

A SERIES OF LESSONS IN RAJA YOGA



WILLIAM WALKER ATKINSON

A Series of Lessons in Raja Yoga

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A SERIES OF LESSONS IN RAJA YOGA

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"Advanced Course in Yogi Philosophy, etc."; "Hatha Yoga"; "Psychic Healing"; "Science of Breath." etc.

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THE FIRST LESSON.

THE "I."

In India, the Candidates for Initiation into the science of "Raja Yoga," when they apply to the Yogi Masters for instruction, are given a series of lessons designed to enlighten them regarding the nature of the Real Self, and to instruct them in the secret knowledge whereby they may develop the consciousness and realization of the real "I" within them. They are shown how they may cast aside the erroneous or imperfect knowledge regarding their real identity.

Until the Candidate masters this instruction, or at least until the truth becomes fixed in his consciousness, further instruction is denied him, for it is held that until he has awakened to a conscious realization of his Actual Identity, he is not able to understand the source of his power, and, moreover, is not able to feel within him the power of the Will, which power underlies the entire teachings of "Raja Yoga."

The Yogi Masters are not satisfied if the Candidate forms merely a clear intellectual conception of this Actual Identity, but they insist that he must feel the truth of the same—must become aware of the Real Self—must enter into a consciousness in which the realization becomes a part of his everyday self—in which the realizing

consciousness becomes the prevailing idea in his mind, around which his entire thoughts and actions revolve.

To some Candidates, this realization comes like a lightning flash the moment the attention is directed toward it, while in other cases the Candidates find it necessary to follow a rigorous course of training before they acquire the realization in consciousness.

The Yogi Masters teach that there are two degrees of this awakening consciousness of the Real Self. The first, which they call "the Consciousness of the 'I'," is the full consciousness of real existence that comes to the Candidate, and which causes him to know that he is a real entity having a life not depending upon the body—life that will go on in spite of the destruction of the body—real life, in fact. The second degree, which they call "the Consciousness of the 'I AM'," is the consciousness of one's identity with the Universal Life, and his relationship to, and "in-touchness" with all life, expressed and unexpressed. These two degrees of consciousness come in time to all who seek "The Path." To some it comes suddenly; to others it dawns gradually; to many it comes assisted by the exercises and practical work of "Raja Yoga."

The first lesson of the Yogi Masters to the Candidates, leading up to the first degree, above mentioned, is as follows: That the Supreme Intelligence of the Universe—the Absolute—has manifested the being that we call Man—the highest manifestation on this planet. The Absolute has manifested an infinitude of forms of life in the Universe, including distant worlds, suns, planets, etc., many of these forms

being unknown to us on this planet, and being impossible of conception by the mind of the ordinary man. But these lessons have nothing to do with that part of the philosophy which deals with these myriad forms of life, for our time will be taken up with the unfoldment in the mind of man of his true nature and power. Before man attempts to solve the secrets of the Universe without, he should master the Universe within—the Kingdom of the Self. When he has accomplished this, then he may, and should, go forth to gain the outer knowledge as a Master demanding its secrets, rather than as a slave begging for the crumbs from the table of knowledge. The first knowledge for the Candidate is the knowledge of the Self.

Man, the highest manifestation of the Absolute, as far as this planet is concerned, is a wonderfully organized being—although the average man understands but little of his real nature. He comprises within his physical, mental and spiritual make-up both the highest and the lowest, as we have shown in our previous lessons (the "Fourteen Lessons" and the "Advanced Course"). In his bones he manifests almost in the form of mineral life, in fact, in his bones, body and blood mineral substances actually exist. The physical life of the body resembles the life of the plant. Many of the physical desires and emotions are akin to those of the lower animals, and in the undeveloped man these desires and emotions predominate and overpower the higher nature, which latter is scarcely in evidence. Then Man has a set of mental characteristics that are his own, and which are not possessed by the lower animals (See "Fourteen Lessons"). And in addition to the mental faculties common to all men,

or rather, that are in evidence in a greater or lesser degree among all men, there are still higher faculties latent within Man, which when manifested and expressed render Man more than ordinary Man. The unfoldment of these latent faculties is possible to all who have reached the proper stage of development, and the desire and hunger of the student for this instruction is caused by the pressure of these unfolding latent faculties, crying to be born into consciousness. Then there is that wonderful thing, the Will, which is but faintly understood by those ignorant of the Yogi Philosophy—the Power of the Ego—its birthright from the Absolute.

