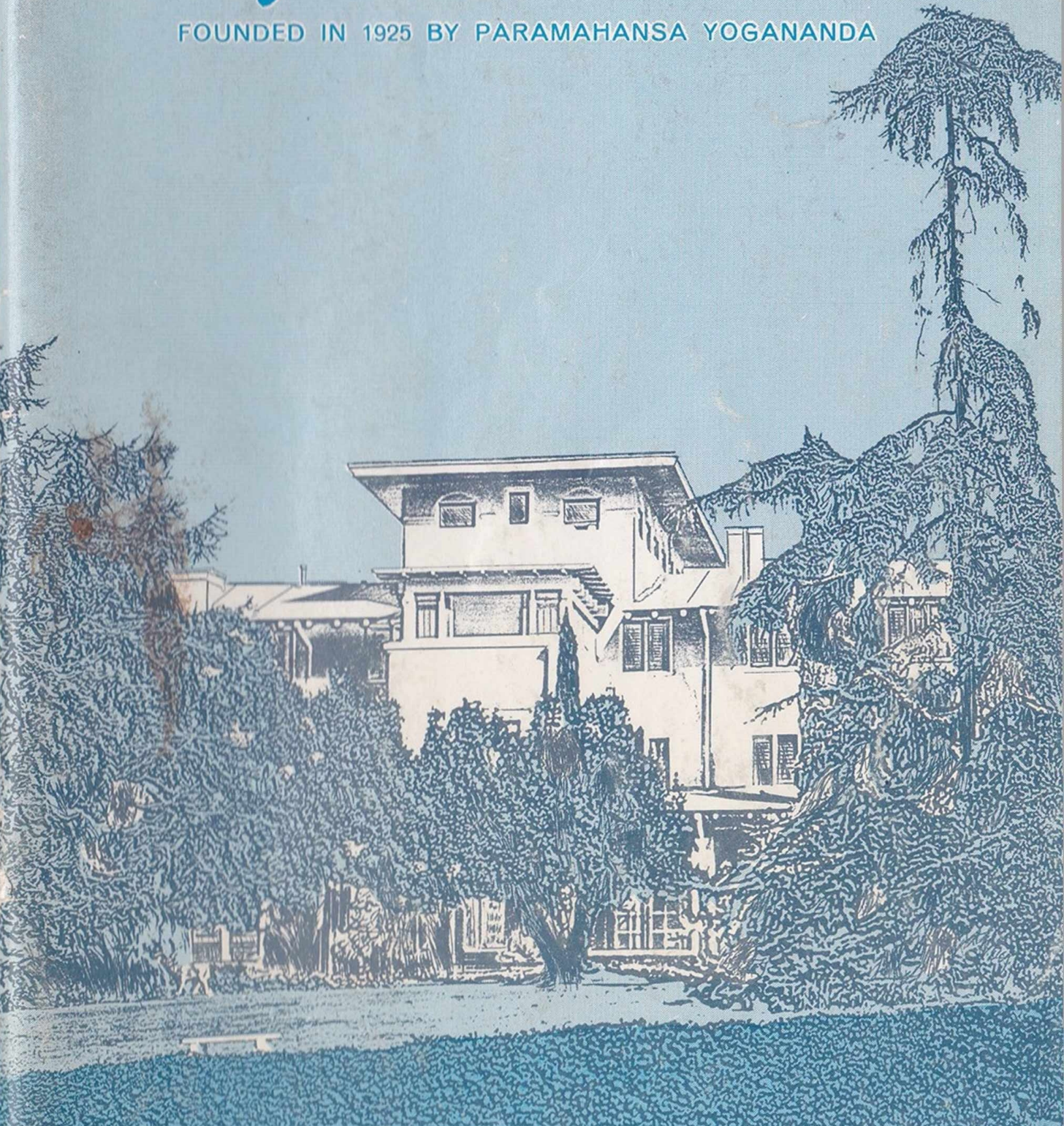




Self-Realization

FOUNDED IN 1925 BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, Los Angeles, California



PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Photograph taken at Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine,
Pacific Palisades, California, September 1951

Self-Realization Magazine

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SRF OFFICERS TO VISIT YOGANANDAJI'S ASHRAMS IN INDIA

Daya Mata (*right*), president of Self-Realization Fellowship of America and Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, and Mrinalini Mata, vice-president, departing on September 20th for India from SRF headquarters, Los Angeles. They plan to stop in Japan en route, to conduct a *Kriya Yoga* initiation for eligible Japanese SRF members. Their six-month stay in India will be devoted to administrative affairs of YSS ashrams founded by Yoganandaji.

What Are Ghosts?

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

*A talk given at Self-Realization Fellowship Church,
Hollywood, California, July 22, 1945*



There are all kinds of tales about ghosts and devils and witches and vampires. Many stories have been written about these creatures, and not a few persons have claimed to have had various experiences with them. I have known of several such cases; most were persons who suffered from overly strong and diseased imaginations. One of them, a woman, had chanced to read a book about vampires; her imaginings about them were so vivid that she came to believe that at night her blood was being sucked away by a vampire. Whenever she visited me, she became well; but the idea of the nightly presence of a vampire was so strong in her that she died at an early age, destroyed by her own thoughts.*

In the sixteenth century, belief in witchcraft was widespread, and hundreds of persons suspected of being witches were falsely accused of being in league with the devil and were put to death. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake as one bewitched. Even Jesus Christ, who was healing the sick and doing only good, was accused of being in touch with Beelzebub. It is true that at various times evil spirits in possessed persons recognized Jesus and spoke to him, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art: the Holy One of God."† Jesus himself spoke of Satan‡ and of evil spirits, which he exorcised from many persons, in one case casting the evil spirits into the bodies of a herd of swine.§

There is another world, the astral, hidden behind this universe. Its inhabitants are "ghosts" invisible to us, garbed in an astral form made of light; they lack a physical vehicle. Ordinarily they are confined

* In the presence of a God-conscious master such as Yogananda, receptive devotees are often healed of mental or physical illness. Permanent cure usually depends on the right condition of both the "seed" and the "soil"; persons who revert to wrong thinking, as this woman did, permit the illness to return.—*Editor.*

† Luke 4:33, 34.

‡ Luke 4:1-8.

§ Luke 8:26-33.

to their own sphere, just as we are limited to our own physical world. If it were a simple matter for the ill-intentioned among astral beings to penetrate the earth plane and hurt us, we would be living in terror all the time. There is enough horror already on this earth of ours. Are not millions of deadly germs floating around? Certainly God would not add the interference of spooks to our sufferings!

It is only when one has weakened his mind by keeping it often blank or unthinking that "tramp souls," earthbound astral beings who are desirous of entering a physical form for sense enjoyments, can enter and take possession of one's body. It is like leaving your car unlocked with the key in the ignition; some vagrant may get in and drive the car off. Tramp souls want a free ride in anyone's physical-body vehicle.

I see many astral beings who have left the material plane, but they cannot see me. I don't make myself visible to them, but I can behold them if I so desire.*

We Existed First as Consciousness

When God first created us, we existed only as consciousness. Is it not true that whenever you create something new, a model is first visualized in your mind? Then you gather together the materials and finally you construct the tangible image of your idea.

In this same manner, everything in creation is triune: mental, astral, and physical. We were created in the mind of God first. How He chemically combined the materials of physical elements to express intelligence is a marvel! Nevertheless, this body is anything but perfect. We can conceive of a body much better than this. I would like to create one that would be like asbestos, able to go through fire and not burn; a form in which there could be no broken bones, no unpleasant coughing. The physical body has pains and aches: its "spark plugs" are often "missing"; first one part and then another gives out, and finally the heart fails.

