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Administration Building, SRF International Headquarters
Paramahansa Yogananda, New York, 1926
How to Express Everlasting Youthfulness

First Self-Realization Fellowship Temple at Encinitas, California, March 20, 1938

The kingdom of God is not in the clouds, in some designated point of space; it is right behind the darkness that you perceive with closed eyes. God is Consciousness; God is absolute Existence; God is ever new Joy. This Joy is omnipresent. Feel your oneness with that Joy. It resides within you; and it encompasses infinity. Beyond the gross vibratory boundaries of matter, the Immutable Infinite reigns in all His majesty and vastness. Endlessness—that is the kingdom of God; conscious Bliss, eternal and boundless. When your soul has expanded and feels its presence everywhere, then you are united with Spirit.

We bow to the Infinite on the altar of the horizon where the sky meets the ocean; and we bow to the transcendental Infinite on the altar of peace within us.

In spite of all our demonstrations of ignorance, God continues to give us life by His indwelling presence. He is sleeping in the sod; He is dreaming in the flowers; He awakens in birds and animals; and He knows that He is awake in the human being. In the superman, He finds Himself again.

In ages past, the rishis and masters of India, secluded in their hermitages, unraveled the mysteries that hide the Omnipresent Spirit. Their research has given us the valuable techniques and methods that tune the body and mind to the Illimitable Source of life and intelligence residing in every human being. By concentrating within on the Infinite,
you can receive this boundless power.

Knowledge acquired from the study of books or from learned human beings is limited; but from the Infinite, the unlimited power of wisdom can be had. How to attain that? We teach the method in the weekly lessons sent from our headquarters at Mt. Washington. The truths in these lessons have come from God and from the research of the masters of India.

**Know the Reason for Your Existence**

It is an insult to your Self to be born, live, and die without knowing the answer to the mystery of why you were sent here as a human being in the first place. To forget God is to miss the whole point of existence. Learn to feel God, and to enjoy Him. Make it a habit and you will see in time how much you have gained. Acquiring material possessions and prosperity is no safeguard against sorrow. There will come a day when you will feel totally helpless, a mere pawn of destiny; and then you will begin to realize that God alone is your haven of security. He doesn’t want to impose Himself on anyone. You must take the initiative to seek Him through your own fervent desire, preferring Him to all other desires. As the swan can swim through muddy waters with its feathers remaining unsoiled, so should you live in this world. If you coat your mind with the oil of nonattachment, then material desires cannot cling to you.

The dewdrop that separates itself from the lake and floats in isolation on the lotus leaf will be dried up unless it returns to the lake. So, before life evaporates in material desires, better slip into the consciousness of God. The dewdrop of life will then not have to suffer death but will be eternal. Birth is separation from the Infinite; death is not an end of life but a transition to a higher state. Freedom from birth and death is a return to God. The dewdrop belongs to the sea. Separated, it is vulnerable to the sun and wind and other elements of nature; but when the droplet returns to its source, it becomes magnified in oneness with the sea. So it is with your life. United to God you become immortal.
Journey to Self-realization

While we are yet separated from the Eternal Sea, our aim should be to manifest as much as possible our essential divine immortality. On the lotus leaf of material happiness the dewdrop of life must remain untouched and unpolluted until it slips into the vastness of God’s presence. How to express our innate immortality in spite of contrary limitations is the purpose of our subject on making youthfulness more lasting.

Youth Is a State of Mind and Soul, As Well As of the Body

Everyone is interested in youthfulness. In one way or another everyone is seeking the fabled “Fountain of Youth.” But what is youth? All young people are not necessarily youthful; some are already old and jaded far beyond their years. In contrast, some elderly people remain youthful in spite of their advancing age. They keep their minds young. Their smiles trickle down from their souls into their bodies and faces; their very life blood throbs with the joy of being. And then there are those dull, lifeless persons who are as good as dead before they die—and they don’t even know it. They are the “walking dead.” You see many people like that—negative, critical, moody, dispirited. There is no excuse for a wrong state of mind. You must be always positive-minded, cheerful, smiling, vibrant. By all means, practice this mental youthfulness that comes from the core of your being.

Thus, the age of the body has no real connection with youthfulness. It is the state of the mind and the expression of the soul that make a person youthful. The definition of youth is that state of body, mind, and soul in which one feels the acme, the zenith, of joy and power. If you want to, you can retain that state indefinitely. Conversely, by carelessness you can lose it very easily.

Let us first approach this subject from the mental standpoint. The mind is the controller; that is, it is at the controls of this body. The body itself is designed by the mind. We are the sum total of the consciousness we ourselves have created over a period of incarnations. This mind, or consciousness, is the supreme force that governs all voluntary and involuntary activities of this bodily factory with its multifarious
outputs.

The Five Mental States of the Consciousness

We judge our condition as desirable or undesirable by the degree of happiness therein, or by the lack of it. Accordingly, there are five mental states: happiness, sorrow, indifference, peace, and true joy.

Waves whipped up in the middle of the ocean by a storm rise high, recede into a hollow, and then rise again, one after the other, until the storm ceases and the waves dissolve in the sea. Likewise with the mind. The mental peaks are life’s alternating joys and sorrows; the hollows in between are indifference or boredom. These are the first three mental states.

You can usually recognize a person’s mental state by his face. If you ask a person whose face registers happiness what has made him happy, you will find that some desire had been satisfied—he got a raise, he accomplished something he wanted to do, or was otherwise gratified. A desire fulfilled gives joy.

When you see a person with a glum or sour face, his expression tells you that he has met with some disappointment. A desire contradicted produces unhappiness. The desire for health is contradicted by pain; the desire for money is contradicted by poverty, and so on.

Then there are the people in between. Ask them, “Are you happy?” “No.” “Are you sad?” “No.” They are in the middle, neither on the crest of the wave of happiness, nor on the clashing wave of sadness; they are in the intermediate hollow. That is the neutral state of indifference.

One cannot remain indefinitely on the crests of either buoyant happiness or turbulent sorrow, or in the dumps of boredom. In this world of competing dualities, the ordinary being is tossed up and down—rising on a wave of joy, sinking into the trough of indifference, and then getting tumbled by a wave of sorrow. They little know anything beyond these states of consciousness. To be thus jostled about is to surrender free will to a seemingly capricious destiny.

What man needs in order to live a successful and satisfying life is