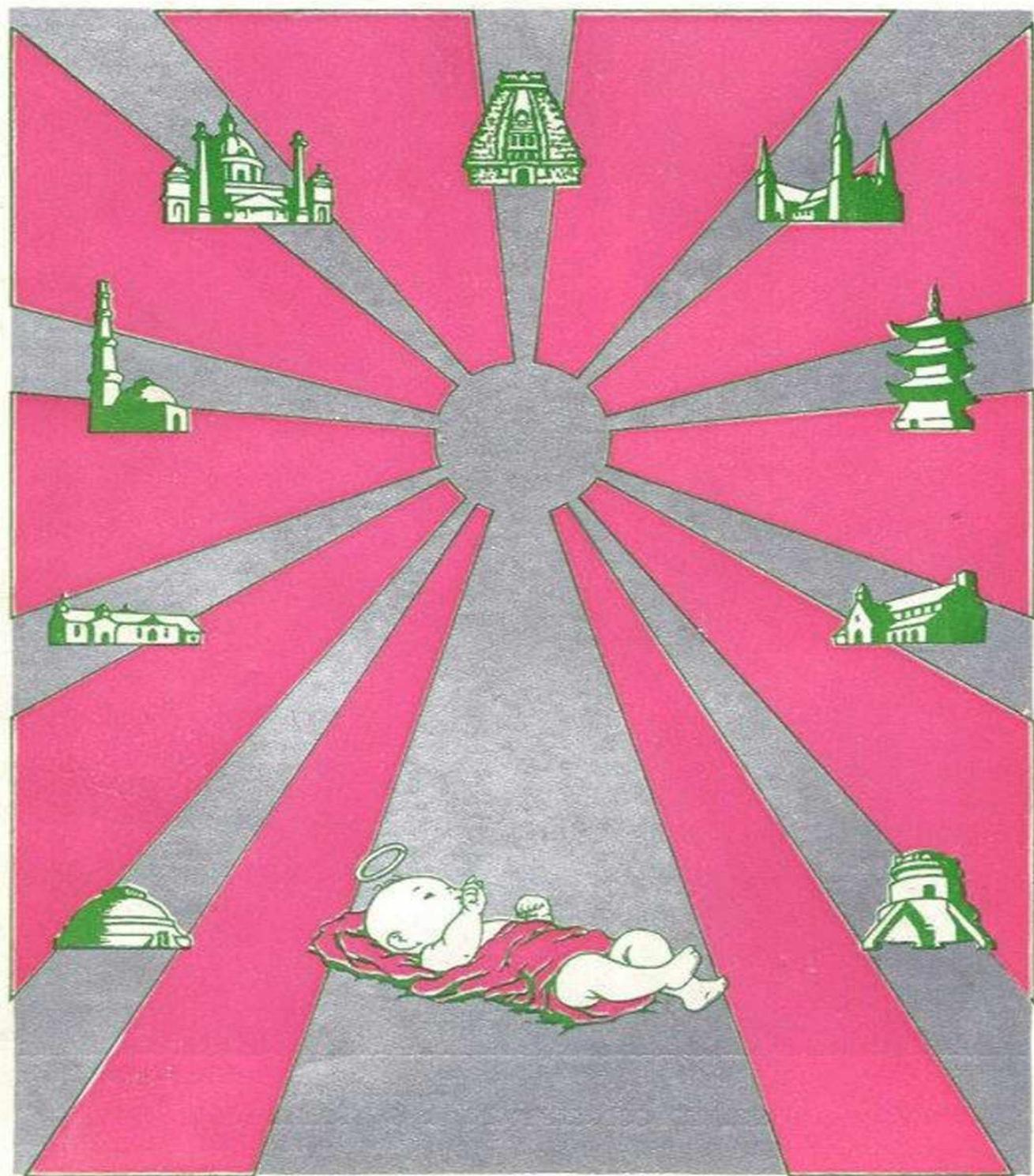


Self-Realization

MAGAZINE



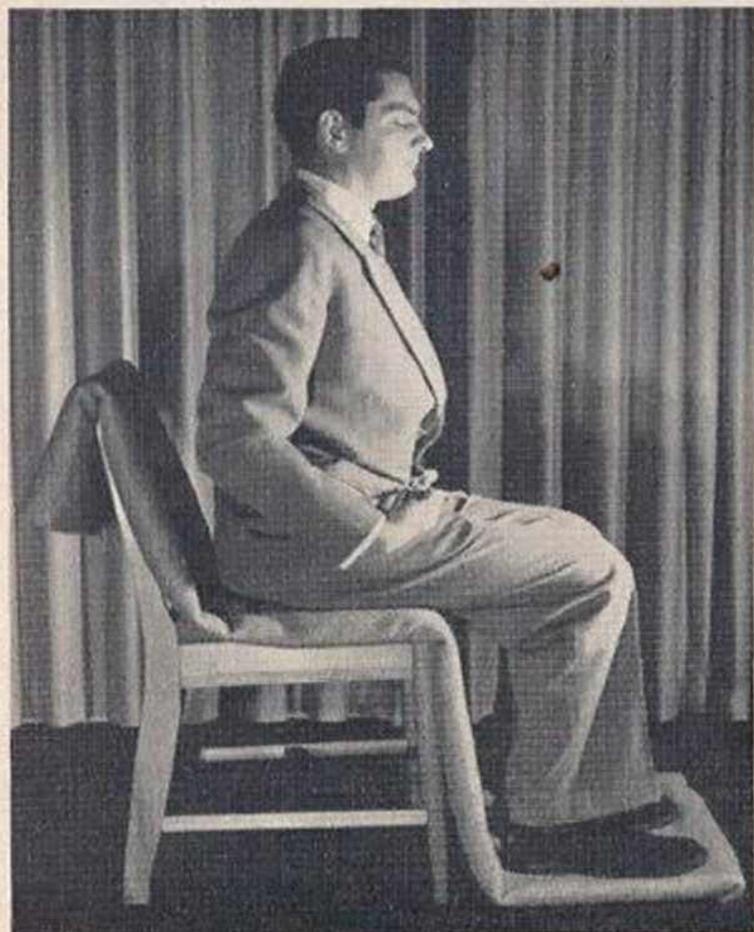
NOV.-DEC., 1955

25¢

Yoga Postures for Health

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

SRF MEDITATION-POSE



Scientific meditation is the direct approach to God-realization, for it consists of definite step-by-step methods that lift man's consciousness from matter to Spirit. The first step is asana, or correct posture.

A number of different yoga-asanas may be used for meditation. Many of these require the yogi* to bend his legs at sharp angles and are therefore difficult to accomplish or to maintain for long periods. However, Paramhansa Yogananda, who taught Yoga in the West for over thirty years, recommended a meditation-posture that may be easily mastered.

The meditation-seat should be flat and horizontal to the floor. A straight armless chair is very good. The height of the chair should be adjusted

to the individual's height and body-build. If the seat is too high one tends to lean forward during meditation. If the seat is too low one tends to lean backward. The ideal seat is that which allows the feet to be placed flat on the floor with the thighs parallel to the floor. Use a woolen blanket or a silk cloth (or both, with the silk on top) to cover the meditation seat and to place under one's feet (*see picture*). The cloth helps to insulate the body from magnetic earth-currents that otherwise keep the consciousness tied to material perceptions. If one plans to meditate for a long time he may place a cushion on the seat.

*One who practices yoga (the ancient art and science of consciously uniting the individual soul with the Cosmic Spirit).

One should wear comfortable clothing (not too heavy, nor too thin, nor too tight). It is also beneficial to remove the shoes, if one is meditating in the privacy of his home. Instructions for the correct meditation-posture are as follows:

