

# Self-Realization

## MAGAZINE



Founded in 1925 by PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

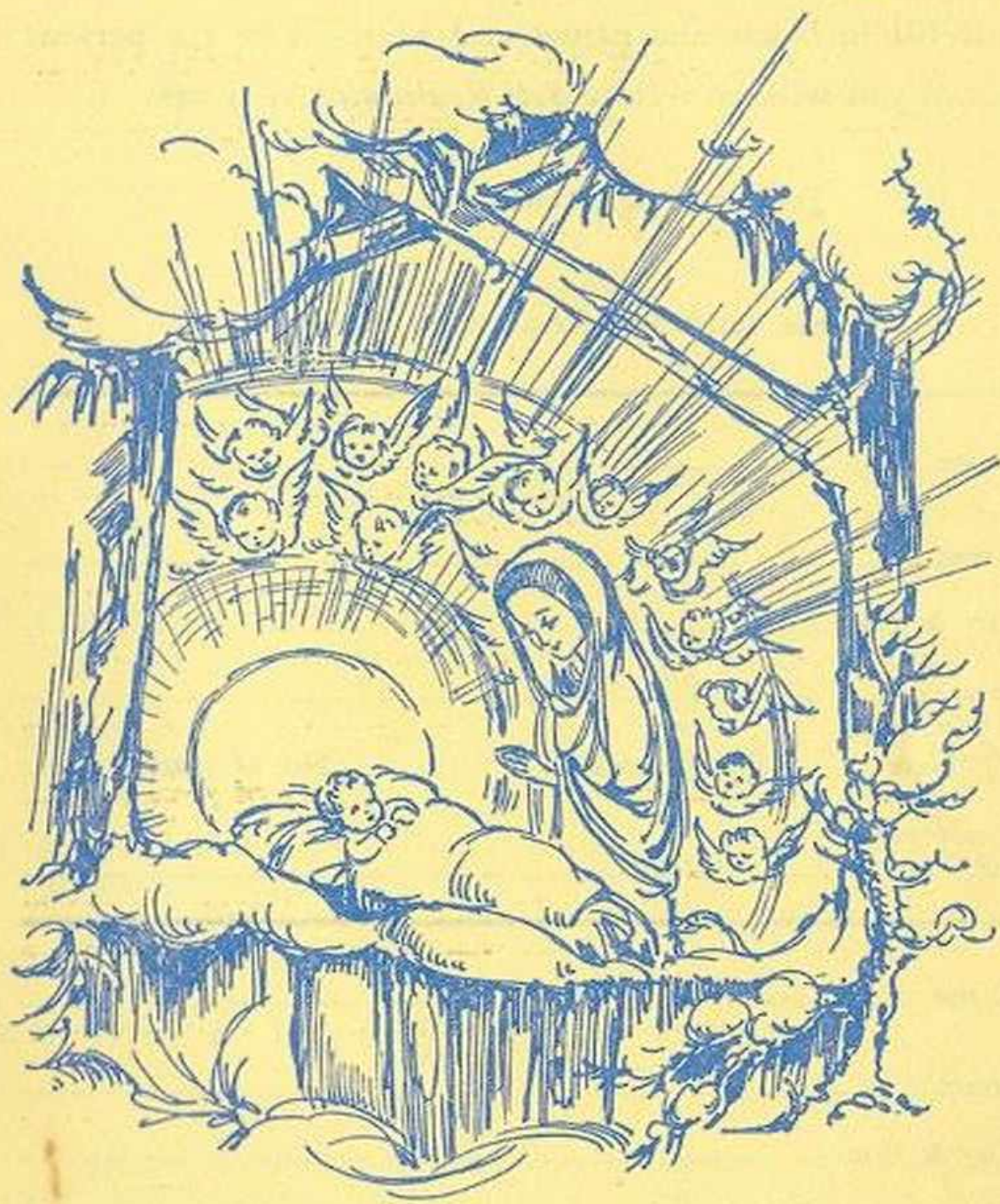


"O Christ, may the birth of Thy love be felt in all hearts  
this Christmas and all other days." — Paramahansa Yogananda



"The Sorrowful Mother," by Carlo Dolci (1616-1686)

# Self-Realization Magazine



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*See inside back cover for additional forms.*

