



Self-Realization

Founded by Paramahansa Yogananda



*Paramahansa Yogananda on ship en route to Alaska
September 1925*



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Self-Realization

Founded in 1925 by Paramahansa Yogananda

A Magazine Devoted to Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul

(Healing the body of disease by proper diet, right living, and recharging the body with God's all-powerful cosmic energy; removing inharmonies and inefficiency from the mind by concentration, constructive thinking, and cheerfulness; and freeing the ever-perfect soul from the bonds of spiritual ignorance by meditation.)

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Paramahansa Yogananda, Founder; The Reverend Mother Daya Mata, President.

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Paramahansa Yogananda

(Front Cover)

Paramahansa Yogananda was born in Gorakhpur, India, on January 5, 1893. His spiritual search was ardent from early childhood, but the goal eluded him until he found his *guru*, Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, who taught him the ancient spiritual science of *Kriya Yoga*. With the *Kriya* key and the guidance of Sri Yukteswarji, he attained the sublime goal of life, God-union.

In 1920 he came to America, at his *guru's* behest and by invitation to represent India at the International Congress of Religious Liberals convened in Boston, Massachusetts. Following his maiden speech on "The Science of Religion," he lectured to capacity audiences in America's largest auditoriums, and personally initiated more than one-hundred thousand persons in the sacred science. Through his tireless efforts, spanning more than thirty years of selfless service to humanity, the world-wide Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogoda Satsanga Society of India) was established; it continues to disseminate the spiritual science of *Kriya Yoga*.

Paramahansa Yogananda not only taught, but showed by the example of his life, how mortal man can achieve immortality: through right action, wisdom, and devotion — love for God. It is with profound gratitude and reverence that Self-Realization Fellowship commemorates his birthday anniversary each year on January 5th, and on March 7th, the anniversary of his *mahasamadhi* (a yogi's final conscious exit from the body) in 1952.

Controlling Your Destiny

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

A talk given on January 1, 1938, at Encinitas, California

With the beginning of the New Year, let us with concentrated resolve and spiritual determination enter into a new era of our lives. Please pray with me: "We are entering a better life, O Father, through the portals of the New Year. May it be a year of greatest communion with Thee, the Giver of all gifts. Be Thou the only King sitting on the throne of all our desires, directing our lives through our intelligence. In the past year desires often led us astray. Bless us that henceforth all our aspirations be in consonance and harmony with Thy will. Bless us that every day be a new awakening in Thy consciousness, physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. We thank Thee, O Father, and the Great Ones who are all blessing us and coaxing us to Thy kingdom. *Aum, Aum, Amen.*"

This is my New Year's wish for you: that you all reach the land beyond your dreams, where there is peace and joy eternal. May you realize the fulfillment of whatever strong good wish you release in the ether.

Let us meditate: Think of the beautiful happenings of the last year. Forget the dark experiences. Sow the good you did in the past on the fresh soil of the New Year, that those vital seeds may grow in an even better way. All past sorrows are gone. All past deficiencies are forgotten. Loved ones who have died are living immortally in God. We are in Eternal Life now. If we realize this we shall never know death. Waves rise and fall in the ocean; when they disappear, they are still one with the ocean. Even so, all things are in the ocean of God's presence. There is nothing to fear. Link every state of the mind with God. It is only when the wave separates itself from the ocean that it feels isolated and lost. Think constantly of your con-

nection with Eternal Life, and you shall know your identity with the Supreme Eternal One. Life and death are but different phases of being. You are a part of the Eternal Life. Awaken and expand your consciousness in God so that your concept of yourself ceases to be limited to the little body. Meditate on this. Realize it. Your consciousness has no circumference. Look ahead millions of miles: there is no end. Look to the left, above, and below: there is no end. Your mind is omnipresent, your consciousness unlimited.

Pray with me: "Heavenly Father, I am no longer bound by the consciousness of the past year. I am free from the cramped consciousness of the body. I am eternal. I am omnipresent in the chasm of eternity above and below me, on the left, on the right, in front, behind, and all around. Thou and I are one.

"We bow to Thee, O God, to Guru, and to the saints of all religions. And we bow to all souls in every nation, for they are made in Thine image. In the New Year we wish peace for all nations of the globe. May they realize their common brotherhood under Thy Fatherhood. Bless them with this understanding, that they forsake fighting and live peacefully with one another to make a heaven of this earth. And bless us all, that we may help to build Thy heaven here by remodeling our lives spiritually, and by example inspiring others to do likewise. We love Thee, our Father, and we love all races as our brothers. We love all creatures, for they reflect Thy life. We bow to Thee, templed in everything.

"Heavenly Father, make us strong in this New Year, ever guided by Thy constant presence, that in body, mind, and soul we may reflect Thy life, health, prosperity, and happiness. As Thy children, may we become perfect even as Thou art perfect. *Aum, Peace, Aum.*"

Each day do some good. Give to a worthy cause, it doesn't matter how much; or help some individual. God is watching to see if you feel for His suffering in others. Make up your mind to be of service to someone every day. You can often help others just by giving them a little understanding. Never gloat over the faults of wayward brothers if you wish to reform them. See God in everyone, as I see Him. Do not ridicule an erring person. God is sleeping in that

soul; you must lovingly awaken Him. Mentally put yourself in the position of others, and then with the utmost kindness you will be able to understand and help them. There is no greater joy. Just as I am always trying to improve myself, I feel for others in their aspirations to be better.

The one thing that will help to eliminate world suffering — more than money, houses, or any other material aid — is to meditate and transmit to others the divine consciousness of God that we feel. A thousand dictators could never destroy what I have within. Every day radiate His consciousness to others. Try to understand God's plan for mankind — to draw all souls back to Himself — and work in harmony with His will.

The greatest blasphemy is to create divisions in God's church. If there were a hundred Gods there could be a hundred different religions, but there is only one God and one truth. It is not dogma and "churchianity" we are to follow, but the spirit of truth and realization that is within every soul.

Our Acts, Past and Present, Forge the Chain of Our Destiny

Picture the New Year as a garden you are responsible for planting. Sow the seeds of good habits in this soil and weed out worries and wrong actions of the past. If you are not a good gardener you will have to come back on earth to try again.

You will never find happiness so long as you are controlled by destiny. By "destiny" I do not mean "fate." There is no such thing as fate. Destiny comprises those forgotten past causes of present effects that you have created in your life. You may say, "I was destined to be greedy." But no, you are not. The first day you started eating you were not a greedy person. You created that habit. The drunkard was not a drunkard the first time he tasted alcohol. When you repeat actions without judgment, you find they begin to usurp your thought and will and make your body obey their dictates. Then you say it is your fate to be a weakling or a failure. That binding chain was forged by you, link by link. You are not destined to be anything except what you have made of yourself. You alone preordained yourself to be good or bad when you repeated in the

past certain beneficial or harmful actions.

Each soul is therefore controlled both by a destiny created by himself and by present freewill-initiated actions. It is good to know how much of your life is controlled by destiny and how much you govern it as you want to. Most mornings when you awaken you make up your mind to do something, but you don't do what you had planned. Modern life is an unbalanced existence. Everyone is racing for something he does not really want when he gets it. Before you create compelling desires, discriminate carefully. If you are driving a horse that is running away with your carriage, your first need is to control the horse.

Analyze your actions and find out whether your life is similarly uncontrolled, pulled toward certain destruction by the wild steeds of your senses. If there is any harmful habit you have not yet tamed, learn now to control it. Slavery to habits such as drinking or sex indulgence will destroy you. Start now to master them. To stumble and fall into wrong ways is only momentary weakness. Do not think yourself wholly lost. The same ground on which you fall can be used as a support to help you get up again, if you learn from your experiences. But to stay fallen is a grievous weakness. Your soul must ultimately be redeemed, and the only real sin is in ceasing to strive toward that goal.

The Hindu scriptures say that each soul is individual and independent. It is not governed by heredity, but rather attracts a certain family and heredity because of some similarity to its own ego or pseudo nature; or because of other attractions created by certain past habits and desires. Your disposition may be either sweet or sour, but God did not make you that way. If He arbitrarily created you as you are, you could not be held responsible for what you do. The prevailing system of law is defective in that it does not penetrate the inner man. The punishment may fit the crime, but unless it fits also the particular karmic pattern of the inner man, the criminal may neither repent his wrongdoing nor desire to mend his ways.

No matter what his present state, man can change for the better through self-control, discipline, and following proper diet and health laws. Why do you think you cannot change? Mental laziness

ness is the secret cause of all weakness. The mentally lazy man is the most hopeless. He does not even want to make an effort to succeed.

Man must change his slothful mental habit and cease to think his present status is predestined. Even the consciousness of being male or female can be completely forgotten. In sleep this consciousness goes: you are a free individual. Every morning God awakens you with the consciousness that you are free, but as your day begins you again put on all the binding habits of worldly consciousness.

Do not live day after day in the same sorry state. If you pray, and believe what you pray, you shall receive God's blessings and help. If you have a bad habit, create a mental antidote and continuously apply it until the poisonous habit is neutralized. Tell yourself resolutely that you are going to be different, that you may be weak now, but you are going to be strong. The minute you *make up your mind* to correct yourself, you will change, you will be different. Suppose you are a greedy man. If you are mentally determined, then as soon as you think self-control, you have self-control. So long as you think you are strong, you can mentally resist temptation. If you anger easily, resolve that you will not become angry today. Even if at first you can control your anger for only a few minutes, you will conquer if you persist.

The Example of Great Men Shows That Our Destiny Is Not Fixed

Try to remember and concentrate on all the beautiful and positive qualities of your life, and do not affirm your deficiencies. The greatest enemy of yourself is yourself. You alone are responsible if you cannot get out of the ruts you have made. You must make a firm determination to do so. No one keeps you tied to destiny but yourself. The example of great men should make you begin to disbelieve that your destiny is fixed. They became great by changing their attitude. You can do the same. Usually those who have achieved great things in life have also had great failures. But they refused to be downed by them. Those who have achieved won many battles, and lost others, but they did not give in to a negative "destiny."

As a young boy I had chronic indigestion. I kept a chest full of medicines for the malady. The first time I talked about it with

my *guru*, Swami Sri Yukteswar, he said, "Why not try divine healing? You don't have to suffer like this." I had been convinced that nothing would work, but when he spoke to me in this way, his conviction impressed my mind. From that day on I was healed.

You sympathize with yourself, believing your weaknesses and difficulties are inescapable. Change that kind of thinking. Reject the consciousness that you are a mortal beggar. Always remember you are a child of God. I know I can will anything I want to, and Nature will obey me.

Be Mentally Dissociated from the Body's Limitations

Begin by controlling your physical habits. They come from the influence of the habits of your family, of your forefathers, and of the whole world. Resist those influences. While trying to rid yourself of a physiological habit or condition, do not give in to it even mentally. Do not let your mind accept any limiting suggestion from the body. Look after the body, but be above it. Know that you are separate from your mortal form. Put up a great mental barrier between your mind and body. Affirm: "I am apart from the body. No heat, cold, or sickness can touch me. I am free." Your limitations will become less and less. But if the body convinces the mind of sickness, then suffering becomes doubled. If you neglect your body and do not strengthen your mind, you may acquire chronic disease. Never let your mind be controlled by your body; this is extremely important. Make up your mind you will not accept any conditions imposed on it by the body. But denial alone is not enough. You must train your mind to be completely apart from body consciousness. This does not mean you should neglect a broken arm, affirming that there is no arm. Give it the proper physical treatment but do not be mentally disturbed by the bodily discomfort. Be dissociated from whatever happens to you. You will find then that no pain can ever again hurt you.

