

Self- Realization MAGAZINE

FOUNDED BY PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

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Healing of Body, Mind and Soul

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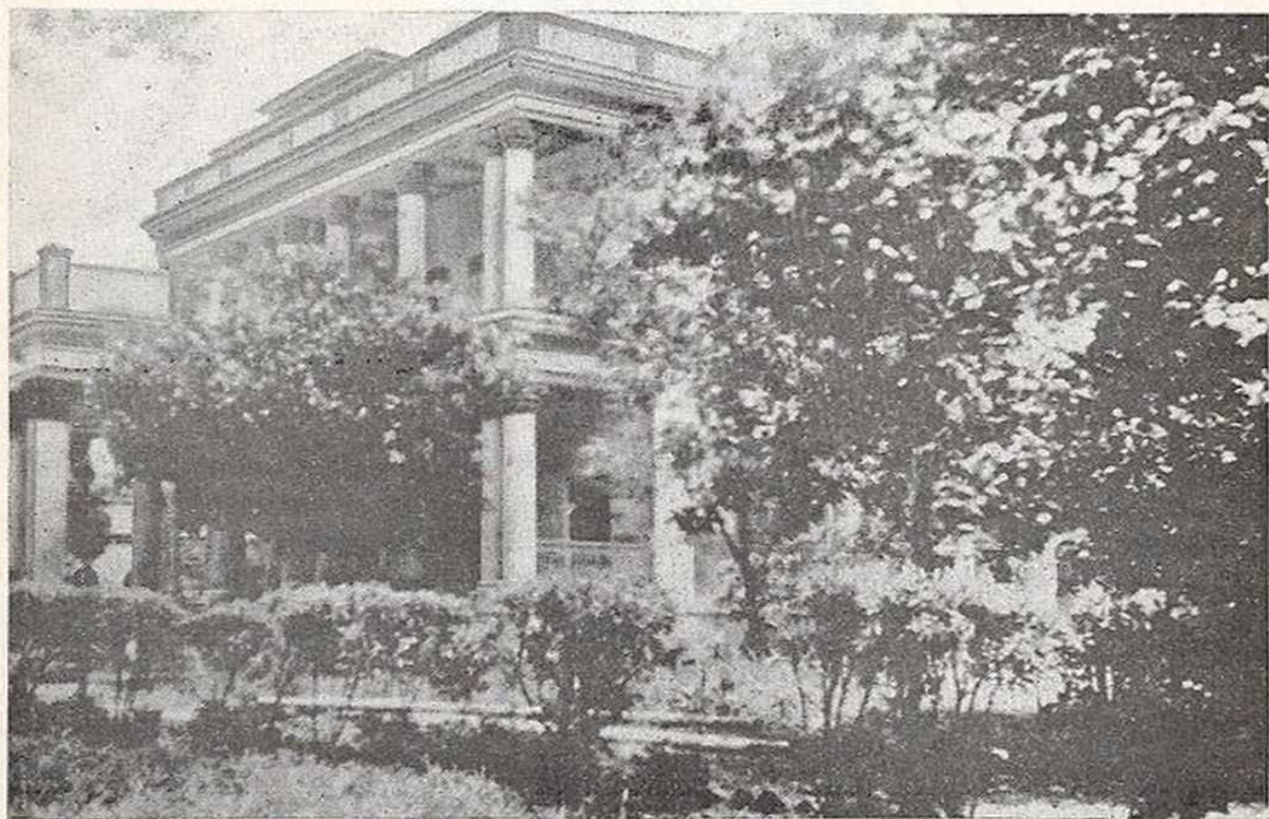


PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA
Photograph taken in Pittsburgh in 1926

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Yogoda Math (Self-Realization Fellowship Hermitage) at Dakshineswar, on the Ganges River near Calcutta. Headquarters of Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society (Self-Realization Fellowship) in India.

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Prayer to Paramhansa Yogananda



"The following tribute to Paramhansaji, written by an anonymous poet, appeared in the February, 1953 issue of "Synthese Universelle," Geneva, Switzerland. Translated from the French.)

O Immaculate Swan, stop thy flight in the skies of the eternal morning, and listen . . .

Thousands of voices, everywhere, intone the Chant of Silence.
OM!

O Immortal Lotus, stop thy dance on the waters of immeasurable Joy; O Shepherd, stop thy march on the paths of purity, and look . . .

Thousands of souls, from the throne between the eyebrows, extol the reign of light and the love of the heart.

OM!

O Paramhansa,* call to thee thy yogis, draw to thee the flames of yoga. May they glorify the Christ-consciousness in thee, in us, in our brothers; may they, O Guru, save the world.

OM!

May all the arms of the earth be raised in greeting, O imperishable Love, when Thy face will shine at the Second Coming, when the Sun will rise again.

OM, OM, OM,

HARI OM!

*Literally, param, highest; hansa, swan. The hansa is represented in scriptural lore as the vehicle of Brahma, Supreme Spirit.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*
By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter V, Stanza 19

Literal Translation

The relativities of existence (birth and death, pleasure and pain) are overcome by those who view this world with equal-mindedness. Verily they are enthroned in the taintless, the perfectly balanced Spirit.

Spiritual Interpretation

Equal-mindedness can be attained by a technique such as Kriya Yoga, which not only disconnects but completely withdraws the mind from the senses. By interiorization of the mind, the yogi feels a state of even, unchanging joy. When he can bring that state of inner ecstasy to all his perceptions in the state of wakefulness, he becomes blameless and faultless, one with the untainted Spirit.

Sages speak of the ordinary person as full of taint or flaw because he perceives the dualities and relativities of existence: pain and pleasure, cold and heat, life and death. Only he who can disconnect his consciousness at will from the perception of worldly objects is free from the disturbing dualities of the senses and thus rests in the tranquil Spirit. Those yogis who evenly perceive divine bliss in the subconscious, conscious, and superconscious states are pure and perfect like the Spirit.

