

**Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet**

**and**

**Christian Vegetarianism**

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# Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet

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## **The mind**

Bondage and liberation are states of mind. The mind, as a mass of vibrating energy, is limited by the constitution or condition of that energy. If the energy is heavy or inert, little can be done with it to produce the state of silence and clarity needed to reflect the truth of spirit. Certain elements darken the mind and make it thick or heavy, vibrating very slowly—sometimes seemingly not at all. On the other hand, some elements lighten the mind, making it fluid and subtle, vibrating at a very high level. It is this latter condition that is needed for attaining the state of liberation—or rather, the state that liberates the spirit from the illusion of bondage and suffering. It is really the mind that becomes liberated, but that liberation also affects the essentially ever-free spirit and sets it free. To attain such liberation the mind must be purified and refined, vegetarian diet being one of the best and strongest means for its purification.

## **Diet and consciousness**

Although diet is commonly considered a matter of physical health alone, since the Hermetic principle “as above, so below” is a fundamental truth of the cosmos, diet is a crucial aspect of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. For diet and consciousness are interrelated, and purity of diet is an effective aid to purity and clarity of consciousness.

The purification of our subtler levels depends upon the purification of our physical entity. This makes sense when we realize that all that goes to constitute a human being is formed of energies of various types, and the only source of energy is that which is brought into the body through sunlight, air, and food. And it is material food that provides by far the greatest amount of the energy from which our multilevel complex is shaped.

When we realize that any physical object has all the levels which we do, namely, the physical, biomagnetic, sensory, intellectual and will bodies, we can understand the importance of the kind and quality of food we eat. For not only does the physical substance of the food become assimilated into our physical body, so also do the subtler energies become united to our inner levels. This is the teaching of the Chandogya Upanishad: “Mind consists of food. That which is the subtle part of milk moves upward when the milk is churned and becomes butter. In the same manner, the subtle part of the food that is eaten moves upward and becomes mind. Thus, mind consists of food” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.5.4, 6.6.1,2,5).

We cannot get a marble statue from clay, nor can we get wheat bread from barley meal—the end product is still going to consist of the nature of the material started with. So it is with all our bodies, gross and subtle. They will reflect the character of the food which has gone into their formation.

## **The esoteric side**

Nothing that exists is “solid matter.” All physical objects are formed of molecules that are formed of atoms that are formed of particles that in the ultimate analysis are vibrating energy—not “things” at all. The only difference between gold, wood, water, and living human flesh is the pattern or behavior of the energy of which they are composed. If we go through the whole range of relative existence from the bottom—where we are—right up to the top, to (but not including) the realm of pure spirit, it is all energy of varying kinds, though one in essence.

The same is true of our individual, private universe we call “me.” It is composed of successive layers of energy from very subtle to very gross. All the levels of energy that exist in creation exist in us as well. We are actually small reflections of the greater universe. Our spirit pervades our little cosmos, enlivening and directing it, just as God pervades, enlivens, and directs the universe.

All which we experience as “us” are just different strata of cosmic energy vibrating at differing rates. The physical body is the densest stratum, behind which is the stratum of biomagnetic energy that keeps the body going and links it to another field of energy which is the mind. (By “mind” is meant the perceiving part of us which can see, hear, smell and so on, by means of the messages conveyed from the sense organs through the nervous system into the brain.) Beyond the mind is the intellect, the part of us that not only sees a hand but knows it is a hand—and not a foot. Beyond the intellect is an even subtler level from which our power of will arises. Human consciousness and human behavior are nothing but the states and activities of these various bodies of vibrating energy.

From whence do all these energy layers come? First we get these energy levels from our parents, but as we grow and develop we replace and increase those energies through the food we eat, although we receive some energy from light and air.

### **We are what we eat**

It is obvious, then, that the food we eat is going to determine the quality and condition of all the levels of our being. Our food has the same levels we do, and the different energies of the food are absorbed into our corresponding levels. Therefore when we eat something, it not only affects us on all levels of our existence, it becomes those levels. In this very real sense we indeed are what we eat. In esoteric philosophy our various levels are looked upon as separate bodies through which our consciousness operates. Since those bodies are formed essentially from the food we eat, they will be conditioned by and function according to the kind of energy extracted from the food. We are very much like the child’s toy that is a series of colored rings stacked on a rod. That is, we are successive layers of subtler and subtler energy that are connected to the physical body. From these energy levels the different life processes are empowered and administered.

When the energies within us are positive, they produce harmonious states of mind and behavior. But when the energies are negative, they move in a random and chaotic manner and produce negative states of mind and, consequently, negative behavior. Moreover, these toxic energies can also manifest as physical illnesses or defects. Substances that are toxic to the body—such as meat, alcohol, nicotine, and drugs—are toxic on the inner levels as well, and their ingestion poisons all our bodies by putting into them negative energies which are going to manifest in the disrupting

manner just described. On the other hand, fruits, vegetables, and grains are reservoirs of pure, basic life energies which are very light and malleable. These energies are easily assimilated into all our bodies and made to take on our specific, unique life vibrations and karmic patterns.

### **Diet and the mind**

As stated at the very beginning, the bondage and liberation of an individual is exclusively a matter of his mind, and the process of liberation is a matter of purifying and transmuting the mind. Since the mind is formed of the subtle energies of that which we eat, we can realize that diet is one of the most crucial aspects of the spiritual aspirant's regimen, for it will determine the quality and effectiveness of his meditation experience. Just as soft wax readily takes the impression of a stamp and retains it—in contrast to cold, hard wax—so the mind formed of light and pure food energies will respond most readily and permanently to the liberating samskaras produced by meditation. Diet, then, can be a major determinant of our success or failure in spiritual life.

### **Higher perception**

What is perception? Volumes have been written on that question, but we can consider it very simply. The mind is a field of energy which, when acted upon, is modified. Those modifications are the perceptions which the pure consciousness of the spirit witnesses, and which the intellect—also an energy field—classifies and evaluates. So the mind shapes itself in response to stimuli, and it is the modifications of the mind-energy which we perceive—not the actual thing itself. Obviously, then, the mind should be extremely sensitive and capable of easily forming into the patterns of perception. For this to be so, the mind (and intellectual) energies must be light and fluid. Such energies are obtained through eating substances composed of those energies—and those substances are fruits, vegetables, and grains.

It has been scientifically proven that plants react to thoughts—they are telepathic. If we take the energies of plants into our higher levels we will then naturally develop intuition and other subtle perceptions.

### **Energy, consciousness, and will**

To help us better understand the mechanics of developing higher consciousness, we can consider the behavior of water. A bowl of water can easily be made to form into waves and eddies in response to movements of the bowl or of air currents. Thick syrup, on the other hand, will respond very little, and tar will not respond at all. So it is with the mind according to the type of energies which go into its composition.

For the intentional evolution of consciousness, the mind has to be very light and responsive, and that is accomplished mostly through diet. The mind must not only be sensitive to random impressions, it must also be shaped by our illumined wills. In a sense, we must sculpt our minds, forming them into instruments of higher awareness. To facilitate this, the mind must be as malleable as possible.

Just as cold clay cannot be worked with for modeling, but warm clay is easily used, in the same way the mind must be responsive to shaping by our will. Animal energies were never meant for

higher consciousness, and consequently cannot be attuned to anything beyond the most mundane perceptions. The energies of fruits, vegetables, and grains, being unconditioned, can easily be made to vibrate to the highest potential.

### **The spiritual value of vegetarianism**

The major thing to keep in mind when considering the subject of vegetarianism is its relevancy in relation to our explorations of consciousness. We need only ask: Does it facilitate my spiritual growth—the development and expansion of my consciousness? The answer is Yes.

“One acts according to one’s prakriti. Even the jnani does so. Beings follow their own prakriti; what will restraint accomplish?” (Bhagavad Gita 3:33). Many supposedly moral or spiritual problems are only matters of energy behavior. If the energies are purified and re-centered where they belong, instantly the problem vanishes. But such a purification and repositioning is not possible with energies other than those absorbed from sunlight, air, and plant life.

### **Conscious evolution**

Practices for conscious evolution consist of two processes: (1) purification, refinement, and repolarization of energies and (2) placement of energies in higher levels. This means that our energies must be responsive, malleable and moveable.

Appollonius of Tyana, a great Master who lived in Greece shortly before the time of Jesus, was asked how he was able to work miracles. His simple answer was: “I have never eaten the flesh of animals.” Of course he did not mean that abstinence from meat alone made him a miracle-worker—otherwise all vegetarian animals and humans would work miracles naturally. What he meant was that the condition of his mind and body, resulting from being a strict vegetarian, had enabled him to successfully engage in the inner disciplines required for spiritual enlightenment—disciplines he had learned from the yogis of India.

