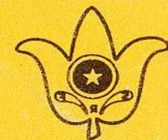




Self-Realization

FOUNDED IN 1925 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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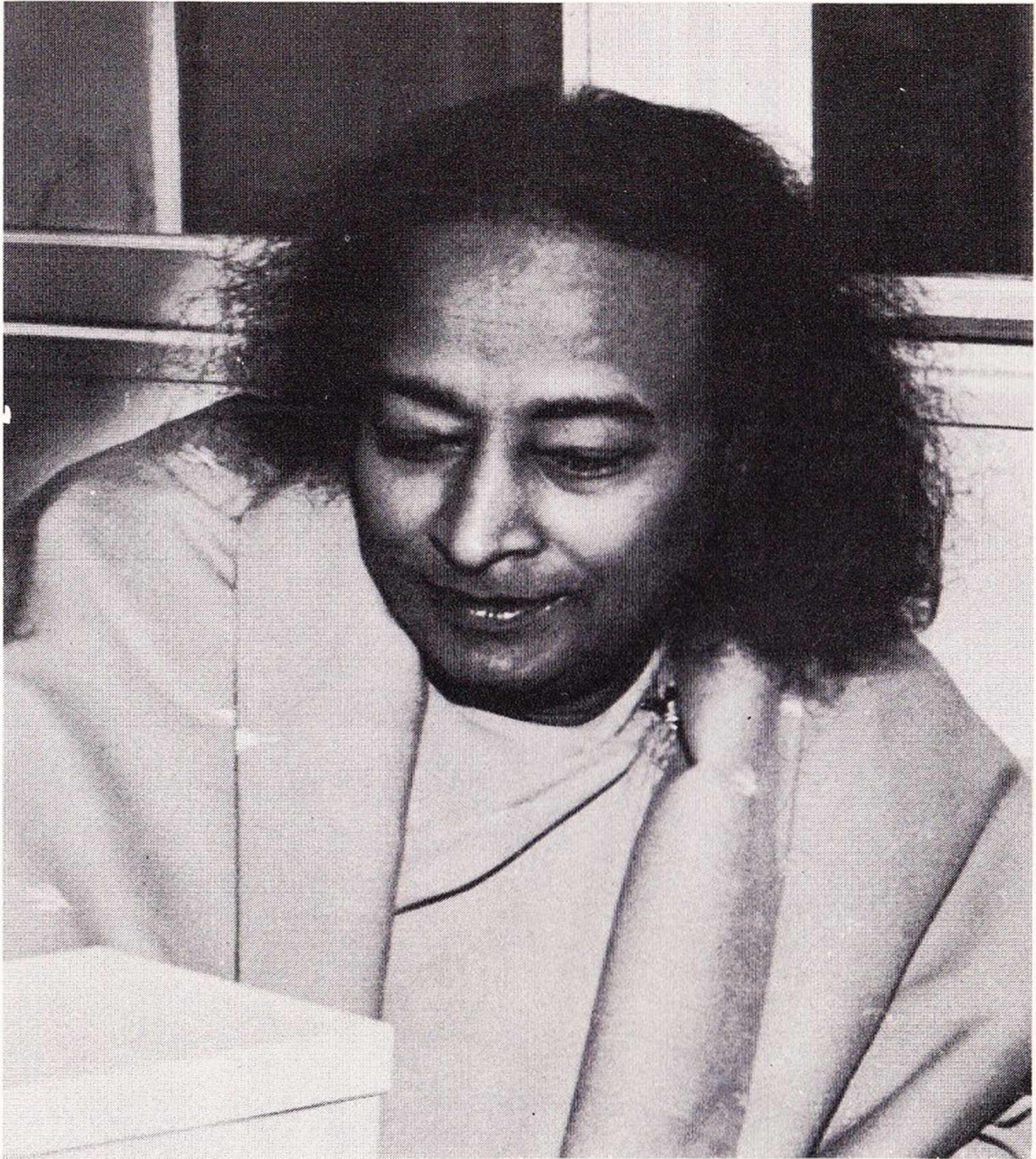
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January - March 1966.

25¢



PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

A beautiful photo of the great guru taken three days before his passing, when he entertained Ambassador of India Binay R. Sen at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, Los Angeles, March 4, 1952

Front Cover: Head of Christ (detail) attributed to an ancient imitator of Leonardo da Vinci.
(Photo courtesy Brera Gallery, Milan, Italy)

Self-Realization Magazine

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January-March 1966

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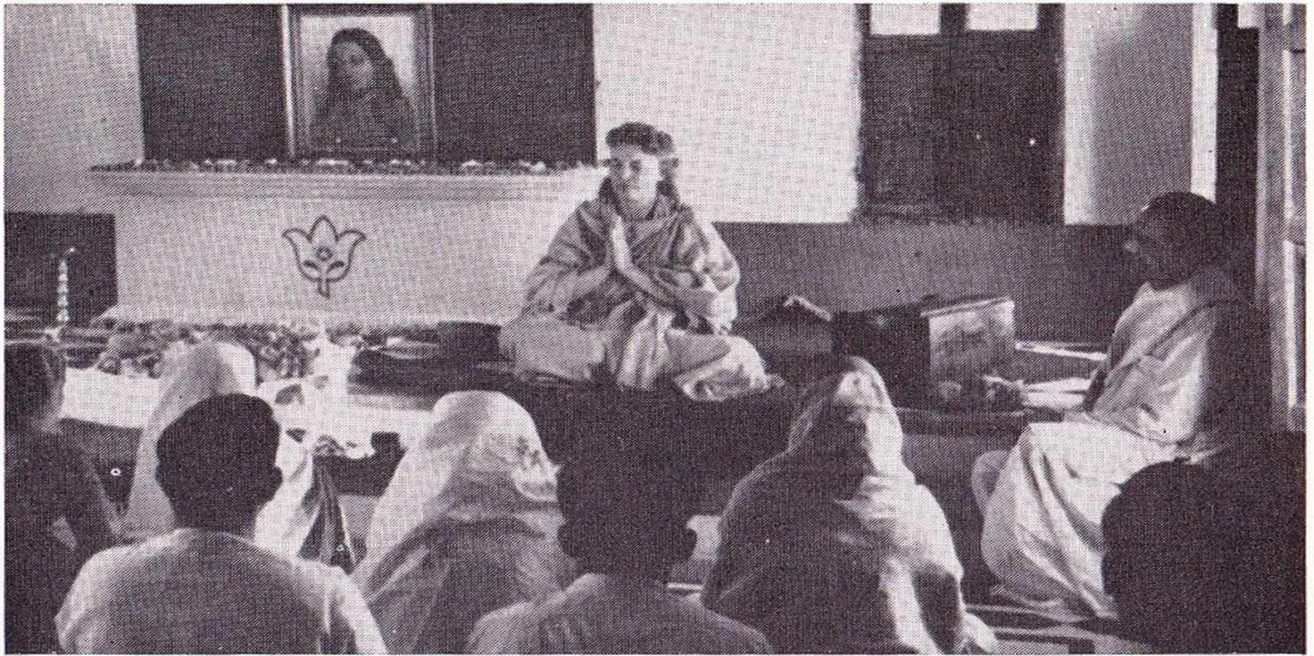
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Paramahansa Yogananda, Founder. Daya Mata, President.

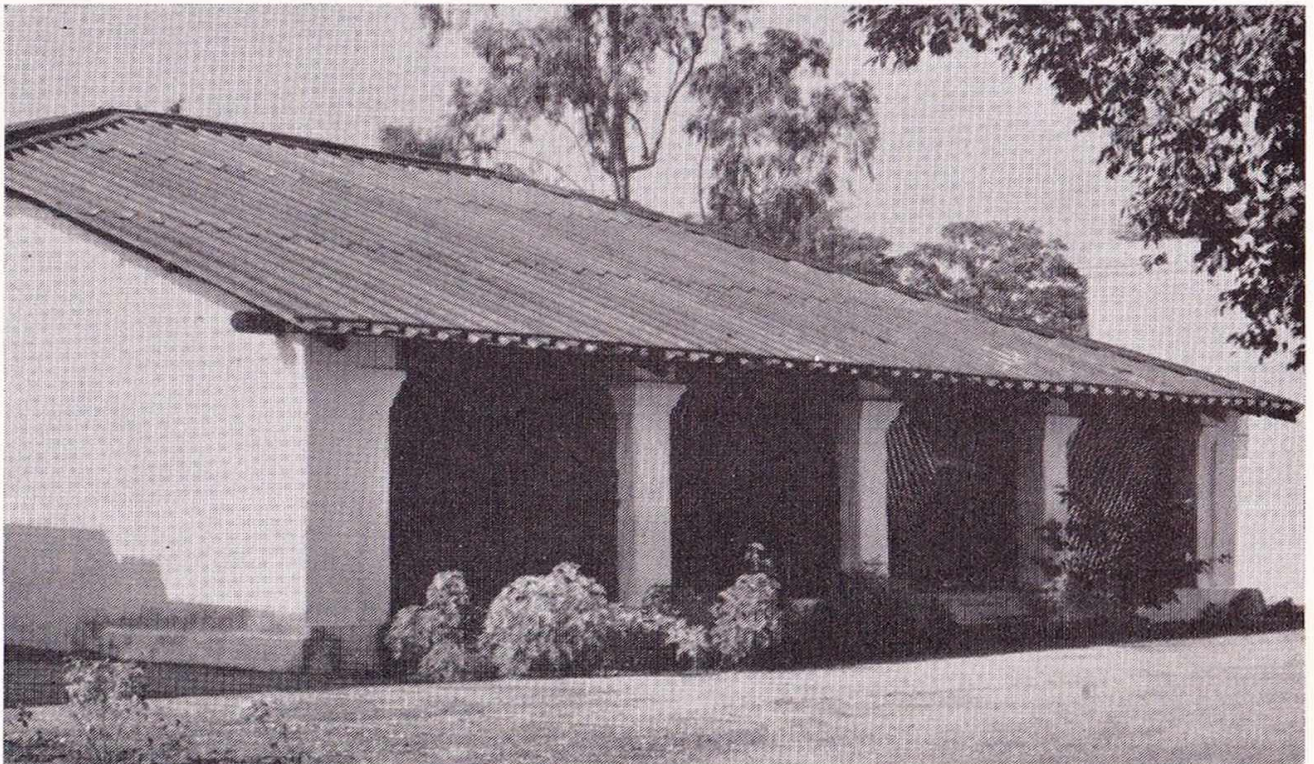
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Daya Mata conducting a service in Yogananda Memorial Shrine at YSS headquarters, Ranchi, 1964. A photo of Paramahansa Yogananda hangs above the marble altar.