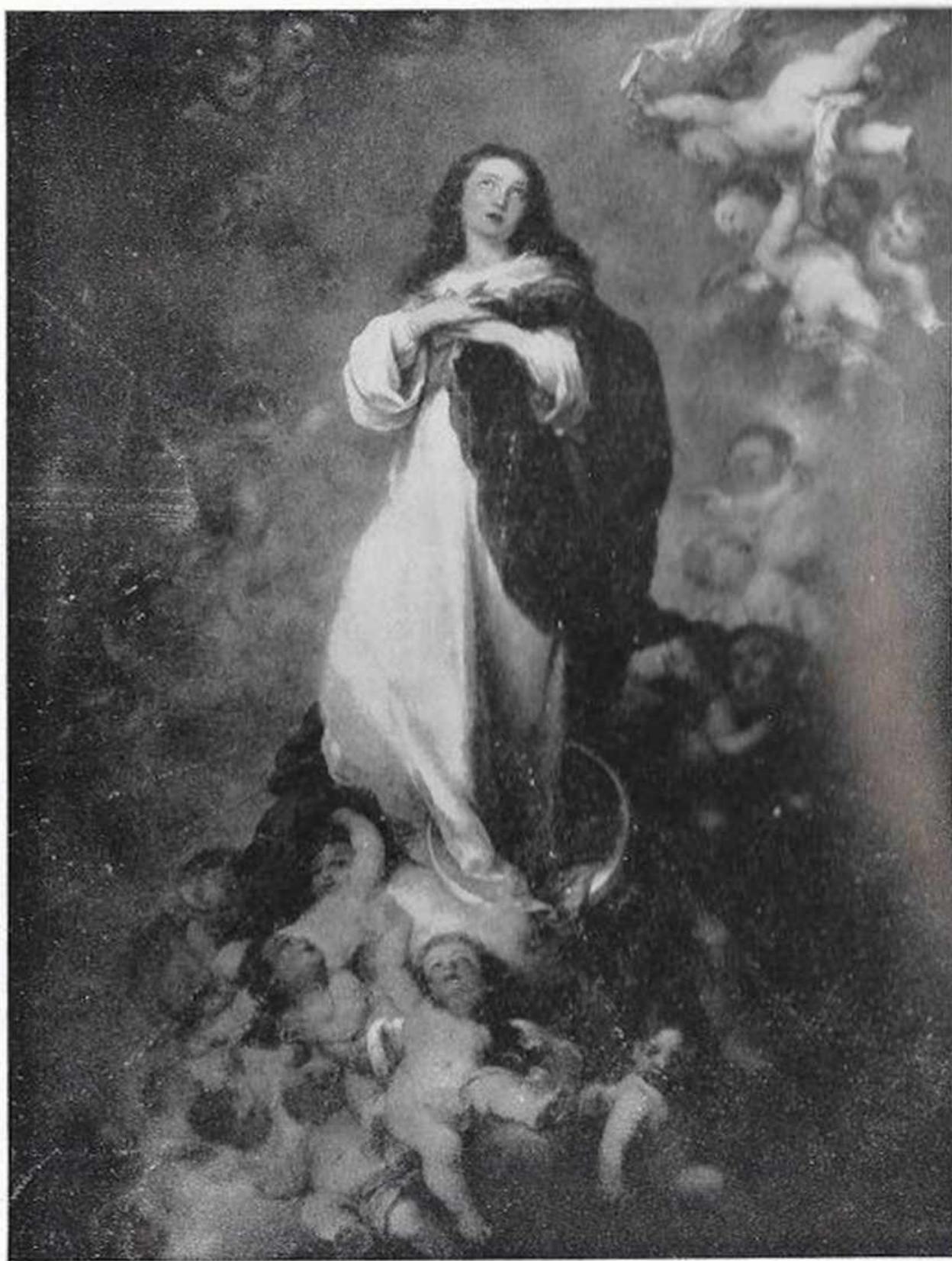
Hold the spine erect, perpendicular to the floor. Place the feet flat on the floor. Hold the chest out, abdomen in, and draw the inside edges of the shoulder blades as close together as possible. Rest the hands, palms upward, at the junction of the thighs and the abdominal region. Hold the head erect, with the chin parallel to the floor. Relax the whole body and keep it completely still. All of these points are important; and, in the beginning-period of one's practice, should be mentally checked often.

The most vital factor is the position of the spine. Paramhansa Yogananda tells us the body is a temple of God, in which the spine is the holy altar. He taught that consciousness (the spark of God in man) has descended from Spirit into the mortal body, where it manifests itself through seven *chakras* or centers of life force in the brain and spine. From the cerebrospinal axis the consciousness and life force move outward into the sensory-motor nervous systems, causing man's perceptions of and reactions to the outer world. Man tends to identify himself with his physical body and to accept the limitations of the body and of the physical environment; he thus forgets his true Self as a child of Spirit. The purpose of meditation is to arouse man's remembrance of his divine nature by reversing the flow of life force from the sensory-motor nerves back to the spine and brain; and thus to uplift the consciousness through the seven cerebrospinal centers into a state of reunion with Spirit.

To progress satisfactorily in meditation, one must hold the spine *erect*. When the spine is allowed to bend, the vertebrae are thrown out of their normal alignment, thus constricting the spinal nerves and hampering the flow of life force in them. Each of the foregoing rules about posture contributes to the straightness, strength, and stability of the spine, as you will discover through your own practice.

The positions of the feet and palms also have valuable psychological and spiritual effects. Placing one's feet flat on the floor induces a state of mental alertness and steadiness. Turning the palms upward conduces to one's surrender of heart and mind to God. Then, when the body is kept completely still, the life force, no longer muscularly compelled to flow outward, freely flows inward to the spiritual citadels—the spine and brain. If one stays for some time in this relaxed position he will experience, through correct posture alone, a calm, joyous state that is a foretaste of divine ecstasy.

In the beginning, however, some difficulties may be encountered. One who is not accustomed to keeping his spine erect must tense the muscles of the back in order to bring the vertebrae into the right position; hence he will find the new position tiring. To relieve the spinal tension the



— The Louvre, Paris

"THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION," by MURILLO (1618-1687)

Self-Realization Magazine

FOUNDED IN 1925 BY PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

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beginner may feel a desire to lean against the back of the chair, or to meditate while lying down.* He should steadfastly resist these temptations, because they will keep the consciousness tied to material perceptions.

Another obstacle is restlessness, which manifests as the desire to squirm or fidget constantly; or, if one is bothered by itching, to scratch oneself. At other times the beginner finds that he salivates and swallows more frequently than usual. Throat noises are disturbing not only to the devotee but, in group meditation, to his neighbors also.

Happily all these difficulties are but temporary; they disappear when one perseveres in steadfast and regular meditation-practice. However, the most basic problem—that of keeping the spine erect—requires special attention. Not only in meditation but in all daily activities one should make a conscious effort to hold the spine straight. Students, office-workers, and others whose occupations demand long hours of sitting should take special care with regard to posture. Everyone who practices the SRF energization exercises will find them extremely valuable in rejuvenating and rightly adjusting the spinal nerves. To attain good health, mental efficiency, and God-realization one must be unshakably convinced of the importance of keeping the spine erect at all times—in activity as well as in meditation.

The functions of body, mind, and soul are harmonized by the basic meditation-posture. The life force then flows freely in the spine and nerves, giving greater strength, vitality, and health. The very act of straightening the spine elevates the mind and consciousness. When the spine is straight one feels he can face the world with courage and confidence and become an inspiring example to others. Everyone likes to know others who are *straight* not only morally but also in appearance. But the supreme benefit of the erect meditation-posture is that it facilitates the practice of psychophysical spiritual techniques that, coupled with steadfast devotion to God, open up the spinal highway through which the soul consciousness may be attained.



Answer the Call of Christ!

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

(Since 1925 it has been an annual SRF custom to hold an all-day group-meditation just before Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Paramhansa Yogananda presided over most of these meditations, during which he would now and then speak words of encouragement and inspiration to the assembled devotees; or, continuously rapt in communion with the Infinite Christ, would address invocations to God and the Great Ones. During the Christmas meditation held on December 24, 1939, in the Mt. Washington chapel, a disciple recorded the following words spoken by Paramhansaji.)

-:- -:- -:-

The conception of Christ was not ordinary, but immaculate. For us his birthday is therefore a very special day to celebrate, knowing and feeling as we do that in Jesus' immaculate conception the Heavenly Father prepared for the birth of a perfect being. *The true celebration of Christmas is the realization in our own consciousness of the birth of Christ-consciousness.*

Do away with all wandering thoughts and feel your oneness with the spirit of Christ. I invoke the spirit of Jesus, and of the Masters who are one with him in Spirit, that the perfect one who was born on earth nineteen hundred years ago may manifest his consciousness within you now. This I pray earnestly today, with all the unctuous fervor of my soul. All things are possible through prayer. Jesus said, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."* Believe that your prayer for his visitation is granted, and it shall be so. The love of Christ becomes manifest in you not merely by peace of mind nor even by burning zeal; but by calm, devotional will for perfection. O Christ, come unto us! Manifest thyself unto us! Naughty or good, we are thine. Deliver us from the bondage of restlessness and receive us as we are.

May all those who are in tune with us today (whose thoughts I feel coming to me)† be blessed with the presence and the consciousness of

*Mark 11:24.

†From SRF students throughout the world who held Christmas meditation-meetings on this day in 1939.

Christ. Heavenly Father, Thou dost grant those prayers that come from our hearts; and this is my heartfelt prayer, that all of us here be visited by Thy presence, Thy glorious presence. O Infinite Light! all the candles of our devotion are burning. Come! come unto us!

The love of God cannot be described. But it can be felt as the heart is purified and made constant. As the mind and the feeling are directed inward, you begin to feel His joy. The pleasures of the senses do not last; but the joy of God is everlasting. It is incomparable! Today you can understand the spiritual gains you have made here as a result of long meditation conducted with *continuous devotion*. You have already meditated four hours and it has seemed like only a minute to most of you. In the consciousness of some, I see, there has been a nibble of response from God; and in others the Divine has wholly swallowed the bait of their devotion.

Forget everything else! Just lay yourself at God's feet. There is no time like the present to surrender yourself unto Him. At first He bestows a glimpse of joy that comes after a little meditation, and stays but a little while. That is when most people misunderstand, give up, and are lost again in worldly snares. But great joy and happiness are to be had if you go on until you realize the spirit of Christ and experience the bliss of contact with the Great Ones. No pleasure of the senses can ever give that comfort and happiness. Even the movies may become tiresome, but God never is. Once you experience the joy of God He becomes more real to you than all else, His contact more joyous than any pleasure of the senses, more tempting than any other temptation. Until you feel His joy you can never attain His glory; you can never know what happiness lies in becoming a king of kings, a prince of light.