### **Best of All**

The best part about all this is that you can discover the truth for yourself by simply trying a vegetarian diet. Of course it must be a sensible one with those things that will nourish the body correctly. But you need only go on a vegetarian diet, eat correctly, and watch for the benefit. It will come.



# Christian Vegetarianism

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## **The Esoteric Side Of Diet**

Although diet is commonly considered a matter of physical health alone, since the Hermetic principle “as above, so below” is a fundamental truth of the cosmos, diet is a crucial aspect of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. This is presented to us immediately in Genesis. The first sin of the human race involved eating. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:6, 7). Moreover, it was only after eating that Adam and Eve perceived their nakedness. This dramatically demonstrates that diet and consciousness are interrelated.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (I John 3:2, 3).

The spiritual traditions of all ages, whose purpose is the freeing of the human being through conscious evolution, have been unanimous in stating that the basic requisite of the path to enlightenment is purification. According to the Beatitudes it is purification which results in the Divine Vision: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). The first of “the first works” (Revelation 2:5) requisite for the successful cultivation of consciousness is that of purifying oneself on all levels, beginning with the purification of the body through diet.

Since the human being is composed of many aspects or levels in his fundamental makeup, it is necessary that the process of purification be instituted and maintained on all those levels. And since it is the physical level which dominates the horizons of our consciousness, obviously the process should begin there—in fact, the purification of all our subtler levels depends upon the purification of our physical entity. This makes sense when we realize that all that goes to constitute a human being is formed of energies of various types, and the only source of energy is that which is brought into the body through sunlight, air and food. Though light and air are essential sources of energy, it is material food that provides by far the greatest amount of the energy from which our multilevel complex is shaped.

When we realize that any physical object has all the levels which we do, namely, the physical, biomagnetic, sensory, intellectual and will bodies, we can understand the importance of the kind and quality of food we eat. For not only does the physical substance of the food become assimilated into our physical body, so also do the subtler energies become united to our inner levels.

Although this study is based on the Judeo-Christian scriptures, both Judaism and Christianity have roots in the philosophy of India as explained in [\*The Christ of India\*](#). So here at the

beginning I would like to present some statements about the nature and effect of food that are found in the basic texts of India, the upanishads.

“From food has arisen strength [virya], austerity [tapasya], mantra, action, and the world itself” (Prashna Upanishad 6.4). Ascetic discipline (tapasya) and prayer (mantra) are essential to religion, and here we see that the food we eat is their basis. And obviously the kind of food we eat will determine the quality of our discipline and prayer.

“By food, indeed, do all the breaths [pranas, life forces] become great” (Taittiriya Upanishad 1.5.4).

“Man, verily consists of the essence of food” (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.1.1). So we *are* what we eat.

“From food, verily, are produced all creatures—whatsoever dwell on earth. By food alone, furthermore, do they live....From food all creatures are born: by food, when born, they grow....Verily, different from this, which consists of the essence of food, but within it, is another self, which consists of the vital breath [prana]. By this the former is filled. This too has the shape of a man. Like the human shape of the former is the human shape of the latter” (Taittiriya Upanishad 2.2.1). The spiritual, astral body is drawn exclusively from food, so diet is crucial in spiritual development.

“Food when eaten becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes faeces, what is medium becomes flesh and what is subtlest becomes mind. Water when drunk becomes threefold. What is coarsest in it becomes urine, what is medium becomes blood and what is subtlest becomes prana....The mind, my dear, consists of food, [and] the prana of water...” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.5.1, 2, 4).

“That, my dear, which is the subtlest part of curds rises, when they are churned and becomes butter. In the same manner, my dear, that which is the subtlest part of the food that is eaten rises and becomes mind. The subtlest part of the water that is drunk rises and becomes prana. Thus, my dear, the mind consists of food, [and] the prana consists of water” (Chandogya Upanishad 6.6.1-3,5; the same is confirmed in 6.7.1-6).

“Now is described the discipline for inner purification by which self-knowledge is attained: When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure the memory [smriti—memory of our eternal spirit-Self] becomes firm. When the memory is firm all ties are loosened” (Chandogya Upanishad 7.26.2).

“On food rests everything—whatsoever breathes and whatsoever breathes not” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.5.1).

“In the body there are nerves [nadis] called hita, which are placed in the heart. Through these the essence of our food passes as it moves on. Therefore the subtle body receives finer food than the gross body” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.2.3).

## **Meat, Fish, and Eggs**

The effect of ingested meat, fish, and eggs on the mental and psychic states of those who eat them is detrimental to any attempts at attaining higher consciousness. It is even destructive of normal, balanced mental states for, as said above, our minds are fields of energy which absorb the subtle energies of whatever we eat and are affected thereby. To eat meat is to absorb the mental state of the animal. (Serious psychological research is being done on this subject right now.) It is virtually the same as grafting an animal's living brain into our brain—a horrible thought.

If that seems a bit too esoteric, just consider that anything dead is toxic, since it is decaying, and therefore unfit for food. Even more, the animals are slaughtered in an atmosphere of intense fear, and as a consequence their flesh is filled with an abnormal amount of various hormones such as adrenaline—which are transferred to us when we eat it. Even worse, today's animals are raised on chemicals that produce abnormal growth and weight. So we are both eating an abnormal substance and taking in large amounts of artificial growth hormones and various “wonder drug” compounds. Recently several deaths have been attributed to eating meat which contained harmful chemicals from cattle feed. And for years it has been known that cattle grazing in fields next to highways have very high levels of lead in their flesh because of automobile exhaust. Those who eat such cattle run a great risk of lead poisoning.

### **We Are What We Eat**

We cannot get a marble statue from clay, nor can we get wheat bread from barley meal—the end product is still going to consist of the nature of the material started with. So it is with all our bodies, gross and subtle. They will reflect the character of the food which has gone into their formation. Because of this, the Christian Church from the beginning urged its members to abstain from various harmful substances which adversely affected either their health or consciousness.

### **Jesus the Essene**

One of the major factors needed for an intelligent understanding of Christianity—and of vegetarianism within Christianity—is the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was an Essene. Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary, were both from renowned Essene families. Saint Joseph was also an Essene. The twelve Apostles were Essenes, most of them being cousins of Jesus. The Master of the Essenes was Saint John the Baptist, also a cousin of Jesus.

Thus the first Christians were not ordinary Jews—they were *Essene* Jews. Wherever the Apostles went after the Ascension of Christ they preached first to the Essene Jews and then to the Gentiles who were initiates of the Mystery religions of that time. (This is one reason the ordinary Jews were so offended by the Christian Jews—they actually preferred initiated Gentiles to Jews who were not Essenes.)

So to grasp the character of Christianity's roots we not only need to know about Judaism, we must acquaint ourselves with Essene Judaism, which was quite distinctive.

### **Vegetarian Essenes**

Pacifism was a fundamental principle of the Essenes. The commandment “Thou shalt not kill” was interpreted in the broadest sense to include all destruction of life. Therefore Essenes were strict vegetarians. They would not wear leather since it involved animal slaughter. Nor would they wear wool since it was common to kill the sheep just after it was sheared, and they considered shearing cruel, even if the sheep was allowed to live. (The same principle was observed by Appollonius of Tyana, as well.)

It was a long-standing tradition among the Essenes that the Messiah would be born into an Essene family. But his Essene background was one of the reasons Jesus was so hated by the Judeans (mistranslated “the Jews” in English versions of the Gospels).

### **Animal Sacrifice**

The aspect of the Essene position on non-killing that most offended other Jews was the refusal of the Essenes to offer animal sacrifice in the Temple. Such a refusal was considered an implied criticism—if not a rejection—of the Law. The Essenes, however, like Appollonius of Tyana among the Greeks and Romans (who killed him because of his efforts to abolish animal sacrifice), insisted that the prescription of animal sacrifice was meant to be fulfilled spiritually, the animals being symbols of human negativity. So adamant were the Essenes on this point that they established for themselves a Tabernacle on Mount Carmel where they usually worshipped. They mostly made monetary offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem, but whenever they offered animals it was understood that those animals were not to be killed, but would be allowed to live in the Temple gardens until they died naturally. As an incentive to this, the Essenes offered animals—such as dairy cattle—which could benefit the Temple and its priests while remaining alive.

Although this attitude toward animal sacrifice was not liked by the rest of Israel, since the Essenes had existed from the days of Moses (his brother Aaron having been their first Master), their interpretation of the Law regarding animal sacrifice could not be successfully challenged. Also, a perusal of the prophets in the Old Testament reveals a definite antagonism toward animal sacrifice, since all the prophets were Essenes—both Isaiah and Jeremiah having been Masters of the Essenes.

“Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Psalms 50:13). “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Samuel 15:22). “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (Proverbs 21:3). “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord... I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats” (Isaiah 1:11). “For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices” (Isaiah 1:11).