Residence of monks at Yogoda Satsanga Society headquarters, Ranchi, India. The building also has a hall for public meetings.

How to Perceive the Infinite Christ

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Inspirational remarks to Self-Realization Fellowship students during annual Christmas meditation at SRF headquarters, December 24, 1934

As you meditate, watch the growth of happiness, the sense of lightness, the sense of expansion in all space. As your joy grows in meditation, so will your recognition of Spirit grow within you. As your intuition increases in meditation, so will your joy in Christ increase. The deeper your meditation, the deeper your contact with Christ Consciousness. As you feel happiness growing within, know that Christ is approaching nearer and nearer to you.

Coax Christ and God today with your songs and the devotion of your heart, and then coax Him with your deepening Self-realization. With all the intensity of your zeal and inner perception, merge your consciousness in the happiness within. Forget time. Whenever you feel that joy spreading within you, realize that Christ is hearing your song. You are not identified with Christ if you are concentrated on merely the words. But if your joy is singing within, Christ is listening to you.

Keep your flesh harnessed to the Spirit. Let not the Spirit be overcome by the flesh. A steady ever-increasing flame of devotion and Self-realization will bring you to the perception of the Infinite. The Lord is burning like a great fire, destroying all darkness from our minds. With united hearts let us offer the homage of our prayer unto Christ, unto God:

“Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved Lord, come to us in response to our soul cries, to our importuning devotion. Test us as Thou wilt, but do not punish us by denying us the consciousness of Thy presence.

“O Divine Mother! come out of the cave of my silence. My darkness melts in the fathomless wisdom of Thy dark eyes. My cry is Thy cry, my joy Thy joy. My soul is lost in Thy Spirit. My heart has lost its throb in Thy throb. My hands are but Thy hands, my brain Thy brain, my thoughts Thy thoughts, my feelings Thy feelings, my soul Thy soul, my love Thy love. Divine Mother, my errors, my virtues

are Thine, but my love for Thee is mine. My heart feels only Thy love, my love dreams of Thy love, my love drinks of Thy love with the lips of silence. Mother Divine, Mother Divine, it is Thou who hast become Christ, Krishna, and the saints of all religions. Divine Mother! Divine Christ!"

With Each Breath We Imbibe the Spirit

Every time you take a breath you are inhaling the presence of God, of Christ, into every part of your body. Inhale, exhale; concentrate at the point between the eyebrows.* Feel, feel! Within, all is immersed in the peace of Christ; without, all is filled with the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ within is joined with the peace of Christ without. The ocean of Divine Mother's love is flooding the little cup of life within and without. Beloved Mother, Father, God, in the silence of my soul I cry, "Mother Divine, manifest Thyself as Christ Consciousness to all. Divine Christ, forget us not though we forget thee, remember us though we remember thee not, be not indifferent to us though we are indifferent to Thee. May thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Indifference Hides the Jewel Presence of God

Just as gems are hidden in a mine, so the jewel presence of God is hidden under the soil of our hard indifference. We have to dig through that soil again and again with the pickaxe of meditation.

Behind the vibratory veil of thoughts, feelings, sensory perceptions, and outer noises lies the wisdom of God. As you live more and more deeply in awareness of Him, even the greatest pleasures of the senses gradually lose their attraction. Once, after deep bliss in God, I started to eat a sweet orange; it seemed as if a thousand scorpions had stung me, so gross was its sweetness.

Just behind your thoughts and feelings is God. The Spirit that is talked about and wondered about is right here. It is through His voice that I am speaking to you of the happiness that I have in Him, joy indescribable, happiness immortal. Divine perception has everything within it. All the joy of the world is contained in Spirit. The

*The seat of the "single" eye of wisdom, the pranic star door through which man must enter to attain Cosmic Consciousness. The method of entering the sacred door is taught by Self-Realization Fellowship.

delight you feel in sensory pleasures is only an imitation of divine joy. How fortunate we are! Many have talked about God, but we are feeling today that Ineffable Being throbbing in our bosoms.

Though this earth is an illusion, created out of the consciousness of God, it was not intended to delude us. God meant it to be an entertainment for us, His immortal children. Beware, as you play your part in His dream creation, that you do not develop ensnaring desires for sense happiness, for they will cause you to fall into the pit of disappointment and misery. The only happiness that is lasting and worthwhile is the joy of meditation. When you meditate long, old worldly habits drop away, and the glory of the Divine shines forth. You realize then that all along there was something tremendous within you, and you had not known it.

Keep a room apart for God, and whenever you deeply meditate in it you will see that what I am telling is true. It is such happiness to know the Lord! The whole ocean of divine joy rolls beneath the little wave of your consciousness. Who shall believe except those that are devotees?

Remember the experience of Christ that you have had today, and make every day like it. All the time I am filled with this joy. But I had to work for it. As a little boy I cried night after night for God; He seemed not to respond. Then, little by little, He began to play hide-and-seek with me; now and then I saw images of saints. I wondered if they were hallucinations, but when those visions came true in life and I met my divine Guru and other masters in the flesh, I didn't doubt any more.

Divine Love is Matchless

What the company of the great Masters of India taught me! When I saw the Divine in their faces right in front of me, and when I saw them actually talking with God, what could I say? Doubt fled, doubting itself, before the living presence of the Lord. But this realization comes only by continuous meditation. Just as young people are concentrated on human love, and the miser is always seeking money, so should your love for God be your supreme preoccupation. Meditation gives birth to the love of God, because by meditation you are able to feel His presence. How can you feel the love of God without the presence of God? That divine love no human being knows. When my mother died, I cried inconsolably. But no pain of human separation can match the longing I feel now when I cry for my Divine Mother.

Beholding in Vision a Blue-Eyed Christ

God granted my prayer that Christ come today. I saw his face. But I was much astonished, for he had blue eyes! the most beautiful I have ever seen. I used to scoff at the idea that Jesus, an Oriental, would have blue eyes and golden hair, as he is often depicted in Western art. But Christ spoke to me today and said, "You didn't know that I can have blue eyes, too!" Then, as I gazed in wonder, his eyes became dark and he spoke again: "Why do you want to see me in form? See me in the Infinite."

Think what a Christmas we are enjoying today! We have something more beautiful than material gifts to attract us. No man-made temple can produce the Spirit we are enjoying today. Wonderful music couldn't produce this joy. God is the music of all music, the nectar of all nectars, the happiness of all happiness. If only people could picture His joy! If the Lord should come even once to you, nothing else would matter to you any more. Don't let the world fool you. Fool the world. The drunken man is always drunk wherever you put him. So is the divine man. Whether talking to people or meditating, he is intoxicated with the love of God.

God — Source of All Happiness

Instead of the supernal security of Spirit, Satan gives man delusive desire for money. In place of the joy of meditation Satan substitutes worldly attractions, to keep our consciousness turned away from divine bliss. But once the love of God comes to you, Satan will no more have a hold on you. So no matter how much pleasure you find in sense perceptions, remember that in God-perception there is more happiness. Live in the world, but be not of the world. You must be in the world and play the game, but you can beat Satan at his own game. It is a question of what you want.

Whoever tells you that to have a family is wonderful, or to have money is wonderful, or to be a great businessman is wonderful, is lacking in true wisdom. For every worldly dream will terminate after a time. Suppose you become a great singer; then you grow old and people lose interest in your voice. Or perhaps you amass money; you will have to leave it when death comes. But God is wealth you cannot lose. If you think human love is wonderful, it will someday bring you unhappiness, when the beloved dies. Divine Joy outlasts everything. It is enduring. When all else melts away, that Joy remains.

Everything has its place, but when you waste time at the cost of your true happiness it is not good. I dropped every unnecessary activity so that I could meditate and try to know God, so that I could day and night be in His divine consciousness. If you want to be different you must really work to be different. When the Masters warned me, I arranged that not one evening slipped away without meditation.

Start Meditating While You are Young

The minds of most worldly people are "shot" by the age of 30 - 35. If you don't meditate when you are younger, you will find that from the age of 35 - 40 onward it will be more difficult to know God. But even if you have passed that age, if you keep trying to meditate no matter how discouraged you may be, after a few years your desire for



Section of remodeled library, SRF headquarters, Los Angeles. Photos of three SRF presidents — Paramahansa Yogananda (*center*), Rajasi Janakananda (*left*), and Daya Mata — are on center wall. Editions in thirteen languages of Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* are displayed at middle left; at right are his *Whispers from Eternity* and other books. On three lower shelves are personal mementos of the great world teacher.

the Lord will become very strong. Angels will be with you. Though the whole world be plunged into suffering, you will know what is going to happen, and God will be with you.

"Knowing the Future Is No Fun At All"

At first the soul is very desirous of exercising its power to know the future. But after a while this knowledge palls. Knowing what is going to take place is no fun at all. I have given all my powers back to God. I am living like a child, just to please Him. I have no ambition of my own. Why should I torture myself with desires? I have given them to Him; whatever He wants me to do, that is my happiness. But it is nevertheless very difficult to carry out His wishes when He tells you to do things you don't like to do! You must have undiscourageable faith in Him. You must know that you are His.

Let no one tell you that anything else is better than God's joy. All men seek happiness, but do they find it? Meditation, long and deep, is the way to attain true joy. Nothing else can compare to meditation. Don't be satisfied with a little silence. Go on endlessly. It must be a relentless pursuit, day and night meditating. When you are in His joy, sleep doesn't matter.