And that is why you should use all the strength of your soul to find God. He is not the monopoly of any one; nor may He be bribed. God doesn't need our praise. That approach to Him implies some strain and effort—like a lover's praising the beloved all the time just to keep her pleased. God doesn't want that kind of relationship with you. But divine, unconditional love is so beautiful. There is no other gift you can give Him but the gift of your love. If God could ever be said to beg from us, it is for our love. If He wants anything at all from us, it is our love. The smoke-screen of delusion has come between us and Him, and He is sorry that we have lost sight of Him. He is not happy seeing His children suffer so much—dying from falling bombs, terrible diseases, and wrong habits of living. He regrets it, for He loves us and wants us back. If only you would make the effort at night to meditate and be with Him! He thinks of you so much. You are not forsaken. It is you who have forsaken your Self. You are the greatest transgressor against your own happiness. God is never indifferent to you.

You have meditated deeply today. And so should you meditate every night. But instead you pass your time in foolishness, wasting opportuni-

ties to be with God. Forget useless pursuits. Neglect minor duties, if necessary; but do not neglect God. He is not merely a name. God is the life that is surging within us; the life by which we see and love one another. For a little while we behold one another here. "Today" is but a thought of God, a moment in Eternity. Time and again God has shown me that this whole creation consists of nothing more than His dream-thoughts.

He is Wise Who Lives in Constant Remembrance of God

We are in a state of dream. The only way to wake up is to refuse to recognize anything as reality except God. Otherwise you will again and again sink to your knees in a mud of suffering that is of your own making, until you realize that neither good fortune nor evil fortune is real, that He alone is real. Then all earthly delusions (disease and health, joy and sorrow, life and death) will pass away. So many people have come on this earth and have left it; still we live as though we shall be here forever. Only he is wise who lives in constant remembrance of God. To think of Him always is to find freedom from this earthly dream of birth and death.

May you all be so filled with the love of God that in your heart you know nothing else, day or night, but His peace and joy. Again and again I have talked to God, and again and again I have reproached Him with what has happened to this creation. For here we are first tempted by Satan. If only we had been first tempted by the Lord, we wouldn't want to follow satanic ways. Misery is the word for this creation with all its delusion and suffering; and one by one we are taken away, we know not whence. Is there any happiness in this? No, happiness comes only in realizing that the nightmare of creation is not real, and that God is real.

Let those who want this world worship it. But you go on to find the supreme joy of Spirit. The love of the Lord is everlasting. If you but once get to Him, then — just as the compass-needle, no matter how you turn it, always points to the north — your mind will ever turn to the love of the Spirit. There are no words to describe that love.

No joy is real except that of the Spirit. But unless your heart cries for God, you cannot know Him. The hearts of worldly people become dry as dust. Why? Because they cry for everything except God. You must cry for the Lord! Cry for Him who, if you would but realize it, is already yours. The sole purpose of creation is to compel you to solve its mystery and perceive God behind all. He wants you to forget everything else and to seek Him alone. Once you have found refuge in the Lord, there is no consciousness of life and death as realities. You will then see all dualities like dreams during sleep, coming and going in the eternal existence of God. Forget not this sermon, a sermon He is expressing to you through my voice. Forget not! He is saying:

"I am just as helpless as you, for I, as your soul, am tied in the body with you. Unless you redeem your Self, I am caged with you. Dally no

more, groveling in the mud of suffering and ignorance. Come! bathe in My light."

It is because God wants you that I am here with you, calling you to come Home, where my Beloved is, and where Christ, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, and the other saints are. "Come," the Lord is saying, "they are all rejoicing in Me. No worldly joys — the taste of food, the beauty of flowers, the passing pleasure of earthly love — can compare with the divine joys of My home. Come! Come! Come! Every night in meditation you shall live with Me in eternal love. Remember Me! Remember My love!" Thus the Lord is calling you. There is only one Reality. It is He. Forget everything else.

Make the SRF lessons your daily study, and meditate every night. Don't go to bed until you have communed with God. In the silence of the night renew your romance with God in the bower of your consciousness, beyond the reach of the noisy senses. In the bower of Infinitude, beneath His moonèd Joy, have eternal communion with the Beloved of the universe.

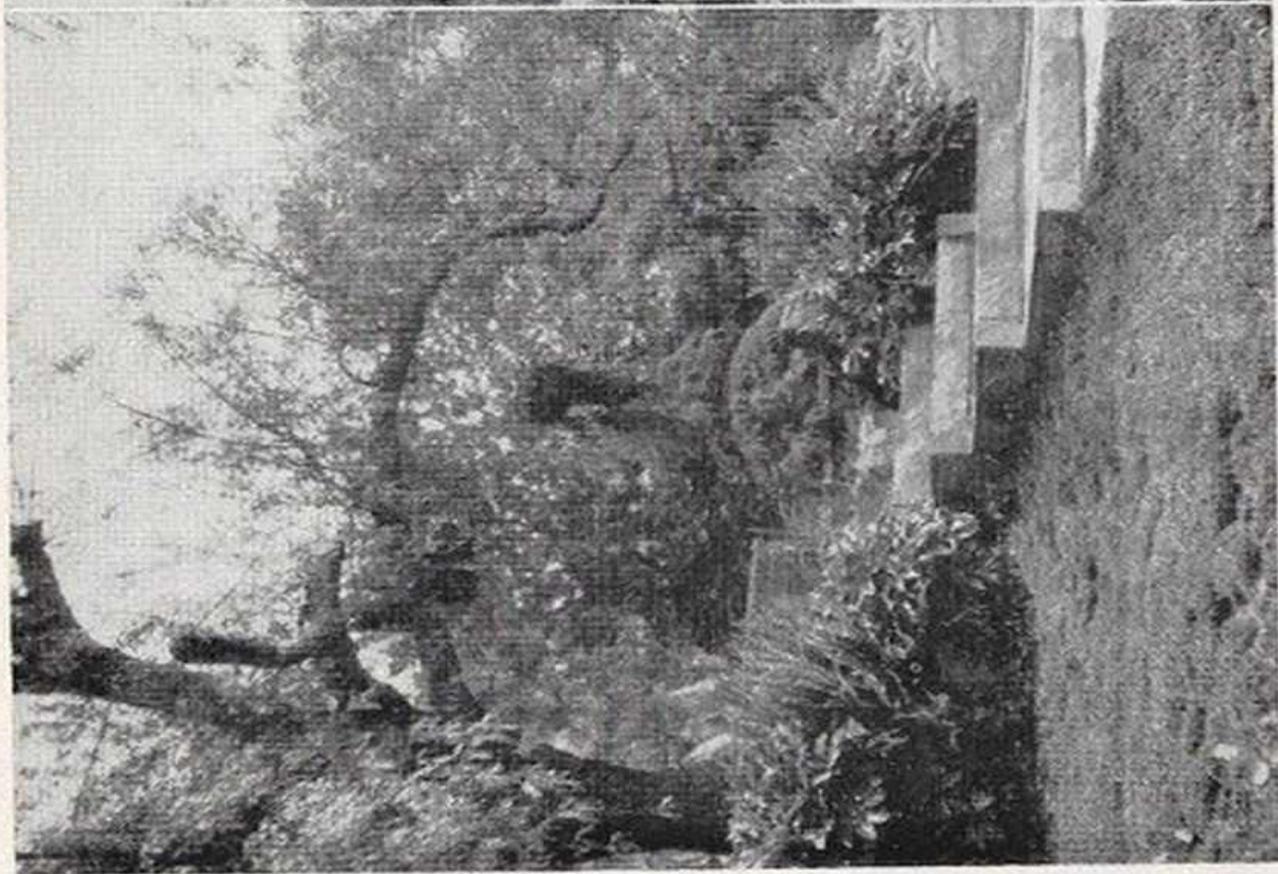
Divine Mother's face is bright like lightning. She is with us today. How happy we are! How joyous we are! And every day, O Mother, be Thou with us, that we go about our duties filled with the fragrance of Thy Presence; that we be lured away from the stinkweed of the senses. Father, Mother, Friend, beloved God, Jesus Christ, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, saints of all religions, we bow to you all. Come unto us, that we may bathe in Thy glory!

(Paramhansaji here began to chant, "Come, Listen to My Soul Song," and a period of meditation followed. Then he spoke again.)*

When a prodigal soul returns, after having run away into the world of matter, there is rejoicing in Heaven; the fatted calf of wisdom is prepared for the homecoming celebration for that soul in the kingdom of God. If you would but look within, you would find that God is a wonderful host, offering every kind of entertainment! In Him is no time, no space, no limitation of any kind.