# Self-Realization Magazine

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November - December, 1959

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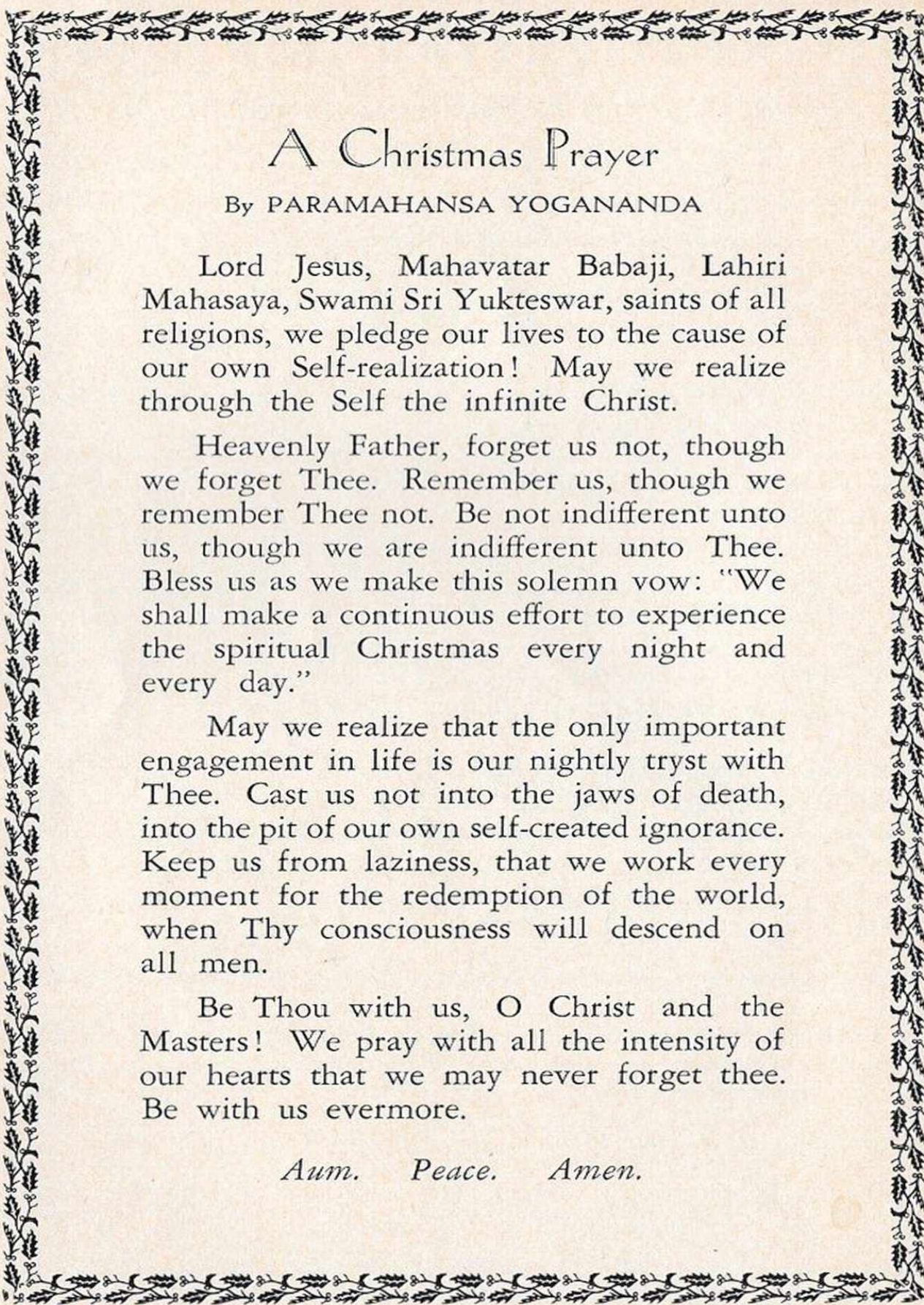
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A decorative border of small, repeating floral motifs surrounds the text. The border consists of a top horizontal line, a bottom horizontal line, and two vertical lines on the left and right sides, all connected by small floral designs.

## A Christmas Prayer

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

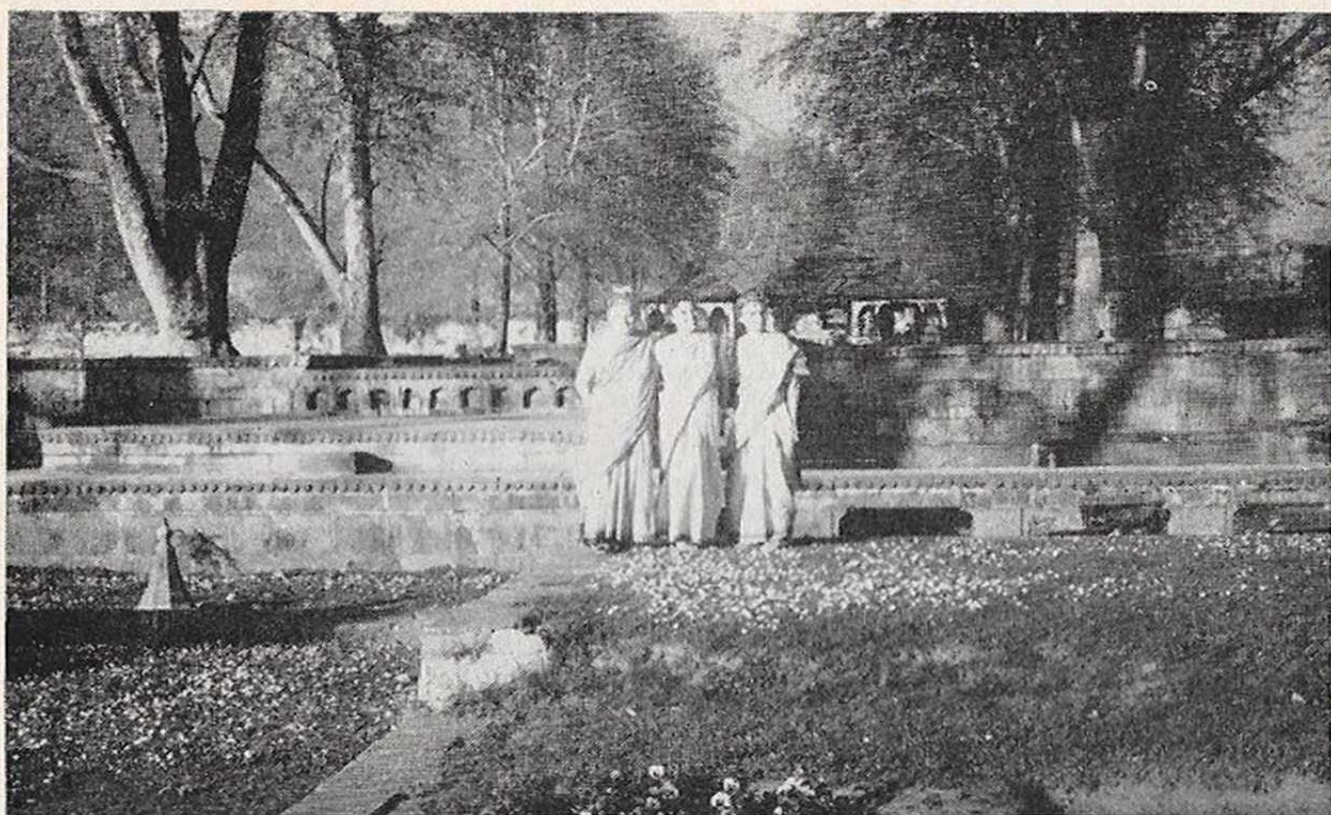
Lord Jesus, Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, saints of all religions, we pledge our lives to the cause of our own Self-realization! May we realize through the Self the infinite Christ.

