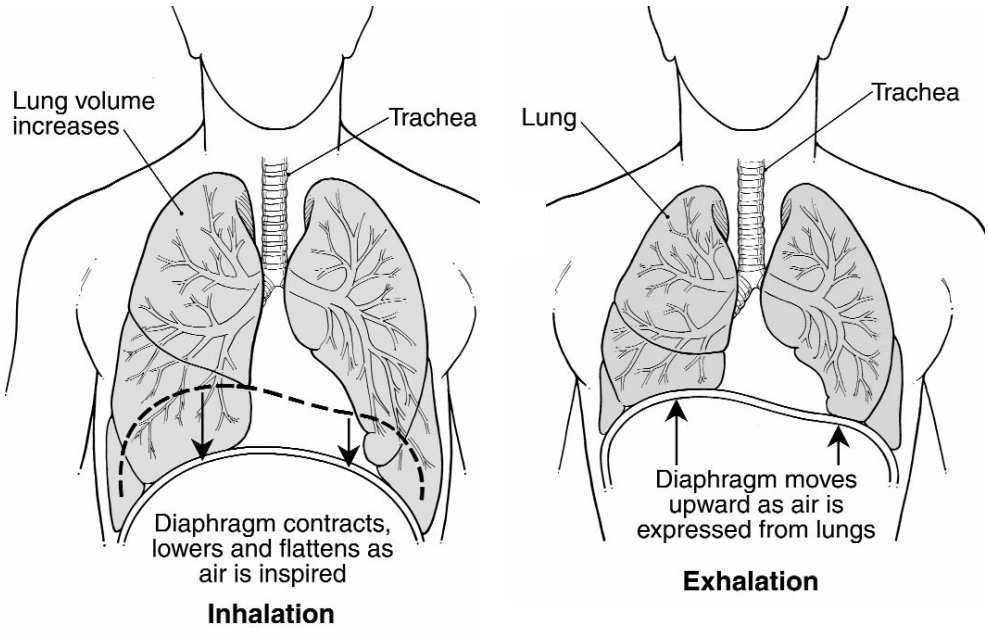
Meditating on the Floor

How Diaphragmatic Breathing Signals the Vagus Nerve - Amygdala - Hypothalamus Connection to Reduce Stress

Deep within the brain the amygdala is constantly processing information, including sensory input. When a threat is perceived, before the information ever reaches the cortex of the brain, the amygdala signals both the adrenal medulla, which is part of the sympathetic nervous system, and the adrenal cortex, culminating in the fright-fight-flight-freeze "4F" response. Signals from the amygdala reach the adrenal medulla very quickly via several pathways, causing instant release of the pre-formed hormone epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, in what is known as the "short term" stress response. Meanwhile, the amygdala is sending information via the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis to the adrenal cortex, instructing it to produce and release more cortisol, if the stimulus continues to be perceived as dangerous. This is to prepare you for immediate self-preservation. The body readies for battle: the mind is alert to the threat, your heart rate increases, bronchial tubes dilate, muscles contract, saliva production diminishes, digestion ceases, and fats are turned into glucose for instant energy.

In a legitimate danger this sympathetic nervous system response can serve you very well, but this mechanism cannot tell a real threat from a perceived threat. A sustained 4F can cause serious health issues, including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, immune system suppression, anxiety, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, adrenal fatigue, respiratory problems, decreased sexual function and much more.

The vagus nerve, the tenth and the longest of the cranial nerves, is part of the body's parasympathetic nervous system that restores the body to its healthy state of balance and allows it to relax and repair itself. This nerve extends from the brainstem, through the thoracic cavity, into the abdomen, passing directly through the diaphragm and innervating many organs of the body including the heart, lungs and digestive system.



During inhalation the belly gently swells outward as the lungs fill.

During exhalation the belly contracts slightly inward as the lungs are emptied.

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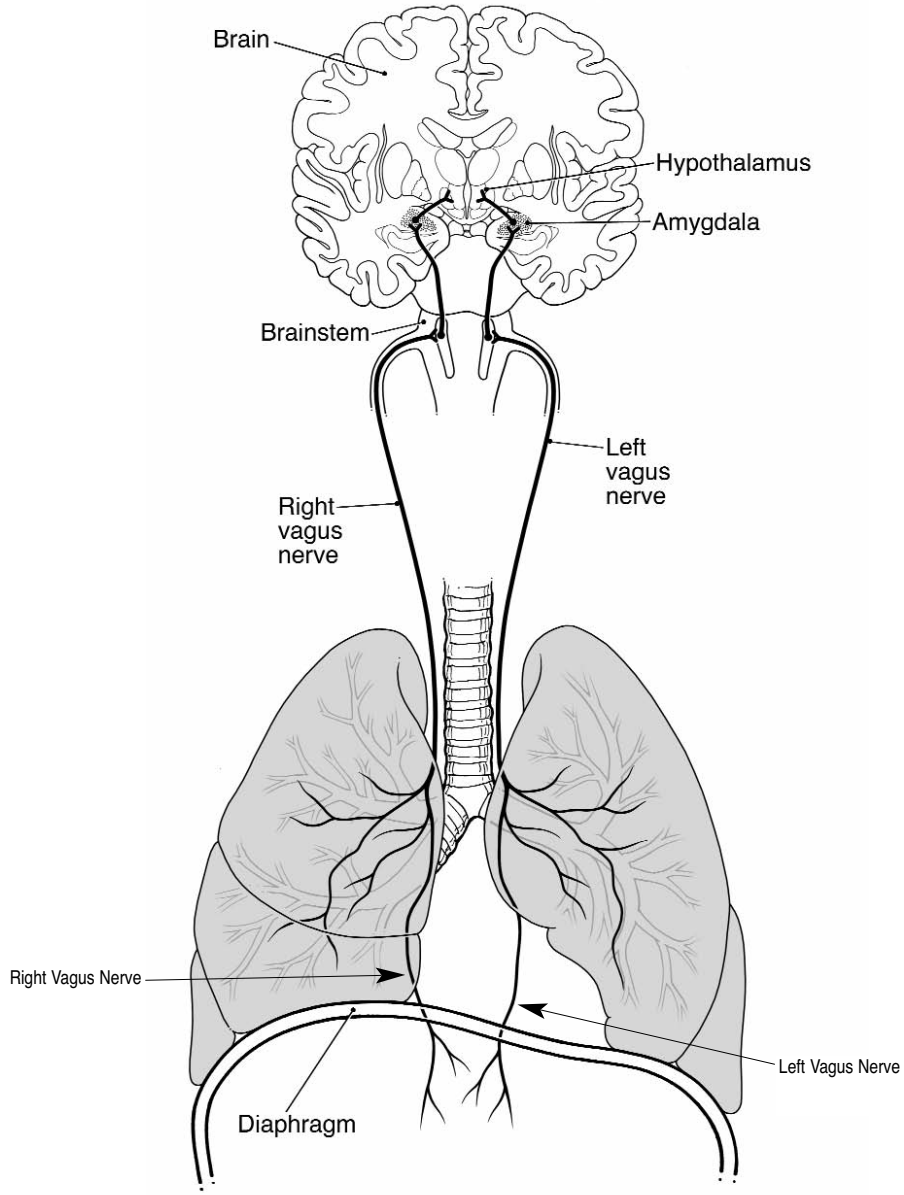

In its resting state, the diaphragm resembles the dome of an open parachute. During the inhalation phase of diaphragmatic breathing, it contracts downward flattening into a disk; during exhalation, the diaphragm relaxes and returns to its resting dome shape. The diaphragm's continuous up and down motion massages the vagus nerve. This rhythmic stimulation sends a message up the vagus nerve to the amygdala that the perceived danger no longer exists. Free of a perceived threat, the stress response is moderated and the body returns to a healthy, balanced state (homeostasis).