But while these mental and physical things belong to Man, they are not the Man himself. Before the Man is able to master, control, and direct the things belonging to him—his tools and instruments—he must awaken to a realization of Himself. He must be able to distinguish between the "I" and the "Not I." And this is the first task before the Candidate.

That which is the Real Self of Man is the Divine Spark sent forth from the Sacred Flame. It is the Child of the Divine Parent. It is Immortal—Eternal—Indestructible—Invincible. It possesses within itself Power, Wisdom, and Reality. But like the infant that contains within itself the sometime Man, the mind of Man is unaware of its latent and potential qualities, and does not know itself. As it awakens and unfolds into the knowledge of its real nature, it manifests its qualities, and realizes what the Absolute has given it. When the Real Self begins to awaken, it sets aside from itself those things which are but appendages to it, but

which it, in its half-waking state, had regarded as its Self. Setting aside first this, and then that, it finally discards all of the "Not I," leaving the Real Self free and delivered from its bondage to its appendages. Then it returns to the discarded appendages, and makes use of them.

In considering the question: "What is the Real Self?" let us first stop to examine what man usually means when he says "I."

The lower animals do not possess this "I" sense. They are conscious of the outer world; of their own desires and animal cravings and feelings. But their consciousness has not reached the Self-conscious stage. They are not able to think of themselves as separate entities, and to reflect upon their thoughts. They are not possessed of a consciousness of the Divine Spark—the Ego—the Real Self. The Divine Spark is hidden in the lower forms of life—even in the lower forms of human life—by many sheaths that shut out its light. But, nevertheless, it is there, always. It sleeps within the mind of the savage—then, as he unfolds, it begins to throw out its light. In you, the Candidate, it is fighting hard to have its beams pierce through the material coverings. When the Real Self begins to arouse itself from its sleep, its dreams vanish from it, and it begins to see the world as it is, and to recognize itself in Reality and not as the distorted thing of its dreams.

The savage and barbarian are scarcely conscious of the "I." They are but a little above the animal in point of consciousness, and their "I" is almost entirely a matter of the consciousness of the wants of the body; the satisfaction of the appetites; the gratification of the passions; the securing of personal comfort; the expression of lust, savage power, etc.

In the savage the lower part of the Instinctive Mind is the seat of the "I." (See "Fourteen Lessons" for explanation of the several mental planes of man.) If the savage could analyze his thoughts he would say that the "I" was the physical body, the said body having certain "feelings," "wants" and "desires." The "I" of such a man is a physical "I," the body representing its form and substance. Not only is this true of the savage, but even among so-called "civilized" men of to-day we find many in this stage. They have developed powers of thinking and reasoning, but they do not "live in their minds" as do some of their brothers. They use their thinking powers for the gratification of their bodily desires and cravings, and really live on the plane of the Instinctive Mind. Such a person may speak of "my mind," or "my soul," not from a high position where he looks upon these things from the standpoint of a Master who realizes his Real Self, but from below, from the point-of-view of the man who lives on the plane of the Instinctive Mind and who sees above himself the higher attributes. To such people the body is the "I." Their "I" is bound up with the senses, and that which comes to them through the senses. Of course, as Man advances in "culture" and "civilization," his senses become educated, and are satisfied only with more refined things, while the less cultivated man is perfectly satisfied with the more material and gross sense gratifications. Much that we call "cultivation" and "culture" is naught but a cultivation of a more refined form of sense gratification, instead of a real advance in consciousness and unfoldment. It is true that the advanced student and Master is possessed of highly developed senses, often far surpassing those of the ordinary man, but in such cases the senses have been cultivated under the mastery of the

Will, and are made servants of the Ego instead of things hindering the progress of the soul—they are made servants instead of masters.