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."

May we realize that the only important engagement in life is our nightly tryst with Thee. Cast us not into the jaws of death, into the pit of our own self-created ignorance. Keep us from laziness, that we work every moment for the redemption of the world, when Thy consciousness will descend on all men.

Be Thou with us, O Christ and the Masters! We pray with all the intensity of our hearts that we may never forget thee. Be with us evermore.

*Aum. Peace. Amen.*



Sisters Revati, Dayamata, and Mataji at the famous Shalimar Gardens, laid out in Kashmir in the early 17th century by Emperor Jehangir



Sister Mataji took this picture of the bathing of elephants on the grounds of the Maharaja's palace in Cooch Behar



Sri Shankaracharya of Puri with Sister Dayamata and Sri Prabhas Ghosh, May 9th, Yogoda Math, Yogoda Sat-Sanga headquarters in Dakshineswar near Calcutta.





Carved pillar in Agra Fort, inlaid with red, green, and blue stones. Tourists have taken as souvenirs all the colored inlays from the center of the design.



Sister Dayamata (*center*) and Sri Prabhas Ghosh with Sri Sananda Lal Ghosh (*right*), brother of Paramahansa Yogananda, and his family; in front of 4 Gurpar Road, Calcutta, where Yoganandaji lived as a youth.

"Now, finding that he has lost his self-control, he grieves inwardly, saying, "Oh, I have done it again! I vowed not to, and yet I did. I have failed." I am speaking, of course, of those who are sincere in their desire to change. If they fail repeatedly, they may get downhearted. Finally the thought may come to them, "This habit is stronger than I am. I am powerless to overcome it." And so they give in utterly to discouragement. In fact, however, there is no need for any such feeling as despair, for wrong actions and feelings are not natural to us. They have been imposed upon us from without.

"Let us take the example of water. Water does not naturally become hot. If heat is applied, the water becomes hot. But when the heat is removed, the water gradually cools to a normal temperature. Heat is a property of fire but not of water. Similarly, if wrong habits and delusions were a property of man's nature, he would be justified in thinking it impossible for him to overcome them. But they are foreign agents. Therefore it is possible for him to remove them.

"Let us take another example—say, the death of a loved one. The person suffering such bereavement has often been known to say,

"I am so grief-stricken, I shall never be happy again." But on the second day his grief is already somewhat diminished. And day by day it keeps on lessening until it disappears altogether. The reason is that grief is not the true nature of the soul. It must be introduced into our consciousness by some external factor. (We all admit this truth. Whenever we see someone unhappy we ask, "What is the matter? What happened?" Our very question shows that we understand that unhappiness is not a normal state. Something must have *happened* to produce it.)

"When the cause of delusion is removed, the delusion itself gradually disappears; just as when the cause of grief or when the application of heat to water is removed, grief or heat slowly vanish.

"So the secret lies simply in this: stay away from the causes of delusion. In the case of bad habits, stay away from those people or environments that aggravate them. But this removal of the cause must stem from inner willingness. It cannot be forced upon one from without. If one locked an unruly boy in a room to keep him from performing mischief, he would be just as unruly, and perhaps even more so, after his release.

"While staying away from those factors that stimulate bad habits in us, we should also direct our attention in positive channels. In this manner, *tamas* and *rajas* will gradually disappear, and our natural *sattwa* will manifest itself."

(Continued on next page)



Sisters Mataji and Dayamata with Ananda Moyi Ma, April 17th, Rishikesh

# Thought Seeds

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



*Nurtured in the soil of consciousness by daily meditation, watered with showers of the heart's devotion, may these thought seeds blossom into divine realizations.*



Let me not dope myself with the opiate of restlessness. Behind the throb of my heart may I feel the presence of God's peace.



Within the soul is the joy that my ego is seeking. I suddenly become aware of His bliss honeycombed in the hive of silence. I will break the hive of secret silence and drink the honey of unceasing blessedness.



I will fill my heart with the peace of meditation. I will pour heartfuls of my joy into peace-thirsty souls.



The kingdom of the planets and all the riches of the earth belong to Thee, my Divine Father. I am Thy child; therefore I am the owner of all things even as Thou art.



O immortal Love, unite my love with Thy love, unite my life with Thy joy, unite my mind with Thy cosmic consciousness.



O Lord! make my heart big enough to hold Thee, that it throb with the Christ Consciousness in everything. Then shall I enjoy the festivity of Thy birth in my mind, my soul, and in oneness with every pulsing atom.