The undisciplined man, watching the motion picture of this world, rides the uneven waves of joy and sorrow or despondency or wrath or apathy in the sea of his consciousness; he cannot behold there the reflected moon of Spirit. When the undulating waves of consciousness

are stilled by yoga, the sage beholds in the calm inner ocean the undistorted reflection of the Divine Moon.

The world is full of excitable people who run the gamut of the emotions while participating in the unpredictable daily motion pictures of life. The ordinary man, living an average life of sixty years, beholds 21,900 diurnal and nocturnal motion pictures, and is tossed on ceaseless waves of feeling. Buffeted and bewildered, he learns very little from the instructive panorama of life. Such men have to reincarnate until they are able to watch the worldly spectacle like calm blissful gods.

The yogi views this world as an entertainment. If he experiences in his own life a "tragedy" such as illness, poverty, persecution, or bereavement, he is able to say sincerely: "Ah, I am enjoying this dramatic spectacle!" —even as an ordinary man, viewing a motion picture of horror or tragedy, may say: "What an interesting drama!"

In this stanza the yogi is advised to conquer his emotional reactions to the inevitable dualities of the phenomenal universe, and to remain, like his Creator, in an even, ecstatic state. The body-identified man is easily moved by the dualities, but, at death, the beloved body cannot be emotionally stirred. The yogi accepts the hint given by Death, and, even while occupying the body, treats it impersonally like a total stranger.

Chapter V, Stanza 20

Literal Translation

With unwavering discrimination, free from delusion, neither jubilant at pleasant experiences nor downcast by unpleasant experiences, the sage becomes established in God.

Spiritual Interpretation

The ordinary man never analyzes the lessons inherent in the cinema of daily life; he remains identified with those pictures, grieving or rejoicing as the case may be.

The yogi, who roasts in a fire of wisdom all seeds of new desires, becomes free from the thralldom of reincarnation. Nevertheless, not having finished the effects of all past actions, he encounters in his present life good and evil happenings, health or disease, flowing from his past karma. Possessing inner tranquillity and the joy of Spirit, he is not excited at the advent of good fortune; neither is he depressed

by calamities. He watches with a calm indifferent attitude the joyous and sorrowful scenes of his life. What have they to do with him?

Chapter V, Stanza 21

Literal Translation

Unattracted to the sensory world, the yogi experiences the ever-new joy of Being. His soul engaged in the union with Spirit, he attains indestructible bliss.

Spiritual Interpretation

The yogi learns to control his *chittwa* (primordial feeling), overcoming all likes and dislikes to external objects, and detaching his attention from the outer world into his true inner Self. Thus he perceives the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy of the soul.

Chapter V, Stanza 22

Literal Translation

Because, O Arjuna! sense pleasures spring from outward contacts, and have beginning and end (are ephemeral), they lead only to misery. No sage seeks happiness from them.

Spiritual Interpretation

The truth in these words from the *Gita* has been echoed down the centuries by many lacerated hearts. "O Lord! Give the support of Thy hand to me, the blind man who has been looted of his wealth of wisdom by the violent bandits called senses and who has been flung by them into the deep desolate well of delusion."*

Pleasures obtained through the senses are transitory. Overtaxed, the senses give unhappiness. Eating to excess or listening to music continually produces discomfort instead of joy. A saint therefore speaks of all pleasures that arise from sense contacts as generators of grief; they often produce unhappiness in the beginning and in the end. Even the desire for sense enjoyments and the process of indulging in them

*Swami Shankara, in *Lakshminrisimha Stotra*.

involve some form of suffering; if not in conscience or body, then in the thought that they must end.

The person, for instance, who wishes to accumulate money by hook or crook goes through unending worries; perhaps, when he is successful and is receiving a little material happiness, other people try to relieve him of his wealth and fill him with forebodings. Old and diseased, he finds his money cannot buy him youth or health. Death delivers the final painful disillusionment to the poor fellow; "he can't take it with him."

Knowing that the transitory pleasures of the material world always end in sorrow, saints do not concentrate on deriving happiness from the impure source of the senses.

When a man's mind gets used to exciting pictures, it loses the ability to appreciate the serener forms of joy. Similarly, finding ephemeral pleasure from the tumultuous scenes of life and from a constant search for recreation, one loses the power to concentrate within and to find the happiness of meditation. As a little boy, accustomed to mischievous activity, sees no joy in quietude, so an adult who adapts himself to a restless way of living finds no attraction in deep contemplation. When the mind like a gourmand insatiably pursues coarse pleasures, it is unable to form a taste for the finer fare of the soul.

Yogis know the superior quality of divine joy as compared with sense joy. The ordinary man is tempted by the lesser charm of the senses because he has not tasted the higher soul joy. Only by weighing material pleasures against meditational bliss can man be inspired to escape sense domination.

It is a wise man who can say: "O Supreme Blessedness, I have weighed Thee and sense lures in the balance of my experience, and have found Thee weightier, far more tempting than any other temptation!"

Man belies his unique status in creation when he remains satisfied with sense pleasures. "The human body, though transient, is capable of serving the supreme object of life," a passage in the *Srimad Bhagavata* points out. "It is only at the end of a long chain of evolution in lower forms that the ego passes into incarnation within a human body. Before that physical form falls a prey to death, the wise man should endeavor

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The Greatest Enemy

By REV. DONALD WALTERS



There is one enemy of every man, more to be feared than jungle beasts, mightier than whole armies to overcome.

The enemy is man's ego—champion of many battles, garlanded by triumphs won with weapons of fears, doubts, desires, anger, and sloth. How many times have the most heroic enterprises of man been cut down, tangled, and suffocated by the ego, even in the moment of their nearing triumph? With how much desperation does man seek to avoid himself, dancing wildly in the throng of daily diversions, secretly dreading the moment when he will be alone again, face-to-face with himself. Yet, he blames his troubles, not on himself, but on a series of circumstances about him. He does not know his enemy by name, which is his own name. He is like a gladiator fighting blindfolded in an arena against an adversary who can easily dodge his clumsy blows, and strike again 'ere he can regain his balance.