Stay more by yourself. Remember, the only real happiness is in meditation. And the proof is obtainable by you. If you meditate the Self-Realization way for two or three hours at night, and then sing and talk to the Lord, undismayed if there is no answer, suddenly a divine light will come. Mysteriously, a fragrance will come. This is the way God lets you know that He is near. But you must be persistent, until He Himself comes. Then you will never fear anything any more.

Convocation Souvenir Booklet (1965)

Includes portrait photographs of Paramahansa Yogananda and Daya Mata; brief histories and many photos of SRF Colonies in southern California; a message from Daya Mata, and inspiring words by Yoganandaji. Only a limited number of copies now in stock.

8¼" x 10", 40 pp., 72 photos, plastic binding, \$1 postpaid

Available from Self-Realization Fellowship



Truth, Benevolence, Beauty

By R. K. DALAL

The three layers of the soul are *satyam* (truth), *shivam* (benevolence), and *sundaram* (beauty). Each of these three, when pursued with one-pointed concentration, leads ultimately to Self-realization — the emancipation of the soul from the thralldom of the senses.

Let us consider each facet of the soul.

What is Truth? It is something that is eternal, unchanging, and real. It is something that no human being, be he an atheist or a theist, can deny. God he may deny, but Truth he cannot.

“For me,” says Mahatma Gandhi, “truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. Truth is not only truthfulness in word but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only.

“The seeker after truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after Truth should so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of Truth.”

Through all crises of life, vicissitudes of circumstances, and the changing pattern of life through ages, whatever remains steadfast, constant, and inexorable, never changing an iota, is Truth.

Civilizations may come and go, empires may rise and fall, dynasties may come and disappear, yet Truth never dies, never changes. It stands like a column of smoke by day and an obelisk of light by night. It is made to withstand the onslaughts of centuries of denials. God is Truth — for Truth is self-proclaimed, self-sustained, and self-propagating. It needs no adjuncts or accessories of religion, ideology, or culture to propagate it. It is something that is dictated by the conscience of man.

It is because of the uncompromising and inflexible nature of Truth that Truth often suffers — but in the end always vindicates itself. The poet Lowell has sung of Truth thus:

“Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future;
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above His own.”

The next facet of the soul is Benevolence.

A heart to be benevolent must be compassionate and full of love: love, not only for mankind, but for birds and beasts, flowers and trees, nay, even for the crawling insects. Benevolence such as this can stem only from nonviolence in thought, word, and deed.

Your love must be so universal that your heart yearns to aspire thus with the poet (Emily Dickinson) who sang:

“If I can stop one heart from breaking,
I shall not live in vain;
If I can ease one life the aching,
Or cool one pain,
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again,
I shall not live in vain.”

We have no right to hurt, kill, or sacrifice that which God has created on earth. It has as much right to live the allotted span of life as you or I. What right has man to kill that which he cannot create or replace? “Live and let live” — no, “Live and help others to live as well” should be man’s motto.

“Teach me to feel another’s woe,
To hide the faults I see;
That pity I to others show,
That pity show to me.” (*Pope*)



Grounds near entrance of Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, Los Angeles, bathed in morning sunshine

Henry Burton wrote as follows:

“Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on;
‘Twas not given for thee alone,
Pass it on.
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another’s tears,
Till in Heaven the deed appears —
Pass it on.”

The third aspect is *sundaram*.

Behold the light of Beauty in everything the Lord has created. What wizardry of colors you see in the flowers! What soft feathers

cover the songbird! What a "poem of pity" you see in a cow! What fleet-footed motion in a noble horse! What gorgeous plumage you see in the spread of a peacock's tail! The earth, the star-studded heavens, the undulating bosom of the vast oceans, the gurgling brook, the rippling river — all bring to you the vision of the *sundaram* of God. You shed tears of joy at the sight of His beauty in creation.

A smile on a beloved's face is entrancing, for it expresses the serene ecstasy of the soul. The eyes, when they lower or flutter on the brink of a flood of tears, the face lost in meditation or wreathed in smiles — all these need the faculty of *sundaram* in your soul to perceive and behold and be bewitched by their sheer beauty. Have you seen a rosebud of a baby smile in her sleep? Have you seen a straggling tear precariously perched on a baby's dainty eyelid? These sights are the divine manifestation of Godhood in man. If we could only remove the veil of worldly grossness we would continuously behold visions of perfection. Keats paid the following tribute to the immortality of beauty:

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams,
and health, and quiet breathing."

When the three lights of the soul descend, you experience a peace that passeth understanding. This divine illumination has been well expressed by Tagore:

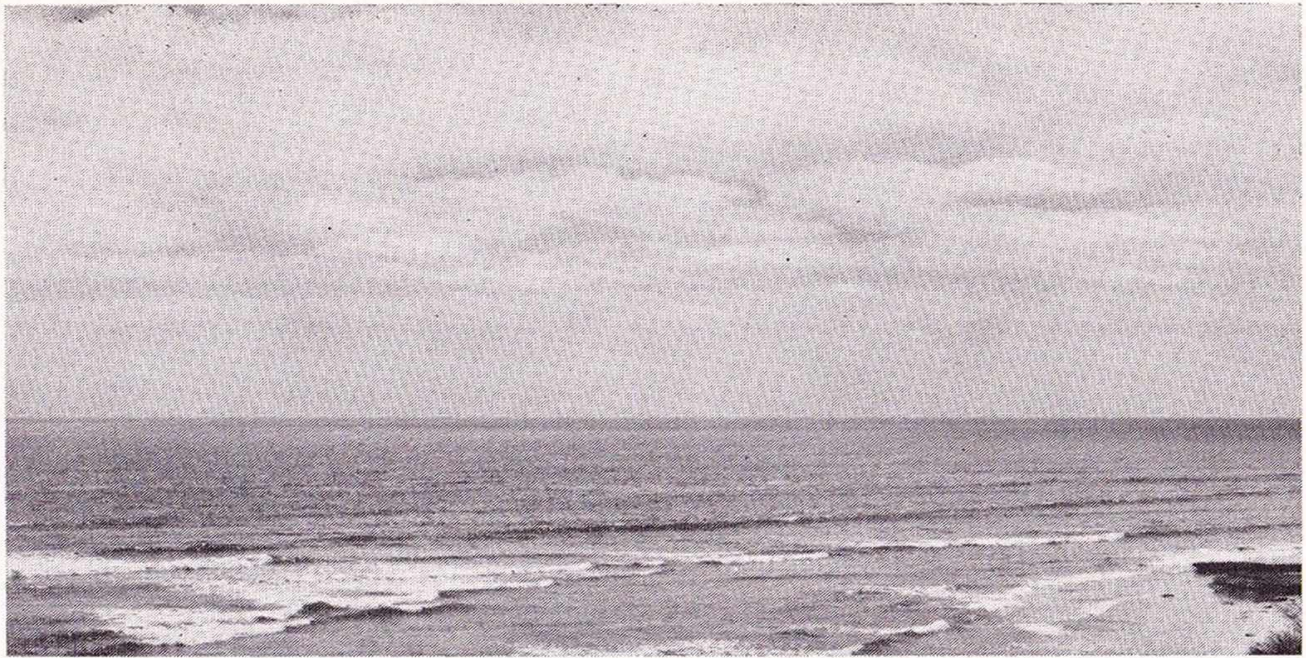
"Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light! Ah, the light dancing, my darling, at the center of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my life; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.

"The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light. Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light.

"The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion.

"Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and the gladness without measure. The heavens' river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad."

— From "*Bhavan's Journal*," Bombay, India



O FAIRY SONG OF LOVE EVERLASTING!

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

I tune the harpstrings of my heart to play an old song newly—the story of my first-born love.

O Spirit, I would offer Thee fresh notes from the virginal soul; original variations on the changeless theme of my adoration.

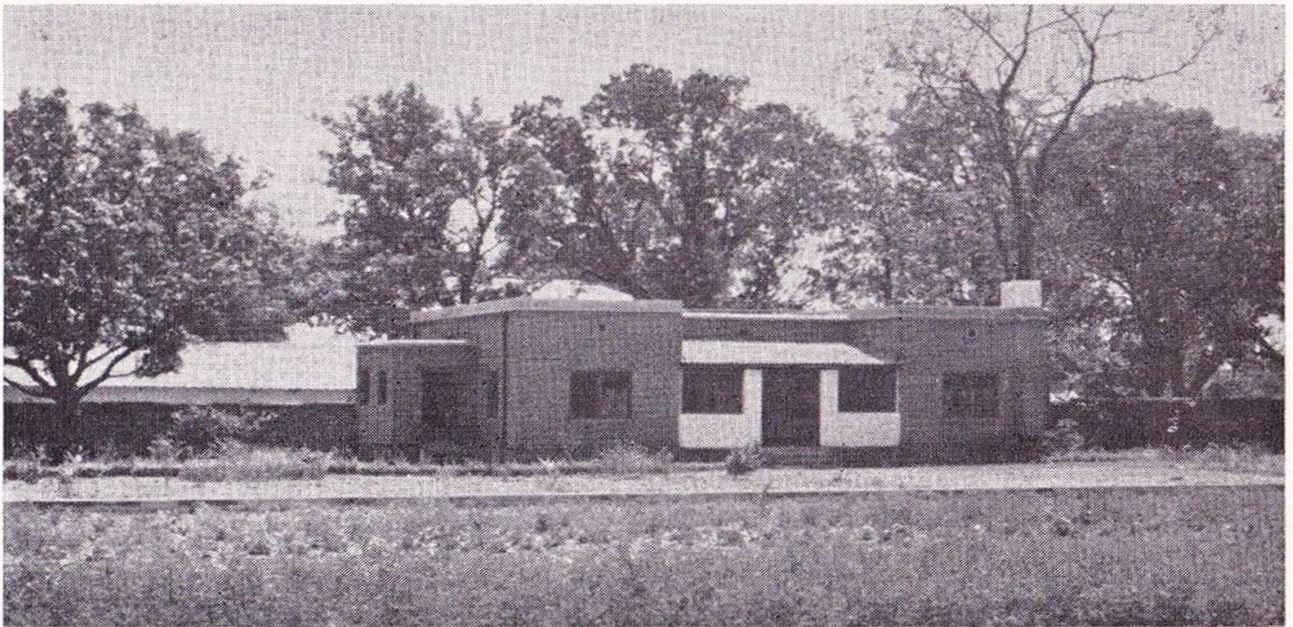
My hymn waves dance to the cosmic rhythms of Thine Ocean and float me on billows of bliss to Thy terminal shores.