Americans like to get a new car every year, but they have to keep this old body-model sixty or seventy years! Yet even when it is falling apart, still you want to hang onto the model you have, until the Lord finally says, "Come on, get out of it!" Then you spring from the

* Great masters watch over their disciples on the astral and causal planes as well as on earth. They can and do materialize in physical or astral form in response to the soul call of a true devotee; but at their own wise discretion. (See *Autobiography of a Yogi*, pp. 323-325.) — Editor.

worn-out physical form and see that you are encased in a luminous astral body of light and energy. You rejoice to find that you can hear, you can see, you can touch; and that your new form possesses no bones to be broken, no flesh to be hurt.

The *prana* that permeates the physical body is intelligent life force ("lifetrons"). The electricity that illuminates a light bulb does not create the bulb itself. But the electricity or life force in the united human sperm and ovum cells guides the embryonic and later development of the entire human body. Therefore it is an *intelligent* or consciously directed life force.

For this reason it is unwise to ascribe to yourself permanently any defect of your body. Suppose you have lost an arm in this life, and the thought of that loss has become so impinged on your consciousness that you think you can never again have the use of that arm. When you are reborn the next time, you bring with you that consciousness of a missing arm, and if it is strong enough it may inhibit the creative action of the intelligent life force that grows the arms of your new body. You should therefore never identify yourself with the flaws in your physical form. They do not belong to you, for you are the pure, perfect image of God — the soul.

35 Ideas of Astral and Physical Bodies

The physical body is made of 16 elements. We have also an astral body composed of 19 elements, and a causal or idea body of 35 elements: the 16 ideas that go to make up the elements of the physical body and the 19 ideas that constitute the elements of the astral body.

God first had to think of what materials He wanted to put into the physical and astral bodies before He actually created them. The astral body is composed of the 16 *forces* behind the 16 gross elements that make up the physical body, plus the 19 astral elements.

The 19 elements of the astral body are mental, emotional, and lifetronic. These are intelligence; ego; feeling; mind (sense consciousness); five instruments of *knowledge*, the subtle counterparts of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch; five instruments of *action*, the mental correspondence for the executive abilities to procreate, excrete, talk, walk, and exercise manual skill; and five instruments of *life force*, those empowered to perform the crystallizing, assimilating, eliminating, metabolizing, and circulatory functions of the body.

These are all subtly made. We can hear, smell, taste, touch, and see in the dream world through the *power* that is in the five senses. And in the astral world, even without the physical organs of the ears, eyes, nose, tongue, and skin, we still have with us all sense perceptions. When you die your physical body of 16 elements disintegrates, but the 19 elements of your astral body are intact.

Therefore, before you were given the body composed of 16 elements, you were created as an astral being that cannot be seen by physical eyes. If you were to behold the swarms of astral beings in the ether at this moment, many of you would be afraid; and some of you would try to seek among them your departed loved ones. But if you concentrate deeply at the spiritual eye* you can view with

* The center of will in the brain, situated in the forehead, between the eyebrows. The technique of "opening" the spiritual eye is taught in the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons.



Audience at opening lecture on September 6th in Self-Realization Fellowship series by Brother Anandamoy at Sheraton-Plaza Hotel, Boston, Mass. The public lectures were followed by classes in SRF teachings. A similar series will be given in New York City (October 20–November 2) and in Washington, D.C. (November 10–17).

inner vision that luminous world in which are living all the souls who have gone on to the astral plane.

Where are those souls who have left this earth? They are roaming in the ether. "That is impossible," you say. So let us make a comparison. If a primitive tribesman came here and I told him that music is audible in the ether, he would laugh at me, or perhaps become frightened; but if I then brought a radio and tuned in a station where music was playing, he would no longer be able to deny the truth of my statement. I could similarly show you right now that astral beings are roaming in the ether, and you couldn't deny it.

In human beings the heart acts as a receiving instrument and the spiritual eye as a broadcasting station. If you can calmly concentrate your feeling on the heart, you can become aware of the reassuring presence of your beloved ones who are now in astral form, enjoying their freedom from flesh thralldom.

We are not non-entities. Essentially we are made of 35 ideas. These comprise the intelligence or causal body of man. God encased the 35 thoughts with His spirit, which is called the soul. Just as under a gas burner there is one flame, and in the top of the burner there are many tiny openings through which individual flames emerge, so we all are one light, flowing from God into many bodies.

At Death We are Still Encased in Two Bodies

We are not fully released at death when we depart from the physical form. Our souls are still encased in the subtle astral and idea bodies. It is only when man dons a physical form that he becomes a visible being. After the death of the physical body, he remains in the astral form as a ghost: an intelligent, invisible being. Inhabitants of the astral realms can of course see one another in their luminous bodies; but they are not visible to us on earth unless we know how to perceive the astral world through the spiritual eye. However, when souls shed their astral body and go into a mental form in the causal world, one cannot see them. Ideas are invisible.

So before you took on this physical form you were a ghost and when you die you will become a ghost again. Many spiritually developed humans can see their own astral body. It is finer than the physical one. You can make it very small like an atom or you can make it very large, at will. Why not? God, the divine operator of the cosmic

movie of creation, can enlarge or reduce the size of the picture on the screen. He is the projectionist, running the film from the booth of eternity. You are an individualized expression of His infinite light.

We are Ghosts Each Night in Sleep

We are also ghosts when we sleep, for in sleep we are not aware of ourselves as a physical body at all. Since you are a ghost when you are asleep, why should you be afraid of a ghost? That is what you were and that is what you are going to be. The only trouble is that when you are thrown into the astral at death you cannot create at will a physical body like the one you now have. Great masters who have attained oneness with the Divine Creator can do so, of course. Jesus was crucified and yet he came back in a physical form; he could condense the subtle vibrations of the astral vehicle into a tangible body.

We fear death because of pain, and because of the thought that we may become obliterated. This idea is wrong. Jesus showed himself in a physical form to his disciples after his death. Lahiri Mahasaya returned in the flesh the next day after he had entered *mahasamadhi*.^{*} They proved that they were not destroyed. Just because instances of those who have mastered the astral are few, one should not say they are not true. You should not ignore the testimony of Jesus and Babaji; nor can I put away the testimony of what I have seen with my Master,[†] or what I have experienced in myself. I know many times when some disciple living at a distance is ill or dying. He has drawn my astral body there through his devotion.

One such case happened here. Seva Devi was a very devoted student. She became extremely ill, but she never complained about it to anyone. She knew her time had come to leave this earth. One day when I visited her in Los Angeles she said to me, "Please don't hold me here."[‡] Later on I was staying in the SRF hermitage in Encinitas for a time. I had been given a radio and was waking up early in the mornings to tune in on India. One morning I suddenly felt intuitively the subtle astral vibration of Seva Devi; she drew my astral body to her through her devotion. My physical body was as dead. I was told later that Seva Devi exclaimed, just before her passing, "Swamiji is here!" She was aware of being consciously ushered by me into the other

^{*} *Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 348. [†] *Ibid.*, p. 413 ff.

[‡] Great Masters are able, if they wish, to prolong the stay of a disciple on earth through intercession with God.— *Editor*.

world.* Some time afterward I saw her glowing astral form; she was sitting in one of my classes, just as real as she used to appear in life. If anyone had touched me at that time, he would have seen her, too. However, those who are in that state of astral consciousness do not usually allow others to touch them.

In Dreams We Make Thoughts Visible

Through the astral body's five instruments of life force, astral beings make visible the thought forms that compose the body. The following experiment illustrates the idea. Close your eyes and visualize a horse on the left. At first your concept is fuzzy, but as soon as I say a *white* horse it is easier to visualize it. Now think of a black horse on the right side. Switch them about so that the white horse is on the right side. If you can visualize a little more strongly you will be able to see them as real images. That is what you do in a dream: your mind is more concentrated then and therefore your thought forms become visible to you.

