

Self-Realization

MAGAZINE



Founded in 1925 by PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

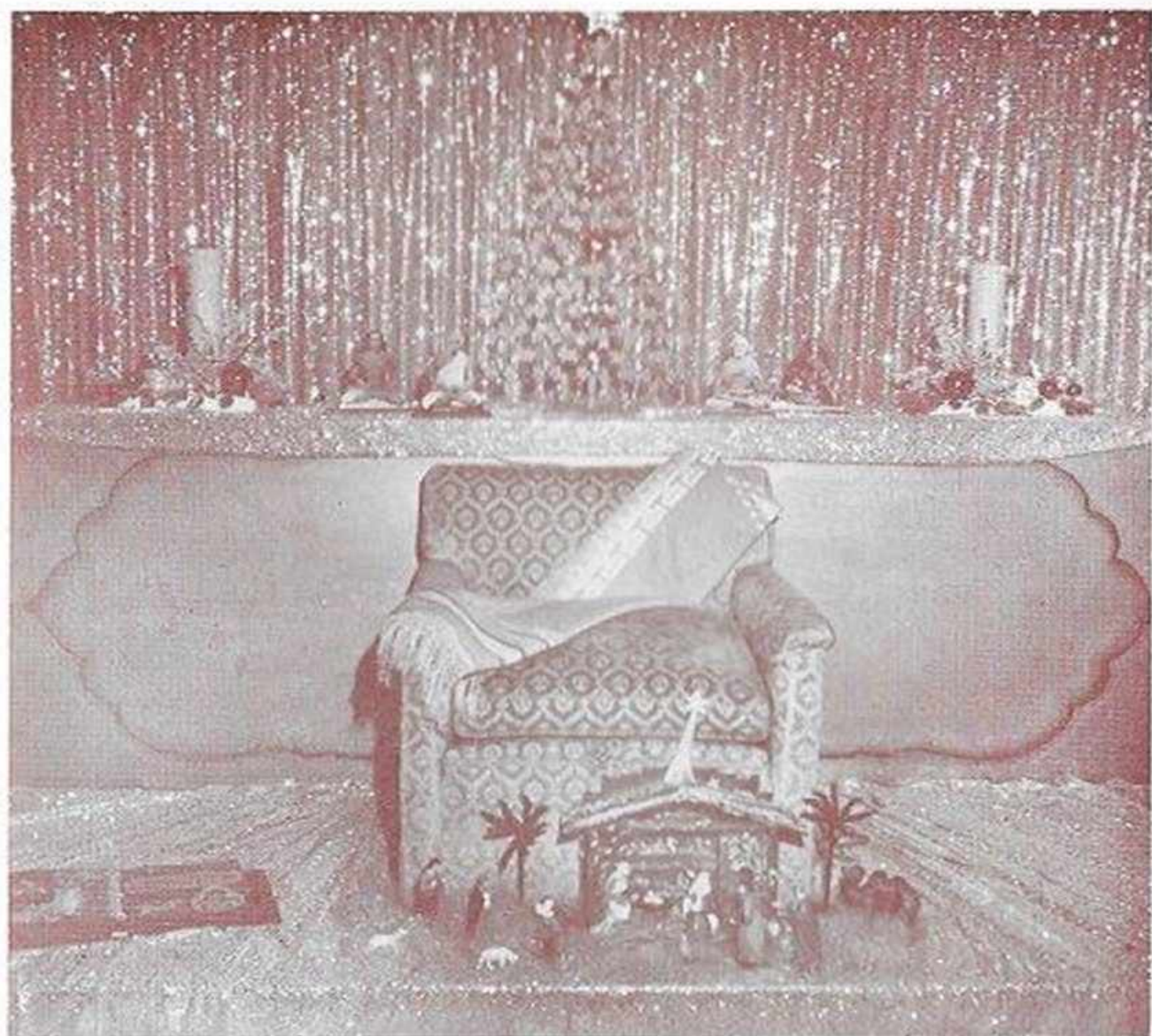


PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

Photograph taken in 1926

Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul

JAN.-FEB., 1955
25 CENTS



CHRISTMAS ALTAR, SRF HEADQUARTERS, LOS ANGELES

Meditation chair and shawl used for many years by Paramhansa Yogananda during the annual all-day Christmas meditations at SRF Headquarters. In the foreground is a nativity scene; above and behind the chair are wooden cut-out statuettes of the Masters Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramhansa Yogananda seated around a Christmas tree.

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January-February, 1955

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CONTENTS

Garden of the New Year (<i>poem</i>)	2
Hindu Theories of World-Creation	3
Letter From Sister Gyanamata	11
Yoga Postures For Health	13
Spiritual Interpretation of <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> by <i>Paramhansa Yogananda</i>	16
Your Only Freedom is to Find God	21
Book Review	22
Controlling Your New Year's Destiny by <i>Paramhansa Yogananda</i>	28
Yogis, Junior Style	35
Thought Seeds	36
News of SRF Centers	38

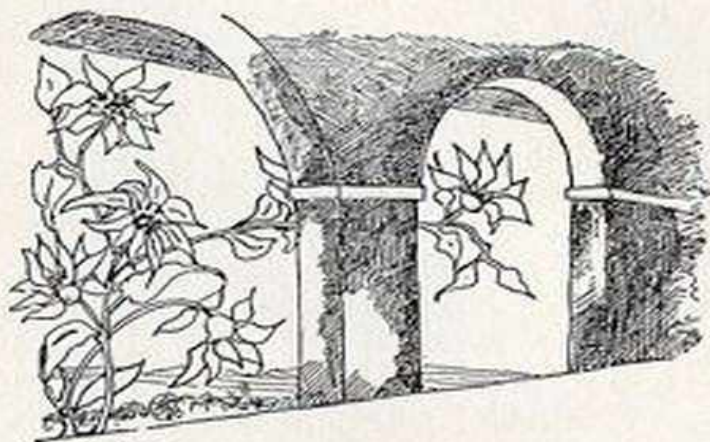
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The Garden of the New Year

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



The echoes of last year, its sorrow and laughter,
Have died away.
The song-voice of the New Year—encouraging, hope-imparting—
Is chanting:
"Refashion life ideally!"

Abandon the weeds of old worries.
From the forsaken garden of the past
Garner only seeds of joys and achievements,
Hopes, good actions and thoughts, all noble desires.

Sow in the fresh soil of each new day
Those valiant seeds; water and tend them
Until your life is fragrant
With rare flowering qualities.

The New Year whispers:
"Awaken your habit-dulled spirit
To zestful new effort.
Rest not till th' eternal freedom is won;
Outwitted, ever-pursuing karma!"

With joy-enlivened, unendingly united mind
Let us all dance forward, hand in hand,
To reach the Halcyon Home
From whence we wander no more.

Hindu Theories of World-Creation

By SATIS CHANDRA CHATTERJEE



In Hinduism the world is called *brahmānda*, literally, "egg of Brahma," suggesting that the world is evolved out of Brahma, the personified creative energy of God. *Brahmānda* refers to a universe that comprises seven *lokas* or regions: (1) *bhūrloka* or the earth, with seven subterranean *talas* or surfaces; (2) *bhūvarloka* or the sky, with the planets and the stars; (3) *svarloka* or the first heaven just above the sky; (4) *maharloka* or the second heaven; (5) *janaloka* or the third heaven; (6) *tapaloka* or the fourth heaven; and (7) *satyaloka* or the fifth heaven. These seven *lokas* comprise the *brahmānda*, which thus contains within it the solar system and many other regions. Beyond the *brahmānda* lie two other *lokas*: *Vaikuntha* and *Goloka*, the sixth and seventh heavens.¹

We are told that there are innumerable *brahmāndas* or world systems. The series of *brahmāndas* in time is beginningless and endless and all around this *brahmānda* of ours there blaze an infinite number of similar *brahmāndas*.² One *brahmānda* comes into being, lasts for a period of time, and then disappears, only to be succeeded by another *brahmānda* that also passes through the same stages; the cycles of recurrence are eternal. The process of evolution in the separate *brahmāndas* and in the whole universe of many *brahmāndas* is the same or very similar. Here we shall be concerned with the evolution of the *brahmānda* in which we live.

Most systems of Hindu philosophy do not believe in the creation of the world out of nothing, but hold that the world is evolved by God out of Himself (although we sometimes find the idea that the world is created by God out of pre-existing material or that it is evolved by *prakṛiti* or primal matter out of herself independently of the agency of God or the Self.)

The ideas in various Hindu scriptures that the world comes out of God by a process of evolution, that it is sustained by God, and that it finally returns to Him in dissolution are explained by several analogies. "Just as the spider weaves its web from substance within itself; just as herbs spring from the earth; and just as hair grows out of a man's body — so does the world issue forth from the immutable God." "Just as from a blazing fire myriad sparks are thrown off, so from God innumerable worlds are born."

The scriptures speak of God as the source of life, mind, the senses, ether, air, fire, water, earth, gods, men, birds, and beasts.³ The same

idea is more philosophically expressed in the later Hindu philosophies. God is said to have a lower nature that is differentiated into eight forms: earth, water, fire, air, ether, sensory mind, intellect, and ego. He has a higher nature that is manifested as the world of *jivas* or individual souls. All beings, conscious and unconscious, arise out of this twofold nature of God, who is thus the origin and end of the whole universe.⁴

The account of evolution of the world out of God as given in the ancient scriptures is as follows. "He (God), having meditated, desiring to create various beings from His own body, first put forth the waters; in these He placed the seed. It became a golden egg as radiant as the sun. In that was born Brahma, the grandsire of all worlds."⁵

This passage means that it is God's will to create a world that moves *prakriti* or the primal divine energy to act and conceive Brahma or Hiranyagarbha, the world-soul, who is endowed with infinite powers of knowledge, will, and action. Brahma becomes the creator of the world in all its aspects: subtle and gross, mental and physical. He does not create the world out of nothing but evolves it out of Himself. Brahma is surrounded by *prakriti* or *pradhana*, the ultimate cosmic energy, in which its constituent elements, the *gunas*,⁶ are held in equilibrium.

The energy of Brahma disturbs the equilibrium and there is a tremendous motion in *prakriti*; as a result *mahat* or *buddhi*, cosmic consciousness, appears. Out of *buddhi* comes *ahamkara*, the principle of egoity or individuation that differentiates homogeneous primal matter into various atoms of the subtlest kind. With the *guna*-expression of *tamas* in *prakriti*, there arise, out of *ahamkara*, the five *tanmatras* or subtle essences of ether, air, fire, water, and earth. And out of these, again, the gross elements of ether, air, fire, water, and earth are formed by the combination of one with the others in different proportions.

Similarly, with the *guna*-expression of *rajas*, *ahamkara* gives rise to the five sense-organs and the five action-organs. The same *ahamkara* when dominated by *sattva guna* generates the ten presiding deities of the sense-and-motor organs and of the mind (sense-consciousness) that is their co-ordinating organ.

The work of creation proceeds by calling into existence the *devas* or deities who guide and control the forces of nature. All objects of the physical world — minerals, planets, animals, men — appear after the primary creations of *mahat*, of the subtle elements, and of the sense-motor organs. The gross elements compose the physical bodies of the *jivas* (individual souls) and of the various *lokas* or globes that they inhabit. Their subtle bodies are formed by the subtle elements and the subtle products of *prakriti*. The sum-total of all subtle bodies is the body of Brahma.

As Brahma is concerned with the creation of the world, so Vishnu, the personified conservative energy of God, preserves and maintains the

world; Shiva, the god of destruction, disintegrates and destroys it at the end. These three processes—creation, maintenance, and destruction—make one complete cycle (*kalpa*) in the eternal series. One cycle is as long as a combined day and night of Brahma, each day and each night being equal to 432 million years of men.

The idea that all things and beings of the world arise out of *prakriti* through the influence of God is concisely, although figuratively, expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. It states that all beings arise out of *mahad-brahma* or *prakriti* into which God infuses the germ of creation; that God is the Father, and *prakriti* the mother or matrix of all creation.⁷

The six Hindu systems of philosophy present various theories of world-creation. However, they agree on one important point that is not clearly brought out in the more ancient Hindu scriptures. This point is the rationale of creation, the moral background of the universe. In Hinduism the world is regarded as a stage for the education and emancipation of individual souls. The world is not considered to be the result of blind physical forces that fortuitously act without moral purpose.

The order and history of the world are ultimately guided by justice or the law of karma, according to which all individual souls must reap the fruits of their own deeds done in this or the previous life. The world is created, maintained, and destroyed by God so that individual selves may have just those experiences of pleasure and pain that they deserve by their good and bad actions. The creation and destruction of the world thus serve the ends of divine justice.

Nyaya-Vaisesika Theories

The *Nyaya-Vaisesika* system of philosophy combines pluralism with theism. It believes in many independent realities: the four kinds of atoms (earth, water, fire, and air) *akasa* or ether, space, time, minds, and souls. According to it, God creates the world of composite objects out of these pre-existing materials. The process of creation and destruction of the world is guided and controlled by God in conformance with the moral law of karma.

When God wills to create a world, the unseen forces of moral deserts (*adrista*) in the individual souls begin to function and to need expression in the active life of experiences (*bhoga*). It is contact with souls endowed with the creative or expressive forces of *adrista* (unreaped karma) that first sets in motion the subtle elements of air, fire, water, and earth that combine to produce the four gross elements that are needed for the manifestation of a world.

God animates the new or embryonic *brahmanda* with Brahma, the world-soul. Brahma is entrusted with the work of creation in all its details, including the proper adjustment between merit and happiness, demerit and misery. The created world is maintained in existence for a

long time and is then destroyed by God to provide a way of escape from suffering for all living beings for some time.

When in the course of time Brahma thus gives up his body, the *adrista* or unseen moral deserts of individual souls operate as a destructive force. On account of this motion there is disjunction of the atoms and consequent bodily disintegration. Similarly, there is motion in the atoms of the elemental earth and its disintegration through the cessation of atomic conjunction. In this way there is destruction of the physical elements of earth, water, fire, and air, one after the other. Thus are destroyed all composite physical things, the four elements, all bodies and sense-organs; and what remain are the atoms in isolation and the eternal substances of *akasa*, time, space, minds, and souls with their merit and demerit. This period of unmanifested creation continues till a fresh process of manifested creation is started by the will of God.⁸

Theories of Creation in Sankhya Philosophy

The *Sankhya* system of Hindu philosophy, like several other systems, teaches that *prakriti* (cosmic energy or creative force) is unmanifested or quiescent when its three *gunas* or the ultimate constituents of the world (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) are held in equilibrium. With the contact between Purusha (Spirit) and *prakriti*, there is a disturbance of the equilibrium and a tremendous commotion in the infinite bosom of *prakriti*, in which each of the *gunas* tries to preponderate over the rest. There is, then, a gradual differentiation and integration of the three *gunas*; and, as a result of their combination in different proportions, the various objects of the world are produced. From *prakriti* arises, first, *mahat* or *buddhi* which in one aspect is the great germ of the universe; and in another aspect is the intellect in individual beings.

