

Self-Realization

MAGAZINE



Founded in 1925 by PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Sister Daya, president of Self-Realization Fellowship, and Sister Meera, of SRF India Center, Hollywood, in newly dedicated Chapel Garden of SRF Church, Hollywood. Sister Daya presided at dedication ceremony on November 3rd.

Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul

25¢
JAN.-FEB., 1958



PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA, 1942

Photograph taken in garden of SRF Church, Hollywood, California

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January-February, 1958

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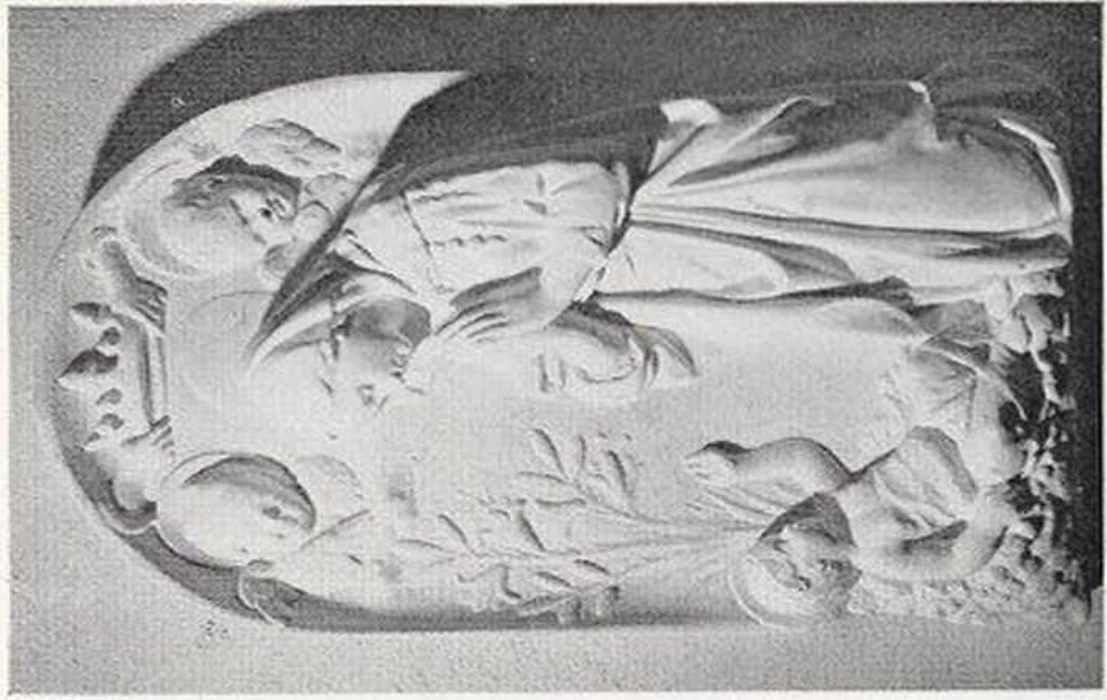
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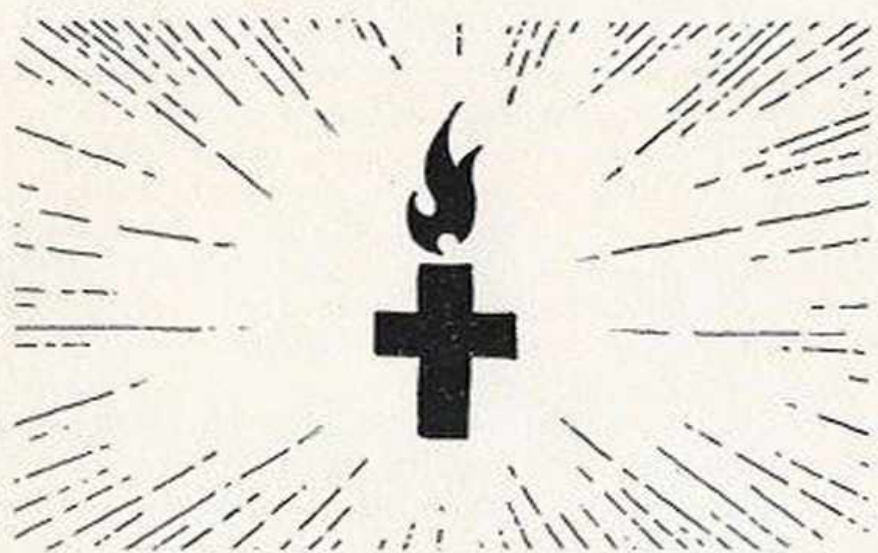
Bronze - colored plaque showing profile likeness of Paramhansa Yogananda in relief; on west wall of Chapel Garden, SRF Church, Hollywood, California.



Bronze-colored plaque showing profile likeness of Paramhansa Yogananda in relief; on west wall of Chapel Garden, SRF Church, Hollywood, California.



White plaster bas-relief of Nativity scene, on east wall of Chapel Garden. This lovely piece was donated by an SRF student.



Lord, Possess Us With Thy Love

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

*Extracts from a talk given on Paramhansaji's birthday anniversary,
January 5, 1945, at SRF Mt. Washington Center, Los Angeles*

Each of us is a child of God. We are born of His spirit, in all its purity and glory and joy. That heritage is unassailable. Therefore to condemn oneself as a sinner who is committed to the path of error is the greatest of all sins. St. Paul said: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"*

Always remember: your Father loves you unconditionally. He is waiting for you to express your desire for Him, before He comes to you. He has given you freedom to go away from Him or to approach Him.