# Yoga Postures For Health

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



## SIRSHASANA—THE HEADSTAND

(Continued from last issue)

The physiological effects of the Headstand, closely examined in the last issue in the light of modern scientific experiments, constitute a solid basis for understanding the numerous and, according to the performers, "unbelievable" benefits of the head-down position.

Yogis of India have long extolled the healing value of the Headstand. The Sanskrit texts speak highly of the pose; one of them (*Yoga-tattva Upanishad*, 122) even states that the Headstand "*banishes all mental and bodily ailments.*"

Western medical science has found independently that the head-down position is a valuable means of treatment in many diseases. The comparison of both these approaches—Eastern yogic and Western medical—opens perspectives of immediate theoretical and practical value. An effort has been made in this series of articles, therefore, to present the question as thoroughly as possible.

Before taking up the medical and the yogic indications, which often correspond, it should be pointed out that medical science very seldom uses the 90-degree head-down tilt that is accomplished in the yogic Headstand. Usually the head-down tilt prescribed by doctors for patients is between 10 and 45 degrees; its gravitational effects on blood circulation obviously are much less pronounced than are those of the Headstand.

A scientific law has been proposed on the basis of clinical and hydrostatic considerations, which relates the importance of the circulatory changes to the degree of tilt (Enderby,\* 1954); and which can be expressed thus: *for every inch of vertical height above or below the heart level there is a corresponding decrease or increase in the local blood pressure of about 2 mm. of mercury.* This means that the slight head-down tilt has to be maintained much longer than the Headstand in order to obtain the same results. Whereas in the East the Headstand is usually prescribed only for a few minutes, in the West the 10-45° head-down tilt is prescribed for hours, sometimes days, or even months! The West,

\* Names in parentheses that are subsequently given in this article are those of medical authorities.

which characteristically looks for faster and more efficient ways of accomplishing things, has in this particular case adopted a slower means than the East.

### Importance of the Inverted Position in Reanimation

One of the most frequent uses of the head-down position in hospitals is in cases of shock. After serious injury or blood loss, shock or the state of peripheral circulatory deficiency usually overtakes the body and rapidly leads to death unless energetically treated. The English physiologist Leonard Hill proposed the postural treatment for shock in 1895 on the basis of animal experiments. During the First World War, at the instigation of the American doctor, W. T. Porter, the head-down positioning of the injured was largely used at the front in France and Belgium. The adoption of this simple yet powerful postural measure saved many lives.

The treatment has since become so widely accepted that shock position has become synonymous with the head-down position, and the blocks used in hospitals to raise the foot of the bed twelve inches are commonly called shock-blocks. The value of the head-down position in case of shock—demonstrated experimentally in man fifteen years ago (Duncan and coll.)—is due to the gravitational pooling of blood toward the upper part of the body, which aids the return of venous blood to the heart and the circulation of blood in the brain (Blalock).

*The same pooling of blood headward (see drawing on page 23) has proved to be of immediate value, when for one reason or another the circulation to the brain drops to an insufficient level.* In the case of fainting, the head-down positioning of the patient is "the most effective therapy," declares Dr. Alfred Soffer of Rochester, N.Y. Dr. Soffer, who proposed this treatment as recently as 1954, backs it up with the fact that in the commonest type of fainting—that occurring secondarily to fright, anxiety, pain, drug reaction, anoxemia (that is, deficient aeration of the blood) and temperature sensitivity—there is a reflex dilatation of the vessels which, in a standing, average-sized man, fills up the muscles of the legs at the rate of over 1.5 liters of blood per minute (Engel).

It was thought, on the basis of animal experimentation, that in man a pooling of blood occurs in the abdominal vessels during fainting. That is why the classic treatment consisted in seating the patient and placing his head between his knees, which was thought to draw the blood from the splanchnic region to the brain.

But this concept has now been refuted (Mueller and assoc.); according to Dr. Soffer, the traditional head-between-the-knees position

is of "minimal assistance," and the "most advantageous position" is the head-down position or horizontal position with legs raised.

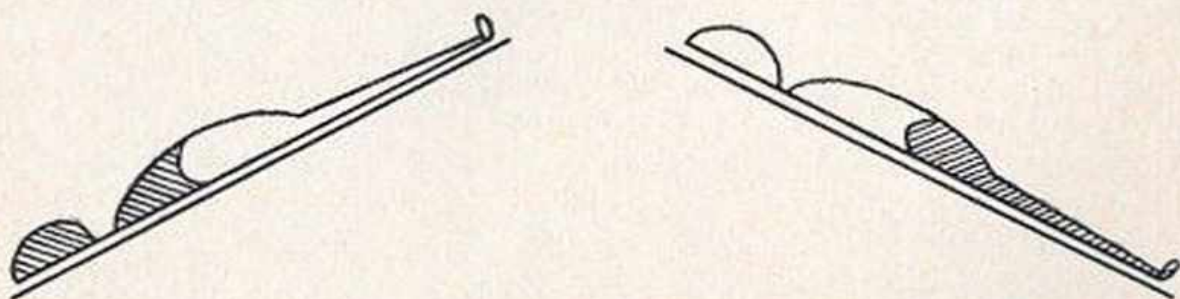
There is one instance in man, however, in which there appears to be a postural pooling of the blood from the brain to the abdominal area. In aged persons with greatly thickened and often hard vessels (arteriosclerosis), it is common to see transient palsies of one side of the body (hemiplegia) or of speech (aphasia) appear while the patient is at the table during a meal. The accepted explanation is that a spasm may be occurring in a brain artery at the time, thus suddenly diminishing the blood supply to the brain cells. This explanation is not satisfactory because "spasm, even if possible, is least likely to occur" in these hard vessels.