The second product of *prakriti* is *ahamkara* or the ego-consciousness that arises directly out of *mahat* or pure consciousness. *Ahamkara* causes the self to think of itself as "I" and of objects as "mine." It is the principle of individuation that differentiates the homogeneous cosmic energy into distinct and separate centers of existence.

From *ahamkara* as predominated by *sattva* arise the five organs of perception (*jnanendriya*), the five organs of action (*karmendriya*), and the mind (*manas*). From the same *ahamkara*, when dominated by *tamas*, arise the five subtle elements or *tanmatras* of sound, touch, color, taste, and smell.

Ahamkara as dominated by *rajas* is concerned in both changes above-mentioned; *rajas* supplies the energy needed for the mutations of *sattva* and *tamas* into their respective products.

The *tanmatras* are not material atoms but infra-atomic essences or potentialities out of which the five gross elements arise in the following way. From the essence of sound (*shabdatanmatra*) is produced *akasa* with

the quality of sound that is perceived by the ear. From the essence of touch (*sparsatanmatra*), combined with that of sound, arises air with the qualities of sound and touch. Out of the essence of color (*rupatanmatra*), mixed with those of sound and touch, there arises light or fire with the qualities of sound, touch, and color. From the essence of taste (*rasatanmatra*), combined with those of sound, touch, and color is produced the element of water with the properties of sound, touch, color, and taste. The essence of smell (*gandhatanmatra*), combined with the other four, gives rise to earth that has all five qualities: sound, touch, color, taste, and smell. From the combination of these physical elements (*mahabhutas*) arise all complex physical objects including the gross and subtle bodies of man.

The *mahabhutas* are not regarded as separate principles, because they are only compounds of other principles. The history of the world is a play of twenty-five cosmic principles, of which *prakriti* is the first and the five gross elements are the last. But manifested creation is not complete in itself and has a necessary reference to the world of selves as the witnesses or enjoyers thereof. The world cycles are not a mechanical system with no rational purposes behind them; they serve the most fundamental ends of moral and spiritual life. In *Sankhya* philosophy, the evolution of *prakriti* into a world makes for a moral order (*rita*) in which individual selves may realize themselves and attain the highest end of life, namely, liberation.⁹

Theories of World-Creation in Yoga Treatises

In the *Yoga* system of philosophy we have a theistic theory of the world in which God is regarded as the Supreme Person distinct from all other persons, the One who acts as the Supreme Ruler of creation. World-creation is due to the association between Purusha (Spirit) and *prakriti*; and world-dissolution to the dissociation of the one from the other. But these changes cannot be effected by individual selves, who are limited in power and knowledge. God is the perfect and omniscient Being who brings about the association or dissociation between Purusha and *prakriti*, according as the *adrista* or unrepaid karma of the individual selves requires the creation or destruction of the world. Without the guidance of God *prakriti* cannot produce just that order of the world which is suited to the moral education and final emancipation of the *jivas*. The process of evolution or dissolution of the world is explained in the *Yoga* in the same way as in the allied system of the *Sankhya*.¹⁰

Theories in Mimamsa Philosophy

In the *Mimamsa* philosophy the creation of the world is explained by the law of karma that works independently of God. It believes in the realities of the world that contains diverse creations including living

bodies, souls, heaven, hell, and deities to whom sacrifices should be performed. The formation of the world is guided by the law of karma that independently regulates the atoms to build up just the kind of world in which souls may reap the consequences of their past deeds.¹¹

Monism or Advaita Vedanta

Let us now consider the *Vedanta* theories of the world. *Vedanta* is the cream of the Vedic culture on its speculative side and is perhaps the ruling creed of the Hindus even today. There are two main schools of *Vedanta*: *Advaita* and *Visistadvaita*. Connected with them we find two different theories of the world that we propose to explain separately.

Advaita Vedanta gives us a monistic theory of the world. It holds that there is only one reality, called Brahman, who is pure existence, pure consciousness, and pure bliss. This reality or Brahman has no difference or plurality within or outside it. It has not even qualities or characteristics to distinguish it from other things. It is perfectly indeterminate and pure being that is of the nature of self-revealing consciousness and blissful existence.

It follows that the manifested world of many things and beings or individual souls is not ultimately real, but a mere appearance *like* an object in a dream or illusion. There is in Brahman some inscrutable power to produce the appearance of a world of many objects in the same way that a magician makes one coin appear as many coins. The origin of the world lies in this magical power of Brahman, called *maya*. Brahman associated with *maya* is called Isvara or God in His aspect as Creator of the world.

Maya as a power of Brahman is indistinguishable from Him, just as the burning power of fire is indistinguishable from fire itself. It is by this power of illusion that Brahman, the Great Magician, conjures up the world-show with all its wonderful objects. *Maya* has the double function of concealing (*avarana*) Brahman from our view and of distorting (*viksepa*) Him in our minds into the appearance of an external world. *Maya* is neither real nor unreal, but indescribable.

Just as a magician's illusions do not deceive him but only ignorant people, so *maya*, the magical productions in creation, do not affect or deceive Brahman. For Him, *maya* is only the will-to-create the appearance of a world. For ignorant people like us, who are deceived by the magic and who see many objects instead of one Brahman, *maya* is an illusion-producing ignorance. In this respect *maya* is also called *avidya* or *ajnana* (literally, "not-knowledge").

Insofar as *maya* positively produces the appearance of a world, it is called positive ignorance (*bhava-rupa ajnana*); and insofar as the world has no beginning, *maya* also is said to be beginningless (*anadi*). But just as for a discerning man who sees through the trick, the magician's

wand produces no illusion, so for the wise few who are not deceived by the world-show and who perceive in it nothing but Brahman, there is no illusion of the world nor of any illusion-producing *maya*. For *advaita* sages, therefore, Brahman is not the wielder of *maya* at all.¹²

In monistic or *Advaita Vedanta* the creation of the world is thus understood to be the appearance of the world out of Brahman through his power of *maya*. Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the world insofar as He is the only reality or substance underlying the phenomenal world, the One with the magical power of projecting the appearance of a world. Brahman by his legerdemain becomes all this that we call the world. But the modification of Brahman into the world is not real, only apparent.

The real modification of any substance into another (as of milk into curd) is called *parinama*; apparent or illusory modification of a substance, as of a rope into a supposed snake, is called *vivarta*. The *advaita* theory of creation is, therefore, known as *vivartavada* or illusory (as distinguished from the *Sankhya* theory that claims a real modification of *prakriti*—called *parinama-vada* theory). *Advaita* or monistic *Vedanta* thus teaches only a seeming evolution of the world out of Brahman through His power of *maya*.

In this process of evolution, at first there arise out of Brahman the five subtle elements, in this order: *akasa* or ether, *vayu* or air, *agni* or fire, *ap* or water, *ksiti* or earth. These five are then mixed up together in five different proportions to give rise to the gross elements of ether, air, fire, water, and earth. Each gross element is produced by condensation and combination of the subtle elements, in the proportion of half of one element and one-eighth of each of the other four elements. This process is known as *pancikarana* or combination of the five.

Again, from the *sattvika* part of each of the five subtle elements (*akasa*, etc.) arises each of the five senses (hearing, etc.); from a combination of the *sattvika* parts of the same subtle elements arise *buddhi* and *manas*; from the *rajasic* parts of the subtle elements arise severally the five organs of action; and from a combination of the same *rajasic* parts arise the five *pranas* or vital breaths.

The subtle body of man consists of: five senses, five organs of action, five *pranas*, *buddhi*, and *manas*—all of which arise out of the subtle elements. The gross body as well as all gross objects of nature is produced out of the gross elements that arise by the mixture of the five subtle ones.¹³

The evolution of the world out of Brahman through *maya* is thus a process of apparent change of the subtle to the gross. Three stages are sometimes distinguished in this process of evolution. Brahman, the unchanging reality, cannot be said to be undergoing evolution. All change and evolution, therefore, belong to the sphere of *maya*. It is *maya*, the

creative power, that at first remains unmanifested, then becomes differentiated into subtle objects, and then into gross ones.

Brahman conceived as the possessor of the undifferentiated *maya* is named Isvara and described as omniscient and omnipotent. Brahman possessed of subtly differentiated *maya* is called Hiranyagarbha (also Sutrātma and Prana); God in this aspect is the totality of all subtle objects. Brahman possessed of *maya* differentiated further into gross objects is called Vaisvanara (also Virat); this aspect of God is the totality of all gross objects including the *jivas* or individual souls.

However, the entire process of evolution of the world, according to *Advaita Vedānta*, is a seeming change of the Unchanging, an apparent modification of the Immutable, and an imaginary superimposition (*adhyasa*) of creation on Brahman.

Qualified Monism — School of Visistadvaita

In the *Visistadvaita* school of *Vedānta* we have the theory of qualified monism. According to it, there is one ultimate reality: Brahman. But Brahman is not, as the unqualified monist (*advaitin*) thinks, a distinctionless, indeterminate reality, but the Supreme Person who contains the world of individual souls and material objects as parts of Himself. Brahman is unity possessed of real parts (*visista*), the conscious and the unconscious.

Both unconscious matter (*acit*) and finite spirits (*cit*) exist within Brahman as uncreated and eternal. *Acit* is the source of material objects and as such is called *prakṛiti*, the root or origin of the world of objects. This *prakṛiti*, unlike the *prakṛiti* expounded in *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy, is a part of God and controlled by God, just as the human body is controlled by the indwelling soul. During the state of dissolution (*pralaya*) this primal unconscious matter, *acit* or *prakṛiti*, remains in a latent (*sūkṣma*) and undifferentiated (*avibhakta*) form.

God creates out of *prakṛiti* the world of diverse objects in accordance with the merits and demerits of the souls in the world prior to the last dissolution. Impelled by the omnipotent will of God, the undifferentiated subtle matter gradually becomes transformed into three kinds of subtle elements — fire, water, and earth. These differentiated elements manifest also the three kinds of qualities known as *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Gradually the three subtle elements become mixed up together, and give rise to all gross objects that we perceive in the material world. In every object of the world there is a mixture of the three elements. This process is known as *trivṛkaraṇa* or triplication.¹⁴

According to *Visistadvaita Vedānta*, then, creation is not an apparent evolution of the world out of God through its power of *maya*. Creation

(Continued on page 50)



A Letter From Sister Gyanamata

(Sister Gyanamata [1869-1951] was the most spiritually advanced woman disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda. She met him in Seattle, Washington, in 1924; eight years later she took the vows of a Sister of the SRF Order.)

New Year's Day, 1940

To my Master, blessed and beloved:

I thank you for your Christmas gift—the little lacquered box. I have not decided what to keep in it yet, but I like to look at it. It reminds me of how much you like golden things—emblems, I suppose, of the pure gold of spiritual consciousness, free from any alloy of baseness.

After you left Seattle I asked myself what method I could take to be receptive to you. I could think of no other way than by keeping you before my mind by deliberate acts. So, at seven o'clock each morning, I stopped whatever I was doing and concentrated for a moment, saying, "He is praying, for *me*." I mentally followed you around the country as you went from city to city on lecture tours.

Do you remember my taking you upstairs to my room when you came to my house in Seattle? Silently you looked at my pictures of holy men; and then, turning your back to the long row of windows, you prayed for me very softly and gave me my first blessing—the one that opened the cervical center* and enabled me to hear the *Aum*. After that, as long

*One of the seven centers or *chakras* ("wheels") in man's cerebrospinal axis; each of the seven possesses a different number of "spokes" or rays composed of prana or life force. The cosmic sound of *Aum* (Amen) is heard in the cervical center as "the soundless roar," and is proof of God's activity in every atom of creation.

as I remained in Seattle, a vase of orange flowers (that were sometimes fresh blossoms and sometimes artificial ones) stayed on the floor to mark the spot where you had stood.

In my room now is a robe of yours that K gave me, together with *Kriya* beads, the rosary from the Mount of Olives, and the little white stone you blessed for me the last time I was ill; all were given by you, so all are sacred. It would make this letter too long to write all the things I have done that you might be a real presence with me in my room, in my mind, and in my soul.

The path by which you reach me is now a well-beaten one. I no longer need external aids (but I like them just the same, and add another to the list whenever one occurs to me).

I never think that anything you give me is a reward. I am not a hireling, but your own. The difference between you and me is one of degree, not of kind; for the goal I long for, work for, pray for, is the same goal to which your Holiness has attained. So this work of yours is *my* work. I do not mean that I do not appreciate the golden words of praise you speak to me from time to time. I repeat them over and over to myself, feeding on them in my heart with prayer and thanksgiving.

On the card that came with your gift, you said that I must remain here on earth to be with you. That thought was in my mind before I received your gift and card. As I contemplated the year just commencing, I said to myself, "Perhaps I have another year in which to be near him." That was what I came for—to be near my Guru. So I am not trying to get away. In the first place, I couldn't. You support my life. I have no power to reject your healings even if I wanted to. But I don't want to. How thankfully, how gratefully, I accept them when they come! In the second place, to try to get away would be a despicable act, after the blessings you have poured out for me. God forbid that I should so requite you!

O Blessed Master, how did you manage to give me so much time during this, the busiest season of the year? Perhaps it does not take time so much as intensity of effort. For three mornings the healing vibrations came; the body was relieved and comforted, and the mind lifted up to God. Without your help I could not have succeeded at all in making my Christmas the kind I wanted it to be.

You gave me another glorious morning today. I was wrapped in power, with flashes of golden light.

I adore you, the vehicle of His glory.

Guru-Lord, remember me—the poor Sister—when thou comest into thy kingdom.