Once when I was meditating I heard His voice, whispering: "Thou dost say I am away; *but thou didst not come in.* That is why thou dost say I am away. I am always in. Come in and you will see Me. I am always here, ready to greet thee."

Deep sincerity is necessary in the spiritual path. In guilelessness comes the birth of Spirit. Jesus said: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."† Before God our human wisdom is nothing. The only way we can coax the Lord to surrender Himself to us is by offering to Him the same unconditional love that He gives to us.

Everyone shall eventually find salvation; but those that tarry on the way fall into the ditch of indifference. Indifference is the worst error; because

*I Corinthians 3:16.

†Matthew 11:25.

it prevents man from realizing how important it is to find God now, in this moment. How do you know, when you go to sleep, whether or not you will wake up? When you die, you are required to be reborn on earth, starting another life where you left off in this one. Our great whirling planet, our human individuality, were not given to us merely that we might exist for a time and then vanish into nothingness, but that we might question what it is all about. To live without understanding the purpose of life is a foolish waste of time. The mystery of life surrounds us; we were given intelligence in order to solve the riddle of it.

I have realized, by searching for love, that it was Somebody Else who cared for me through all human loves. The Divine has loved me as mother, as father, and as friends. I searched for that one Friend behind all friends, that one Lover whom I now see glimmering in all your faces. And that Friend never fails me.

The Importance of Cultivating Divine Friendship

God is behind everything. "Honor thy father and thy mother,"* but "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."† You should understand the importance of cultivating divine friendship with Him, and of not wasting any more time. One by one we leave this earth. But there is nothing to grieve about; we fall back on the same bosom of Spirit whence we came, and then rise from it again into another life, like waves on an ocean.

The difficult thing about this motion picture of life is that all unrealities seem real, and all realities seem unreal. Each night in sleep the world is made to disappear from our consciousness, that we might understand that the material universe is not real. This lesson of sleep comes not to frighten us but to make us seek the reality of God. The soul can never be satisfied with anything but love. His spirit is the reality that nothing else can match.

As the years have rolled by I see life and death as waves. Birth is one wave on the surface of the sea, and death is a wave of sleep on the bosom of God. I have realized that. I know I can never die; for whether I am sleeping in the ocean of Spirit or awake in a physical body, I am ever with Him. That supreme happiness cannot be found in the world; but we need not run away to the jungle to seek Him. In this jungle of daily life we may find Him in the cave of silence.

It doesn't matter how many mistakes we have made; they are only temporary. You are formed in the image of Spirit. The Lord created this delusory motion picture of earth and all its pleasures for but one purpose: that perchance you would see through His play of *Maya* and forsake it

*Matthew 19:19.

†Deuteronomy 6:5.

to love Him alone. This is the truth; it cannot be otherwise. Why are we made to feel love for our family members, only to watch them slip away, one by one? These events take place to help us to realize that *He* is the one who is loving us behind all loved ones.

So many years are gone from our lives already. And only so many years, weeks, days and hours are left for some of us. Don't waste time. Night and day in your heart say: "Lord, I want You." Never be insincere about that. Never reason: "Tomorrow I will love God. Today let me have a good time." Always say: "Today, my Lord, *today* I want You."

Just now I see that great light of God spread everywhere—such joy, such light! "Lord, I bow to Thee on this beautiful occasion in which Thou art born in us in new glory. May I always be blessed with the consciousness of Thy presence, and may each one of us here be thus blessed, that we may all know Thou art seeking to be born anew in our consciousness."

Love Him, talk to Him every second of your life, in activity and in silence, with deep prayer, with the unceasing desire of your heart; and you shall see the screen of delusion melt away. He that is playing hide-and-seek in the beauty of flowers, in souls, in noble passions, in dreams, shall come forth and say: "You and I have been apart for a long time, because I desired that you give Me your love willingly. You are made in My image, and I wanted to see if perchance you would use your freedom to give Me your love."

I pray that God may give you the imperishable gift of His love. But without effort you won't find Him. If you make twenty-five percent of the effort, the rest will come through God and Guru. This evening has passed like a moment, for He has been with me every second. That is what I wanted to feel: that you are showing appreciation to me merely to express your appreciation of Him who sent me. May His blessings be ever with you; may His consciousness never leave you. May you realize, within and without, the fullness of His presence.

Banish Shyness — Call God Your Own

He doesn't quickly talk to us because we are shy of Him. Don't be afraid of Him. Call Him your own and pursue Him unceasingly, mentally and in every action, and you shall find Him to be the greatest haven of safety.

"I offer the bouquet of these souls to Thee, O Father, that they may adorn the altar of Thy presence. Be Thou unceasingly with them. Father, Thou art the head of this family. We are Thy children, gathered together to sing the glory of Thy name. Banish the darkness of ignorance with Thy light, drive away all gloom from the shores of our minds with the expanding light of Thy presence. Naughty or good, we are Thy children. Reveal Thyself unto us. Bless every one here who has a

kind thought for me; all kindness, honor, respect, and love given to me, I offer to Thee, O Father! Thou art my love, my all.