If man would succeed in his noble undertakings, let him know who it is that hinders him from success. Even that realization will be half the battle won. Let him not think of the people who are against him, nor of the money he has lost, nor of the opportunities that have come to others but not to himself. Let him brace himself against the inner weaknesses that keep him from surmounting these outer obstacles.

Is he poor? Millionaires have sprung from paupers' hovels, minting their wealth on the press of unceasing, determined effort.

Is he ailing? Fame has been brought to the bedside of cripples by the sheer force of their unalterable will.

Do people doubt him? So did they Christ, yet the force of his conviction has converted nations. Do they seek to stop him? So did they Christ, yet he has conquered continents with his love.

Let us say no more, "This has held me back; that has hindered me." But let us say, "I am *allowing* this to hold me back; that to hinder me." We are what we have made ourselves. What we will be is what we make

ourselves today. Let us not cower before circumstances, but rather make ourselves the larger force, overcoming all obstacles.

There is a power of will in every man that can be fashioned to whatever size he chooses. Will is the force that molds the universe. The man of mighty will can harness the very will of God to assist him in his right undertakings. But as soon as man says, "I'm weak," or, "I'm too tired," or, "I doubt that I can do it," he abandons that power which could save him, and he therefore fails.

How can we conquer this greatest enemy of all? First, we must face him for what he is. Lay all the blame at *his* feet, no one else's. Second, deny firmly that he has any power to touch us. It is only when we have dared to face him that we can begin to avoid him successfully. But we must watch him closely. Even the door of thoughts must not be kept ajar, lest he slip in and take the castle. Keep a close guard also on the secret door of feelings and emotions. We must know the enemy's tricks, and counter them with positive thinking, laughter, courage, and determination. Is this difficult? Ah, yes! That is what makes him the greatest enemy. But it is possible, and he will never let us rest until we have conquered him.

Creative effort; sustained and definite purpose: this is a formula that could be used to advantage by everyone in his efforts to succeed. When discouraging thoughts come, simply say, "I won't hear you!" Don't reason with them. Rather, divert mind and body energetically to something positive, and forget weak thoughts—burn them away in the flame of wholesome endeavor.

This battle with the enemy is the battle of the soul with body-consciousness. It will continue until we reach oneness with God. But there are moments all along the way, once one has learned the deeper nature of this struggle, when the soul soars in the temporary absence of the enemy. It is during these absences that the enemy becomes a friend. These absences become increasingly frequent, until they are habitual. When the ego is completely put aside, forgotten in the knowledge that God alone is the Doer, then, and only then, does it completely change its aspect. Surprise of surprises! the enemy, now the friend, begins to smile. With gentle solicitude it showers blessings of peace, love, and joy upon the soul, and upon all creatures whom it meets in its daily pilgrimage to help a suffering world. Instead of hindering, it helps the soul in all it seeks to do. The two together form such a mighty team that the very world could not stand against them. Such is the state that the masters have reached. A knowledge of their lives is enough, surely, to inspire men to take up this mightiest of all wars—the war of conquering one's greatest enemy to make of him a friend.

Essentials of Hindu Thought

By DEWAN BAHADUR K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI



Sanatan Dharma ("the eternal religion"), known as Hinduism in the West, possesses no founder, unlike other world faiths. Its source is the Vedas, anciently revealed to unknown *rishis*, men of true God-realization. Just as the law of gravitation existed before Newton discovered it, so the spiritual truths enshrined in the Vedas are eternal. The teachings of the Vedas are implemented and illustrated and explained and amplified by lesser scriptures—the *Smritis* and *Ithibasas* and *Puranas* and *Agamas* and *Darsanas*. The *Vedanta* (summaries in the Vedas) are the thread running through them all. To an outsider Hinduism may seem to speak with many voices but to the initiated Hindu it speaks with only one voice.

Hinduism is one of the few religions that do not actively proselytize. It affirms that all persons who love God will attain salvation, whatever their religious labels may be. Sri Krishna says that whatever aspect of Godhead is loved by a devotee, the Lord will intensify that love and grant its fruition. While many other religions pride themselves on the number of their adherents, Hinduism does not do so; but it does not like its own children to leave its protection. Why indeed should they leave it, when it possesses a richer philosophy and an ampler store of *sadhanas* (paths of spiritual discipline) than any other religion in the world?

Hinduism looks complex but is in reality simple. Its greatest manual is the *Bhagavad Gita*, which every sect of Hinduism honors as the essence of all the Hindu scriptures. The fundamental article of faith in Hinduism is that the universe has proceeded from God and is a mode of His being and that He is immanent in it and upholds it and is yet beyond it and that it will at the time of *pralaya* (involution) be withdrawn into Him. If we view God apart from the universe, He can be described only as Bliss (*Satchitananda*). If we view Him in relation to the universe, He can be described as its Creator and Preserver and Destroyer.

The special doctrines of Hinduism in regard to Godhead are its affirmation of the Lord's immanence along with His transcendence, its teaching about the Mother aspect of Godhead, its insistence on the truth that

God is not only the Ruler but is also our beloved Friend, and its doctrine of the periodic appearance of *Avataras* (Incarnations) of God to protect the righteous, punish the unrighteous, and establish righteousness once again on the earth. The destiny of all living creatures is to attain the eternal infinite bliss of God at some time or other, and in some form or other. The different sects of Hinduism merely stress different aspects of Godhead and present diverse levels of God-realization.