During shallow chest breathing, however, there is very little movement of the diaphragm, and consequently, the vagus nerve is not stimulated (massaged) by the diaphragm. In the absence of calming vagus nerve stimulation, the amygdala never receives the "all-clear" signal. Instead, it continues to perpetuate the 4F response—believing that the danger is still present, and stressing the mind-body-sense complex.

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Mechanics of Alternate Nostril Breathing (*Nadi Shodhana*)

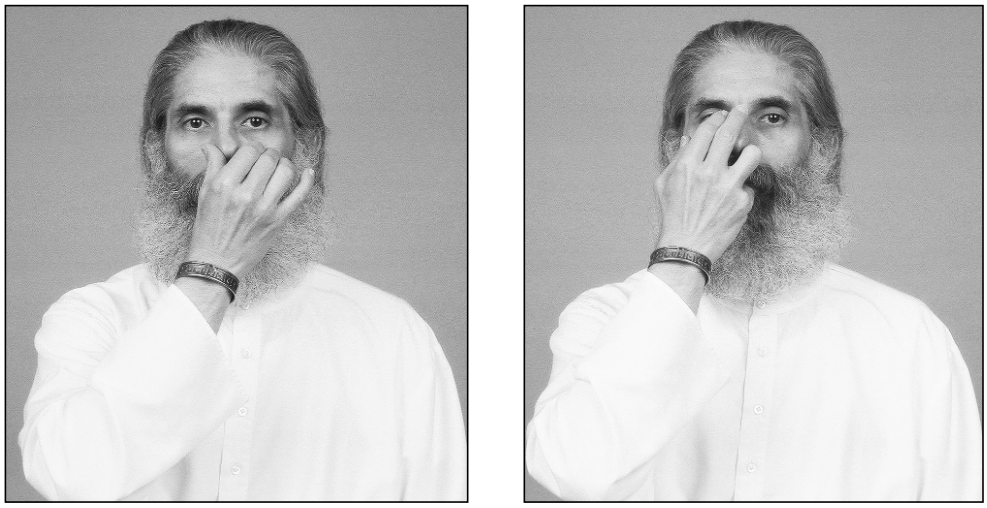
First, relax in your comfortable meditation posture and observe your breath. Allow your breath to become deep, even and diaphragmatic.

Before beginning the practice of *nadi shodhana*, determine whether you will inhale first through the right or left nostril.

If the sun is rising or in the sky, or if you must be mentally or physically active in the evening, inhale first through the right nostril. By breathing through the right nostril first, you flood the entire body with the energy of the sun (the male principle or *pingala*).

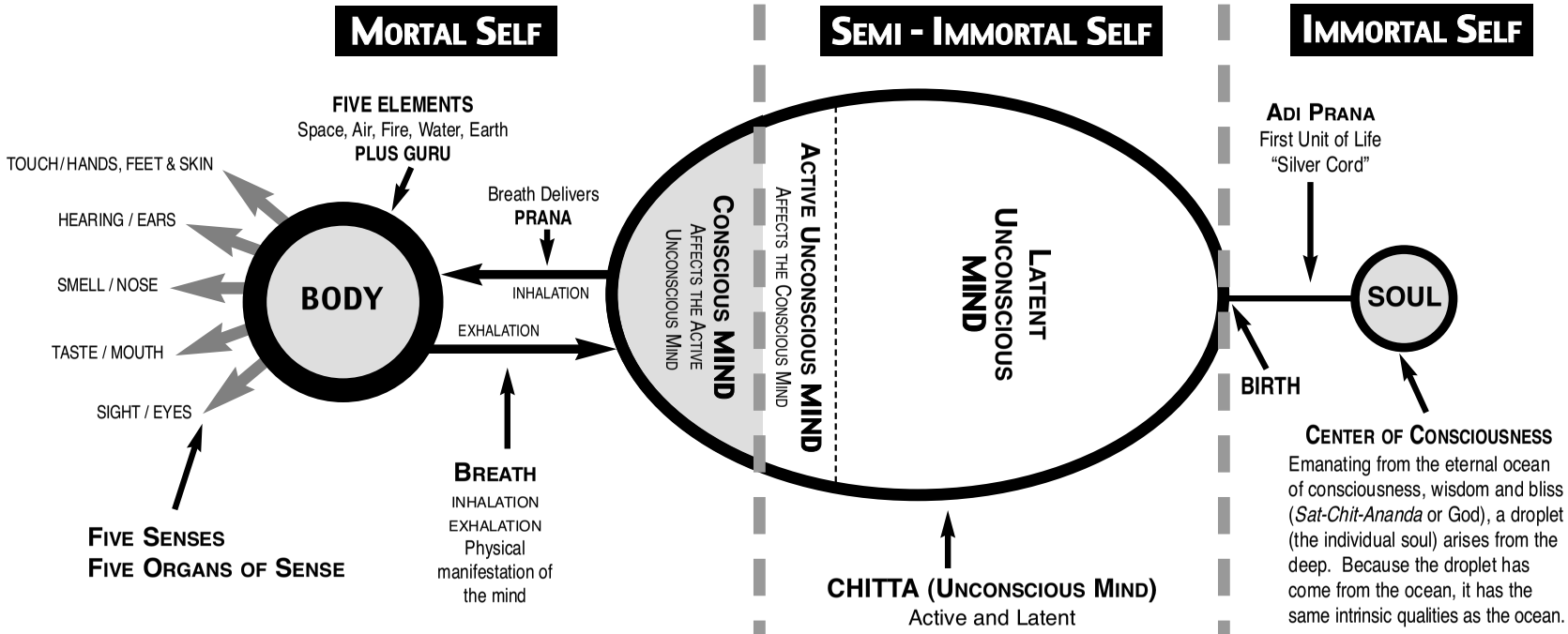
Generally, if you do this practice prior to your evening meditation, before contemplation, or in preparation for sleep, inhale through the left nostril first (*ida*) to access the cool, calming, intuitive energy of the moon (the female principle).

Regardless of which nostril you inhale through first, close off that nostril and exhale fully through the opposite nostril before your first inhalation. This empties the lungs of toxins and, in the subtle body, clears the energy channels or *nadis*. The inhalation and exhalation together should form a full and complete yogic breath.



For the practice of *nadi shodhana* (alternate nostril breathing), apply a modest amount of gentle pressure with the thumb and fourth finger to open and close the appropriate nostril.

THE ANATOMY OF YOUR REAL BEING



Purpose of Life

During this lifetime each human being has the necessary instrumentation (body, breath, senses and mind equipped with *buddhi*) to resolve the debilitating *samskaras* of fear, anger and greed stored in the unconscious mind. By resolving these attachments the animal nature evolves, through the human, to unite with the Divine.

Death

Death means separation of the body, breath, senses and conscious mind from *chitta* (the unconscious mind) and *Sat, Chit, Ananda* (the Soul).

Death is NOT annihilation.

After Death

Following physical death, as in sleep, the unconscious mind (*chitta*) and individual soul remain linked in a resting state between incarnations. Eventually, another vehicle (body) is taken to resolve and fulfill remaining attachments or *karmas*.