Jesus and the Masters, be with us! Inspire us all with thy glories! We are not worthy of Thee, O Spirit! Our lips have wasted time in worldly speech. Now our soiled lips are talking of Thee. Divine Spirit, bless us that within our hearts we speak only of Thee evermore. No matter what we say with our tongues, our hearts will ever be repeating Thy name. Divine Beloved, Thou art ours. Bless all who are here that they drink of Thy joy, glory in Thy joy, and thus forget this earth-dream altogether. We are just moving in a dream. We may be working, but it is not real. Only when we feel the joy of Thy Being are we awake in Reality. *Aum, glory. Aum, glory. Aum, Christ. Aum, Christ.*

*A song in *Cosmic Chants* by Paramhansa Yogananda.



(Another period of meditation followed, after which Paramhansaji related the following experience.)

I saw a great blue valley. The mountains were like shimmering jewels. Here and there mist sparkled around these opalescent mountains. A silvery river of silence, diamond-bright, flowed by. And there I saw, coming out of the depth of the mountain, Jesus and Krishna walking hand in hand—the Christ that sang by the river Jordan and the Christ that sang by the river Jumna. Krishna with his flute and Christ with his song came hand in hand, and they baptized me in the river. My soul melted in the flaming-bright waters. The shining mountains and the river and the sky all began to emit flames. My body and the bodies of Christ and Krishna, the opal mountain and the glowing waters and the sky all became dancing lights, and atoms of fire flew. Nothing remained but mellow light. In that Light I behold all creation trembling. Thou art that eternal light of Spirit wherein all forms commingle. Thou art That. *Aum.*

(A period of meditation followed.)

There is no way to find God's love other than to surrender to Him. Master your mind so that you may offer it to Him. There are four steps or states of consciousness. The ordinary man is restless all the time. However, when he practices meditation he becomes once in awhile calm, but most of the time he remains restless. As he practices meditation more he feels half the time calm, half the time restless. And when he practices meditation deeply and regularly he is most of the time calm and only once in awhile restless. Finally he reaches a state wherein he is all the time calm, and never restless.

The trouble is that you do not meditate long enough, and hence you fail to reach the state of complete calmness. But if each night, when everybody else is asleep, your mind is praying to Him continuously like a steady stream, then God answers you. Pray to Him, "Lord, this life is Thine. I cannot live without Thee. Thou must come to me." What is the use of praying unless you mean this? Prayer that is merely habit is a mockery, and is wrong. Today you have been so absorbed in Him that you haven't even been aware that you have been meditating for seven hours. It seems as if we had just started. This is the way you should always pray. Day and night, sometimes for weeks, I am not really conscious of this world. That

CAPTION FOR PICTURE ON OPPOSITE PAGE. (Left) Flagstone steps leading to the "Temple of Leaves" (*extreme left*) on grounds of Mt. Washington Estates, Los Angeles.

(Right) The circular "Temple of Leaves," with nineteen flagstone seats facing a graceful pepper-tree. The floor is laid with flagstone and *Dichondra*-grass. The blessed master Paramhansa Yogananda often taught students in this ideal classroom.

is true. I am always drunk with the joy of Eternal Spirit. "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."* You must be willing to lose it for God.

May this Christmas be the greatest holy day you have ever had. Want nothing but the love of God. That alone is real. Never go to sleep unless you feel that divine consciousness. I can't sleep until I have had that contact. Dear friends, don't wait 365 days to meditate deeply again as you have today. For during those 365 days some of you will leave this earth. This life is like a ship. You are on that ship, watching the passing scenes; then suddenly you hear the stopping-throbs of the ship's motor, and the journey is over for you.

The whole world is pulsing with the power of God: indescribable, infinite happiness; wave after wave of bliss. Your heart is like the shore, and the Ocean of Infinite Love is breaking on the shores of your heart. I hope you all consciously experience that. Think of the millions of people who are getting drunk with wine today to "celebrate" the birth of Christ. What a sacrilege! Satan tries to keep man's attention tied to everything but the Divine Joy. But on your calendar the engagement with God must be supreme.

In the beginning of my spiritual training with my Master Sri Yukteswarji, when we would sit together in meditation in the evenings I would become restless as the time approached for me to leave the Serampore hermitage in order to catch the last convenient train back to Calcutta. Disregarding my state of mind, Master, I found, would not dismiss me as early as I thought he should. I would have to run fast each night to reach the train in time. As I discovered that my worry about train schedules was not influencing Master, I made it a point to banish the restless feelings that had previously been disturbing me. My guru immediately began to dismiss me in ample time to catch my train.

Sri Yukteswar gave such wonderful training! And I wish the churches in this country might in time give that kind of training too. If the poor minister has to entertain you every Sunday, the entire purpose of the church is missed: for God begins where motion ceases. I had to talk to you today in order to help you feel what I am feeling. But the Masters in India don't teach by talking. They just have the disciples come and sit with them in meditation.

Make every night a Christmas night by meditating until you are full of the divine consciousness you have felt today. Instead of making sure of God you have been making sure of money. Tomorrow you may be gone from this earth, taking with you no imperishable riches. But if you have made time for God, and have experienced the Christ-consciousness, when death comes you may truly say, "I am king over life and death. Joyously I plunge into the Infinite!"

*Mark 8:35.

Many people think of America as a materialistic land, but I have found many wonderful souls here. I am glad to see so many here today, to chant and meditate with me. It is you, and those like you, who are the real saviors of this country. By your devotion to God you bring blessings on your whole nation.

The only way to attain salvation is to have complete loyalty to God. This dream of life will be taken away from you one day; the only thing that is real is the love of God. Nothing else; all are false dreams. Get away from them. Every minute I see how necessary that is. But He has tied me to the SRF work, and so I tell Him: "I shall work for You alone." Then I feel within His supreme joy.

How kind He has been to this unworthy devotee! I could never have imagined that I might win God. Indeed I used to pity myself, saying: "Lord, You love Your saints, but why don't You love me?" Yet I found that He loves all alike. But first you have to show Him that in your heart you have forsaken everything else. Unless you give up desires for body-comforts, sleep, and every other desire, you cannot know Him. Day and night you must think of the Divine Beloved. Then your heart will always sing. Follow the SRF lessons. Practice the presence of God. And meditate.

My greatest Christmas gift to you is this day in which we have spent many hours together drinking in the love and joy of God. Make the most of this time. Feel joy and forgiveness for all. Dance in the joy of God. Preach God. Bless America, bless the whole world, with the love of God.

My body shall pass but my work shall go on. And my spirit shall live on. Even when I am taken away I shall work with you all for the deliverance of the world with the message of God. Prepare yourselves for the glory of God. Charge yourselves with the flame of Spirit. Forsake slavery to the desires of the flesh. Until you have established your spiritual mastery over the body, the body is your enemy. Always remember that! Have no other desire than to spread His name and to think and sing of Him all the time. What joy! Can money give us this joy? No! It comes only from God.

The Lord wants us to escape this delusive world. He cries for us, for He knows how hard it is for us to gain His deliverance. But you have only to remember that you are His child. Don't pity yourself. You are loved just as much by God as are Jesus and Krishna. You must seek His love, for it encompasses eternal freedom, endless joy, and immortality. Experiencing the bliss of God, you see that there is no such thing as time, and know you shall never die. Every day I enjoy that consciousness. I don't like to show it outwardly. Indeed I can't show it—it is too delicate and precious. I have caught Him in the net of love. I hope you all have felt the presence of Jesus the Christ this day as I have felt it. Jesus appeared to me at one time today as a little boy; but then he didn't appear in form



(Upper) Group starting on annual SRF-YSS parade through streets of Calcutta. The house at extreme right is #4 Gurpar Road, boyhood home of Paramhansa Yogananda.

(Lower) Annual YSS meeting, Calcutta, September 25th, attended by 400 devotees. Speeches were given by Swami Atmananda, Dr. N. N. Das, Professor Tripurari Chakravaty of Calcutta University, and others.

any more, remaining with me instead as formless Joy eternal, Light eternal.

I tell you these experiences in order to encourage you, but you should not talk to others about your sacred feelings. Keep them in your heart. Use your nights for talking with God. Forsake sleep — it doesn't matter. Don't worry about "tomorrow." Every night and all day long have this joy that you have felt today. Lazy people shall never enter the kingdom of God. Don't be afraid to work hard. Thrash the body mentally. And meditate all the time. While you are working, ever be thinking, "Lord, I must not forget Thee." Want Him so deeply that you could roll on the ground with anguish for Him. Cry for Him. Don't watch the clock. Don't care whether He does or does not answer, for that puts a condition on your love. He is aware of your every cry; and when your heart's full surrender has been made and the *danse macabre* of karma is over, He burns up His veil of *maya* for you and then where is death? where is old age? where is sorrow? Nothing remains but His light. This is the truth.

Falter no more, you who have heard these words. Follow the truth that God has sent through Self-Realization Fellowship and you shall be forever blessed. God is ever calling you through the flute of my heart. I urge upon you — forget Him not! Our bodies may perish, but let our souls forever blaze like eternal stars in the heart of God.