In 1927 Drs. Fleming and Naffziger of San Francisco suggested that cerebral anemia might be due to a pooling of blood to the splanchnic region during mealtime, and offered as treatment the head-down positioning of the patient by raising the foot of the bed. This theory has not, to our knowledge, been confirmed scientifically so far, but it offers such an interesting approach to the cause and treatment of certain nervous disorders that it is worth mentioning.

#### **Does the Headstand Rejuvenate All the Bodily Vessels?**

The pooling of the blood away from the lower part of the body in the head-down position has very beneficial effects on the circulation of blood and lymph in the legs, particularly when this circulation is defective. In varicoses, for example, the inverted position is recognized to be of great value. To elevate one's legs above the level of the pelvis, after the day's work, has long been standard palliative treatment.

The yogic approach is more radical: the whole body is inverted in the Headstand (or Shoulderstand) position. The results then appear to be more powerful, since the yogic position is said not only to benefit the



*Postural pooling of blood in the head-down and head-up tilts. The pooling in the head-down position explains the beneficial influence of the position in many diseases and its rejuvenating power in healthy individuals (see text).*

varicoses but to cure them! It is possible that the regenerating power of the tissues is much more stimulated by the complete inversion of the body than by the inversion of the legs only, as if both nervous and endocrinous mechanisms are set in motion by the complete inversion.

Since varicoses frequently occur in persons whose employment requires long-continued standing, the head-down position may prove to be a first-class means to prevent the formation of varicoses. Immediately one notices great relief from the feeling of heaviness in the legs caused by continuous standing, and enjoys a feeling of refreshment and rejuvenation. The Headstand therefore should be known to all whose profession requires standing for long hours at a time: machinists, salespeople, doctors, dentists, nurses, traffic policemen, etc.

Varicoses can also affect the veins near the lower end of the bowel (piles, or hemorrhoids) and those of the testicles (varicocele). Yogis state that in both these diseases the inverted position brings beneficial results, even cure. The inverted position can be coupled, for better results, with an internal massage of the circulatory system such as appears to be realized in the yogic stomach exercise (*Uddiyana Bandha*, *Self-Realization Magazine*, Jan.-Feb. 1957) and with rhythmic tension and relaxation of the anus muscles: the exercise known in *Hatha Yoga* as *Aswini Mudra*\* and independently in Western medicine as "winking of the anal sphincter" (Tucker).

There is another disease of the veins in which the head-down position has been recognized as one of the best means of prevention. The disease (phlebothrombosis) usually occurs after an operation. It is dreaded by surgeons because it may lead to a fatal pulmonary complication. Investigations have shown that the position of the patient after the operation plays an important role in the genesis of the disease.

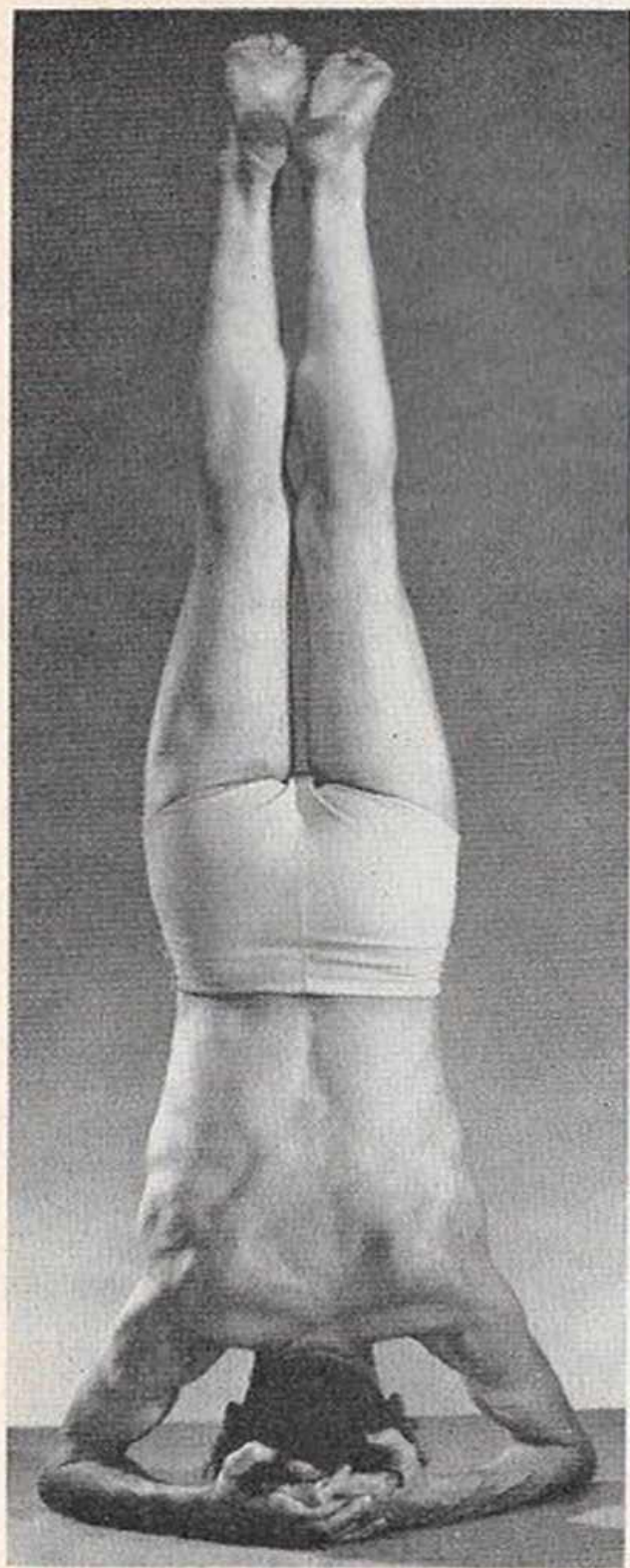
Since after an operation the blood coagulates more rapidly than usual (a defense mechanism of the organism which helps to lessen bleeding in injured tissues), the possibility of formation of a clot increases in those parts of the body where blood tends to stagnate. Such stagnation may occur in the veins of the inactive muscular masses of the legs, which are in a declive position when the postoperative patient lies horizontal with a pillow under his head or is half seated. It is usually in the calf that the clot is formed, and, being not firmly attached to the wall of the vein, the clot can be detached and carried away by the blood stream to the heart and pulmonary artery, where it may produce sudden death by massive occlusion (pulmonary embolus).