### **Transmigration**

The Essenes considered that God had prohibited the killing of both animals and human beings because of the transmigration of souls—that is, that the individual soul starts at the lowest rung of evolution and passes through all lower forms of life, eventually coming to the human form and

evolving beyond that, as well. Since all souls are evolving upward at the will of God, to interrupt their evolution by killing them is a defiance of the Divine purpose. Saint Paul had this in mind when he wrote: “For meat destroy not the work of God” (Romans 14:20).

Just as it would be insane for someone with a college degree to go into a grade school and kill and eat the first and second graders, saying that he had the right to do so because he was better educated, so it is morally insane for us to kill and eat a being simply because it is lesser in evolution. We are all students in the same school, and animals have the same divine right to live as do we. Therefore, to cause them suffering and stop their evolution is a crime against the divine spark within them—the same divine life that is within us, as well.

Because of this, too, the Essenes were vegetarians. If we look at the history of religion—especially in the Christian West—we will find that whenever there has been a movement of spiritual regeneration, the first principle adopted has been that of strict vegetarianism. The Nazarites of the Old Testament were never to eat meat. Samson was a Nazarite, which proves that vegetarians are hardly weaklings.

### **The Passover Lamb?**

In the Torah (Exodus 12) it is implied that every Jew must eat of the sacrificial lamb during the Passover celebration. Since Essenes were vegetarians, did they—including Jesus and Saint John—comply with this? They felt no need to. It was a contention of the Essenes that the Torah had been corrupted both in its text and observance. For this reason, too, they did not usually worship in the Temple at Jerusalem but rather in the tabernacle on Mount Carmel which they maintained according to the original instructions of the Torah. (That is, it was not a permanent building, but a tent-like structure to remind the worshippers that the imperishable God dwells in the quickly-passing tabernacle of the perishable human body).

### **True Nature of the “Animals” Sacrificed**

It was their opinion that the “animals” originally offered in sacrifice were effigies of animals that represented the particular failing or fault from which the offerer wished to be freed. Appollonius of Tyana taught this in relation to the ancient Greek sacrifices, and urged a return to that practice. In the Essene practice, each person molded the effigies with his own hands, while praying and concentrating deeply on the traits he wished to have corrected.

The effigies were made of five substances: powdered frankincense, flour, water, olive oil, and salt. When these effigies had dried, they were taken to the tabernacle. The altar of the tabernacle was a metal structure with a grating over the top and hot coals within (there was usually not an actual fire). The effigies were laid upon this grating and burnt by the intense heat. As they burned, through the force of the heat the olive oil and frankincense liquefied and boiled or seeped upward. This fragrant liquid was called “the blood” of the sacrifice. It was this with which Moses consecrated the tabernacle, its equipment, and the priests (Exodus 24:6, 8), not animal blood. And it was just such a “lamb” whose “blood” was sprinkled on the doorposts in Egypt (Exodus 12:7).

### **Essene Passover “Lambs”**

For the Passover observance, the Essenes would bake a lamb effigy using the same ingredients—except for the frankincense they would substitute honey and cinnamon (or, lacking honey, they would use a kind of raisin syrup). This was the only paschal lamb acceptable to them—and therefore to Our Lord and his apostles.

### **Contemporary Jewish Vegetarian Passover**

In later centuries vegetarian Jews have represented the paschal lamb by placing a leg bone of a lamb on the Passover table. Many vegetarian Jews in our time find that offensive—understandably so—and use a celery stalk or similar “bony” vegetable instead. I have observed this myself when celebrating Passover with vegetarian Jewish friends.

### **What Did John the Baptist Eat?**

What, then, about the statement in Saint Matthew’s Gospel (Matthew 3:4) that John the Baptist only ate locusts and wild honey? Did he eat insects? No. The “locusts” which Saint John ate were not insects, but the pods of the locust tree which even today are known as “Saint John’s Bread,” and to those of us who frequent health food stores as carob.

### **The Multiplied Fish**

Why, then, did Jesus feed the people with fish when he multiplied the food? Simply because that was what they had. However, there is a very interesting distinction made between the bread and the fish in the Gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, and John (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:41; John 6:11). When writing of the feeding of the five thousand, all three Evangelists are careful to note that Jesus first took the bread, blessed it, divided it and gave it for distribution. *But the fish he simply gave for distribution!* He gave no blessing to the eating of fish because it was not given by God to man for food. Moreover, since it was already dead he did not kill anything—he just made more of it. Of course, his disciples ate only the bread, while the others ate the fish as well. (There is also a speculation that the “fish” were actually a preparation made by the Galileans from a plant that grew in the Sea of Galilee.)

### **The Sacrifices of Cain and Abel**

Let us go back to the beginning of the Bible. In Genesis 4:1-5 we read that when Abel offered sheep to God, and Cain his brother offered “the fruit of the ground,” “the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.” This is cited by desperate carnivores as evidence against the vegetarian position. But where in this account of Cain and Abel’s sacrifice is there any mention of eating whatsoever—either of vegetables or of animals?

It is obvious that the acceptability or unacceptability of the sacrifices was a matter of the inner disposition of those who offered. For “the Lord looketh on the heart” (First Samuel 16:7). Considering that later on non-animal food substances were daily offerings in the Temple, it would not be logical to conclude from this story that animal offering is acceptable and vegetable

offering is not. (Though that, too, would have absolutely nothing to do with the principles of vegetarianism.)

Nor can it reasonably be concluded from the Genesis account that the animals offered by Abel were killed. Rather, they were dedicated to the service of God—just as the Essenes insisted upon doing at the time of Jesus.

The killing of animals and the eating of their flesh was absolutely unknown to Adam, Eve, and their children. Only later in the spiritual degeneracy of the human race did the practice of flesh-eating arise.

### **God Has Spoken Even at the Beginning**

It is interesting that carnivores consistently see only what they like in their reading of Genesis, and completely ignore the explicit statements that vegetarianism was the divinely ordained diet for both humans and animals. “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; *to you it shall be for meat*. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, *I have given every green herb for meat*: and it was so” (Genesis 1:29, 30).

From this we see that neither humans nor animals are natural flesh-eaters. To be so is to violate the divine pattern.

### **The Esoteric Side—The True Motivation**

But let us look at the esoteric side of vegetarianism, for that is the real basis of Christian Vegetarianism.

First of all, nothing that exists is “solid matter.” All physical objects are formed of molecules that are formed of atoms that are formed of particles that in the ultimate analysis are vibrating energy—not “things” at all. The only difference between gold, wood, water, and living human flesh is the pattern or behavior of the energy of which they are composed. If we go through the whole range of relative existence from the bottom—where we are—right up to the top, to (but not including) the realm of pure spirit, it is all energy of varying kinds, though one in essence.

The same is true of our individual, private universe we call “me.” It is composed of successive layers of energy from very subtle to very gross. All the levels of energy that exist in creation exist in us as well. We are actually small reflections of the greater universe. Our spirit pervades our little cosmos, enlivening and directing it, just as God enlivens and directs the universe.

All which we experience as “us” are just different strata of cosmic energy vibrating at differing rates.

The physical body is the densest stratum, behind which is the stratum of biomagnetic energy that keeps the body going and links it to another field of energy which is the mind. (By “mind” is

meant the perceiving part of us which can see, hear, smell and so on, by means of the messages conveyed from the sense organs through the nervous system into the brain.) Beyond the mind is the intellect, the part of us that not only *sees* a hand but *knows* it is a hand—and not a foot. Beyond the intellect is an even subtler level from which our power of will arises.

Human consciousness and human behavior are nothing but the states and activities of these various bodies of vibrating energy.

From whence do all these energy layers come? First we get these energy levels from our parents, but as we grow and develop we replace and increase those energies through the food we eat, although we receive some energy from light and air.

### **Food and Our Body, Mind, and Spirit**

It is obvious, then, that the food we eat is going to determine the quality and condition of all the levels of our being. Our food has the same levels we do, and the different energies of the food are absorbed into our corresponding levels. Therefore when we eat something, it not only affects us on all levels of our existence, it *becomes* those levels. In this very real sense we indeed *are* what we eat.

In esoteric philosophy our various levels are looked upon as separate bodies through which our consciousness operates. Since those bodies are formed essentially from the food we eat, they will be conditioned by and function according to the kind of energy extracted from the food.

We are very much like the child's toy that is a series of colored rings stacked on a rod. That is, we are successive layers of subtler and subtler energy that are tied into the physical body at certain power points or nerve plexii, which the yogis call "chakras." There are seven major such tie-ins, and a multiplicity of lesser, dependent points of contact. From these energy centers the different life processes are empowered and administered.