When the physical body falls off at death, what remains? The soul, encased in the astral body of 19 elements, and the 16 elements of the physical body in *thought form*. That is why, if a departed soul has unfinished desires created while on the earth plane, it continues to feel in the astral those desires and the wish to express itself through a material body. And so that soul in its astral vehicle again goes into a united sperm and ovum cell and is born once more in a physical form.

Jesus said, "Destroy this [body] temple and in three days I will raise it up."† He meant that he had to divest himself of the physical, astral, and mental bodies (by casting out all vestiges of attachment to a form) to become one with Spirit. It took three distinct efforts to do this.

God created us in thought first, then He created our energy (astral) bodies, and last came the physical form. What we were, we have become again. Why be afraid of it? Death comes to free us. You shouldn't wish for death, but be comforted in the realization that it is our escape from so many troubles; it is a pension after the hard work of life.

People are afraid of death because they have been in this cage of the flesh so long they fear to leave its "security." But it is foolish to be

* See "*Self-Realization Magazine*," July 1956, p. 28 ff. † *John 2:19*.

afraid. I am making death very charming! No more repaired tires on the body vehicle, no more patchwork living. Since it is the Lord's desire that we should have this old model until death comes, we have to keep it and take care of it. But I wish the Lord had given us the power to go into *samadhi** and drop this body easily as did the saint Narada. He was singing of God in divine ecstatic communion, and when he returned to ordinary consciousness he saw he had shed his old body and possessed a fresh, new one of light. That is the highest, the painless, method of passing.

There is in India a story of a dying youth who, hearing the sobs of grief around him, cried:

“Insult not me with your cries of sympathy
When I soar
To the land of eternal light and love;
It is I who should feel for you.
For me disease, shattering of bones,
Sorrow, excruciating heartaches no more.
I dream joy, I glide in joy, I breathe in joy evermore.”

You don't know what is going to come to you in this world; you have to go on living and worrying. Those who die are pitying us; they are blessing us. Why should you grieve for them? I told this to a woman who had lost her son. When I had finished explaining, she dried her tears immediately and said, “Never before have I felt such peace. I am glad to know that my son is free. I thought something awful had happened to him.”

Disease May Be a Divine Test

You should realize that when disease comes, it may be a test of God. You must pass these tests. You must not be upset by them. Though Jesus was suffering on the Cross, he surmounted that divine test. Many great souls have died of terrible diseases and suffering. Saint Teresa of Avila was afflicted with tuberculosis, and yet she said, “I don't want the Lord to shorten my trials. I want to suffer bravely and work as long as I can.” And when her body went she was lifted up in Christ.

I am urging you not to put all your eggs of happiness in one basket. When you are physically strong and you believe you are well,

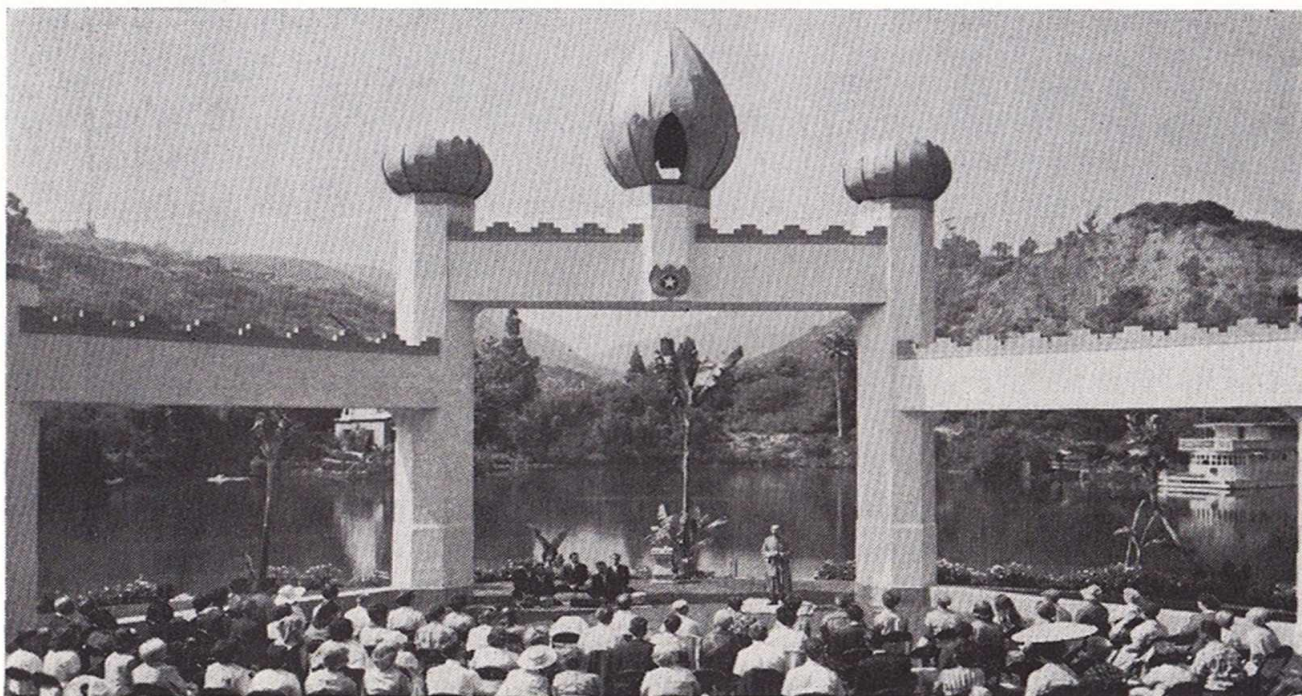
* A blissful superconscious state in which a yogi perceives the identity of individualized soul and Cosmic Spirit.

suddenly pain comes and you think, "My goodness, what is this?" SRF teaches you not to put all your eggs of happiness in the frail basket of your body. How? By teaching you to control the body; by teaching you to meditate.

St. John says in the Bible, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."* When your astral body goes up, or leaves the body at death, you see your physical body as dead. That is true also when advanced yogis leave the physical body at will. Thus John, though living, saw his material form as dead during the experience he describes. It is fun to get out of the body this way. But many persons who think that they get in and out of the body are doing so only in imagination. Just because you think it is so doesn't make it so. You have to know the technique.

One man in New York came to me and assured me that he could travel astrally. "I don't think you can," I said. "You are only imagining

* *Revelation 1:17.*



Out-of-town SRF members visiting SRF Lake Shrine on July 19th during annual week of classes in Los Angeles hear an inspiring talk by Brother Bhaktananda (*standing*). SRF monks (*group in dark suits, center*) playing harmonium, cymbals, and drums led the audience in chanting, Indian fashion, devotional hymns composed by Paramahansa Yoganandaji.

that stimulates the sex nerves. When the emotion or Eve-consciousness in any human being is overpowered by the sex impulse, his reason or Adam also succumbs.

Sex creation is a delusive counterpart of God's joy. Thus when sex is divorced from love, you are in tune with the devil, because it takes you away from God-consciousness, realization of the Self as Spirit: ever existing, ever conscious, ever new Joy. Sex, desire for wine and money — these were the counterfeits created by Satan to displace the ecstasy of the soul. When Adam and Eve tasted of the sex sensation, they fell from Paradise; they lost that divine consciousness by which they could feel their oneness with God in soul ecstasy, and they were forced out of the garden of Eden. Ever since, human beings have had to reproduce their kind through the sexual way, like animals. Women give birth in a troublesome and painful manner. Then, too, husband and wife have to accept what they get; if a bad child comes, they must rear it. Originally they were able to create what they wanted, through the power of mind, just as God does. O happy days of pristine innocence!

So we are now engaged in the human body. At night we become ghosts, and when we die we become ghosts. What is the lesson in this? We must learn to know our ghostly nature, our invisible, powerful nature. But you cannot do so if you are always concentrating on the body: "I have a headache, I want this and that, I dislike spinach." Preoccupation with material concerns is what you must overcome.