Health and sickness are dreams of the mind. You are Spirit. You are above them both. Though you are temporarily jailed in the body, mentally rise above imprisoning thoughts of health and sickness. In the constant fear of sickness, you are concentrating on it

and attracting it to you. Make your mind impervious to all bodily sensations. I do not even feel the need for sleep when I remind myself that I am Spirit, and that Spirit does not sleep.

Almighty Power Lies in the Mind

The mind is the miracle of all miracles that God has created. No person is truly ignorant, but he may appear so if he is deeply asleep in delusion. We do not see the fine mechanisms of the mind. Almighty power lies therein. We can realize this with the help of a *guru*, one who has acquired this mental strength. If you want to be an acrobat, mix with acrobats. If you want to be strong-minded, mix with those who have strong minds. Stay away from useless company, those persons whose influence paralyzes your will and mind. Silence and seclusion are the secrets of success. In this modern life of activity there is only one way to separate yourself from its ceaseless demands: get away from it once in a while. Only weaklings give in to environment. The kingdom of your destiny, and its creator, is yourself.

Be an angel inside. It is the easiest thing to do. Every time you feel anger, go within and say, "I am the peaceful child of God. I am whatever I make up my mind to be. The stars and angels and all creation must bend to work my will." Try your mental power in small things first, and you will strengthen it for greater endeavors. If you have a strong mind and plant in it a firm resolve, you can change your destiny. I know I was to have died long ago, and the sickness I was to have died of.

The power to attain success lies in the mind. You will realize this truth if you can hold to this conviction against the disbelief of the whole world. Take up some hobby or project that others think you cannot do, and then do it. Start with modest aims, and gradually your mind power will become more developed. The world and your family label you in a certain way; but mentally, constantly, work to change yourself for the better. There is no limit to the power of your mind. Concentrate on that thought. Fill your mind with the resolution to accomplish, and work toward your goals with positive actions. Keep driving the mind toward higher attainments. Ac-

quire spiritual prosperity, and every other kind of prosperity will be your slave. My life is a testimony to that.

Whenever you are sitting still, without any demands on your attention, be away in your mind, using it constructively every moment. Great things are produced first in the mind. I keep mine at work all the time, and put its creative thoughts into action the moment I see an opportunity. Then the results come. Every day you should try to do something creative. Improve your destiny. Take your health, or your moral life, or spiritual life — one thing at a time — and change it as you desire. Whatever I have wanted to accomplish in this life, I have been able to do. Matter has come out of mind, hence the mind has no physiological limitations. Therefore if you can control the mind, the whole world will gravitate toward you. Everything I have ever wanted, I have received. One thing I craved above all else was the ever-new happiness of God. As the result of disbanding all other desires, this also I have attained.

Do not be a helpless failure. Control your destiny by changing your thought. Do whatever you make up your mind to do. To concentrate the mind in this way does not cost you a thing. Inwardly determine to change yourself, and you can change your destiny according to your will.



The Lord created me in His image. I will seek Him first, and make sure of my actual contact with Him; then if it be His will, may all things — wisdom, abundance, health — be added as part of my divine birthright.

I want success without measure, not from earthly sources but from God's all-possessing, all-powerful, all-bountiful hands.

— *Paramahansa Yogananda in "The Law of Success"*

The Three Yoga Paths

BY SRI JAGADGURU BHARATI KRISHNA TIRTHA

Shankaracharya of Gowardhan Math, Puri

His Holiness the Jagadguru was head of Gowardhan Math in Puri, India, from 1925 until his passing in 1960. Gowardhan is one of four maths or monasteries established in the ninth century by Lord Shankara, India's greatest philosopher, and founder of the ancient monastic Swami Order. As the senior Shankaracharya (the title by which the spiritual leader of each math is known), His Holiness was the spiritual leader of most of Hindu India. Unique among his predecessors, His Holiness was the first Shankaracharya to travel to the West, when, in 1958, he was the guest of Self-Realization Fellowship on a tour for world peace. In the United States he spoke in dozens of colleges and cultural centers, from the Naval Academy in Maryland to the California Institute of Technology. The following article is a transcript of a talk given at Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters in Los Angeles.

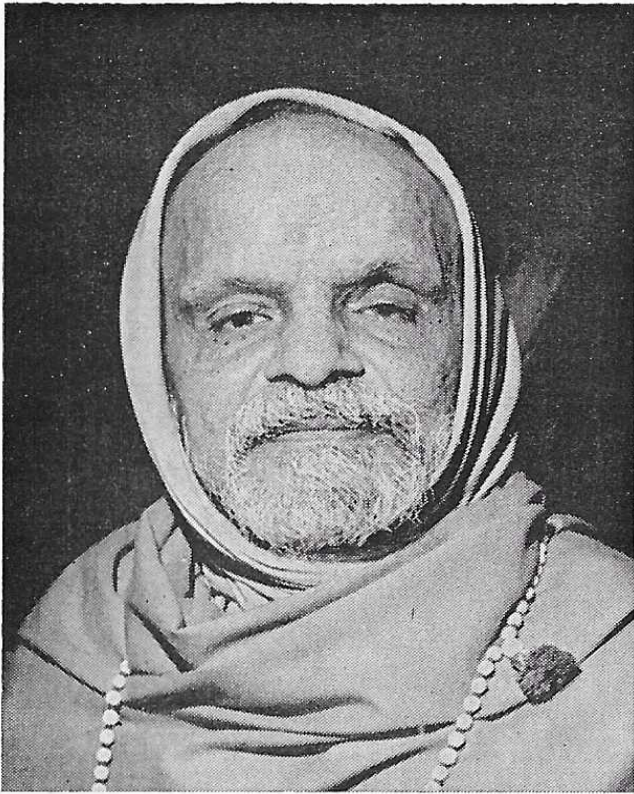
Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga are famous as the three main paths that spiritual aspirants may follow in order to achieve the goal of Self-realization. These three paths are described in the scriptures of all the various religions; in our Vedic and other holy books of Hinduism and in the Bible we find Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga all similarly dealt with. St. Peter and St. James emphasized Karma Yoga, the path of good works for the attainment of the goal of oneness with the Divine. St. John emphasized love, or what we call Bhakti Yoga, with shraddha, faith, and other ingredients of Bhakti Yoga. St. Paul laid utmost stress on wisdom, Jnana Yoga.

There may be two explanations for this difference in the kind of emphasis laid on the three paths by the three evangelists. Their own particular temperament may be held accountable for it. But, much more than that, I feel that it is due to the difference, not in the temperamental predilections of the evangelists themselves, but in the background, the exigencies, the circumstances, and the needs of the audiences to whom they addressed themselves, the disciples to whom they were laying down their instructions.

Whatever the reason may be, there are the three paths. It is also clear that, from the standpoint of Christ himself and of the evangelists themselves, as in our scriptures of Vedic religion, we have no conflict between any of the three paths or between any one of them and the other two. The emphasis is laid on one particular aspect by a particular evangelist, and that is all. But we find that later on, as generations passed by, people took up one particular aspect that was congenial to them, that pleased them intellectually and otherwise, and emphasized not merely that particular line but began talking in terms of the objectionable character of the other paths. They ignored the fact that different mentalities, different temperamental idiosyncracies, in fact the personal equation as one may call it, should be held responsible for these divisions, and that there can be no mechanical rule by which all people can be fitted harmoniously into the same path.

Karma Yoga — The Diverse Path of Right Action

Karma Yoga is the path in which we are told to do the various things enjoined in the scriptures that you might call external actions; the rituals, ceremonials, and outer rules and regulations for people to follow. This is the path of works. We may say at the very outset that the path of *Karma Yoga* is bound to have one great disadvantage for the majority of people, in that it does not prescribe one path for everybody. There are various subdivisions, and sub-subdivisions. We are told that a particular thing should be done, and, when we go into details, one text will say that a certain ritual or ceremonial should be performed by sunrise or before sunrise, and another text will say that it should be done after sunrise. Even if



Jagadguru Shankaracharya Bharati Krishna Tirtha at eighty-two. Photo taken in Oakland, California, 1958.

there were extensive description, it would be difficult for every person to decide for himself the best course in that particular case. It is like a doctor's prescribing medicines, diet, and so on for different patients suffering from different complaints; one rule would not apply, either to medicines or to diet. Each case has to be taken on its own intrinsic merits: this is heart disease, therefore salt-free diet is prescribed; here is a case of diabetes, and sugar-free diet is prescribed. And generally it is not possible for the patient, who does not know the exact diagnosis, to find out what exactly ails him and prescribe a treatment for himself.

It is not a question of absolute prohibition or absolute enforcement. It is a question, very often, of proportion. And when that comes in, the mathematics of it will make it more complicated, and the patient himself will not be able to decide precisely what he should have of diet and medicine. So, in all these cases, an expert is necessary. And even the experts very often fail in their diagnosis. All are not evangelists. Even the evangelists' own immediate disciples of the first generation made mistakes.

Infallibility cannot be claimed by anyone on any kind of scientific question. And the consequences of a wrong step may be serious. Owing to our not being all-knowing, we cannot claim infallibility. All that we can say is, "Such-and-such is my inference." And even in this, you will find in actual experience that, as the English proverb says, "Doctors differ." In fact, they go to the extent of saying, "No two doctors ever agree." Even when experts are on the scene, you cannot expect unanimity in their opinion on a subject.

The second handicap is that even when we know exactly what ails us and what is the proper treatment for that ailment, the things prescribed are not available for us. Very often this happens. If a particular medicine that is the proper cure for a particular disease is not available within a short time, when the critical juncture has been reached, the delay in our obtaining the necessary medicine may result in our death. Twofold trouble is there because, on the one hand we are not all-knowing, and on the other hand we are not all-powerful. All things are not available to us. So with the best of intentions, with the best of knowledge about the physical things needed, we are often unable to do what is required when it is required.

On account of this double handicap, *Karma Yoga*, good works, however splendidly performed, have this inherent defect and cannot be relied upon altogether. And this is why, in the Indian scriptures, we have at the end of every ritual a prayer for forgiveness for whatever deficiency may have occurred in the proper performance of that ritual. The All-knowing One, who knows the hearts of people, and who can always decide rightly, is the *Karma-phaladata*, the Person who gives the fruits of action. He knows that the heart or right intention has not been lacking. And taking the heart into consideration, He will excuse all deficiencies in other things. The heart must be taken into account and one must think and say, "I surrender with all my heart." But with other things, "I am not powerful enough; I am not knowing enough, and therefore all defects arising from these two causes should be pardoned."

The *shraddha* (faith) portion, the *bhaktikanda* (devotion) portion, comes into *Karma Yoga* when we say, "God, the Knower of the feelings, the sentiments, and the desires, should take these facts into consideration and take the intention for the actual action."