Dr. H. K. Gray of the Mayo Clinic was the first to mention (in 1934) the great value of the head-down tilt in the prevention of the

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\* *Gheranda Samhita* - 3:82.





SIRSHASANA — HEADSTAND

disease. The foot of the bed is elevated ten inches and the patient is maintained in the head-down position for the first twenty-four hours after the operation. More recently Professor Richard Torpin of the Medical College of Augusta, Georgia, arrived independently at the same conclusion and the same preventive measure. He keeps his patients in the head-down tilt for four days after the operation.

The drainage of the leg veins during their elevation in the head-down position enables them to receive a greater supply of blood when the legs are brought to horizontal in the subsequent Relaxation Position. This postural change greatly improves the circulation in the lower limbs, and makes their tissues healthier. The arteries in the legs derive even greater benefit, because the smooth muscles in their walls are unusually exercised by the contrasting pressures of blood they must handle when the legs are elevated and then lowered.

This fact leads to the following speculations: Would the systematic inversion of the body keep the arteries young and healthy? Would the topsy-turvy position prevent the accumulation of fat on the artery walls throughout the body? *Would the Headstand be the exercise, long sought in the West, which rejuvenates all the blood vessels, hence the entire body?* The yogis of India have long proclaimed the remarkable rejuvenating power of the inverted position.

(Continued on page 40)

(Continued from page 25)

Since the alternate elevation and lowering of the legs is known to improve the circulation in them, it was logical to apply the method in obstructive diseases of the arteries. In such diseases (arteritis, Buerger's disease), the walls of the arteries are so much thickened that very little blood goes through; all the tissues of the lower limbs suffer from an insufficient blood supply. Dr. Buerger was the first to propose postural treatment in the form of his "gravitational vascular exercises." The treatment was modernized in 1936 with the introduction of Sander's oscillating bed. The method helps by greatly improving the circulation in the legs, but does not seem to help the condition of the arteries themselves. The postural exercises thus appear to be of value in arterial disease for preventive, rather than curative, effect.

### The Inverted Pose Benefits Abdominal and Pelvic Organs

Yogis speak highly of the inverted position as a cure for many diseases of the organs and glands of the bodily trunk. Western medical science also has recognized the value of the head-down position in several ailments. In displacements of the womb, for example, either downward or backward, Western medicine has long been prescribing the genu-pectoral pose, in which only the trunk of the patient is inverted. This position tends to put the womb back in place and to eliminate the symptoms of the disease: heaviness of the organs (the relieving effect of the pose is sometimes felt for hours after practice); lumbar pains; menstrual troubles; and even sterility (especially in young women with retrodisplacement of the womb).

The most common use of the head-down pose in Western medicine is in surgery. The head-down tilting of the patient displaces his abdominal organs upward toward the diaphragm and thus makes it easy for the surgeon to operate on the pelvis or the abdomen. This pose is believed to have been first used extensively in surgery by the German doctor, Friedrich Trendelenburg, as far back as 1880. The position soon commanded more and more attention in Europe as well as in America, to the point that the 45-degree head-down tilt proposed by the German surgeon became known the world over as the Trendelenburg position. Such was the interest aroused by the pose that its name was soon used for any degree of tilt: slight-, high-, and even reverse (head-up) Trendelenburg; as well as for the patient himself: a Trendelenburgized patient! \*

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\* Trendelenburg (1844-1924) was acquainted with East Indian thought. His M.D. thesis dealt with ancient Hindu surgery (*De Veterum Indorum Chirurgia*, Berlin, G. Schage, 1866).

Two of the reasons for the success of the Trendelenburg position in surgery is that it tends to reduce the oozing of blood in the patient's pelvis or abdomen and also makes it easier for the surgeon to arrest the bleeding of small blood vessels that are cut during the operation. The position apparently drives the blood away from the elevated pelvis or abdomen. The same effect has been noticed in obstetrics by E. M. Rucker, M.D., of Richmond, Va.: the blood loss that follows delivery of the after-birth (placenta) is reduced to a minimum when the mother is placed in the Trendelenburg position immediately after the birth of the child.

These facts tend to prove that the head-down position pools the blood away not only from the veins of the legs but also from those of the pelvis and abdomen. Such increased venous drainage cannot but be helpful for the health of the pelvic and abdominal organs. This fact has long been noticed by yogis, who say that the inverted position is beneficial in such illnesses as piles, enlargement of liver and spleen, biliary troubles, dyspepsia, constipation, appendicitis, and diabetes.