Total Self-Realization

Resolution of all *karmas*, liberation from pain, misery and bondage, and union with the Supreme Reality.

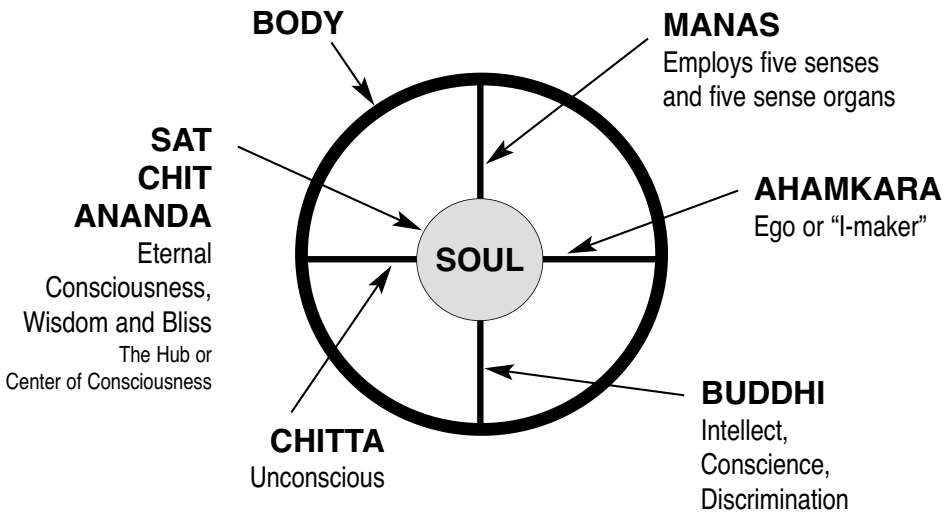
To begin this study, we draw upon the teachings of the Himalayan masters. The following diagram illustrates a wheel comprised of three basic components: the rim of the wheel, the spokes and the hub. The spokes move, and then the rim of the wheel rolls forward. The hub facilitates the turning of the spokes and the wheel rotates as a result of that movement.

In this analogy, the wheel represents the human body. No movement can occur in the body unless and until there is movement in the four modifications (functions) of the mind. These faculties of the mind are like the spokes of the wheel. The mind always moves first and the body follows.

The hub is the Eternal Witness or soul (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). This core itself never moves, but it is the cause and the power of the mind, and the mind ultimately animates the body. Without the existence of the hub there could be neither mind nor body.

The four spokes in our analogy represent the four major functions of the mind: *manas* (active mind), *ahamkara* (ego or I-maker), *chitta* (the unconscious, storehouse of impressions or *samskaras*) and *buddhi* (intellect, discrimination).

The Four Functions of the Mind



DIETS TO BALANCE YOUR DOSHAS

On the following pages, *Ayurvedic* diets appear for all *doshas* to guide you in your food selection.

You may note that the same food may appear on both the FAVOR list and the REDUCE/AVOID list for the *vata, pitta* and *kapha* diets presented on the following pages. These apparent conflicts can be explained by considering three factors: (1) the unique balance of *vata-pitta-kapha* of each person, (2) the unique balance of *vata-pitta-kapha* existing in each food, and (3) the fact that the lists are skewed because of the slightly differing effects experienced by the authors and other *Ayurvedic* authorities.

Whenever the same food appears on *both* the FAVOR list and the REDUCE/AVOID list, experiment and pay extra attention to the effects it has on your particular constitution.

Consider the sweet potato, which is almost equally *pitta* and *kapha.* Is it a *pitta* food or a *kapha* food? A *pitta-kapha* constitution may experience the sweet potato as a *pitta*-increasing inflammatory agent or as a calming *kapha* food. For the *pitta-kapha* person, the answer will come only with experimentation.

VATA DIETS

Vata Diet (FAVOR)

Vata types should favor these foods.
These foods tend to decrease vata.

Vegetables: artichoke, asparagus, avocado, beets, carrots, chilies, cilantro, garlic (cooked), green beans, mustard greens, okra, onions (cooked), parsley, radishes, seaweed, squash, sweet potatoes, turnips, watercress

Fruits*: apples (cooked), apricots, bananas, cherries, dates (fresh or rehydrated), figs (fresh or rehydrated), grapefruit, grapes, lemons, limes, mangoes, oranges, papaya, peaches, persimmons, pineapples, prunes (rehydrated), raspberries, strawberries
**In moderation. Most vata types need to limit their fruit intake.*

Grains: basmati rice, brown rice, couscous, oats, quinoa (see note on quinoa, page 355) spelt, wheat

Beans: masoor and mung beans (with care), tofu (can be drying)

Nuts and Seeds: All are acceptable in small amounts, but cashews are best; almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, coconut, filberts, pecans, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds

Dairy: butter, buttermilk, cheese, cottage cheese, cream, ghee, kefir, milk, paneer, sour cream, yogurt

Animal Products: chicken, eggs, fish, turkey

Oils: almond, avocado, coconut, ghee, mustard, olive, peanut, sesame

Sweeteners: fructose, honey, maple syrup, molasses, raw sugar

Spices: asafoetida, basil, black pepper, cayenne, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, fennel, fenugreek, ginger, horseradish, mint, mustard, nutmeg, rock salt, sea salt, turmeric

VATA DIETS

Vata Diet (AVOID/REDUCE)

Vata types should reduce or avoid these foods.
These foods tend to increase vata.

Vegetables: broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, leafy greens, lettuce, mushrooms, onions (raw), peas, peppers, potatoes, sprouts, tomatoes, zucchini, raw vegetables in general

Fruits: apples (raw), dried fruit, pears

Grains: barley, buckwheat, corn, dry cereals, millet, quinoa (although used as a grain, quinoa is really a berry. Quinoa is an alkalizing food that provides a complete protein with all essential amino acids. Note that some *vata* types are sensitive to it), rye

Beans: aduki, chick peas, kidney, lentils, lima, peanuts, pinto, soy, tofu, split peas

Nuts and Seeds: none (see favor list)