As Man advances in the scale, he begins to have a somewhat higher conception of the "I." He begins to use his mind and reason, and he passes on to the Mental Plane—his mind begins to manifest upon the plane of Intellect. He finds that there is something within him that is higher than the body. He finds that his mind seems more real to him than does the physical part of him, and in times of deep thought and study he is able almost to forget the existence of the body.

In this second stage, Man soon becomes perplexed. He finds problems that demand an answer, but as soon as he thinks he has answered them the problems present themselves in a new phase, and he is called upon to "explain his explanation." The mind, even although not controlled and directed by the Will, has a wonderful range, but, nevertheless, Man finds himself traveling around and around in a circle, and realizes that he is confronted continually by the Unknown. This disturbs him, and the higher the stage of "book learning" he attains, the more disturbed does he become. The man of but little knowledge does not see the existence of many problems that force themselves before the attention of the man of more knowledge, and demand an explanation from him. The tortures of the man who has attained the mental growth that enables him to see the new problems and the impossibility of their answer, cannot be imagined by one who has not advanced to that stage.

The man in this stage of consciousness thinks of his "I" as a mental thing, having a lower companion, the body. He feels that he has advanced, but yet his "I" does not give him the answer to the riddles and questions that perplex him. And he becomes most unhappy. Such men often develop into Pessimists, and consider the whole of life as utterly evil and disappointing—a curse rather than a blessing. Pessimism belongs to this plane, for neither the Physical Plane man or the Spiritual Plane man have this curse of Pessimism. The former man has no such disquieting thoughts, for he is almost entirely absorbed in gratifying his animal nature, while the latter man recognizes his mind as an instrument of himself, rather than as himself, and knows it to be imperfect in its present stage of growth. He knows that he has in himself the key to all knowledge—locked up in the Ego—and which the trained mind, cultivated, developed and guided by the awakened Will, may grasp as it unfolds. Knowing this the advanced man no longer despairs, and, recognizing his real nature, and his possibilities, as he awakens into a consciousness of his powers and capabilities, he laughs at the old despondent, pessimistic ideas, and discards them like a worn-out garment. Man on the Mental Plane of consciousness is like a huge elephant who knows not his own strength. He could break down barriers and assert himself over nearly any condition or environment, but in his ignorance of his real condition and power he may be mastered by a puny driver, or frightened by the rustling of a piece of paper.

When the Candidate becomes an Initiate—when he passes from the purely Mental Plane on to the Spiritual Plane—he realizes that the "I,"

the Real Self—is something higher than either body or mind, and that both of the latter may be used as tools and instruments by the Ego or "I." This knowledge is not reached by purely intellectual reasoning, although such efforts of the mind are often necessary to help in the unfoldment, and the Masters so use it. The real knowledge, however, comes as a special form of consciousness. The Candidate becomes "aware" of the real "I," and this consciousness being attained, he passes to the rank of the Initiates. When the Initiate passes the second degree of consciousness, and begins to grow into a realization of his relationship to the Whole—when he begins to manifest the Expansion of Self—then is he on the road to Mastership.

In the present lesson we shall endeavor to point out to the Candidate the methods of developing or increasing the realization of this "I" consciousness—this first degree work. We give the following exercises or development drills for the Candidate to practice. He will find that a careful and conscientious following of these directions will tend to unfold in him a sufficient degree of the "I" consciousness, to enable him to enter into higher stages of development and power. All that is necessary is for the Candidate to feel within himself the dawn of the awakening consciousness, or awareness of the Real Self. The higher stages of the "I" consciousness come gradually, for once on the Path there is no retrogression or going backward. There may be pauses on the journey, but there is no such thing as actually losing that which is once gained on The Path.

