

## ***CSE Youth Spiritual Education***

### **Caring for the Self and the Koshas – Lesson 1**

#### **For Adults - Introduction to the Koshas**

The ancient yogis were scientists of the body, mind and spirit. Through their experiments they created many models, ways of looking at life, that help us even today. One such model is that of the Self and its Koshas, or coverings. Yogacharya O'Brian has written extensively on the Self, and for the adults I refer you to her writings and teachings. For our youth and family, we will be exploring ways to care for each of the coverings of the Self. The healthier these coverings are, the easier it is for us to experience the Self, and to share that with family, friends and the world. Each week, we will provide activities focused on the coverings. These activities can be done as a family, or, with older youth, can be done separately.

#### **Discussion - Who Are You?**

Ask & Say:

- In Yoga we ask big questions, and then we do experiments with body, mind and spirit to find the answers. One of the biggest questions that Yogis ask is, "Who am I?" or "Who are we?"
- We all know our names, but are you your name? If you were called a different name would you still be you? Is there more to you than just your name?
- What about your hair color - are you your hair color? If you changed your hair color, would you still be you? What else is there?
- What about how tall you are, is that who you are? If your size changes, are you still you? Were you you yesterday, when you were a tiny bit smaller? Will you still be you tomorrow when you are oh, so slightly taller? Or is there more to you than your size?
- What about when you are tired and going slow. Is your slowness you?
- What about when you are hyper, and going faster than fast, is your fastness you? Or is there something more? What is it?
- What about the thoughts you think, are you your thoughts? What happens when your thoughts change? Does that mean you are now someone else? Or when you fall into deep sleep, and your thoughts are gone. Are you still you?
- What about your feelings? When your feelings change, do you become someone different? Are you a different you? Who are you?
- What about when you have a wise thought. Are you that one wise thought? What happens if it goes away, and you can't remember it anymore? Do you go away? What happens when you can't find a wise thought, you're stumped, and can't figure things out? Have you gone away? Or are you still there?
- Do you ever feel joyful for no reason at all, just a joy for living? Are you that inner joy? If you can't feel it, are you still you? (This is a tricky one! Inner Joy is closely associated with the Self. It is the first outward expression of our True Self, it is a quality of the Self, but not the Self!)
- Who are you?

## **CSE Youth Spiritual Education**

### **Caring for the Self and the Koshas – Lesson 1**

Yogis asked all these questions to themselves thousands of years ago, and experimented with their body, mind and spirit. They practiced for years, and discovered that we were more than our bodies, mind, feelings, thoughts, wisdom and inner joy. These things change all the time. But who we are at the core of our self, our essential self, remains the same. The yogis call it the “Self”, with a capital S. Some people might call it God within us. Sometimes we think of the Self by describing its qualities, like “Inner Light” or “Love that is inside of us,” or “Creative Inspiration.” That Self is who we are, and we use our bodies, minds, energy, wisdom and joy to express that Self out into our world! (Older students – yogis say there is only One Self, expressing as each one of us, and we are that One Self!)

The Yogis created a model to help us understand who we truly are. This model is called The Koshas. (Watch Intro to Koshas video)

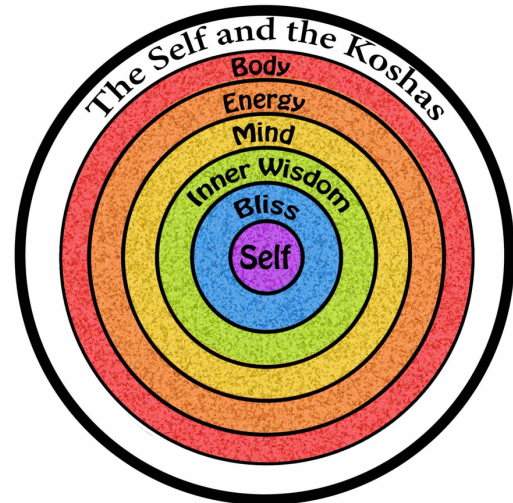
In this model, all the different parts of us, our body, energy, minds, emotions, inner wisdom, and inner bliss, are all thought of as coverings of our Self. When our coverings are healthy, then it is easier to experience and express our True Self. If the outer coverings become unhealthy, like a body that is sick or tired, then it is harder to experience and express our Self, our Inner Light out into the world.

Over the next couple of months, we will be experimenting with ways to keep each of the coverings healthy! For today, we are going to imagine that we can feel each of the coverings, imagine each covering relaxing, and see if we can experience the Self, our True Self, who we are!

### **Experiment - KOSHA Meditation for Kids**

Allow children to lay on their backs. It can be useful to have them facing away from each other, and away from their friends so that this can be their own time. They could also sit up, facing away from each other. Children can either repeat the sayings out loud or think them in their minds.

1. Body
  - a. Now, take a deep breath in, and let it out. As you let it out, relax your body.
  - b. Your body is strong. It moves different ways, lets you eat good food, and do the things you love to do.
  - c. Say (or think), “I am grateful for my body.”



**CSE Youth Spiritual Education**  
**Caring for the Self and the Koshas – Lesson 1**

2. Breath/energy
  - a. Now, breathe in, breathe out, and relax your breath, relax your energy.
  - b. Your breath keeps you alive. It helps you when you exercise, it helps you relax and control your emotions, and it keeps working even when you sleep and don't know it.
  - c. Say "I am grateful for my breath. I am grateful for my energy."
3. Mind
  - a. Now, breathe in, breathe out, and relax your mind.
  - b. Your mind helps you see the world and make sense of it. It allows you to be curious, creative, and understanding.
  - c. Say "I am grateful for my mind."
4. Intuition
  - a. Now, breathe in, breathe out, and relax and notice your intuition, your inner wisdom.
  - b. Your intuition helps you to know right from wrong, to know what the right thing for you to do is, and how to know and be who you are.
  - c. Say "I am grateful for my intuition."
5. Bliss
  - a. Now, breathe in, breathe out. Relax and notice your inner joy deep inside your heart.
  - b. Your inner joy is what makes you feel connected to your Self and to others. It helps you know what is important to you, and lets you find peace even when things are challenging on the outside.
  - c. Say "I am grateful for my inner joy."
6. Self
  - a. Now, breathe in, breathe out. Relax and notice your true Self.
  - b. Your true Self shines through all parts of you. It lets you experience life and know that you are alive.
  - c. Say, "I am grateful for my Self."

Practice this meditation each day this week. You may want to shorten the words as you practice, and you may find that your body, energy, mind, inner wisdom, and inner joy automatically start relaxing as you focus on them. Remember to rest in the Self, your essence of being, who you truly are! Enjoy!

**Folder Activity:** Create a folder for your artwork on the Koshas, and decorate the cover. Color in the Kosha coloring page, and place in your folder. You will be creating a book over the next few months about Taking care of the Self and the Koshas!

# CSE Youth Spiritual Education

## Caring for the Self and the Koshas – Lesson 1

### Additional Materials

Suggested Children's Books:

- *I Am* by Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
- *All I See is Part of Me* by Chara M. Curtis



Additional Craft projects for the Kosha unit can be found at <https://www.csecenter.org/Events/Youth--Family/Lighting-the-Path-for-Children>, specifically

- [“Experience the Radiance of the Soul”](#)
- [“Look Within Maze: An Exploration of the Koshas”](#) articles.



**Next week** we will share ways to take care of the body. Hint – hand washing is one very important way! Some fun kid-friendly on-line videos can be found here:

- Pepper and soap experiment  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKP5Uilpu3E>
- CDC Handwashing videos for kids, adults and families to explore <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>