GYANAMATA

Yoga Postures For Health

By REV. C. BERNARD

SAVASANA—The Relaxing Pose



In watching students who are learning the postures I have seen one mistake made consistently. The beginner, eager to learn as much as he can in the shortest possible time, tries hurriedly to do too many different asanas in the time at his disposal. As a result of this hurried, anxious attitude, he cheats himself—more than he may realize—of benefits he should receive. He would expend less energy and achieve more good in the same period if he were to essay fewer postures, allowing ample time between each one for the practice of *Savasana*, the Relaxing Pose.

All the asanas or body postures are based on fundamental biological principles. To disregard in performance those physiological principles upon which the practice is based is surely foolish, whether the practitioner is aware of his error or not. All yoga practices are intended to help the individual to achieve an improved state of well-being, to gain greater harmony in the interrelationship of body, mind, and life forces. The yogi should therefore employ all his efforts correctly, so as to harmonize with psychophysical relationships.

Each of the yogic body poses is held by muscular tension, created either by the contraction or by the stretching of certain muscles. Great good comes from this squeezing of the muscle fibers in the muscle group, and from the pressure that this squeezing places on adjacent tissues and organs. But the squeezing is only half of the benefit; the other half, equally important, is the resulting vast increase in efficiency of all fluid circulation.

When the beginner makes his usual mistake of practicing one pose after another without sufficient pauses, he receives only a little of the great circulatory increase that he should gain. Why is this so? Because the efficacy of asana practice is dependent on the sequence of muscular stretching or contraction *alternating with relaxation*. In order to understand the essentiality of relaxation to successful practice, it is necessary to know some facts about the circulatory system.

In the human body there are three closely interrelated yet somewhat independent networks of tubes and vessels that confine and conduct the bodily fluids. Each of these three systems employs some means that causes circulation of the contained fluids.

The main route of supply for moisture and nutrition (including

oxygen) is the arterial system, consisting of large arteries branching into many smaller arterioles, which in turn divide into an incredible number of hairlike tubules called capillaries. These countless microscopic true capillaries infiltrate all tissues and bring the blood into intimate contact with the body cells. Bypassing the tortuous network of the very fine true capillaries are some vessels larger than the true capillaries and smaller than the arterioles from which they branch. These are usually referred to as a-v capillaries (a-v meaning arterial-venous); they carry some of the blood stream directly from the arterial supply to the venous system for return to the heart. The true capillaries also join the venous system but only after traversing the tissues that they nourish.

The venous system begins with this continuation of the arterial capillaries. Where the capillaries become part of the return circuit, they are called venous capillaries. The venous capillaries then join into larger vessels, venules, which in turn combine to form the main vessels of return, the veins. Arterial circulation moves from the heart toward the tissues. Venous circulation leads away from the tissues and organs that the blood has served and, by thus bringing the blood back to the heart, completes part of the fluid circuit.

What is the motive power that causes this circulation of the blood? In the arterial system it is the heart principally, with some help also from arterial peristalsis (a rhythmic wave motion producing forward flow of contained fluid), which acts as a force pump to drive the nutrition-charged arterial blood toward the organs and tissues where it is needed. But what force is there to assure the return of venous blood to the heart? Some motive power, but significantly little, remains from the pressure in the arterial system that drives the blood through the minute capillaries. Practically all of the pressure in the blood stream produced by the pumping action of the heart is dissipated in the friction occasioned by forcing the blood corpuscles through the capillaries, which in many cases are smaller than the corpuscles themselves.

Now let us see just what happens in the heart action. The heart contracts to drive blood into the arterial system; then, as the contracted chambers of the heart relax and expand, a vacuum (technically referred to as negative pressure) is produced in the venous system. This causes blood to rush from the veins in order to fill the heart. The partial emptying of the large veins into the heart creates pressure differences in the venous system that cause movement of toxin-laden blood from the organs and tissues toward the purifying organs and toward the heart. It is important to realize that with this amount of circulation the body can maintain life, *but it will never thrive!*

Even though the organs and tissues are interlaced with many millions of the minute capillary tubes, not necessarily all of the available capillary channels are open to permit the flow of blood. It has been found

that in a state of rest the true capillaries in a muscle may be shut off, circulation of blood being accomplished only by the a-v capillaries (which, strictly speaking, are really tiny arterioles). In this condition the tissues derive very little circulation or exchange of gases and chemicals. Thus in a muscle that is not being activated by neurological or neuro-chemical stimulus only as little as two to five per cent of the capillary channels may be open. With exercise the capillary channels open up, and the relative efficiency of blood circulation under this condition is tremendously greater. It has been estimated that when all channels of the voluntary muscle capillaries are in use, the blood stream is exposed to more than 60,000 square feet of capillary wall! From this fact one can deduce the immense importance, in fact, the absolute indispensability of proper exercise and nerve stimulation for the maintenance of good health.

Exercise and the reversal of gravitational influences on the body (by inverting the trunk in asanas such as the Shoulder Stand, or by using a slanting board to elevate the lower limbs and pelvis) increase the vital circulation. Actually every alternate contraction and relaxation of the muscles produces a pumping action essentially similar to that of the heart. Let us review the sequence of changes that occurs in the pumping action of that marvelous organ. When the heart contracts it becomes smaller, and blood is forced out of the ventricles into the arteries. Following contraction, which empties the ventricles, there must be a period of relaxation to allow them to fill again. Only this alternating of contraction and relaxation makes possible the complete cycle that provides a continuous pumping action of the heart.

Let us suppose that the ventricle contracted to expel the blood but did not relax afterward. What would happen? Circulation would stop at once. There can be no circulation without the alternation of contraction *and relaxation*. When you tense muscles anywhere in the body, you duplicate the heart action. Temporary contraction or tension of the muscles followed by relaxation pumps the venous blood along its channels and allows fresh blood to flow into the tissues from the arterial system. Residual tensions (i.e., those which do not quickly release but remain for long periods) or spastic conditions greatly impede the circulation. Relaxation is supremely important!

It is now plain why the practiced yogi advises a period of relaxation equal at least to the period of tension in the performance of any asana. To accomplish this relaxation more perfectly, the yogis use a position called *Savasana*, the Relaxing Pose. The position is so easily assumed that a picture is hardly necessary. Simply lie on the back on a firm surface (it may be padded, but it must not sag) with legs straight, heels touching, toes pointing outward at a comfortable angle (approximately thirty

(Continued on page 51)

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter VI, Verse 34

Literal Translation

Arjuna said:

O Krishna, verily the mind is unsteady, tumultuous, powerful, obstinate! I consider the mind as difficult to master as the wind!

Spiritual Interpretation

The devotee in deep despair says: "O Krishna! how may one control the mind, which is ever-restless like the volatile breath, in spite of yoga practice." When the bad habit of restlessness is conquered by the stronger habit of tranquillity that is acquired by patient, enthusiastic, long-continued yoga practice, the devotee finally finds the answer to his prayer.

The yogi who has often experienced the divine bliss of meditation should remain watchful against the sudden appearance of material desires and worldly moods. Care should be observed lest the devotee stop practicing yoga through the influence of misleading subconscious impulses that mar tranquillity and arouse interest in material pleasures. Instead of giving strength to his abnormal nature of restlessness, the yogi should strive to recall his true nature of tranquillity as manifested during yoga practice, and should strengthen it by deeper meditation.

Arjuna compares the mind to the wind. Here the deeper meaning

of "wind" is breath; for the changeableness and waywardness of the human mind is ineluctably bound up with man's breathing patterns. The glory of India's ancient sages is that they discovered the liberating truth: to control the breath is to control the mind.

The ordinary man may try unsuccessfully to restrain his breath by unscientifically holding it in the lungs. The Kriya Yogi, on the other hand, is able to oxygenate his blood scientifically and thus remove from it most of the carbon; he requires little breath. His is the real way of controlling the breath.

It is impossible to control the breath by the unscientific way of holding it in the lungs. The discomfort of forcible withholding of the breath proves that the act is injurious to health. During the forcible withholding of the breath in the lungs the oxygen is used up, resulting in a greater accumulation of carbon in the air tubes. This causes pressure, discomfort, and pain in the lungs. No one should hold the breath in the lungs to the point of discomfort.

Similarly, the ordinary man who tries forcibly to control the mind finds himself unsuccessful. But when he practices the scientific method of Kriya Yoga and learns to withdraw his life force from the five sense telephones, his mind is automatically freed from sensations and from the conscious and subconscious thoughts accruing from those sensations.

The aspirant should not be discouraged by initial failure in the most difficult art of mind-control. By scientific yoga the beginner finds the right way to free the mind from all conscious and subconscious restlessness. Of course, much depends on one's intensity, zeal, and continuity. These will help the mind to grow into the habit of peace and to rise above the unnatural mortal habit of restlessness that is rooted in the identification of consciousness with the bodily senses.

Chapter VI, Verse 35

Literal Translation

The blessed Lord said:

O Mahabab ("mighty-armed" Arjuna), undoubtedly the mind is fickle and unruly; but by (yoga) practice and by dispassion, the mind may nevertheless be controlled.

Spiritual Interpretation

The real nature of the soul is ever-new bliss, but owing to identification with the body, the soul develops a powerful eclipsing "second nature" of restlessness. In that state it is "natural" for the mind to be boisterous and unruly. Yet, by yoga practice, when the mind contacts the true bliss and becomes disengaged from the short-lived sense pleasures, the consciousness of the devotee again displays its true restful divine nature. Man has

not to acquire, but to remember, the soul joy within.

In response to the prayer of the ideal devotee, Arjuna, his God-incarnate guru, Krishna, revealed to him the following wisdom, applicable to all yogis:

"O mighty-armed devotee, made in the image of Spirit! no doubt the mind is restless and difficult to control! But there are two ways to subdue it. First: By meditation and ecstasy the mind must be taught to regain its natural power of abiding in the soul's tranquil nature. Second: At the same time the mind must be dispassionately disengaged from desires for pleasures of this world and of the hereafter—desires that stimulate the mind to restlessness. In other words, the yogi should revive by daily deep yoga-practice the memory of soul tranquillity, and should simultaneously keep the mind away from external and internal temptations. He cannot permanently feel the joy of his soul in meditation if he does not sever his desireful ties with the sensory environment.

The yogi must learn to win the tug of war between soul perception and sense perception. In the initial state of yoga practice the devotee is aware of the gripping influence of sense pleasures even though they are short-lasting, but he is little aware of the permanent unending bliss secreted in his soul. The discriminating yogi will therefore find it natural that the habits of sense pleasures gathered from incarnations will be of stronger influence than his fleeting glimpses of soul bliss perceived during meditation. But he will also realize that even though habits of sense pleasures are very strong, they are not stronger than is the eternal perception of divine bliss present in the soul—the inextinguishable inheritance from Spirit.

The yogi should not stimulate his material habits by remaining actually in unspiritual environments and by merely dreaming of the heavenly joys of sainthood. By staying away from worldly pleasure-reminding environments and by relinquishing sense attractions the yogi is better able to concentrate on the divine bliss of the soul. As a naughty boy should be removed from a restless environment and kept, instead, in the company of a calm friend, so the yogi should remove his restless mind from sense entanglements and keep it concentrated on soul perceptions.

The practice of yoga is defined as repeated inner and outer efforts to remain in the eternal tranquillity of the soul. "Dispassion" is the act of disengaging the mind from all forms of sensory pleasures as found in this world or (as described in the scriptures) to be found in heaven. Many men picture paradise as a place where they can enjoy an unlimited number of sensory pleasures. The yogi is warned to keep his mind away from everything that reminds him of impermanent worldly joys and that causes him to forget the everlasting bliss of his soul.

Chapter VI, Verse 36

Literal Translation

This is My word: Yoga is difficult of attainment by the ungoverned man; but he who is self-controlled will, by proper methods, be able to achieve it.

Spiritual Interpretation

"It is natural for people who constantly indulge in restless habits to become more restless; similarly it is natural for calm devotees, those who perseveringly practice yoga, to become more divinely tranquil."

A yogi who meditates with a mind enslaved by sense pleasures will be unable to revive his consciousness of the lost soul-happiness. But that devotee can attain the union of soul and Spirit who convinces his mind of the misery-making results of pursuing sense pleasures and therefore stays away from them, and who assiduously tries to taste the superior bliss of the soul by deep regular yoga-practice.

Chapter VI, Verses 37-38-39

Literal Translation

Arjuna said:

O Krishna! what happens to a person unsuccessful in yoga—one who has devotedly tried to meditate but who has been unable to control himself because his mind kept running away during yoga practice?

Does a yogi perish like a sundered cloud if he finds not the way to Brahma (Spirit)—being thus unsheltered in Him and steeped in delusion, sidetracked from both paths—the one of God-union and the one of right activities?

Remove forever all my doubts, O Krishna! for none save Thee may banish my uncertainties.

Spiritual Interpretation

The discouraged devotee in deepest prayer resorts to God as the mighty Cosmic Physician who alone is able to cure the deep-seated disease of material doubts.

Not all yogis realize their Goal just because they practice a yoga technique. There are two kinds of unsuccessful yogis. One type practices yoga with deep enthusiasm in the beginning but afterward relaxes his efforts. The second type continues to meditate regularly and with devotion almost to the end of his life. Shortly before death, however, owing to some past bad karma or to present indulgence in bad company, the yogi loses concentration on the soul's bliss.

An unsuccessful yogi often feels that he is like a cloud dispersed by the wind, unable to quench the thirst of himself or others by a rainfall

of wisdom. He realizes he has strayed away from the path leading to God. He bemoans the fact that he is not established in Him. He feels that he is deluded, unable to ascertain his real duty in life. Such a discouraged devotee allows himself to be diverted from his former path of seeking union with God by yoga and by right actions and meditation.

Chapter VI, Verse 40

Literal Translation

The blessed Lord said:

O Arjuna, My son! a performer of good actions never meets destruction. Whether in this world or in the beyond, he falls not into evil plight!

Spiritual Interpretation

Arjuna here receives a wonderful reply from the Divine Preceptor. This stanza of the *Bhagavad Gita* stands as a monument of inspiration to all sincere yogis who have failed to unite their souls with God because of obstructions arising from prenatal and post-natal actions.

A man who does not seek divine union remains steeped in ignorance, a target for all kinds of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering. A person totally identified with sense pleasures has no chance to get even a glimpse through the gate of eternal freedom.

The fate of the sense-addict is comparable, in a way, to that of the musk deer. At a certain age a navel sac of the deer bursts and exudes a fragrant musk substance. Frantically seeking the origin of the perfume, the deer sniffs wildly in every direction; not finding any external source of fragrance, the creature destroys itself by mad dashes among the rocks. Alas, if the deer had only put its nostrils to its navel! The sense-addict, similarly, seeking the fragrance of bliss in every place except the soul, perishes in trying to find pleasure. Had he concentrated his attention within, he would have discovered the longed-for happiness.