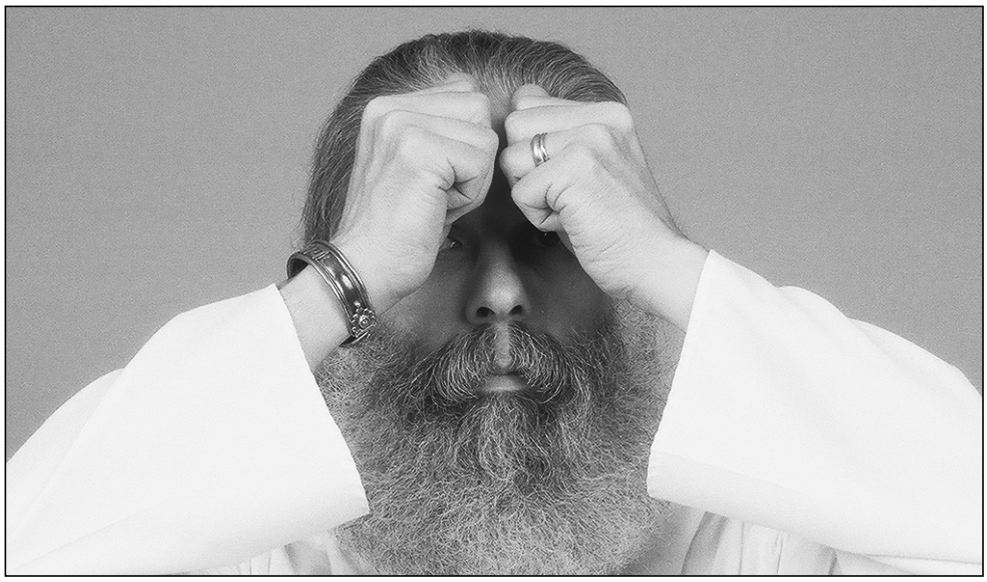
Dairy: all dairy is acceptable

Animal Products: red meat (beef, lamb), pork

Oils: corn, margarine, safflower, soy

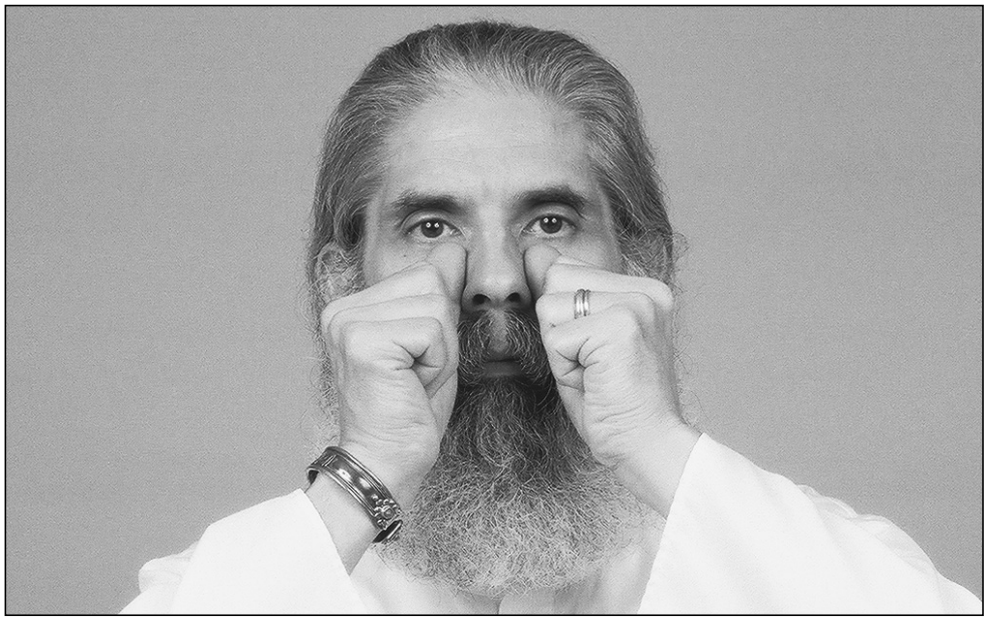
Sweeteners: white refined sugar

Spices: none

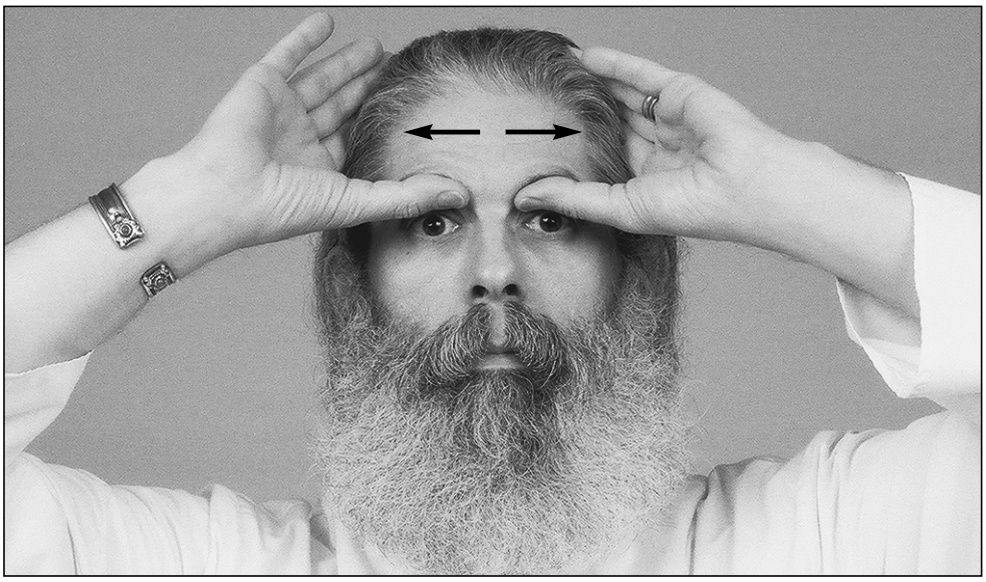


1. Forehead, Ears, Neck
With hands in a loose fist, position the thumbs against the forehead. Using the fleshy part of the hand below the thumb as a squeegee, gently drag the fist across the forehead, up, over and around the back side of the ears, and down the sides of the neck.

Repeat each exercise three times

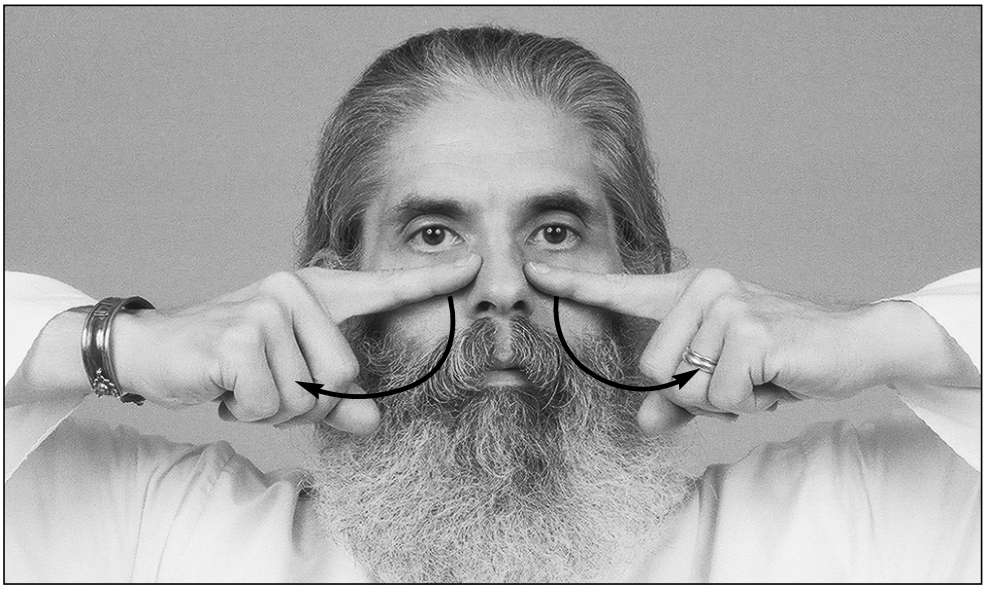


2. Cheeks, Ears, Neck
With the same loose fist, position the thumbs under the corners of the eyes. Using the fleshy part of the hand below the thumb as a squeegee, gently ski down the sides of the nose with your fists, go under, then up the outer side of the cheekbone; continue up, over and around the backs of the ears, and down the sides of the neck.

