



FOREWORD

Not long ago, my colleague David Life and I were teaching a yoga workshop in Seattle, Washington. A local television news crew was filming the class. The reporter asked us, “What is your message? What are you trying to promote here?”

We answered, “Vegetarianism, animal rights, concern for the environment, and taking social action.”

“Yes, yes,” the reporter said, impatiently. “But what are the physical benefits of yoga?”

I looked at her, she looked at me, and there was a long pause. Then I said, “What could be more physical than those things?”

This incident is very telling about how we as a culture view the connection between what we do as individuals and how that affects the world we live in. For the food we eat, the other animals we share the planet with, the actual planet herself, and how we interact with one another are all intensely physical issues.

As a yoga teacher I strive to teach yoga from the context of its origin, the yogic scriptures. *The Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, written five thousand years ago, state that *ahimsā* is the first step in the attainment of yoga. Yoga means union with God. For those of you who might have a problem with the term “God” you may substitute “the source of being,” “Oneness,” “the Self,” “the universal soul,” or “Happiness” itself. *Ahimsā* means the non-

harming of others. The practice of nonviolence is the touchstone of the practice of yoga.

Vegetarianism is not an optional part of this practice—it is the essential practice. Moreover, the term “others” is not limited to people of your same sex or sexual orientation, religion, nationality, race, or age. Nor is it limited to human beings. Getting over “otherness” is essential for the attainment of yoga. If we seek self-realization or happiness, then we must go to the cause to find it. The root cause of happiness is compassion—the ability to see oneself in others, and to see so clearly and so deeply that “otherness” disappears and only “oneness” remains. Compassion is the key to the attainment of yoga.

In her work, Carol Adams has given us an essential missing link to the attainment of happiness: vegetarianism. All living beings seek happiness. Vegetarianism as a spiritual practice brings us closer to happiness because it brings us closer to the truth of who we really are: the totality, the “oneness.”

Carol Adams has devoted herself to bringing to light the roots of oppression and prejudice in all realms. In her groundbreaking book *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*, she focused on the link between misogyny and meat eating. Now, with *The Inner Art of Vegetarianism*, Carol gives us an opportunity to examine how our food choices affect our chances for spiritual realization and eternal happiness. As she points out, not everyone can take the time each day to meditate or practice yoga postures. But everyone eats food each day. Adams asks us to make our daily meals a part of our spiritual practice. True to her heart, she boldly continues the fight against prejudice in general and one particular form of prejudice in particular. It is a prejudice so deeply rooted and ingrained in us that we hardly notice it. It is our prejudice against other animals.

I believe there will come a time when we human beings will react with disgust to any fellow creature being confined and tortured for our amusement, exploitation, or dinner. *The Inner Art of Vegetarianism* brings that realization of compassion one step closer.

—Sharon Gannon, Director
Jivamukti Yoga™ Center, New York City



May all beings be happy and free
May all beings be happy and free
May all beings be happy and free
...And may the thoughts and actions
of my own life contribute in some way
to that happiness and to that freedom for all.

—English version of a Sanskrit chant
used at Jivamukti Yoga™ Center