The greedy man can never be satisfied even by endless banquets; he tries to satisfy the sense of taste rather than the slight needs of the body. The lustful man, untrue to his wife, can never be satisfied by continual acts of sex indulgence. The drunkard, too, goes on drinking until he kills himself; he cannot satisfy a quenchless thirst. That man, on the other hand, who is not enslaved to the senses is easily satisfied because he uses the senses to serve him, not allowing them to master him.

The fallen yogi who has occasionally succeeded in experiencing the superior bliss of his soul cannot forget it; he well knows there is no comparison between ever-new divine joy and the gross pleasures of the senses.

It would indeed be unnatural for a person to find pleasure in feeding somebody else as often as he himself felt hungry; he would soon starve.

(Continued on page 51)

Your Only Freedom is to Find God

By SIVA



It does not lie within your power to satisfy all your worldly desires. You may have any number of ambitions, but they will never be fulfilled if your karma of this or a past life does not justify such fulfillment. On the other hand, if your desire is for God, that aspiration leads inevitably to fulfillment.

The realization of earthly hopes is uncertain, even with your best efforts; but the attainment of God is quite certain merely through irrepensible yearning.

To have mundane desires is one thing and to obtain their fulfillment is another. Even in cases of fulfillment one's heart is still not satisfied, because no object of enjoyment nor any worldly circumstance is perfect and complete. Wherever there is imperfection there is something lacking; and this deficiency leads to pain. But once God has been attained, all difficulties and sorrows vanish, because He lacks nothing and is perfect in every way.

Even when the desired earthly possessions are obtained, enjoyment in them will cease, or they will perish; thus, ultimately, they cause pain. But once God is attained there is no end to our possession of ever-new bliss.

The desire for sense enjoyments deprives man of his power of discrimination and drives him to misdeeds and sins. It is desire that breeds sin. Man commits wrongs in trying to obtain worldly objects for enjoyment; and the inevitable result is suffering. On the other hand, by the aspiration to attain God, man's heart is purified and his wisdom increased. All the means and methods employed by the aspirant are pure, holy, and ethically perfect, because the aspiration itself is meritorious and proper to the essential nature of man.

A man obsessed with desire for sense enjoyments is restless at heart all his life. And at the time of death various kinds of cares and anxieties, unsatisfied ambitions, and the impending separation from his possessions torment him. On the other hand, the man who aspires to attain God and whose heart is full of devotion lives a righteous and happy life; and in his last moments, calling on the blissful name of the Lord, he goes to the abode of perfect peace.

You are never free to obtain all desired objects of worldly enjoyment, but you are quite free in renouncing desires and in devoting yourself to God and His worship. Use that freedom! — *Kalyana-Kalpataru*.

BOOK REVIEWS

SELECTED WRITINGS OF MAHATMA GANDHI, with an Introduction by Ronald Duncan. (The Beacon Press, Boston, Massachusetts; cloth, 253 pp., 1951, \$3.50.)

"Though detachment must always be the biographer's aim, he can never achieve it; and more often than not he succeeds in revealing nothing but himself. This being so, perhaps he should in the first place admit to those factors which have probably limited his vision and thus give the reader the chance to make adjustments accordingly."

Ronald Duncan thus ingratiatingly introduces the events that led up to his meeting and living with Gandhiji for a time in the latter's ashram in Wardha, India.

As a sociological experiment Mr. Duncan had spent some time working in a mine at Yorkshire, England, and subsequently as an observer (and abettor) of a stay-in strike at a mine in the Rhondda Valley. As a result of these experiences he became interested in the possibilities of passive resistance.

"I could see the need of personal discipline even in industrial disputes. This realization turned me from all the current political theories with their ridiculous simplifications. Dimly, I perceived what our age needed most was saints, not politicians.

"True to type, I wrote a pamphlet about the matter and as nobody would sell it when it was printed, I posted the copies away to anybody whose name came to mind. One of these was, of course, Mahatma Gandhi."

Mr. Duncan was surprised to receive a reply. He and Gandhiji engaged in correspondence, but the mail was slow; Duncan (still in his early twenties) impatiently suggested a meeting. Gandhi at once cabled assent, setting a date so early as to necessitate the young reformer's leaving London within two days!

The ocean voyage was uneventful, he relates, but the wildly bouncing bullock-cart ride from the Wardha station toward the Mahatma's ashram was so unnerving that Mr. Duncan did not at first recognize Gandhi when the latter approached the cart on the road ("not a road; it was all ruts and bumps"). Gandhi had walked three miles to meet him; and, without a word of introduction, remarked: "As I was saying in my last letter... the best we can do is to make sure of the method and examine our motive...." Whereupon, Mr. Duncan writes, "we began to walk across this desert scrub, continuing our discussion as though neither time nor place had interrupted our correspondence. I noted Gandhi

never referred to my arrival — which I suppose was one way of making me feel at home and saved us the time of discussing something of no consequence."

Mr. Duncan remained with Gandhiji for some time, taking part in the activities of the Wardha ashram, spending two hours each day talking with Gandhi and then accompanying him on his morning walk. The reader will find in Mr. Duncan's observations the freshness of honesty laced with wit ("In 1937 I was only twenty-two, and that is probably not the best age at which one can assess the achievements or the personality of a philosopher of sixty."). To clarity of observation he adds a reinforcing warmth of real appreciation for India's political saint. He explains in conclusion the basis of his choice of selections from Gandhi's writings:

"In making this selection I have tried to bear three things in mind: firstly, my intention to present material of permanent interest as opposed to comments on day-to-day political matters; also to show the development and to give the essence of his philosophy of *satyagraha*, and its basis in the religious teachings of the *Gita*; and thirdly, I have tried to emphasize those ideas which, though they may not seem immediately applicable to Western life, should be of considerable relevance to contemporary thought."

Some extracts from Gandhi's writings are the following:

In Hinduism incarnation is ascribed to one who has performed some extraordinary service of mankind. All embodied life is in reality an incarnation of God, but it is not usual to consider every living being an incarnation. Future generations pay this homage to one who, in his own generation, has been extraordinarily religious in his conduct. I can see nothing wrong in this procedure. It takes nothing from God's greatness, and there is no violence done to Truth. There is an Urdu saying which means, "Adam is not God but he is a spark of the Divine." And therefore he who is the most religiously behaved has most of the divine spark in him. It is in accordance with this train of thought that Krishna enjoys in Hinduism the status of the most perfect incarnation.

This belief in incarnation is a testimony of man's lofty spiritual ambition. Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God. The endeavor to reach this state is the supreme, the only ambition worth having. And this is Self-realization. This Self-realization is the subject of the *Gita*, as it is of all scriptures. But its author surely did not write it to establish that doctrine. The object of the *Gita* appears to me to be that of showing the most excellent way to attain Self-realization. That which is to be found more or less clearly spread out here and there in Hindu religious books has been brought out in the clearest possible language in the *Gita* even at the risk of repetition.

That matchless remedy is renunciation of fruits of action.

But the *Gita* says: "No one has attained his goal without action. Even men like Janaka attained salvation through action. If I (God) were lazily to cease working, the world would perish. How much more necessary then for the people at large to engage in action?"

While on the one hand it is beyond dispute that all action binds, on the other hand it is equally true that all living beings have to do some work, whether they will or no. Here all activity, whether mental or physical, is to be included in the term action. Then how is one to be free from the bondage of action, even though he may be acting? The manner in which the *Gita* has solved the problem is, to my knowledge, unique. The *Gita* says: "Do your allotted work but renounce its fruit — be detached and work — have no desire for reward and work."

This is the unmistakable teaching of the *Gita*. He who gives up action falls. He who gives up only the reward rises. But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfillment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.

Again, let no one consider renunciation to mean want of fruit for the renouncer. The *Gita* reading does not warrant such a meaning. Renunciation means absence of hankering after fruit. As a matter of fact, he who renounces reaps a thousandfold. The renunciation spoken of in the *Gita* is the acid test of faith. He who is ever brooding over result often loses nerve in the performance of his duty. He becomes impatient and then gives vent to anger and begins to do unworthy things; he jumps from action to action, never remaining faithful to any. He who broods over results is like a man given to objects of senses; he is ever distracted, he says good-bye to all scruples, everything is right in his estimation, and he therefore resorts to means fair and foul to attain his end.

From the bitter experiences of desire for fruit the author of the *Gita* discovered the path of renunciation of fruit, and put it before the world in a most convincing manner. The common belief is that religion is always opposed to material good.

"One cannot act religiously in mercantile and such other matters. There is no place for religion in such pursuits; religion is only for attainment of salvation," we hear many worldly-wise people say. In my opinion the author of the *Gita* has dispelled this delusion. He has drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits. On the contrary he has shown that religion must rule even our worldly pursuits. I have felt that the *Gita* teaches us that what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion. Thus, according to the *Gita*, all acts that are incapable of being performed without attachment are taboo. This golden rule saves mankind from many a pitfall. According to

this interpretation murder, lying, dissoluteness, and the like must be regarded as sinful and therefore taboo. Man's life then becomes simple, and from that simpleness springs peace.

* * * * *

Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.

From the standpoint of pure Truth, the body too is a possession. It has been truly said that desire for enjoyment creates bodies for the soul. When this desire vanishes, there remains no further need for the body, and man is free from the vicious cycle of births and deaths. The soul is omnipresent; why should she care to be confined within the cage-like body, or to do evil and even kill for the sake of the cage? We thus arrive at the ideal of total renunciation, and learn to use the body for the purposes of service so long as it exists; so much so that service, and not bread, becomes with us the staff of life. We eat and drink, sleep and awake, for service alone. Such an attitude of mind brings us real happiness, and the beatific vision in the fullness of time. Let us all examine ourselves from this standpoint.

We should remember that non-possession is a principle applicable to thoughts as well as to things. One who fills his brain with useless knowledge violates that inestimable principle. Thoughts which turn us away from God, or which do not turn us toward Him, constitute impediments in our way. In this connection we may consider the definition of knowledge contained in the 13th Chapter of the *Gita*. We are there told, that humility (*amanitvam*), etc., constitute knowledge, and all the rest is ignorance. If this is true—and there is no doubt that it is true—much that we hug today as knowledge is ignorance pure and simple, and therefore only does us harm instead of conferring any benefit. It makes the mind wander, and even reduces it to a vacuity; and discontent flourishes in endless ramifications of evil. Needless to say, this is not a plea for inertia. Every moment of our life should be filled with activity, but that activity should be *sattvika*, tending to Truth. One who has consecrated his life to service cannot be idle for a single moment. But one has to learn to distinguish between good activity and evil activity. This discernment goes naturally with a single-minded devotion to service.

* * * * *

To feel that we are something is to set up a barrier between God and ourselves. To cease feeling that we are something is to become one with God. A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate

when we say that life is a mere bubble.

A life of service must be one of humility. One who would sacrifice his life for others has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavor entirely directed to the service of humanity. God is performing continuous action without resting for a single moment. If we would serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean which knows no rest. The same is the case with ourselves. As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience.

* * * * *

We must refuse to wait for the wrong to be righted till the wrongdoer has been roused to a sense of his iniquity. We must not, for fear of ourselves or others having to suffer, remain participators in it. But we must combat the wrong by ceasing to assist the wrongdoer directly or indirectly.

If a father does an injustice, it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof. If the headmaster of a school conducts his institution on an immoral basis, the pupils must leave the school. If the chairman of a corporation is corrupt, the members thereof must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it; even so, if a government does a grave injustice, the subject must withdraw cooperation wholly or partially, sufficiently to wean the ruler from his wickedness. In each of the cases conceived by me, there is an element of suffering whether mental or physical. Without such suffering it is not possible to attain freedom.*

I still believe that man not having been given the power of creation does not possess the right of destroying the meanest creature that lives. The prerogative of destruction belongs solely to the creator of all that lives. I accept the interpretation of *ahimsa*, namely, that it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evildoer. But it does not mean helping the evildoer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of *ahimsa*, requires you to resist the wrongdoer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically. Thus if my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him; on the contrary, my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it

**Young India*, Vol. II.

may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents. But I may not by physical force compel my son to become good. That, in my opinion, is the moral of the story of the Prodigal Son.