There are two forces fighting. One force is trying to save us and another force is trying to hurt us. This world is ruled by invisibilities or ghosts: God the Father, Christ Consciousness, the seven spirits before the throne of God; and Satan, the evil force. In the ultimate sense, Satan is really a tool of God. He fails to keep his promises to man, and then the disillusioned person seeks the veracious Lord.

Call on God's Holy Name

No one can harm you if you truly believe in God. His name is holy. Many people tell me that somebody they know is using black magic on them. I say to them, "You are sitting in the castle of God. No one can harm you." When you think somebody is injuring you, he can do so. Suppose someone is sending you a wrong thought and you accept it; it will hurt you. But you don't have to *accept* evil ideas.

Listen to the voice of God through your good thoughts. Every time a bad thought comes, throw it out. Then Satan can't do anything to you. As soon as you think wrongly, you go toward Satan. You are moving back and forth constantly, between good and evil, but you must go deeper, into the heart of God, where Satan will not be able to reach you.

Listen to the Divine Voice. God is the Spirit of all spirits. Don't be afraid of malicious persons; no one can affect you unless you are fearful. When you keep your mind blank you allow evil to enter, but when you say, "God is with me," nothing can come but good. No satanic force has any power over you when your consciousness is on the Divine; you are free, a child of the Eternal Almighty.



Placid pool on grounds of Self-Realization Fellowship Hermitage, Encinitas, California

Sing "Victory to Guru!"



There is no greater saint than one's Guru.
When one finds one's Guru, all worldly troubles go.
Disease, sorrow, pain, and fear afflict so long
As one is without the Guru's protection;
When the Guru lays his soft hand on one's head
All that troubles him in life passes away.
The Guru is Creator, Preserver, Destroyer;
The Guru is all gods in One — the Supreme.
My Guru causes creation, existence, dissolution.
Take the Guru's name again and again.
It will train the tongue for the finest taste
To which other flavors will be tastelessness.
Prayer, God, and Guru — these are not separate;
The three are One — this is Vedic wisdom.
Take the Guru's name, think of it, sing "Victory to Guru!"
This will make thee fearless, Sitaram, servant of the Lord.

— Reprinted from "The Mother," Calcutta, India; from "Sudhar Dhara" (Streams of Nectar); translated by Abinash Chandra Bose

The Power of Silence

BY C. N. ZUTSHI



Man has two unique gifts which really make him human: the power of thought and the power of speech. A successful person is he who makes the best use of them.

These two powers are closely linked, and the act of using them with effect certainly needs much cleverness and attention. The greatness of a person lies in his way of thinking, avoiding a verbiage of words to clothe his thoughts, producing a tremendous effect, and setting his listeners a-thinking.

The power of speech, although a most potent means of thought-communication and a very powerful precursor of knowledge, if used without proper discrimination can become a person's enemy, a vehicle for spreading disaffection among his fellowmen. Besides being the principal doorway for the flow of man's energy, the power of speech forms an index of his nature, his character, and his powers. Of all his organs of action, the organ of speech needs least effort and most control, for we are prone to use it more than others, and unwise talk may not only make one's own life but also the lives of others intolerable. How often do we forget that speech is silver, silence is gold. Only if we learn to control it can we go higher in our development.

Silence is Part of Right Education

It is therefore part of a child's right education that he should be silent while his elders are speaking, and not try to show off his little knowledge. Often it is seen that one has a tendency to talk when one knows only a little. Hence the ancient adage that those who are silent know much, whereas those who talk much know little. In the spiritual life, the tendency to talk much is a stumbling-block in the way of spiritual development. It is said of a Hindu saint, Sadasiva Brahman, that when he was a student, his guru asked him to keep quiet because he had an inveterate habit of arguing with everyone who came to see his teacher. This advice he followed with much profit to his spiritual growth.*

* This story about Sadasiva Brahman is told in more detail at the end of chapter 41 in *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. — Editor.

Philosophers would use silence to achieve better thinking, for speech distracts concentrated thought. Ethically, speech is an obstacle to perfection, since most of the talk turns out to be either egoistic, about one's own achievements, or degenerates into gossip-mongering about others. Hence control of speech is laudatory.

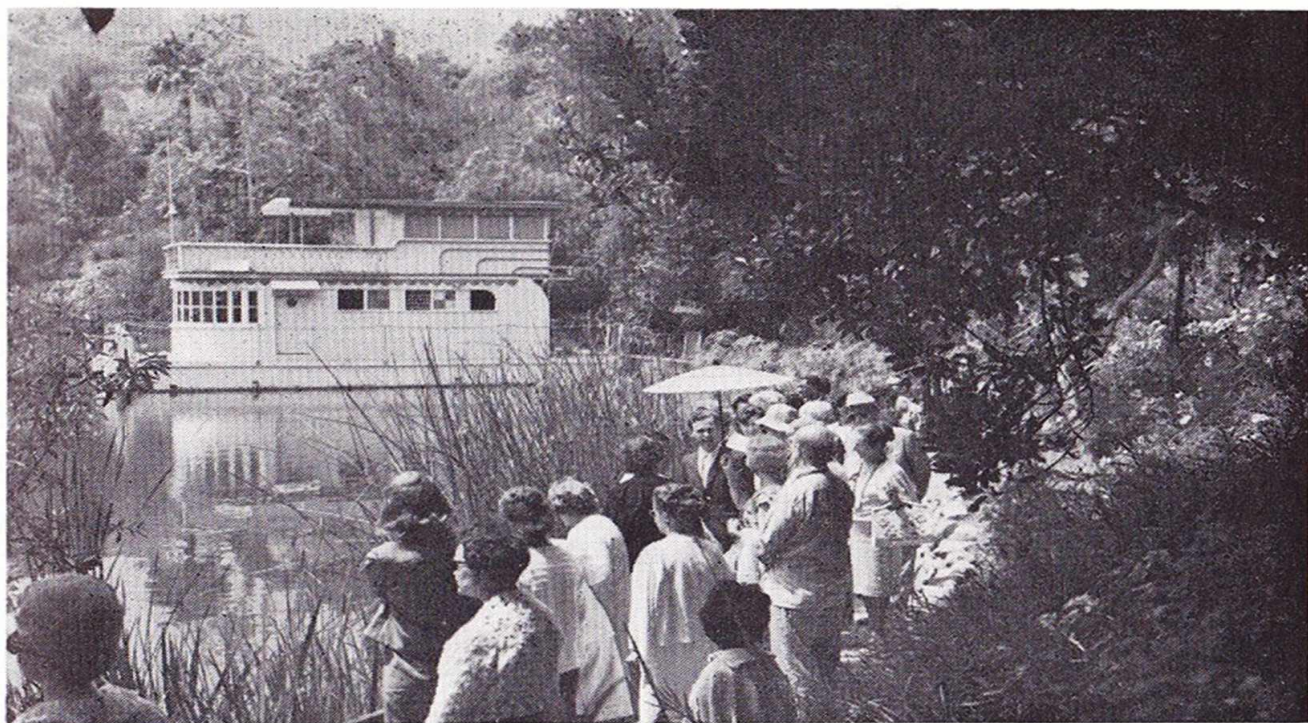
The discipline of the mind is closely connected with the control of speech. The austerity of speech consists in using words that are inoffensive, truthful, pleasant, and beneficial. And the austerity of mind is serenity, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of the heart. Many persons take occasional vows of silence as a self-discipline. Mahatma Gandhi had always one day in a week reserved for silence, and Jain *munis* to this day observe silence for days, weeks, and even for months, and emerge, when they break silence, with spiritual benefit.

Obviously, the observance of silence is a test of one's self-control, for thereby we avoid much talk that is trivial, worthless, and often bad. Confucius once observed: "A glib talker with an ingratiating appearance is seldom a gentleman. A gentleman does not judge a person entirely by his words. In a cultured world we find flowery conduct, and in an uncultured world we often find flowery speeches."