When the energies within us are correctly polarized, they are stored in these centers and produce harmonious states of mind and behavior. But when the energies are negatively polarized, they move out from those centers in a random and chaotic manner and produce negative states of mind and, consequently, negative behavior. This is because their negative polarity renders them toxic and therefore unfit for use in positive—i.e. healthy—life processes. Just as when we eat something unfit we vomit it out, so the bodies eject the anti-life energies through destructive thoughts, words, and acts. Moreover, these toxic energies can also manifest as physical illnesses or defects.

Substances that are toxic to the body (which meat absolutely is) are toxic on the inner levels as well, and their ingestion poisons all our bodies by putting into them negative energies which are going to manifest in the disrupting manner just described.

### **The Psychic Effect of Meat-Eating**

Besides negative energies, meat-eaters also must contend with the influence of negative intelligences in the form of obsessing spirits, for the vibrations of meat attract such entities. One of the reasons the Essenes abhorred animal slaughter was the fact that wherever blood is spilt all kinds of negative entities gather. Because the blood of the sacrifices attracted evil spirits, the priests who served in the temple at Jerusalem wore specially magnetized bells whose ringing repelled such beings. This was necessary for their protection.

Because of this affinity of negative spirits and energies for meat and blood, some shamanic healers place raw meat at the feet of their patients so the disease energies and entities will pass from the ill person into the meat, which is then destroyed. This being so, what will be the condition of the human being whose entire body is pervaded with the substance of animal flesh and blood? Such a body will be susceptible to evil and negative influences which will not be confined to the physical body alone but will invade the rest of our bodies as well.

The mental, emotional, and physical states of the meat-eater are rendered susceptible to negative influences. It is true, many people have strong enough intelligence and will to withstand much of those influences, but what a waste of life energy that requires! The wise hear the exhortation of Higher Consciousness: "Touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17).

### **Eating Karma**

Also, since the body of an incarnate being is produced by its personal karmic force, those who eat the flesh of that being will also absorb its karma. This can even lead to rebirth as the type of animal that was commonly eaten by the human being. This is, of course, very rare, but the chance is not worth the taking.

Many people think that reincarnation necessarily means that we are reborn as animals or human beings at random, but this is not correct. Once we reach the human level all of our karmas are human karmas and therefore require a human body for their manifestation. If, however, we are abnormally involved with animals so as to become mentally obsessed with them, or if we are cruel to animals and create much negative karma in relation to them, we may come back as an animal, but with fully human consciousness as to why we are in that exotic situation. Since eating murdered animals is certainly both abnormal and cruel, the resulting karma could in certain cases impel a person back into animal form.

### **Do Vegetarians Kill Vegetables?**

When meat-eaters start to be cornered by reason, one of their favorite reactions is to declare that vegetarians kill the food they eat, as well. But do they? Most vegetables—and all fruits—are harvested from the living plant which remains intact and alive. Only the eating of root vegetables—cabbage, lettuce, and such—consumes the entire plant, and they are harvested only when ripe, when they would begin to decay if not harvested, for their life cycle has ended. So we are not killing them at all.

### **Difference in Energies**

Furthermore, in their brief span of life the energies of which they are composed have not undergone any negative conditionings as in the case of most animals. As a result, fruits, vegetables, and grains are reservoirs of pure, basic life energies which are very light and malleable. These energies are easily assimilated into all our bodies and made to take on our specific, unique life vibrations and karmic patterns.

The bodies of those who eat meat, on the other hand, become patchwork quilts of varying and conflicting energies and life-patterns. Animal energies have been specifically attuned to support the consciousness and the life cycles of the specific animal. When those energies are taken into the bodies of a human being they naturally produce conflict on all levels. The true personality of the human becomes overlaid and mixed with the alien animal vibrations of the meat he has eaten. Studies have shown that the animal fats are not even converted into human body fat, but rather are stored in pockets throughout the body. Thus meat-eaters' bodies become a hodgepodge of deposited animal fats. The same is true, then, of their inner (especially their mental) bodies. They become a conglomerate of animal energies, living graveyards of the dead.

As previously pointed out, when animals are killed, they are filled with terror. As a result their glands dump many toxins such as adrenaline into the blood and tissues, making them highly toxic. Besides the glandular secretions, the animal's flesh is also pervaded by hormones and drugs introduced into their diet by the animal raisers. All this goes into the body of the meat-eater. What a bonus! A poison on the atomic level is also poison in its subtler levels. By eating meat, then, the body, life energies, mind, intellect, and will are poisoned. We can see from this that the ingestion of meat, and other life-and-soul-killing substances such as alcohol, nicotine, or mind-altering drugs, is self-destructive.

### **Degraded Consciousness**

The worst effect of meat-eating is in the distortion of consciousness, as already considered. A remarkable experiment has proven that what we eat affects not only our behavioral tendencies, but actually does become in a sense "grafted" into our mind. Flatworms were taught to "run" a maze. When those worms were ground up and fed to other flatworms, those worms knew how to run the maze.

During his college days, a psychologist worked in a fried chicken fast food restaurant. He observed that the frequent customers acted very much like chickens—nervous and flighty. Then he began watching other people and saw that they quite markedly exhibited the traits of the kind of animals whose flesh they usually ate.

Observance of meat-eaters confirms this. They commonly display typical animal behavior patterns such as territorialism and instinctual selfishness. Like animals they usually react with fear, hostility, and aggression towards anyone different from them. Animals gang up on and kill one of their own kind if it is deformed, defective, or just unlike the rest of them. And so do many who eat meat. Much of the hatred between human beings—individual, national, and racial—results from the eating of meat. Gandhi knew this and so did Leo Tolstoy—both of them great humanitarians and vegetarians. They understood that first there must be unselfish compassion for animals before we can extend it effectively to human beings.

If we completely took on the mentality and behavior of the animals we eat it might not be so bad. Cows, pigs, and sheep do not war on anybody, invent weapons to kill other animals, steal from one another, or enslave other animals. But we absorb the stupid and selfish thoughtlessness of the animals we eat and link it with a human intelligence.

It is the eating of meat that results in a person's evaluating all factors of life simply according to pleasure or pain, giving no thought to higher principles. Like another carnivore, the dog, humans tend to react to everything in three basic ways: 1) Can you eat it? 2) Can you urinate on it (mark it as your own and possess it)? and 3) Can you have sex with it? It is amazing how many objects are described as "sexy" by advertisers. This is a result of the "doggie psychology" produced by eating meat.

Few things are more unattainable than the ideal of world peace, the elimination of war, and the establishment of human brotherhood as long as the human race feeds upon the decaying flesh of the innocent. Meat-eating is the ultimate act of selfish greed. To take a life because the animal's flesh will taste good is a hideous aberration. How can an entity that engages in this vile habit be considered ethical to any worthy degree? A being that will destroy others for the sake of his own preservation, making them die so he may live, is execrable—what then to speak of a being that will kill for gastronomical pleasure?

### **Higher Perception**

What is perception? Volumes have been written on that question, but we can consider it very simply. The mind is a field of energy which, when acted upon, is modified. Those modifications are the perceptions which the pure consciousness of the spirit witnesses, and which the intellect—also an energy field—classifies and evaluates. So the mind shapes itself in response to stimuli, and it is the shape of the mind energy which we perceive—not the actual thing itself. Obviously, then, the mind should be extremely sensitive and capable of easily forming into the patterns of perception. For this to be so, the mind (and intellectual) energies must be light and fluid. Such energies are obtained through eating substances composed of those energies—and those substances are fruits, vegetables, and grains.

It has been scientifically proven that plants react to thoughts—they are telepathic. The same experiments conducted on animals produce no such results, because the energies of the animals are intensely and undeviatingly locked in on the pattern of the animal's life and consciousness. If we take the energies of plants into our higher levels we will then naturally develop intuition and other subtle perceptions. But if we eat meat, the effect will be the opposite. Insensitivity and dullness must result.

Just as certain vibrations of light and sound are beyond the range of the senses, so higher perceptions and intellectual insights are beyond the scope of the animal energies, and consequently beyond the scope of the mind which has such energies vibrating in it—actually composing most of it! Since subtle psychic and spiritual perceptions are beyond the range of an animal's mind and intellect, so will they be beyond the grasp of those who eat that animal's flesh. What hope, then, is there of higher consciousness?

### **Energy, Consciousness, and Will**

To help us better understand the mechanics of developing higher consciousness, we can consider the behavior of water. A bowl of water can easily be made to form into waves and eddies in response to movements of the bowl or of air currents. Thick syrup, on the other hand, will respond very little, and tar will not respond at all. So it is with the mind according to the type of energies which go into its composition.

For the intentional evolution of consciousness, the mind has to be very light and responsive, and that is accomplished mostly through diet. The mind must not only be sensitive to random impressions, it must also be shaped by our illumined wills. In a sense, we must sculpt our minds, forming them into instruments of higher awareness. To facilitate this, the mind must be as malleable as possible.