MY ENEMIES

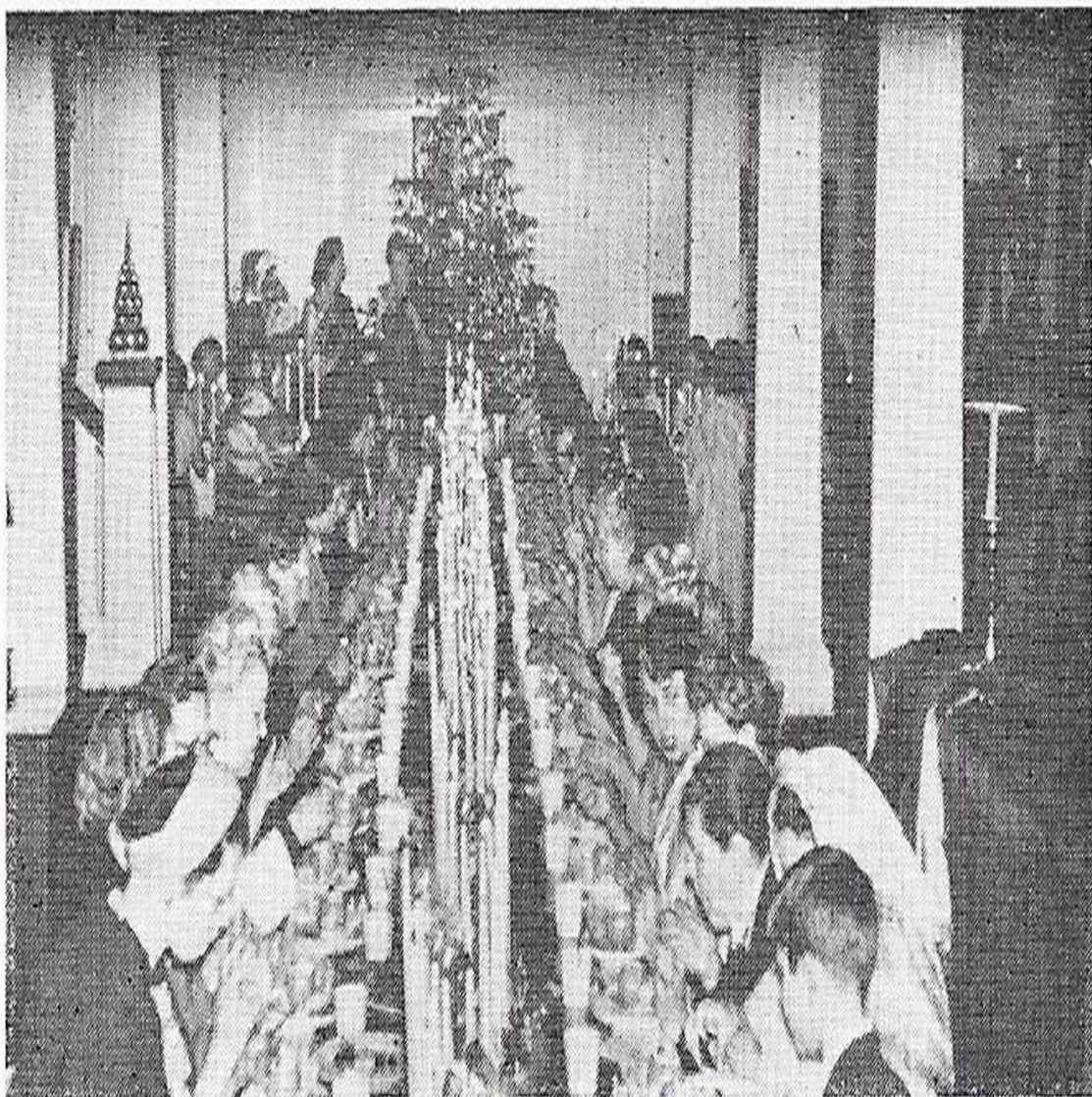
By Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

"The world lays close siege, and my five senses are the avenues by which it enters and attacks me. They give free passage to the fatal darts, and here death makes its approaches to my heart. My eye gazes about, and by admitting variety of engaging subjects, draws off my attention from the one thing necessary. The ear is open to pleasing sounds, and these disturb the mind in its meditations. The smell amuses, and obstructs serious thinking. The tongue is lavish in speech, and lets itself loose in flattery and falsehood. The touch kindles impure fires.... Lastly, the devil bends his bow, and makes ready his arrows within the quiver."—*Meditations of St. Bernard*; tr. Stanhope.



CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES AT SRF MT. WASHINGTON CENTER

Candlelit banquet table at which women renunciates of Encinitas and Hollywood SRF colonies joined those of Mt. Washington Center, Los Angeles, for Christmas dinner. Beyond is a tall Christmas tree, hung with old-fashioned ornaments and twinkling lights. Many of the women are wearing richly colorful saris from India.



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Controlling Your New Year's Destiny

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

(A talk given on January 2, 1944)



If you saturate with devotion a thought of God, and by your concentration impress that thought deep within you, then in the temple of superconsciousness the Lord of the universe will come to receive that loving thought.

Ask God to help you fulfill all the good thoughts and resolutions that you are making now for the New Year. Resolve that you are going to do just what you think you should do, and that under no circumstances are you going to be cowed into doing otherwise by your old bad habits.

There was a great lesson for me in the book I have been writing. I used to write without ever reading over the manuscript—a task I always avoided. But I had to go over and over every bit of my autobiography. The Lord disciplined me, yet in a noble way, because I have enjoyed reliving those wondrous experiences as I read the account again.

I have ventured many projects in this life. I have lectured and I have built things and I have painted things, but always the secret of my success was will power. I can truthfully say that destiny is what you make it.

Analyze yourself. What happened to your good intentions and noble ambitions of the past year? Did you let them die for want of dynamic will-to-accomplish? Make a strong determination to avoid repetition of old errors in this New Year. Plan your time. Resolve that you are not going to be an automaton run by the world and by your own habits; that is not the way to true happiness. You must change; you must *be able to change*. Vague desire to improve is not enough. You have made yourself what you are now, and you can become whatever you want to be, but you have to use will power.

More confining than stone walls are the prison bars of habit. You carry this invisible prison with you wherever you go. But you can be free! Determine now to break out of the jail of habits and race for freedom. How frightful life is, that from the age of three one is limited by habit. As soon as I realized I was caged in by habit I broke through all the bars. I would not permit myself to be bound by habits that made me say, "I can't do that," or, "I have to do this," or, "Don't do that to me, it

makes me nervous," or, "I can't stand the cold," and so on.

Why are these habits so strong from early childhood? Because they have been carried over from previous-life experiences. *Our moods are inkmarks traced on the graph of life by the karma of the past.* Wrong habits and moods are more offensive than the odor of the skunk. Why behave like a human polecat, making everyone else uncomfortable and punishing yourself as well? At one time or another we all have done so, because we all have carried with us obnoxious peculiarities.

But we can overcome undesirable traits. The human mind is elastic. If you pull it gradually it will yield to your tugs. Yet you don't even try. God has given us more than enough power to overcome all the trials and shortcomings of our lives. Saint Francis, though ill and sightless, could heal the sick and raise the dead. Outwardly blind, inwardly he beheld the great Light of the universe. God puts His true children such as Saint Francis to greater tests than He gives to ordinary people. But no one passes through the gates of freedom until he has passed all God's tests, until he has learned to live like a true son of God. Why should you think of yourself as a weak mortal? You are potentially a son of God. You do not have to acquire anything; you have only to *know*.

To try to be a millionaire in this incarnation is really much more difficult than to be a true son of God. Earthly environment is so limited that many people die without having become what they want to be. But to know God is possible in one lifetime, because you don't have to acquire Him; He is already your own.

Even if everyone were to pray day and night to become as rich as Henry Ford, their prayers could not be granted because earth is not a place where everybody can be a Henry Ford. But everyone can be rich in Spirit, for God has given everyone equal power to become like Him. When you claim your divinity, everything belongs to you. A Henry Ford might lose his wealth or his health, but a Jesus Christ can create at will health or wealth, or anything else he wants whenever he wants it. So don't hanker to be as rich or as healthy as someone else; have only one desire: to be like God. Jesus never claimed that he was the only son of God. The Father loves you, His child, just as much as He loves Jesus. And God won't deny you anything, if, like Jesus, you establish your true status with Him. Meditation is the way to reclaim your lost divinity.

Habits are grafts on our real nature, which is ever-free Spirit. In my childhood I used to get very angry, but when I made up my mind not to, I never again gave in to anger. If I hadn't used my will I wouldn't have been able to accomplish that or anything else in this life. You, too, can use your will. The errors of a lifetime can be corrected *today*. Make a resolution in this New Year to realize the truth that, although as a mortal man you have certain habits, as a divine being you are free. Why should

you lie to yourself? Why should you ascribe to yourself the faults of the past? You must destroy them. Otherwise they will become grafts on your tree of life. You must not allow that. Affirm repeatedly: "I am a child of God. I am one with God."

Every strong resolution you make with great determination can become a habit at once. Why should you not be able to do what you want, guided by reason? You must try. Away with all your faults! Review your actions of the past year. See what troublesome habits you may have displayed: perhaps you fight with people, or you eat too much, or you are jealous. Make up your mind today, and *know* that you are never going to do those things again. Just say to yourself, "Paramhansaji said he had an aversion to editing, but he became an editor; and if he could make himself an editor, I can do this." Why couldn't you? Everything I have tried to do with will power has worked. And I give you hope that if you make up your mind, you too will succeed. God has given you the power to dynamite your troubles. "Beware, O ye mountains, stand not in my way! Your ribs will be shattered and tattered today!" A great Swami* wrote those words. "I hitch to my chariot the fates and the gods!"

The Romans used to hitch prisoners to chariots and drag them on the ground, a terrible practice; yet in it is a lesson for us: that we can hitch to the chariot of our will the prisoners of habits and drive them, instead of letting them drive us. To be able to do the things that we know we should do, not merely the things we whimsically want to do, is to be really free.

Learn to discriminate in this New Year: examine every impulse that comes, to see if it is the right thing for you to act on. And when your reason tells you to do a certain thing, let neither the fates nor the gods stand in your way. But if you find out that you are wrong, be able to change your mind. Some people are so stubborn, they do not want to admit they are wrong. But one should be guided by reason, not by blind will. If, after calmly reasoning, you make up your mind that what you have set out to do is right, then nobody should be able to stop you. If I had no job I would shake up the whole world until people would say, "Give him a job to keep him quiet!" (I do not say these things out of personal pride but that you may learn from my experiences.)

Work of any kind, if done in the right spirit, gives you victory over yourself. You may clean bathrooms, but if you do it with the thought of serving and helping people, you are showing the spirit of a man of God. It isn't what you do but the attitude with which you do a thing that counts. Work never hurt anybody. But mental laziness, and doing things against one's will, spoil one. People often ask me, "How

*Swami Rama Tirtha.

do you do so many things?" It is because I do everything with the greatest pleasure and spirit of service. Inwardly I am all the time with God. And though I sleep very little I always feel fresh because I perform my duties with the right attitude: that it is a privilege to serve.

You must realize that you are a child of God. Make up your mind that you are not going to be run by that old habit-bound self. The temporary limitations and imperfections of the body and brain cannot hold you back; as soon as you give the verdict and strongly will to be a new person, you will change.

You have been a prisoner of your habits and it has not been good for you. It is because of wrong habits of thinking and acting in this and in other lives that your bodily kingdom yields now to invasions of disease, troubles, moods, and ignorance. From now on you must say, "I am not the slave of the body. I am the dictator of my own kingdom. My thoughts are going to be exactly as I wish them to be." Once you have changed your habits, you will say to yourself, "How simple it was to do it! How unkind I have been to myself by not exchanging my soul-stultifying habits for those that bring happiness."

Are You a Psychological Antique?

Some people can best be described as psychological antiques. They are the same year in and year out. They say the same old things, do the same old things. Converse with them just a little while and you can anticipate exactly what they will say. Take a look in the mirror of introspection and see if you are a psychological antique. Most people are.

But why should you be one? Change your habits. Cast out moods. Try to be better every day. Let people be able to say, "What a wonderful change has come over him!"

The man of Self-realization has achieved mastery over the old habit-dulled self. Recognizing such mastery in Jesus, the officers who had been sent by the Pharisees to arrest him came away marveling instead at his assurance, saying, "Never man spake like this man."* A master's nature is infinite; it cannot be contained in the narrow confines of human conceptions. Every time I thought I had succeeded in categorizing my Master Sri Yukteswar, I found him to be different, greater, non-classifiable.

Some time you have to break the habit of attachment to the mortal body and get back to God. There is no alternative. You are a prodigal son here on earth. Your infinite nature must be rediscovered. You will never be happy so long as you remain habit-mired in ignorance of your eternal soul-nature. It does not matter who you are; the only way you can find lasting joy is to go back to God. You do not have to leave earth's shores and put on wings; you must learn rather to be happy here

*John 7:46.

and now, under all conditions; and to consider others' happiness as included in your own joy. Go out of your way to make others happy. You cannot please everybody, but to those who cross your path, give kindness and love. There is no more liberating action than sincerely to give people kindness in return for unkindness. Why not be like a flower that gives fragrance even when crushed in the hand?

If people criticize you, do not ignore them. See if you have the fault they ascribe to you, and if you do, silently correct your error. But it is seldom necessary to admit your faults to others, because they might unkindly hold your admission over your head any time they become angry with you. To a God-realized spiritual teacher or guru you can tell your faults, but not to someone who cannot help you as a guru can, and who might instead hurt you by broadcasting your faults to others.

A Stream of Divine Power Through SRF

Learn to mix with good people. The faces of many of you who come here have become more spiritual. And the more you are in tune with me and refrain from fussing about little things, the better you will be. A steady stream of divine power will flow to you, for the Great Ones sent me here. When I am gone you will realize this truth with greater impact. I am here only to deliver their message. Little by little a spiritual change will come to SRF disciples, and their influence will spread over the world. Self-Realization is one of the greatest spiritual movements ever sent to help mankind. It has been blessed by the Great Ones—Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar—in communion with Christ. The grace of these masters is not gone from the earth. They are waiting to help you and to help the world, but they can work only through the free choice of man. The world has gone mad with hate and war, but Jesus' way of brotherly love is the solution to the world's problems. We can make this world proof against war by bringing Christ into our lives, by following his teachings as he meant us to.

This last Meditation Day* on the 24th of December Christ came to me several times: first as a little child; then as a grown man; and finally as he looked before his crucifixion. I had been thinking that I would have to meditate long before he would come to me. And he surprised me! God was showing me through this experience that no further effort is needed once you have convinced Him that you want Him more than all the gifts of the world. Then He takes away the screen of mystery and comes to you as Christ or as Babaji or as any great incarnation in whose form you desire to behold Him.

Make up your mind that in this New Year you are going to be more Christlike in your behavior. You must make the effort now. You must

*The annual all-day Christmas meditation held in SRF churches and hermitages throughout the world, a custom established by Paramhansa Yogananda. (Ed.)

meditate more. This Church of Self-Realization was not brought into existence merely to give glimpses of God through words; *but that you might know Him through your own experience.* We teach that true fellowship with man can come only after one has gained experience of God. If you contact God within yourself you will know that He is in everyone; that He has become the children of all races. Then you cannot be an enemy to anyone. If the whole world could love with that universal love there would be no need for men to arm themselves against others. By our own Christlike example we must bring unity among all religions, all nations, all races.

We must train ourselves to plain living and high thinking. It would be good if each family had a small garden to grow some of their food. Live more simply so that you can find time to enjoy the little pleasures of life. Man races through his span, working, eating, sleeping; and that is about all he accomplishes. Eliminate any habit or activity that disturbs your mental peace and happiness.