Jnana Yoga, the Path of Mental Balance

We now take up the *Jnana Yoga* portion. We are told that continuous study, continuous meditation, logical and psychological thinking, and introspection, should be so mastered that a person

never loses his mental balance. Experiences of the outside world should not get us off balance. We should be able to control our mind and heart in such a manner that whatever may happen, we remain unaffected, unperturbed, unruffled. This means that eternal peace, the final goal, has been achieved already. The scriptures say, "For a person who has attained that stage there is nothing further that need be done." It is not the case of a *sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) asking what he should do. It is the case of a person who has attained the loftiest level possible, and there is nothing further left for him to attain. There is nothing else required of him in order to enable him to reach the goal; he has already reached the goal.

Bhakti Yoga, the Path of Surrender

Bhakti Yoga is the path that is suitable for most persons. *Bhakti Yoga* will help us through to our goal with the least worry on our part. It is like handing over the driving of our car or other vehicle into the hands of an expert. We have a certain goal to reach. And that goal is in our minds. Owing to our weakness, we ourselves cannot consciously analyze properly and describe the goal. We want happiness. We all seek happiness; not partial happiness, fractional happiness, but complete, all-round, perfect happiness. And we do not know where it is to be found, what path will lead to that goal. Under such circumstances, handing over the reins into the hands of a person who well knows how to reach the goal is the first thing to do, and we do it when we make the Lord Himself the charioteer. He alone knows the path to it because it is He Himself. What we are trying to reach is the Divinity within, which we wish to attain and to continually experience.

In the Bhagavad-Gita* we have the relationship of Arjuna and Sri Krishna. Arjuna represents man as such. He is the "*nara*." *Nara* means man, humanity, not excluding any person from the scope of its operation. And Narayana is the Lord. What is the relationship between Arjuna and Sri Krishna, between *nara* and Narayana? We have Sri Krishna, the charioteer, who drives the chariot; the person who is being driven to his goal is Arjuna, that is, *nara*.

*India's greatest scripture; the Hindu Bible.

Universality of Bhakti Yoga

Nara-Arjuna is not asking for himself alone; he is our spokesman, our representative, humanity's delegate. He places before the Lord all the difficulties and sufferings that he has been passing through. His mental troubles, his other worries, are our own; and the questions he asks are the very questions that we ourselves feel impelled to ask from time to time. So, he is there in the position of the person in the chariot who is being driven along to his destination. And the Lord is the driver of the chariot. The Lord, being omniscient, knows our goal and the path to it. We know hazily where we have to go, and we tell the driver to drive there. He knows both the goal and the way thereto and we trust him.

But is it sufficient that the driver knows where we should be taken? Has he the capacity to take us there? Yes. The Lord, being all-powerful, can do that. He is not merely all-knowing; He is all-powerful too. Many people are acquainted with various theories, dogmas, creeds, and so on. In my own teaching days, I would talk to the students about the development of the steam engine: Watt's model, Stephenson's model, and this and that. I taught them a number of theoretical matters with regard to the way steam worked, the boiler and the engine and the safety devices in the shape of rear and front brakes, all sorts of things. I would talk to my students at great length and with much knowledge; but if a railway train had been entrusted to me for driving, it would have been an immediate danger to the persons who traveled in it! The theoretical side is easy enough and cheap enough for anyone to talk about.

With this combination of the two essential qualities, knowledge and ability, in the driver, will our success be assured? The question is asked because, in a great number of cases in the worldly professions, both these qualifications are found, but not found beneficial to us. Take for example a lawyer. Does this man know law? Oh yes, he knows it very well. Can he practice law? Yes, he does it, and he goes on doing it day after day; that is his profession. But if he will not do it for us, if he does not care to do it, what happens? His knowing the law will not benefit us unless he is willing to practice it and actually does it. Or suppose the fees he demands are beyond

our means to pay. Then all his knowledge, all his experience, will not save us at all. So, a third quality is wanted, willingness. This third factor is the most important of all, because without it everything else is wasted.

The Lord Is the Devotee's Devotee

In the Arjuna and Krishna relationship of devotee and God, the person driven along to his destination and the driver, what is the key factor? The Lord is not merely all-knowing and omnipotent, He has not merely the will, the inclination to be of help to the devotee, He Himself is the devotee's Devotee. He cannot go against the wishes of the devotee. That is the essence of the relationship. St. John summarized it: "God is love." He is not merely a loving person, the subject of the predicate; He is of the very nature of love — abounding love, illimitable love, love to all those who have faith in Him, who strive to make use of whatever knowledge they have by surrendering it in His service. Once we surrender, as Arjuna does, and hand over the reins into the hands of the Master, who is all-knowing and all-powerful, and at the same time is the devotee's Devotee, we are absolutely safe.

In today's terms, if you obtain an expert chauffeur who knows where to drive you, who knows how to drive, and who has the will and eagerness to do anything for your speedy attainment of your goal, you should not interfere and try to catch hold of the wheel and drive the car according to your own wishes. That would mean danger to yourself. The driving wheel has to be handed over entirely into the hands of the person having these three qualifications. And here the all-knowing One, the all-powerful One, the loving One, who is Love itself, is the driver. So the relationship between ourselves and the Lord should be like that between Arjuna and Sri Krishna. We hand over everything. That is the meaning of self-surrender — self-surrender not with any egoistic interest but with absolute faith.

Bhakti Yoga Inspires Faith

Take the case of a small child who is seated on a high level of ground. The father, the mother, the elder brothers, all come and

stand in front of him, stretch out their hands, and ask him to jump into their arms. The child does it, does it immediately. He is aware of two things, that the father and the mother and others concerned are his well-wishers on the one hand, and are capable of protecting him on the other. If he has the least doubt on either of these two points, he will hesitate, he will refuse to come down. He may feel that the mother and others are well disposed enough, loving enough; but suppose he is not sure they would be able to sustain his weight? He would fall to the ground and break his legs. He will therefore be afraid to come down.

Suppose he knows that the person who stretches out the arms is powerful enough, strong enough to sustain his weight, but has not the necessary love, and hence may cheat him. Then the boy will think, "When I jump from here, suppose that person withdraws his arms; what will become of me?" In the attitude of the child toward his relatives, he is completely sure in both respects, that there will be no cheating and that they have sufficient power to catch hold of him and to sustain him. He jumps down. Similarly with us, in *Bhakti Yoga* we have the awareness, the certainty, that God is capable of supporting us, that He is all-powerful. And secondly, about His love toward us, we are absolutely certain of it. Hence there is no reason for any kind of anxiety. We jump into His arms.

In this path of *Bhakti Yoga*, once you have come into it, there can be no difficulties at all. The defects I have outlined in regard to *Karma Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* are not applicable in this case. It is like a transmitting station and receiving station for radio messages. Generally, if one of them has gone wrong, there will be no communication. But in *Bhakti Yoga* the transmitting station (God) cannot possibly go wrong. If there is any deficiency, it must be in the receiving station (us). The receiving station ought to correct itself; there is then nothing further to worry about.

"Brahma-Keeta Nyaya" — Constant Reflection on God

We are told of three paths in another manner. These paths are connected with the main paths of *Karma*, *Jnana*, and *Bhakti*. We have to start with what is called *Brahma-keeta nyaya*. It is said that insects and worms which, out of fear, go on contemplating the form

and the buzzing sound of the bee which has caught hold of them become transformed into the shape of the bee or the wasp. Constant reflection, constant meditation on a particular form gives us even that physical form. That is one of the elementary ideas with which *Jnana Yoga* starts. We have the same philosophy explained in the scriptures of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, in fact in all the religions of the world. It is in the path of *Jnana Yoga* (wisdom, constant reflection on God) that there is absolute self-abnegation, absolute self-surrender, absolute sinking of the self, merging of the self into the Godhead. No further action is necessary on the part of the *sadhaka*. Very few persons however, are able to be candidates for that path.

“Markata Nyaya” — Right Action Using Natural Capabilities

Then there is the second path for those who cannot do that, who cannot concentrate absolutely on the Lord. It is called *Markata nyaya*. God has provided already for all contingencies, for all requirements; before the need arises, the needed thing has been created and supplied. That is the law of Nature. That is the law of God. And that is why we speak of God as Providence: One who provides beforehand for all needs.

Here is an example of Providence. After a monkey gives birth to a child, and the mother jumps from one tree to another tree at a considerable distance, what can the child do? It cannot jump soon after birth; but provision for it has already been made by Nature. The child grips the mother in such a way that there is no possibility of its loosening its hold. When the mother monkey jumps from one tree to another, the child monkey is carried along with it. And no effort is needed on the part of the little monkey. Everything is done by the mother until the stage is reached when the child monkey can act for itself. And that is the provision made in advance by Nature, by God, for that kind of animal.

“Marjara Nyaya” — Complete Reliance, Absolute Faith

There is a third kind of path called the *Marjara nyaya*. In the case of the monkeys we have the provision that the child monkey can catch hold of the mother and cling to her. But a kitten does not

have such an ability. We find that in the case of cats the mother does everything. The mother grips the child by her own teeth and carries it from place to place and looks after everything necessary, until the kitten is able to look after itself.

The great majority of people who are aspirants on the spiritual ladder come under the *Markata nyaya* path. *Bhakti Yoga* is the path best suited to them. That is to say, we are like Arjuna with Sri Krishna as the owner of the chariot and the driver of it. We rely on the Lord. We do not have knowledge of our own to move about by ourselves, to discuss things for ourselves, to decide things for ourselves, and to do things for ourselves. We have not that capacity. So we rely on the Lord. Whatever we can do, in accordance with the instructions given to us by the Lord, that we do. With regard to other things, we leave them to Him. He looks after things. He need not be reminded by us of His duty in the matter at all. He knows everything, He does everything, and we leave it to Him. But, where we have the orders, and those orders are such as we can carry out, there can be no pretending that we are in the "kitten" stage or in the "monkey" stage. In the great majority of devotees, as we actually are, with our mind intent on reaching the goal in this way, with absolute faith in God, there is no need for further anxiety in the matter. Like the child standing somewhere above and jumping down into the hands of its father or another loving person, we have only to jump into the grace of the Lord. That is the essence of the doctrine of *Bhakti Yoga*.



The Lord has created all men from the illimitable joy of His being. Though they are painfully cramped by the body, God nevertheless expects that men made in His image shall ultimately rise above all sense identifications and reunite with Him.

— Swami Sri Yukteswar in "*Autobiography of a Yogi*"

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE
BHAGAVAD-GITA

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

BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter XVIII, Stanza 42

Mind-control, sense-control, self-discipline, purity, forgiveness, honesty, wisdom, Self-realization, and faith in a hereafter constitute the duties of Brahmins, springing from their nature.

He who has realized oneness with God, and who possesses all knowledge contained in Him, is a true *Brahmin*. Knowing the Lord as Beginning and End of all beings and worlds, he can behold souls passing into the astral world after their earthly experience. Thus he has knowledge of the hereafter. Such a God-knowing *Brahmin* can at will withdraw his life force from the senses and thus disconnect his mind from body consciousness and dissolve it in God consciousness.