O Lullaby of the Sea Serene! ever croon to me thy devotion chant to the Divine Eternal Mother.

O Fairy Song of Love Everlasting! rock me in thy cradle of melody and bring me sleep on Her bosom of peace.



Daya Mata (*left*) and a party of YSS devotees during a walk on Neterhat plateau, near Ranchi, December 1964



Medical dispensary on spacious grounds of Yogoda Satsanga Society headquarters, Ranchi, India. White-roofed building in background is used for cooking. In foreground is vegetable garden.

Mysteries of Life and Death

Wisdom from Various Sources, Compiled by Chaman Lal

Kabir the great medieval Indian sage laughs at those who think "God is high up in the heavens." He says:

I laugh when I hear the fish in the water is thirsty.

You do not see that the Real (God) is in your home, and you wander from forest to forest listlessly.

To what shore would you cross, O my heart? There is no traveler before you, there is no road. . . .

There, there is neither body nor mind; and where is the place that shall quench the thirst of the soul? You shall find naught in the emptiness.

Be strong and enter into your own Self; for there your foothold is firm. Consider it well, O my heart! Go not elsewhere.

Kabir says: Put all imaginations away, and stand fast in That which you are.

* * *

The pupil asks: "Who is the worshiped one, by the worship of whom blessing is obtained?"

The Master says: "It is He who, being eternal and unique, does not stand in need of any human action for which He might give as a recompense either a blissful repose, which is hoped and longed for, or a troubled existence, which is feared and dreaded. He is unattainable to thought, being sublime, beyond all unlikeness which is abhorrent and all likeness which is sympathetic. He by His essence knows from all eternity. Knowledge, in the human sense of the term, has as its object that which was unknown before, whilst not-knowing does not at any time or in any condition apply to God."

The pupil asks: "Do you attribute to Him other qualities besides those you have mentioned?"

The Master says: "He is height, absolute in the idea, not in space, for He is sublime, beyond all existence in any space. He is the pure Absolute Good, longed for by every created being. He is knowledge, free from the defilement of forgetfulness and not-knowing."

The pupil asks: "Do you attribute to Him speech?"

The Master says: "As He knows all, He no doubt also speaks."

The pupil says: "If He speaks because He knows, what then is the difference between Him and the illumined sages who have spoken of their knowing?"

The Master says: "The difference between them is time, for they have learned in time and spoken in time, after having been not-knowing and not-speaking. By speech they have transferred their knowledge to others. Therefore their speaking and acquiring knowledge take place in time. And as divine matters have no connection with time, God is knowing and speaking from eternity. It was He who spoke to Brahma and to others of the first beings in different ways. On the one He bestowed a book; for the other He opened a door, a means of communication with Him; a third one He inspired so that he obtained by cognition what He bestowed upon him."

The pupil asks: "Whence has He this knowing?"

The Master says: "His knowing is the same from all eternity, forever and forever. As He has never been not-knowing, He is knowing of Himself, having never acquired any knowledge which he did not before possess. He speaks in the *Vedas* which He sent down upon

Mysteries of Life and Death was compiled, edited, and published by Chaman Lal. He writes in a foreword: "My cordial thanks are due to the authors (known and unknown) mentioned in the text. I feel the reader will join me in expressing sincere gratitude to all the saints, sages, and scholars through whom the inspiring revelations were made during the last seven thousand years."

The selections are grouped in thirteen chapters, under the following headings: "Whence Came I?", "Where is God?", "Four Helpful Friends", "Karma — Basis of Birth", "The Worlds Visible and Invisible", "What Am I Doing Here?", "Character — Fountain of Life", "Where Am I Going?", "Secrets of Happiness", "Mysteries of Death", "Interview with the God of Death", "Road to Nirvana", and "How to Die a Sweet Death."

Cloth, 238 pp., 1965, \$5.10 postpaid. Order from DeVorss & Co., 516 W. Ninth St., Los Angeles, California 90015.

Brahma. Praise and celebrate Him who has spoken the *Vedas* and before the *Vedas*."

The pupil asks: "How do you worship Him to whom the perception of the senses cannot attain?"

The Master says: "His name proves His existence; for where there is a report there must be something to which it refers, and where there is a name there must be something which is named. He is hidden to the senses and unperceivable by them, but the soul perceives Him and thought comprehends His qualities. This meditation is identical with worshiping Him exclusively, and by practicing it uninterruptedly beatitude is obtained."

— *Alberuni in "India"*

* * *

The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, sang the following immortal song in praise of God. It is part of the daily Sikh prayer service, which includes *arati*, the waving of lamps.

The firmament is thy salver,
The sun and the moon thy lamps;
The galaxy of stars are as pearls scattered,
The woods of sandal are thine incense.
The breezes blow thy royal fan;
The flowers of the forests
Lie as offering at thy feet.
What wonderful worship with lamps is this,
O thou destroyer of fear!
Unstruck music is the sound of thy temple drums.

Thousands are thine eyes
And yet thou hast no eyes;
Thousands are thy shapes,
And yet thou hast no shape;
Thousands are thy pure feet,
And yet thou hast not one foot. . . .

All this is thy play and bewitches me.
In every heart there is light;
That light art thou.
By the light that is God Himself
Is every soul illumined;
But this divine light becomes manifest

Only by the Guru's teachings.
What is pleasing to thee, O Lord,
Is the best *arati* and worship with lamps.

O Lord, my mind yearns for thy lotus feet,
As the honey-bee for the nectar of the flowers.
Night and day, Lord, I am athirst for thee;
Give water of thy mercy to Nanak.
He is like the *sarang*:
The hawk-cuckoo that drinks only raindrops
So that he may dwell ever in the peace of thy name.

* * *

There is nothing higher than I (God). All this universe is strung upon Me as rows of jewels upon a string. I am the taste in water, the light in sun and moon, the *Om* in the *Vedas*, manhood in man, the might of the mighty, the heat of the fire, the wisdom of the wise, the splendor of the magnificent.

From Me come the moods of goodness, fire, and melancholy. I am not in them but they are in Me. And bewildered by these three moods the whole universe fails to understand that I sit above them and am changeless. For divine magic of moods is hard to see through, but they who cling to Me transcend this magic.

— Lord Krishna in the "*Bhagavad-Gita*"

* * *

Lord Buddha has warned us all of the consequences of wrong Karma. He says:

All beings fear pain, all beings fear death; therefore, think of yourself as a being and do not cause pain or kill.

Do not use harsh speech to anyone. Those you address may answer you in the same way and cause anger. Then suffering follows.

Keep as silent as a broken gong. Then there will be no trouble, pain, suffering, or blame.

As a cowherd uses his staff to drive his cattle, even so old age and death drive the life of living beings.

The fool does not know that he does wrong. He will suffer for his wrong actions, like being burnt by fire.

Whoever causes pain and distress to innocent ones will himself suffer quickly.

(Continued on page 33)

Soul Whispers

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



During this Easter pray: "O Christ, resurrect my consciousness from the sepulcher of bad habits and free me in Thee. Pluck the lotus blossom of my devotion from the mire of earthly forgetfulness and wear it on the breast of Thine omnipresence. Resurrect me in Thee.



May I sympathetically help others to help themselves. Teach me not to condemn their ingratitude if they turn against me and no longer permit me to serve them.



O Father of All, may I feel that even he who does me mortal injury is my brother, made in Thine image and existing only temporarily in darkness. Banish from my mind the vengeful "tit for tat" spirit.

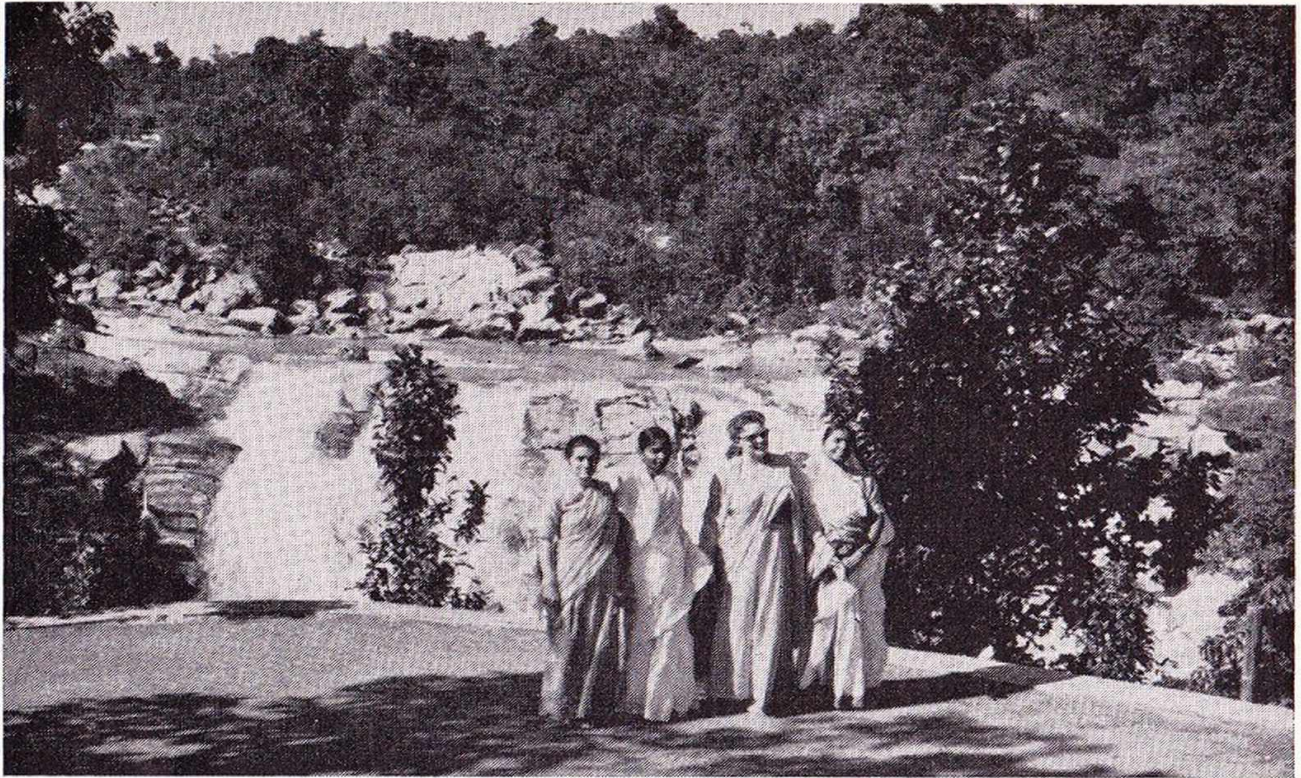


Cast unceasingly the seeds of Thy blessings into the prayer-plowed soil of my heart. May they grow into plants bearing precious fruits of Self-realization.



