



Self- Realization MAGAZINE

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Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul



Paramhansa Yogananda (center foreground) with SRF Center leaders and a small group of the 300 SRF members who attended the second annual SRF Convocation held at Los Angeles, California, August 22nd through August 26th.

Standing (left to right): Mr. Clifton Davis and Mrs. Davis, Miss Maude Biggin, Miss Carmen Dalziel, Mr. E. J. Stevens, Mr. Vincent Oldaker, and Mrs. Don Cross, Vancouver, B.C.

Seated (left to right): Dr. Alfredo Cuaron and Mrs. Katherine Quick, Mexico City; Mr. Pedro Gonzales Milan, Merida, Yucatan; Mr. Oscar Font, Havana, Cuba; Mr. Bernard Cote, Montreal, Quebec; Mr. George Kekaula, Honolulu, Hawaii; Miss Agnes Sundgren, Stockholm, Sweden; Miss Anita Fontaine, Miss Victoria Palamari, Montreal, Quebec; Mr. Juan B. Amaya, Monterrey, Mexico; Mr. Carl Herndl, Melbourne, Florida; Mrs. Cecile de la Pena and Mr. Jose Cuaron, Mexico City; Mr. J. Oliver Black, Detroit, Mich.

Messages poured in from non-attending SRF members, including this telegram from the Phoenix, Arizona Hindu Community: "Congratulations on 31st year in America spreading teachings of India."

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International Headquarters, at Los Angeles, California, of Self-Realization Fellowship. Founded in 1925 by Paramhansa Yogananda.

Yoga Postures For Health

By C. BERNARD

Sirshasana — Head Stand

The origin of yoga practices is shrouded in remotest history. The methods which constitute the system of self-development exercises—physical, mental, and spiritual—known as yoga were not derived by painstaking research in the same manner as we might employ today. Rather they were discoveries, by men of great spiritual insight, of the various forces which activate physical and mental life and the body positions and exercises which beneficially affect the life forces.

Of all the *asanas* which we have considered thus far, none is more beneficial than *Sirshasana*. The head stand, as it is more commonly known, has been borrowed from yoga by western physical culturists but has not been fully exploited by them. The head stand and the shoulder stand (see *Self-Realization Magazine*, May, 1949) exert a remarkably salutary influence on all the life forces.

There are a number of variations of the general head stand pose, but little more is accomplished by one than by another. The one shown here may prove a little difficult at first simply from the fact that the legs are locked in *Padmasana* or lotus pose. Presuming that one can place the legs in lotus pose easily, some effort

is still required to lift them to the position shown.

Fluid Balance

During our daily activities—all of which are performed in an upright position—the force of gravity pulls the viscera, the internal organs, the blood, and the lymph fluids toward the lower part of the body. Physical exercise and muscle tone are all that resist the downward pull. The gravitational pull disturbs the fluid balance in the body. Fluids accumulate in the legs and lower abdomen. This in turn obstructs normal circulation, placing a greater demand on the circulatory system and even then allowing the settling of waste products in the tissue spaces. The blood and lymph which make up this surplus of fluid in the lower body are drawn from their normal course of circulation in the upper trunk and particularly the brain. Mental efficiency naturally begins to decline, for all the mental processes associated with the brain are dependent upon cranial circulation and function only as efficiently as the circulation. It has been demonstrated repeatedly (and you can quite easily prove it to your own satisfaction) that the inverted position of the head stand will do wonders for mental concentration.

Not only as a result of the pull of the earth's gravitational field but as a consequence of unhealthy emotional life, the colon, and with it the rest of the viscera and organs, is *pulled* downward by reflexive muscular activity. Thus, depressive moods, worry, discouragement, pessimism, dissipation of the vital force, in fact, any negative mental attitude will either pull the viscera downward or cause the lowering of organic and muscle vitality and so allow the gravitational force to induce a prolapsis of the abdomen. Daily physical exercise (the energizing exercises of Self-Realization Fellowship are particularly vitalizing and strengthening) and a cheerful frame of mind are the greatest possible aids to the health.

Spiritual Vitality

Exercise, mental calmness and a constructive mental outlook, a wholesome emotional life, and, greatest of all, the spiritual vitality which comes of deep meditation and communion with God—all increase the muscular and organic vitality, raise the consciousness and life force to the upper region of the body and in so doing offset all downpulling influences.

To practice *Sirshasana*, place your head on a small pad or folded blanket on the floor, legs already having been placed in lotus position. Press with the arms and pull the legs up along the arms until the body weight is fairly well distributed on the head with the hands merely balancing the body. Then lift your legs to the position

shown. The legs will be as nearly straight as possible with the trunk.

