



Self-Realization MAGAZINE

Founded in 1925 by PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Paramahansa Yogananda at Teotihuacán in Mexico, July 1929

Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul

MAR. - APRIL 1961
25¢



Paramahansa Yogananda at Ajijic Village Church
near Chapala, Mexico, July 1929

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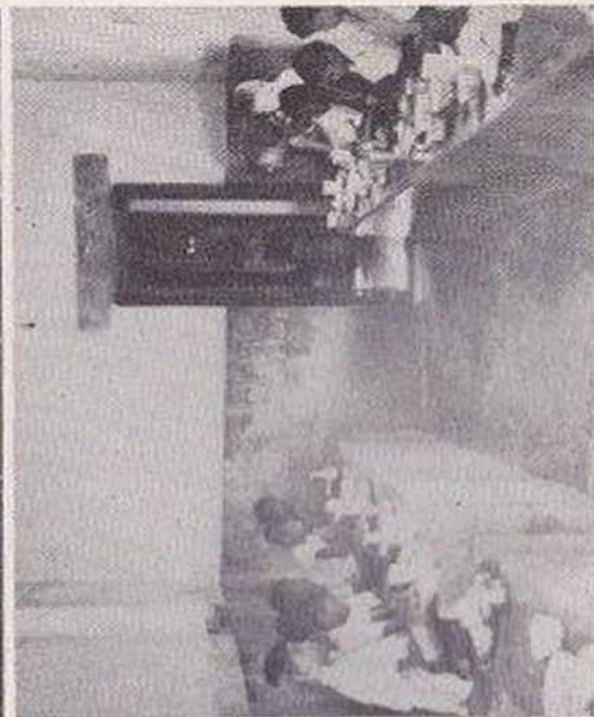
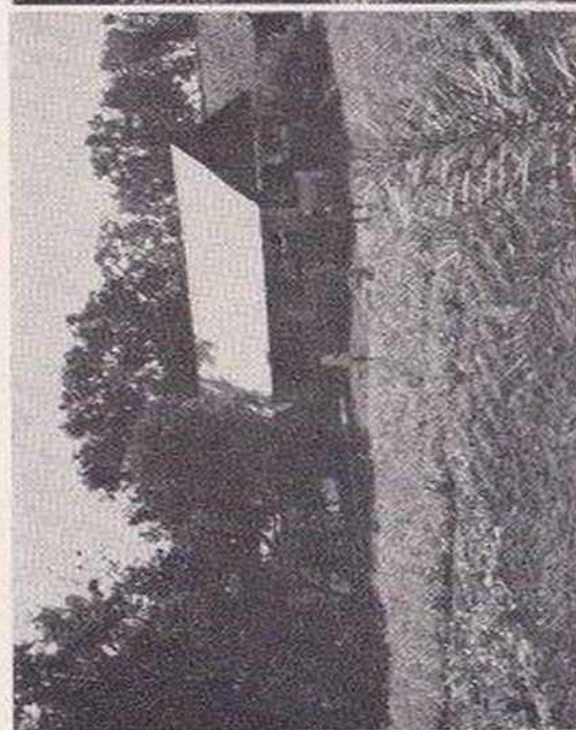
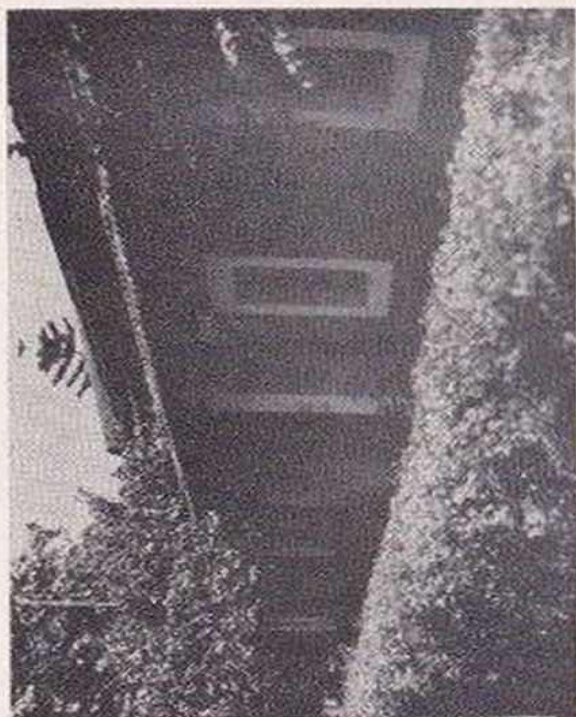
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YSS boys' school, Ranchi. (Top, left) garden, (top, right) guest house,
(lower, left) medical dispensary, (lower, right) dining hall.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BHAGAVAD - GITA

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

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter XIII, Stanzas 8-12

(The sage is marked by) humility, lack of hypocrisy, harmlessness, forgivingness, uprightness, service to the guru, purity of mind and body, steadfastness, self-control;

Indifference to sense objects, absence of egotism, understanding of the evils (inherent in mortal life): birth, illness, old age, and death;

Nonattachment, nonidentification of the Self with one's children, wife, and home; constant equal-mindedness in desirable and undesirable circumstances;

Unswerving devotion to Me by the yoga of nonseparativeness, resort to solitary places, avoidance of the company of (worldly-minded) men;

Perseverance in Self-knowledge, and aspiration for the Goal of all learning. (All these qualities) constitute wisdom; (qualities) opposed to them constitute ignorance.