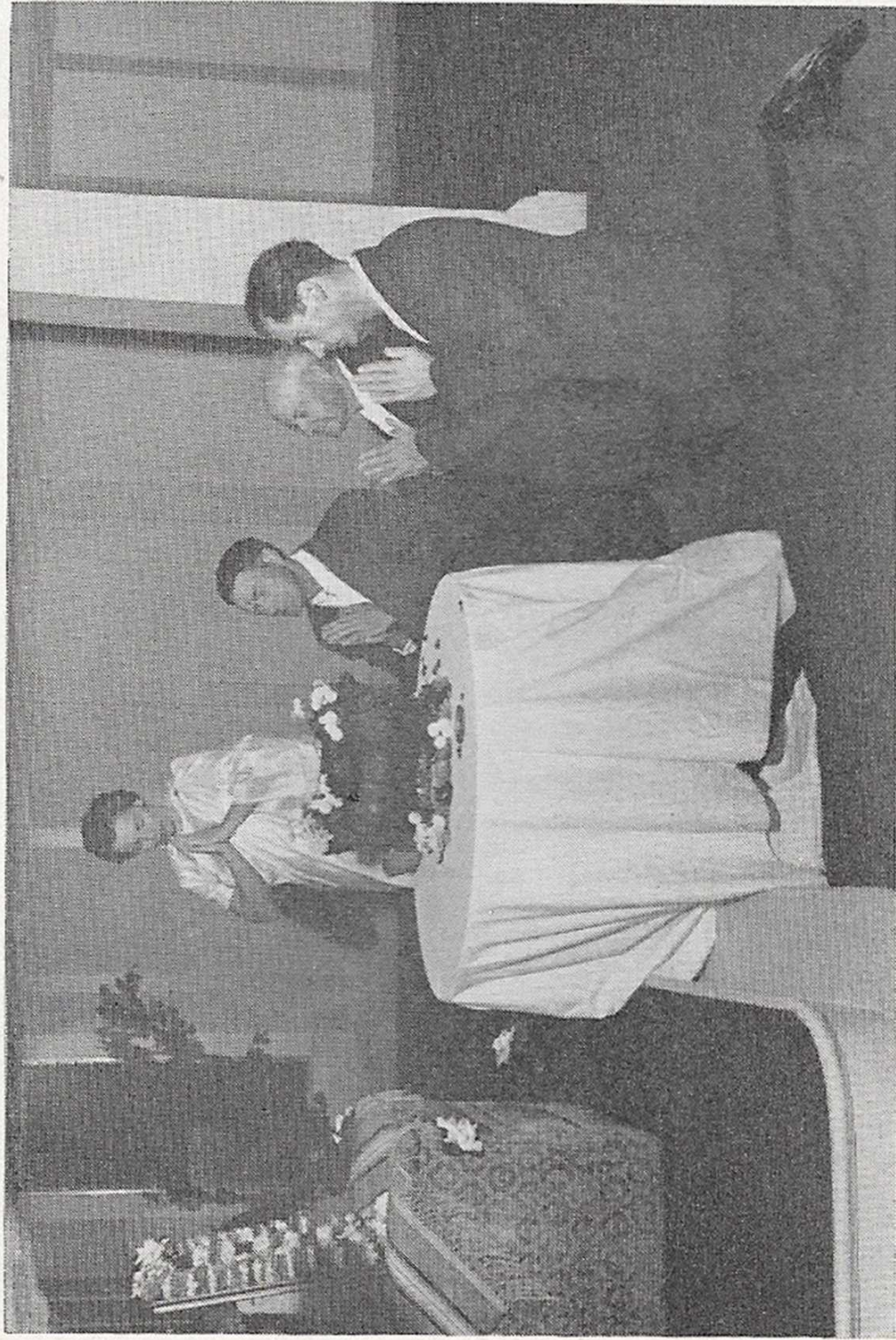
"Bless us with Thy grace. Destroy our desires for anything but Thee. Be Thou the King sitting on the throne of all our ambitions. Let the light of Thy glory spread over the vast world. Bless us all, saturate us with Thy presence. May we realize more and more that Thou hast always been ours. Thou art always ours. Thou wilt ever be ours. We thank Thee for the benediction and love of Thy family assembled here. May we all some day celebrate Thy birth in us in eternity, in immortality, and in unceasing joy."

Pray with me: "Our Father, bless us that some day, when we are free, we may gather in heaven to celebrate Thy birth within us; manifest Thyself within and without. Unite us all; in the light of that union may we find Thy One Presence. With all the devotion of our merged hearts, of our united souls, we fall at Thy feet of omnipresence. Bless us that we may never be indifferent to Thee. May an undying fire of love possess our hearts. Let us bask with Thee in its light forever and ever, celebrating Thy birthday with the great Gurus. We bow to Thee, our Father, our very own. Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, we bow to Thee, to Jesus Christ, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, Guru-preceptor, and saints of all religions. Father, Thy presence be with us now and forever. Unceasing love for Thee we offer at Thy feet of omnipresence. Receive! We bow to Thee. *Aum. Aum. Amen. Aum. Amen.*"

I bow to the Great Guru and to Babaji and the line of gurus for the special privilege of this wonderful family through Christ and God. May we always be blessed while on this earth and beyond. *Aum. Aum. Aum.*



Turnley Walker, who reviewed *The Master Said*, and Georgiana Hardy of the Los Angeles Board of Education, who gave a resume of Paramhansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, on "Cavalcade of Books," December 1st, over KNXT-TV, Los Angeles.