Yogis go even further: they state that the inverted position cures hernia and sagging of the abdominal organs; and helps women to recover faster from the physiological changes brought on by childbearing and childbirth. Such statements may seem baffling from a medical standpoint. It is easy to understand that hernia, for example, when strangulated, will be perhaps reduced by the head-down pose; the ancient surgeons (particularly Fabricius of Aquadapente, the teacher of Harvey — discoverer of blood circulation) suspended their patients by the legs and shook them vigorously when simpler means for reducing strangulated hernia would fail. But how can the pose strengthen the muscular wall of the abdomen so as to cure hernia?

It is easy to conceive that inversion of the body would temporarily



A class on SRF teachings in session in SRF India Hall, Hollywood, California, during 1959 Summer Classes

counteract the falling down (ptosis) of the stomach, bowels, kidneys, or even of all the viscera; and thus relieve the pressure they exert on the abdominal belt and the downward traction they impose on the sensitive peritoneum. But how can the pose correct the nervous and endocrine symptoms that as a rule accompany the sagging of the organs? Likewise, how can the pose render firm again the abdominal and pelvic muscles, as well as instill strength and vitality in women after childbirth? Is it possible that the inverted position directly tones up the nervous system as well as the endocrine glands, and, through the latter, improves, even cures, the above diseases? We shall see later in this series of articles that good arguments exist in favor of this theory.

It should be pointed out here that, so far as the gonads are concerned, the inverted position exerts a most beneficial influence. Gonadal insufficiency in both men and women, yogis say, is corrected by the pose; presumably the sexual glands are stimulated by the head-down position. The sexual desire, on the other hand, is regularized or normalized by the same inverted pose; yogis of India often practice the Headstand to keep the sex impulse under control (*brahmacharya*). These two seemingly contrary effects—i.e., stimulation and normalization of the sex function—can be explained in part by the activation of the circulation induced by the inverted pose and the relaxation pose that follows. This reason is clear for the stimulating effect. So far as the normalizing effect is concerned, a luminous explanation is given by the modern Hindu *rishi* (lit. "seer") Sri Yukteswar in his book, *The Holy Science* (pp. 45-46).

Sri Yukteswar says that the sexual desire—"a very accurate thermometer to indicate the condition of one's health"—has two states: a normal state and an abnormal state. The sexual desire, meant for the propagation of the human race, "makes man quite free from all disturbing lusts" when in its normal state. Its abnormal state, Sri Yukteswar points out, "results only from foreign matter accumulated by unnatural living." This foreign matter accumulates in the tissues "according to the law of gravitation." The "pressure" it exerts on the sexual organs "irritates" their nerves and "forces the sexual desire out of its normal state."

It ensues from the premises of the great Hindu sage that the adoption of the inverted position, by changing the direction of the gravitational pull, will temporarily free the sexual organs from the pressure exerted by "foreign matter." Besides, an unusual opportunity will be given the blood stream to sweep away these toxins and poisons. To get rid of them completely one would have to practice, in conjunction with the Headstand, (1) asanas that stimulate the excretory organs—liver and kidneys; and (2) reduce the absorption of toxic food. That is why yogis in their purificatory training practice spinal asanas in connection with the Headstand; and also follow a relatively toxin-free diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and dairy products.

(To be continued)