A true *Brahmin* is he who is one with *Brahman*, God, even as Jesus, who declared: "I and my Father are one" (*John 10:30*). Whether born in a high or a low caste, whether Christian, Hindu, or follower of any other religion, he who *knows* God, as did Jesus, is a true *Brahmin*.

A *Brahmin* manifests in his daily life all the divine qualities, such as purity, self-control, forgiveness, and uprightness. The Hindu scriptures say a knower of Brahman is like Brahman. Thus a true *Brahmin* is pure like God, without any taint of delusion in his consciousness. Even as God by austerity* remains above the manifested cosmos, so by self-control the *Brahmin* transcends the perception of the world. As God is the Acme of All Virtue, and forgives, at the time a man is liberated, all the sins he has committed for countless incarnations, so a *Brahmin* is a receptacle of divine virtues, honest conduct, and forgiveness, continuously pardoning those who act inimically toward him.

Jesus advised man to forgive his enemies seventy times seven.† Even though that course often seems impractical, every man should bear in mind that four hundred and ninety times are very few when compared with God's unceasing forgiveness — daily, weekly, monthly, annually — not only of the sins of one lifetime, but of incarnations. Without God's forgiveness no sinful prodigal child could return to his true home in the ever-loving Father.

In the highest sense, God has only one quality; existence, consciousness, and joy are mingled as one in Him. The liberated *Brahmin* manifests this one quality of God — ever-existing, ever-

*The Hindu scriptures say that creation is God's *lila* or sport, a play of His cosmic consciousness, springing from His desireless desire. He is present in His creation, yet He remains apart as the Absolute Spirit beyond creation. In that sense He may be said to be practicing "austerity," or non-attachment, like the perfected yogi who lives in the world, but is untouched by the world. Having mentally renounced desires for the things of this world, he has attained the power to enjoy creation and yet to remain apart from it, absorbed inwardly in the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new joy of Spirit. (*Editor's Note*)

† "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven." — *Matthew 18:21, 22*.

conscious, ever-new Joy — and is therefore free from the clutches of the triple qualities inherent in human characteristics and in Cosmic Nature. But he can descend to the physical state of existence and outwardly manifest principally the aforesaid divine sattwic qualities, or the activating rajasic qualities, or even the sense-oriented tamasic qualities, without being in any way affected by them.

A *Brahmin* may act as a pure or kind individual without being limited to these characteristics. He can also be active like a businessman to help God's plan in the world, without being ensnared by desire for money or power. He might even display a gross tamasic quality such as anger, or over-eating, without being affected by it. Jesus used the whip of anger to drive the money changers from his Father's temple. On another occasion, upon finding no fruit on a fig tree in full leaf, Christ ordered it to be barren, and it was so. Jesus did not do this vengefully, to hurt the tree, but to show the almighty power of God over everything, and that those who are one with Him through the Christ Consciousness are able to utilize God's power even as he did.*

The anger Jesus displayed in the temple and before the fig tree did not affect him; being one with God, he could do no wrong, nor be touched by any consequences, nor caught in the trap of the three qualities.

Wishing to humble the pride of a worldly student who was always boasting that he could perfectly satisfy any guest at his table, an Indian saint, Bhutananda, by his miraculous powers once ate up enough food for a thousand people. Saint Bhutananda had told the disciple, "I will go to your home in response to your invitation, pro-

* "Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

"And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." — *Matthew 21: 19-21*.

vided you can supply all the food I can eat.” The student impudently prepared sufficient for a thousand guests. He felt very foolish when the saint ate it all — a feat that the disciple could not in his wildest dreams have imagined one man could do.

The ordinary person who is still bound by the three *gunas* should not imitate certain fairly inexplicable actions of the liberated, who are above the good, activating, and obstructing qualities and can come down to this plane and operate them without being affected.

Prahlada was a great boy-saint of India. His father, the wicked demon-King Hiranyakasipu, was enraged by the youth’s religious propensities. When he found he was unable to curb Prahlada by severe admonitions, Hiranyakasipu took many steps to destroy his son. On one such occasion, the father ordered Prahlada to be thrown from the back of one of the celestial elephants, but the huge animal gently caught up the boy with his trunk.

After reading this story, two young orthodox Indian boys went deep into a forest to fast and meditate, with the intention of attaining similar spiritual powers. After several days, they decided that their spirituality was proof against all harm. They soon had a chance to test it. They came upon a herd of wild elephants. Seizing the opportunity to display their newly acquired omnipotence, they confidently approached a large bull elephant — surely it would receive them lovingly as its celestial ancestor had treated Prahlada! Instead, the poor beast, fearing that his herd was endangered by the intruders, trampled the hapless boys.

This tale shows that God will not respond to mere beliefs of fanatical people, but only to the divinely empowered demands of liberated devotees, who consciously realize their oneness with Him. Individuals yet bound by the three qualities of Cosmic Nature should not attempt to perform potentially dangerous miracles such as are sometimes displayed by saints no longer confined by the threefold influence of sattwic, rajasic, and tamasic qualities.

Do Avatars Have Karma?

BY SRI DAYA MATA

"Satsanga" means "fellowship with Truth," and is usually an informal gathering of Truth-seekers at which the leader speaks extemporaneously about God, and may answer spiritual questions from those present. Following is a discussion by The Reverend Mother Daya Mata on two such questions during a Satsanga at Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters, August 17, 1965.

Is the suffering of liberated beings the result of bad karma from the past? Does any karma result from their actions in this life?

Karma is the law of cause and effect: what we sow we must reap: good actions bring good results into our lives, bad actions bring negative results and suffering. All mankind is subject to the law of karma, except those rare souls who have attained aboveness by realizing their oneness with God. Souls such as Jesus and Krishna do suffer on earth, but to say that their suffering is the result of their own bad karma is to carry logic to a ridiculous end. Following this line of reasoning we would have to assume that the Lord has very bad karma for having created suffering mankind. And if we are individualized sparks of God, as the scriptures teach, then our suffering is the result of His karma, and He alone is suffering through us. It is illogical to think that the law of karma can be applied to God or to those who by their spiritual development have become one with God and who have thus gone beyond the reach of His laws. The snake carries poison in its fangs, but it never dies from its own venom. The Infinite carries the law of duality, the poison of *maya*, within Himself, but He is unaffected by it. He who

is one with God similarly remains untouched by *maya*. Only those who are subject to that law of duality suffer from its poison. Even great saints may have some vestiges of karma to be worked out. But when a soul has been liberated and then returns to earth he is free of karmic imperatives. No matter what he does, he is in full control of himself and the results of his actions.

A Master Can Be Fiery Without Anger

For example, it would not be correct to say that Gurudeva Paramahansa Yogananda was capable of anger; I never found him angry, but he could be fiery when necessary. If one has mastery of an instrument, he can use it effectively according to its intended purpose. If he has no control over that instrument, he can misuse it. God gave man the power to speak and act with fire. Even Christ showed that; he was fiery when he drove the money-changers from the temple.* He did not meekly approach them and say: "Now this is a naughty thing you are doing, my children, please take your business transactions out of here." He overthrew their tables and set loose the doves that were being sold. Similarly, all masters — those who are master of themselves — can display a seemingly wrathful disposition at times, but they are in full control of it. Any ordinary person who is prone to anger and has no control over it must learn to conquer his emotion or suffer the karmic consequences.

Paramahansaji said that when he was a young boy he once became angry at a bully who used to pick on the smaller boys. He beat that bully in a fight and then vowed he would never get angry again. Even this anger has to be qualified. When a great soul is born in this world, he first expresses through the body and mentality of a child; he has some of the limitations of a child. But hidden within him, as the flower is hidden within the seed, is the essential divinity of his nature; the pattern of greatness is there. So Paramahansaji had a child's anger; but even that was governed by a subconscious wisdom, for it was spurred by a righteous cause.

The fact that Paramahansaji was conscious in his mother's womb shows that he was no ordinary child. He had attained one-

**Matthew 21:12.*

ness with God many incarnations ago. He came in this life as a master. But he was so humble, he didn't say much about himself before the public. He never declared his greatness. That is the way of the truly great. Having perfect humility, they never think of their own greatness. The Divine is also that way. He never speaks of His greatness even to His saints. But we can behold it when we look at nature. See His beautiful form and intelligence therein: strength in the ocean, magnificence in the mountains, omniscience in the laws that govern the universe — in these we find His unspoken greatness.

In the same way real greatness in people is unspoken by them. It is so with all great ones; it was so with Gurudeva.

As Actors Play a Role, Avatars Take on Name and Form

To appear on earth in human form, however, even a master has to take on a certain amount of delusion or the very atoms of his body would not hold together; but that is not karma. The delusion essential for a manifested form is what Jesus alluded to when he had just come out of the tomb after his crucifixion and said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."* When any soul, even a Christ, descends into the world of duality and takes on a human form, he thereby accepts certain limitations. But taking on the compulsions of the law of karma is not one of them. He still remains above and beyond all karma. As an example, there is a story told about Lord Krishna: He was walking with one of his devotees through the fields of a little village in India and saw a sow suckling her piglets. The mother pig was grunting now and then, talking to her babies, and they were squeaking contentedly. Lord Krishna saw in this a beautiful expression of motherly love. He said to his disciple, "I'm going to enter the body of that sow and have that experience for a while." Krishna's form disappeared, losing its identity in the mother pig.

Now most people don't feel very attracted to pigs, but when I was young, we used to visit my grandmother's farm every summer. I thought there was nothing cuter or sweeter than the little pink piglets. They were adorable, and so clean and affectionate. I used to carry them to the lawn in front of the house and play with them

**John 20:17.*

by the hour. So when I first heard this story I could understand and appreciate Krishna's feeling.

Months went by and the disciple began to worry about Lord Krishna and why he had not yet returned. The devotee went back to the field where he had left Krishna. He saw the mother pig, happily surrounded by her piglets. "Krishna, my Lord, what are you doing? You said you were going to come out of that form after a while."

Krishna answered, "Oh! this is such a sweet experience, I don't want to leave."

"My Lord, you are Krishna! You can't remain bound like this! Come out!"

Krishna consented. "You are right. Take a spear and drive it into this form." When the disciple had obeyed, the form of Krishna emerged from the sow's body, unchanged, untrammelled by that experience.

So in the same way Christ and the masters have no karma, nor are they affected more than momentarily and superficially by their assumed limitations. Only when they enter a form do they temporarily limit themselves by that form. God has no form; He is not an old man with a grey beard sitting on a throne someplace in heaven. He is formless, unlimited, unconfined. When He temporarily assumes a form, it is only the form that is limited

So there is no karma for great ones; they come to play a role. Jesus Christ was bound for a time by his form, and with the coming of his crucifixion he knew the role he was destined to play according to the will of the Infinite: to demonstrate the immortality of the soul. So he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"* He had that power. But it would be false to say that Christ did not suffer. Of course he suffered! He was in that form and he experienced real pain when they scourged him and pierced his flesh with the nails, the wreath of thorns, and the spear. He knew what pain was, or he would not have cried: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"† But in the next instant he

**John 2:19.*

†*Matthew 27:46.*

conquered the delusion of that limitation. This gives hope to us all, that we too can conquer if we keep on trying.