By cultivating the qualities mentioned above, the yogi attains wisdom and eradicates from his heart the qualities of ignorance: pride, anger, greed, and so on.

The devotee bent on liberation understands that all learning pertaining to the phenomenal worlds is partial, uncertain, relative, and unsatisfying. Realization of God is the only true, permanent, and absolute knowledge.

Chapter XIII, Stanzas 13-19

I will tell you of That which should be known, because such knowledge bestows immortality. (Hear about) the beginningless Supreme Spirit—He who cannot be called either existent (sat) or nonexistent (asat).

He dwells in the world, enveloping all—everywhere, His hands and feet; present on all sides, His eyes and ears, His mouths and heads;

Shining in all the sense faculties yet (transcending) the senses, unattached (to creation) yet the Mainstay of all, free from the gunas (modes of Nature) yet the Enjoyer of them.

He is within all creatures, and without them; (immanent in) the animate and the inanimate; near He is, and far; imperceptible because of His subtlety.

He, the Indivisible One, appears as countless beings; He maintains and destroys (their forms), then creates them anew.

The Light of All Lights, beyond darkness; Knowledge itself, the Goal of all learning, He is seated in the hearts of all.

I have briefly described the Field, the nature of wisdom, and the Object of wisdom. Understanding these, My devotee enters My being.

The unmanifested transcendent Spirit beyond creation is causeless, without attributes, eluding classification; hence not *sat* or *asat* nor referable to any other category.

The next stanza describes God as immanent in creation: *Kutastha* or the Intelligence that informs the phenomenal worlds. In all men it is He that works through their hands, moves in their feet, sees and hears through their eyes and ears, eats with their mouths, and in all faces gazes at Himself. With unseen vibratory fingers He holds in perfect balance the ideational, causal, and physical universes.

The Lord is not a Person with sense organs, but Consciousness itself; He is therefore aware of the thoughts and sensory perceptions of every being. Jesus referred to this all-embracingness when he said: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without [the knowledge of] your Father" (*Matthew 10:29*).

The subtle invisible Spirit is everywhere and thus seems to the ignorant to be nowhere. Far from those in delusion, the blessed Lord is near and dear only to the heart of His devotee.

Spirit employs the three modes of Nature to appear as (1) the Creator or Brahma (*rajas*, activity), (2) the Preserver or Vishnu (*sattwa*, the nourishing quality), and (3) the Destroyer or Shiva (*tamas*, dissolution).

The motion-picture beam is the light-revealer and the "life" of all scenes on the screen; without the beam the "living" quality of the pictures would disappear.

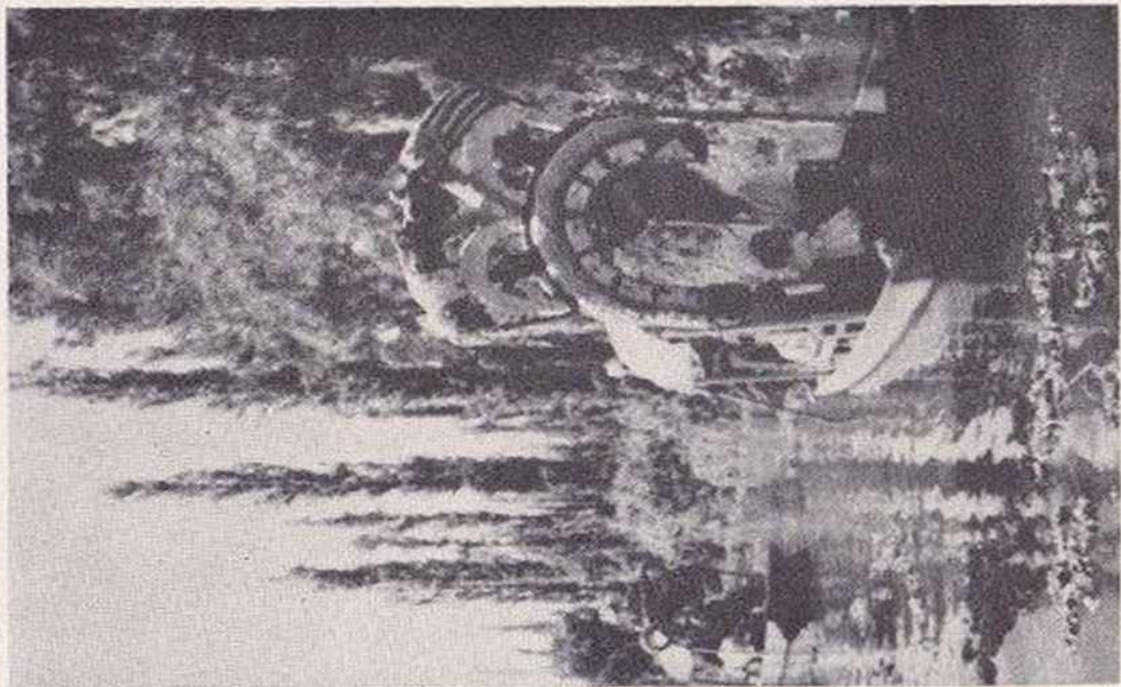
Similarly, Cosmic Intelligence is called the Light of All Lights because it makes manifest the motion pictures of creation. Without Spirit, sentient beings would lose their consciousness and their bodies; the universe of suns and moons and planets would vanish into nothingness.