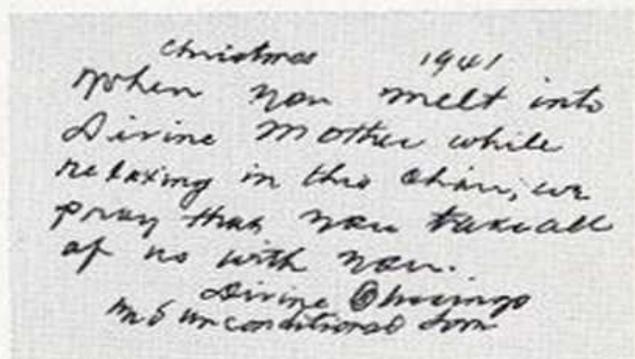
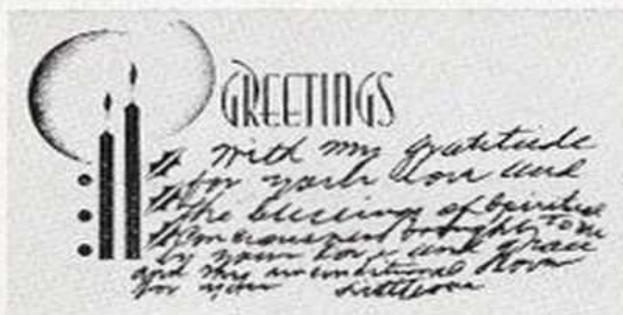
Make a solemn resolution today with me: "Heavenly Christ, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, saints of all religions, we pledge our lives to the cause of our own Self-realization, that we may realize through the Self the infinite Christ, the infinite Presence of God. Heavenly Father, forget us not, though we forget Thee. Remember us, though we remember Thee not. Be not indifferent unto us, though we are indifferent unto Thee. Bless us as we make this solemn vow: 'We shall make a continuous effort to experience the spiritual Christmas every night and every day.' Cast us not into the jaws of death, into the pit of our own self-created ignorance. Make us realize that the only important engagement in life is our nightly engagement with Thee. Keep us from laziness and make our flesh work every moment for the redemption of the world, that Thy consciousness descend on every man. Be Thou with us, O Christ and the Masters! We pray with all the intensity of our hearts, O Lord, that we may never forget Thee. Be with us evermore. Tomorrow we celebrate thy birth in festivities, O Christ, with friends we love. But today we have celebrated thy birth in the spirit of true remembrance of thee. *Aum. Peace. Amen.*"

This way of keeping Christmas is sorely needed all over the world. I hope that no matter where my body is, you will daily celebrate this kind of holy day, but especially on the day before Christmas, when you should meditate all day long. Then you will realize that the real Christmas lies in the experience of Christ-consciousness.

May you remain in the eternal glory of Christ every night and every

day of the year. You will be blessed whenever you become so intense in your love for God that you forget the body while meditating. The body then becomes purified. Be intoxicated with God. Make a resolution to study your lessons with deep interest. Then you will be able to do something worth-while in this world. What is the use of being a "soap-box orator?" You should talk only from your experience of Christ. I want teachers who will be able to talk of God and Christ as they actually feel Their presence, and see Them. Pray with me:

"Heavenly Father, charge my body with Thy power. Charge my life with Thy life. Charge my soul with Thine eternal love. We surrender ourselves unto Thee. May Christ Consciousness be born in the cradle of our flesh, in the cradle of our souls. Heavenly Father, Mother, Friend, beloved God, be Thou with us evermore. This is our earnest prayer: 'Be with us evermore.'"



CHRISTMAS CARDS, SENT TO PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA,
HANDWRITTEN BY RAJASI JANAKANANDA

(LEFT) Rajasi Janakananda (Mr. James J. Lynn, beloved late president of SRF) has written: "With my gratitude for your love and the blessings of spiritual consciousness brought to me by your love and grace and by my unconditional love for you. (signed) LITTLE ONE." (Master often called his disciple "Little One," because of Mr. Lynn's humility. Mr. Lynn signed himself as "Little One" in nearly all his letters to Master.

(RIGHT) Rajasi has written: "Christmas, 1941. When you melt into Divine Mother while relaxing in this chair, we pray that you take all of us with you. Divine blessings and unconditional love."

This card was attached to a Christmas gift from Rajasi: a reclining-type chair. From time to time Master would sit in the chair, enwrapped in the peace of *samadhi* (superconsciousness). The disciples around him were awefully aware that in his presence was a shower of blessings.



A Letter From Sister Gyanamata

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

Mt. Washington Center

September 5, 1936

Divine Master:

On Sunday, August 30th,* I had the great happiness of feeling the uplifting vibrations of your presence. They grew stronger as the day passed, and at my meditation time on Monday morning I floated in a sea of peace and joy. I looked down the dark tunnel of Eternity† with awe at the thought of the relationship of guru and disciple. I have never become accustomed to these occasions. Each time I marvel at the joy and well-being that come upon me when you draw near in Spirit.

Mr. Lynn,‡ whose only wish is to be a channel through which your power may flow to us, sends me his wonderful spiritual vibrations fre-

*This letter was written to Paramhansaji in 1936, while he was traveling in India.

†A reference to the astral spiritual eye of intuitive perception in the middle of the forehead. Through this "single eye" the deeply meditating devotee may behold, as through a telescope, the vast vista of the universe, tier upon tier. The guru (literally, "one who leads from darkness to light") helps the disciple to open the spiritual eye and behold the omnipresence of God and of the soul (a reflection of God.)

‡Mr. James J. Lynn, disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda for 32 years and beloved late president of SRF. His life is described in a memorial issue of *Self-Realization Magazine* (March-June 1955, 60¢).

quently. I consciously receive them and note their difference from yours. But I do not tell him this, because I know he wants me to take them as wholly yours, though flowing through him. Still, to me, they *are* different; to me there can be no one like you.

On the morning I have mentioned, Mr. Lynn asked me to come up and meditate alone with him before he took his sun bath. He always meditates before and after *everything*, except this one thing. His visit to Mt. Washington was going to end that day, a Sunday. Knowing that he would be gone before my return from our church services, I went upstairs to meditate with him and to say goodbye. He placed a chair for me in front of him, and we meditated for a little while. He was so pleased with the result that he said he intends, from now on, to meditate before his daily sun bath. During this visit I have meditated alone with him each day, for about three quarters of an hour, before he goes out on the balcony. This will show you how exceedingly kind he is to me. As he concluded our meditation on August 30th, before he opened his eyes he said: "You are a white and purple flame; and the mention of our Master's name thrills us both." I was almost overcome by receiving your vibrations and his at the same time; and he supported me to the door — thinking, I believe, that I might fall.

No words of mine can adequately convey to you Mr. Lynn's unselfish devotion. His one thought, during these visits, is to pour out his wonder-power for our sakes.

One night he stopped at my room to give me his blessing. He added a word of personal praise, which I have now forgotten; and then, looking past me he said suddenly: "And there behind you is Swamiji! God bless you, Sister!" The fervor in these words of blessing made them sound more like thanks; as if some credit were due me for the vision he had had of you.

Blessed Master, *I* cannot see you, but I can feel the vibrations of your presence. The joy it gives me each time is so great that I would not exchange it for the wonder of vision.

I am prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness.

GYANAMATA

IN CHRIST IS ENLIGHTENMENT FOR ALL

"If there is a Way and not a Sage, it will not expand. If there is a Sage but no Way, nothing good will result. When a Way and a Sage are found together, then all men will become cultured and enlightened."—*Nestorian Tablet of Chang An.*

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." *Jesus the Christ* (John 14:6).

Thought Seeds

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

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



November 6th

Today I determine never again to sink into the pit of despair, sorrowing over unfulfilled hopes and the failure of my impractical dreams. Rather than allow myself to remain thus bound and limited, I will now live according to the dictates of wisdom, knowing that thus I shall be led to the happiness I am seeking.

November 13th

O Cosmic Lord, in the enveloping warmth of sunshine I feel Thy comforting presence. In the cool caress of the breeze I feel Thy breath of life.

November 20th

Father, I thank Thee that Thou dost remember me even when I remember Thee not. I am grateful for Thine unceasing bounties. Bless me, that I live in constant remembrance of Thee.

November 27th

O Perfect One, I realize that many things in the world, which we behold with our two physical eyes, appear gross and ugly; but that the inner side of creation, revealed only to the single eye of wisdom, is extremely beautiful. Therefore will I ever strive to see everything through my wisdom-eye, that behind all imperfections I may behold Thy reigning beauty.

December 4th

Beloved Father, the trail of Thy lingering fragrance in crea-

tion has led me to Thy secret hiding-place within me. A fore-taste of Thy love, flowing to me through human hearts, inspires me to seek Thee as the Perfect Source of all love.