Our Real Strength Comes from Self-Surrender

There is a saying that what we cannot cure we must endure. We should acquire a bit more endurance in this world. Let us not be so weak, whining and crying and feeling that life is hopeless. So long as there is life there is hope. We should never, never inwardly give up. Rather, we should mentally throw ourselves at the feet of Him who is our strength, our power, our love, and our joy. Real strength comes from such self-surrender. It is hard to do; if it were easy everyone would do it. But it is very difficult to give up this little self. To learn that lesson is why we are here on this earth.

As with Christ, so with all great souls. After they have completed their role on earth they must again rid themselves of all consciousness of form. At the approach of death, even with the greatest, there is a sudden shock. When the message came to Lahiri Mahasaya from Babaji: "Tell Lahiri that the stored-up power for this life runs low; it is nearly finished,"* Lahiri Mahasaya shuddered. Similarly with Swami Sri Yukteswar when his time came to leave the body. Such is the power of delusion. This momentary fear does not minimize the greatness of divine souls. It shows that even God can be shocked by His own *maya*.

Sooner or Later God Fulfills All Desires

As liberated souls are not bound by karma, neither are they bound by their desires. When Lahiri Mahasaya received *Kriya Yoga* initiation, Babaji created for him a golden palace to satisfy his *chela's* long-forgotten desire from the past. Yet Lahiri Mahasaya was an *avatar*,† and such desires no longer bound him. The Indian sages say that it takes eight million lives to evolve to this human form, and we have already passed countless incarnations in human form. Through all those lives we have had millions, perhaps trillions, of desires, some of them for little things, like apple pie. Now it is said in the Bible: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his

* *Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 345.

† A divine incarnation; a liberated soul that reincarnates on earth.

righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* First find God, and then everything you have ever craved, even the slightest desire, will be ferreted out and satisfied sometime by the Infinite. You give up all other desires for the sake of finding God. This is called renunciation? You give up nothing! You renounce only *the time* when fulfillment is going to come to you. Because so long as there is even the slightest yearning in you for anything, that desire must find fulfillment, whether by being washed away, or neutralized, or satisfied. Renunciation simply means that you say: “O Lord, I want only You! Now You worry about me. This soul, this ‘I’ belongs to You — now it is Your problem. I have no greater desire than for You alone.”

Far back in one of Lahiri Mahasaya’s past lives there must have been a desire for a palace. It was not something that was holding him back from spiritual attainment, for that attainment had already come to him, neutralizing past desires. It is as if you came to me and told me that as a child you always loved ice cream, and, to please you, I arrange to give you ice cream. You do not need it, because you have long since outgrown the yearning for it. I understand that it is not, and never was, a condition of your life without which you simply could not go on.

For instance, after each of Gurudeva’s lectures in Salt Lake City (before I came here to the Mount Washington headquarters) I had the privilege of accompanying his secretaries to his sitting room in the hotel. He would relax and talk informally to us about his classes or other spiritual subjects. And always before I left for home, he ordered ice cream with chocolate sauce. I had once said to him that I loved ice cream with chocolate sauce on it! So throughout the three months he was in Salt Lake City we had ice cream with chocolate sauce every night. About ten years later Gurudeva went back there and I was in his party. We all stayed in the same hotel where he had lectured before. That first evening we gathered in his sitting room, and found he had ordered ice cream with chocolate sauce. He looked at me with a twinkle, as though to say:

(Continued on page 32)

**Matthew 6:33.*

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

Rendered into English by Edward Fitz-Gerald

SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

(Continued from last issue)

II

*Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
"Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry."*

GLOSSARY — (*Dawn's Left Hand*: Dawn of early wisdom, the first yearning to solve the mystery of life. *A Voice*: Intuition of the soul. *Tavern*: Sanctum of inner silence. *Little ones*: Undeveloped thoughts, earliest intuitions of life's purpose. *Fill the Cup*: Fill the consciousness. *Life's Liquor*: Life's vitality. *Its Cup*: The human body. *Be dry*: Vanish.)

Spiritual Interpretation

"I had not yet fully wakened from my material sleep of ignorance, and was but dreaming of the dawn of early wisdom, when I heard the intuitive voice of my soul cry out from the tavern of inner silence: 'O little thoughts of awakening wisdom, rouse yourselves! fill the cup of consciousness with the wine of Divine Joy, ere life's vitality vanish from the bodily cup.' "

Practical Application

When man is dreaming with early inspiration, the inner voice of the soul urges him to wake up his undeveloped thoughts about

the purpose of life and be practical, by filling his consciousness with true happiness — with Divine Joy — before life flies away.

The inner promptings of common sense often shake man in his mental stupor, urging him to rouse his energies and harness them for the realization of life's principal aim. Yet it is human nature that most people go on year after year dreaming wishfully that they might realize true happiness — their life's goal and foremost desire — only to find life ebbing away.

Before that comes to pass, one should take care, through determined effort, to fill the cup of his consciousness with the divinely intoxicating wine of spiritual fulfillment, and drink of that elixir to quench the thirst of life's most important desire. With the chalice of his heart he should drink smiles tapped from the hidden casks of Divine Joy he discovers daily.

(Continued from page 30)

“This is for you.” He knew that fulfillment of that desire was no longer essential; it was just an expression of affection — giving what had once meant so much to me. Similarly, the creation of a palace was Babaji's way of saying to Lahiri Mahasaya, “Since you once long ago had a craving for a palace, I wish to give it to you.” It was in no way a condition that had to be fulfilled before Lahiri Mahasaya could attain liberation. He had already attained that. What would a palace mean to someone in that state of consciousness? In my consciousness it means nothing; how could it mean anything to someone of Lahiri Mahasaya's stature?

Truth is so interesting, so fascinating! One can go on discussing it endlessly. But in the ultimate analysis, the highest truth is to learn to be in love with the One. In that love we find oneness with the Infinite Being. Then there are no more desires, limitations, or queries. That is why Gurudeva taught us that above all else we must be in love with God.

O Wine of Centuries!



I attuned myself to Thee, and now my life is an unbroken inspiration. Thy bliss inundates me in my wakeful state, slumber, dreamless sleep, and deep turiya.

Vision after sublime vision! Oh, what has become of me? Indescribable divine intoxications wave-like overwhelm me.

O Consecrated Wine of Uncounted Centuries, I have found Thee — I have found Thee at last! Give me Eternity to taste all Thy sweetness.

— Paramahansa Yogananda

Self-Realization Fellowship Scheduled

CALIFORNIA: CLASS SERIES

The annual Self-Realization Fellowship Summer Classes in Los Angeles are inspirational as well as instructive, with opportunity to visit the Mother Center and Ashram Centers in Southern California. July 30 — August 5. A detailed schedule of the Summer Classes will be sent to all Self-Realization students in the United States, Canada, and Mexico; to all centers and meditation groups overseas; and to other interested persons upon request.

UNITED STATES: CENTER TOUR

Annually a tour is conducted by Self-Realization Fellowship for the spiritual welfare of centers and meditation groups in the United States. The tour includes classes in Self-Realization yoga teachings, *Kriya Yoga* initiation, and a lecture to which Self-Realization students may also bring interested friends. A detailed schedule will be sent to members in each tour city, and to others on request. The tour will include the following cities: St. Petersburg, Florida, April 16 — 17; Miami, Florida, April 20 — 23; Atlanta, Georgia, April 27 — 30; New Orleans, Louisiana, May 4 — 7; Kansas City, Missouri, May 12 — 14; San Antonio,

Classes and Center Tours for 1972

Texas, May 18 — 21; Dallas, Texas, May 25 — 28; Denver, Colorado, June 1 — 4.

LATIN AMERICA: CENTER TOUR

The biennial tour of centers and meditation groups in Latin America includes classes in Self-Realization yoga teachings, *Kriya Yoga* initiation, and a lecture to which members may bring interested friends. Full information will be sent to members in the respective cities, and to others on request. The cities included in the tour are Medellin, Colombia, February 26; Bogata, Colombia, February 26 — 29; Cali, Colombia, March 1 — 3; Quito, Ecuador, March 4 — 7; Lima, Peru, March 8 — 10; Cochabamba, Bolivia, March 11 — 13; Santiago, Chile, March 15 — 19; Valparaiso, Chile, March 17; Cordoba, Argentina, March 20 — 23; Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 24 — 29; Asuncion, Paraguay, March 30 — April 1; Sao Paulo, Brazil, April 2 — 5; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 6 — 9; Salvador, Brazil, April 10 — 11; Recife, Brazil, April 12 — 13; Caracas, Venezuela, April 14 — 19; San Juan Puerto Rico, April 20 — 23; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, April 24 — 27.



Self-Realization Fellowship Worldwide Prayer Circle

"The Infinite Source is an infinite dynamo, continually pouring strength, happiness, and power into the soul. That is why it is so important to rely as much as you can upon the Infinite Source."

Paramahansa Yogananda

We live in an age of discovery! Scientific miracles, inventions, new adventurous opportunities loom beyond our comprehension. In this era of man's shining ingenuity, we often expect that whatever is not now possible will be achieved one day through technological breakthroughs. But this total dependence on our inventiveness causes us to forget our inescapable and ultimate dependence on God: the Wisdom which generates our thoughts, the great Intelligence which fills and fuels our minds. With the rapid development of the material world around us, the miracles wrought by the soul in prayer often go unnoticed.

Though the human mind is brilliant compared to that in lower forms of life, its light is but a tiny spark compared to the vast radiance of that Intelligence which created life and the laws of nature — laws which man but discovers. Dependence on intellectual comprehension of those laws confines man to a life of limited understanding. Sadly, it often requires a tragedy — death of a loved one, incurable disease or accident, grave material loss — to awaken man to the inadequacies of reason in solving the conundrum of life's greatest problems.

*(Left): Albrecht Durer's original pen and ink drawing, "Praying Hands"
(Courtesy Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria)*

The scriptures of the world's great religions declare that man is more than a physical body, more than a mind. He is the soul! — made in the image of God. No matter how greatly developed the body and mind, they are bound by mortal limitations as fixed as life itself. But the soul is without limitation; its power is infinite, eternal. And developing one's spiritual self extends infinitely the divine qualities of the soul.

Prayer is a vital factor in this unfoldment of the soul. Prayer expresses the deepest desires of the heart and soul to God. It establishes and strengthens a personal relationship with the Creator, one in which man and God walk hand-in-hand. Prayer also is affirmation, the declaration of truth. One who prays sincerely knows it is not possible to pray without believing his prayer will be heard, even as it is not possible to believe in prayer and not be moved to pray deeply. As we depend physiologically on the material elements to the extent that we cannot live without breath, food, or sun-rays, so we should depend spiritually on prayer to the degree that it becomes as natural to pray as it does to live by the life-sustaining power of food, air, and sunshine. Ultimately, our sustenance comes from God. Can we not depend on Him personally as well as on the material elements He has created?