Swami Chidananda (*right*), vice-chancellor of Swami Sivananda's Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh, India; and Brahmachari Ernest of SRF headquarters, at Mt. Washington Center, Feb. 13, 1961



In the garden of the Basilica of Guadalupe, Oct. 15, 1960; Mrs. G. Gallo, Mr. J. Cuaron, Sister Dayamata, and Mr. J. M. Echeguren



Flower-decked boats on poplar-lined canal between Mexico City and Lake Xochimilco, one of the world's most beautiful waterways

Sister Dayamata's Travel Notes



In October 1960, Sister Dayamata, accompanied by Srs. Sraddha and Mataji, visited Mexico, where she gave talks and conducted a Kriya Yoga Initiation at the Mexico City SRF Center. Another purpose of the trip was to make motion picture and still films of the places in Mexico visited by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1929.

October 12, 1960

Dear Ones:

Late this evening we leave Guadalajara, flying toward Mexico City. We are looking forward to our visit with Self-Realization Fellowship members in that area. After a smooth flight of a few hours, our plane lands at the airport at midnight. As we alight and walk toward the airport buildings we behold a huge delegation of SRF devotees coming forward with garlands and large bouquets of roses, which they present to us. We are deeply, deeply touched by their warm reception and their willingness to come out at this late hour to receive us. I realize over and over, as I travel about the world and see members and friends of SRF, that it is to Master* that they dedicate their devotion. My mind becomes absorbed in thoughts of him to whom this homage belongs.

In the National Palace: Frescoes by Diego Rivera

October 13th. Today we are seeing something of Mexico City. At the National Palace we behold the marvelous fresco paintings of the late Diego Rivera, one of Mexico's foremost artists. These are fabulous works depicting the history of Mexico. The huge murals entirely cover the walls of the central patio of the National Palace. The detail, brilliant colors, and three-dimensional quality of Rivera's scenes bring his paintings to life for us.

Next we visit the Cathedral of Mexico, a massive edifice with about forty interior columns. It was begun in the year 1536 and addi-

*Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of Self-Realization Fellowship.

tions were made until about 1813. A tremendous amount of gold leaf is used on the altars of cathedrals in Mexico, reminding us of the golden altars in the Buddhist temples, or *wats* as they are called, in Thailand. The cathedrals in Mexico, however, are more ornately carved.

Cathedral of Mexico Built Over Former Aztec Temple

In the chapel we meditate awhile before proceeding on our way through the cathedral. We learn something of the history of this ancient building. Hernán Cortéz, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, was determined to introduce Christianity into Mexico. He built a church over the former walls and foundation of the main temple of the Aztecs. His building was the first Christian church on American soil (1525). Later the great Cathedral of Mexico replaced it. Some of the stones used in this cathedral are from the former temples of the Aztecs.

The Basilica (Church) of Guadalupe

October 15th. Today we go to the inspiringly beautiful Basilica of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, the scene of many miracles. The very origin of the building was miraculous. The famous story is told by Don Hildebrando Garza in his *Madonna of the Americas*, which first appeared in *Sponsa Regis*, May 1954:

"The first written tradition furnishes us with a full story of the apparitions, of which the following is only a brief account. Early on the morning of Saturday, December 9, 1531, a poor Indian peasant, called Juan Diego, simple and humble, one of those recently converted to the Faith, was on his way from his native village to Mass and instruction at one of the Franciscan mission churches in the city of Mexico. Dawn was breaking as he passed by the hill called Tepeyac, just three miles north of the city. Suddenly there burst forth a beautiful song as of thousands of birds singing. For an instant it ceased, and the mountains echoed a response. Looking up to the crest of the hill, he saw a white shining cloud, having around it a rainbow whose colors were formed by rays of dazzling light that blazed from the midst of the cloud.

"Then it was very quiet, and he heard a woman's voice calling his name. Strangely overjoyed rather than frightened, he climbed up the hill to see who was calling him. The voice came from the brightness of the cloud and bade him draw nearer. Then he saw her — a most beautiful Lady (just as she was to look later in the miraculous picture).



Paramahansa Yogananda on Ajiije Mine Mountain (8000 ft.) by Lake Chapala, Mexico, June 1929.



Aztec pyramids at Tenayuca, near Mexico City. Yoganandaji visited here in 1929.



Sister Dayamata with two South American SRF students on a flower boat, Lake Xochimilco, Mexico. Musicians in background are on a passing boat.

“‘Juanito, Juan Diegito, where are you going?’

“‘My Lady and Mistress, I am going to Mexico [City] to hear Mass and the divine things which the ministers of God teach us.’

“‘Know, my son, my little one, that I am the ever Virgin, Holy Mary, Mother of the true God, who is the Author of life, the Creator of all things, the Lord of heaven and earth, present everywhere. It is my wish that a church be erected to me in this place. Here I will show myself as a loving Mother to you and to all those born in these lands, and to all those who love me and trust in me, for I am your loving Mother. Go to the palace of the Bishop and tell him what you have heard and seen. Tell him also of the church I ask for.’