Sister Daya, president of SRF, with Ramananda, Devananda, and Ananda Moy, who took their final vows as Brothers of the SRF Order on November 16th in the chapel of SRF headquarters, Los Angeles.



Sister Daya (*standing*), SRF president, with (*counterclockwise*) Shila, Kalyani, Ambalika, Vijoya, Benoyee, and Seva, who took their final vows as Sisters of the SRF Order on November 18th in a ceremony held in the chapel of SRF headquarters, Los Angeles.

Yoga Postures For Health

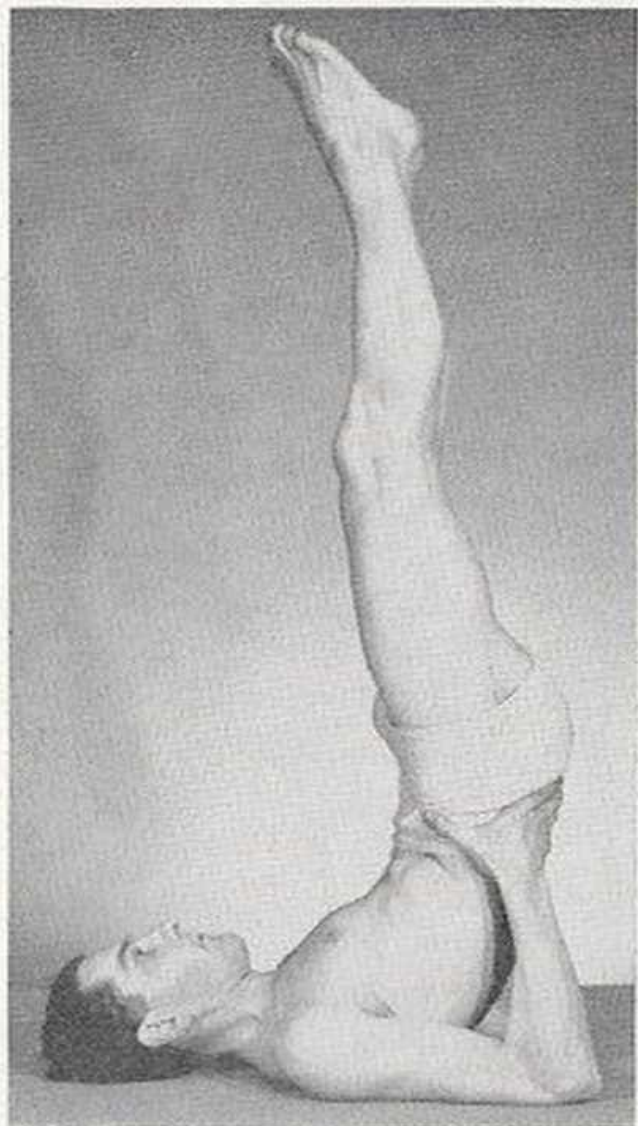
By B. TESNIERE, M.D., and BRAHMACHARI LELAND

VIPARITA KARANI—THE INVERTED POSE

Viparita Karani means "inverted action." This refers to the physiological changes that occur, owing to the gravitational effect on the body when it is in an upside-down position, as compared with the conditions that obtain when the body is in the customary upright position. In its broad meaning *Viparita Karani* takes in all the inverted poses, such as the headstand and the shoulderstand, but it usually refers to the particular inverted posture here described, probably because this pose (*shown at right*) is the most easy to practice.

The humorously skeptical attitude of many Westerners toward yogic inverted poses is outmoded. These asanas have been practiced down the centuries in the East, with practical benefits to body and mind, not only by the "professional" (i.e., *Hatha*) yogis, but by people of all walks of life. Although medical science has not yet utilized all the outstanding physiological values of the inverted action, its effects have been the object of precise but little known scientific research during the past sixty years. Some Western physicians do occasionally prescribe an inverted position in treating certain diseases that obstruct the respiratory passages. The simple process of postural inversion induces an effective drainage that cannot be obtained to the same degree by any other means now known.

Viparita Karani may be practiced with salutary results by people of



VIPARITA KARANI

all ages, with the following exceptions: Persons whose blood pressure is beyond normal limits; those suffering from diseases of the heart, ear, or sinus; and those with hemorrhagic diseases, or with diabetes.

Since the Inverted Pose is a very powerful position even for persons in normal health, certain precautions should be strictly observed in its practice: (1) one should not attempt the pose until at least three hours after a meal, to allow time for digestion; (2) one should wait half an hour after strenuous exercise, or until the body is at rest, before assuming the pose; (3) a woman should not practice during the menstrual period.

HOW TO PERFORM *VIPARITA KARANI*

(1) Assume *Savasana*, the Relaxation Pose; then *slowly* raise the legs together until they are vertical (a good exercise for the abdominal muscles!).

(2) Pressing with the arms on the floor to gain leverage, *slowly* raise the buttocks and the rest of the trunk, up to the middle part of the dorsal region, all the while keeping the legs vertical.

(3) Bend the arms at the elbows and place the palms under the upper parts of the buttocks. This assists in keeping the upraised torso and legs balanced.