In every important religion, silence is a great spiritual discipline. The enlightened seers, the sages, are called *munis*, "the silent ones," in Sanskrit. Speaking always influences thought and disturbs the mind. So it was that hundreds of *munis* observed the vow of silence not only for a part but for the whole of their lives. Trailanga of Benares, for instance, seldom uttered a single word; nevertheless he had extraordinary knowledge of spiritual life and could control his body in a remarkable manner.

The reason why these vows of silence are observed lies in the fact that control of the mind is closely connected with control of speech. Hence sages recognize that for thought-control, control over speech is necessary. Thinking can be done better in silence, for speech, the vocal expression of thoughts, is a distraction to the mind.

When we begin to control our speech, the mind becomes automatically controlled, and control of the mind is essential to the contemplative life, which is the culmination of all spiritual disciplines. For what after all is the process of true meditation? It is this: that the mind has to be quieted in order to see within, to be disciplined for introspection; and that the light which is used to illumine external objects has to be made to illumine the mind itself. Another Chinese



On walk around SRF Lake Shrine, Pacific Palisades, July 19th, SRF students view houseboat where Sunday School classes are held (*above*) and Gandhi World Peace Memorial (*below, right*). They were in Los Angeles for annual classes in the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of Self-Realization Fellowship and of the Lake Shrine.

philosopher, Chaung Tze, puts this very beautifully when he says: "To see yourself, you do not look in turbulent water but in calm water. Only that which is calm can instill calmness in others."

Yoga teachers invariably warn us that a restless mind can never attain yoga. So the mind has to be peaceful. When a person has reached perfection, he has attained mental quiet. He has attained inner calm by mental concentration, which is accompanied by the conviction that external actions are not part of him. The *Gita* says: "Owing to constant touch with the world, the mind can easily be contaminated; hence purification is a necessary condition."

It is perfect calm that the saints seek in order to commune with Divinity — that is when God is said to speak to the soul. If we wish to attain a perfect spiritual life, silence is necessary. The supreme Godhead is often compared to silence and the means to reach It also is by silence alone.

It goes without saying that final Self-knowledge is attainable only by the pure mind ready to listen to Reality and free from all distractions. The world is audible in our stillness and not in our restlessness, for only then it unfolds itself in our deepest nature, free from all the distractions of time. Our intellect then becomes a fit medium for the reflection of the deepest truths. This experience, although indescribable, is most congenial to the seeker. He at once begins to say, "I know myself," which is the supreme moment of Self-realization which all religions place before us as our goal.

This true knowledge is possible because silence is the unspoken language of love. It is love that approaches with the gentle tread of angels, and knows which doors to open quietly and which to leave locked without one word of questioning. So it is love that whispers; it is hatred that shouts. Love at first sight, with which we are so familiar, is reciprocated nine times out of ten through the speechless and ethereal medium of silence. Have we not read of the beloved's eyes conveying wordless messages to the object of his worship? Every religion says that the best form of worship or prayer is silence. No words are necessary, and even thought should not be allowed to disturb the quietness. Such worship belongs to the unseen church of the spirit, of which P. Hoole Jackson writes:

In such a place
The heart sings worship
That God understands.

— Reprinted from "Thought," Delhi, India

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

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

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter XVII, Stanza 23

"Aum-Tat-Sat" is considered to be the triple designation of Brahman (God). By this power were created, in the beginning of time, the Brahmins (knowers of Brahman), the Vedas, and the sacrificial rites.

The Unmanifested, the Infinite, the Changeless Spirit is called *Param-Brahman*: the One Absolute. However, when God began His cycles of manifestation by creating the universe, the ancient sages described Him — the Nameless and Formless — as *Aum-Tat-Sat* (or, often, *Sat-Tat-Aum*). In the Christian Bible *Sat-Tat-Aum* is spoken of as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Meaning of Aum-Tat-Sat

Aum ॐ (the "Word" of the Bible) is God the Holy Ghost, Invisible Vibratory Power, the direct creator and activator in all creation.

Tat ("That") is God the Son, the Christ or Cosmic Intelligence actively present in all creation.

Sat ("Being, Truth") is God the Father, beyond creation, existing in vibrationless unchangeability.

As the calm ocean without waves and the ocean with waves in tumult are one and the same in essence, differing only in appearance,

so also the One Unmanifested Sea of Spirit and the manifested Sea of Spirit (*Aum-Tat-Sat*) are one and the same, differing only in form.

God as *Sat* is the Father of creation, though He exists beyond it. God as *Tat* is the Son or Christ Intelligence that pervades the universe. God as *Aum* is the Creative Vibration that upholds the worlds through *Prakriti*: Mother Nature, His consort.

It is the macrocosmic triple conception that has established itself in the microcosmic human relationship of father, mother, and son.

Man displays in himself the three divine manifestations. His body is the result of *Aum* or vibratory forces. His Christ Intelligence or *Tat* exists in his omniscient spiritual eye between the eyebrows. His soul resides in the head as a reflection of Cosmic Consciousness or *Sat*.

Aum Testifies to the Divine Presence

Aum of the *Vedas* became the sacred word *Hum* of the Tibetans, *Amin* of the Moslems, and *Amen* of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Jews, and Christians. *Amen* in Hebrew means "sure, faithful." *Aum* is the all-pervading sound emanating from the Holy Ghost as it performs its work of creating and maintaining the universal structure. *Aum* is the voice of creation, testifying to the Divine Presence in every atom.

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."— *Revelation 3:14*.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him [the Word or *Aum*]; and without him was not any thing made that was made."— *John 1:3*.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."— *Romans 10:17*.

"He who knows *Aum* knows God."— Patanjali, great ancient sage of India, author of *Aphorisms of Yoga*.

Aum is Cosmic Sound and Cosmic Light

Aum is the divinely empowered creator of all things; it manifests itself as cosmic light and cosmic sound. As the ocean roar is a conglomerated sound of all waves and is manifest in each wave, so the cosmic sound and the cosmic light are the aggregate of all animate and inanimate creation, and are manifest in each man as the light of life and may be heard by him as the astral sound of *Aum*.

All seekers who want liberation from the world of delusion must pass through the sphere of the Holy Ghost vibration and the sphere of Christ Intelligence before they can reach God the Father beyond the phenomenal worlds.

Jesus promised to send to his disciples the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, to speed them on their way to Self-realization. An advanced devotee can hear the sound of *Aum* in his body and can see its light in his spiritual eye. After he has become acquainted with these two limited manifestations, in the bodily sound and in his spiritual eye, then by further spreading of his consciousness in Omnipresence he sees his small spherical physical eye of light expand into a cosmic sphere whose light conflagrates the whole universe.

With the Father Beyond Creation

Similarly, he can feel the *Aum* sound of his body vibrating into a perception of his cosmic body. In ecstasy he suddenly sees his body as an atom or cell in the cosmic body. Perceiving the cosmic body as his own, he feels in it the cosmic *Aum* sound and the Christ Intelligence. By further advancement he becomes conscious of his presence not only in all creation but with God the Father beyond creation.

As the devotee listens to the cosmic sound he forgets the restrictions of the human body and of space, and feels his consciousness vibrating everywhere with the ever expanding *Aum* sound.



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North and west sides of Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters on Mount Washington, Los Angeles, Calif.

BOOK REVIEWS

SAINTS AND SAGES, by Swami Sivananda. 173 pp., boards, 1960, \$3.00 postpaid. Order from Divine Life Society of South Africa, Sivanandashram, Clare Estate, Durban, South Africa.

Brief descriptions of the lives of thirty-five great spiritual personages have herein been compiled from three books by the late illustrious Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. The lives of real men and women who have attained divine union with God animate philosophy for us as nothing else can; for truly "one picture is worth a thousand words."