December 11th

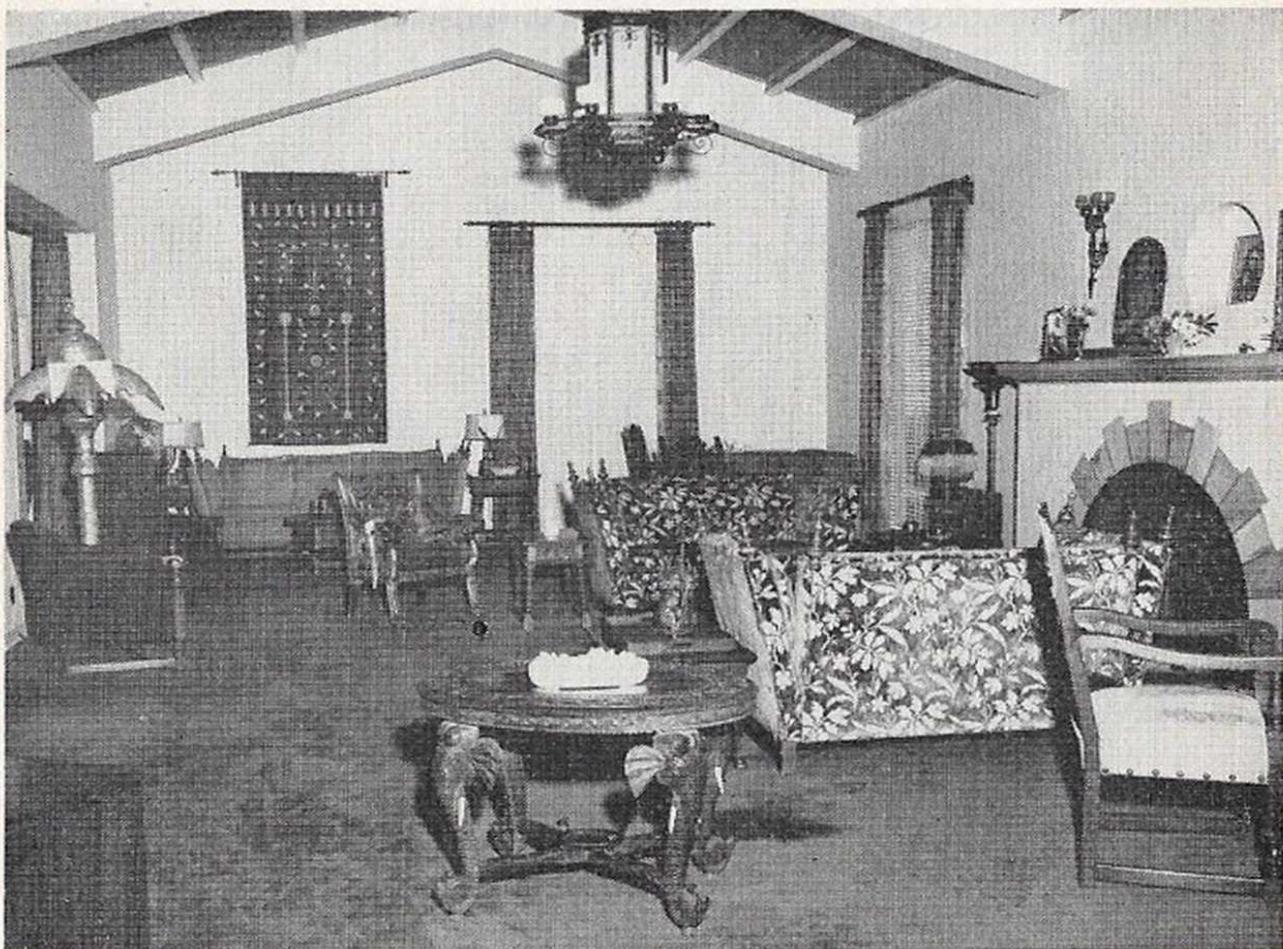
I will regard true friendship as the light by which we help one another to perceive Thee, O Heavenly Friend!

December 18th

I will not waste Thy precious gifts on a life that consists merely of eating, sleeping, and working. I will use my reason to seek Thee and to serve my fellow-man. Thus may I work out my salvation and fulfill Thy sacred plan for me.

December 25th

Today I lay the imperishable gifts of good will, spiritual service, and unconditional love beneath the Christmas tree of civilization — that flowering tree with its branches of many races.



Reception room, SRF Hermitage, Encinitas, California

Yoga Postures for Health

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

SRF MEDITATION-POSE



Scientific meditation is the direct approach to God-realization, for it consists of definite step-by-step methods that lift man's consciousness from matter to Spirit. The first step is asana, or correct posture.

A number of different yoga-asanas may be used for meditation. Many of these require the yogi* to bend his legs at sharp angles and are therefore difficult to accomplish or to maintain for long periods. However, Paramhansa Yogananda, who taught Yoga in the West for over thirty years, recommended a meditation-posture that may be easily mastered.

The meditation-seat should be flat and horizontal to the floor. A straight armless chair is very good. The height of the chair should be adjusted

to the individual's height and body-build. If the seat is too high one tends to lean forward during meditation. If the seat is too low one tends to lean backward. The ideal seat is that which allows the feet to be placed flat on the floor with the thighs parallel to the floor. Use a woolen blanket or a silk cloth (or both, with the silk on top) to cover the meditation seat and to place under one's feet (*see picture*). The cloth helps to insulate the body from magnetic earth-currents that otherwise keep the consciousness tied to material perceptions. If one plans to meditate for a long time he may place a cushion on the seat.

*One who practices yoga (the ancient art and science of consciously uniting the individual soul with the Cosmic Spirit).

One should wear comfortable clothing (not too heavy, nor too thin, nor too tight). It is also beneficial to remove the shoes, if one is meditating in the privacy of his home. Instructions for the correct meditation-posture are as follows:

Hold the spine erect, perpendicular to the floor. Place the feet flat on the floor. Hold the chest out, abdomen in, and draw the inside edges of the shoulder blades as close together as possible. Rest the hands, palms upward, at the junction of the thighs and the abdominal region. Hold the head erect, with the chin parallel to the floor. Relax the whole body and keep it completely still. All of these points are important; and, in the beginning-period of one's practice, should be mentally checked often.

The most vital factor is the position of the spine. Paramhansa Yogananda tells us the body is a temple of God, in which the spine is the holy altar. He taught that consciousness (the spark of God in man) has descended from Spirit into the mortal body, where it manifests itself through seven *chakras* or centers of life force in the brain and spine. From the cerebrospinal axis the consciousness and life force move outward into the sensory-motor nervous systems, causing man's perceptions of and reactions to the outer world. Man tends to identify himself with his physical body and to accept the limitations of the body and of the physical environment; he thus forgets his true Self as a child of Spirit. The purpose of meditation is to arouse man's remembrance of his divine nature by reversing the flow of life force from the sensory-motor nerves back to the spine and brain; and thus to uplift the consciousness through the seven cerebrospinal centers into a state of reunion with Spirit.

To progress satisfactorily in meditation, one must hold the spine *erect*. When the spine is allowed to bend, the vertebrae are thrown out of their normal alignment, thus constricting the spinal nerves and hampering the flow of life force in them. Each of the foregoing rules about posture contributes to the straightness, strength, and stability of the spine, as you will discover through your own practice.

The positions of the feet and palms also have valuable psychological and spiritual effects. Placing one's feet flat on the floor induces a state of mental alertness and steadiness. Turning the palms upward conduces to one's surrender of heart and mind to God. Then, when the body is kept completely still, the life force, no longer muscularly compelled to flow outward, freely flows inward to the spiritual citadels—the spine and brain. If one stays for some time in this relaxed position he will experience, through correct posture alone, a calm, joyous state that is a foretaste of divine ecstasy.

In the beginning, however, some difficulties may be encountered. One who is not accustomed to keeping his spine erect must tense the muscles of the back in order to bring the vertebrae into the right position; hence he will find the new position tiring. To relieve the spinal tension the

beginner may feel a desire to lean against the back of the chair, or to meditate while lying down.* He should steadfastly resist these temptations, because they will keep the consciousness tied to material perceptions.

Another obstacle is restlessness, which manifests as the desire to squirm or fidget constantly; or, if one is bothered by itching, to scratch oneself. At other times the beginner finds that he salivates and swallows more frequently than usual. Throat noises are disturbing not only to the devotee but, in group meditation, to his neighbors also.

Happily all these difficulties are but temporary; they disappear when one perseveres in steadfast and regular meditation-practice. However, the most basic problem—that of keeping the spine erect—requires special attention. Not only in meditation but in all daily activities one should make a conscious effort to hold the spine straight. Students, office-workers, and others whose occupations demand long hours of sitting should take special care with regard to posture. Everyone who practices the SRF energization exercises will find them extremely valuable in rejuvenating and rightly adjusting the spinal nerves. To attain good health, mental efficiency, and God-realization one must be unshakably convinced of the importance of keeping the spine erect at all times—in activity as well as in meditation.

The functions of body, mind, and soul are harmonized by the basic meditation-posture. The life force then flows freely in the spine and nerves, giving greater strength, vitality, and health. The very act of straightening the spine elevates the mind and consciousness. When the spine is straight one feels he can face the world with courage and confidence and become an inspiring example to others. Everyone likes to know others who are *straight* not only morally but also in appearance. But the supreme benefit of the erect meditation-posture is that it facilitates the practice of psychophysical spiritual techniques that, coupled with steadfast devotion to God, open up the spinal highway through which the soul consciousness may be attained.

In the next article we shall discuss one of the basic yoga asanas, *Paschimottanasana*, the posterior-stretching pose.