Founding a Prayer Council and Worldwide Prayer Circle

The power of prayer is unlimited. This is more than a mental or emotional conviction. It is based on knowledge and experience down through the ages. Many years ago, Paramahansa Yogananda founded the Prayer Council at Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters to serve all who request prayers for the healing of physical illness, mental inharmony, and spiritual ignorance. The work of the Prayer Council has continued uninterrupted through the years. Requests for prayer are always welcome, and each request receives individual attention, in the utmost confidence. Letters received expressing gratitude for assistance given by the Prayer Council attest to the unlimited power of God and to the efficacious methods of yoga used in directing that divine power to heal body, mind, and spirit.

The operation of spiritual healing laws through prayer does not require dwelling upon the specific problems of those for whom one is praying. What is essential is knowing *how to pray*. It is not enough to pray without concentration and devotion (love for God); one must know how to pray effectively. This is why the disciples of Jesus said: "Teach us to pray" (*Luke 11:1*).

Paramahansa Yogananda taught that first one should meditate (concentrate with devotion on the indwelling presence of God) before praying. Use of the simple, effective meditation techniques taught in the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* is an invaluable aid. Through meditation one contacts the Source from which all blessings flow. If the individual meditates deeply, thus becoming absorbed in communion with God, he knows, or *realizes*, that God "hears" his prayers. But whether or not one is able to meditate deeply, even a little practice powers the "mental microphone" above the noisy distractions of restlessness so that one's prayer may be "broadcast" effectively. The science of communing with God must be learned and properly applied. Then He responds unfailingly, and the devotee receives the wisdom of His reply.

Prayer Services

Prayer services for healing of physical, mental, and spiritual afflictions are conducted in Self-Realization Fellowship temples, and in centers and meditation groups throughout the world. The services are open to all who wish to participate. Those who are unable to attend prayer services are invited to join the worldwide prayer circle by regularly conducting prayer services in their homes.*

This worldwide circle of prayer was conceived by Paramahansa Yogananda to assist the Prayer Council at Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters in serving all who request prayers and in daily prayer for world peace. Participants in the worldwide prayer circle aid in furthering peace and harmony among nations and in the lives of men.

*Information about the Prayer Service is available from Self-Realization Fellowship upon request.

The science of meditation and continual prayer to God must become integral to every individual seeking a happy, balanced life and Self-realization. The transcendental power of prayer is unlimited. Through prayer, man attains peace and joy and divine fulfillment. All that one fails to achieve by external efforts can be realized through the unlimited, eternal power of the soul in prayer.

There is a power which will light your way, which will bring you health, happiness, peace, and success, if you will but turn toward the light. Realize that all power to think, to speak, and to act comes from God, and that He is with you now, guiding and inspiring you. As soon as you truly realize this, a flash of illumination will enter, and fear will leave you. Sometimes the power of God comes like an ocean and surges through your being in great boundless waves, sweeping away all obstacles.

Do not beg at the door of matter; do not beg from the limited source of the conscious or the subconscious mind. Go deeper within, and you will find Him in all His glory. Once you are in touch with that Power, all the divine forces of nature will wait on you.

Paramahansa Yogananda

That I want Thee, only Thee — let my heart repeat without end. All desires that distract me, day and night, are false and empty to the core.

As the night keeps hidden in its gloom the petition for light, even thus in the depth of my unconsciousness rings the cry — I want Thee, only Thee.

As the storm still seeks its end in peace when it strikes against peace with all its might, even thus my rebellion strikes against Thy love and still its cry is — I want Thee, only Thee. — *Rabindranath Tagore.*

The Blessings of a Deathless Guru

BY ALEXANDER LIPSKI, PH.D.

It is not by chance that the historian Franklin Le Van Baumer in his book, *Main Currents of Western Thought*, refers to our age as "The Age of Anxiety."* He argues that in the twentieth century man feels insecure since he has no acceptable value system to guide him, and he views himself at the mercy of forces over which he has no control. Undoubtedly an old order is breaking down. Under attack from skeptical social scientists and in the face of rapid technological change, existing moral standards are giving way. In the middle of the nineteenth century it appeared as though science rather than religion could solve all problems. Now, however, although scientific advance continues, many people realize that science cannot furnish answers to ultimate questions. Moreover, while our ability to produce gadgets has increased, we have become aware of the fact that material goods cannot give us true satisfaction. We seem to have more and more means and less and less meaning. The distinguished Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung rightly diagnosed the illness of the present age as alienation from God. And he added: "It is easy enough to drive the spirit out of the door, but when we have done so the salt of life grows flat — it loses its savour."†

Conventional religion has been thus far unable to cure the disease of alienation from God. Consequently those of us who have been frustrated by the seeming senselessness of life have had nowhere to go for answers to our quest for meaningfulness. Whether we were consciously aware of it or not, we were yearning for someone who could restore purposefulness to our existence.

It required a God-intoxicated yogi like Paramahansa Yogananda and his liberating message of Self-realization to cure us of

*Franklin Le Van Baumer, *Main Currents of Western Thought* (New York, 1964), p. 587.

†C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York, 1939), p. 142.

our alienation from God and to provide us with a worthwhile goal in life. Paramahansaji accomplished this by revolutionizing our concept of religion, of God, and of ourselves, and by placing at our disposal means of testing the truths of his teachings. So far religion had meant for most of us the adherence to a particular dogma and church organization, and the setting aside of one hour on Sundays for remembrance of a God about whom we had only the vaguest notion. Paramahansaji defined religion as the search for a "permanent removal of pain and the realization of Bliss or God."* By equating God with "Ever-new Joy" he awakened our desire to seek God. At the same time he taught that the bliss we are seeking is right within us; it is our very nature. Just as God includes within Himself attributes such as omniscience, omnipresence, and infinitude, so our true Self, a reflection of God, partakes also of these attributes. It is through the great yogic techniques, *Kriya Yoga* above all, that Paramahansaji has enabled us to taste Divine Bliss and to find out that it is incomparably superior to the pleasures derived from sense experience. Contacting Joy first in deep yogic meditation, we gradually learn to experience the divine presence in all activities. Paramahansaji also encouraged us to seek God not only as impersonal Bliss but also in personal form, as God the Father, Mother, Beloved Friend, to whom we can talk and who is "nearer than the nearest, dearer than the dearest."† Thus we can give assent to Paramahansaji's admonition: "Everything else can wait, but our search for God cannot wait."‡ We have found a meaningful goal for our lives.

Paramahansaji has blessed us not only by giving us a worthy goal and the means to attain it; he has also brought to us the essence of India's spiritual heritage. Indian wisdom had been known to men such as Emerson and Thoreau in the early nineteenth century. Paramahansaji, however, was the first to interpret Indian teachings in terms intelligible to modern Western man. His inter-

*Paramahansa Yogananda, *The Science of Religion* (Los Angeles, 1957), p. 14.

†Paramahansa Yogananda, *How You Can Talk With God* (Los Angeles, 1959), p. 22.

‡Paramahansa Yogananda, *Sayings of Yogananda* (Los Angeles, 1968), p. 22.

pretation of the Bhagavad-Gita, for instance, brings out the fact that the battle of Kurukshetra is symbolic of our inner battle. Daily on the battleground of our bodies and minds our higher and lower tendencies are engaged in combat. It is our duty to fight courageously our enemies, such as selfishness, sloth, greed, lust, and anger. Furthermore, Paramahansaji emphasizes that the Gita urges aspiring yogis to balance meditation with activity. We should serve enthusiastically our family, community, nation, and world, without regard for reward. Naturally our most important duty is to love and serve God, the Source of our being.

Love of God is also the foremost commandment enjoined by the New Testament. In general, Paramahansaji shows the basic agreement of the Bhagavad-Gita and the New Testament. Until Paramahansaji's interpretation of the New Testament, many of us had believed it had no relevance for modern man. Interpretations by erudite scholars relying entirely on their intellect had contributed further to cloud the underlying truths of the New Testament. Paramahansaji enabled us for the first time to understand passages such as "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."* He pointed out that by focusing on the point between the eyebrows (the Christ Consciousness center or "third eye") we can actually see the light spoken of in the preceding Bible passage. He explained that St. Paul was referring to a yogic technique of withdrawing life force from the senses and uniting it with Christ Consciousness (God's intelligence, life, and joy reflected in the manifest universe) when he declared: "I protest by our† rejoicing which I have in Christ, I die daily."‡ He made us realize that the second coming of Christ did not refer to the return of Jesus in his physical body but to the awakening of Christ Consciousness, attainable by anyone who sincerely and correctly practices *Kriya Yoga*. Incidentally, we owe it to Paramahansaji, a Hindu yogi, that we have learned to celebrate a truly spiri-

**Matthew 6:22.*

†*Our* (rather than "your") rejoicing is the correct translation; St. Paul was referring to the universality of the Christ Consciousness. (*Editor's Note*)

‡*I Corinthians 15:31.*

tual Christmas by communing with the universal Christ in deep meditation during the annual all-day Christmas meditations held in Self-Realization Fellowship temples and centers around the world.

Practicing yoga and following Paramahansaji's teachings, we begin to see a profound change in our lives. No longer do we crave to fill the inner void with shallow amusements or sense excitements. Drawing upon our inner spiritual resources, we are able to face even-mindedly the inevitable ups and downs of life and to accept the apparent imperfections of the world. We learn to see so-called negative experiences as tests from God meant to aid us in our growth. Instead of vainly attempting to restructure the universe we remind ourselves of Paramahansaji's oft-repeated advice: "Reform yourself and you will reform thousands." For self-improvement is the only feasible answer to society's problems. And self-improvement is made possible once we learn rightly to use our unlimited willpower. "A saint is a sinner who never gave up."* What a liberating truth! We are not victims of our environment or at the mercy of our habits, but truly the captains of our souls. Thus Paramahansaji holds before us the shining goal of Self-realization or emancipation, a freedom that no political or social system can give or withhold from us: freedom from habits, from sense enslavement. Becoming masters of ourselves, we can contribute to the building of a peaceful society, sharing with one another the inner peace obtained through meditation.

The crux of Paramahansaji's teachings, however, is the *guru*-† disciple relationship. While the early Christians were aware of the need of a spiritual guide, we modern men have known only about intellectual teachers conveying arid book learning. Paramahansaji made us aware of the fact that one needs to attune oneself to a God-realized master to attain God-realization. By pledging mutually unconditional love, *guru* and disciple enter an indissoluble rela-

*Paramahansa Yogananda, *Sayings of Yogananda* (Los Angeles, 1968), p. 4.

†Spiritual teacher, "dispeller of darkness"; from Sanskrit *gu*, darkness; *ru*, that which dispels. (See *Guru Gita*, 17-19.)

tionship. The disciple is assured of the *guru's* guidance at all times, regardless of whether he is in incarnation or in the beyond. Since Paramahansaji left his body in 1952, a sufficient time has elapsed to test the accuracy of his promise: "To those who think me near I will be near."* It is the experience of his many disciples all over the world, including those of us who have never met the *guru* in the flesh, that he continues to guide us in a most tangible way: he kindles our desire for God communion; he warns us when we go astray; he reduces our karmic burden; and he sustains us in times of trial. Rightly the fifteenth century Indian mystic Kabir stated: "The *guru* is great beyond words, and great is the good fortune of the disciple."†

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE from Self-Realization Fellowship

In this age of growing interest in the ancient science of Yoga and the wisdom of the East, there is an evident need for discrimination in choosing a proper source for Yoga instruction. The authenticity of a teacher or school is of prime importance in every field of endeavor — and so it is with Yoga.

