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CHAPTER 1

Our Infinite Potential

When we begin to understand the total being that is man, we realize that he is no simple physical organism. Within him are many powers whose potential he employs in greater or lesser degree in accommodating himself to the conditions of this world. Their potential is vastly greater than the average person thinks.

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Behind the light in every little bulb is a great dynamic current; beneath every little wave is the vast ocean, which has become the many waves. So it is with human beings. God made every man in His image,* and gave each one freedom. But you forget the Source of your being and the unequaled power of God that is an inherent part of you. The possibilities of this world are limitless; the potential progress of man is limitless.

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Every human being is an expression of the great, vast Spirit. Since you are a manifestation of Spirit, you should make an effort to express your infinite potentialities.

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* Genesis 1:27.
What you are is much greater than anything or anyone else you have ever yearned for. God is manifest in you in a way that He is not manifest in any other human being. Your face is unlike anyone else’s, your soul is unlike anyone else’s, you are sufficient unto yourself; for within your soul lies the greatest treasure of all—God.

All great teachers declare that within this body is the immortal soul, a spark of That which sustains all.

Whence does our true personality derive? It comes from God. He is Absolute Consciousness, Absolute Existence, and Absolute Bliss....By concentrating within, you can directly feel the divine bliss of your soul within and also without. If you can stabilize yourself in that consciousness, your outer personality will develop and become attractive to all beings. The soul is made in God’s image, and when we become established in soul awareness, our personality begins to reflect His goodness and beauty. That is your real personality. Any other characteristics you display are more or less a graft—they are not the real “you.”

Analyze yourself: Something within you is always prodding you to seek that “something else” which seems to be missing in your life. In the inner self of all human beings is a deep-seated need for
achievement. Why? Because we have fallen away from the Father’s bosom. We have wandered away from our eternal home in God, and we long to regain that lost perfection.

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The soul is absolutely perfect, but when identified with the body as ego,* its expression becomes distorted by human imperfections….Yoga teaches us to know the divine nature in ourselves and others. Through yoga meditation we can know that we are gods.†

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The moon’s reflection cannot be seen clearly in ruffled water, but when the water’s surface is calm a perfect reflection of the moon appears. So with the mind: when it is calm you see clearly reflected the moonèd face of the soul. As souls we are reflections of God. When by meditation techniques‡ we withdraw restless thoughts from the lake of the mind, we behold our soul, a perfect reflection of Spirit, and realize that the soul and God are One.

* See egoism in glossary.
† “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High”[Psalms 82:6]. “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?” [John 10:34].
‡ “Be still, and know that I am God” [Psalms 46:10]. Scientific techniques of yoga meditation that enable one to calm and interiorize the consciousness and perceive God’s presence within are taught by Paramahansa Yogananda in Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons, a comprehensive home-study series compiled from his classes and lectures and available from Self-Realization Fellowship International Headquarters.
Self-realization* is the knowing—in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God’s omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing.

Focus your attention within.† You will feel a new power, a new strength, a new peace—in body, mind and spirit....By communing with God you change your status from a mortal being to an immortal being. When you do this, all bonds that limit you will be broken.

Mines of power lie unexplored within you. You use this power unconsciously in all things you do, and you achieve certain results; but, if you learn how to consciously control and use the powers within you, you can accomplish much more.

Few people in this world try consciously to develop the potentials of body, mind, and soul. The rest are victims of circumstances of the past. They plod

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* See *Self* in glossary.
† “Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).
on and on, pushed by past wrong habits, helplessly
going down under their influence, remembering
only: “I am a nervous man,” or “I am a weakling,”
or “I am a sinner,” and so on.

It lies with each one of us to cut with the sword
of wisdom the cords of our bondage, or to remain
bound.

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One of the illusions of life is to continue to live
helplessly. As soon as you say, “It’s no use,” it be-
comes so….To think you cannot change at will is
delusion.

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Our little minds are part of the omnipotent mind
of God. Beneath the wave of our consciousness is the
infinite ocean of His consciousness. It is because the
wave forgets it is a part of the Ocean that it becomes
isolated from that oceanic power. As a result, our
minds have become weakened by our trials and ma-
terial limitations. The mind has stopped its work.
You will be surprised how much it can do if you cast
off the limitations you have put on it.

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Why limit your capability to the adage, “Don’t
bite off more than you can chew”? I believe you
should bite off more than you can chew, and then
chew it!

❖ ❖ ❖

The mind is like an elastic band. The more you