Four pages are devoted to the life and work of Paramahansa Yogananda, "a born Siddha and Yogi. He used to get mystic experiences even in the days of his childhood, and had perfect control over his body. Under the guidance of his Christlike master Sri Yukteswarji, Yoganandaji's spiritual life progressed by leaps and bounds. His supreme devotion to God and his Guru brought him a variety of spiritual experiences, until at last he attained Cosmic Consciousness. He used to master the techniques of Yoga in a short period of time After his *mahasamadhi* the body of Yogananda manifested a phenomenal state of immutability for 21 days, thus demonstrating his great yogic powers even after death

"Yogananda taught the balanced way to attune the body, mind, and soul to the cosmic laws of life and thus overcome the threefold suffering of man — physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance. He says: 'Since God is the source of our being, He is the primary necessity of life. Why wait for pain, disappointment, and despair to drive home this truth? To attain happiness, seek God. The thought of separateness from Him is false — the cause of all human misery. Each one of us is an inseparable part of God here and now. All men are made in His image, as the scriptures assure us. We have only lost sight of the divine image within our own soul.' "

The book contains a pleasing variety of sketches about saints both ancient and contemporary, and includes some of their wise sayings as well as incidents in their lives. Several extracts follow:

Thyagaraja Swami, Musician-Saint

Thyagaraja Swami was a great musician-saint of South India. He is said to have composed 24,000 *kirtans* in praise of Lord Rama. About five hundred are chanted by the songsters of the present day. When devotional songs are sung with piety and devotion, they at once elevate the soul to great spiritual heights and melt the mind in the Lord and lead to communion with Him.

Thyagaraja used to sing in the temple of Ambal and worship the *Devi* (goddess) before he proceeded for his daily alms. He lived on alms although he was well known throughout South India and Maharajas were willing to have him as the *darbar* (court) songster.

He was a superman, and had direct *darshan* (vision) of Lord Rama on several occasions. When idols that he worshiped were thrown into the river, he received directions in his dreams from Lord Rama, located the exact spot in the river where they lay buried underneath the sand, and recovered them.

The Raja of Pudukottah once tested the merits of the songsters in a strange way. He placed an unlit lamp amongst them and challenged them to light the lamp with a song only, without using a match-stick or any other usual means. Thyagaraja Swami meditated upon Narada (an incarnation of the Lord) for a while, sang the *raga* "Jyotiswarupini" and the lamp lighted of itself. All were struck with wonder.

Once he restored life to a person who had been accidentally drowned in a temple well. Thyagaraja had foreknowledge of the exact day and hour of the passing of his soul from the physical body.

He never cared for wealth or position in society, but was humble and courted poverty. Once the Raja of Tanjore sent a message to Thyagaraja. The messenger said: "Kindly compose a song or two in praise of the Raja and he will give you ten acres of land and a big bullion of gold."

Thyagaraja said, "Why should I use my music to flatter Rajas?" He sang a song, whose translation is: "Which gives greater happiness—gold or the worship of Lord Rama? O soul! speak the truth. Which is sweeter and more delicious—milk, butter, curd, or the nectar of meditation and *bhajana* (worship in song) of Lord Rama? Which is more conducive to health—a dip in the Ganga of serenity of mind or in the muddy well of worldly corruption? Which of the two is better—praise of a rich man who is puffed up with vanity or praise of the All-merciful, Omnipotent Lord?" The messenger did not speak a word. He left the place silently.

The Maharaja of Travancore sent a messenger to fetch Thyagaraja at any cost. The messenger tried to tempt him by saying that the Maharaja would give him much wealth and a good position. Thyagaraja replied, "I

regard wealth as an obstacle to man's progress. It does not contribute any happiness to man. On the contrary, it brings all sorts of miseries. Only fools run after money."

He then explained to the messenger the meaning of one of his songs: "That state of mind which places implicit faith in Rama is the real position in life. There are many who can repeat all the *Vedas*, *Shastras*, and *Upanishads* like a parrot, but who do not live in the spirit of the teachings. Can such persons be regarded as having attained real position? There are many persons who possess a mountain of wealth, a number of wives and children, and who enjoy the friendship of Maharajas. Can they be considered to have attained real position? Can a person who holds good status in society but who leads a life of evil passions and dire ignorance be regarded as having attained real position? No, no. Only that man who has implicit faith in Rama, who meditates on the Lord, and who has obtained His grace has attained real position." The messenger went away quietly.

What a magnanimous soul Thyagaraja was! He spurned material riches. The wealth of the three worlds is mere straw to a man who enjoys the treasure and bliss of God-realization. The state of such exalted souls is beyond description.

Glory to Thyagaraja Swami whose songs instill devotion and happiness in the hearts of the hearers!

Lord Mahavira, the last Tirthakara

Lord Mahavira was born in 599 B.C. and entered *nirvana* in 527 B.C. He was the last *Tirthakara* of the Jains.

Maha means "great," and *vira* means "hero." *Tirtha* literally means "a ford, a means of crossing over"; metaphysically it denotes a spiritual guide or philosophy which enables one to cross over the ocean of recurring births and deaths in this world; *kara* means "one who makes." The whole word signifies a Jain holy teacher.

Mahavira was known in his early life by the name of Vardhamana (increasing, i.e., ever advancing). He was born to Sidhata, the Raja of Kundalpura, and Queen Trisala. Obedient to his parents, he served them with great faith and devotion. People were surprised at his virtuous nature at such a tender age. He became very much interested in meditation, and cultivated the arts of music and literature. Thirty years of Prince Vardhamana's life passed off like this.

Then he saw in a vision that he was passing through innumerable births. He thought: "How many births have gone by fruitlessly! I clearly see that the soul is essentially separate from matter. I have wasted thirty years of my life. I have not practiced any penance. I have not renounced the world

in order to attain pure Knowledge. The infatuation with the world which is at the root of all evils is not destroyed.”

Prince Vardhamana became extremely penitent. He resolved to give up everything worldly. He gave up attachment to his parents, friends, and relatives. He thought over the Twelve *Anupreshas* or matters of deep import according to the Jain scriptures: (1) all worldly things are temporary, (2) the soul alone is the sole resort, (3) this world is beginningless and crooked, (4) there is nothing to help the soul but the soul itself, (5) the body and mind are essentially separate from the soul, (6) the soul is essentially pure, and the body and mind are essentially impure, (7) the soul's bondage is due to the inflow of *karma* into it, (8) every being ought to stop this inflow, (9) emancipation is attained when *karma* is completely got rid of, (10) the emancipated souls remain in the foremost of the filled spaces, (11) in this world to have the birth of a human being and to meditate on the nature of the soul are the greatest blessings, (12) to have the three spiritual jewels as described by the omniscient is the only morality.

Mahavira thought over these things and decided finally that he should abandon his home.

His mother said, “My beloved son, you will not be able to bear the severity of the austerities. There is time yet for it. You must help your father in governing the kingdom. You can become a monk after some years.”

Mahavira said, “Adorable Mother! The objects of the world are evanescent like water bubbles. Where can one get happiness in this world, which is the abode of disease, sorrow, pain, and death? I must leave this world.”

He distributed all his wealth to the poor with his own hands and went to the forest and became a monk. There he practiced rigorous austerities, fasting for many days and meditating on the pure nature of the soul.

He was tested by the celestials; a group of handsome women surrounded him, but he remained unmoved and unperturbed. Attaining omniscience, he preached his message of spiritual peace for thirty years. Many kings in India became his disciples.

Rabia, Saint of Islam

Hazarat Rabia, a great woman saint of Islam, was born in 717 A.D. of a poor family. Her parents died in a famine soon after her birth. As a young girl she was kidnapped and sold as a slave to a rich man.

While walking in the street one day she fell down and broke her wrist. She bowed her head in the dust and prayed: “O Lord! I am without a father

(Continued on page 34)

Soul Whispers

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



I am crying in the wilderness of my loneliness. Eyes closed in prayer, long have I scanned inner skies of darkness to discover the hidden light of Thy presence.