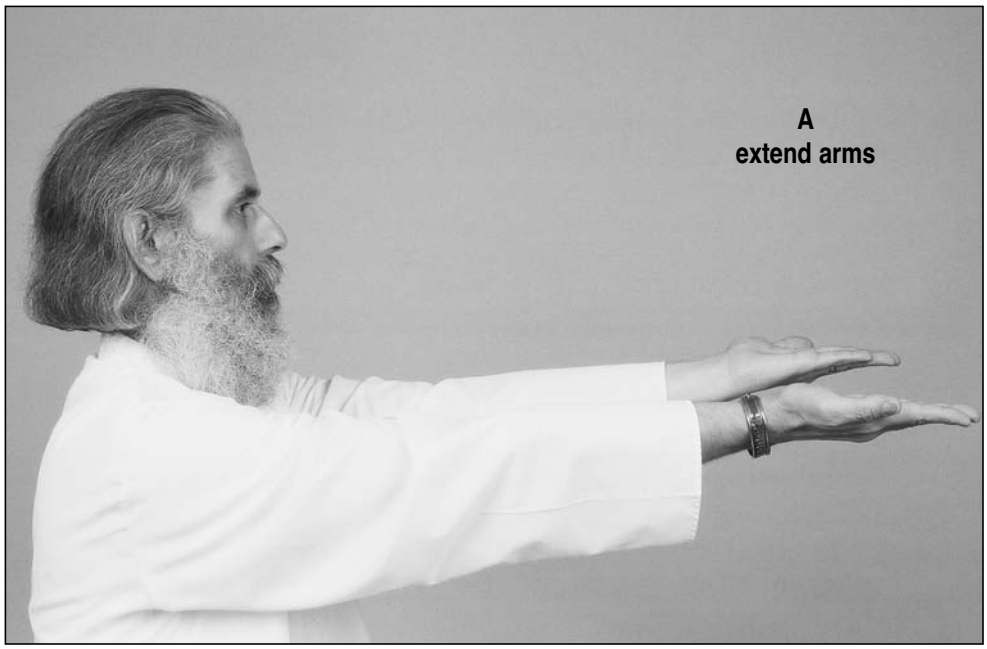


3. Eyebrow
Using the fleshy part of the thumbs, and pressing upward, gently work the thumbs across the upper rim of the eye socket outward toward the temples. Never push the thumbs in toward the eyes.

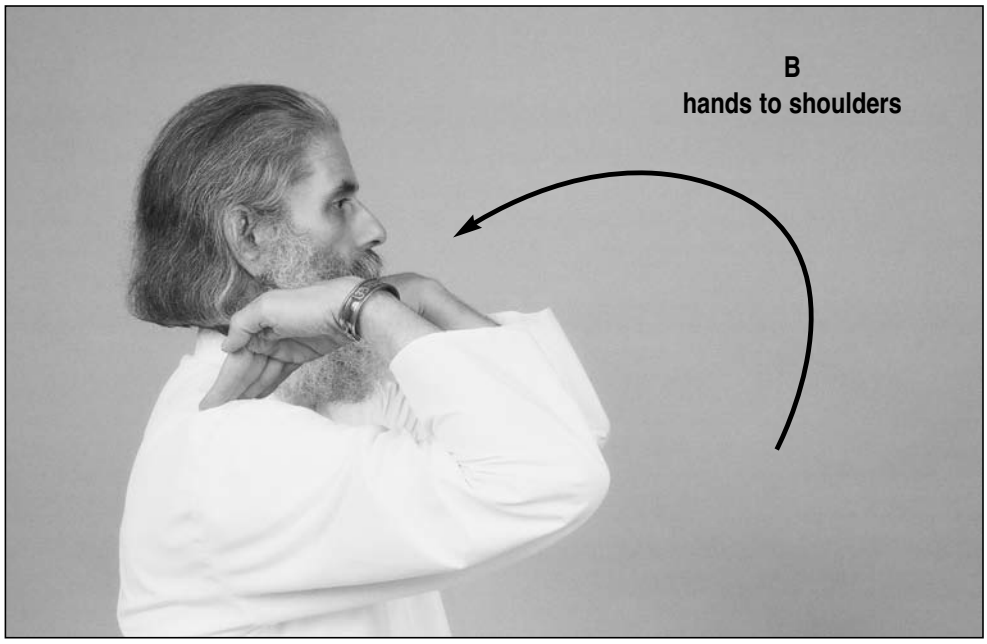
Repeat each exercise three times



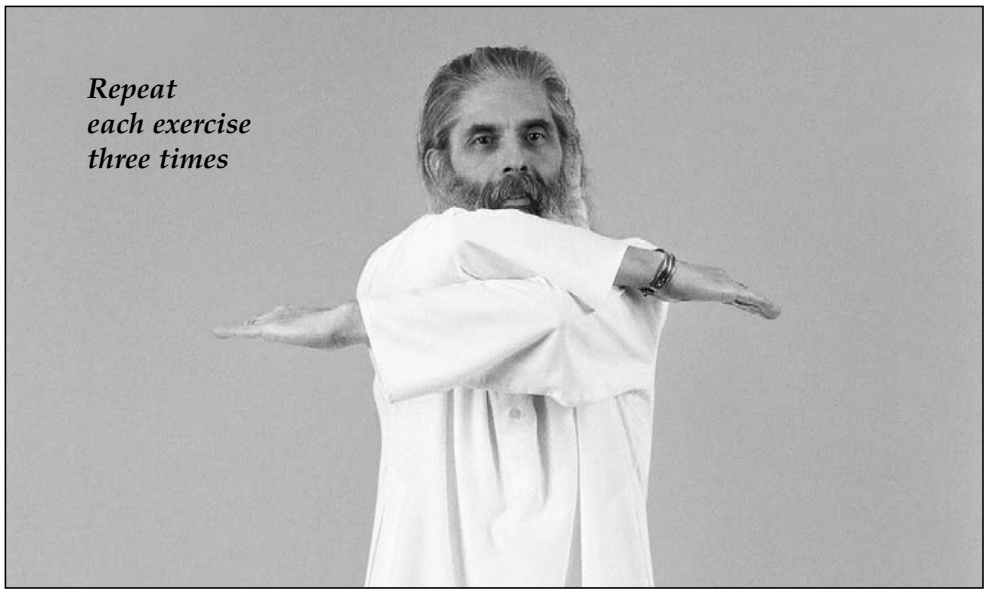
4. Windshield Wiper
Position the index fingers at the inside corners of the eyes. Then, follow a gentle, semi-circular sweeping motion around and under the cheekbones, like a windshield wiper.