(4) Fix the gaze on the tip of the toes, which should be in vertical alignment with the chest. Breathe normally.

(5) Stay in the pose for fifteen seconds in the beginning. The time may be slowly increased to five minutes.

(6) Very slowly resume the original position and relax for an equal length of time in *Savasana*.

Of all the inverted poses, *Viparita Karani* is the easiest to perform. The only difficulty about it is the pressure on the elbows. This discomfort may be lessened by putting a cushion under each elbow.

Effects of the Inverted Pose on Venous Circulation

The physiological benefits of the Inverted Pose are outstanding. The circulation of blood in the heart and blood vessels is powerfully affected; there is a complete upheaval in the circulation, yet the heart is not strained. During *Viparita Karani* the heartbeat is barely accelerated to the level maintained when the body is in a normal upright standing position.

Viparita Karani obviously affects the circulation of blood in the veins; for example, those in the legs are gradually depleted of venous blood, which increasingly accumulates in the veins of the face, neck, and arms. Within one minute's practice of the pose, the lower part of the

(Continued on page 48)



Sister Sailasuta (*wearing garlands*) at Howrah Station, Calcutta, on August 6, 1957, with group of YSS members who came to bid her farewell at the start of her return journey to America. Among those present are Swami Atmananda, Sri Prabhas Ghose, Brahmachari Rabinarayan of the Puri YSS Ashram, Sri Indra Nath Seth, Mr. and Mrs. Tulsi Bose and their daughters Hashi and Kukku.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter VIII, Stanza 4

Literal Translation

O Supreme Among the Embodied (Arjuna)! Adhibhuta is the basis of physical existence; Adhidaivata is the basis of astral existence; and I (the Spirit) within the body am Adhiyajna (the Great Sacrificer or Maker of all).

Spiritual Interpretation

Adhibhuta represents the macrocosmic objective material universe and also the microcosmic physical body of man. *Adhibhuta* means "that which becomes," the never-fixed, the ephemeral—hence, the material world of transitoriness.

Adhidaivata signifies the macrocosmic objective astral universe that is hidden within the physical cosmos, as well as the microcosmic astral body that is concealed within man's physical form. *Adhidaivata* refers to the *daivas* or *devas*, literally, "the shining ones," or astral angels.

Adhiyajna means, in this verse, God as the Originating Dreamer of the physical, astral, and causal universes with their various kinds of beings. Spirit is the all-creative underlying Substance. It exists in the cosmoses as Spirit, and in the body of man as the soul.

The Lord is truly the *Adhiyajna* or the One Indweller in the macro-

cosms and microcosms. *Yajna* means "performance of a holy rite or sacrifice." God is thus the *Adhiyajna* who performs all the dream ceremonies necessary for the creation of His universes.

Chapter VIII, Stanza 5

Literal Translation

He enters my Being who thinks only of Me at the hour of his passing, when the body is abandoned. This is truth beyond doubt.

Spiritual Interpretation

A yogi who practices meditation throughout life is able to commune with God at any time, especially the crucial time of death. A man's thoughts at the last moments of life determine his status in the hereafter.

A true yogi finishes the dream-actings of his role in life and makes his final exit from the earthly stage, his mind fixed only on the bliss of Spirit, his heart untainted by any mundane longings.

After death a devotee is not required by karmic law to return to earth if, during his lifetime, he had been able through yoga practice to disconnect his life-force and consciousness from the body; and if he had been successful, at will, in living without breath, drawing a supply of cosmic energy from God; and if he had been nonattached to the body and to sense objects; and if he had had no personal desires but had remained undisturbed by wishes for any person or object or sense enjoyment, thus knowing only the joy and love of his Creator.

Such a devotee without doubt attains the being and freedom of God. He needs no further incarnations on earth for the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, for he has rendered them all nonexistent. A self-disciplined yogi who has trained his mind to be detached at will from the sensory world and to unite that emancipated mind with the Lord thinks of nothing but Him at the time of death. According to the law of karma, that man has automatically created the cause which must manifest as the effect of God-attainment. He who in life avoided all inharmony and who was accustomed to being absorbed in yoga ecstasy remains after death in the same state of divine union.

Such a yogi throughout life sees his physical form as a dream of God; when the atoms of that body-dream are dispersed by death, he wakes up in the Dreamless Bliss.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. . . . And I will give him the morning star."* Christ thus assured St. John of the divine reward for those who are faithful to God "unto the end." The "morning star" or the "star of the East" is the spiritual single eye of omniscience in the center of the forehead (east).

* *Revelation* 2:26, 28.

Literal Translation

O Arjuna! That thought with which a dying man leaves the body determines—through his long persistence in it—his next state of being.

Spiritual Interpretation

A man, suddenly finding himself at death's door, reviews in a flash the thoughts and desires and habits of his entire life. He is quickly invaded by one overwhelming feeling or desire, whose nature will be in accordance with the character of his life. He may feel predominantly guilty, for his evil actions; or predominantly happy, because of his good deeds; or predominantly worldly, because of his material activities. Whatever his feeling, it is the determining cause that will lead him to a particular part of the astral worlds and then to another suitable incarnation on earth. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."*

The paramount habit of thought and feeling during a man's years on earth is thus the most important factor on "the day of judgment." The final thought, inexorably produced by the tenor of a lifetime, is indeed "Gabriel's trumpet," the karmic judge that announces a man's next destination.