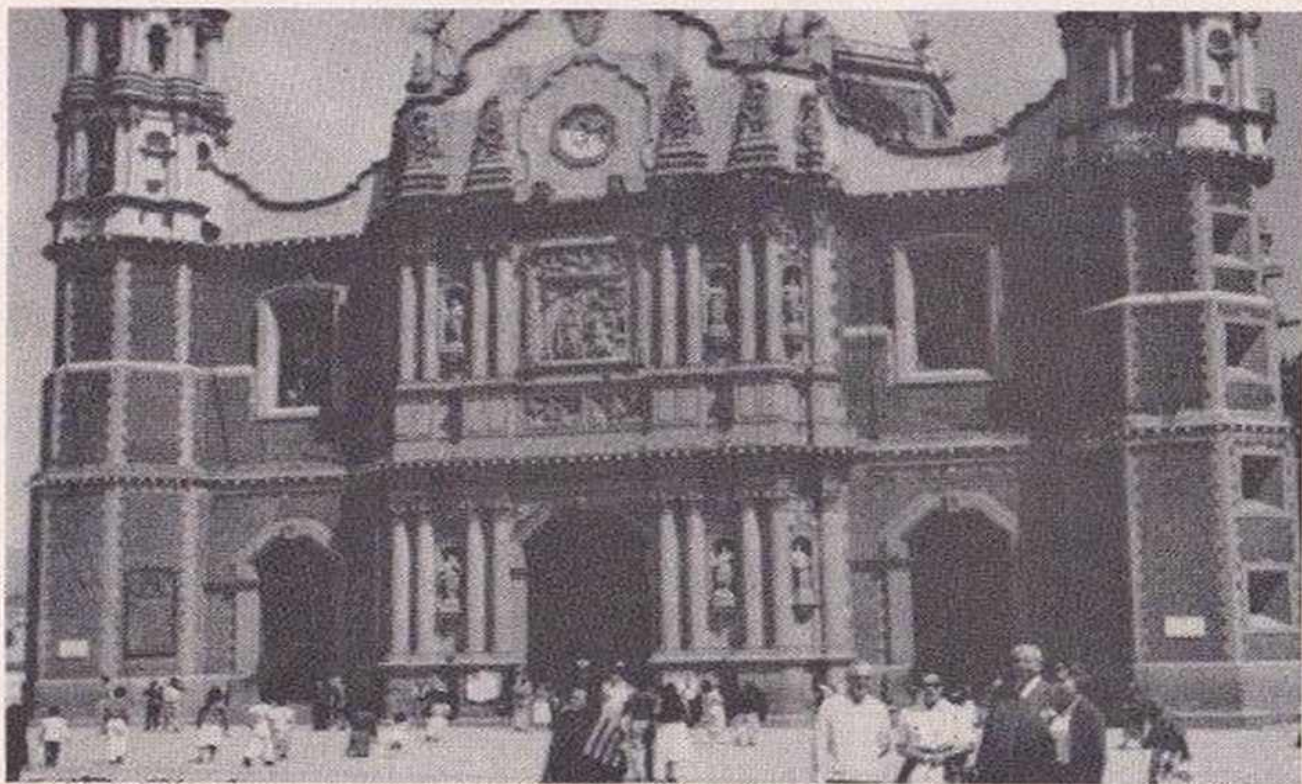
“When the Bishop heard Juan Diego, he treated him kindly, though without believing him. Dismissing the Indian, the Bishop promised to discuss the matter with him again after a few days.

“The evening of the same day, Juan Diego, confused and discouraged, came back looking for Our Lady and found her waiting for him. He suggested to her that she send a more respectable person,

who would be more easily believed. Our Lady answered that she had many messengers and servants whom she could send, but it was her desire that he should carry her message. And so she asked him to go and see the Bishop again and tell him it was the Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God, who had sent him.

The Bishop Asks for a Sign

"Sunday the tenth, after hearing Mass and receiving instruction, Juan went to the Bishop's house. The Bishop questioned him again and again, and finally told him he would have to bring a sign. Although Juan Diego confidently asked him what kind of sign he wanted, the Bishop would not specify any particular one. He sent the Indian away and commanded two of his servants to follow him. Shortly afterwards, to the confusion of the Bishop's men, they lost sight of Juan Diego. Not being able to find him, they returned to the Bishop and said that they thought the Indian must be a witch or an impostor, because he had disappeared before their very eyes.



Front of the Basilica de Santa Maria de Guadalupe, about three miles outside Mexico City. In right foreground are Mr. J. Martin Echeguren, Mrs. G. Gallo, Yogacharya Cuaron, and Sister Mataji; October 15, 1960.

"Juan Diego, in the meantime, saw Our Lady again and, after she had thanked him for what he had done, she told him to come back on the following day for the sign.