*There are special methods of meditation, however, for bedfast invalids.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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"Mother of the Universe"

A religious festival (*puja*), celebrated in Bengal, India, is *Jagadhatri Puja*, "worship of the Cosmic Mother." Statues of the Goddess are displayed in November of each year in temples throughout Bengal. Jagadhatri, literally, "Sustainer of the Universe," is mythologically represented as riding on a lion, symbol of power.

The seven *chakras* (cerebrospinal centers of consciousness through which man must travel to attain God-realization) are here shown by six small wheels and by one large circle around the head—the *sahasrara chakra* in the brain, the "thousand-rayed lotus of light."

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
—James 4:6.

NOVEMBER, 1955



Sister Daya, president of SRF, on her return, October 24th, to SRF headquarters after a three-week absence. She was showered with rose petals, India-fashion, and presented with flowers and baskets of fruit by SRF disciples, residents at Mt. Washington Center and India Center.



"One should first see the cause as distinct from the effect, and should then, at all times, realize the cause as inherent in the effect itself..."

"Just as, by delusion, one ignores the rope and perceives the serpent, so does he of deluded intellect perceive the universe without realizing the truth."—*Shankaracharya*.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter VI, Stanza 47

Literal Translation

He who absorbs himself in Me, with his soul immersed in Me, him I regard, among all classes (of yogis), as the most equilibrated.

Spiritual Interpretation

In the 47th stanza it is pointed out again that the Raja Yogi (a follower of the royal highway of Kriya Yoga, especially favored by royal sages and great yogis in ancient India) is the greatest devotee of God. Various lesser methods and bypaths are also termed yoga: *Karma Yoga* (the path of good actions); *Jnana Yoga* (the path of discrimination); *Bhakti Yoga* (the path of prayer and devotion); *Mantra Yoga* (the path of God-union by chanting and incantations of seed-sounds); *Laya Yoga* (the path that teaches man how to dissolve the ego in the Infinite); and *Hatha Yoga* (the path of bodily discipline).

Here the Lord is emphasizing that the Raja Yogi (Kriya Yogi) who with devotion withdraws his life force and mind from the body, and who unites his ego with his soul and his soul with the ever-blessed Spirit, and who can maintain constant ecstasy with the Infinite equally during action and during meditation, is the highest of all yogis. Such great devotees do not remain always "locked up" in ecstasy, refusing to

take part in the drama of life created by the Lord; they perform their duties and their God-reminding actions with blissful consciousness, under divine direction.

The devotee who performs actions in a state of ecstasy is the greatest of all yogis; he has attained a higher state than the yogi who remains one with the Lord for years in *sabikalpa samadhi* without performing any bodily actions.

Therefore Kriya Yoga teaches the householder, as well as the man of renunciation, to commune with God as his first duty; and then to perform all proper physical, mental, moral, and spiritual duties with divine consciousness, directed by Him alone.

Chapter VII, Stanzas 1-2

Literal Translation

The blessed Lord said:

O Arjuna, absorbing your mind in Me, taking shelter in Me, and following the path of yoga—hear how thou shalt realize Me beyond all doubts, in full completion (that is, know Me with all My powers).

Spiritual Interpretation

When a yogi mechanically practices yoga methods, without concentrating on the omnipresent God, his mind becomes concentrated on the path rather than on the Goal.

The path of yoga is only a means to reach the Divine Destination. When one communes with the Lord, the technique of yoga has fulfilled its purpose. I knew a devotee in India who for years so enjoyed the practice of yoga techniques that he forgot to love God. The blossom precedes the fruit; when the fruit appears the flower falls. The flower of deep yoga-practice similarly precedes the fruit of divine realization. When the fruit of final freedom arrives, yoga techniques are no longer necessary.

Many devotees make the dangerous mistake of imagining that they have attained God-realization; therefore they do not practice yoga. Many truly liberated men, however, just to set a good example to other devotees, practice yoga even after achieving complete union with God.

Emancipation is a sum total composed of the yogi's whole-hearted effort (25%), the guru-preceptor's guidance (25%), and the grace of God (50%). The Lord is the Maker of the laws of salvation. It is necessary to follow the yoga technique with divine grace in order to reach the all-knowing Father who yearns for the love of His children even more than they want His affection. Yoga should therefore be practiced by the devotee with deepest love and spiritual thirst for the Father of all.

When the yogi expands his consciousness with the cosmic sound emanating from the cosmic vibration, he feels himself expanding with it. He clearly perceives the ever-existent, ever-conscious, ever-blessed God

who is present behind *Aum*. It is then that the yogi realizes the immeasurable stores of energy, power, joy, wisdom, and grace that are manifested in the cosmic sound *Aum*—the first expression of God in the universe; he begins to glimpse the full vastness of God.

Chapter VII, Stanza 3

Literal Translation

Among thousands of men, one strives for spiritual attainment; and, among the blessed true seekers that assiduously try to reach Me, perhaps one perceives Me as I am.

Spiritual Interpretation

The precious state of God-realization is very difficult to attain, because in the average man the searchlights of his five senses are turned toward the perception of material objects and not inward toward God. Animals are instinct-guided; unlike men, animals have no power of free will by which they may turn the searchlights of their senses from matter to God. Most men, too, are habit-bound. They do not try to change their material habits of tasting transitory pleasures into spiritual habits of tasting the joys of Spirit. Through the influence of cosmic delusion man is outwardly attracted to the spurious luster of matter and not inwardly attracted by the eternal effulgence of God.

It is an undeniable truth that man's life-wave, no matter how far projected away, still exists as a part of the Cosmic Sea. Sooner or later it must yield to the divine pull and go back to the Cosmic Ocean Home from whence it sprang forth.

However, this stanza points out that when the soul-wave of man becomes accustomed, through bad habits, to staying away from the calm depths of the Cosmic Ocean, it is reluctant to return there. It is true also that God, as the Cosmic Ocean with its storms of delusion, wishes to enact a play with the soul-waves; hence they are not easily allowed to return to His bosom! But when the soul-waves are fiercely battered by the raging tumults of cosmic delusion, they send an inner call for help and try to respond to the unceasing pull of God toward the depths of His ocean-bosom.

Owing to the influence of the storms of delusion, and to the Divine Ocean's desire to play with the soul-waves, and to the evil desire and habits of the soul-waves not to return to the depths of Spirit, few human waves make an effort to seek their original Home. If all soul-waves would raise a hue and cry, God would certainly create a lull in His cosmic storm and help the soul-waves to return to His bosom! And, whenever a determined soul-wave tries to attain the deeps of the Divine Ocean, it may do so by special divine grace.

This stanza of the *Bhagavad Gita* points out that most soul-waves

ride on ceaselessly with the storm of delusion. Out of many thousands of life-waves of human beings, perhaps only one desires to race toward the Divine Ocean instead of running away from It. Even that one good soul-wave, desirous of returning to the Cosmic Bosom but tested by cosmic delusion and obstructed by past evil karma, cannot easily merge in the freedom of the Blissful Sea. Nevertheless, out of these many good seekers, one or two of them, here and there, will succeed in overcoming the outward thrust of delusion and evil karma and be able to plunge headlong with forceful faith into the ever-pulling power of the Divine Deeps.

The Cosmic Ocean is fully aware of having caused so much trouble by having sent away Its children-soul-waves, without their permission, to be buffeted and tested by the storm of delusion. The cosmic plan, therefore, is to help, sooner or later, all soul-waves to return Home. The same Divine Ocean which by Its cosmic storm of delusion sent away all the soul-waves from Its bosom will in time dismiss delusion and bring all the soul-waves back to their Home of freedom.

This stanza points out that only one among thousands of men is shrewd enough to seek God; and that among such true seekers, perhaps only one will cultivate the unceasing spiritual tenacity to neutralize the effects of bad karma and of cosmic delusion and thus attain the Reality — God.

Many sincere devotees of the Lord do not force themselves to seek Him with ever increasing intensity in meditation nor are they persistent in their search for Him. That is why they do not realize Him continuously. But a persevering devotee, in spite of much bad karma and the temptations of cosmic delusion, will certainly reach God in the end.

The Path Made Easy for Modern Man

Elsewhere the *Bhagavad Gita* says: "Even a devotee that realizes only shortly before death that God is real and all else unreal will be able to commune with Him in the after-death state." Some great saints tell us that God has relaxed certain spiritual regulations for the benefit of devotees who must live in this modern age of confusion. A present-day devotee, they say, who will *continuously* pray for God-communion for three days and nights, or even for twenty-four hours, will realize his Goal.

Yogavatar Lahiri Mahasaya, my guru's guru, said that a person with much good past karma who gives three years to deep practice of *Kriya Yoga* according to the guru's instructions may achieve not only God-communion but may become forever united to Him. Failing in that, a devotee with considerable past good karma, by deep practice of *Kriya Yoga* under a guru may in six years attain complete liberation. Others, with some good karma, can find liberation in twelve years, by the deep practice of *Kriya Yoga* and by the guru-preceptor's guidance and blessings. And all deep seekers, even those with very little past good karma, may find liberation in a period of twenty-four years.

Others, with no previous good karma but possessing now supreme determination and the guidance of a true *Kriya Yoga* guru-preceptor, by deep and steady practice of *Kriya Yoga* may be able to find realization in forty-eight years. If a devotee is unable to find realization in forty-eight years, he will certainly be attracted in his next life to *Kriya Yoga* and will practice it deeply until final salvation is achieved.