Repeat each exercise three times

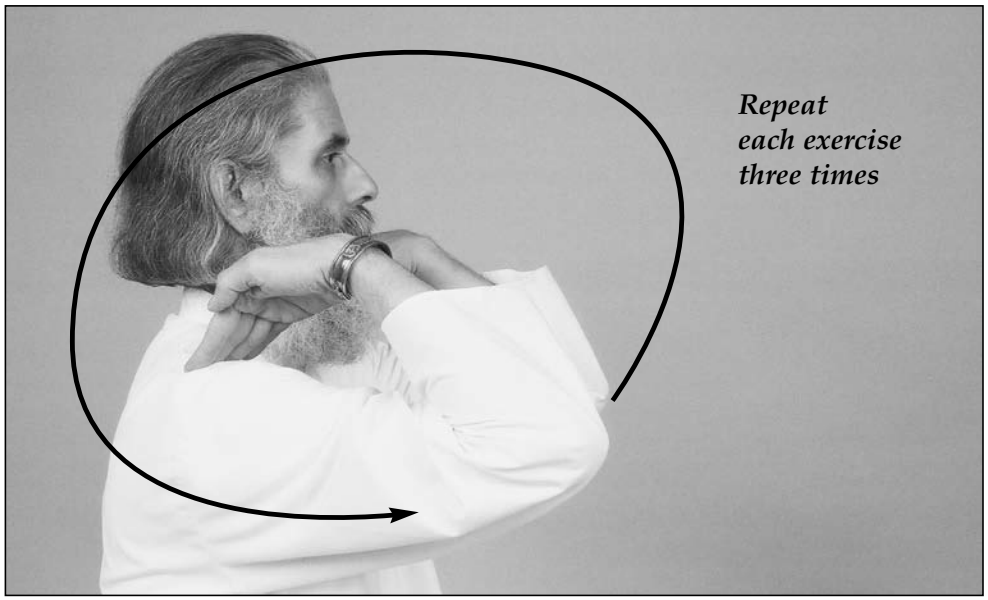


21. Arm Extensions
Reach arms straight out (palms up) and then bring fingertips to the shoulders.



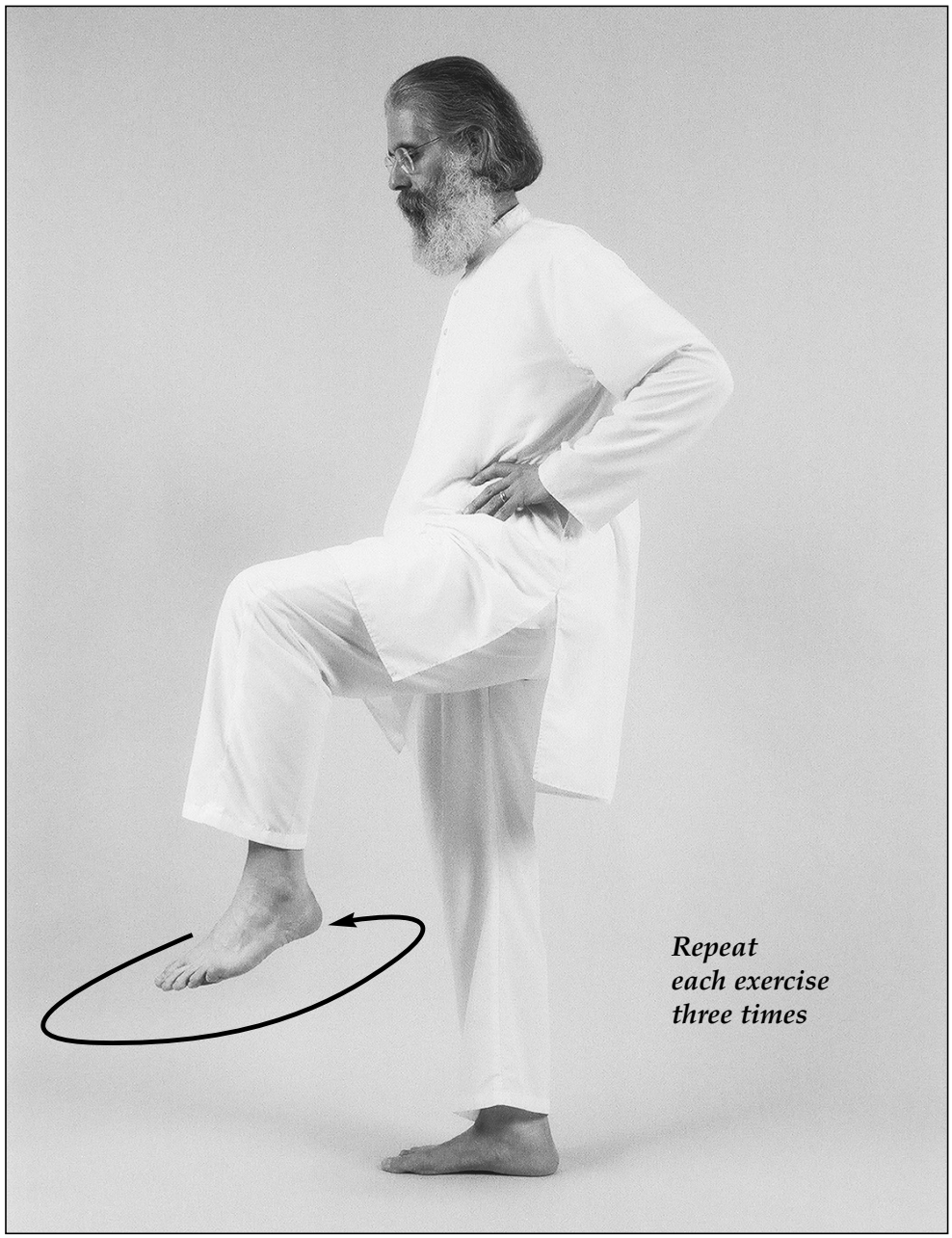
23. Helicopter

Raise and extend arms out to the sides, horizontal to the floor. Exhale as you swing arms forward (crossing the left over the right). Then inhale as you reverse the process, again extending arms to the sides. Each time you swing the arms forward, alternate which hand crosses over the other.



24. Shoulder Circles

With arms bent and hand on shoulders, *slowly* draw a large zero with your elbows—moving the elbows up, around and then backward in a clockwise direction. Then, reverse direction by rotating in a counter-clockwise manner—*slowly* moving the elbows up, around and then down.



27. Knee Swirl

Use the same stance as in the previous exercise. When the right leg is lifted and the thigh is parallel to the floor, gently swirl the lower leg in a circular motion—first clockwise and then counter-clockwise. Keep the ankle stationary—performing the circular motion from the knee (as if you were stirring a drink). Repeat the exercise with the left leg. To help balance, stare at one point on the wall.

Do not attempt this exercise if you have knee or hip problems. Rest your hand on the back of a chair if you need an assist in balancing.

PRE-BATTLE INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Contemplation

1. Choose a time and place that is not encumbered by the demands of your everyday responsibilities. Sit in a clean, quiet, comfortable environment and systematically review your thoughts, words and actions of the past twenty-four hours.

2. Create a mental list of the obvious *shreyas* you have served in thought, word and deed, and quietly give the personality credit for it's skillful action.

3. Create a mental list of the obvious *preyas* you have served in thought, word and deed—without judgment, regret or guilt.

4. For each *preya* you acknowledge, determine from which of the Four Primitive Fountains it has originated: Food, Sex, Sleep or Self Preservation (see pages 293-297).

5. For each *preya* you acknowledge, determine which of the three *Gunas* was predominant at the time of the original action: *Tamas*, *Rajas* or *Sattva*. (see pages 461-466).