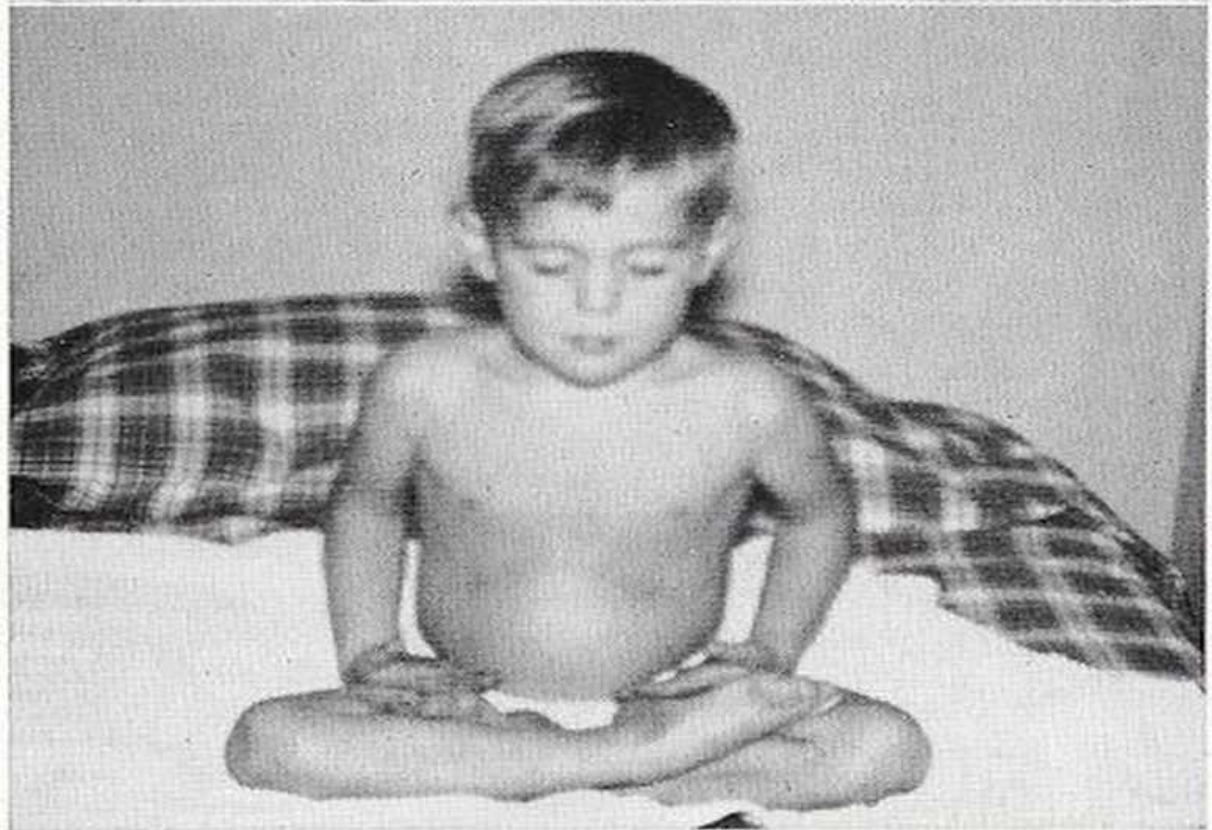
In this New Year resolve to cast out from the temple of your mind all the devils of bad habits; to plan your life so that you can do all the things you want to do. If it is happiness you want, have it! There is nothing that can stop you. You are an immortal child of God and all the difficulties that visit you are meant only to stimulate you to higher achievements.

The Best Resolution — Give More Time to God

Pick out which habits you are going to destroy in the New Year. Make up your mind about them and stick to your decision. Resolve to give more time to God: to meditate regularly every day, and on one night each week to meditate several hours so that you can feel your spiritual progress in God. Resolve that you are going to practice *Kriya Yoga* and to control your appetites and emotions. Be a master! Make up your mind strongly now.

Think of the good resolutions you have made in the past — that you were not going to be dictated to by your old habits and thoughts. But have you kept them? It is an insult to your soul and to God to give in to your weaknesses. Be master of yourself, captain of your destiny. Danger and you were born together, and you are the elder brother, more dangerous than danger! Do not lose the courage and determination that you feel as you listen to me now. Pray with me:

"Heavenly Father, give us the strength to carry out all our good resolutions in the New Year. May we always please Thee by our actions. Our spirits are willing. Help us to materialize all our worthy wishes in the New Year. We will reason, we will will, we will act; but guide Thou our reason, will, and activity to the right thing that we should do in everything. *Aum. Peace. Amen.*"



Yogis, Junior Style



Many earnest SRF students who have children train them to follow a daily routine of exercise and meditation according to the ideals and teachings of the blessed Paramhansa Yogananda. Two such fortunate youngsters are Eileen Roma Hall, aged two and a half; and Eric ("Rickie") Hugues Dugdale, aged three and a half.

After his first visit a year ago to the SRF Sunday School in Hollywood, California, Rickie showed his parents how to sit in the lotus or meditation posture, and expressed his delight with all he was learning. However, since the Dugdale home is a considerable distance from the SRF Church, Rickie's parents felt they could not bring him there every Sunday, and so he was enrolled in a Sunday School of another church. When the class began, however, Rickie rose and staunchly declared his loyalty to SRF: "I am a yogi and I want to go to my own church!"

Since that time he has attended the SRF Sunday School. He follows SRF teachings daily. He is now expert in some of the yoga postures, and meditates faithfully every morning and night. Rickie does not take a meal without first thanking God. He is a bright and happy child, with great love for God and Paramhansa Yogananda.

Eileen is the granddaughter of Elinore Smith, an SRF disciple at India Center. One of the first words Eileen spoke was the name of Babaji. Now, at two and a half, she knows all the Gurus by name. She does all the SRF exercises with her parents, and sees to it that her parents join her in regular practice of eight yoga postures. She meditates with them and says prayers at the family altar.

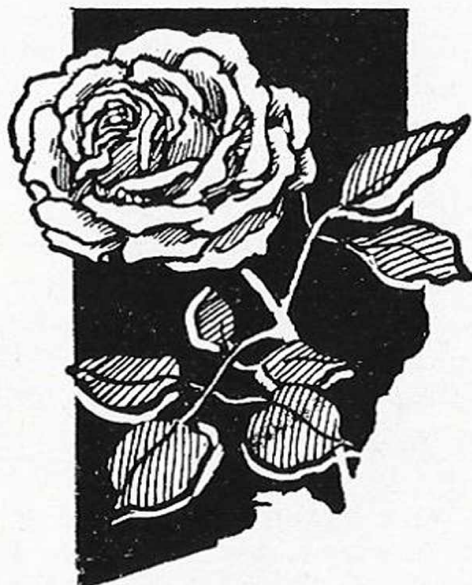
Eileen will not eat until she says a prayer, whether she is at home or a guest in some other home; and insists on those present joining her in prayer. She is a conscientious vegetarian. While visiting one day, she refused her favorite soup — vegetable — because it had not been made completely of vegetables.

Whenever she visits India Center she throws pennies in the wishing pool and pays a visit to Paramhansa Yoganandaji's picture in the chapel in India Hall. Her most cherished possessions are pictures of Jesus and the four gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship. She carries one of these pictures with her wherever she goes. (A picture of Jesus is visible beside her in the photograph facing this page.)

CAPTION FOR PICTURES ON OPPOSITE PAGE: (*upper*) Eileen Roma Hall, aged two and a half, and (*lower*) Eric Hugues Dugdale, three and a half, seated in lotus or meditation pose. The children practice daily the SRF principles of body, mind, and soul development.

Thought Seeds

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Nurtured in the soil of consciousness by daily meditation, watered with showers of the heart's devotion, may these thought seeds become a beautiful garden of divine realizations.

January 2nd

In this new year I will remember that my highest duty is to God. If I perform all other duties beautifully but forget Him, the year will be a failure. My first and most joyous duty is to realize Him.

January 9th

As I radiate sympathy and good-will to others I open the channel for God's love to come to me. Divine love is the magnet that attracts all blessedness.

January 16th

I am beholding through the eyes of all. I am working through all hands, walking through all feet. The brown, white, olive, red, yellow, and black bodies are all mine.

January 23rd

I have been dreaming that I am mortal man; I am now awake. In my spiritual essence I am an image of my Heavenly Father.

January 30th

Blessed are those who share Thy gifts. We receive only that we may learn to give.

February 6th

Mother Divine, the brave may laugh while passing amidst flying bullets, though death lurk in every one. But I laugh because, whether I float on the surface of the present life or sink beneath the waves of death, Thy protecting omnipresent eternal life envelops me; I am held in Thine immortal arms.

February 13th

Behind the throb of my heart I shall feel the throb of God's peace.

February 20th

O Holy Ghost, sacred *Aum* vibration, enlarge my consciousness while I listen to thine omnipresent sound. Make me feel that I am both the Cosmic Ocean and the little wave of body vibration in it.

February 27th

I am the blessed child of sweet immortality sent here to play the drama of birth and death, but always aware of my deathless Self.

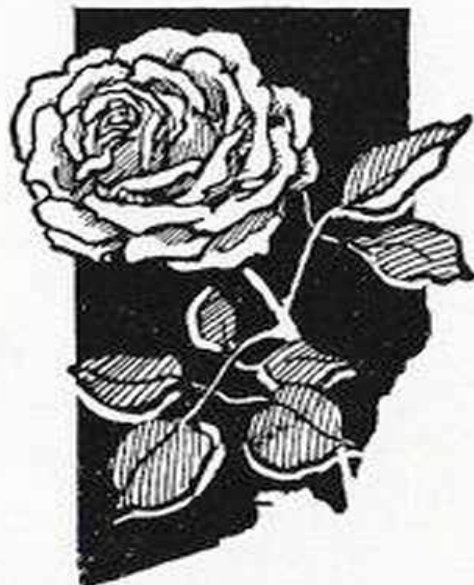
FILL US WITH THY DIVINE MAGNETISM

"Heavenly Father, make us one with Thee, filled with Thy divine magnetism. And, as we pass through life, may Thy divine magnetism within us change others and bring them closer to Thee. Make us 'fishers of men,' that in the net of selfless divine love we may catch many of Thy divine children and bring them home to Thee."

—*Paramhansa Yogananda*

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News of SRF Centers



Los Angeles, California

Indian Consul General Visits SRF Headquarters

The Honorable Mr. S. K. Banerji, recently appointed Consul General of India at San Francisco,* together with Mrs. Gauri Banerji and Mr. Upendara Lal, Consulate Secretary, visited SRF Mt. Washington Center in Los Angeles on December 7th. They were received by Sister Daya, who presented each guest with a garland of fresh flowers and spoke a few words of welcome on behalf of the Fellowship and its president, Rajasi Janakananda. The visitors were shown through the chapel, offices, and print shop.

While in the car on the way to the Headquarters, Mr. Banerji told Mr. Walters, SRF minister: "I have heard so much about the wonderful work you are doing that I wanted to see your Center for myself."

A luncheon of Indian dishes was served to the consular party. Mrs. Banerji commented that the food was so completely Bengali in flavor that it made her feel rather homesick. The visitors were told that Paramhansaji had been fond of cooking and that many times

*Mr. Banerji succeeds Mr. M. R. Husain, who has been appointed to another governmental post.

he had served the disciples as well as guests with delicious Bengali dishes that he had prepared himself.

The Consul General graciously offered to loan, for the benefit of SRF ashram residents, an especially fine film, "Holy Himalayas." He remarked that although India is making rapid material advancements, her spiritual culture, bulwark of her strength throughout the ages, is still vitally predominant.

Sister Daya received the following letter from the Consul General, dated December 13th:

We returned to San Francisco over the week end after a very pleasant stay in Los Angeles. We went to many functions there, but the lunch we had with you in the peaceful atmosphere of your Centre at Mount Washington will long remain in our memory. It is a great pity that we came too late to meet Paramhansaji, but we could sense how completely the spirit of the Master pervades the Centre.

Yours sincerely,

S. K. Banerji

Christmas Celebrated

Celebration of the advent of Christmas began on December 1st at the Mt. Washington Center. The chapel was decorated to depict the heavenly astral celebration of

Christ's birth. Surrounded by "angels" on fleecy "clouds," wooden cut-out statuettes of the Self-Realization Gurus seated in meditation posture were placed on the "snow" around a shining crystal-like Christmas tree made entirely of clear plastic snowflakes. Master's chair, with the familiar orange shawl laid across it, and the nativity creche, were in their usual places near the altar.

About two weeks before Christmas a "tree" made entirely of colored Christmas lights was set up on the rooftop of the Headquarters, and Christmas music was played from there for half an hour each evening over a loud-speaker system. Many neighbors telephoned or stopped by to say how much they enjoyed the nightly sight of the Christmas tree in the sky—for so it appeared—and the sweet serenades of Christmas music resounding in the air.

On December 23rd all the renunciate women from the various colonies of the Self-Realization Order gathered in the Mt. Washington chapel for the annual all-day Christmas meditation (a tradition established by Paramhansa Yoganandaji years ago). The renunciate men gathered at the same time and for the same purpose in the main hermitage at the Encinitas colony, where they were to remain for the holidays. Master's rooms at both colonies were open for meditation during most of the holiday period, and whenever they could, devotees stole away there to meditate, and to give thanks for countless blessings received through

the grace of Christ and the great Gurus of Self-Realization.

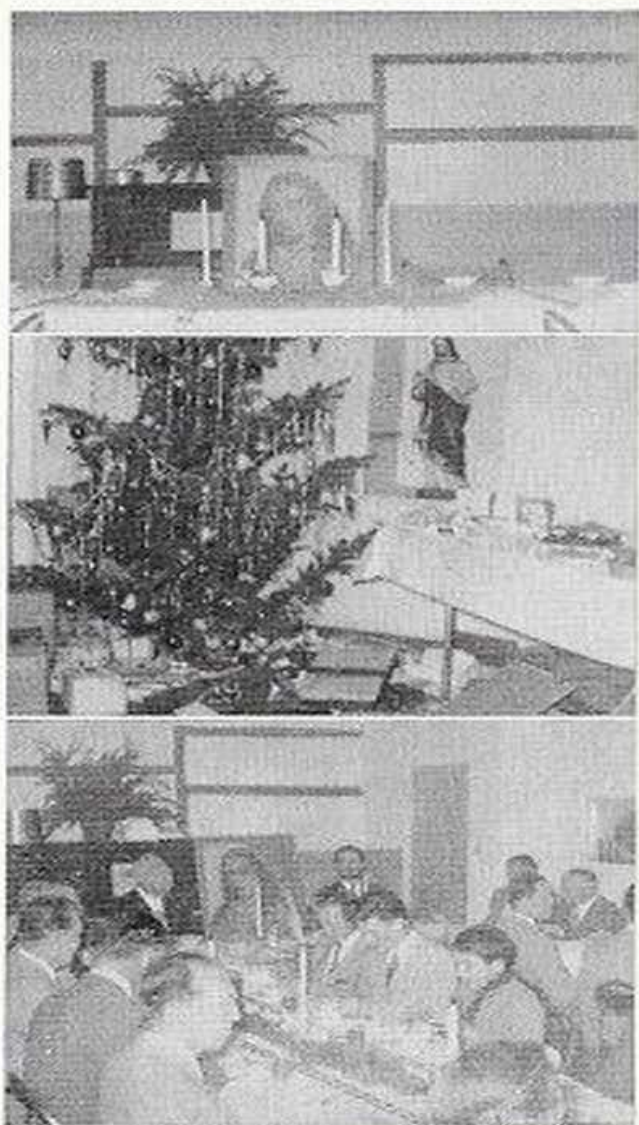
After the spiritual celebration came preparations for the festive social celebration of Christmas on the 25th. On Christmas Eve there were innumerable nocturnal tip-toeings up and down the halls as the disciples helped Santa with last-minute deliveries. At midnight a band of devotees sang carols in Master's apartment at the Headquarters, then formed a candlelight procession, caroling up and down the halls and around the grounds. On Christmas morn, anticipated moment! came the childish delight of opening little gifts from one another.