O Light of Supernatural Subtlety! Thou dost hide, behind Thine ultraviolet rays in the sun and in earth-bombarding cosmic rays.

Lord, Thine etheric veil, patterned with intricate crisscrosses of countless invisible currents, effectively conceals Thee from me. Drop Thou the raiment of space, that I see Thee without matter illusions.



Uma Mata, Sheela Sinha, Daya Mata, and Mrs. Leela Sinha (District Inspector of Girls' Schools) near Dasong Falls, about 20 miles from Ranchi, India, November 1964

NOTHING DIES

“Then death, so call’d, is but old matter dress’d
In some new figure, and a varied vest:
Thus all things are but alter’d, nothing dies;
And here and there the unbodied spirit flies. . . .
From tenement to tenement though toss’d,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost:
And, as the soften’d wax new seals receives,
This face assumes, and that impression leaves;
Now call’d by one, now by another name,
The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.
So death, so call’d, can but the form deface;
The immortal soul flies out in empty space,
To seek her fortune in some other place.”

— *Ovid (5th century), in “Metamorphoses”*

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

(India's greatest scripture, a part of the "Mahabharata" epic)

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter XVII, Stanza 1

Arjuna said:

Those who set aside the scriptural rules but who perform sacrifices with faith — what is their status, O Krishna? Are they sattwic, rajasic, or tamasic men?

In the last chapter, the last two stanzas read as follows: "He who ignores the scriptural commands and who follows his own foolish desires does not find happiness or perfection or the Infinite Goal. Take the scriptures as your guide in determining what should be done and what should be avoided. Act in accordance with the wisdom given in the holy books."

Arjuna's Perplexity About the Scriptures

Arjuna was perplexed by those words and therefore questioned Lord Krishna. A devotee doubtless reverences the scriptures but may

not always understand them or be able to study them carefully. Even great scholars sometimes disagree on the meaning of various sacred texts. Many men, ignorant of scriptural injunctions, prohibitions, and rituals, nevertheless possess great faith and lead deeply religious lives. Arjuna therefore asked his Guru for further enlightenment.

Chapter XVII, Stanzas 2 – 3

The Blessed Lord said:

The natural faith of the embodied is threefold — sattwic, rajasic, and tamasic. Hear thou about it.

The devotion of each man is in agreement with his inborn nature. Whatever his faith is, that verily is he.

The scriptures are the repository of man's highest experience and soul wisdom, and, as such, are a priceless aid to all spiritual aspirants. But, Krishna assured Arjuna, whether or not a man lives by the precepts of righteousness is determined by his natural bent, his inmost being as formed by all his actions of past lives.

Chapter XVII, Stanza 4

The sattwic pay homage to the gods, the rajasic to the Yakshas and the Rakshasas, and the tamasic to the Pretas and the hosts of Bhutas.

Sattwic or good men worship the Devas (divinities), embodiments of spiritual qualities.

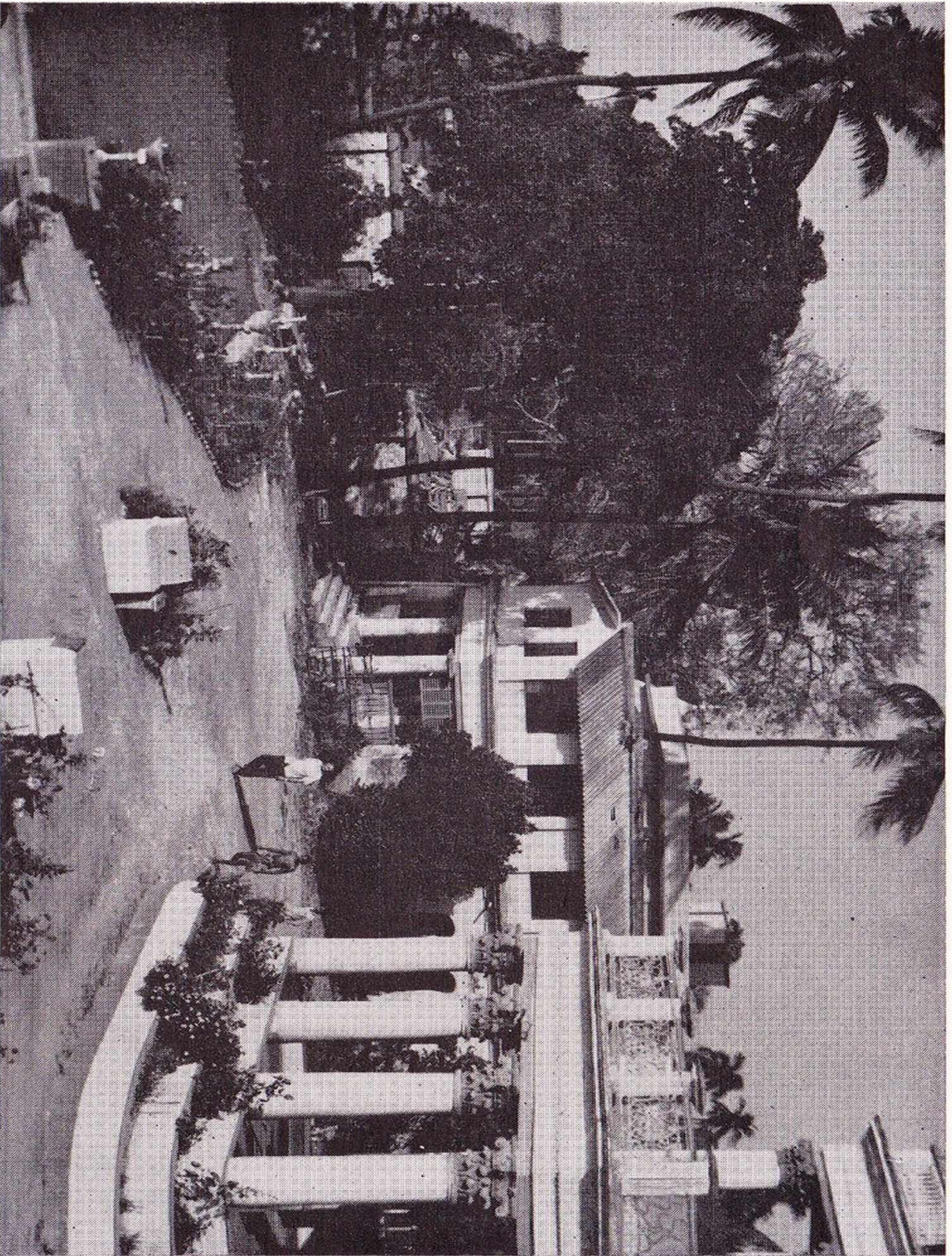
Rajasic or worldly, passionate men worship the Yakshas (guardian-spirits of wealth) and the Rakshasas (astral-world demons and giants of great power and aggression).

Tamasic or dull, ignorant men worship the Pretas (spirits of the dead) and the Bhutas (ghosts and elemental beings).

Each person shows by his life, by the inescapable expression of his nature, what type of man he is and what type of unseen power he consciously or unconsciously attracts to himself.

A Man's "Religion" is Shown by his Nature

A person's "religion" is demonstrated not by his formal worship but by his nature. Most men are not "pure" types, however; at various times they display the *guna* (quality) of *sattwa* or *rajas* or *tamas*.



Front portico, Yogoda Ashram (*right*) and guest house (*center*), Dakshineswar, India, on the Ganges River. This large and beautiful YSS (SRF) ashram was dedicated in 1938.

But a person's life as a whole is always marked by a predominance of one *guna*, which indicates the stage of his spiritual evolution.

Therefore Sri Krishna said: "Whatever a man's faith is, that verily is he." All persons live according to the law of their nature, and thus are devotees of one of the three paths.

The wise, sattwic man patterns his life after the celestial design, and knowingly or unknowingly receives help from the deities to whom God has entrusted the highest functions of the phenomenal worlds.

The rajasic or worldly, passionate man, aspiring to wealth and power, is knowingly or unknowingly adoring Yakshas and Rakshasas—cosmic embodiments of greed, ruthless strength, and egotistic ambition.

The tamasic or ignorant man knowingly or unknowingly offers his devotion to the Pretas (spirits of the dead) and the Bhutas (elemental Nature-spirits, an order of beings inferior to man). By sloth, stupidity, and sense attachment such a person fails to rise to his full stature as a human being and becomes enslaved to disintegrating forces beyond his comprehension and control.

This stanza points out that the lowest path means devotion to the "spirits of the dead."

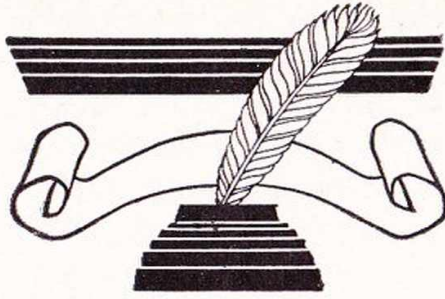
In general, these words indicate the stultification of *tamas*, through which a man's life is a kind of "death." Those who are given over to debasing habits and dullness and despair, who ignore all the inexhaustible resources of the soul, are worshipers of the "spirits of the dead."