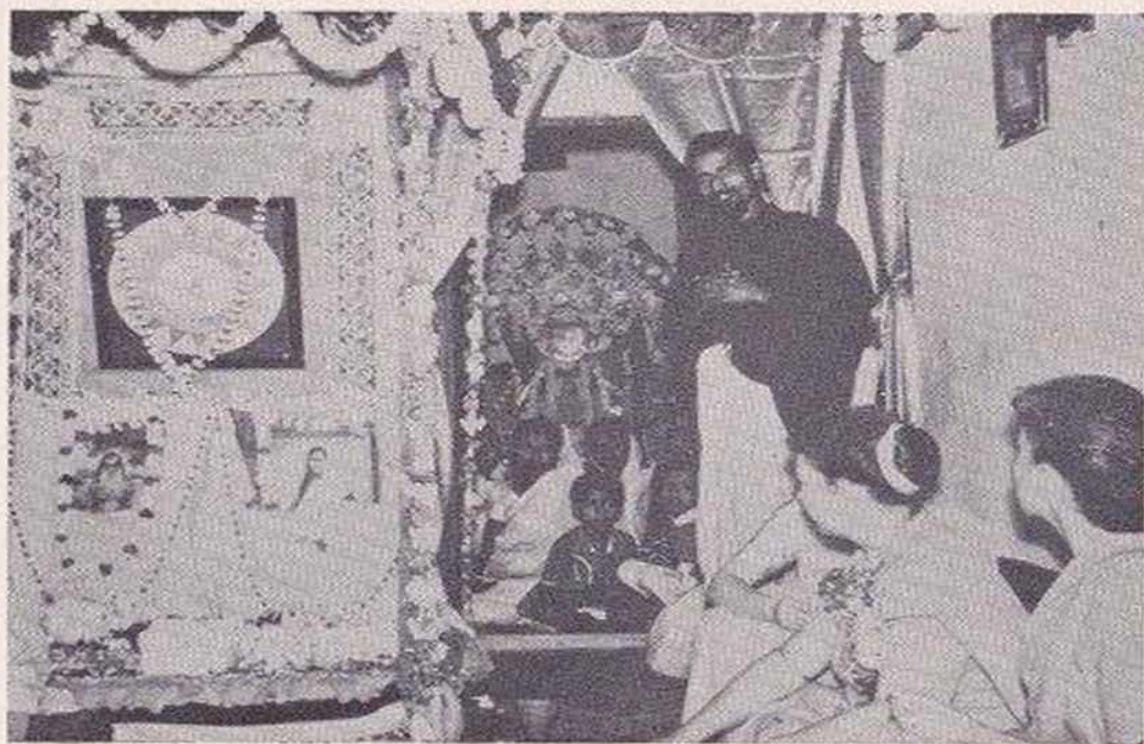
"At dawn, December 12th, Juan Diego set out to call a priest for his dying uncle, Juan Bernardino. Fearing that Our Lady would detain him and cause him to be late, he decided to take another road. To his surprise, he saw her descending the hill to meet him. He explained to Our Lady about his uncle, that he was on his way now for a priest and had intended to come back immediately afterwards for the sign. The day before, on the 11th of December, he had not been able to go to her at all because he was taking care of his uncle.

"Our Lady calmed his anguish. 'Listen, my little son. There is nothing which you need fear. Do not be anxious about this illness, nor any other illness or affliction. Am I not here beside you, your merciful Mother? Am I not your hope and salvation? Of what more do you have need? As to the illness of your uncle, he will not die from it. Be assured that he is already cured.'

Miraculous Roses in Wintertime

"Juan Diego then asked Our Lady for the sign. She directed him to climb up the hill to the place where he had first seen her. There he was to gather and bring down to her an armful of roses. Juan, in spite of the winter weather and the barrenness of the place, believed Our Lady. Going up he found at the summit fragrant Castilian roses covered with dew. He cut as many as he could and brought them down to Our Lady. With her own hands she arranged them in his *tilma* (cloak). 'Here is the sign I promised in order to show my will to the Bishop. Go and see him and show the roses to no one but him. Tell him of the church I wish here. You are my ambassador, and I have confidence in your faithfulness.'

"At the Bishop's house Juan Diego waited for a long time to see the Bishop. The servants noticed that he had something in his *tilma* and was shielding it carefully from sight. Though Juan Diego resisted, they managed to pull aside one corner of the *tilma*, and saw the roses. The amazed servants told the Bishop at once of this strange happening. When the Bishop called him in, Juan Diego related what Our Lady had told him and then, unfolding his *tilma*, he allowed the roses to spill out. The Bishop's eyes were fixed on the *tilma*, where there was now imprinted the image of the most Holy Mary of Guadalupe, as Juan had described her.



Sister Dayamata (*leaning forward*) near altar in YSS Gurudham founded by the late Sri Motilal Thakur, a revered disciple of Swami Sri Yukteswarji; Serampore, India, 1959

"On the same day, December 12th, Our Lady appeared to Juan Diego's dying uncle, Juan Bernardino. She told him that she had come to cure him. She also said that it was her wish that a church be erected at the foot of the hill of Tepeyac. Here her image, which Juan Diego was carrying to the Bishop, was to be venerated and called 'Holy Mary, ever Virgin, of Guadalupe.'

Image Acclaimed by Renowned Artists

"Our Lady's image has been acclaimed by artists of world renown. At the head of a commission of seven artists who examined the image in 1751, Miguel Cabrera declared:

"The plan of this holy Picture is so singular, so perfectly accomplished, and so manifestly marvelous, that whoever has any knowledge of the art of painting, on seeing it at once declares it a miraculous accomplishment. . . . Its most beautiful grace of symmetry is a marvel that amazes those who are at all acquainted with sketching. Every line and turn of it is so clearly a miracle, that there actually shines forth in the admirable work the supreme power of its Author.'