Self-Realization Fellowship was founded in India in 1917 and in America in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda. He was the last in a line of four great Hindu masters (Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda). In 1861 Mahavatar Babaji revived and sent forth the liberating technique of *Kriya Yoga* as a divine dispensation to the world. He chose Paramahansa Yogananda to spread the sacred knowledge.

Through Self-Realization Fellowship, the institution founded by Paramahansaji for the dissemination of his message; through his books and lessons, through official representatives and teachers, and

*Paramahansa Yogananda, *Sayings of Yogananda* (Los Angeles, 1968), p. 112.

†Rabindranath Tagore, tr. *Songs of Kabir*.

especially through the spiritual attunement of students who practice these truths, Paramahansa Yogananda continues to guide and inspire all who sincerely follow this path.

Only those trained disciples who have dedicated their lives to service within Self-Realization Fellowship were designated by Paramahansaji to train others to carry out his mission of disseminating the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings in all lands. If you want to be sure that you are receiving printed material emanating from or authorized by Self-Realization Fellowship, please look for the name and Los Angeles address of Self-Realization Fellowship as author, notice of SRF copyright, and the SRF lotus symbol, which usually appear on any official announcement literature pertaining to the lessons, classes, and retreats sponsored by Self-Realization Fellowship.

Only those persons so appointed may be regarded as authorized Self-Realization Fellowship lecturers, teachers, or center or meditation group leaders. If you wish to verify affiliation of any individual or group, please write to international headquarters for information. Thus you can assure yourself that you are receiving the true teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda and not an interpretation.

Many imitators are borrowing the name of this beloved world *guru* to gain recognition for themselves; there are some who use the sacred teachings he gave to further their own interests. Self-Realization Fellowship bears no responsibility for spiritual instruction given from any source other than international headquarters or a representative accredited by the headquarters.

There is a spiritual blessing implicit in the practice of precepts given by a true *guru* or his chosen channels. Those who obtain instruction through other means miss this subtle but important aspect of the revelation of divine truths. According to spiritual law one may have many teachers, but only one *guru*.

AUTHORIZED MINISTERS OF SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Ordained Ministers of Confirmed Active Status

In addition to the members of the Board of Directors, the following ministers are authorized during 1972 to conduct christenings, wedding ceremonies, and funeral services; to serve as meditation counselors; and to conduct public classes and worship services:

Bro. Abhedananda
Bro. Achalananda
Bro. Anandamoy
Bro. Bhaktananda
Bro. Bhavananda
Bro. Bimalananda
Bro. Dharmananda
Bro. Jivananda
Bro. Mokshananda
Mukti Mata
Bro. Premamoy
Bro. Sadananda
Bro. Sarvananda
Bro. Turiyananda
Yogacharya Oliver Black

Ministers Authorized to Give Kriya Yoga Initiation

The president of Self-Realization Fellowship Church, as the channel of our Guru-Founder, Paramahansa Yogananda, is the only person authorized to give *Kriya Yoga* initiation. By virtue of the spiritual authority vested in her, the president may designate other ministers to conduct the initiation ceremony. The following may be so designated during 1972:

Mrinalini Mata
Bro. Anandamoy
Bro. Bhaktananda
Bro. Mokshananda
Bro. Premamoy
Yogacharya Oliver Black

Students of *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons* are eligible to receive *Kriya Yoga* initiation upon satisfactory completion of the first two steps; eligible students are notified by the Mother Center. Time and place of *Kriya Yoga* initiations are announced in the "Calendar of Events," mailed each year to students.

“The First and Great Commandment”

In his early life Abraham Lincoln was a free thinker and somewhat skeptical of organized religion. His independent attitude was contrary to the trend of the times, and he once complained that church influence was used against him in politics. Later in life, during his herculean task as President of a divided land, he developed deep feeling for God as he drew great spiritual strength and understanding from the scriptures and from within. He once said, “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day.” Though his faith was profound, he still withheld from joining a church. He explained: “When any church will inscribe over its altar the Saviour’s condensed statement of law and gospel: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself,’* that church will I join with all my heart.”

Although he was an ardent admirer of Lincoln, it is doubtful that Paramahansa Yogananda was aware that the Great Emancipator had made the foregoing statement. Yet they shared the same ideal, as evidenced by the inscription of the first commandment on a wall in the chapel at Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters; and on the opposite wall, this corollary truth from the Bhagavad-Gita, the Hindu Bible: “He who seeth Me everywhere, and seeth everything in Me, of him will I never lose hold, and he shall never lose hold of Me.”†

**Matthew 22: 37, 39.*

†*Bhagavad-Gita VI: 30.*

Fasting Proves Beneficial for Physical and Mental Health

Fasting, as a treatment for disorders of the bodily functions, has not been widely practiced in modern times owing to the attention given to other methods of cure, chiefly allopathic. But Nature advocates fasting, for we see that all animals instinctively avoid food when they are ill.

Fasting permits the bodily organs to rest from their customary burden of digesting food. At the same time, because the bodily energy is no longer needed in the process of digestion, it is used by the body to heal its organs or other affected parts. This explains why the body is able to heal itself during the condition of rest known as fasting.

Many years ago, Paramahansa Yogananda stated: "Most diseases can be cured by judicious fasting under the guidance of a specialist."* The following scientific investigations give experimental evidence of the potency of fasting:

In Armenia, Dr. Grant Sarkisyan has successfully treated patients for a variety of disorders, including bronchial asthma, skin diseases, the initial stage of arteriosclerosis, hypertension, stenocardia, and digestive tract diseases. The fasting period may last 20 days or longer, followed by an equal period of controlled dieting. The selective diet is to be followed after discharge from the hospital, the preference being for vegetable and fruit dishes, which Dr. Sarkisyan feels are important for longevity.

* Short fasts of one day a week or three consecutive days a month will be found conducive to maintaining bodily health. Longer fasts are not advocated except under medical supervision.

In the Soviet Union, Dr. Uri Nickolayev has practiced fasting therapy during the past 23 years. He states that 64% of his patients have been helped. Their illness is mental: schizophrenia. The fasting period lasts from 20 to 30 days. The patient loses from 15 to 16% in weight, but skin color and muscle tone improve; mental outlook improves remarkably. After release, patients observe a restricted diet or risk a relapse. They are advised to fast from 3 to 5 days each month, breaking the fast when their appetite returns, the tongue becomes clean, and their symptoms disappear.

In the United States, fasting experiments have been conducted in the treatment of obesity. The specific advantage of fasting over a low calorie diet, and hence the reason for conducting these fasting experiments, lies in the fact that the patient's hunger disappears during the fast.

At George Air Force Base, Victorville, California, 25 patients underwent fasting treatment for up to 84 days. Of the 25 patients, 16 completed the weight reduction program, with weight losses of 40 to 100 pounds. The psychological state of the patients during the fast was quite good, and most of the patients maintained the weight reduction during the follow-up period of 2 months to 1½ years. Dr. Robert M. Karns, who conducted the experiment, also reported that a 48-year-old diabetic patient, who was receiving 25 units of insulin daily before the fast, was able to discontinue the insulin treatment after the fast. A 60-year-old patient reported improvement of an arthritic and heart condition.

Weight reduction experiments conducted by Dr. Garfield G. Duncan with 40 overweight patients fasting for periods of 4 to 14 days have proved effective for permanent weight reduction, and patients had a feeling of well-being during the treatment.

In experiments with mice, which are often the testing ground for treatment of man's disorders, it was demonstrated that the life-span could be increased by 50%. The treatment? Fasting. The mice were fed for two days and starved for one day alternately.

Self-Realization News

Spiritual Celebration of Christmas

Each year, Self-Realizationists around the world precede the social celebration of Christmas with a spiritual celebration: an entire day devoted to meditation on the omnipresent Christ. In Self-Realization Fellowship temples, the all-day meditation on December 18th began at 10:00 A.M. and lasted until 6:00 P.M. — eight hours of chanting, practice of Self-Realization techniques of meditation such as *Kriya Yoga*, and deep devotion to Christ. The blessings of this intensive effort each Christmastide carry over into the New Year, propelling each devotee's hopes and aspirations toward the highest fulfillment of his soul.

Paramahansa Yogananda started this custom more than fifty years ago, in 1925. He saw that the world was paying homage to Christ in its way, yet the blessings of Christ Consciousness, vibrating strongly in the ether at Christmastime, went largely unsought. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few" (*Matthew 9:37*). Paramahansaji said:

"Christ must be worshiped in truth — first in spirit, by meditation; and second in form, by perceiving his presence even in the material world. You must meditate on the real meaning of the coming of Christ, and feel his consciousness drawn within you by the magnet of your devotion. That is the real purpose of Christmas. When you can close your eyes and by meditation expand your awareness until you feel the whole universe as your own body, Christ will have been born within you."