As the entire universe is thus an aspect of God and as He is immanent in it, we must look at the world not as mere matter but as matter divinely ensouled. Whatsoever is grand, auspicious, and noble therein is a manifestation of God—is a *vibhuti* (sacred expression of power) in the language of Sri Krishna. Other religions ask us to rise up from Nature to Nature's God. Hinduism asks us to realize also the infinite glory of God immanent in and vivifying Nature. The evolving categories of being are described by saying that the universe is the progressive manifestation of the *Shakti* (power) of God.

Besides inorganic matter, there is organic matter or embodied souls. The macrocosm consists of many worlds, each instinct with angelic life and divine glory. The microcosm is the living body of all—from the amoeba to the angel.

Hinduism has contributed the great ideal of karma and reincarnation to the world's storehouse of philosophic understanding, to account for birth and death and the endless dance of life—our "little life that is rounded with a sleep." Buddhism which is a stem of Hinduism affirms these doctrines, but few other religions do so. Nevertheless the doctrines of karma and reincarnation offer the most satisfying explanation for the diversities and inequalities of life. Other religions believe in the post-mortem existence of the soul. But the very logic that accepts such a view must admit that there is no ground for denying the prenatal existence. The karma doctrine is thoroughly logical because otherwise we would have to posit a world of effects without causes and of causes with effects.

The souls can, however, get out of the rolling wheel of *samsara* (recurrent births and deaths). This can be done by knowledge of and love for the Infinite, Eternal, and Supreme God. Hinduism also stresses the need for *japa* (repetition of God's name) and *dhyana* (meditation on God).

But a person can successfully practice higher discipline only if he leads a thoroughly ethical life. Hinduism has specially stressed *ahimsa*

(non-injury). *Abimsa paramo dharmah*, "non-injury is the highest religion." Believers in *abimsa* abstain from flesh and wine. A great Western writer has called *abimsa* "the gospel of mercy." We have never heard of any abattoirs in India. The *Gita* emphasizes the performance of *swadharma* (one's own duty) by every man. Sri Krishna says that to point out the vital importance of such an attitude he himself showed the way by treading the path of *dharmā* (lawful duty). "He who treads the path of pleasure, giving up the duties inculcated by scripture, will not attain the fruition of his endeavor nor find happiness or salvation," the *Gita* says. "Therefore scripture is your guide and authority to instruct you what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing the command of the *shastra* (scripture), you must do your duty."

Sri Krishna has analyzed our *dharmas* (duties) as *yagna* (sacrificial rites), *dana* (charity), and *tapas* (self-discipline). These define our relations to the gods, to other human beings, and to ourselves. We must deserve and attain the blessings of the gods who are the guardians of the universe. We must give out of our abundance to our less fortunate brethren. We must by purity and austerity keep ablaze the light of divine knowledge and love in our own hearts.

In a memorable passage Sri Krishna defines *tapas* (*austerity*) of the body and of the tongue and of the mind: "Austerity of the body consists in reverence for the gods and spiritual persons and teachers and wise men, purity, straightforwardness, sexual self-control, and non-injury. Austerity of the tongue consists in speaking words that do not hurt and rankle and that are true and sweet and helpful, and in reciting the words of God. Austerity of the heart consists in clarity of mind, wishing the good of all, fortitude, self-control, and purity of heart (unselfish motives)."

Like other religions, Hinduism also has rituals and hagiologies of its own. It insists on the regulation of the daily life. Every devotee should rise early to pray to God and to ponder over the means of his spiritual welfare. He should practice *asana* (yogic posture) and *pranayama* (rhythmic breathing), living always a virtuous life and observing the universal moralities (*yama* and *niyama*). These practices will give him a healthy body and mind. Only then can he go further in the path of yoga (*pratyahara*, *dhyana*, *dharana*, and *samadhi*). The path of yoga is one of the special wonders and great glories of Hinduism. It alone teaches the practical path to meditative ecstasy.

The rituals are for all sections of Hindus, though they are more

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I Am Lonely No More

By Paramhansa Yogananda

(Written in 1938)



I am not lonely in the chamber of solitude,
For Thou art always there.
I am lonely amidst an uproarious crowd
In which Thy silence slips away
Like a fast-footed, startled, large-eyed deer.
When I had found Thee not
I was lonely in a crowd of thoughts
And solitary in the chamber of myself,
Thinking: "I came alone from the Unknown
And alone must depart into the Unknown."
Finding Thee, I have learned
To make mine own Thee alone,
On the lonely wayside of life
Or on its crowded thoroughfare.
For now I behold the unseen links
In front of and behind this life
Hidden in post-mortem and prenatal chambers.
From my Known-One I came,
In my Known-One I live,
Finally in my Known-One I'll dive.
Away from Myself I was lonely—
But since my little self met the big Self,
I am lonely no more.

Yoga Postures For Health

By REV. C. BERNARD

ARDHA-CHANDRASANA — "HALF-MOON POSE"

A glance at the photograph accompanying this article will show that *Ardha-Chandrasana* is aptly named the Half-Moon Pose.

The position is easily assumed by standing erect with legs and feet together, hands stretched upward with palms facing forward and thumbs interlocked. Slowly bend the trunk sideways to the right. Keep the upper arms pressed against the head, making every effort to hold them as straight as possible. To complete the *asana*, raise the heels from the floor (the photograph does not show this clearly). The pose should be held for approximately one minute. The position is then repeated, bending to the left side. Care must be taken that all bendings are directly sidewise and not toward the front or back.

Most of the *asanas* or body-poses involve either a forward or a backward stretching. The Half-Moon Pose supplements the yogic regimen with a careful stretching to the side, thus bringing into play muscles that otherwise might not receive the proper toning. This particular pose does much to strengthen the spine and make it more flexible.

Anything, of course, that improves the tone of the muscles along the spine will increase the circulation not only of the spinal muscles, but, reflexly, the circulation in the spinal cord also. Adequate circulation to the spinal cord is vitally important to the general health and organic vitality. The vasomotor plexuses along the spine exert a profound influence on the circulation through all the organs. Any improvement in spinal circulation will be reflected in a corresponding improvement of general health.