"In the Brief of Pope Benedict XIV (1754) we find these remarkable words: 'In it there is nothing which is not wonderful: a Picture from flowers gathered in midwinter on a soil entirely sterile and fit to bear only thorns; on a cloth so thin that through it, as a lattice, the temple lay easily open to the eyes: and that after two centuries the niter [saltpeter] of the neighboring lake, which erodes silver, gold, and brass, has not in the least injured its supreme beauty nor its most vivid colors.' "

We See the Portrait of the Blessed Virgin

Here in the Basilica of Guadalupe, in the place of honor above the high altar, we see the beautiful portrait of the Blessed Virgin on the cloak of Juan Diego. It is in exquisite colors on rough cactus-fiber cloth. The imprint of the image is about four feet, eight inches in height. It is said that this image of the Virgin Mary is her only authentic portrait. The colors have remained fresh and beautiful for more than four centuries, although the fabric on which the portrait appears normally lasts only about twenty years. In this sacred atmosphere we sit and meditate deeply.

I was interested to learn, from Don Hildebrando's account, that Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Madonna not of Mexico alone but of all the Americas. He writes as follows: "When she appeared, four hundred years ago, there was neither Mexico nor the United States nor Canada, nor any other nation of present name in the Western Hemisphere, but simply two continents united into one.

" 'Happy America! Favored Americans! America beloved by Mary! O Americans, whence was this to you, that the Mother of your Lord should come to you?' This is the way in which preachers and poets, as well as canonists and historians of the 17th and 18th centuries, spoke.

"The One Who Crushed the Serpent"

"Besides bearing in mind that the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the only one known to have been given to us by Our Lady herself, it is of great importance to remember also that Our Lady of Guadalupe is not so called from the *place* at which she appeared (Tepeyac), as was the case at Fatima in Portugal or Lourdes in France, but she herself gave us this name. The name she gave is the Indian 'Tecoatlaxopeuh,' transliterated by the Spanish-speaking people as 'de Guadalupe.' The Indian name means 'the one who crushed the serpent.' "



The figure of the Virgin Mary found imprinted on the cloak of Juan Diego. The miraculous picture, rich in symbolic details, converted to Christianity eight million Indians in Mexico during the short span of seven years.

One of the Principal Shrines of Christendom

Many devotees come from great distances, we learn, to visit the Basilica of the Blessed Virgin of Guadalupe. It is one of the principal shrines of Christendom in the Western Hemisphere. The pilgrims come in huge throngs, marching through the streets of the little villages on the way, until they arrive here to pay their respects to the Blessed Virgin. We have seen similar pilgrimages during our travels in India, where the holy custom of pilgrimage also prevails.

We have visited a great many churches and cathedrals in Mexico City, accompanied on these trips by Yogacharya Cuaron and members of the Center. But the one that I love most is a little church around the corner from our hotel, where we go in the evenings to meditate. It is dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi and in it I feel great devotion.

Other Similarities Between Mexico and India

I find in the devotion of the Mexican people a striking similarity between Mexico and India. Catholicism, the chief religion of the Mexicans, has in its long history produced many saints. Our beloved Guru often pointed out that this is due to the fact that many of its adherents follow a life of renunciation and dedication to God and to the Divine Mother, whom they worship as Mary.

As in India, we often see here in Mexico women on the banks of little lakes or streams washing their clothes and spreading them out on green bushes or on the ground to dry. One of the most familiar sights here is the little burro carrying a huge load of various kinds of green growing things, or sometimes just a bundle of sticks. Sister Srad-dha has become so attracted to these small beasts of burden that she would like to bring one home with her to the ashram!