With countless heart cravings I pant for Thy raindrops of wisdom. Relieve my thirst, O Ever Flowing Waters!



May I be secretly joyous in spite of all adverse circumstances, knowing that happiness is my birthright, my divine "buried treasure." Guide me to find in the soul the riches beyond the dreams of kings.



O Spirit, teach me to pray with deep concentration, and to imbue scientific meditation with devotion. May my heart daily become more pure by all-surrendering love for Thee.



As Thy freeborn offspring, I want to train and use my own will; but only with Thy guidance, O Father! May all my activities lead me closer to Thy paradise of fulfillment.



O Heavenly Father, fill me daily with the love and thanksgiving that overwhelm the heart of a newly awakened saint. Give me the fervor known to all devotees who have ever loved and found Thee.

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Letters from SRF Students

"Last year when very ill I wrote and asked to be included in the prayers of the Prayer Council. Your reply came, bringing an awareness of God's healing radiance and the help of the daily prayers of the SRF disciples. As I read it, the warmth of its message of love and protection was like a mantle around me. 'These are my people,' I thought. 'This is my family.' My faith was sustained and strengthened.

"For many years I had had an enlarged thyroid, medically of special interest because the top part seemed to be hard and dried up — probably a type of cyst. Doctors from time to time were rather anxious to operate, but I had never agreed to this.

"I don't know just when the healing took place, but suddenly my throat was entirely normal — the condition mentioned had completely disappeared. The doctor I was consulting was most surprised, especially as I had taken no drugs to affect the thyroid gland, and the condition had been of such long standing.

"It was a wonderful thing to happen — it filled me with light and thankfulness and praise, and the determination to persevere wholeheartedly in the way our beloved Paramahansa Yogananda has shown us." — *D.S., Melbourne, Australia.*

"The SRF Recharging Exercises freed me from my 20-year habit of smoking. For seven months I have not smoked. I am so happy about it." — *E.S., Cologne, Germany.*

"My deepest thanks to all who helped us with their prayers, a 'last-minute-help' indeed! On the same day that your consoling letter arrived, my son was to be operated on. One kidney that had stopped functioning because of the accident was to be taken out. If this had been done, he would not have been able to continue working in his profession, as it requires his complete good health. A short time before the operation, X-rays were taken. They showed that the kidney which had not worked the evening before was now functioning. It is now functioning just as normally as before the accident. Can you imagine how happy we all have been? In my prayers I thanked God and Christ with all my heart — but now I want to tell it to you too and to thank you deeply." — *H.L., Berlin, Germany.*

"When I have finished my Recharging Exercises, I feel as if I could uproot trees! All tiredness is gone. Since childhood I have been

unusually thin and often had to take the mockery of companions. Now the muscles of my body are more and more visible, and my inferiority complex naturally is leaving me." — *W.W., Innsbruck, Austria.*

"*Hong-Sau* [Concentration Technique of Meditation] has taken away my breathing difficulties. For many years I have meditated, but nothing has influenced my meditation as much as this technique. It is indeed a key to heaven." — *F.L., Vienna, Austria.*

"I cannot quite find words to tell you what a blessed week I've experienced here in the Encinitas SRF Retreat — the rest, the peace, and most of all the restoration of an escaped inner rapport I once enjoyed. For all this, and more, may I express a deep and heartfelt 'thank you.'" — *E.H.A., Los Angeles, California.*

"We want to thank the Retreat staff and leaders for their part in providing such a wonderful place to attune oneself to Master. As each day went by, more spiritual calmness, growth, and insight accrued. The new Retreat and its program, and the privilege of meditating here where Master spent so much time allows a greater closeness to God and Guru. We wish only to return soon." — *T.P., Los Gatos, California.*

"Your magazines are most informative, like a textbook of rare quality, containing illuminating insights and truths about spiritual culture, creation, and man's sole purpose in this universe. *Self-Realization* magazines are the finest source of religious knowledge I have ever found in this form. I treasure them." — *J.E., Soledad, Calif.*

"After receiving the first issue of my subscription to *Self-Realization Magazine*, I realized what a valuable spiritual aid a little magazine can

CAPTION FOR PHOTOGRAPHS ON OPPOSITE PAGE

(ABOVE) A group of out-of-town SRF students stroll behind new Retreat in SRF Colony, Encinitas, California, recently opened to members and friends. The tour to Encinitas on July 17th was taken by many members visiting Los Angeles for the annual summer classes in SRF teachings.

(BELOW) In the Temple of Leaves at SRF headquarters on Mount Washington, Los Angeles, Brother Dharmananda (*pointing*) tells a group of SRF students the history of the spot, where Paramahansa Yogananda often used to teach. Many such groups visited the headquarters on July 20th, when Self-Realization Fellowship held open house for students attending classes.



SCENES DURING PILGRIMAGE TOURS
Annual Week of SRF Classes, July 14-20, 1967
(see opposite page)

be. Master's words made available in *Self-Realization* brought me to a higher intensity of purpose than I ever thought I could reach. Is it possible for me to purchase back issues of the magazine, that the bubbling spring produced in me by this first issue may geyser into a fountain of one-pointed spiritual desire?" — *S.B., Goleta, California.*

(Continued from page 28)

and a mother. I am poor. I am a slave. My wrist is broken, but I do not grieve. I wish only to please Thee. Mayest Thou be pleased with me!"

Her master gave her a great deal of hard work and yet she fasted all day and spent the greater part of the night in prayer and meditation.

One night her master heard some sounds outside and woke up. He looked through the window and saw Rabia in the courtyard. She was praying: "O my adorable Lord! Thou knowest my heart already. My eyes are ever turned toward Thee. I wish to worship Thee always. Thou hast made me a slave. What can I do? How can I serve Thee constantly? As I am a slave I can worship Thee only at night."

The master saw above her head a light which illumined the whole place. He was struck with wonder. Thinking that Rabia must be a very pious lady, he released her next morning and begged her pardon. Thereupon she left the city to live in the desert. After some time she went to Basra and lived there till her death at the age of ninety.

Rabia liked solitude and led a simple life. She had rich disciples but she embraced poverty, living in a dilapidated hut and having only one or two earthen plates, a broken jar, and a piece or two of cloth. She frequently fasted and spent the days and nights in prayer and meditation. Men and women went to her cottage to get her blessings and spiritual instructions. She received many offers of marriage, but said: "I am devoted to God. I have no desire for human relations. I am concerned with the Lord. It does not please me to be distracted from Him even for a single moment."

Rabia laid great stress on the love of God and worship for His sake alone without any hope of reward or fear of punishment. To her, God was the Beloved. She taught that the true lover must abandon everything, including the will, in total surrender to the Divine Will. He must renounce all desires, even the desire for emancipation.

When Rabia was nearing Mecca the Kaaba* left its place and came to welcome her. But she said: "It is the Lord of the house I desire. What have I to do with the house?"

*A small cube-shaped building in the Great Mosque at Mecca, containing a sacred stone; the most sacred shrine of the Mohammedans.

Books by Paramahansa Yogananda



Autobiography of a Yogi. 8th edition, 514 pages, \$4.00.

Whispers From Eternity. Heartfelt prayers that convey to man an infinite hope. 1959 edition. Cloth, 266 pages, \$2.50. (*Spanish edition, 1962; cloth, \$2.50.*)

The Science of Religion. Happiness as the goal of all religions. Cloth, 101 pages, \$1.50. (*Spanish edition, paper, \$1.50.*)

Cosmic Chants. Devotional songs, arranged for piano. 1963 edition, plastic binding; 106 pp. 9 pp. Indian art prints, \$2.50.