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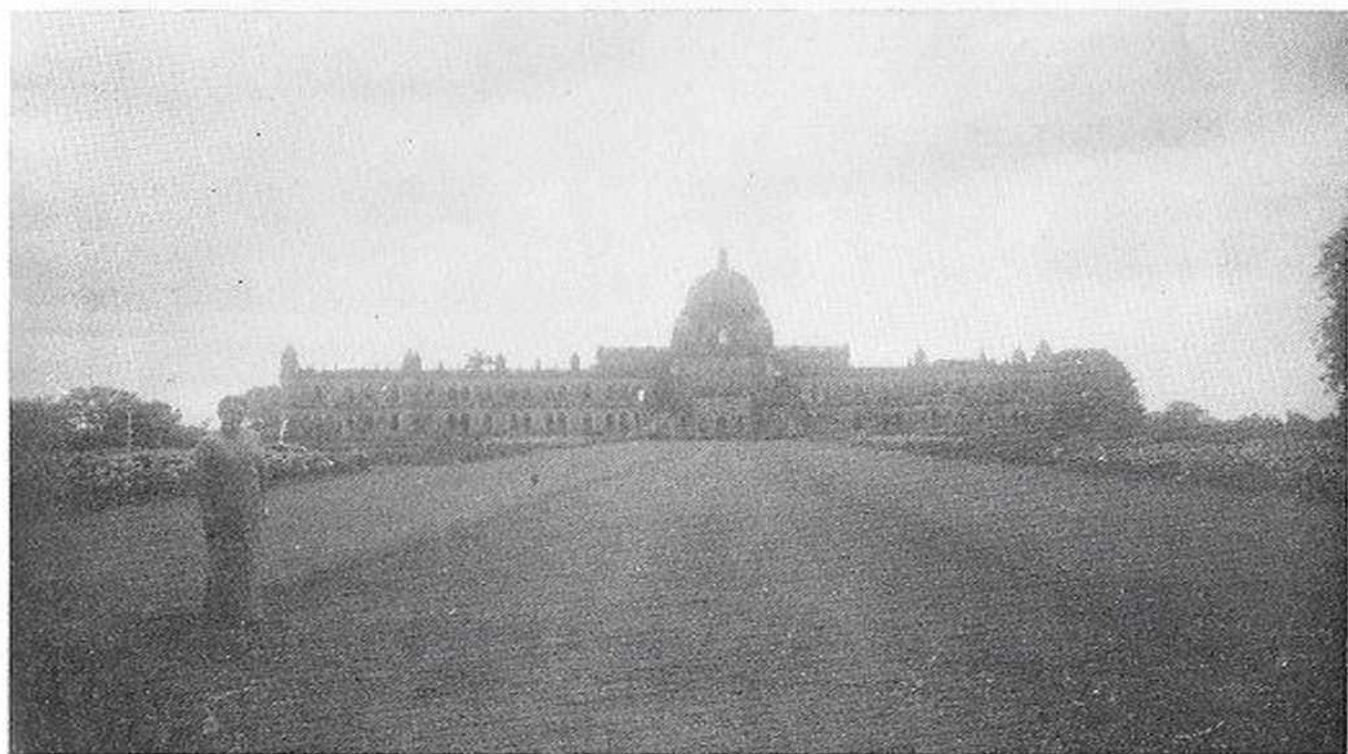
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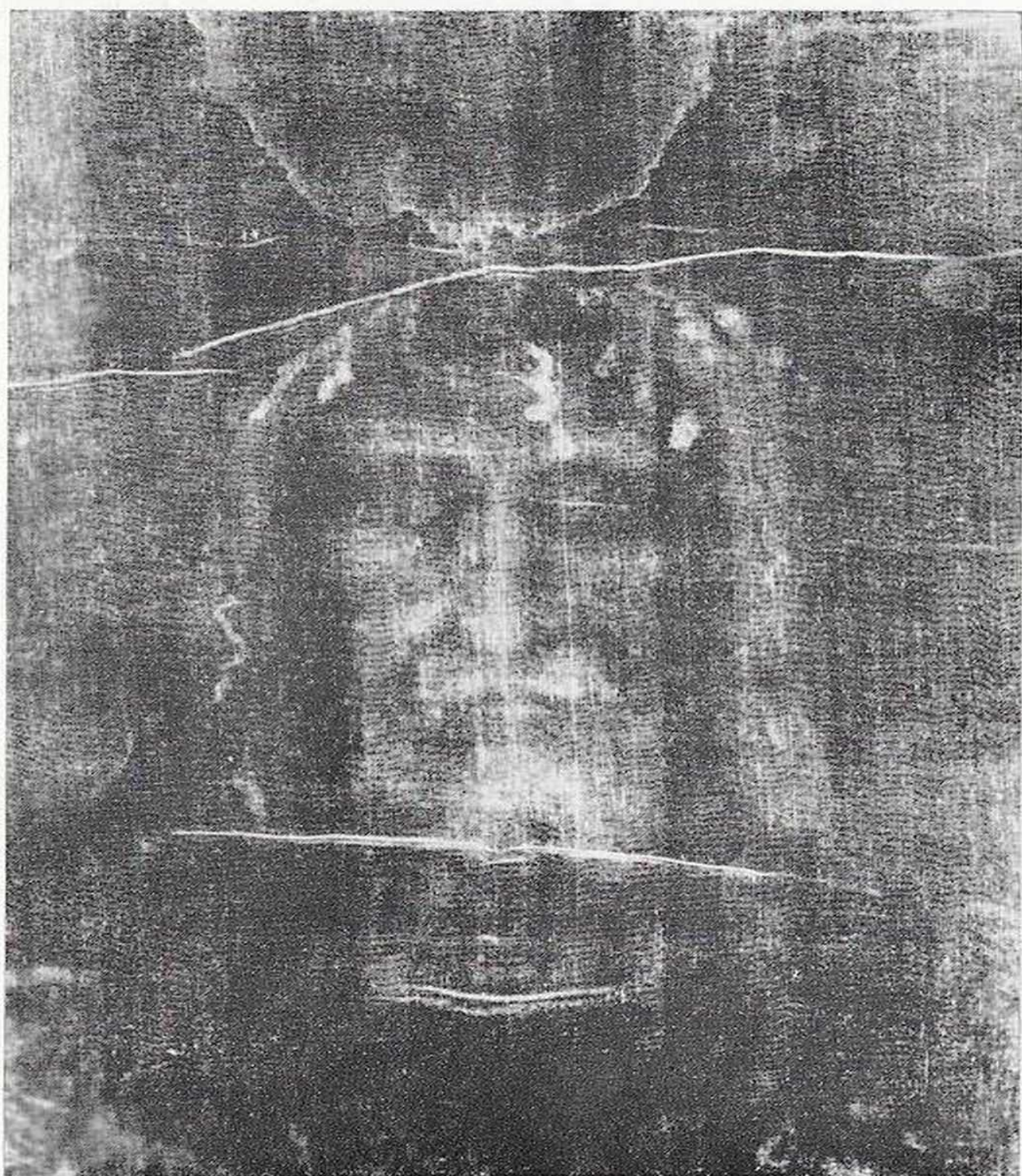
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Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya, head of the ancient Shankaracharya Math in Puri, with Sister Dayamata, May 9th; at Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar, headquarters in India of YSS-SRF.



The Maharaja's palace, Cooch Behar. For several days in May, Sister Dayamata (*left foreground*) and her party were guests of the Maharani, mother of the Maharaja, at the palace in Cooch Behar and the royal chateau in Darjeeling.



#### CHRIST'S FACE ON THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN

A likeness of the face and figure of Lord Jesus is imprinted on the "clean linen cloth" in which his sacred body was wrapped by Joseph of Arimathea (*Matthew 27:59*). Such is the declaration of the Popes of the Catholic Church and of many scientists who have examined the Shroud. The last two public exhibitions of the sacred relic took place in Turin, Italy, in 1898 and 1931. (*See page 50.*)