The real secret of health lies in cellular and organic nutrition. Nutrition is largely a direct function of circulation. The greater the circulation, the greater the possibility of nutrition in the vital organs. Over a period of time, then, circulation determines the level of organic vitality and efficiency.

It is the vastly increased circulation, which is made possible without muscular strain by the practice of the *asanas*, that makes them so valuable in preserving or regaining one's health. However, please note



Ardha-Chandrasana. or
Half-Moon Pose

that the proper practice of *asana* calls not only for holding the body in a particular position for a period of time, but, just as importantly, for allowing the muscles to relax completely between each

period of holding an *asana*. To gain the greatest benefit from the practice of *asanas*, do not neglect to stretch out on your back on the floor and relax completely for a brief period before assuming another pose or even the same one. A rest of ten or fifteen seconds between each pose will be found beneficial.

Not only does *Ardha-Chandrasana* make the spine more supple; it helps also to strengthen the abdominal walls. Here again we can see the importance of this *asana*. The tone of the abdominal muscles has much to do with general health and especially with the body's ability to throw off waste materials. This pose will be found helpful to those suffering from kidney troubles or enlargement of liver or spleen. Remember always, however, that regular, gentle practice of stretching over a period of time will accomplish much more than a few sporadic violent attempts. It is a case of "making haste slowly." The rewards are great. You are sure to find that your time has been well spent and the results gratifying.



"There no sun shines, nor moon, nor glimmering star, nor yonder lightning; the fire of earth is quenched. From Him, who alone shines, all else borrows its brightness; the whole world burst into splendor at His shining."—*Katha Upanishad*.

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numerous for the *Brahmins*. But rituals have the same value for all. They help to purify the body and the mind. The ceremonies consisting of oblations, i.e., the fire rites, the daily worship of images, the feeding of learned and holy persons, and so on, are means for spiritual upliftment. But rituals should be observed along with righteousness of life. No rituals will help a person if he leads an unethical life and indulges in drink or debauchery.

A word may be said here about some external aspects of Hinduism which strike the eye of the outsider. Image worship is resorted to only after spiritual power has been enkindled in the image by *mantras* (sacred invocations). Gazing at holy images is useful for the stilling and concentration of our erratic minds. But worship before images is not necessary after a certain stage of the spiritual life is reached.

The veneration for the cow in Hinduism is again another symbol of its insistence on *ahimsa*. The cow is the only animal that is all help and no harm. But for its milk and the products of such milk, no Vedic ritual or worship can be performed. The cow is a symbol of man's obligation to help and protect all lower forms of life.

Hinduism emphasizes also the need for a Guru. The flame of spiritual knowledge can be kindled in us only by some form of contact with such a flame in a higher personality. The Guru is thus a divine link between us and God.—From "*Dharmarajya*," Delhi, India.

(Continued from page 6)

to obtain through it the highest good. Animals and even lower forms of life can pursue the objects of the senses—man should not waste his existence on them."

Many men refuse to undergo the restraint of giving up sense pleasure for an unknown soul pleasure. Their reasoning is a travesty of human judgment. Sense indulgence forms bad habits and destroys the desire to taste superior pleasures. Most people follow their misery-making sense longings because they cannot picture the nature of divine bliss. Their bad habits blind them completely and destroy the power of envisioning any better joys. If young people, before getting entangled in worldly life, experience the bliss of meditation, they are little likely to fall victims in later years to the ubiquitous sense delusions.

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A Well-Balanced Life Means Happiness

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

(Transcript of a lecture)



"First come, first served." This has been your worst calamity: the unwelcome habits that came earliest in your life have kept you quite busy, and now they have crowded out many worth-while pursuits. The social world moves on the wheels of certain habits. Few men realize that the social machinery may be headed toward the chasm of ignorance and the mire of petty engagements that halt the steady, progressive activities of life.

How many times card games, dancing parties, hunger for amusement, time-killing and progress-murdering idleness, lack of initiative and ambition have stood in your way and persuaded you to ignore and break your engagement with worth-while objectives of life, even though you are fastidiously punctual in keeping daily engagements with useless doings.

When an overdose of drugging sleep makes you lazy and a late riser on Sunday morning you forget your highest engagement. Waking late, you find the delaying-to-dress habit standing in your way, influencing you not to go out of your home; and you easily forget your engagement with the spirituality-stimulating atmosphere of the temple or church.

Your business engagements are important, and for them you often sacrifice your equally important engagements for daily physical exercise, or for bathing the mind and nerves with showers of peace by meditation.

Just because your business engagements have been considered most important, they have always come first. But I preach evenness of spiritual development and of demonstrating material prosperity — I do not believe in drugging and chloroforming the spiritual sense with business madness or any other kind of madness or unbalance. Many think that unless one is "at it" day and night he is going to be left behind. That is not true. The one-sided, business-bent man, forgetful of his other duties of life, is not the truly successful man. It requires great skill to live life evenly, rightly, and successfully. He who keeps

only his engagements with money is left behind by God.

God talks to us very loudly, through the pangs of hunger He has given us, that we should get busy and make money to support our physical bodies. But using up all our mental powers to maintain our physical bodies is not the goal of life. There is little difference between eating food from a gold plate or a tin plate. The food in both cases is equally satisfying to hunger. Then why concentrate on unnecessary "necessities" or constantly multiply self-created, useless desires for more? To create such meaningless demands for luxuries is to be engaged night and day, giving one's life blood in the pursuit of things that one does not really need.