Just as cold clay cannot be worked with for modeling, but warm clay is easily used, in the same way the mind must be responsive to shaping by our will. Animal energies were never meant for higher consciousness, and consequently cannot be attuned to anything beyond the most mundane perceptions. The energies of fruits, vegetables, and grains, being unconditioned, can easily be made to vibrate to the highest potential.

Just as an animal will have no idea what you are talking about if you begin to lecture it, so a mind formed of animal energies will not be able to comprehend high and subtle spiritual principles. Such a mind will also be incapable of the insight that is further needed to translate those principles into dynamics of life. This is why meat-eaters may intellectually grasp certain metaphysical principles, but they usually do not manifest them in their own lives. This is why there is so much inconsistency and hypocrisy in the religion of carnivores. The philosophy of a person whose intellect is composed of pig-cow-fish-fowl vibrations will reflect such a composition.

Animals know only to avoid pain, seek pleasure, unreflectingly follow urges they do not understand and struggle to stay alive. The same is true of those who eat their flesh, even if their intelligence masks the animality with a display of technology, philosophy or psychological exposition.

When we absorb the bodies of animals into our own bodies, we naturally tend to follow the behavior patterns of those animals. Just as bad, we reinforce our own predatory subconscious programmings. Instincts from the time when, as animals ourselves, we killed and ate other animals, will be awakened in us by our eating of meat and will affect our behavior profoundly.

It ought to be evident that the price of eating meat goes far beyond a matter of dollars and cents.

## **Meditation**

The practice of meditation is greatly hindered by the eating of meat, since the entire orientation of the animal energies is to move outward. To say that animals do not cultivate self-awareness is certainly no exaggeration—they do not need to at their level of development. But for us human beings it is essential. Yet, if our minds are filled with the mental energies of animals, they will not be able to be turned inward and become centered in the pure consciousness that is our real nature. Instead, they will be restless and running here and there—just like the animals of whose energies they are composed.

## **The Spiritual Value of Vegetarianism**

The major thing to keep in mind when considering the subject of vegetarianism is its relevancy in relation to our explorations of consciousness. We need only ask: Does it facilitate my spiritual growth—the development and expansion of my consciousness? The answer is Yes.

That this is true is demonstrated in the Second Book of Esdras that was originally in the Bible—including the King James Version—but was later removed. When Esdras pled with God for prophetic guidance, God told him: “Go into a field of flowers, where no house is builded, and eat only the flowers of the field; taste no flesh, drink no wine, but eat flowers only; And pray unto the Highest continually, then will I come and talk with thee. So I went my way into the field which is called Ardath, like as he commanded me; and there I sat among the flowers, and did eat of the herbs of the field, and the meat of the same satisfied me” (Second Esdras 9:24-26). After seven days Esdras received a revelation from the Lord, but first he had to refine his mental energies by diet—mere devotion and prayer was not enough. (Nor would diet have availed anything without prayer.)

As already discussed, many supposedly moral or spiritual problems are only matters of energy behavior. If the energies are modified and re-centered where they belong, instantly the problem vanishes. But such a modification and repositioning is not possible with energies other than those absorbed from sunlight, air, and plant life. This is why, as already cited, God told the first human beings: “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat [food]” (Genesis 1:29). The Psalmist affirmed this dietary regimen when he wrote: “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth” (Psalm 104:14).

## **Conscious Evolution**

Practices for conscious evolution consist of two processes:

repolarization and refinement of energies and  
placement of energies in higher levels.

This means that our energies must be responsive, malleable and moveable—just as is water. (It is no accident that water is continually used in the Bible to symbolize spiritual life.) A person who eats meat simply will not be able to reattune and control the energies as is necessary for successful application of such evolutionary practices. Even worse, the attempt at such practices sets up deep conflicts in the energies of the carnivore and can result in illness, both physical and psychological.

Appollonius of Tyana, a great Master who lived in Greece shortly before the time of Jesus, was asked how he was able to work miracles. His simple answer was: “I have never eaten the flesh of animals.” Of course he did not mean that abstinence from meat alone made him a miracle-worker—otherwise all vegetarian animals and humans would work miracles naturally. What he meant was that the condition of his mind and body, resulting from being a strict vegetarian, had enabled him to successfully engage in the inner disciplines required for spiritual enlightenment.

## **Daniel, Prophet and Vegetarian**

In the Old Testament we have an example of abstinence from meat as a basis for physical and psychic health. Daniel and his fellow Essenes refused to eat the meat provided by the King of Babylon. Here is the account.

“The king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

“Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

“Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king’s meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

“So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

“As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

“Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm” (Daniel 1:3-20).

The proof of the philosophical pudding was in the physical eating.

We should not overlook the fact that Daniel and his friends are said to have been “ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” This indicates that the King was questioning them on esoteric matters, proving indeed that “as for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

Abstinence from meat is shown by this incident to be essential for the opening of higher consciousness.

### **Original Christian Vegetarianism According to Saint Peter**

From the time of Daniel we can move forward to the Christian era and see what the Fathers and Saints of the Church have thought about the eating of meat.

One of Saint Peter’s closest Roman disciples was Clement, a young man destined to be both Bishop of Rome and a saint of the Church. When he met Saint Peter and asked to be his disciple, he answered: “How is it that you want to remain with me for always without understanding my way of life and purpose? You see that I eat only bread and olives and a few greens.”

Clement kept careful records of Saint Peter’s informal talks, usually known as *The Clementine Homilies*. Here are some segments of Saint Peter’s words that deal with the value of a non-meat diet and the evils of meat-eating.

“The things which are pleasing to God are these:...not to taste dead flesh, not to touch blood...” (Homily VII, section iv).

“This is the service He [God] has appointed:...to abstain from *the table of devils*, that is, from food offered to idols, from dead carcasses,...and from blood” (Homily VII, section viii).

It is intriguing that Saint Peter calls the table upon which meat is offered “the table of devils.” At first hearing this seems remarkably strong, but when we realize that it is the work of evil (“demons”) to destroy life and halt evolution, then it becomes comprehensible. Further, evil entities are drawn to wherever suffering and destruction are perpetrated, vampiristically drawing energy from the spilt blood of the innocent. For this reason, as already pointed out, the priests who were serving in the temple compound at Jerusalem always wore consecrated bells on their clothes so the vibrations made by the priests’ movements would repel the negative entities that thronged around the blood of the animal sacrifices. (There was so much blood, that stone drains were constructed to carry it away from the Temple itself into the Temple gardens where it “watered” the ground as fertilizer. Who but a demon would not be repelled at such a picture? And imagine the vibration of the plants in such a garden.)

Further in this section—no doubt having in mind the ludicrous idea that it is not wrong to eat the flesh of animals that have died naturally or been killed by other animals—Saint Peter specifically mentions such animals as part of the “demon diet.”

In Homily VIII, section xv, Saint Peter speaks of those ancients who would “turn, contrary to nature, to the eating of animals.... They, on account of their mongrel nature, not being pleased with purity of food, longed only after the taste of blood. Wherefore they first tasted flesh.”

Why does Saint Peter call such people “mongrels”? First, because the human diet is vegetarian, as outlined in Genesis. “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; *to you it shall be for meat.*” So those who ate the flesh of animals were mixing the diets of humans and demons. (Flesh is not the normal diet of animals either.) “And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, *I have given every green herb for meat:* and it was so.”) Further, since our life-force energies are derived almost totally from our food—which should be vegetable—if we eat meat, our life energies become a mixture of human and animal energies. And morally speaking such a practice mixes the ways of human and demonic life. What term for such a situation could be more appropriate than “mongrel”? And surely the term is not as bad as the condition and the practice that produces it.

Continuing the subject of the first meat-eaters—for, as we have seen, human beings were originally vegetarians—Saint Peter tells us: “But when irrational animals fell short, these mongrel men tasted also human flesh. For it was not a long step to the consumption of flesh like their own, having first tasted it in other forms.”

We need only recall our own modern history which includes the cannibalism in Roanoke, Virginia, the Donner party, the concentration camps in Germany (my father worked with a refugee who had eaten human flesh in a death camp during World War II), and the Andes plane crash. And contemporary (carnivore) society considers that the cannibalism was justified. Such is the mentality of those who will eat the flesh of the innocent. On the other hand we have record of thousands of people in rural India who have died of starvation but never even considered killing their farm animals.