This "I" consciousness, even in its highest stages, is but a preliminary step toward what is called "Illumination," and which signifies the awakening of the Initiate to a realization of his actual connection with and relation to the Whole. The full sight of the glory of the "I," is but a faint reflected glow of "Illumination." The Candidate, once that he enters fully into the "I" consciousness, becomes an "Initiate." And the Initiate who enters into the dawn of Illumination takes his first step upon the road to Mastery. The Initiation is the awakening of the soul to a knowledge of its real existence—the Illumination is the revelation of the real nature of the soul, and of its relationship with the Whole. After the first dawn of the "I" consciousness has been attained, the Candidate is more able to grasp the means of developing the consciousness to a still higher degree—is more able to use the powers latent within him; to control his own mental states; to manifest a Centre of Consciousness and Influence that will radiate into the outer world which is always striving and hunting for such centres around which it may revolve.

Man must master himself before he can hope to exert an influence beyond himself. There is no royal road to unfoldment and power—each step must be taken in turn, and each Candidate must take the step himself, and by his own effort. But he may, and will, be aided by the helping hand of the teachers who have traveled The Path before him, and who know just when that helping hand is needed to lift the Candidate over the rough places.

We bid the Candidate to pay strict attention to the following instruction, as it is all important. Do not slight any part of it, for we are giving you only what is necessary, and are stating it as briefly as possible. Pay attention, and follow the instruction closely. This lesson must be mastered before you progress. And it must be practiced not only now, but at many stages of the journey, until full Initiation and Illumination is yours.

RULES AND EXERCISES DESIGNED TO AID THE CANDIDATE IN HIS INITIATION.

The first instruction along the line of Initiation is designed to awaken the mind to a full realization and consciousness of the individuality of the "I." The Candidate is taught to relax his body, and to calm his mind and to meditate upon the "I" until it is presented clearly and sharply before the consciousness. We herewith give directions for producing the desired physical and mental condition, in which meditation and concentration are more readily practiced. This state of Meditation will be referred to in subsequent exercises, so the Candidate is advised to acquaint himself thoroughly with it.

STATE OF MEDITATION. If possible, retire to a quiet place or room, where you do not fear interruption, so that your mind may feel secure and at rest. Of course, the ideal condition cannot always be obtained, in which case you must do the best you can. The idea is that you should be able to abstract yourself, so far as is possible, from distracting impressions, and you should be alone with yourself—in communion with your Real Self.

It is well to place yourself in an easy chair, or on a couch, so that you may relax the muscles and free the tension of your nerves. You should be able to "let go" all over, allowing every muscle to become limp, until a feeling of perfect peace and restful calm permeates every particle of your being. Rest the body and calm the mind. This condition is best in the earlier stages of the practice, although after the Candidate has acquired a degree of mastery he will be able to obtain the physical relaxation and mental calm whenever and wherever he desires.

But he must guard against acquiring a "dreamy" way of going around, wrapped in meditation when he should be attending to the affairs of life. Remember this, the State of Meditation should be entirely under the control of the Will, and should be entered into only deliberately and at the proper times. The Will must be master of this, as well as of every other mental state. The Initiates are not "day dreamers," but men and women having full control of themselves and their moods. The "I" consciousness while developed by meditation and consciousness, soon becomes a fixed item of consciousness, and does not have to be produced by meditation. In time of trial, doubt, or trouble, the consciousness may be brightened by an effort of the Will (as we shall explain in subsequent lessons) without going into the State of Meditation.

THE REALIZATION OF THE "I." The Candidate must first acquaint himself with the reality of the "I," before he will be able to learn its real nature. This is the first step. Let the Candidate place himself in the State of Meditation, as heretofore described. Then let him concentrate