The Unwisdom of Consulting "Departed Spirits"

In particular, this stanza of the *Bhagavad-Gita* refers to the cult of consulting "departed spirits." It constitutes a path that is fraught with danger.

Many persons erroneously imagine that "the dead" — human beings who have passed over to the astral world — are in touch with great masters or are themselves deep founts of wisdom. The truth is that most astral beings are not reliable messengers and have attained no final insight into the Great Mystery.

The soul is divine; but until man achieves soul-realization he is unable after death to express any more divinity than he expressed during his life on earth. Only those persons who were liberated while in the body are empowered, upon leaving it, to unite with God and to impart illumination to others.



Letters from SRF Students

“The first *Kriya* technique is the most marvelous yoga I’ve ever come across. I don’t think any other man who ever lived has given mankind a more lucid, logical explanation of why we should seek God, and how to do so, than Paramahansa Yogananda. He achieved something colossal.” — *D.B., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

“Last July someone tried to discourage me from studying Self-Realization Fellowship teachings and had me pretty well upset. So I prayed to God to let me know in some way if this religion is the right one for me to find Him. Next morning I was looking out of my back window and saw a halo, and in the halo there appeared Sri Yukteswar. The face was very plain, and I had not been trying to see anything; I was thinking only of God. After seeing the vision I knew God had shown me the right way.” — *K.Y., Tuscaloosa, Alabama.*

“I am what I suppose might be called a ‘passionate’ individual, with rather tumultuous — and completely undisciplined — emotions; yet I am finding that the *Hong-Sau* technique is beginning to give me an inner discipline, relaxation, and potential self-control. I am much less at the mercy of my feelings — I even sense, at times, a separation from them. I look forward to the time when this sense of separation is even more frequent.” — *W.J., Memphis, Tennessee.*

“The practice of the *Kriya* technique gives me a strong feeling of being liberated, a feeling I never had before. The inner world of peace is wonderful.” — *E.E., Dortmund, Germany.*

“I have been long in writing to you. I had to go to work at an early age and had little time for school. Now I find it difficult to give proper expression to my thoughts in a letter. However, my feelings are

very strong toward SRF and my daily prayer is that you who carry on that great work may be able always to uphold its high ideals.

“Being spiritually inclined I decided in my early teens to be a follower of Lord Jesus. My later discovery of the SRF teachings meant a great deal to me because their philosophy was so harmonious and explained so clearly his inspiring words. Faith in Jesus carried me through many anxious times when my family was young, and the inner guidance I felt was always right.

“An SRF leaflet was given to me. On looking at Master Yogananda’s picture in it, I could see the Christ-likeness shining through his eyes. Though my time for study was not much, I found in the SRF Lessons the greatest knowledge and enlightenment, far beyond my expectations. The benefits I have received over the years have been wonderful. I am filled with joy and happiness.

“To mention only one instance of the blessings that have come to me from SRF, many years ago three doctors told me I would have to have a major operation, with minor operations every few months. Then that ‘something’ within told me to try the SRF spiritual-healing teachings on the weakened body parts. In a few weeks the difficulty was corrected so well I didn’t need even a minor operation again. I tell you this to help explain my gratefulness to God and the Masters for the great message of SRF.

“But these are unimportant things when we consider the great peace of mind that is to be obtained for all time through the practice of SRF teachings. Until I came in touch with SRF I would not have believed there were such fine people in the world. I can never forget the kind letters and the good advice I received in those early days. I saw to it, years ago, that *Autobiography of a Yogi* was put in all the libraries here and I sent it and other books and magazines to most of my friends and relatives. At the time I was disappointed that there was relatively little response. Knowing the great benefits to be obtained, I felt we should be ‘shouting it from the housetops,’ as the saying goes. Now I realize that unless one is seeking spiritually and feels the need of such help, he is content to go on just as usual. People don’t seem to realize or even believe there is anything better. We must be content to leave the situation in God’s hands and do our part the best we can.

“I owe such a lot to this great organization for the spread of the knowledge in Self-Realization teachings. I don’t know of any other that could even begin to take its place.” — *G.T.P., Toronto, Canada.*

“From following the spiritual instruction that goes with saving in the Horn of Plenty Bank, I feel I am getting a foothold in the positive direction of my thinking, which six weeks ago was really negative. I now feel that even the most stubborn case of negative thinking can, in time, be overcome by these affirmations.” — *H.O., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.*

“After many futile efforts to find the solace that I so desperately needed, one beautiful morning I was led by some unseen power to the San Diego SRF Church. A healing took place that morning during meditation. The weight of my past bad actions and thoughts was lifted in such a way that from that time to this I have not suffered the dread feeling of sinking into darkness, wanting only to close my eyes forever in sleep, to sink into oblivion from all the weight of the world. That fearful compulsion has not returned to this day. I know without a doubt that Master was there and felt my need and answered it.

“The way up has been slow and not without some setbacks, but with the Lessons to study and the joy of each service in the Church, plus the daily way of life which has gradually become easier for me, and more and more an abiding joy, all the trials along the way show themselves to be but steppingstones leading ever upward. My children

SRF Classes, August 19th-26th

The annual week of summer classes in Self-Realization Fellowship teachings will be held in Los Angeles during the week of August 19th – 26th. Full information will be mailed in June to all SRF students in North America.

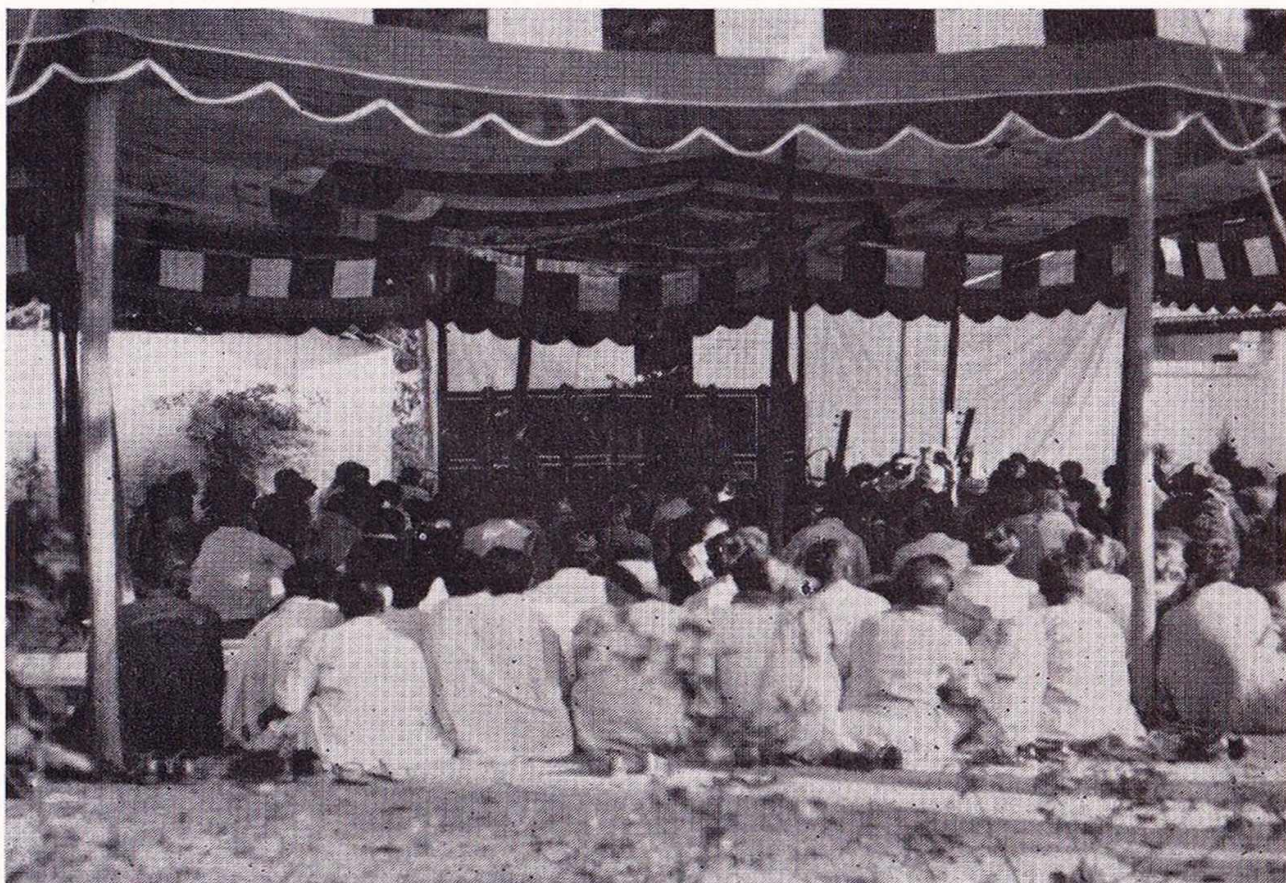
Any interested SRF student who lives outside the area covered by the mailing should write airmail or telegraph the Class Registrar at SRF headquarters requesting particulars. It is necessary to register in order to attend the classes.

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look forward eagerly to each Sunday's service at the Church. The friendship and instruction they receive there are invaluable now and will become ever more so as they grow in wisdom through Master's teachings. Our family life has become harmonious and will be ever more so as our meditations grow deeper.

"The many blessings that have come to me as a direct result of my association with Self-Realization teachings would require hours to relate and would only repeat what you have heard from thousands of others. One special blessing has been the hearing of the *Om* sound from the start of my meditations. It is with great love and deepest sincerity that I send this message from my heart." — *M.P., San Diego, California.*



Yogoda Satsanga Society devotees assembled on January 5, 1964, under a *pandal* at Yogoda Math, YSS headquarters in Ranchi, India. They were attending a ceremony conducted by Daya Mata, YSS - SRF president, commemorating the birth anniversary of the late Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of Yogoda Satsanga Society in India and Self-Realization Fellowship in America.