Truly astonishing is Saint Peter’s account of the effect of meat-eating upon the ancient world: “By the shedding of much blood, the pure air being defiled with impure vapor, and sickening those who breathed it, rendered them liable to diseases, so that thenceforth men died prematurely. But the earth being by these means greatly defiled, these first teemed with poison-darting and deadly creatures. All things, therefore, going from bad to worse, on account of these brutal demons, God wished to cast them away like an evil leaven, lest each generation from a wicked seed, being like to that before it, and equally impious, should empty the world to come of saved men. And for this purpose, having warned a certain righteous man, with his three sons, together with their wives and their children, to save themselves in an ark, He sent a deluge of water, that all being destroyed, the purified world might be handed over to him who was saved in the ark, in order to [make possible] a second beginning of life. And thus it came to pass” (Homily VIII, section xvii).

## **Global Consequences**

This passage tells us remarkable things regarding the effects upon the world and its inhabitants which were produced by humanity taking up the habit of meat-eating. We learn:

1. *That the very ecology of the earth was affected by it.* This is not the exaggeration it might at first seem when we realize that much of the earth's present pollution comes from the meat industry. One of the major producers of methane in our atmosphere comes from the meat animals—especially the beef cattle. This is not the place for a complete outline of the ecological effect of meat-eating, but here are a few facts regarding water pollution alone in the United States.

The total production of excrement by the human population is twelve thousand pounds per second; this is handled by our sewage systems. But the livestock produce *two hundred fifty thousand* pounds per second—and there are no sewage systems to deal with it. Pollution on a gigantic scale is the result. The animals in feedlots produce *one billion tons* of waste annually—waste that is not recycled in any way. Moreover, the feedlot wastes contain heavy metals, antibiotics, pesticides and nitrogen compounds. Where does this feedlot waste end up? In our water. Animal wastes account for more than *ten times* as much water pollution as the total amount attributable to the entire human population. The meat industry is accountable for more than three times as much harmful organic waste water as the rest of the United States' industries combined. Evaporation of this harmful organic waste water is one of the principal causes of acid rain. And these facts are only about water pollution in relation to meat-eating.

2. *That disease and the shortening of life result from the eating of meat.* There are so many excellent books on this subject such as *What's Wrong With Eating Meat?* by Vistara Parham (PCAP Publications, Corona, New York), and *Diet For a New America* by John Robbins (Stillpoint Publishing, Walpole, New Hampshire), that there is no need for a lengthy exposition here. But a few facts cannot hurt.

The major cause of death in this country is heart disease. Every forty-five seconds someone dies from heart attack, and every twenty-five seconds someone suffers a heart attack. It is estimated that the average American male has a fifty percent chance of dying from a heart attack. However, the risk for a vegetarian who uses eggs and dairy products is only fifteen percent. And the risk for a vegetarian who does not use eggs and dairy products is only four percent. The risk of dying by heart attack is reduced ninety percent by those who totally abstain from meat, dairy products, and eggs. The American Medical Association has officially stated that a vegetarian diet can prevent ninety-seven percent of coronary occlusions.

Eighty percent of all food poisoning cases are caused by eating meat or fish; and twenty percent of all food poisoning cases are caused by eating dairy products.

Every day one thousand four hundred Americans die of cancer. In one year alone, more Americans than died in World War II, the Korean and the Vietnamese wars combined, will die of cancer. Medical research has linked both breast and prostate cancer to a meat diet.

Diseases that medical studies show are caused or worsened by a non-vegetarian diet are: atherosclerosis, heart disease, heart attacks, stroke, osteoporosis, breast cancer, colon cancer, cervical cancer, uterine cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, kidney stones, and salmonellosis.

On the other hand, diseases that medical studies show are cured or improved by a vegetarian diet are: atherosclerosis, osteoporosis, diabetes, hypoglycemia, multiple sclerosis, ulcers, arthritis, gallstones, high blood pressure, anemia, and asthma. American medical studies further show that there have been no cases of AIDS in vegetarians who do not use eggs or dairy products.

Surely, then, we can believe Saint Peter's statement that meat-eating shortens life.

*3. That animal life mutated as a direct result of meat-eating, and this accounts for the appearance of poisonous and savage (killing) animals.* When we consider the research done in this century on the psychic effects human beings have on plants and animals, this is not hard to accept.

Perhaps saddest of all is Saint Peter's characterization of humanity in the grip of the carnivore habit as "brutal demons." This is meant as a sorrowful diagnostic expression, not one of hatred or abhorrence. For the divine image inherent in man is never destroyed, but its obscuration is the worst of evils, and whatever produces that obscuration is execrable in the extreme. This is seen as reasonable when we consider Saint Peter's statement that generations of meat-eating can in time render human beings incapable of spiritual life ("should empty the world to come of saved men") as a result of the mutation that takes place in them. Here the principle "as above, so below" comes into play. For physical degradation must of necessity produce psychic and spiritual degradation.

Finally, we see that the flood described in Genesis was not the result of the "sinning" which contemporary exoteric Christianity attributes it to, but rather to the single factor of meat-eating. Is it any wonder, then, that for those who seek salvation through "a second beginning of life" vegetarianism is a fundamental factor to ensure that it shall indeed "come to pass"?

### **Saint Bernard**

In the twelfth century the great mystic teacher of the Church, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, wrote the Rule for the Knights Templar. There he simply stated in the twenty-sixth section: "It is understood that the custom of eating flesh corrupts the body." Surely a word to the wise is still sufficient.

### **Saint Paisius Velichkovsky**

One of the latest canonized saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church is Saint Paisius Velichkovsky, the eighteenth century writer on interior life whose efforts completely revitalized the Hesychast system of Christian meditation throughout the Slavic countries, and whose influence is still a major force in Eastern Christian mysticism. Writing about those (even bishops) who would force us to eat meat by misapplied quotations from the Bible, especially Saint Paul, Saint Paisius says: “It is not right for us to comply in this matter even with an angel.” This is firm conviction! Why was the saint so adamant about this? He further writes: “It [meat-eating] cripples heedfulness of mind. From the beginning of the creation of the world and of man the will of God—which is true and perfect—was not to eat meat. Because of this, not only in Paradise, but even up to the Flood, there was no eating of meat among men.”

### **Saint Basil of Poiana Marului**

A basic text Saint Paisius Velichkovsky recommended for those who wished to take up the practice of meditation was an entire book by the great eighteenth-century Hesychast monk, Saint Basil of Poiana Marului, on the evils of eating meat. In that he says: “Meat is the food most associated with sinful passions..., and because of it the bones of the ancients fell in the desert and they did not behold the promised land. Just as manna was then called the bread of the angels [Psalms 77:25], because it came down from heaven, so here also bread is called the food of the angels, and not meat, because bread was sent to many of the saints from on high by the holy angels.... We see that manna was sent from heaven to the ancients, but in the new grace many desert dwellers, instead of manna, received bread, but never meat—sometime through the holy angels, sometimes from the birds of the air, sometimes by the invisible hand of God.... There is a great multitude of divine fathers, both anchorites and those living in communities, who received food sent to them by God—but never meat.... So we have learned one thing for certain, that God neither by Himself, nor through His holy angels, nor through the birds of the air, ever gave meat to His servants in the new grace, but only bread.... The witness of God Himself that we should abstain from meat is far greater and more certain than the permission of certain men who allow it. Assuring us of this, God has never shown Himself sending His servants food that consists of meat.”

“The passionate pleasure provided by meat is like the furnace of the Chaldees fired up seven times over, while that derived and contrived from plain food is like the lion’s den where Daniel was once cast in. [See the third and sixth chapters of Daniel.] Just as that furnace is a far more fearsome torment than the lions and their den, so enslavement to the belly and love of pleasure when it is enslaved to eating meat is far more fearful than what occurs with plain foods.”

“Abstaining from meat is a divine law unto salvation and a virtue that is pleasing to God.”

### **Saint John of Kronstadt**

The glorious Saint John of Kronstadt’s holy example utterly transformed the popular concept of the parish priest in the mind of the nineteenth and twentieth century Russian Orthodox Church and inspired thousands of priests to live like angels upon the earth—some of whom I have known personally, including a rabid Bolshevik who after coming into personal contact with “Batiushka Ioann” became one of the most powerfully spiritual people I have ever met. In his diaries he wrote forcefully and uncompromisingly about the incompatibility of meat-eating with spiritual

life. For example: “It is better to avoid meat, which turns you into an animal.” He was particularly eloquent from the Sacramental perspective: “It does not do for a priest to use milk, butter, and especially meat.” “He who often communicates of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ should not require to eat any animal food. Why should I require any animal flesh when I partake of the life-giving Mysteries of my God?” (*My Life in Christ*, section 1190).

### **Best of All**

The best part about all this is that you can discover the truth for yourself by simply trying a vegetarian diet. Of course it must be a sensible one—just cutting out meat, fish and eggs is not enough; you must also add to the diet those things that will nourish the body correctly. (Two books that greatly help are *The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook* and *Simply Heavenly! The Monastery Vegetarian Cookbook*.) But you need only go on a vegetarian diet, eat correctly, and watch for the difference. It will come.