But the holiday cooks could not linger long over presents. Christmas dinner had to be prepared! Many hands helped, and a few hours later, happy and hungry, everyone sat down to a Christmas feast. At Mt. Washington it was served on banquet-length tables whose decorations are planned lovingly and secretly each year by artistic members of the SRF family. There was a beautiful three-tiered birthday cake for the baby Christ. Around its lower layer were depicted, in colored icing, the shepherds and their flocks, as they beheld above them the star of Bethlehem and choirs of angels. Around the middle tier the three wise men were shown following the star. And on top of the cake, colored frosting had been contrived to look like a little straw manger with the Christ child in it. Around this, in letters of blue edged in gold, were the words, "Happy birthday, dear Jesus."

The Christmas banquet at Encinitas was a gala occasion, presided over by Rev. M. W. Lewis. Dr. Lewis told many stories about Paramhansa Yoganandaji during the early 1920's when Master was just establishing the Self-Realization movement. Sister Daya presided over the women's banquet at the Headquarters. The following are a few extracts from her talk to the disciples:

"How blessed are we, that out of thousands of seekers we have been drawn to the feet of a true Guru, our own Paramhansa Yoganandaji, and to these liberating teachings of Self-Realization. Every day we must have in our hearts that kind of thankfulness wherein not a moment goes by that we do not feel grateful for all the blessings that have come into our lives through the grace of God, Christ, and our Gurus. The crosses one may have to bear are nothing when compared with the great joy, the great sense of security, the great sense of fulfillment that floods the being of the disciple who has dedicated his life completely to God and Guru.

"Let us in this Christmas and in the days and years that lie ahead try ever to keep our minds on the Divine Goal, and to press forward with greater and greater zeal, with greater perseverance, greater devotion; that when trials come to seduce our thoughts from God toward the self we remain secure in the consciousness of God alone. Whenever struggles or tribulations came into my life as I moved along



CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES AT SRF ENCINITAS COLONY

Christmas festivities of SRF monks who spent holidays at Encinitas SRF colony. At top and bottom is Christmas banquet table, a portrait of Paramhansa Yoganandaji in the place of honor. Rev. M. W. Lewis (*at left of Paramhansaji's picture*) presided. Around Christmas tree (*center*) in SRF Retreat are gifts distributed on Christmas Eve at party given by SRF Voluntary League.

this blessed spiritual path, I took great comfort in reflecting on something told us by Sister Gyanamata. She said that whenever anything happened that disappointed her or caused her pain, she would instantly ask herself, 'What did you come here for? Was it for honor, distinction, favors, or pleasure?' Promptly the inner answer would come. 'No. For God alone.' Through joys and trials alike, hold on to that thought: God alone.

"No matter what our inadequacies, there is one thing we have to give to God, our love. That is the one thing He does not have, unless we choose to give it. Some may be able to express more devotion than others, but it can be developed through deeper and deeper meditation and service. It is through our unwavering devotion and the blessings of Master that we shall reach the Goal. Without Master's guiding hand none of us could make the grade. It is still outstretched to us. We are all one in our devotion to God through Guru. Give of your heart, that he may see there complete devotion. Give of your mind and energy, that you may not remain content with your service in the work, but try always to improve your effort. Give of the joy of your soul to one another; and give love. Master said, 'When I am gone, only love can take my place.'"

Sister Daya concluded her talk with the reading of a letter written by the blessed Master Yoganandaji to the disciples at the Mt. Washington Center in 1935, when he was

in India. His words had come across the miles to gladden the hearts of the only "family" he then had in the West. Now they bridged the gap of years to inspire and encourage anew a spiritual family comprising three colonies of resident renunciates.

The letter read as follows:

The Palace,
Bangalore.

November 17, 1935

"Very dear Mt. Washington,
my own divine-family members:

"Please receive my heartfelt, living greetings at Christmas and the New Year.

"This time, though my seat at the Christmas table there will remain empty, still I know I shall, by your kindness, fill the seats within your hearts, and shall celebrate Christmas with you in spirit. And what you eat and see and rejoice in I shall enjoy too while you think of me. Through your taste I shall taste; through your eyes I shall see; through your feelings I shall rejoice. So I will be with you, very close.

"And now receive my greatest gift: silently I will give unto you the packages of my eternal goodwill for your complete union in God through Christ and me. Strive in the supreme way for the very best good in the New Year.

"Very sincerely yours,
"Swami Yogananda"

2nd Dutch Edition

A second edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi* in Dutch translation has just been published. The first edition of the Dutch *Autobiography* won a special publisher's award for its impressive format. Although Holland is such a small country, public demand caused the noted Kluwer Publishing House in Deventer to re-issue the book.

Meaning of Name "Rajasi"

Paramhansa Yoganandaji gave the name of Rajasi Janakananda to his disciple in August, 1951. At that time Master also announced (and foretold) that Rajasi would be the second president of SRF. We have not been certain until recently of the meaning of the name Rajasi.

According to Dr. John Dowson, the eminent Orientalist and Sanskrit scholar, "Rajasi" is a name of the Divine Mother. (Her names of Durga, Parvati, Kali, Devi, Tara, Uma, and Rajasi are just a few among Her many names.) Each name refers to a certain aspect or particular function of the Infinite Creator. "Rajasi" means "power, activity" (the expression of *rajas* or motion); and, as a name of the Cosmic Mother, indicates Her aspect of divine power. In India it is customary for parents (or gurus) to bestow names of the Divine Mother on both males and females.

The meaning of Janakananda is "the bliss of Janaka." Janaka was a great king as well as a fully Self-realized master of ancient India.

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Over a hundred Self-Realizationists attended the three-hour evening portion of the all-day Christmas meditation held in the SRF Hollywood Church on December 23rd.

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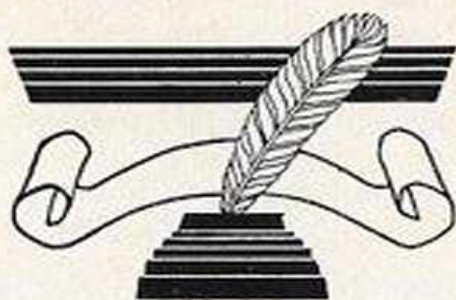
"This holy book brings us near to God; it has ignited in me a fire of spiritual desire. Sometimes, reading it, I laugh happily; but several times I have had a lump in my throat, so much touched was I to read about the many manifestations of God. I will never be tired of reading the book nor of looking at the pictures of the Great Ones."—M.G., Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"I am reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* for the third time and enjoy it more with each reading."—C.V., Culp Creeks, Oregon.

"I cannot put into words what effect this book has had on me; it is truly wonderful."—C.J.B., Alberta, Canada.

"A woman friend wrote to me about Yogananda and sent me the German-language edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi*. I was deeply affected, intellectually overwhelmed; and suddenly I knew that he is the Guru I have been in search of for so many years of my life. Before I had finished reading the book I wrote to the beloved Master. Unfortunately my letter failed to reach his hand; he had left the physical plane. Sad-hearted, I joined SRF with the thought that again I had missed the personal contact of a Guru (as had happened in my previous esoteric training). But the contrary happened. I found the Master in every lesson, in every word. I resigned my service and membership in the other school in order to concentrate on the teachings of Paramhansaji only. Today I can sincerely say that I have gained through SRF much more practical knowledge than I gained through all my other studies. Although I know the teachings of many other venerable Hindu Masters, I prefer the matchless instruction of Paramhansa Yogananda—the one who is guiding mankind on the shortest path to Self-realization."—A.D., Wiedner-Hauptstr., Germany.

Letters From SRF Students



"The *Praecepta* are indeed gems of wisdom. If each school child in the nation, nay, in the world, could be given the lesson on friendship once a week from the time he is able to reason, the next generation would be a far, far better group of humanity.

"Meditation did not come easily to me at first. But now that I *know* God is here (because I feel His presence in those quiet moments when the mind ceases thinking of anything but the Maker of all things) I wonder how I ever got along without meditation. It has answered many questions; it has vanquished many a ruffled mood. It has enabled me to realize beyond any doubt that there is only one real barrier to the unity of mankind: the lack of widespread realization of our oneness with God. The world owes a great debt to Yoganandaji for giving so many people a chance to realize themselves. Truth, I now know, is infallible; it destroys fear and all manner of evils that some of us have allowed, through ignorance, to become a part of us. When Everyman knows this within his entire being, what a wonderful world it will be! It will be living truth, no fear, no hatred; only good, peace, oneness, God.

"Sometimes this happiness, the first true happiness I've ever known, becomes so great that I yearn just to put down a little of what I feel. It is inconceivable to me how I survived these years without acknowledging God. He was there, my unseen Friend, whom I forgot to talk to, to ask of, to love. But we are always His children, good or bad, as Yoganandaji said; I know that He will never desert me. And I would sooner perish than ever desert Him again.

"I would not forfeit the privilege of studying these lessons for anything on earth. All of the little non-spiritual pleasures that once seemed so important are dwarfed by comparison. The veil of *maya* has acquired a small but growing rip at its top. May the day be not far off when the whole thing comes quietly down, fully revealing to me the eternal Truth." —K.W.Y., New York, N.Y.

"I have been taking the *Praecepta* (blessed teachings!) since March, and they have become my whole life. As I study I feel that some place,

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some time, I have had this knowledge before. The concentration technique is wonderful; I am getting fine results. Blessed peace descends upon me at that time. I don't know how I could live without those periods of at-one-ment."—*M.F., El Monte, Calif.*

"To say that I am sorry that I did not receive the inspiration to start this study years ago is putting it mildly. I sought everywhere for just the lessons and teaching I am now receiving for the first time. Other religious studies always fell short of complete satisfaction. They did not show *how* to get in personal touch with our great Father-Creator and to receive direct inspiration from Him; they did not point the way as Self-Realization Fellowship does. I am amazed to have received so much inspiration in so short a time from so few lessons. Paramhansa Yogananda must have been a wonderful and inspiring teacher. Having God, he asked nothing else; indeed, there was nothing that anyone could give him except love."—*W.H.M., The Dalles, Oregon.*

"The teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda are priceless. Words cannot express the gratitude I feel for the privilege of studying the *Praecepta*. I try to put the teachings into practice as best I can. Truly everything one needs for right success spiritually is in the teachings."—*G.W., Long Beach, Calif.*

"This week has been spent in study and meditation, and the results are wonderful. Everything in the lessons is proving true, and I am trying daily to practice and realize all that I am learning. The vibrations, music, and light have been with me for a long time, but this week's lesson explains why, and I feel very humble, a part of something very, very wonderful.

"I hear the sea, the bells, and, most wonderful, the flute songs of indescribable beauty, every time I listen for them, whether in silence or in a noisy place. The light too is there as described in the lessons, but not for long at a time. It seems to engulf me; I catch my breath, as it were, and watch it appear again. At times it seems more like a candle glow than a star, but the light is always beautiful. I feel so much different. I shall never be the same person again. Many questions that have troubled me for years are cleared up now."—*H.M.W., Wilmington, Calif.*

"I have deeply appreciated my first three lessons. Already they have wrought a wonderful change in my life. Everything had seemed dark, evil, and hopeless; and then, almost immediately after applying for membership, my consciousness changed, and with just a little volition I have been able to maintain it at a much higher level. Self-Realization seems such a scholarly, systematic, and practical way to integrate ourselves with Him and His universe. I pray that I keep steadfastly on the path."—*M.F.S., Los Angeles, Calif.*

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is a real fact, and the created world is as real as Brahman; but objects of the world have no independent existence of their own. In all of them there is the same Brahman, on which they are dependent for existence, just as all golden ornaments are dependent on gold. It is no doubt true that God has been described in the ancient scriptures as the wielder of a magical power called *maya*. But *Visistadvaita Vedanta* claims that the scriptures do not mean that the world is only an appearance or illusion like the one produced by a magician. Rather, the meaning is that the inscrutable power by which God creates the world is as wonderful as that of the magician. God has in Him a real power of creating this wonderful world (*vicitrartha-sargakari sakti*) which is, therefore, a real manifestation of His unmanifested causal nature or creative power.¹⁵
—Reprinted by permission from "The Indian Culture," Mahendra Jayanti Volume, Calcutta, India.

¹Cf. *Vishnu-purana*, I, iii; II, 7; *Devi-bhagavata*, IX, 8-10, 12-16.

²*Mahanarayana Upanishad*, VI; *Devi-bhagavata*, IX, iii, 7, 8.

³*Mundaka Upanishad*, I, i, 7; II, i, 3, 7.

⁴Cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, VII, 4-6; x, 20.

Manu-smriti, 1, 8, 9; cf. also I, ii.

⁶The three *gunas* or "qualities" of Nature are *sattwa*, light, wisdom; *rajas*, power, activity; and *tamas*, inertia, ignorance. Manifested creation therefore displays in varying proportions these three qualities or modes of expression.

⁷*Bhagavad Gita*, xiv, 3-4.

⁸Cf. *Padarthadharmasangraha*, pp. 19-23; *Nyayakandali*, pp. 50-54, *Kusumanjali*, 1-5.

⁹Cf. *Sankhya-sutra*, 1, 71; 2, 23-43; *Karika and Kaumudi*, 21-41, *Pravacanabhāṣya*, 1, 64-74; 2, 10-32.