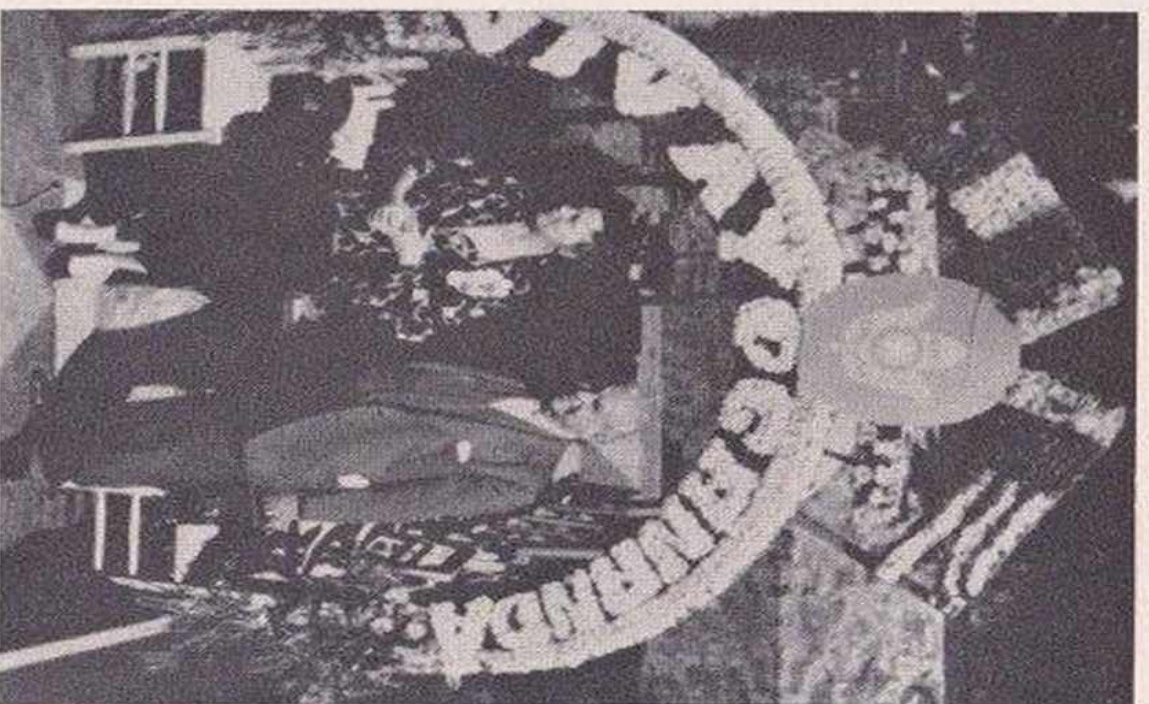
One particularly inspiring sight, on the shores of Lake Chapala, is a very tiny shrine dedicated to the Virgin, where the housewives come to place flowers and to pray or say the rosary for a few minutes before they begin their washing.

Lake Xochimilco — Paradise in Mexico

October 17th. Today we went to Xochimilco and I can readily understand why Master loved this beautiful lake so much. Small boats are used for pleasure excursions. As we arrived with a party of about twenty-five devotees we were escorted to two boats that had been decorated artistically with flowers. On an arch over the forward part



Paramahansa Yogananda holding mangoes, his favorite fruit, picked in the orchard of friends during a three-month vacation in Mexico in 1929



Sister Dayanata and Mr. J. Cuaron on picnic boat, flower-decorated with *Viva Yogananda*, Xochimilco, October 17, 1960

of one boat was written in blossoms: *Viva Yogananda*. On the arched entrance to the other boat were the words: *Welcome, Dayamata*. Mexican music was played by a hired band. A picnic was enjoyed by all of us on these two boats as we rode along the canals of Xochimilco. We saw on the lake green floating gardens covered with growing corn, cabbages, and other kinds of vegetables. The poplar trees lining the canals are a distinctive feature, which I have seen nowhere else in Mexico.

One finds loveliness beyond words here in Xochimilco. Certainly it may be compared with the beauty of Dal Lake in Kashmir. In *Autobiography of a Yogi*, our blessed Guru wrote: "As entries in a scenic beauty contest, I offer for first prize either the gorgeous view of Xochimilco in Mexico, where skies, mountains, and poplars are reflected, amid playful fish, in myriad lanes of water; or the lakes of Kashmir, guarded like beautiful maidens by the stern surveillance of the Himalayas. These two places stand out in my memory as the loveliest spots on earth."

Inspiring Enthusiasm of SRF Students in Mexico

October 18th. The time has been filled with activity from morning till night, although there have been some days of rest and solitude. Getting used to the altitude took a little time; perhaps this is especially true for us who have lived at sea level for many years. However, with just a few changes in the program worked out for us, we soon adjusted ourselves.

It is wonderful to behold the spirit that exists in our group of devotees in Mexico. Wherever I go I speak of Mount Washington Center and of our wonderful life there, and I meet many students who are enthusiastic to visit the Mother Center or even to enter our monastic Order and dedicate their lives wholly to God and Gurus.