So why not give good sense a chance to prove itself? There is nothing but benefit to be gained.

## **Did you enjoy reading this book?**

Thank you for taking the time to read *Spiritual Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet*.  
If you enjoyed it, please consider telling your friends or posting a short [review at Amazon](#),  
Barnes & Noble, Goodreads, or the site of your choice.

Word of mouth is an author's best friend and much appreciated.

## About the Author

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**Abbot George Burke** (Swami Nirmalananda Giri) is the founder and director of the Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA.

In his many pilgrimages to India, he had the opportunity of meeting some of India's greatest spiritual figures, including Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Anandamayi Ma. During his first trip to India he was made a member of the ancient Swami Order by Swami Vidyananda Giri, a direct disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who had himself been given sannyas by the Shankaracharya of Puri, Jagadguru Bharati Krishna Tirtha.

In the United States he also encountered various Christian saints, including Saint John Maximovich of San Francisco and Saint Philaret Voznesensky of New York. He was ordained in the Liberal Catholic Church (International) to the priesthood on January 25, 1974, and consecrated a bishop on August 23, 1975.

For many years Abbot George has researched the identity of Jesus Christ and his teachings with India and Sanatana Dharma, including Yoga. It is his conclusion that Jesus lived in India for most of his life, and was a yogi and Sanatana Dharma missionary to the West. After his resurrection he returned to India and lived the rest of his life in the Himalayas.

He has written extensively on these and other topics, many of which are posted at [OCOY.org](http://OCOY.org).

## Light of the Spirit Monastery

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**Light of the Spirit Monastery** is an esoteric Christian monastic community for those men who seek direct experience of the Spirit through meditation, sacramental worship, discipline and dedicated communal life, emphasizing the inner reality of “Christ in you the hope of glory,” as taught by the illumined mystics of East and West.

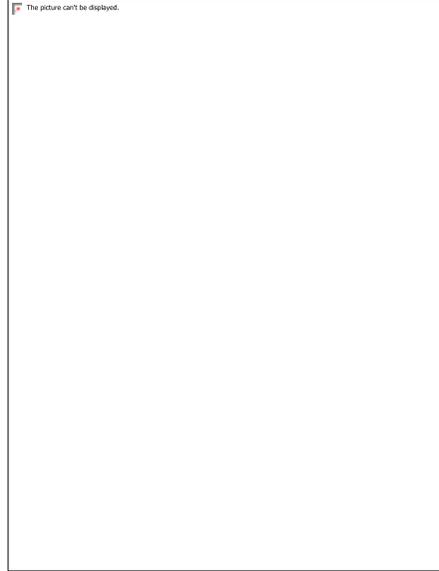
The public outreach of the monastery is through its website, [OCOY.org](http://OCOY.org) (Original Christianity and Original Yoga). There you will find many articles on Original Christianity and Original Yoga, including [Esoteric Christian Beliefs](#), [Twelve Pointers for Maintaining Brahmacharya](#), and [How to Be a Yogi](#) are practical guides for anyone seriously interested in living the Yoga Life.

You will also discover many other articles on leading an effective spiritual life, including [The Yoga of the Sacraments](#) and [The Four Soul Killers](#), as well as the “[Dharma for Awakening](#)” series—in-depth commentaries on these spiritual classics: the [Upanishads](#), the [Bhagavad Gita](#), the [Tao Teh King](#) and the [Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ](#).

Recently added are a series of podcasts by Abbot George on meditation, the Yoga Life, and remarkable spiritual people he has met in India and elsewhere, at <https://ocoy.org/podcasts/>

## Get your FREE Meditation Guide

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*Ten Simple Tips to Improve Your Meditation Today.*



Get free updates: newsletters, blog posts, and podcasts, plus exclusive content from Light of the Spirit Monastery.

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## [Reading for Awakening](#)

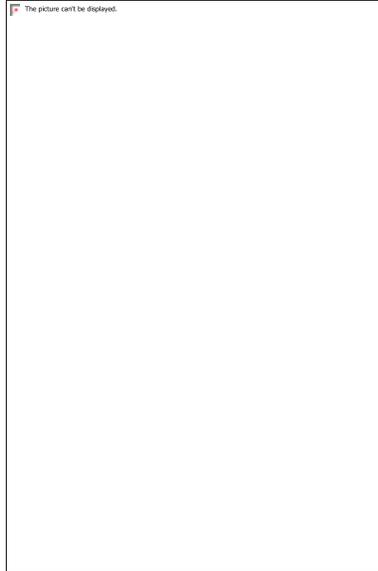
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**Light of the Spirit Press** presents books on spiritual wisdom and Original Christianity and Original Yoga. From our “Dharma for Awakening” series (practical commentaries on the world’s scriptures) to books on how to meditate and live a successful spiritual life, you will find books that are informative, helpful, and even entertaining.

Light of the Spirit Press is the publishing house of Light of the Spirit Monastery (Atma Jyoti Ashram) in Cedar Crest, New Mexico, USA. Our books feature the writings of the founder and director of the monastery, Abbot George Burke (Swami Nirmalananda Giri) which are also found on the monastery’s website, <https://ocoy.org/>.

We invite you to explore our publications in the following pages.

Find out more about our publications at [lightofthespiritpress.com](http://lightofthespiritpress.com).



## **The Christ of India**

### *The Story of Saint Thomas Christianity*

There is a strong connection between Jesus and India, both historically and philosophically. And his disciple, Saint Thomas, who was the apostle of India, built upon the foundation of that connection. The result is that unique form of Christianity known as Saint Thomas Christianity.

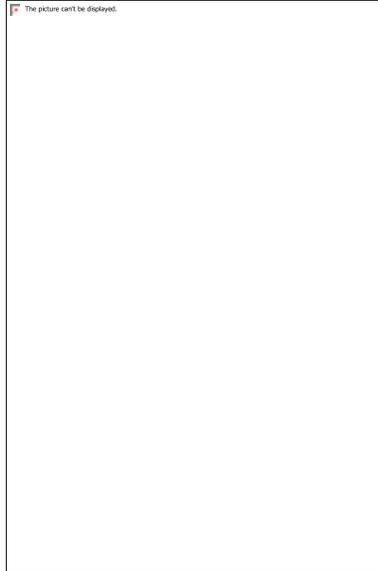
In *The Christ of India*, Abbot George Burke presents the growing evidence that Jesus spent much of his “Lost Years” in India and Tibet, and reveals the philosophical unity of Jesus’ teachings with the Eternal Way of Truth known in India as Sanatana Dharma. Also includes the history of Saint Thomas Christianity from the times of Jesus and Saint Thomas to the present day

#### **What Readers say:**

“Abbot George is like the Emily Dickinson of modern day spiritual writers.”  
—*Reverend Gerry Nangle*

“Interpreting the teachings of Jesus from the perspective of Santana Dharma, *The Christ of India* is a knowledgeable yet engaging collection of authentic details and evident manuscripts about the Essene roots of Jesus and his ‘Lost years’. ...delightful to read and a work of substance, vividly written and rich in historical analysis, this is an excellent work written by a masterful teacher & a storyteller.” —*Enas Reviews*

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **Om Yoga Meditation: Its Theory and Practice**

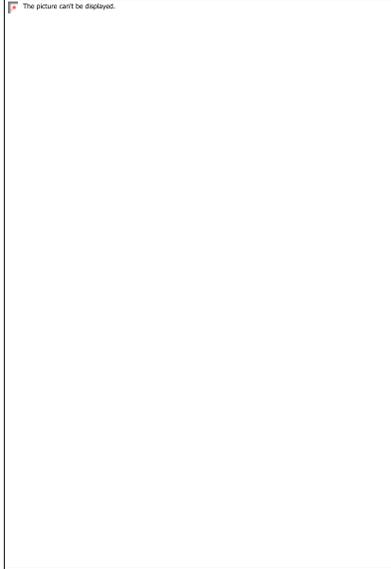
A thorough guide providing all the information that might be desired for a successful meditation practice, illuminating the art and science of effective inner life. Beginning with an in-depth explanation of what yoga is and what its goals are, and continuing with a background on the theory of mantra, Abbot George then shows the value of the unique mantra Om. He shows that Om Meditation is the original yoga, citing the classic scriptures of India and the testimony of the saints.

In *Om Yoga Meditation* you will discover the techniques for using Om in meditation, and how to make your meditation the most effective. You will also learn the foundations of the yogic life that will support and nourish your practice, and be given the keys to bless others as well as yourself using Om.

### **What Readers say:**

*“Om Yoga Meditation* uniquely touches on the spiritual power and lasting positive effects of the mantra Om. If you’re curious about trying the mantra Om in your spiritual practice, this book is the perfect guide with theory and techniques to help you along the way.”—*Spirituality & Health Magazine*

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **The Dhammapada for Awakening**

*A Commentary on Buddha's Practical Wisdom*

*The Dhammapada for Awakening* brings a refreshing and timely perspective to ancient wisdom and shows seekers of inner peace practical ways to improve their inner lives today.