"I had been meditating more deeply than usual. Following meditation I went to sleep. When I awoke in the morning I was still living a vivid dream. At first I remembered her as a woman whom I had known many years ago; tall and of ample proportions, with a generous heart. In my dream she stood with her back to me in my kitchen. I had always disliked the task of putting up drapes at the windows. By some telepathic means she conveyed to me, besides great warmth, the idea that she had come to my apartment to stay, and to relieve me of the chore, among others, of supervising the hanging of my drapes. Yet in her demeanor there was no attitude of taking from me any of my rightful privileges or duties, just a reassurance that removed a great weight from my shoulders. She seemed to understand all that I needed and desired and to stand ready to support me without interfering in any way. Although I knew who she was, I wished to see her face, but she would not permit that. Slowly I began to feel a great surge of love for her, and infinite contentment, that while I would continue to depend on my own efforts, still she was there to take care of me. At once, she and I were one. And then the conviction grew upon me, and with it a feeling of incredible sweetness, that it was not the woman I had known so long ago, but Divine Mother, who was letting me know that She had come into my life to ease my burdens, to make me aware of Her love, and She had taken this means to let me know gradually and without shock.

"All day and for many days after, I felt this ineffable sweetness permeating my heart, buoying me up, overflowing from my very soul. I now understood that She was not yet ready to let me see Her face, but I was filled with Her Spirit. I am profoundly grateful." — *T.W., New York, N.Y.*

"Since reading Paramahansa Yogananda's books I feel an almost personal relationship with him. My thoughts seem to have entered a new sphere, and I wish to know more. I believe this is the answer to my seeking and prayers. I see God in an entirely new light." — *M.H., New Zealand.*

"Each day I use the *Scientific Healing Affirmations* and they are growing more helpful each time. I am so very grateful for them. It seems as if a new life has opened for me." — *M.P., Asheville, N.C.*

"I bought a copy of your wonderful book *Scientific Healing Affirmations* and am thoroughly convinced that we should have more of

this type of work going on in the world. I feel a need for SRF, and for your prayers to help me find my place in life." — *C.W., San Antonio, Texas.*

"While browsing in a bookshop I became interested in the paperback edition of *Metaphysical Meditations*, and could not put it down, so beautiful were its contents." — *S.F., Bronx, New York.*

"*Metaphysical Meditations* is worth a thousand times more than I gave for it. It was like the sweet dreams of winter that materialize in summer, to find something from a great soul such as Paramahansa Yogananda. I never knew him in the body, yet I don't feel a stranger to him at all. Loneliness had stolen my peace of mind unsuspectingly many times. But turning my inner vision upon Paramahansa Yogananda and applying myself as prescribed by the rules of Yoga, the calmness of mind that was his quickly becomes mine. I realize that I am not alone, that somewhere on this plane, and on planes unseen, other souls know me. This is why I love the great one, Paramahansa Yogananda." — *R.B., Memphis, Tennessee.*



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Self-Realization Fellowship Retreat is open throughout the year to students and friends for retreats of one to ten days.

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(Continued from page 18)

Do not follow a life of evil; do not live heedlessly; do not have false views; do not value worldly things. In this way one can get rid of suffering.

A man should not live heedlessly but should exert himself to live righteously. Such a man is happy in this world and in the next.

— *The Dhammapada* 66-67

* * *

Destiny is only the effect of our previous efforts. . . . Our achievements are determined by our efforts. Our effort is therefore our destiny. . . . Our previous and present efforts, in case they are in contrary directions, are like two rams fighting against each other. The more powerful of the two always overthrows the other. Whether they are the past or the present efforts, it is the stronger ones that determine our destiny. In either case, it is man's own effort that determines his destiny by virtue of its strength. Man determines his own destiny by his own thought. He can also make those things happen which were not otherwise destined to happen. The soul of man is powerful enough. Only those things happen in this world which man creates by his own free effort, and not others. . . . One should, therefore, overcome his unfavorable destiny (the effect of one's past actions) by greater effort in the present. There is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by men by the right sort of efforts.

— "*Yoga Vasistha*" by Sage Vasistha

* * *

Shankaracharya, at the very beginning of one of his *Vedanta* treatises, *Vivekachudamani*, says: "*Three things are difficult to attain; they are obtained only by the grace of God. And these three are human birth, yearning for spiritual freedom, and the blessings of a great soul — a spiritual teacher.*"

Obtaining a human birth is itself a rare privilege, but that in itself is not enough. It only provides an appropriate medium through which the soul may attain its freedom. Many persons do not even recognize the value and purpose of human life. They just live a vegetative life — the life of the body and the senses. Slightly more evolved persons, however, engage themselves in intellectual and cultural pursuits. It is only a very small minority that feel the soul urge keenly and turn their attention to things spiritual. Even amongst those who strive for spiritual ends, only a handful may reach the goal in this

life. As the *Gita* says: "One in a thousand strives for spiritual life. Even amongst those that strive for spiritual life, only a few realize the truth as it is." So it is that Shankaracharya points out that two more conditions must be fulfilled if our efforts are to be fruitful. They are: an intense yearning for attaining liberation (*mumukshutwa*) and the association with or guidance by a spiritual teacher.

When a man intensely hungers for spiritual knowledge, he will give up all worldly pursuits and surely get the blessings and guidance of a teacher who will impart to him the necessary instruction. The sacred books say that when the field is ready, seeds will be sown; when the flower blossoms, the bees are attracted to it. If the desire is keen and intense, help does come. . . .

Spiritual conquest is spoken of as the greatest of all conquests. One may conquer all the worlds and possess all their wealth; yet may remain a slave to one's senses and live the life of an animal. Such a one is detested and despised by all. But he who is master of himself, who has conquered and controlled his mind and senses, who is established in the knowledge of the glory of the Self, is loved and revered by all. Such a one has transcended his human limitations and attained divine dimensions. He becomes a blessing to humanity, and his life is devoted to the spiritual welfare of others. Not only does he become divine himself, but he also helps others to become divine.

That is the greatest possibility open before a human being, the highest goal that man can attain. Man is to become divine. That is the highest purpose of human birth; and this privilege, this unique opportunity, is given only to man. Hence its spiritual value and sacredness, and the exhortation that this opportunity should not be wasted and that our life should not be lived wantonly.

Jesus Christ significantly remarks: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Every teacher, every prophet, every religion gives the same warning.

— *Swami Ananyananda in "Vedanta for East and West"*

* * *

Just, O King, as the lotus, though it is born in water, and grows up in water, yet remains undefiled by the water (for no water adheres to it); just so should the strenuous *bhikshu* (monk), earnest in effort, remain undefiled by the support that he receives, or by the following of disciples that he obtains, or by fame, or by honor and veneration,

or by the abundance of gifts. This is the first of the qualities of the lotus that he ought to have.

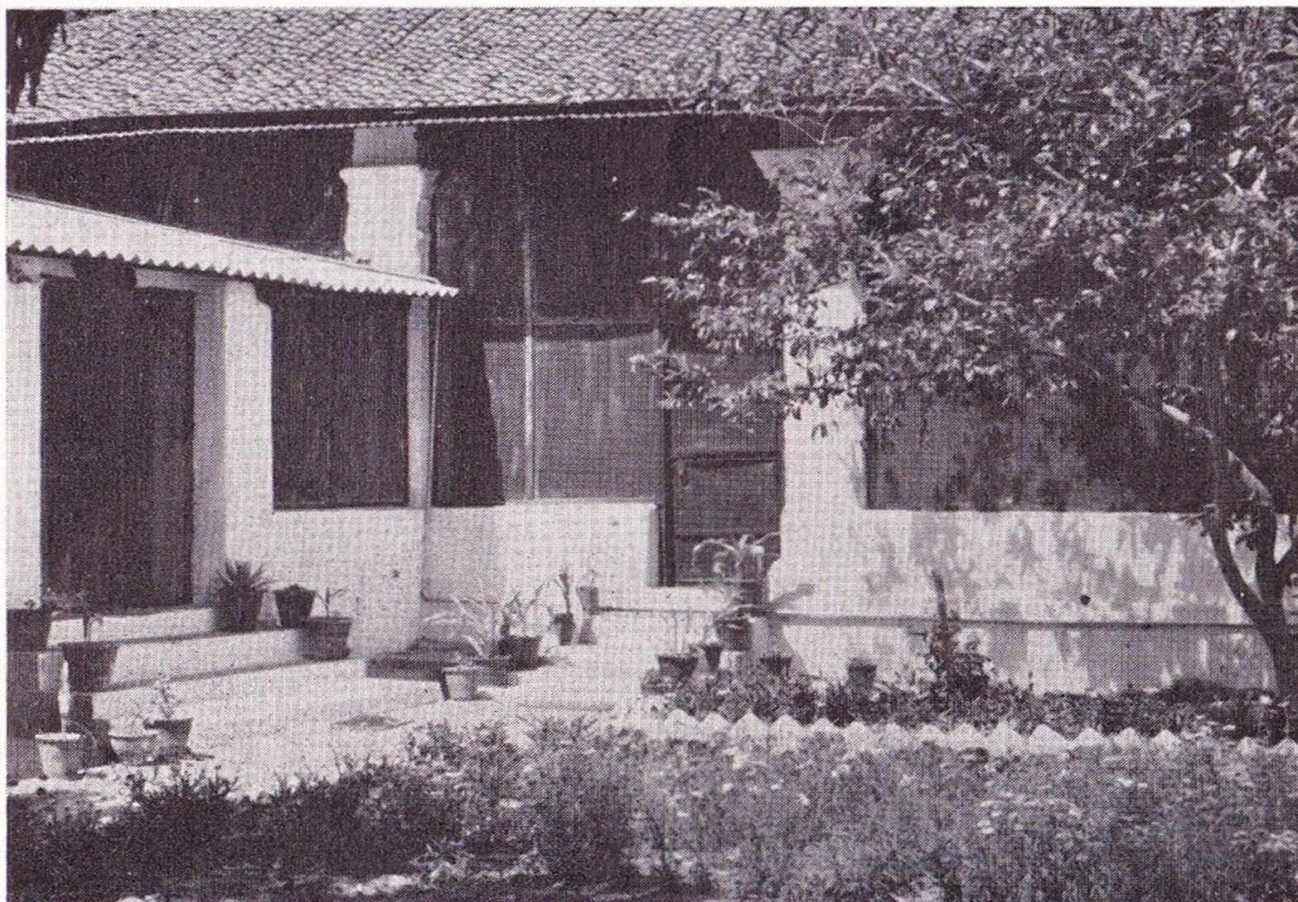
And again, O King, as the lotus remains lifted up far above the water; just so should the strenuous *bhikshu* remain far above all worldly things. This is the second of the qualities of the lotus that he ought to have.