The West is suffering from over-production as a result of concentration on unnecessary objects of luxury — and the East is suffering from lack of adequate production and of supply of many real necessities. In the West many factories close as a result of competition and over-production, and the East suffers from want of factories. In the West the people are too busy finding the will-o'-the-wisp of comfort; in the East many people try to remain comfortable by inactivity and laziness. Comfort can be acquired only by a balanced attitude, a self-mastery that makes it possible for one to be comfortably active and actively comfortable. Engagements with Mr. Over-activity and Mr. Idleness both lead to misery. It is high time modern man shook off drowsiness and systematized his life. He has learned to apply science, psychology, and system to his business; these are nothing but devices for his material comfort. The really astute man should apply system and science to better his health, prosperity, and social and international life. In order to do that he must avoid giving all his time to business, which pertains only to his hope of physical comfort. People forget that the increase in cost of living luxuriously means a corresponding increase in expenditure of nerve and brain energy, which curtails longevity. Besides, most people become so engrossed in making money that they haven't time to enjoy the environment of comfort after acquiring it.

Systematize and schedule your engagements — let nothing, especially your bad habits, sway or influence your judgment. Let the secretary of your good judgment arrange your life's daily schedule.

Your engagement with business is important, but your appointment to serve others is more important, and your engagement with meditation, God, and Truth is most important. Don't say you are too busy with the worries and cares of keeping the wolf from the door to find time for the culture of heavenly qualities. Break your self-satisfied, doggedly immov-

able old bad habits of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the more important engagements with wisdom. No one else will answer for your actions, though others often become instruments in keeping you enmeshed in useless frivolities and so-called important engagements.

O sleeping image of God, awake! With determination make the effort to know the right law that will enable you to keep your most important engagement with yourself — to "know thyself" as the ever-new joy of the soul.

Do not say, "I will meditate on the Cosmic Being tomorrow." That tomorrow will never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate deeper tomorrow, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Do not be lured by bad habits and paltry, useless, vanity-feeding engagements into crowding out God-contact.

The world creates bad habits in you, but the world will not stand responsible for your actions springing from those habits. Then why give all your time to the world? Reserve even an hour a day for actual scientific soul-exploration. Doesn't the Giver of the world itself, of your family, money, and everything else deserve one twenty-fourth part of your time?

Your greatest and most important engagement is with God, seeking His truth through the path of wisdom and daily discipline!

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News of SRF Centers



Los Angeles and Encinitas *Christmas Celebrated*

The Christmas holidays were celebrated separately by the men and the women disciples of the Self-Realization colonies; the former met at Encinitas under the leadership of Rajasi Janakananda and Dr. M. W. Lewis, and the latter convened at Mt. Washington Estates in Los Angeles under the guidance of Sister Daya.

The traditional SRF spiritual Christmas celebration, an all-day meditation, was held on the 23rd at both colonies. Long periods of meditation were interspersed with devotional chanting or the reading of excerpts from the writings of Paramhansa Yoganandaji. In this deeper way of worshipping Christ that Paramhansaji taught, the disciples felt transformed by awakened devotion and heightened faith.

A huge Christmas tree graced the main hall at Mt. Washington and at the Encinitas Hermitage, and, as in years past, a Christmas tree was decorated and placed in the Master's quarters at both Mt. Washington and Encinitas. A live deodar was chosen for his rooms at Mt. Washington, and it has since been planted on the grounds.



The disciples intend to carry out this idea every Christmas in memory of the blessed Master, who so much loved trees. Remembering also Paramhansaji's childlike joy in being the first to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, when the clock struck twelve on Christmas Eve, the Mt. Washington disciples lit candles in every window in the Headquarters building, as a gesture of greeting to the omnipresent spirit of the Guru; and, after a few minutes' meditation in their rooms, all gathered in Master's quarters to sing Christmas carols.

Christmas Eve in Encinitas was the occasion for a vow ceremony for the monks. Rajasi was present and blessed each one in Master's name.

The social celebration of Christmas on the 25th was climaxed with banquets at both the Mt. Washington and the Encinitas SRF colonies. At Encinitas the first robe that Master wore in this country, when he came to Boston in 1920, graced a chair at the head of the banquet table; and at Mt. Washington the familiar shawl he had worn at so many holiday banquets was draped over the back of his chair. Rajasi and Dr. Lewis spoke in reminiscent vein to

the monks, telling of happy times with the Master and of the wondrous experiences with God and Christ which had come to them through the Guru's grace. Sister Daya presided over the banquet at Mt. Washington, and the women disciples heard a recorded talk given by Master at a previous Christmas celebration.

Christmas was for all the disciples a time of deep reflection and poignant memories as well as spiritual joys. The physical absence of the blessed Master, through whose grace each one had felt in some measure the living spirit and love of Christ, brought keen sadness. Yet his invisible presence seemed such a tangible reality that tears turned to smiles as the disciples realized that the Guru is indeed one with his disciples in the omnipresent love of Christ.

New Year Celebrated

Renunciate women disciples of the Hollywood and Mt. Washington Self-Realization colonies gathered at Mt. Washington on December 31st for the meditation service with which Self-Realizationists always usher in the New Year. Earlier in the evening Mrs. Grace Seton, well-known authoress and lecturer and for many years a friend of Paramhansa Yoganandaji's entertained the disciples with a talk on India.

Mrs. Seton Tells of Divine Healing

In the informal question-and-answer discussion that followed, Mrs. Seton told of meeting Param-

hansaji in Washington, D.C. in 1926, and described a remarkable experience that took place five years later.

She was then critically ill in a hospital in Greenwich, Connecticut; a friend telegraphed Paramhansaji to seek his aid. While her life hung in the balance, and she knew it, Mrs. Seton saw with inner vision three unfamiliar faces. Before them, praying with uplifted hands for her life, was the form of Paramhansa Yogananda. Facing him was a bearded visage of stately mien; behind and above it was the peaceful countenance of a man with white moustache and hair; still farther behind and above, in far space, was the face of a young man with long, bright hair. The three smiled and nodded, as if in assent.