It explores the Buddha's answers to the urgent questions, such as "How can I find lasting peace, happiness and fulfillment that seems so elusive?" and "What can I do to avoid many of the miseries big and small that afflict all of us?"

Drawing on the proven wisdom of different ancient traditions, and the contemporary masters of spiritual life, as well as his own studies and first-hand knowledge of the mystical traditions of East and West, Abbot George illumines the practical wisdom of Buddha in the Dhammapada, and more importantly, and make that makes that teaching relevant to present day spiritual seekers.

### **What Readers say:**

"In this compelling book, Abbot George Burke brings his considerable knowledge and background in Christian teachings and the Vedic tradition of India to convey a practical understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. ...This is a book you'll want to take your time to read and keep as reference to reread. Highly recommended for earnest spiritual aspirants, especially those who may need a prod to keep them moving forward."

— Anna Hourihan, author, editor, and publisher at Vedanta Shores Press

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **May a Christian Believe in Reincarnation?**

*Discover the real and surprising history of reincarnation and Christianity.*

A growing number of people are open to the subject of past lives, and the belief in rebirth--reincarnation, metempsychosis, or transmigration is becoming commonplace. But it often thought that belief in reincarnation and Christianity are incompatible. But is this really true? May a Christian believe in reincarnation? The answer may surprise you.

Reincarnation-also known as the transmigration of souls-is not just some exotic idea of non-Christian mysticism. Nor is it an exclusively Hindu-Buddhist teaching.

In orthodox Jewish and early Christian writings, as well as the Holy Scriptures, we find reincarnation as a fully developed belief, although today it is commonly ignored. But from the beginning it has been an integral part of Orthodox Judaism, and therefore as Orthodox Jews, Jesus and his Apostles would have believed in rebirth.

### **What Readers say:**

“Those needing evidence that a belief in reincarnation is in accordance with teachings of the Christ need look no further: Plainly laid out and explained in an intelligent manner from one who has spent his life on a Christ like path of renunciation and prayer/meditation.” \_\_—\_Christopher T. Cook

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **A Brief Sanskrit Glossary**

### *A Spiritual Student's Guide to Essential Sanskrit Terms*

This sanskrit glossary contains full translations and explanations of many of the most commonly used spiritual sanskrit terms, and will help students of the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and other indian scriptures and philosophical works to expand their vocabularies to include the sanskrit terms contained in them, and gain a fuller understanding in their studies.

#### **What Readers say:**

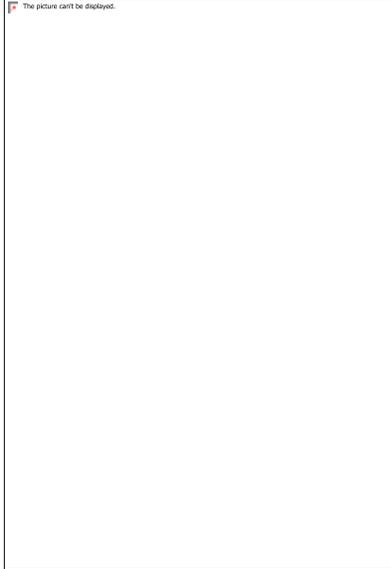
“If you are reading the writings of Swami Sivananda you will find a basketful of untranslated Sanskrit words which often have no explanation, as he assumes his readers have a background in Hindu philosophy. For writings like his, this book is invaluable, as it lists frequently used sanskrit terms used in writings on yoga and Hindu philosophical thought.

As the title says, this is a spiritual students guidebook, listing not only commonly used spiritual terms, but also giving brief information about spiritual teachers and writers, both modern and ancient.

Abbot George's collection is just long enough to give the meanings of useful terms without overwhelming the reader with an overabundance of extraneous words. This is a book that the spiritual student will use frequently.”

—Simeon Davis

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **The Gospel of Thomas for Awakening**

*A Commentary on Jesus' Sayings as Recorded by the Apostle Thomas*

“From the very beginning there were two Christianities.” So begins this remarkable work. While the rest of the Apostles dispersed to various areas of the Mediterranean world, the apostle Thomas travelled to India, where growing evidence shows that Jesus spent his “Lost Years,” and which had been the source of the wisdom which he had brought to the “West.”

In *The Gospel of Thomas for Awakening*, Abbot George shines the “Light of the East” on the sometimes enigmatic sayings of Jesus recorded by his apostle Saint Thomas, revealing their unique and rich practical nature for modern day seekers for spiritual life.

Ideal for daily study or group discussion.

### **What Readers say:**

“An extraordinary work of theological commentary, *The Gospel of Thomas for Awakening* is as informed and informative as it is inspired and inspiring”.

James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief, Midwest Book Review

[Get it at Amazon.](#)



## **Robe of Light**

### ***An Esoteric Christian Cosmology***

In *Robe of Light* Abbot George Burke explores the whys and wherefores of the mystery of creation. From the emanation of the worlds from the very Being of God, to the evolution of the souls to their ultimate destiny as perfected Sons of God, the ideal progression of creation is described. Since the rebellion of Lucifer and the fall of Adam and Eve from Paradise flawed the normal plan of evolution, a restoration was necessary. How this came about is the prime subject of this insightful study.

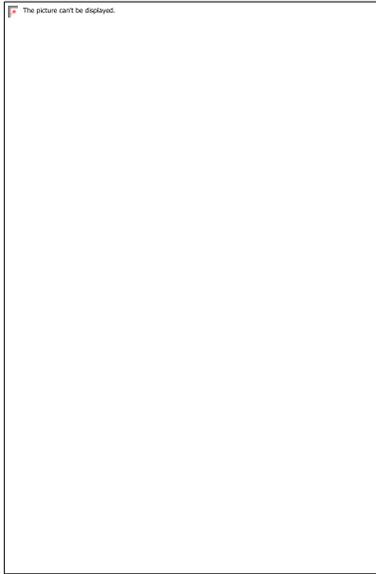
Moreover, what this means to aspirants for spiritual perfection is expounded, with a compelling knowledge of the scriptures and of the mystical traditions of East and West.

#### **What Readers say:**

“Having previously read several offerings from the pen of Abbot George Burke I was anticipating this work to be well written and an enjoyable read. However, *Robe of Light* actually exceeded my expectations....Abbot Burke explicates the subject perfectly...making a difficult and complex subject like Christian cosmology accessible to those of us who are not great theologians.”

—*Russ Thomas*

**[Get it at Amazon.](#)**



## **The Bhagavad Gita–The Book of Life**

### ***The Essential Guide for a Successful Spiritual Life***

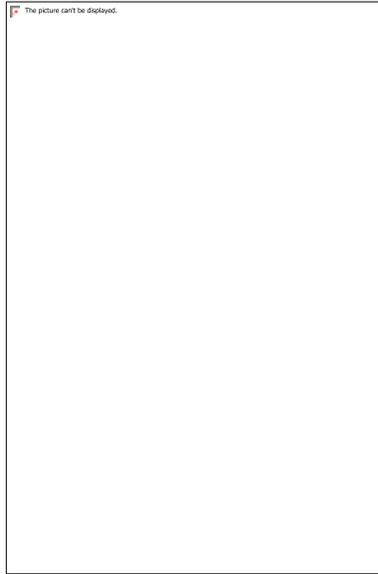
*A new translation of a spiritual classic*

From the Author: “Nothing has ever arisen in my life, internal or external, that the Gita has not made clear and enabled me to deal with or understand. Yet is it not dogmatic. At the very end Krishna says to Arjuna:

“Now I have taught you that wisdom which is the secret of secrets. Ponder it carefully. Then act as you think best.”

No threats, no promises, no coercion. It is all in the reader’s hands. Even better: the Bhagavad Gita tells us that we can attain a Knowing beyond even what it tells us. And it shows us the way.”

**Get it at Amazon.**



## **Foundations of Yoga**

### ***Ten Important Principles Every Meditator Should Know***

An introduction to the important foundation principles of Patanjali's Yoga: Yama & Niyama

Yama and Niyama are often called the Ten Commandments of Yoga, but they have nothing to do with the ideas of sin and virtue or good and evil as dictated by some cosmic potentate. Rather they are determined by a thoroughly practical, pragmatic basis: that which strengthens and facilitates our yoga practice should be observed and that which weakens or hinders it should be avoided.

It is not a matter of being good or bad, but of being wise or foolish. Each one of these Five Don'ts (Yama) and Five Do's (Niyama) is a supporting, liberating foundation of Yoga.

**Get it at Amazon.**