Stay in this pose at first for only a minute or so. As practice becomes easier, increase to about five minutes. Once you have discovered for yourself the physical and mental refreshment of this wonderful exercise, you will be glad you took the time to master it.



An unusual variation of *Sirshasana*, or head stand.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

The Divine Untouchable

Chapter V, Stanza 10

Literal Translation

"As the lotus leaf remains unsoiled by water, so lives the yogi who performs non-attached actions, surrendering them all to the Infinite. He remains unbound, unentangled in the senses."

Spiritual Interpretation



The emancipated yogi is not soiled by the waters of evil worldly environments where he lives and works, even as the lotus leaf is not contaminated by the muddy depths of the water on which it floats.

An excitable man becomes emotionally affected every time he beholds mixed good and bad in a motion picture. But a calm man can remain unaffected during all his motion picture experiences. Similarly, worldly people are full of turmoil beholding the mixed dream pictures of life, whereas yogis remain completely unaffected while watching the good and evil dream dramas of life. Milk cannot float on water; butter can. Minds liquefied with troubles become mixed up while trying to float on waters of poisonous evil environments. Souls who precipitate the butter of Self-realization can easily float on the venomous waters of delusive activities.

There is a deeper meaning to this stanza which only advanced yogis can understand. Nevertheless I will try to explain it as simply as possible.

When the yogi withdraws his life-force from the twenty-five thousand million cells and nerves he beholds the life-force currents like little streams trickling back from the shores of the flesh through innumerable small channels into the large channel of the spinal cord. All the currents of the body withdrawn from the nerve channels become one current in passing through the last astral tube, or *Brahmanadi*,* existing centrally within three other luminous tubes (*susumna*, *bajra* and *chitra*). The yogi then finds all processes of his consciousness and all activities of the life-force to be surrendered into this astral tube *Brahmanadi*, where originally the soul had descended with the life-force.

The inmost astral tube is called the *Brahmanadi* because the spirit

of *Brahma* present in the soul of man descended through this tube and later entered the other three astral tubes, passing finally through their openings into the grosser channels of the nerves and cells of the entire body. An advanced yogi who can see the retirement into the inmost astral tube of all the activities of the life-force and of the processes of consciousness is spoken of as having surrendered his life and consciousness into the cosmic consciousness present in the *Brahmanadi*.

The advanced yogi takes his ego, life-force, and processes of consciousness up through this astral tube to its opening (*Brahma-randhra*) at the top of the head, in order to enable his transformed ego (the soul), life-energy, and mind to pass beyond the physical body and be united with the Omnipresent Bliss.

The *Bhagavad Gita* also tells us in this esoteric stanza that when the yogi retires his life-force and processes of consciousness through the *Brahmanadi*, he sees wondrous astral phenomena. He is warned not to be attached to them (as any form of attachment forces the yogi to come down again to the sensory surface of the body). He should by-pass the miraculous phenomena until he reaches the Universal Substance existing beyond the cerebrum.

When the yogi by the process described above is able to unite his soul with the Infinite and thus destroy all his past karmas he is spoken of as one who has ascended from the flesh. After a yogi is able to ascend to the Spirit and burn all his past karma in the fire of ecstasy (*sabikalpa samadhi*), he perceives God without creation. He then learns by the highest ecstasy (*nirbikalpa samadhi*) to manifest his acquired God Consciousness in the flesh and to perform all actions without being entangled by their good and evil effects. In this highest ecstatic state the yogi perceives God, creation, and his bodily perceptions existing and working together in harmony as described in Chapter 5, Stanzas 8-9. In this state the yogi performs all activities of body and mind without attachment, beholding them equally as waves of Cosmic Consciousness.

A person tossing on a wave in the ocean cannot very well perceive the whole ocean, but as he comes out of that wave and stands on the shore, he can see the whole ocean without concentrating on any individual wave. A yogi similarly withdraws himself from tossing on the

*Astral tube: Tubes of finest intelligent life-energy or lifetrans—subtle forms of electrons and protons made of prana. Lifetrans are endowed with a high intelligent power by which they are able, among their many activities, to guide the embryonic human body, starting with micro-cosmic sperm and ovum cells, into symmetrical and highly organized development.

Nadi signifies any astral tube; *Brahmanadi*, the tube through which *Brahma*—the Spirit as soul, life, and consciousness—descended into the body.

wave of his specific life and watches from the shore of divine bliss (*subikalpa samadhi*) the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness without the waves of creation. Just as a man on a beach can view the whole ocean as a single mass of water, then can notice the individual waves as well as the ocean as a whole, so a yogi, after perceiving the sea of Cosmic Consciousness without the waves of creation, can increase the depth of his intuition to perceive simultaneously the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness and also the waves of all creation (*nirbikalpa* or highest *samadhi*).