The crisis passed; Mrs. Seton recovered. A number of years later she visited the Self-Realization Hermitage in Encinitas. There, on the mantel in the drawing room, she saw for the first time pictures of Sri Yukteswar, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Babaji, the great *paramgurus* of Self-Realization Fellowship, whose faces she immediately recognized as those she had seen in the vision that had presaged her recovery from a near-fatal illness.

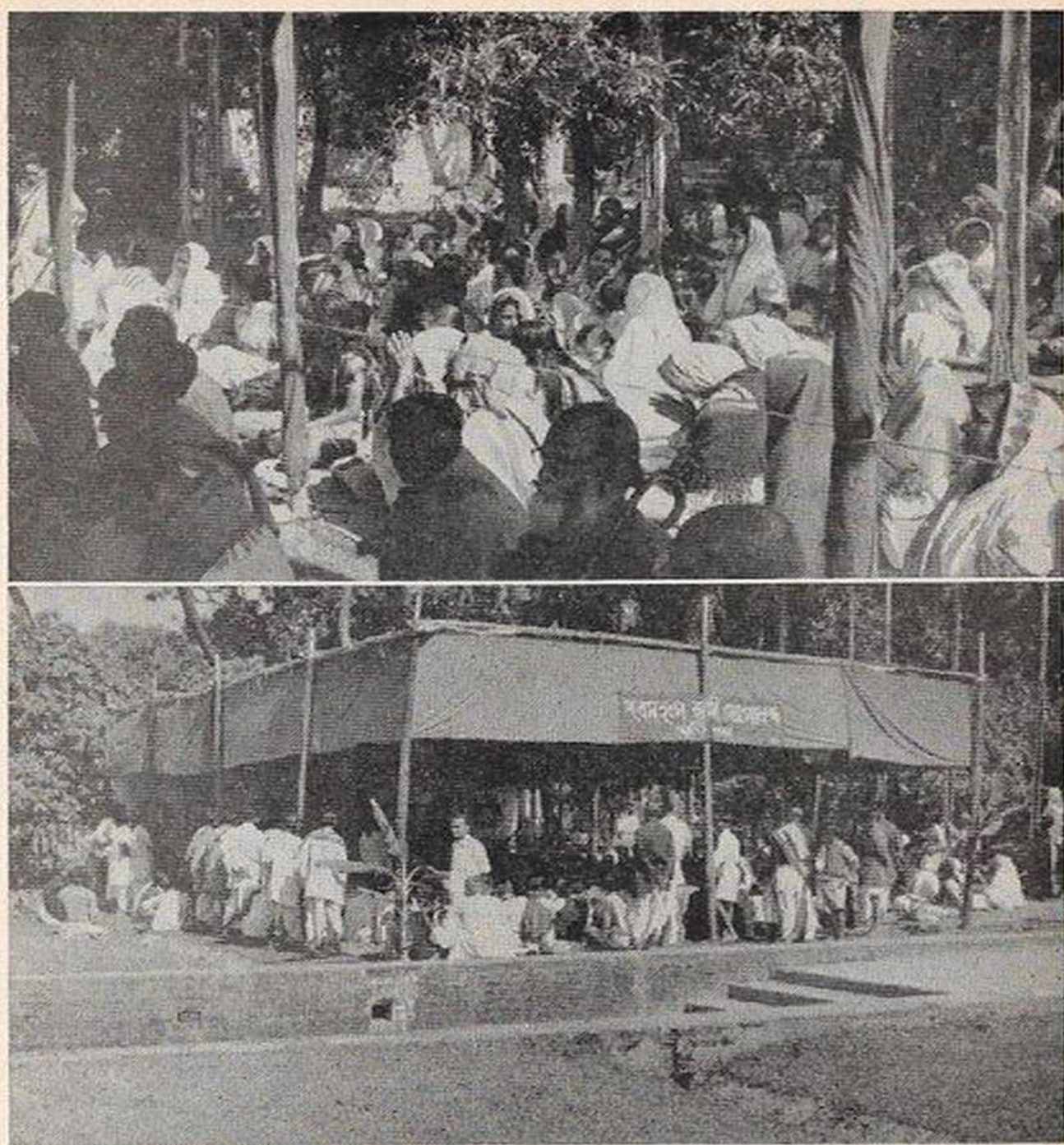
Hollywood, Calif. *Christmas Eve Service*

A Christmas Eve service was held at the SRF Church in Hollywood, after which there was an



Groups of devotees who attended Memorial Services for Paramhansa Yogananda in January, 1953 at Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar, India. The presiding chairman was Sri Motilal Roy, founder of *Prabartak Sangha*.

"The secret meaning of the *Vedas* is truth; of truth, self-control; of self-control, release from bondage; this is the all-comprehensive gospel." —*Mahabharata*.



Some of the devotees who attended Memorial Services for Paramhansa Yogananda in January, 1953 at Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar. (*upper*) Women seated in the shade of a mango grove. (*lower*) A temporary pavilion erected in the compound of Yogoda Math, facing the Ganges.

informal gathering at India Hall. Light refreshments were served. A short program, which included beautiful songs by Miss Helena Sundgren, was presented.

New Year's Eve Meditation

The SRF Hollywood Church was open on New Year's Eve for group meditation and devotional chanting, which was led by renunciate disciples from Mt. Washington and India Center.

Master's Birthday Celebrated

Many devotees gathered at the Hollywood SRF Church on the evening of January 5th to honor Paramhansa Yogananda in the devotional ceremony traditional in India for the Guru. Flowers, and gift offerings for the Paramhansa Yogananda Memorial Fund, were laid on the altar before the portrait of the beloved Master. The ceremony was concluded with the serving of *proshad*, a fruit drink given on spiritual occasions.

Paramhansa Yogananda Mahasamadhi Commemoration

Devotional meditation services in all SRF colonies and churches on Saturday evening, March 7, 1953, and special Sunday morning services on March 8th will commemorate the *mahasamadhi* (a yogi's final conscious exit from the body) of the blessed Master Paramhansa Yogananda on March 7, 1952.