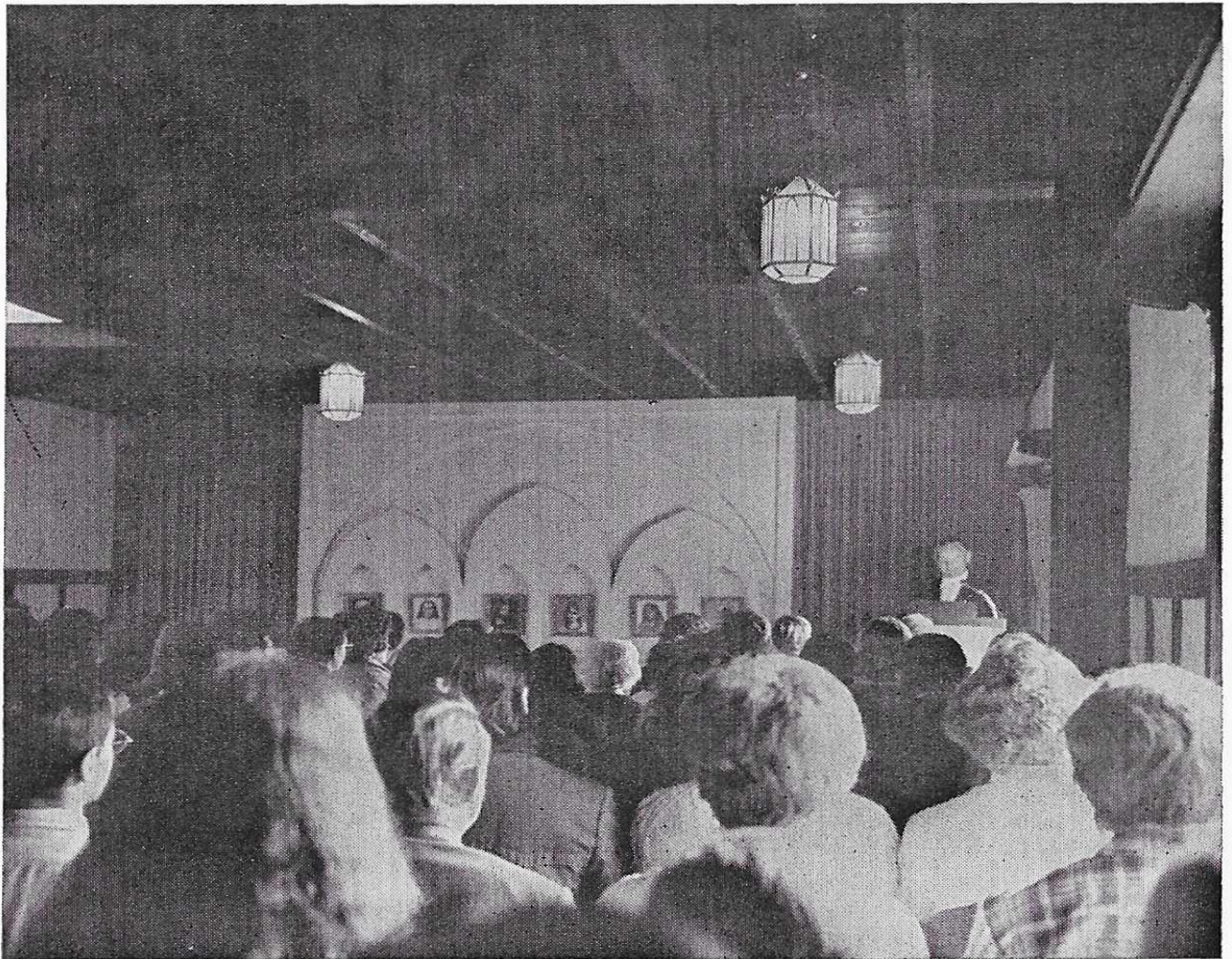
One-Day Spiritual Retreats

Spiritual retreats for one day are conducted by Self-Realization Fellowship at the Lake Shrine Temple in Pacific Palisades, Cali-

ifornia. The retreats feature classes in the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings and the meditation techniques for realizing God taught by Paramahansa Yogananda. Participants meditate together and are encouraged to maintain silence throughout the day and to “practice the presence of God” during free time as they stroll on the beautiful grounds.

“How refreshing,” said one participant, “to step out of a busy schedule — if even for a short time — to be with God.” The attendance has been so high that the number of retreats scheduled for 1972 has already been substantially increased.

Bro. Dharmananda conducts class during a one-day retreat, Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades, California, on January 8, 1972.



Letters to Self-Realization Fellowship

"My life has been uplifted and my outlook changed since joining Self-Realization Fellowship a few years ago. Had I not been associated with you, I do not know how I could have faced the recent sorrow that came into our home. Yet one of the first things I thought of when Mother became ill was the Prayer Council. I shall always be grateful for the blessing of spiritual healing their contact with God has made possible. I haven't words to express my gratitude! Every time I've called the Prayer Council to pray for a friend or loved one, the individual concerned has shown an amazing improvement shortly afterward." — *N.T., Wrightsville, Georgia.*

"When Papa came out of his coma the doctors were amazed, for one does not usually regain consciousness from hepatic coma. It was a miracle of faith and prayer. Following this, the doctors said that even with no further complications Papa would not live for more than a year. A month ago he flew to the Mayo clinic in Rochester, and when he returned to Mexico City he was in high spirits. The doctors had found that, incredibly, his liver was regenerating to the extent that further hemorrhaging was unlikely. They agreed that improvement was such that he could expect to live for many years. And Papa himself has changed considerably. He is more considerate, sweeter, understanding, and humorous than he has been for ten years." — *J.B., Mexico City, Mexico.*

"After I asked the Prayer Council to help my grandmother, it was like a miracle. She recovered so quickly! I am very grateful to you." — *N.S., Sao Paulo, Brazil.*

"I was becoming a dissatisfied, nervous, humorless grouch. Finally, with everything in our family about to crash, I took stock of myself. I thought, 'If you really love God, act like it! Stop trying to carry this load by yourself.' So I got busy righting my attitude, and almost at once the worry, nervous tension, and self-recrimination were gone! I understand now that if we stop nurturing our troubles, stop thinking they are the most important part of our lives, they will melt away. Now

my husband has a new job with excellent pay and promise of promotion. He is happy again, and I have been patient and calm with my children — a relationship which eluded me before. The love of God came like a knight in armor to save the day. I thank the Prayer Council.” — *S.V., Mt. View, California.*

“My health is greatly improving, and I am steadily gaining weight. One evening I read again in *Autobiography of a Yogi* the account of Sri Yukteswar’s miraculous increase of weight in a single day; and I thought suddenly, ‘Surely if I believe strongly enough, this could happen to me also.’ What happened amazes me even now. The next morning I was actually twice as plump. My eyes were bright and sparkling, my hair had acquired a richer glossier sheen, my cheeks were flushed with new health. My financial difficulties are now at an end, too, for I have found something to do right at home which will soon bring a good income. I can never, never thank you for your kindness and sincere prayers.” — *L.M., Jaimica, West Indies.*

“Three days after receiving your answer to my prayer request, a neighbor said, ‘You’re losing weight.’ I hadn’t given it much thought because I didn’t know it was possible to lose weight so quickly. If you have ever been overweight you can realize how happy I was. And without my mentioning to you another affliction, I received healing help. My right hand had been drawn up by muscular dystrophy, and I had use of only the thumb and forefinger. My wrist had been as hard as stone and immovable for years. Recently I felt life flowing into the little finger of my hand, and then I discovered the wrist was more flexible. Now the wrist has loosened, and I can move my hand. I am very grateful for your kindness and help.” — *L.M., Santa Cruz, California.*

“I was extremely weak when I wrote you for prayers. How you have helped me! I actually felt strength pouring into me when I read in your letter that you had already begun praying for me. I also thank you for the beautiful poem written by Yogananda — *God! God! God!* Whenever I read it, I feel a divine blessing.” — *D.M., Montreal, Canada.*

The true measure of loving God is to love Him without measure.

— *St. Bernard*

BOOKS BY YOGANANDA FOR THE BLIND



The following books by Paramahansa Yogananda are available for home reading by blind persons in the U.S.A. from the Braille Institute of America, Inc., 741 North Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90029:

Autobiography of a Yogi

Sayings of Yogananda

The Science of Religion

Metaphysical Meditations

Scientific Healing Affirmations

How You Can Talk With God

The Law of Success

A Braille copy of the *Autobiography*, and also a voice reading of it (on eight tapes), may be borrowed by blind persons in the U.S.A. from the Theosophical Book Association for the Blind, Inc., Route 2, Box 5-A (Krotona), Ojai, California 93023.

Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography* and his *Whispers from Eternity* are available in Braille from the New York Public Library, 20 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Blind persons who wish to borrow any of the books listed with the foregoing libraries should make their request direct to the appropriate institution listed above.

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Founded in America by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1920

YOGODA SATSANGA SOCIETY OF INDIA

Founded in India by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1917

The Reverend Mother Daya Mata, *President*

Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogoda Satsanga Society of India) International Headquarters

LOS ANGELES, California, U.S.A.: The Mother Center, 3880 San Rafael Avenue (Zip code 90065). Telephone (213) 225-2471. Visitors welcome, Saturday and Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., weekdays by appointment.

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SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP RETREAT: Guest accommodations. For reservations write c/o P.O. Box 758 (Zip code 92024), or telephone (714) 753-1811.

MEDITATION COUNSELORS: Brother Mokshananda, Mukti Mata, Brother Premamoy.

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SERVICES: Sunday meditation 10:00 a.m., lecture 11:00 a.m., children's service 11:00 a.m., meditation 8:00 p.m.; Thursday lecture 8:00 p.m.

MEDITATION COUNSELOR: Brother Achalananda.

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MEDITATION COUNSELORS: Meera Mata, Brother Bhaktananda.

PACIFIC PALISADES, California: SRF Lake Shrine, Ashram, Temple, Mahatma Gandhi World Peace Memorial, 17190 Sunset Boulevard. Telephone (213) 454-4114.

SERVICES: Sunday lectures 9:30 and 11:00 a.m., children's service 11:00 a.m., meditation 8:00 p.m.; Thursday lecture 8:00 p.m.

MEDITATION COUNSELOR: Brother Dharmananda.

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SERVICES: Sunday lecture 11:00 a.m.; Thursday meditation 8:00 p.m.

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MEDITATION COUNSELOR: Brother Mokshananda. Telephone Encinitas (714) 753-2888.

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Yogoda Satsanga Society of India

For information about Yogoda Satsanga Society activities, write to General Secretary, Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, Yogoda Branch Math, Old Hazaribagh Road, Ranchi 1, Bihar, India.

Headquarters and Ashram Centers

CALCUTTA (Dakshineswar), West Bengal: *Registered office*, Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, Yogoda Math, Dakshineswar, Calcutta 57, West Bengal. Telephone 56-2801 or 56-2908. Yogoda Ashram, Publication Section, and Yogoda Satsanga Press.

RANCHI, Bihar: Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, Yogoda Branch Math, Old Hazaribagh Road, Ranchi 1, Bihar. Telephone 23724. Yogoda Branch Ashram.

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WEST BENGAL:

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GHATAL: Sri Yukteswar Vidya-pith (junior high school), Primary School.

ISMALICHAK: Multipurpose School.

KALIDAN: Sri Yukteswar Smriti Mandir & Library, Primary School.

LAKSHMANPUR: Separate High Schools for boys and girls.

PALPARA: Yogoda Brahmacharya Vidyalaya (multipurpose school — separate schools and hostels for boys and girls), Yogoda Palpara Mahavidyalaya (college).

INSIDE BACK COVER: On the field of Kurukshetra, Prince Arjuna of the Pandus, accompanied by Lord Krishna as his charioteer, is ready to lead his forces into battle against the army of the Kurus, relatives who have driven Arjuna from his kingdom. The allegorical significance of this epic conflict has been explained by Paramahansa Yogananda as the battle between man's good and bad tendencies — a war that everyone someday must fight, and win, to gain everlasting happiness. Thus the soul of man (Arjuna), aided by the *guru* (one who manifests Divinity; here Lord Krishna), is fighting on the battlefield of the body (Kurukshetra) against the crooked mental tendencies and overindulged sensory appetites (Kurus) that for many years have deprived him of his native self-control, exiling him from his inner kingdom of peace.

The Bhagavad-Gita (the Hindu Bible) is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna wherein Krishna explains in detail the psychological battle of life and how it may be won. Exhorting Arjuna to overcome his doubt and vacillation, Krishna persuades him to fight to the death his dear "relatives" of bad habits and harmful tendencies, and gain the eternal victory. This final moment of the Gita story is here depicted. Arjuna's doubts have been dispelled at last, and he is determined to overcome.

"Trouble and ignorance are gone! the Light
Hath come unto me, by Thy favour, Lord!
Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!
According to Thy word, so will I do!"

— *Bhagavad-Gita XVIII: 73*
(*Sir Edwin Arnold's translation*)

BACK COVER: Self-Realization Fellowship international headquarters atop Mt. Washington, Los Angeles. Use of telephoto lens on camera creates illusion that snow-capped San Gabriel mountains, 10 miles away, are just behind the Mother Center.