his entire attention upon his Individual Self, shutting out all thought of the outside world, and other persons. Let him form in his mind the idea of himself as a real thing—an actual being—an individual entity—a Sun around which revolves the world. He must see himself as the Centre around which the whole world revolves. Let not a false modesty, or sense of depreciation interfere with this idea, for you are not denying the right of others to also consider themselves centres. You are, in fact, a centre of consciousness—made so by the Absolute—and you are awakening to the fact. Until the Ego recognizes itself as a Centre of Thought, Influence and Power, it will not be able to manifest these qualities. And in proportion as it recognizes its position as a centre, so will it be able to manifest its qualities. It is not necessary that you should compare yourself with others, or imagine yourself greater or higher than them. In fact, such comparisons are to be regretted, and are unworthy of the advanced Ego, being a mark and indication of a lack of development, rather than the reverse. In the Meditation simply ignore all consideration of the respective qualities of others, and endeavor to realize the fact that YOU are a great Centre of Consciousness—a Centre of Power—a Centre of Influence—a Centre of Thought. And that like the planets circling around the sun, so does your world revolve around YOU who are its centre. It will not be necessary for you to argue out this matter, or to convince yourself of its truth by intellectual reasoning. The knowledge does not come in that way. It comes in the shape of a realization of the truth gradually dawning upon your consciousness through meditation and concentration. Carry this thought of yourself as a "Centre of Consciousness—Influence—Power" with you, for it is an occult truth,

and in the proportion that you are able, to realize it so will be your ability to manifest the qualities named.

No matter how humble may be your position—no matter how hard may be your lot—no matter how deficient in educational advantages you may be—still you would not change your "I" with the most fortunate, wisest and highest man or woman in the world. You may doubt this, but think for a moment and you will see that we are right. When you say that you "would like to be" this person or that, you really mean that you would like to have their degree of intelligence, power, wealth, position, or what not. What you want is something that is theirs, or something akin to it. But you would not for a moment wish to merge your identity with theirs, or to exchange selves. Think of this for a moment To be the other person you would have to let yourself die, and instead of yourself you would be the other person. The real you would be wiped out of existence, and you would not be you at all, but would be he.

If you can but grasp this idea you will see that not for a moment would you be willing for such an exchange. Of course such an exchange is impossible. The "I" of you cannot be wiped out. It is eternal, and will go on, and on, and on, to higher and higher states—but it always will be the same "I." Just as you, although a far different sort of person from your childhood self, still you recognize that the same "I" is there, and always has been there. And although you will attain knowledge, experience, power and wisdom in the coming years, the same "I" will be there. The "I" is the Divine Spark and cannot be extinguished.

The majority of people in the present stage of the race development have but a faint conception of the reality of the "I." They accept the statement of its existence, and are conscious of themselves as an eating, sleeping, living creature—something like a higher form of animal. But they have not awakened to an "awareness" or realization of the "I," which must come to all who become real centres of Influence and Power. Some men have stumbled into this consciousness, or a degree of it, without understanding the matter. They have "felt" the truth of it, and they have stepped out from the ranks of the commonplace people of the world, and have become powers for good or bad. This is unfortunate to some extent, as this "awareness" without the knowledge that should accompany it may bring pain to the individual and others.

The Candidate must meditate upon the "I," and recognize it—feel it—to be a Centre. This is his first task. Impress upon your mind the word "I," in this sense and understanding, and let it sink deep down into your consciousness, so that it will become a part of you. And when you say "I," you must accompany the word with the picture of your Ego as a Centre of Consciousness, and Thought, and Power, and Influence. See yourself thus, surrounded by your world. Wherever you go, there goes the Centre of your world. YOU are the Centre, and all outside of you revolves around that Centre. This is the first great lesson on the road to Initiation. Learn it!

The Yogi Masters teach the Candidates that their realization of the "I" as a Centre may be hastened by going into the Silence, or State of

Meditation, and repeating their first name over slowly, deliberately and solemnly a number of times. This exercise tends to cause the mind to centre upon the "I," and many cases of dawning Initiation have resulted from this practice. Many original thinkers have stumbled upon this method, without having been taught it. A noted example is that of Lord Tennyson, who has written that he attained a degree of Initiation in this way. He would repeat his own name, over and over, and the same time meditating upon his identity, and he reports that he would become conscious and "aware" of his reality and immortality—in short would recognize himself as a real center of consciousness.