¹⁰Cf. *Yoga-sutra*, *Bhasya* and *Vrtti*, 1, 23-29; 2, 1, 32, 45; 3, 45.

¹¹Cf. *Slokovarttika*, chapter on *Anumana*; *Prabhakara-vijaya*.

¹²Cf. *Shankara-bhasya* on *Brahma-sutra*.

¹³Cf. *Loc. cit.*, and *Sadananda, Vedantasara*, 17-45.

¹⁴Cf. *Sribhasya*, I. I. 1-4; I. 4. 8-10; 2. 1. 15, *passim*.

¹⁵*Loc. cit.*, I-1-1.

"Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." — *Proverbs* 24:3-4.

(Continued from page 15)

degrees), arms at sides with palms downward. (*Savasana* may be practiced to advantage on a slanting board because of the additional beneficial effect of reversed gravity.) A small pad or very thin pillow may be placed at the back of the head if it rests unaccustomedly far back in this position. Now what happens? Nothing *should* happen! Perfect relaxation is achieved by not tensing muscles that would otherwise be tense. If this process of learning how not to tense the muscles seems enigmatic, or impossible of achievement, do not be discouraged; in the next issue of *Self-Realization Magazine* I shall explain in detail how to accomplish it. Also forthcoming will be vital information about the third network of circulation, the immensely important *lymphatic* system.

Don't forget the importance of relaxation, and become careless in your practice of the asanas. Derive full benefit by practicing the Relaxing Pose, *Savasana*, after each attempt of any other asana, and for at least a period equal to that of tension or stretching. Above all, remember that only daily exercise such as the asanas provide (brisk walking is excellent too) can assure adequate circulation, nutrition, and elimination in the cells and tissues!

(Continued from page 20)

The materialist, similarly, caters to the pleasures of his senses while his ego remains starved without divine bliss. His mistaken habit is to feed the senses in hopes of satisfying the inner hunger for happiness.

The yogi tries to sublimate the unnatural hunger for sense pleasure into the natural hunger for the soul's joy. Even a fallen yogi is far superior to the materialist. The former is on the threshold of awakening from sense delusions; the latter is still asleep in ignorance.

God gives encouragement in this stanza to all devotees to seek their natural divine inheritance. The sense-addict who continues reveling in material pleasures, disregarding the counsel of the prophets, drifts farther and farther away from his true nature. The imperfect yogi, in spite of failures, tries to regain his memory of divinity. Once the devotee has tasted the superior soul-bliss, his heart becomes convinced of the inferiority of sense joys. No matter how many times a sincere yogi falls down in the path of yoga, he struggles again toward his Goal.

The devotee who performs meritorious actions develops divine memory and good karma that impel him to seek liberation in this life or in the beyond. The memory of the divine bliss of yoga practice remains lodged in his subconscious mind. If he is not able to find full liberation in one life, in his next incarnation the hidden memory of his past experiences of yoga sprouts forth in spiritual inclinations even in his infancy.

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- SABONG—YSS Ashram, P.O. Sabong, Vill. Julkapur, R.R. Sta. Ballychak.

Bihar

- LAKSHMANPUR—YSS Vidyapith; High School for boys, residential hostel.
- RANCHI—YSS Brahmacharya Vidyalaya (residential high school, Calcutta matriculation standard); YSS Sevashram (Home of Service); ashram accommodations for guests.

Bombay

- BOMBAY—YSS Paramhansa Yogananda Ashram, Malmadi P.O., Dharwar.
- WALCHANDNAGAR (POONA)—YSS Ashram.

Madras

- MADRAS (MYLAPORE)—Kanakan Vilas, 14 Warren Rd.; Sun., 4 p.m.

Orissa

- PURI—Yogoda Ashram, Swargadwar; Sri Yukteswar Vidyapith; Sri Yukteswar Samadhi Mandir.

INDONESIA

- CELEBES—YSS Makassar, Djalan Pasar Ikan No. 3; Sun., 9:30 a.m.

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The following persons may assist other Self-Realizationists in the practice of SRF techniques and the understanding of basic meditation principles taught by Paramhansa Yogananda.

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- PHOENIX—Rev. K. Michael, SRF Church of All Religions, 1800 W. Monroe. Tel. Alpine 3-3658.

California

- ENCINITAS—Rev. M. W. Lewis, SRF Golden World Colony, P.O. Box 758. Tel. 4341.

- HOLLYWOOD—Rev. C. Bernard; Rev. D. Walters; SRF Church of All Religions, 4860 Sunset Blvd. Tel. NORMandy 1-8006 or CAPITol 8179.

- LONG BEACH—Mr. Leland Standing, SRF Church of All Religions, 430 E. Ocean Blvd. Tel. Los Angeles, CAPITol 8179.

- OAKLAND—Mrs. Edward Silva, Tel. HUMBoldt 3-1511.

PACIFIC PALISADES—Rev. R. C. Stanley, SRF Lake Shrine, 17190 Sunset Blvd. Tel. EXbrook 3-4323.

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WASHINGTON—Swami Premananda, SRF Church of All Religions, 4748 Western Ave. N.W. Tel. Wisconsin 4748.

Michigan

DETROIT—Mr. J. Oliver Black (Yogacharya), 18094 Parkside Ave., Detroit 21.

Minnesota

ST. PAUL—Rev. J. R. Raymer, 316 Stonebridge Blvd., St. Paul 5.

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UNION CITY—Miss Rose M. Napoliello, 1308 Summit Ave. Tel. UN. 7-1120.

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SEATTLE—Mrs. Mildred Hamilton (Yogacharya); Rev. Ralph B. Hamilton, 7057—19th Ave. N.E. Tel. VE. 1612.

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MEXICO, D.F.—Mr. Jose M. Cuaron (Yogacharya), Apartado 1680. Tel. 37-2140.

Mrs. Katharine Quick, Prado Sur 525, Lomas de Chapultepec. Tel. 20-49-89.

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charya), 2 Glenloch Rd., Hampstead, London N.W. 3. Tel. Primrose 6193.

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DAKSHINESWAR—Swami Atmananda Giri. Write Yogoda Math, 21 Strand Rd., P.O. Ariadaha, 24 Parganas, Dakshineswar, Bengal, for information regarding other Yogoda Sat-Sanga meditation centers.

PICTURES OF SRF GURUS

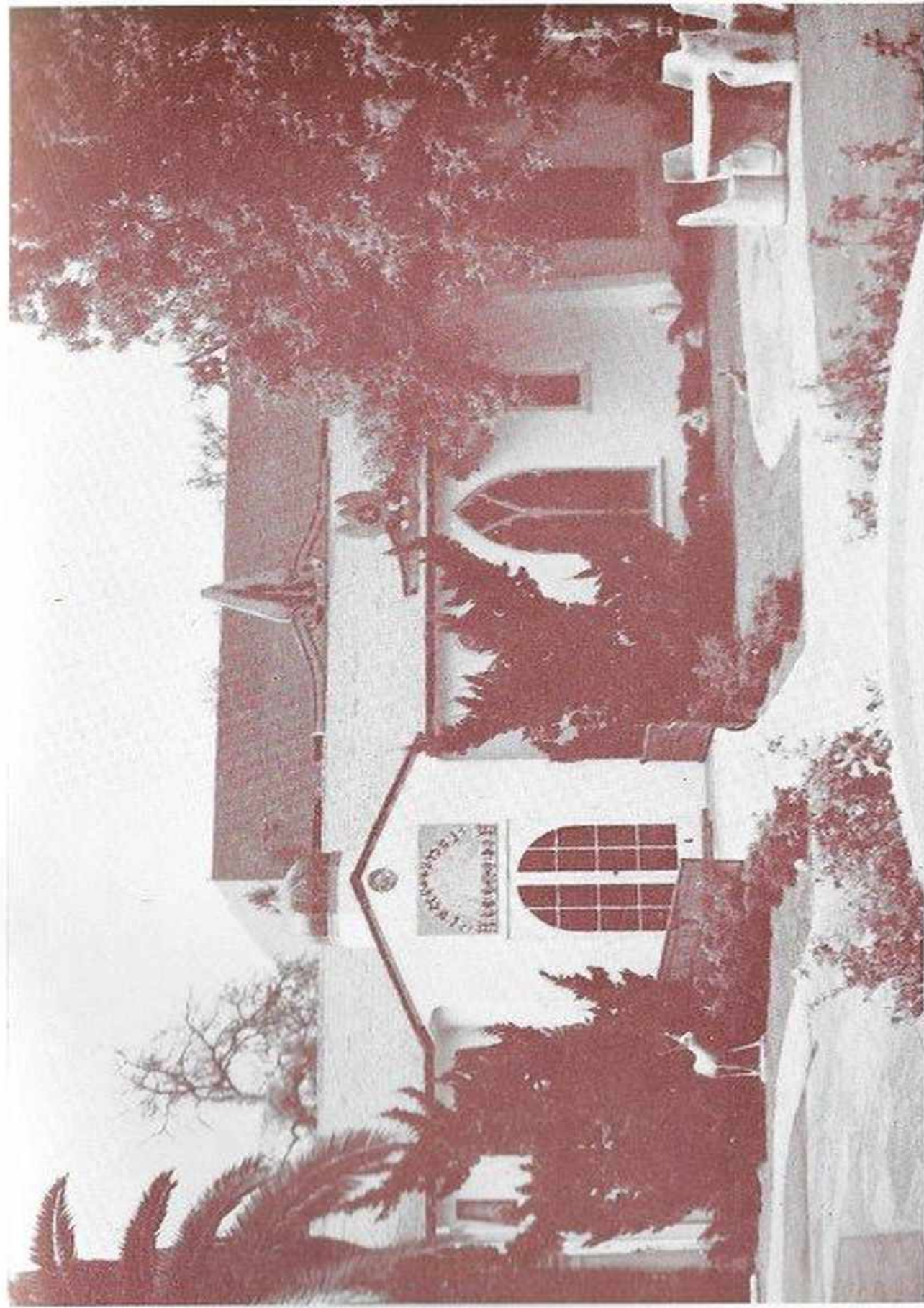
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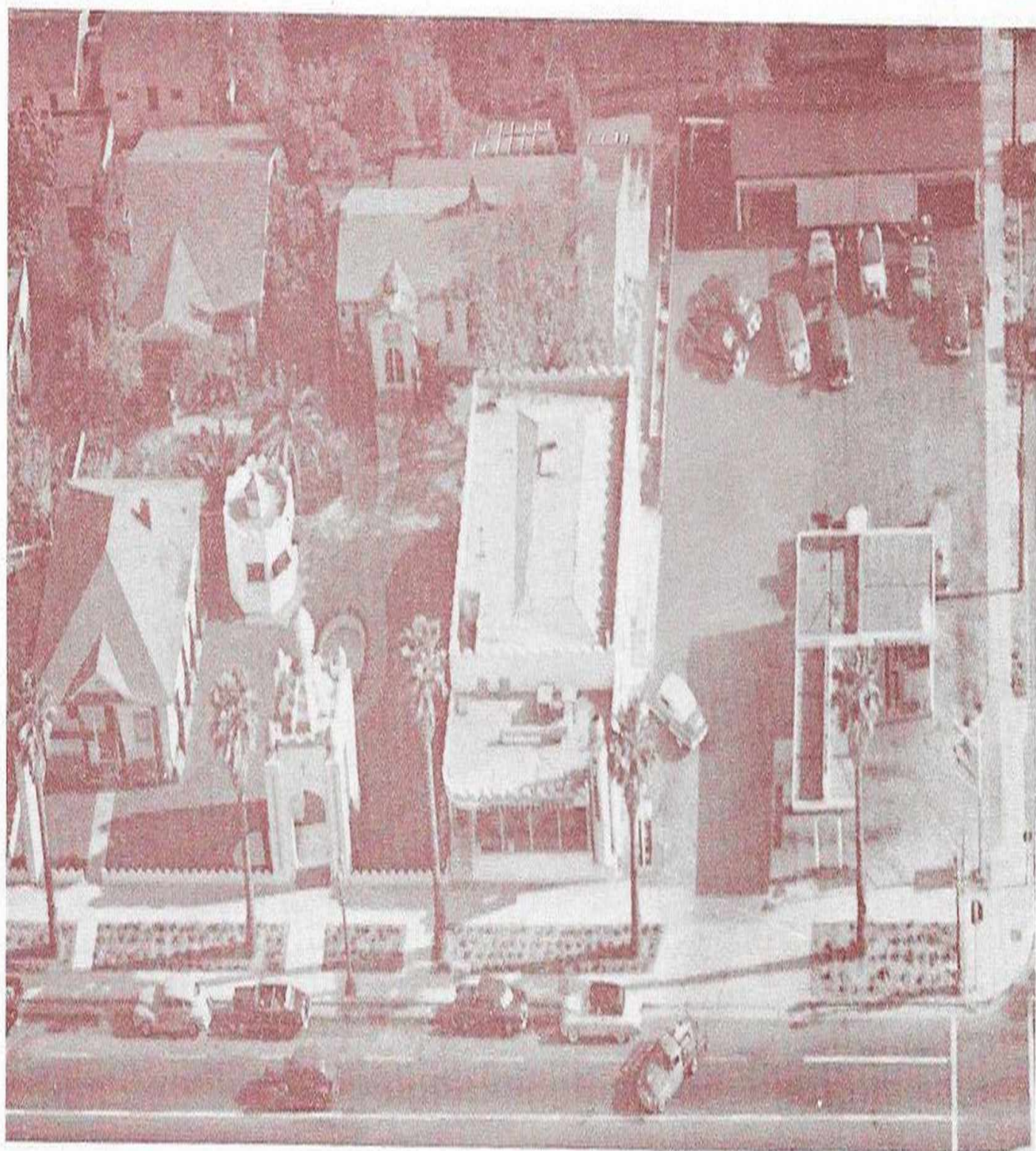
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SRF CHURCH OF ALL RELIGIONS, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Dedicated in 1942, SRF Church in Hollywood is charmingly situated in a secluded section of the grounds of SRF India Center. This recent photograph is available on postcards in natural color.



AERIAL VIEW, SRF INDIA CENTER, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Fronting Sunset Blvd., SRF India Center comprises two dormitory residences for renunciate disciples (*left*); SRF Church of All Religions (*rear*); SRF Book House (*octagonal structure*); SRF Golden Lotus Gateway; SRF Cafe and India Hall, with adjoining parking facilities (*right*).