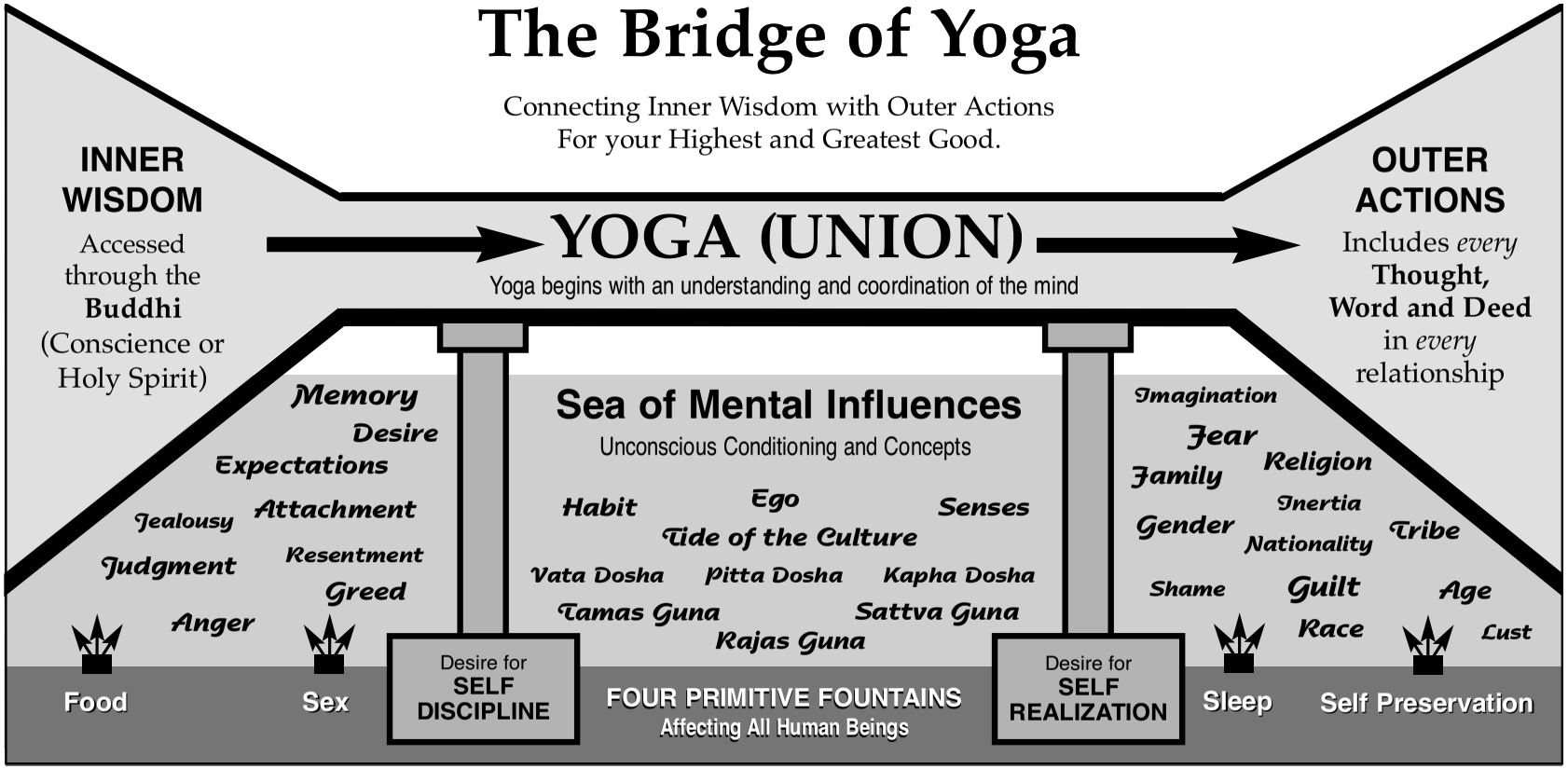
Repentance

6. Repentance simply means, "I will NOT repeat! For each of the *preyas* acknowledged in *contemplation*, pledge to yourself that in any future situations you will redouble your efforts to serve the *shreya* and sacrifice the *preya*. "I want to do it. I can do it. I have to do it. I am going to do it—no matter what!"

God-Centered Prayer

7. During prayer time, instead of asking the Supreme Reality for anything other than strength, offer the *preyas* you acknowledged in contemplation back to the Origin from which they have come.

Create this *Pre-Battle Intelligence Briefing* daily and you'll be forewarned and forearmed the next time a *preya* crosses your path. This Yoga Science methodology of analyzing information is employed as Military Science by the U.S. Army. The program is known as *After Action Review* or AAR.



Yoga means union. It is a bridge connecting your inner, intuitive wisdom with your actions in the world. Supported by the desires for discipline and Self-realization, you can skillfully cross the "Sea of Mental Influences: Unconscious Conditioning and Concepts" that are constantly being churned up by the *Four Primitive Fountains* affecting all animals. By constructing and utilizing the *Bridge of Yoga* in your life, your own inner wisdom will motivate you to think, speak and act in a discriminating manner. The more you use the *Bridge of Yoga,* the debilitating and constrictive power of fear, anger and self-willed desires and faulty concepts will be diminished and transformed into expansive reserves of energy, will power and creativity. The *Bridge of Yoga* facilitates union with the Supreme Reality and enables you to fulfill the true purpose of your life—free from pain, misery and bondage.

Glossary of Terms

ABHYASA – Constant spiritual practice.
ABHYANGA – In *Ayurveda*, a warm sesame oil massage.
ADONAI – A Hebrew name for the Supreme Reality.
AGNI – The Sanskrit name for the fire element.
AHAMKARA – Ego or I-maker (one of the four major modifications or functions of the mind). See also *manas, chitta* and *buddhi*.
AHIMSA – The highest precept of Yoga Science and the first of Patanjali's *yamas* and *niyamas*. It means non-injury or non-harming. Since there is but one true reality (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*) from which all subtle and gross objects are manifest, if we think, speak or act in a harmful manner, somewhere in space and time that injury will come back on us. "As you sow, so shall you reap." It is equally true that if we think, speak or act in a selfless manner toward another, somewhere in space and time some benefit will be added unto us. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."
AJNA CHAKRA – The sixth *chakra*, located at the space between the two eyebrows.
ANAHATA CHAKRA – The fourth, or heart *chakra*, located at the midpoint between the two breasts. It is considered to be the demarcation between the lower animal consciousness primarily concerned with self-preservation, and the higher *chakras* that lead to an expansion of the self and union with the Divine.
ANANDA (ANAND) – Bliss or fullness; an aspect of our Essential Divine Identity. The other two aspects are *Sat* (eternal) and *Chit* (consciousness).

ANNAMAYA KOSHA – The physical body; sheath of food and water.
APARIGRAHA – Non-possessiveness; the fifth yogic virtue presented in the *yamas*.
ARTHA – Material and social security (one of the four-fold purposes or goals for achieving a successful human life). See also *dharma, kama* and *moksha*.
ASANA – Physical posture; the third rung of classical Yoga science.
ASHRAM – A place where Yoga scientists gather to study and to practice *sadhana* in a protected setting.
ASHTANGA YOGA – Literally, "eight-limbed" Yoga. Also known as *Raja Yoga*, it is the basis of Yoga Science as codified around 200 A.D. by the sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. It consists of spiritual practices of internal purification for the purpose of Self-realization. See *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi*.
ASTEYA – Non-stealing; the third yogic virtue presented in the *yamas*.
ATMAN – The pure Self; the Supreme Reality (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*) that resides within the individual *jiva* (mind-body-sense complex). Just as the space of one room in a house is the same as the space in every other room, the *Atman* is identical in every being. Differing walls and furnishings make two rooms appear dissimilar, but the space in one does not differ from the space in the other. Different bodies and habits make human beings appear to be separate, but the Essential Nature of all is one and the same *Atman*. The collective *Atman* is called *Brahman*.
AUM – The sacred *mantra* or vibration of creation (*OM*). The A, U, M and the silence that follows represent the four states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, deep sleep and *turiya* (the transcendent state existing beyond the limitations of mind). *AUM* is considered to be the "mother of all *mantras*" because it contains all past, present and future manifestations.
AYURVEDA – Science of Life. A medical system intuited by meditators approximately five thousands years ago. *Ayurveda*

is based on the concept that within the parameters of our genetic make-up, optimal health is achieved by maintaining the unique balance of the five basic elements with which we were born. These elements are ether (space), air, fire, water and earth. See *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*.