And again, O King, as the lotus trembles when blown upon by the slightest breeze, just so should the strenuous *bhikshu* exercise self-control in respect to the least of the evil tendencies, perceiving the danger (in the least offense). This is the third of the qualities of the lotus that he ought to have. For it was said by the Blessed One (The Buddha): Seeing peril in the least offense, the *bhikshu* trains himself to follow all the spiritual precepts.

As the lotus, O King, is untarnished by the water, so is *Nirvana* untarnished by any evil qualities.

— *Milindapanha*

* * *



This pleasant patio garden adjoins dining room and sleeping veranda at rear of YSS headquarters main building, Ranchi, India

Death is simply a change of body and environment. There is no death for the soul. The *Jivatma* (individual soul) is part and parcel of the *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul) and is imperishable. It is a ray of the Eternal Light. But it is deluded by *maya* or Ignorance. The physical body and everything connected with it, i.e., wealth, children, friends, status, caste, etc., are separated from us at death. But the subtle body: the seventeenfold aggregate consisting of the mind and ten *Indriyas*, the five *Pranas*, and *Buddhi*, does not perish until the time of final liberation.

The *Jiva* (soul) in the subtle body — which body is an offshoot of ignorance in the same manner that the physical body is an extension of the subtle body — goes to the subtler regions after death, enjoys or suffers in the higher worlds the fruits of its past karma. These higher worlds interpenetrate the physical worlds even as the subtler organs — mind, *Indriyas*, *Buddhi*, etc., interpenetrate the physical organs of ours. The *Jiva* after living in the higher worlds for some time is reborn on the earth in a family in accordance with its past karma and tendencies. These cycles go on unendingly until the ignorance of the *Jiva* is destroyed and then it becomes free and one with the Eternal.

Good actions produce good results and sinful actions produce bad results. Good actions performed for the sake of enjoyment on earth or heaven will not directly secure liberation. They may lead to it by making the mind pure. But the final goal is reached only by wisdom and disinterested work. There will come a time in the life of every man when health fails, old age arrives, wealth dwindles, friendship cools, and popularity fades. These are the harbingers of death.

Those who lived a rich and fortunate life and have numerous cravings and attachments suffer much more than the poor and miserable at the time of death. Goldsmith says: "The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. A man of sorrows lays himself quietly down, without possessions to regret and few ties to stop his departure. He feels Nature's pang only in the final separation and this pang is in no way greater than those he had fainted under before. For after a certain degree of pain, every new breach death opens in the constitution Nature kindly covers with insensibility." Animals, most ignorant men, and God-men or great wise men have no mental pangs.

— Narayanan Iyer in "*Kalyan*"

Prayers for Divine Healing

Renunciants of the monastic Self-Realization Order send healing vibrations by prayer each day to SRF students and all others who request help in healing and liberating themselves from the threefold suffering of man: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance.

Any person who wishes to be included in the daily healing prayers may write, telephone, or telegraph SRF headquarters, Los Angeles.

Through the blessings of God and the Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship, thousands have received spiritual aid in solving and dissolving their problems.

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Comments on "Autobiography of a Yogi"

"*Autobiography of a Yogi* is the greatest gift I ever received in my life. Over the years I have read the New Testament seventy or eighty times. After reading Yogananda's book I suddenly understood the New Testament better than I ever had from all my previous readings and meditations on it. Never before nor since the publication of *Autobiography of a Yogi* has a book with such deep philosophy been written in such a simple manner. Only a masterpiece can have this characteristic. I think the greatest difference between the Occidental and the Oriental approach is this: the New Testament clearly points out the aim but does not describe clearly the ways to attain it; Yogananda shows you clearly the direct highway that leads to accomplishment of your aim. *Autobiography of a Yogi* is the emissary of great Gurus, designed to show seeking souls in the West 'the way' and 'the truth.'" — *L.L., York, Pennsylvania.*

"Fall classes in Adult Education here in Broward County started last week, and I want to thank you again for your kindness in sending the deeply meaningful and inspiring autobiography of Yogananda for use in my teachings. Some of my students have bought Yogananda's book, which I recommend highly, because I feel that no one of sincere purpose can read it without gaining in insight about himself and in spiritual status." — *H.F. (Ph.D.), Wilton Manors, Florida.*

"Master Yogananda's writings read very easily, because they speak not only to the mind but to the feelings also. When I read his autobiography (for the third time, now) I had the curious feeling that he had written the book especially for me. I think there must be others who have felt the same way." — *F.K., Sante Fe, New Mexico.*

"A thoughtful, repeated reading of *Autobiography of a Yogi* convinced me that this teaching of Yogananda is truly the path to happiness and peace of mind." — *J.F., San Francisco, California.*

"After much spiritual searching, I took a course in Yoga philosophy at the YMCA in Chicago. Through it I discovered a great thing: tolerance. Hindu philosophy teaches that all religion is good and leads to the same goal. This I loved and appreciated. I began subconsciously to pick this ideal from one religion and that ideal from another religion until I now have 'my own religion' which to me is the best of them

all because it fits my needs. Through this course at the YMCA I read *Autobiography of a Yogi*, the book that has inspired thousands. To realize that there are living saints deeply awakened my spiritual interest." — *P.A., Oak Park, Illinois.*

"Yogananda's autobiography has inspired me to begin practicing Yoga at once! My initial despair over the fact that I saw no way of coming to California for instruction was relieved when Yogananda explained, toward the end of his book, that anyone with a sincere interest could begin, through the SRF Lessons." — *S.M., Westminster, Colorado.*

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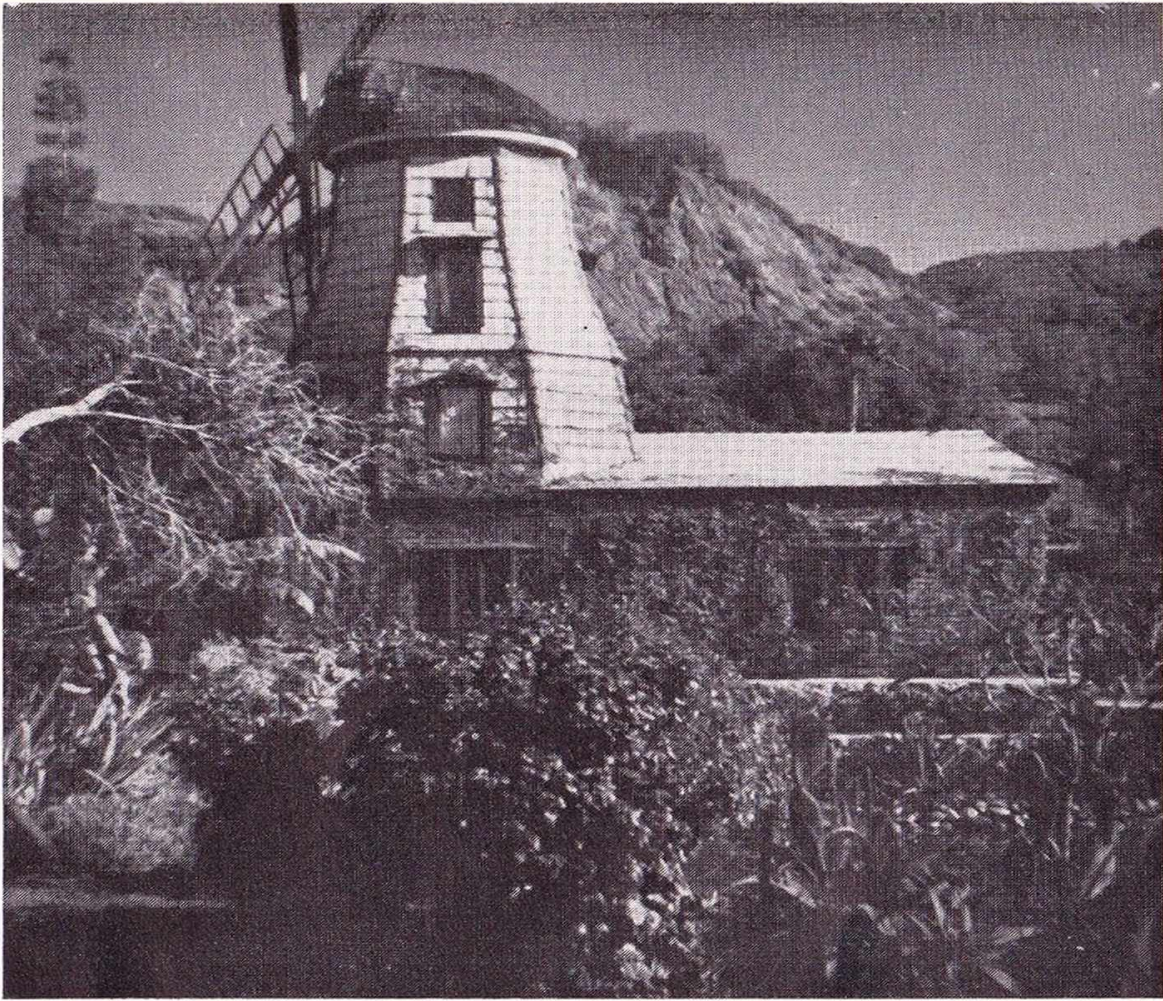
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