We think we have given you the key to the first stage of meditation and

concentration. Before passing on, let us quote from one of the old Hindu

Masters. He says, regarding this matter: "When the soul sees itself as a Centre surrounded by its circumference—when the Sun knows that it is a

Sun, and is surrounded by its whirling planets—then is it ready for the

Wisdom and Power of the Masters."

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE "I" FROM THE BODY. Many of the Candidates find themselves prevented from a full realization of the "I" (even after they have begun to grasp it) by the confusing of the reality of the "I" with the sense of the physical body. This is a stumbling block that is easily overcome by meditation and

concentration, the independence of the "I" often becoming manifest to the Candidate in a flash, upon the proper thought being used as the subject of meditation.

The exercise is given as follows: Place yourself in the State of Meditation, and think of YOURSELF—the Real "I"—as being independent of the body, but using the body as a covering and an instrument. Think of the body as you might of a suit of clothes. Realize that you are able to leave the body, and still be the same "I." Picture yourself as doing this, and looking down upon your body. Think of the body as a shell from which you may emerge without affecting your identity. Think of yourself as mastering and controlling the body that you occupy, and using it to the best advantage, making it healthy, strong and vigorous, but still being merely a shell or covering for the real "You." Think of the body as composed of atoms and cells which are constantly changing, but which are held together by the force of your Ego, and which you can improve at Will. Realize that you are merely inhabiting the body, and using it for your convenience, just as you might use a house.

In meditating further, ignore the body entirely, and place your thought upon the Real "I" that you are beginning to feel to be "you," and you will find that your identity—your "I"—is something entirely apart from the body. You may now say "my body" with a new meaning. Divorce the idea of your being a physical being, and realize that you are above body. But do not let this conception and realization cause you to ignore the body. You must regard the body as the Temple of the

Spirit, and care for it, and make it a fit habitation for the "I." Do not be frightened if, during this meditation, you happen to experience the sensation of being out of the body for a few moments, and of returning to it when you are through with the exercise. The Ego is able (in the case of the advanced Initiate) of soaring above the confines of the body, but it never severs its connection at such times. It is merely as if one were to look out of the window of a room, seeing what was going on outside, and drawing in his head when he wishes. He does not leave the room, although he may place his head outside in order to observe what is doing in the street. We do not advise the Candidate to try to cultivate this sensation—but if it comes naturally during meditation, do not fear.

REALIZING THE IMMORTALITY AND INVINCIBILITY OF THE EGO. While the majority accept on faith the belief in the Immortality of the Soul, yet but few are aware that it may be demonstrated by the soul itself. The Yogi Masters teach the Candidates this lesson, as follows: The Candidate places himself in the State of Meditation, or at least in a thoughtful frame of mind, and then endeavors to "imagine" himself as "dead"—that is, he tries to form a mental conception of himself as dead. This, at first thought, appears a very easy thing to imagine, but as a matter of fact it is impossible to do so, for the Ego refuses to entertain the proposition, and finds it impossible to imagine it. Try it for yourself. You will find that you may be able to imagine your body as lying still and lifeless, but the same thought finds that in so doing You are standing and looking at the body. So you see that You are not dead at all, even in imagination, although the body may be. Or, if you

refuse to disentangle yourself from your body, in imagination, you may think of your body as dead but You who refuse to leave it are still alive and recognize the dead body as a thing apart from your Real Self. No matter how you may twist it you cannot imagine yourself as dead. The Ego insists upon being alive in any of these thoughts, and thus finds that it has within itself the sense and assurance of Immortality. In case of sleep or stupor resulting from a blow, or from narcotics or anaesthetics, the mind is apparently blank, but the "I" is conscious of a continuity of existence. And so one may imagine himself as being in an unconscious state, or asleep, quite easily, and sees the possibility of such a state, but when it comes to imagining the "I" as dead, the mind utterly refuses to do the work. This wonderful fact that the soul carries within itself the evidence of its own immortality is a glorious thing, but one must have reached a degree of unfoldment before he is able to grasp its full significance.