BINDU – Point of concentrated attention.

BRAHMACHARYA – Moderation of energy, commonly translated as chastity; the fourth yogic virtue presented in the *yamas*.

BRAHMA – God as the creator; one aspect of the Hindu trinity.

BRAHMAN – The absolute, undifferentiated Supreme Reality. See *Atman*.

BUDDHI – That function of the mind that has the power to discriminate, determine, judge and decide (conscience, Holy Spirit). *Buddhi* discriminates between the *preya* and *shreya*. It reflects intuitive wisdom from the Center of Consciousness (*Chit*), unerringly advising us which action will lead us for our highest and greatest good. Dis-ease occurs when our thoughts, words and deeds are not in harmony with the *buddhi*.

CAVE OF THE HEART – A space in the subtle body, located at the level of the heart, between the two breasts.

CHAKRA – Literally, wheel or circle. In Yoga Science, it refers to a psychoenergetic center of consciousness. The seven primary *chakras* are situated between the base of the spine and the crown of the head. The lower *chakras* represent our animal consciousness, dealing with self-preservation and reproduction. The higher *chakras* represent our expanding consciousness and identification with the Divine unity of all life. See also *muladhara, svadhishthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, ajna* and *sahasrara chakras*.

CHIT – Consciousness; awareness and wisdom—an aspect of our true Divine identity. See also *Sat* and *Ananda*.

CHITTA – Unconscious mind; the function of the mind that serves as the storehouse of consciousness (merits and demerits). It consists of information related to self-preservation, attachments and our learned mental processes for dealing with emotions, desires, memories and imaginings.

CHRIST – From the Greek word meaning "the anointed one."

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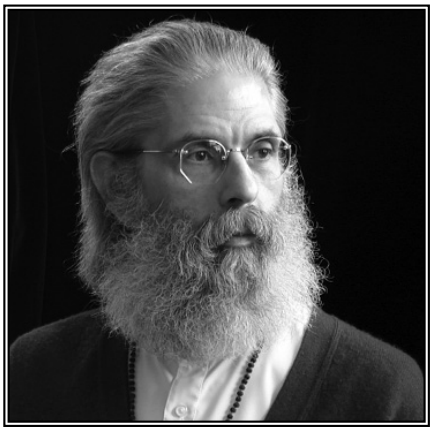
About the Authors



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Founder and Co-Director, American Meditation Institute

Leonard (Ram Lev) is the founder and director of The American Meditation Institute in Averill Park, New York. Leonard is the author and editor of *Transformation—The Journal of Meditation as Mind/Body Medicine*, and over the past decades has served on the faculties of the New England Institute of Ayurvedic Medicine and the International Himalayan Yoga Teachers Association. Leonard has studied in Rishikesh, India and is a direct disciple of Swami Rama of the Himalayas—the man who, in laboratory conditions at the Menninger Institute, demonstrated that blood pressure, heart rate and the autonomic nervous system can be voluntarily controlled. These research demonstrations have been one of the major cornerstones of the

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For Yoga Science and Philosophy

The American Meditation Institute was established in 1996 for the teaching and practice of authentic Yoga Science and philosophy. Located in the picturesque foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, *A*MI provides a peaceful, healthy setting to learn practical, holistic skills that improve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being.

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3. Help students embrace those values which have the power to protect, uphold and transform the individual and society.

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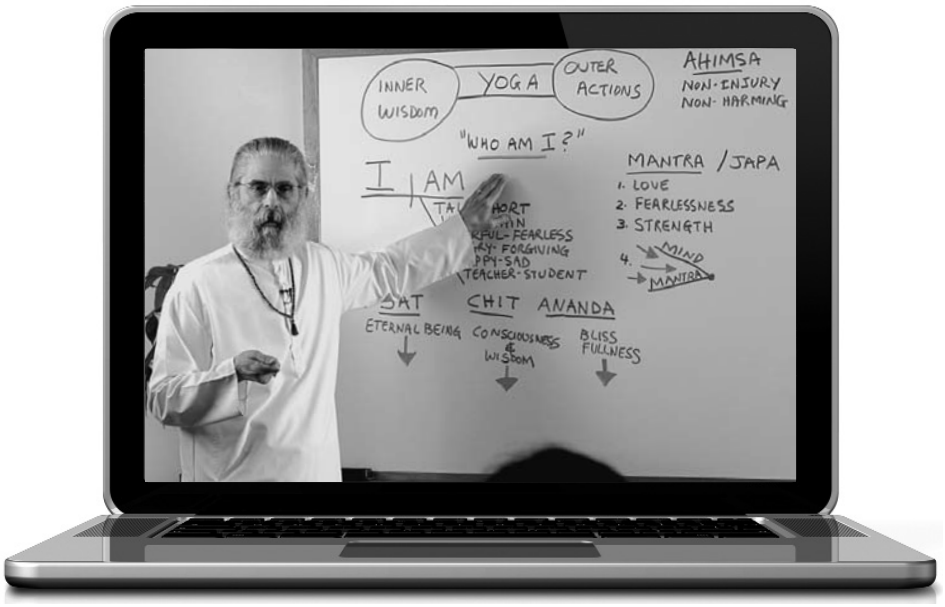

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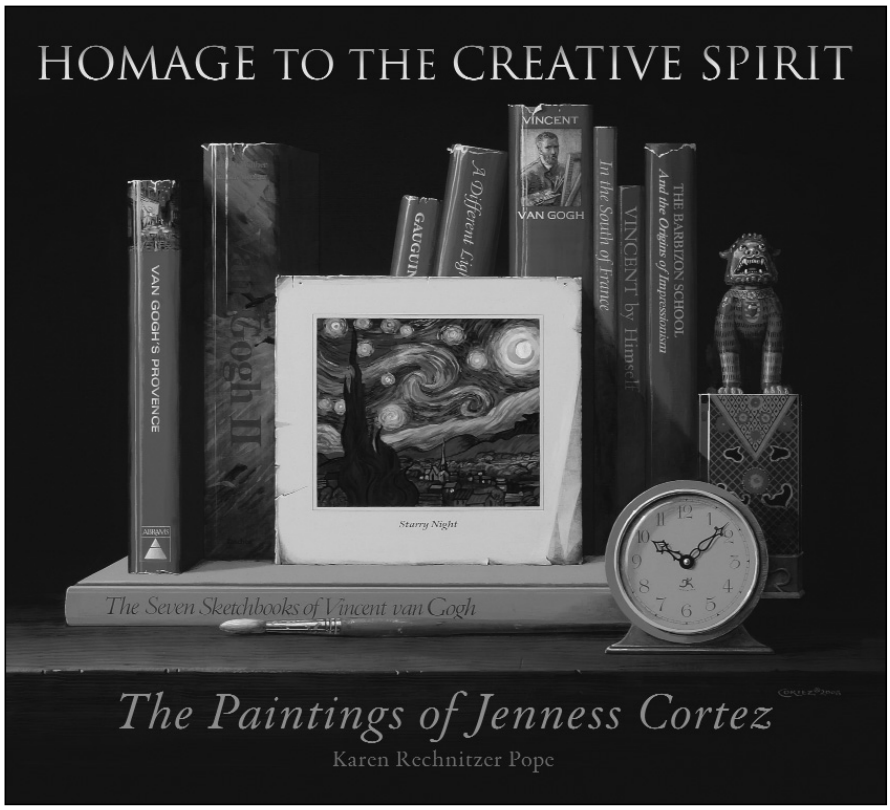

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