A human being leading a meaningless, mechanical existence, or an evil life, little realizes that on the last day he will bring judgment upon himself, with a Gabriel's trumpet of karma proclaiming his "fate." If a person is tired of material life or evil habits why should he continue in that way to the end, only to be required to go on with the same kind of obnoxious living after death? Each man should endeavor to lead a righteous life, that at its termination he will not have a guilty conscience and be reborn among evildoers.

By practice of nonattachment the yogi dissolves all the inclinations and desires of his heart and remains in continuous ecstasy with the *Aum* vibration, the expression of God in creation. When death arrives he finds Gabriel's trumpet, issuing from the Cosmic *Aum*, ushering him into the transcendental spheres of God. Lahiri Mahasaya went through this *Aum* into the Infinite and resurrected himself in a physical body one day after that of his "death."†

Those devotees are liberated who can manifest the Christ or *Kutastha* consciousness by emerging from the three useless dead bodies (the physical, astral, and causal). In this state the emancipated being knows divine thought to be the matrix of creation; he too is now able to materialize thought into the shape of his former body or into the shape of any other body in which he may wish to appear.

(To be continued)

*Proverbs 23:7.

†See *Autobiography of a Yogi*, end of chapter 36.



Swami Atmananda Giri, YSS secretary; Dr. J. B. Chowdhury, secretary of Bengal Sanskrit Association; Sri Tulsi Bose, founder, with other YSS members in Calcutta, of Tulsi Yogoda Ashram; and Sri Prabhas C. Ghose, YSS vice-president; during dedication ceremonies of newly built Tulsi Yogoda Ashram, Calcutta. A picture of Paramhansa Yogananda is enshrined in templelike gold case on altar. Tulsi Yogoda Ashram is located on site of original mud hut where Paramhansaji as a boy gave spiritual instruction to his young friends.

News of SRF Centers

Los Angeles, Calif.

"The Master Said"

Reviewed on Television

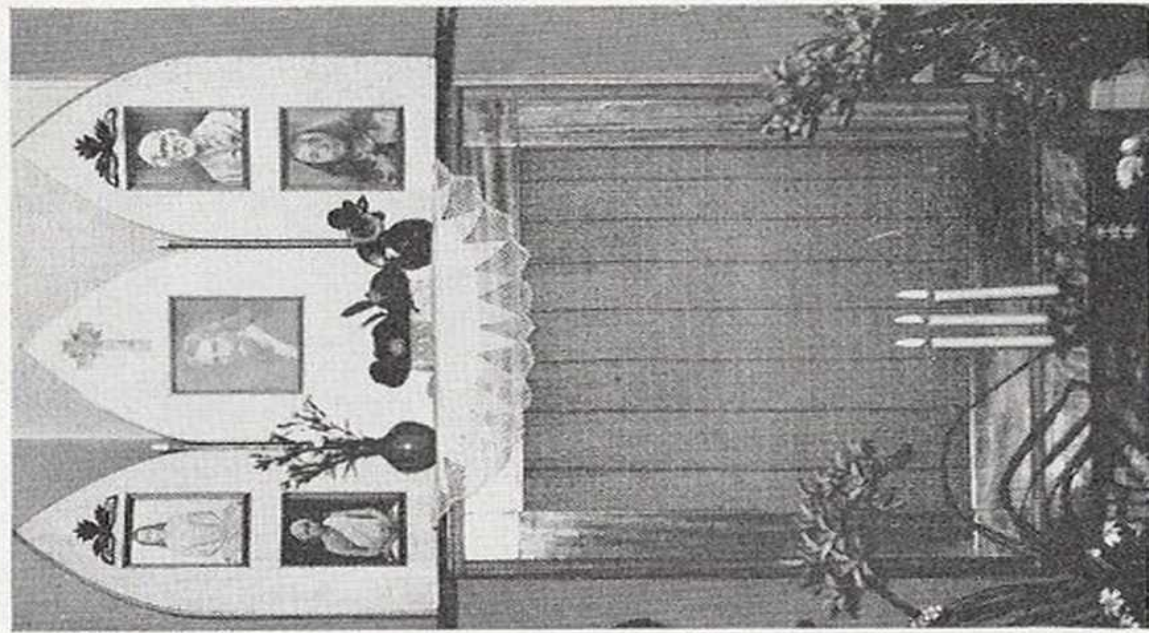
CAVALCADE OF BOOKS, a weekly program sponsored by Southern California Booksellers Association, gave a review of the new edition of *The Master Said*, a collection of sayings of Paramhansa Yogananda, to California TV audiences on December 1st over KNXT-TV, Los Angeles. The book was reviewed by Turnley Walker. After reading

some selections from *The Master Said*, Mr. Walker commented:

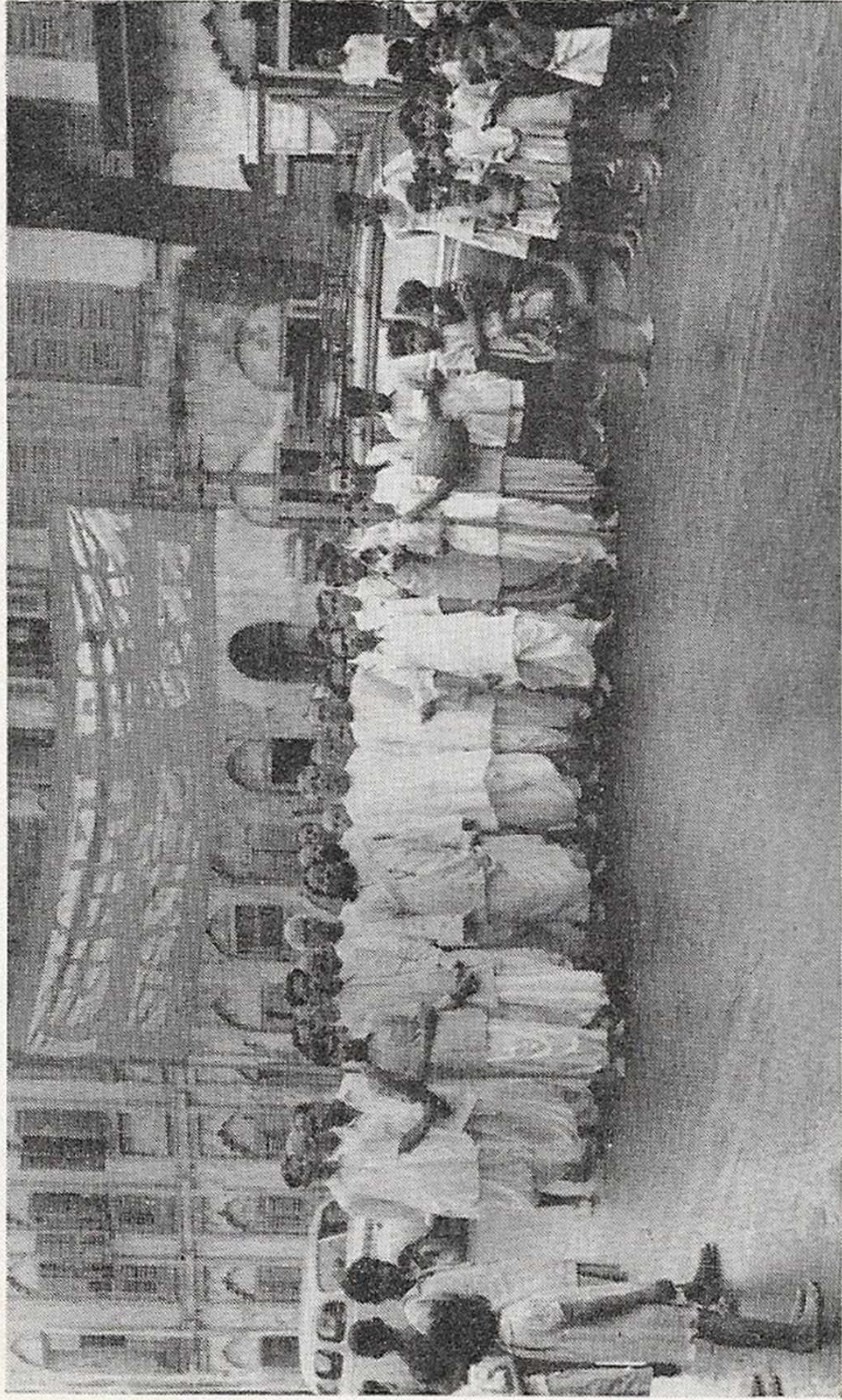
"Paramhansa Yogananda was a master of Yoga, that system of meditative techniques by which the divine consciousness may be aroused in man. In this book we find many of the key statements of his teaching . . . I've been very interested in the connection between Christianity and Yoga. The sayings of Yogananda in this book show how the teachings of the great religions may be blended in a man such as this."



Some members of the Sydney, Australia, SRF meditation group at the home of Mrs. Augusta Claude, where weekly meetings are held



Flower-decked SRF altar in home of Mrs. Claude, Sydney meditation leader



YSS - SRF group, Calcutta, during early morning parade and *kirtan* (devotional singing), part of celebrations on September 25th of fifty-first anniversary of Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society. Two boys carry YSS banner.

were identified with this body, I would have a great aversion to myself, but Master is here with his grace. He lessens my little pains, wipes away the idea of disease from my mind, and sweetly repeats to me: 'You are not this body.' And I believe in him so deeply that unsuspected strength comes into me: yesterday I dug in the garden! Oh, the Guru's help: What a reality! Considering the appearance of the sore, the physician said that I should suffer much. This is not the case. Guruji spares me this; I suffer only a little bit, just what is needed to help me to plunge in the divine presence. Little by little, I learn the health consciousness by experience, despite this ailment, which is but an aspect of *maya*. What a marvelous experience! But, I repeat, an experience possible only because of the constant aid of the Guru."—*E.G., Cugy (Vaud), Switzerland.*

"At about the time the SRF Prayer Council must have prayed for me, I felt an increase of life-force and the rheumatism disappeared from all parts of the body except the forearms and hands. The knees, which had been badly affected, are completely healed, and I can do the knee-bending of *Maha Mudra* without difficulty. I can also without difficulty sit in the 'Easy Pose'—which formerly was not so easy."—*L.M., Washington, D.C.*

"I am happy to report that my sister's recuperation time after a serious operation was reduced from eight weeks to six days (her doctor had said it would take from six to eight weeks before she could think of going home). She has gained so much strength that next week she is coming to my home for a visit."—*G.B., Youngstown, Ohio.*

"In May of this year you wrote me a most encouraging and helpful letter in reply to my request for help from the Prayer Council of SRF. I was then not feeling well and a tuberculosis 'shadow' had appeared in my chest X ray. I am now feeling very well again and yesterday I learned with joyful thankfulness that my X ray now shows very considerable improvement."—*F.D., Christchurch, New Zealand.*

(Continued from page 19)

body becomes livid, seemingly bloodless, while the upper part becomes redder, being suffused with blood.