My beloved student, Mr. James J. Lynn, once observed: "Out of each thousand greedy men, one adamantly seeks money; and out of those determined seekers, one becomes rich!" He also told me: "When a dollar bill drops within sight, twelve wolves of businessmen jump to get it! The one who most quickly grabs it and with tenacity hangs on to it while being pounded by other greedy businessmen, may, half alive, get away with that dollar!" Just as no one may amass wealth without resourcefulness and determination, so the infinite wealth is not to be attained without courage and tenacity. Man, however, as the divine image, should understand that God has not to be earned but realized. A determined devotee by steady efforts recovers this eternal divine forgotten heritage, ever existing within the soul.

God-realization is not reserved for the specially privileged nor for one son of God only nor for a few sons of God. God is ready to take back all prodigal sons — anyone who makes the supreme effort to return to Him. Only the wanderer who has traveled far away from his cosmic heritage, through a tortuous evil way, will find difficulty and delay in returning Home.

I often say that if a hundred persons in various circumstances of life prayed deeply and made supreme efforts to become millionaires, all of them could not, in one lifetime, succeed. Most of them would have to wait several lives to get into the proper environment that would make them eligible, by the acquirement of proper human karma, to become millionaires. But I also point out that all men, being already made in the image of God, can attain Him in one lifetime by making the proper spiritual effort under the guidance of a true guru.

God has not to be earned like money. By His grace He is already earned and deposited in every soul. But owing to human forgetfulness He has to be rediscovered.

YOGA-SUTRA OF PATANJALI

WITH THE COMMENTARY OF VYASA

*Translated into English by Dr. J. R. Ballantyne
and Govinda Shastri Deva*

The Eightfold Path of Yoga as outlined by the great sage Patanjali. 158 pp. Paper, \$1.25. Order from SRF headquarters, Los Angeles, California.

YOGA AND HEALTH

By Selvarajan Yesudian and Elisabeth Haich

Therapeutic value of Hatha Yoga explained. Instruction in twenty-five yoga postures. Cloth, 190 pp., 26 pp. of photographs, \$3.00 plus 20¢ postage.

Order from SRF

(Continued from page 23)

"This immediately calls to mind the commencement of the Gospel according to St. John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.' The *Word* of the Bible and the *prana* of the Oriental is one and the same concept. Only the name is different.

"Every force is based on *prana*: the force of gravity, attraction, repulsion, electricity, radioactivity. Without *prana* there is no life, for *prana* is the soul of all force and all energy. This prime principle is to be found everywhere in the world. It is in the air, but is not air; it is in food, but is not food; it is the strength in the vitamin; it is also contained in water, but is not identical with the chemical constituents of water—these are merely carriers of *prana*.

"The air is filled with free *prana*, and the human organism can most easily absorb *prana* from fresh air through the process of breathing. In breathing normally we take in normal amounts of *prana*. Through deep breathing our intake is increased, and through controlled Yoga breathing we are able to store up a substantial quantity of reserve *prana* in our brain and nerve centers to be used in case of necessity....

"Our spine, including the uppermost vertebra, the skull, is the carrier of life. In the uppermost curvature of the skull is the positive pole, while the lowest vertebra is the seat of the negative pole. The tension between both of them is what we call life. The Yoga philosophy, many thousands of years old, calls the positive pole the residence of the God Vishnu, the Spirit; the negative pole, on the other hand, is the seat of *Kundalini*, the symbolically personified Goddess of Nature. Vishnu is the beaming fire and his brilliance constantly attracts *Kundalini* towards himself.... This is the poetical and symbolical description of a physiological fact. In modern scientific language we would probably express it thus: 'Between the positive pole in the skull and the negative pole in the lowest vertebra of the spine there is an electrical current of very short wave-length. When

the negative pole is freed from its normal location in the lowest vertebra and travels upward, it can reach the positive pole and unite with it. Whether we express ourselves symbolically or in scientific language, the fact remains that this condition represents the highest fulfillment in consciousness and the most perfect realization of happiness.

"This condition is known to the mystics all over the world. In the West it was called the 'mystic marriage'.... This is the highest plane, the level on which the individual consciousness fuses and becomes one with the Overself, with God. The basis of every religion is the secret which lies hidden within the spine of each individual, and which does not rest on imagination, but is actually the most perfect truth itself.

"This fulfillment is called *samadhi* by the yogis. Although this pertains to *Raja Yoga*, the final goal of spiritual Yoga, it was necessary to mention it here; as the condition of illumination is not only a spiritual but also a physiological fact.

"The various paths followed by Yoga cannot be separated by a sharp dividing-line.... The body is the structure, the clothing, the frame, the carrier of the mind. Our complete knowledge of the body leads us to the mind and the latter to the Overself."



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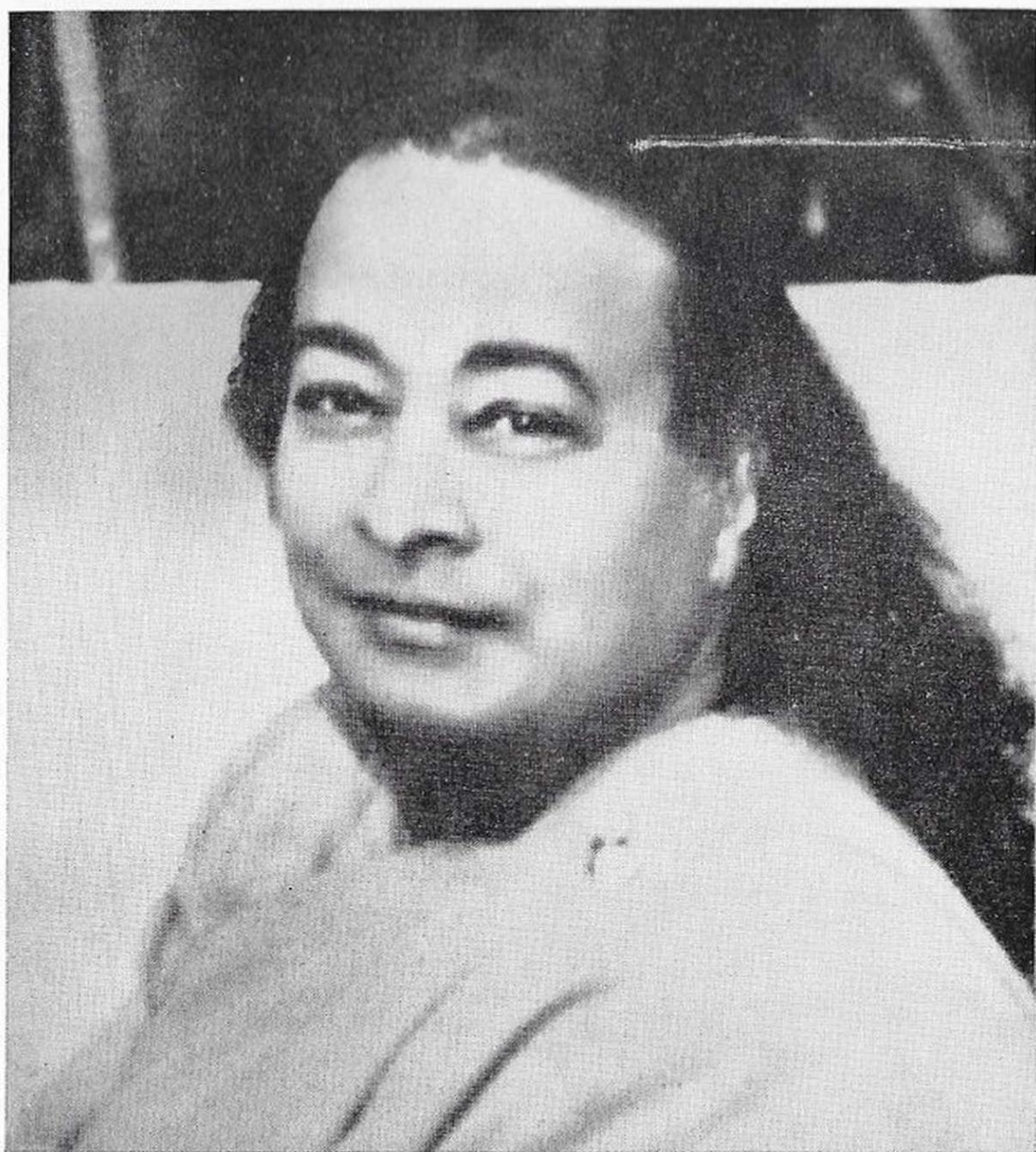
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Headquarters of Self-Realization Fellowship, Mount Washington Estates (*lower half of picture*), Los Angeles, Calif. This airplane view shows the building from rear. The groves on the estate are pines, palms, and eucalypti. Serpentine road (*center*) is Mt. Washington Drive; at extreme right is San Rafael Avenue.



PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

Photograph taken at a banquet-celebration in Los Angeles on January 26, 1950—the date of India's birth as a republic. Paramhansaji is seated at the speakers' table. The festivity was attended by 300 persons.