(To be Continued)



POETRY OF LIFE

"After those bitter winter nights, when, in the mornings, you find frozen on the (hot-house) panes the shapes of the foliage they shelter, the intricate patterns of leaves of fern and sensitive plant, mysteriously etched by the moisture they exhale. Indeed, this process is still a wonder to me, seeming to offer its own guarantee, however often that may be denied by the folly of men and mocked by wars, hunger, and aimless persecution, that life possesses a meaning. Why else should water, freezing as it runs down a sheet of glass, assume these forms of Nature, tracing in misty white the ghosts of many leaves, designs of the Creator; what laws, as yet unknown, what immense and majestic poetry of life, with deep, internal rhythm, some of it only to be perceived in the central core of this earth, some at the very edge of a universe, ordain and govern such echoes, such paraphrases, such facts as that an empty shell for as long as it shall last seems to have gathered in its opaline cavities the sounds of all the breakers that have passed over it, or that a butterfly's wings should mirror the flowers over which they hover (protective coloring is too dull an answer and places the Creator in battle dress—at most, it can only be a particle of the whole vast truth), or that a snowflake, transient reproduction of a crystal, should so delicately present an identical structure?"—*Sir Osbert Sitwell in "The Scarlet Tree" (Little, Brown & Co.)*



Scenes from the tour of SRF Colonies August 24th, one of the popular events of the second annual SRF Convocation held at Los Angeles, California.

(Upper left) Three comfortable busses await passengers in front of SRF India House in Hollywood. Approximately 120 SRF members made the 250 mile trip.

(Upper right) Greetings are exchanged at the Encinitas, California SRF Colony Hermitage. A reception committee welcomes first arrivals.

(Center left) A group of members on the grounds of the Encinitas Hermitage, which commands an unsurpassed view of the vast blue Pacific from this point. The guests subsequently lunched at the SRF Encinitas Cafe.

(Center right) The sun had already set when the travelers arrived at the beautiful SRF Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, but there was still enough light to enjoy its quiet beauty and to have the view recorded by the camera.

(Lower left) Back once more at India House in Hollywood, passengers gratefully headed for the dining room (lower right) where they enjoyed a late dinner before returning to their hotel.

SRF Holds Second Convocation



Paramhansa Yogananda (right) with Mr. Arthur Kometer of New York City, one of his first students in the U.S. Mr. Kometer was with Paramhansaji in 1927 when he first visited Mt. Washington Estates, which was to become the international headquarters of SRF.

A spirit of deep joy permeated the events of the second annual SRF Convocation, which was held at Los Angeles, California from August 22nd through August 26th. Members flocked from near and far to take part in the special classes and center meetings; in a tour of SRF colonies and projects; in the sacred Kriya Yoga Initiation; and in the garden party which crowned the week's events.

The tour of SRF colonies was a high spot on the Convocation calendar. Three chartered buses sped the travelers from place to place. Leaving early in the morning from India House in Hollywood, the guests were taken directly to Encinitas, where Dr. and Mrs. M. W. Lewis, for many years disciples of Paramhansa Yogananda and now in charge of the SRF Encinitas colony, made everyone welcome. A few who had requested it had the priceless opportunity of meeting Paramhansa Yogananda's most highly advanced woman disciple, Sister Gyanamata, who resides at the Encinitas hermitage. Her letters have been published regularly in the *Self-Realization Magazine* for several years.

After lunch at the SRF Cafe the party traveled up the coast to Pacific Palisades, home of the SRF Lake Shrine, where Rev. R. C. Stanley, the minister in charge, showed them the many points of interest and beauty. The tour ended at India House, where many of the passengers stayed to dine.

THE MASTER BUILDER

A Report by A. R. Steinberg.

It can be truly said that the Master Paramhansa Yogananda is a builder. More and more his work and philosophies are spreading good will among the people of America.

The accompanying photograph was taken recently at a youth rally of B'nai Brith, the largest Jewish fraternal organization in America, at which function Reverend C. Bernard delivered a lecture describing Paramhansa Yogananda's work and philosophies. There was also a demonstration of yoga postures by two SRF renunciates.

The guest speaker of the evening was Attorney General of the State of California Edmund G. Brown, one of the leading Catholic laymen in America, and the chairman of this youth rally, who played host to SRF, was Mr. Harry Sherman, president of California Studios.

This is truly building for a better world, when through the Master's teachings, all creeds can meet in harmony and peace.



Col. A. Ralph Steinberg, Past President, Beverly Hills B'nai Brith; SRF minister Donald Walters; Mr. Harry Sherman, President of Beverly Hills B'nai Brith; Hon. Edmund G. Brown, Attorney General for the State of California; SRF minister C. Bernard; Mr. Jay Sutton, Vice-President of Beverly Hills B'nai Brith.