The Candidate is advised to investigate the above statement for himself, by meditation and concentration, for in order that the "I" may know its true nature and possibilities, it must realize that it cannot be destroyed or killed. It must know what it is before it is able to manifest its nature. So do not leave this part of the teaching until you have mastered it. And it is well occasionally to return to it, in order that you may impress upon the mind the fact of your immortal and eternal nature. The mere glimmering of this conception of truth will give you an increased sense of strength and power, and you will find that your Self has expanded and grown, and that you are more of a power and Centre than you have heretofore realized.

The following exercises are useful in bringing about a realization of the invincibility of the Ego—its superiority to the elements.

Place yourself in the State of Meditation, and imagine the "I" as withdrawn from the body. See it passing through the tests of air, fire and water unharmed. The body being out of the way, the soul is seen to be able of passing through the air at will—of floating like a bird—of soaring—of traveling in the ether. It may be seen as able to pass through fire without harm and without sensation, for the elements affect only the physical body, not the Real "I." Likewise it may be seen as passing through water without discomfort or danger or hurt.

This meditation will give you a sense of superiority and strength, and will show you something of the nature of the real "I." It is true that you are confined in the body, and the body may be affected by the elements, but the knowledge that the Real "I" is superior to the body—superior to the elements that affect the body—and cannot be injured any more than it can be killed, is wonderful, and tends to develop the full "I" consciousness within you. For You—the Real "I"—are not body. You are Spirit. The Ego is Immortal and Invincible, and cannot be killed and harmed. When you enter into this realization and consciousness, you will feel an influx of strength and power impossible to describe. Fear will fall from you like a worn-out cloak, and you will feel that you are "born again." An understanding of this thought, will show you that the things that we have been fearing cannot affect the Real "I," but must rest content with hurting the

physical body. And they may be warded off from the physical body by a proper understanding and application of the Will.

In our next lesson, you will be taught how to separate the "I" from the mechanism of the mind—how you may realize your mastery of the mind, just as you now realize your independence of the body. This knowledge must be imparted to you by degrees, and you must place your feet firmly upon one round of the ladder before you take the next step.

The watchword of this First Lesson is "I." And the Candidate must enter fully into its meaning before he is able to progress. He must realize his real existence—independent of the body. He must see himself as invincible and impervious to harm, hurt, or death. He must see himself as a great Centre of Consciousness—a Sun around which his world revolves. Then will come to him a new strength. He will feel a calm dignity and power, which will be apparent to those with whom he comes in contact. He will be able to look the world in the face without flinching, and without fear, for he will realize the nature and power of the "I." He will realize that he is a Centre of Power—of Influence. He will realize that nothing can harm the "I," and that no matter how the storms of life may dash upon the personality, the real "I"—the Individuality—is unharmed. Like a rock that stands steadfast throughout the storm, so does the "I" stand through the tempests of the life of personality. And he will know that as he grows in realization, he will be able to control these storms and bid them be still.

In the words of one of the Yogi Masters: "The 'I' is eternal. It passes unharmed through the fire, the air, the water. Sword and spear cannot kill or wound it. It cannot die. The trials of the physical life are but as dreams to it. Resting secure in the knowledge of the 'I,' Man may smile at the worst the world has to offer, and raising his hand he may bid them disappear into the mist from which they emerged. Blessed is he who can say (understandingly) 'I'."

So dear Candidate, we leave you to master the First Lesson. Be not discouraged if your progress be slow. Be not cast down if you slip back a step after having gained it. You will gain two at the next step. Success and realization will be yours. Mastery is before. You will Attain. You will Accomplish. Peace be with you.

MANTRAMS (AFFIRMATIONS) FOR THE FIRST LESSON.

"I" am a Centre. Around me revolves my world.

"I" am a Centre of Influence and Power.

"I" am a Centre of Thought and Consciousness.

"I" am Independent of the Body.

"I" am Immortal and cannot be Destroyed.

"I" am Invincible and cannot be Injured.

[Illustration: "I"]