These changes in the venous circulation are well-known to yogis in the East, who frequently recommend inverted positions as aids in healing certain diseases of the veins below the heart, such as varicosis and hemorrhoids. Western medical science also acknowledges the role of gravity upon the venous circulation in the legs, but does not go as far as the Eastern yogis, simply recommending that the lower limbs be placed higher than the trunk as an aid in the cure of varicosis. Dentists, nurses, sales clerks, machinists, waiters, and others who have to stand for hours at a

time will find that the Inverted Pose brings much quicker relief to tired legs than does just raising them slightly above the body level. Those who suffer from hemorrhoids may gain at least temporary relief from pain by adopting the inverted position.

Effects of the Inverted Pose on Arterial Circulation

More remarkable, because almost unrecognized, are the effects of *Viparita Karani* upon circulation in the arteries. The blood pressure in the arteries of the legs falls well below the level that it maintains when the body is in a prone position, while the pressure increases in the arteries of the neck and head. These effects are diametrically opposite to those observed in the standing position, in which the pressure in the arteries of the legs rises noticeably, while it decreases in the arteries of the neck and the head. The words *Viparita Karani*—"inverted effect"—begin to unveil their significance.

When the body is inverted rapidly rather than slowly, the variations in arterial blood pressure are greater. However, they are still within normal limits; there is no danger in practicing the pose. Furthermore, these variations level off in a few seconds to the same pressures that are reached during the slow (and hence correct) performance of the pose. What counts is not the extent of variation in blood pressure, but the *length of time* these variations are maintained. Hence the yogic injunctions to perform the Inverted Pose (1) very slowly and (2) for gradually increased periods of time.

Effects of the Inverted Pose on Capillary Circulation

Most important is the action of the Inverted Pose on the capillaries above the heart, for it is rich in practical consequences. The increase in pressure in the supracardiac veins (which is a direct consequence of the pull of gravity in this position), as well as in the supracardiac arteries (which seems to be a reaction of the vasomotor nervous system to cope with the changes in venous circulation), results in an opening up of all the capillaries above the heart. Therein appears to lie the practical value of the Inverted Pose. The "grocery deliverymen" and "garbage collectors" of the blood stream—the red corpuscles that deliver oxygen, sugar, and other food to the cells, and take away carbon dioxide and other waste products—are present in greater concentration. The vast increase in their number within this region, plus the increase in length of time that they remain in the capillaries here, probably affords a much more thorough than usual discharge of their duties. Instead of only "hitting the high spots" (as happens under other circumstances when only part of the capillaries are open), the red corpuscles can get into all the corners, as it were, and do a thorough cleaning and freshening job. Yogis of the

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AND HEALTH

*By Selvarajan Yesudian
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East recommend *Viparita Karani* to improve nourishment, health, and regulation in the functioning of the brain as well as of any organ located above the heart: ductless glands (thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary, thymus); sensorial organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin of the face), and even the hair.

Effect of the Inverted Pose on the Glands

The effect of the Inverted Pose on the ductless glands located in the head, neck, and thorax is of utmost importance. The thyroid gland, for example, is very influential in the harmonious development of body and mind; likewise, the pituitary gland has a direct influence on bodily growth (as well as indirectly through the stimulation of the thyroid). Yogis have long claimed that the practice of *Viparita Karani* by children conduces to their harmonious physical development and that its use by old and young alike helps to sharpen the mental faculties: recall, thinking, and reason.

The remarkable rejuvenating effects experienced by performing the Inverted Posture may be attributed to the wholesome stimulation of the pituitary gland. This vital gland secretes hormones that regulate not only the thyroid gland but all the other endocrine glands, including the gonads (sex glands). Modern science has shown that the gonads are directly responsible for bodily rejuvenation.

Since the Inverted Pose temporarily decreases the actual circulation of blood in the lower part of the body, improvement of the functioning of the gonadal glands as a result of practicing this pose can be credited only indirectly to better blood circulation. What actually happens is that *Viparita Karani*, by decreasing the congestion of blood in the pelvic region, helps in time of sex excitement to prevent outward secretion of the vital fluid and the accompanying loss of life energy. The conserved vital power is then "distilled" into physical and mental vigor.

In this respect, *Viparita Karani* is an aid in maintaining *brahmacharya* (self-control), particularly the control of the sex impulse. Spiritual aspirants that live a life of continence (which is essential to the higher stages of spiritual development) should learn how to transmute sex energy into physical strength and vitality and into increasing powers of mental concentration and creativity.

When we reflect that the Inverted Pose was called "inverted effect" by the *rishis* of ancient India at a period when medical knowledge about the human body was perhaps not as highly developed as it is now, we humbly bow before their wisdom and spiritual insight.



The next article will cover *Savasana*, the Relaxation Pose.