A *sankirtan* (devotional group singing) will be held at several SRF churches on the evening of

March 9th, the anniversary of the *mahasamadhi* of Sri Yukteswar, guru of Paramhansa Yogananda, in 1936.

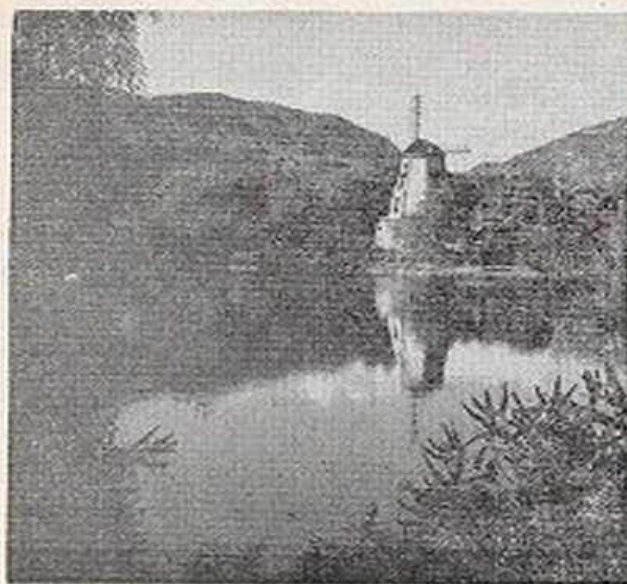
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Much has been accomplished at the SRF Lake Shrine recently; in fact, the grounds have been completely done over. This is good news, particularly to those who remember the terrible damage done by last winter's floods. The reconstruction has been accomplished through the tireless efforts of those living at the Lake Shrine.

New gates, a wider driveway (now 21 feet), and a newly paved parking lot have been added. Space does not permit our telling of all that is new, but the Shrine of St. Francis should be mentioned. An exquisite hand-made shrine glass-enclosed in an inspiring statue of St. Francis. In front of it a redwood feeding-board for birds reminds one that St. Francis was a divine lover of animals and birds.

The statue was purchased by Mrs. E.J. Bresendine and Mrs. Vera Pollard, and all the work on the shrine was done by Mr. Bresendine. St. Francis was very dear to Paramhansaji. Many who visit the shrine have felt stirred by the statue of the gentle saint, whose appearance to Paramhansaji in a vision was the inspiration of his poem "God! God! God!"

Soon visitors will be going through a new SRF museum of Oriental arts containing many objects of interest that had been



Windmill House Chapel at SRF Lake Shrine.

given to Paramhansa Yoganandaji. The decorating of the interior of the museum has been the inspired work of Mr. Emil Hahn, who, in addition to this labor of love, donated the paints and necessary materials. The opening of this beautiful and unusual museum will be announced shortly.

San Francisco, Calif.

"Paramhansa Yogananda, Modern Saint and Sage," was the topic of a talk given by Mr. John Laurence Sept. 21, 1952 at the Church of Divine Science, where he appeared as a guest speaker. He said of the Master:

"Leading all who came in his sphere to their own potentialities of Divinity, he had a scientific approach to God; he was a scientist at work in the cosmic laboratory. Beyond the kindergarten stage of

belief, he *knew* God. Too divinely simple to be enmeshed in mystery-mongering, he took the 'mist' out of the 'mysterious.'"

The speaker recounted many healings, physical and spiritual, recorded in Paramhansaji's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and declared this book "a challenge to a material age in which there is too much marketing of ideas, too little inward realization. Yogananda found unity in diversity, no longer seeing other than the One in the all."

Detroit, Mich.

The flourishing SRF Center in Detroit has instituted a Sunday School class for children. "It is most gratifying," writes Yogacharya Black, conducting teacher, "to see how keen is their interest in the teachings. Their sweetness is an added incentive to our natural interest in helping them to build character in their lives according to Master's ideals."

Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

Mr. Pedro Gonzales Milan, conducting teacher, writes that the members have been enjoying a series of interesting weekly meetings at which each one takes a turn in leading a discussion of Self-Realization teachings.

CONVOCATION DATE

The annual five-day SRF Convocation will be held at Los Angeles, California, beginning August 19th. Further details will be announced as soon as the program of activities is scheduled.

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A life-sized oil painting of Paramhansa Yogananda, the work of his brother Sananda Lal Ghosh, as it appeared on the central dais at a Memorial Meeting for the blessed Master in January, 1953, Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar, Bengal.

CONSUL GENERAL HUSSAIN VISITS ENCINITAS

(Picture on opposite page)

Mr. M. Azim Hussain, Consul General of India stationed at San Francisco, paid a visit on January 6th to the SRF Hermitage and Golden World Colony at Encinitas. They were guests of honor at a luncheon in the SRF Encinitas Cafe, at which Dr. and Mrs. M.W. Lewis, Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd Kennell, Rev. K. Michael, and Mr. J.J. Slavos were also present. An illustrated news story about the distinguished visitors appeared in the *Encinitas Coast Dispatch*. An extract follows:

"Mr. Hussain succeeds former Consul General M. R. Ahuja who was a long time friend of Paramhansa Yogananda. Mr. Hussain was much interested in the extent of the SRF work in this area. He spoke of the increasingly friendly relations between India and the United States."



Courtesy "Encinitas Coast Dispatch"

Mr. M. Azim Hussain, Consul General of India, and
Mrs. Hussain Visit SRF Hermitage, Encinitas (*see page 46*)



EASTER THOUGHT

Beloved Father, this day I will
resurrect my body into the light,
my mind into cosmic conscious-
ness, my will into divine will, my
joy into the joy of Spirit, and
my life into the eternal life.

Paranahouse Jogauanda