Metaphysical Meditations. Daily thoughts for divine peace. 115 pages, cloth, \$1.25. (*Spanish edition, paper, 60¢; German edition, heavy paper, \$1.75.*)

Scientific Healing Affirmations. For awakening the inner powers that free man from the consciousness of sickness. Paper, 76 pp., 75¢. (*Spanish edition, paper, 50¢.*)

How You Can Talk With God. The way by which man can commune with his Heavenly Father. Paper, 25¢.

The Law of Success. Explains how divine forces are utilized to mold a successful life. Paper, 25¢. (*Spanish edition, 25¢.*)

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At a gathering of Sufis, Hassan said, "He is not sincere in his claim to love for God who is not patient under His chastisement." Rabia said, "I smell egotism in his words." Shaque said, "He is not sincere who is not thankful for the chastisement of his Lord." Rabia saw that something better than that was needed. Then Malih Dinar said, "He is not sincere who does not delight in the chastisement of his Lord." Rabia said, "Even this is not good enough." They then asked her to give her views. Rabia said, "He is not sincere who does not *forget* the chastisement of his Lord."

She was once seen running with fire in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. They asked her, "Where are you going?" She replied, "I am going to set fire to paradise and put out the fire of hell, so that both veils may disappear for pilgrims and their purpose may be sure. The servant of God may then see Him without any hope for paradise or fear of hell."

Rabia was asked why she worshiped God. She replied: "Is it not enough for me that I am given hands to worship Him? He is worthy of worship without any other motive." On another occasion she said: "I have not served God for fear of hell — if I did I would be a wretched hireling; nor from love of paradise, for then I should be a disloyal servant, serving for the sake of reward. I have served Him only for the love of Him."

Avvaiyar, the "Universal Grandmother"

Avvaiyar belonged to the seventh century A.D. She was well known for her great wisdom, sympathy, and love for all.

She became an orphan while yet a child, and was brought up by a man who was a poet. At the age of sixteen Avvaiyar became famous for her great beauty. Kings and princes sought her hand. But Avvaiyar was devoted to her pursuit of religion and had a great desire to serve humanity. She vehemently refused to become bound in marriage. However, the pressure of her foster parents was very great and they decided to give her in marriage to a neighboring prince.

Avvaiyar was much distressed and prayed and wept before her deity Vighneswara, to save her: "O my Lord! These people are only after my youth and beauty; but I want to dedicate myself to the Goddess of Learning and to the spread of truth. Please take away my youth and beauty so that I can have peace and follow my way of life." It is said that God granted her request and that she quickly became an old woman with a common appearance.

Henceforth she went about imparting her wisdom to all, from the humblest to the highest. During her wanderings she met a couple who were farmers. The wife was persuading her husband to leave his occupation and become the servant of a chieftain. They consulted Avvaiyar, who said: "The tree on the bank of a river and a life of dependence on a king — both are

insecure and will crash sometime. There is no profession more worthy than tilling the land. No other profession is as independent and dignified as agriculture.”

Avvaiyar was respected by many kings; she was invited to their courts. But she always sought to lead a simple life amongst the poor, who flocked to her wherever she went, and shared their joys and sorrows. She was so much loved by all that she was called the Universal Grandmother. She wrote many ethical works, some of which are studied even today by children in schools. Following are some of her sayings:

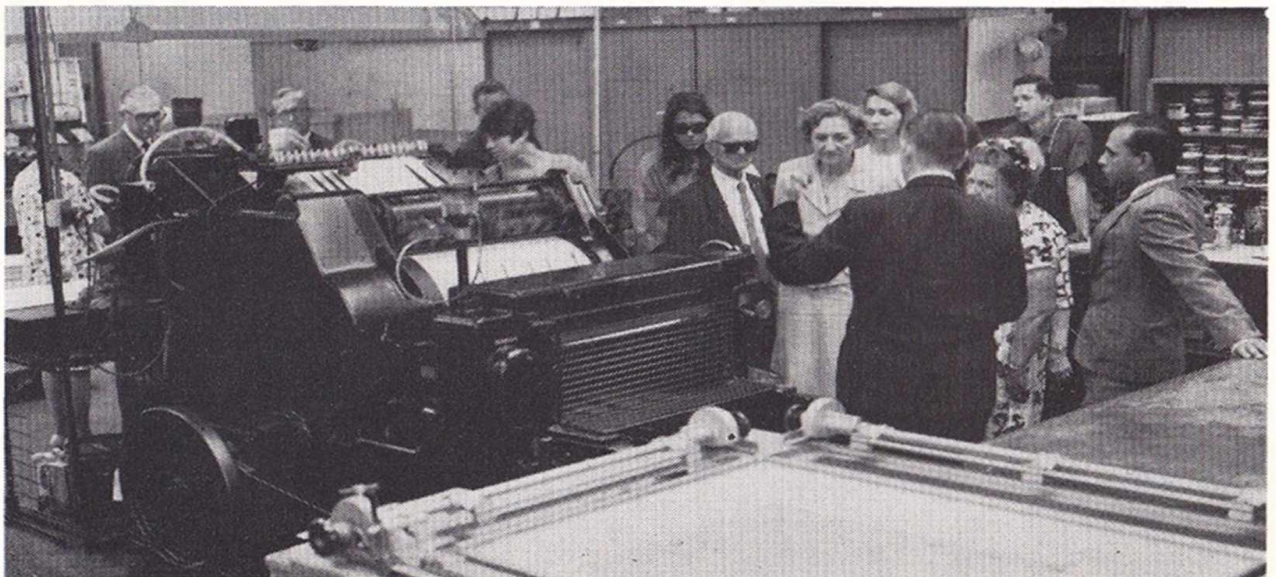
Speak not to provoke.

Harsh words do not conquer soft ones: the arrow that strikes down elephants harms not a piece of cotton; the rock that is not cleft with the long iron crowbar splits when the roots of a tender shrub enter it.

It is not possible to calm down the waves in order to bathe. Even so it is no use waiting to do good until after one has grown rich, for riches may not then stand one in good stead. A man should do good here and now, according to his means. To him alone riches prove useful.

Too much eating results in the revolt of the senses, in the increase of desires, and in ultimate physical ruin. To eat just enough to keep alive and to get the best out of this life is the duty of every wise man.

Cool are the rays of the moon; cooler still is sandal paste; coolest are the pleasant words of the gracious who have love, learning, and patience.



SRF students visiting Publications Building at SRF headquarters in Los Angeles, July 20th, during annual week of classes, hear explanatory talk by Brother Dharmananda (back to camera)

Comments on "Autobiography of a Yogi"

"*Autobiography of a Yogi* has been a revelation to me. It made clear to me many passages in the Bible that I had never before understood. Until I read this book, Yoga had always seemed to me to be something esoteric; something for me, at least, to back away from. It now seems that yoga may be what I have been searching for all my life." — *W.B., Tacoma, Washington.*

"I have received a great renewal of faith from *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Because of it I returned to my religion after an absence of seven years. The book is a beautiful document on the power of the love of God." — *P.W., Brooklyn, N.Y.*

"Having read Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography*, I have been changed immensely; I now feel as though I am finding my way out of the woods, so to speak. His teachings have revolutionized my way of life and thought." — *R.W., Brooklyn, N.Y.*

"Since reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* I am no longer interested in reading novels. (I was formerly an omnivorous reader, with a palate for good reading of every description.) After reading the *Autobiography*, Miss . . . and I sent for every book written by Paramahansa. We have read the *Autobiography* twice, and we pick it up frequently for reference when reading his other writings." — *D.W., North Avoca Beach, N.S.W., Australia.*

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* The Word or Holy Ghost: invisible divine power, the only doer, the sole causative and activating force that upholds all creation through vibration. *Aum* the blissful Comforter is heard in meditation and reveals to the devotee the ultimate Truth, bringing "all things to remembrance." — *Paramahansa Yogananda in "Autobiography of a Yogi."*

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