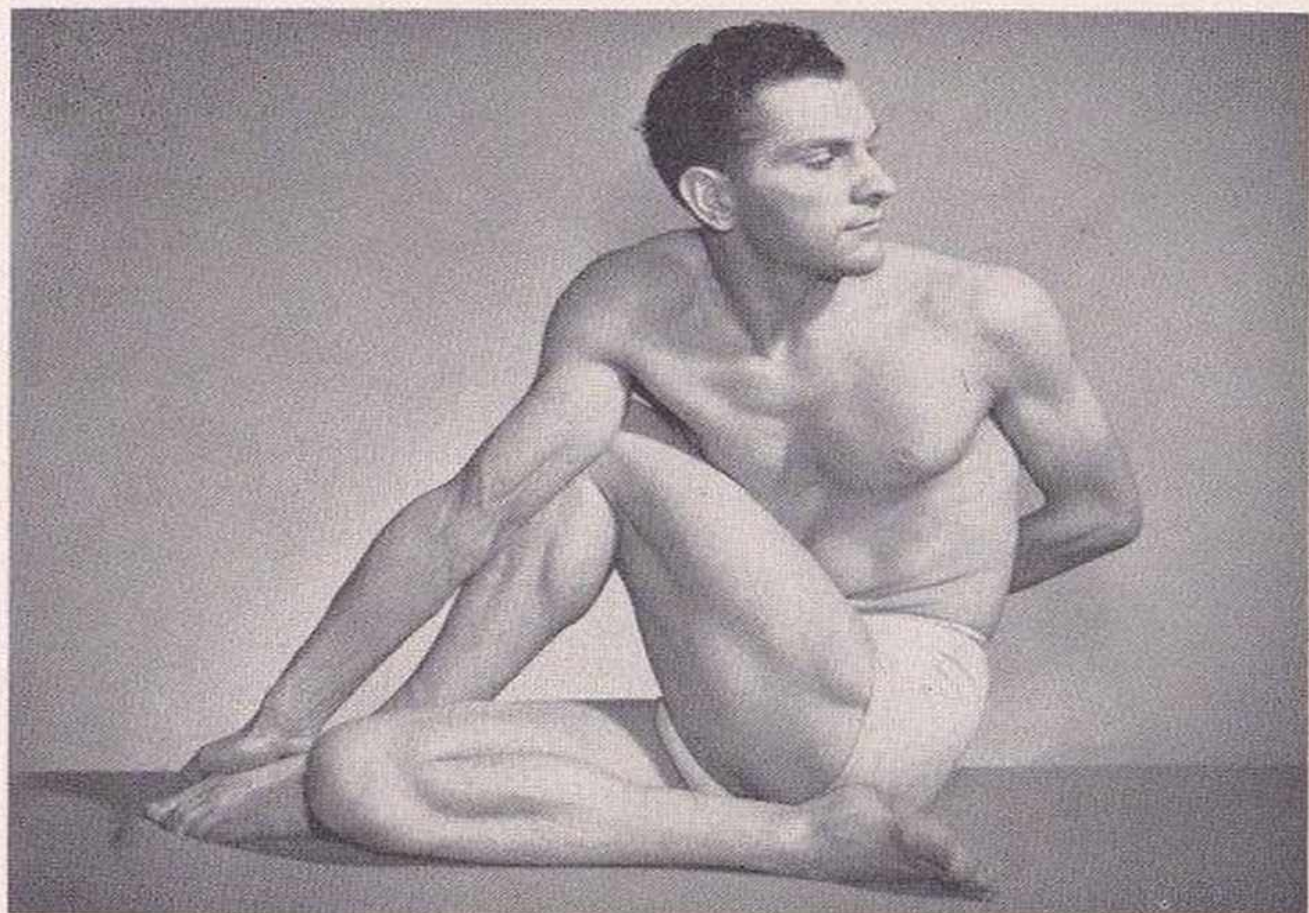
We have been meeting frequently with the devotees in the evenings, and tonight we go to the SRF Center again, there to speak on the various paths of Yoga and devotion to God. On October 20th *Kriya Yoga* initiation will be given; I am told that devotees have come all the way from South America to receive it.

(To be continued)

"Numerous are the ways to God, yet the true way is but a single step: take one step out of thyself, that thou mayest arrive at God." — *Sufi saint, Abu Said Fazullah of Khurasan.*

Yoga Postures For Health

By B. TESNIÈRE, M.D.



ARDHA-MATSYENDRASANA — THE HALF SPINAL TWIST

Ardha-Matsyendrasana is a yogic pose named after Matsyendra, an expert in *Hatha Yoga* who lived in India during the 10th century. The pose originally devised by him is extremely difficult to achieve, for it requires a supple spine and a complete mastery of the Lotus Posture.* *Ardha-Matsyendrasana* is an easier variation, "half" as difficult (*Ardha* is Sanskrit for "half").

The pose, which suggests a picturesque piece of statuary, belongs to the large group of spinal asanas; and, within that group, to the category of spine-twisting postures.

**Self-Realization Magazine*, Jan. 1959 and Mar. 1959.

The principle of *Ardha-Matsyendrasana* and of other spine-twisting asanas is the use of the legs as fulcrums or levers so that the pull of the arms on the two upper corners of the rib box can bring the spinal twist to its maximum potential. The value of the twist is that it exercises, adjusts, and rejuvenates the spine, and that it stimulates all the organs of the trunk to better health.

A twisting pose of medium difficulty, *Ardha-Matsyendrasana* should be attempted only after the easier *Vakrasana*, or Twisted Pose,* has been mastered; and before one essays the difficult *Matsyendrasana*, or Full Spinal Twist (*Fig. 1*).

Ardha-Matsyendrasana may be performed by anyone and is beneficial to all. (Women should abstain from doing the pose during menstruation or pregnancy.)

Technique of Assuming the Half Spinal Twist

The Half Spinal Twist is performed in three phases by placing in position successively the legs, arms, and head (*Fig. 2*).

POSITION OF THE LEGS

1. Sit with the legs bent at the knee and half extended in front.
2. Bring the heel of one leg against the buttock of the other by placing the outside of that leg flat on the floor.
3. Slide the foot of the upright leg toward the knee that is resting on the floor and lock the foot just a little above the knee, against the thigh.

POSITION OF THE ARMS

4. Twist the upper part of the body so that it is turned toward the foot resting against the buttock. Place the backward arm on the ground in order to maintain your balance.
5. Bring the other arm forward over the upraised knee. Smoothly push that knee aside with the upper arm and shoulder so that the hand can grasp the knee on the floor.

POSITION OF THE HEAD

6. Turn the head toward the back as far as you can. By pushing on the floor with the backward arm, bring the twist to its maximum.

**Self Realization Magazine*, September 1956

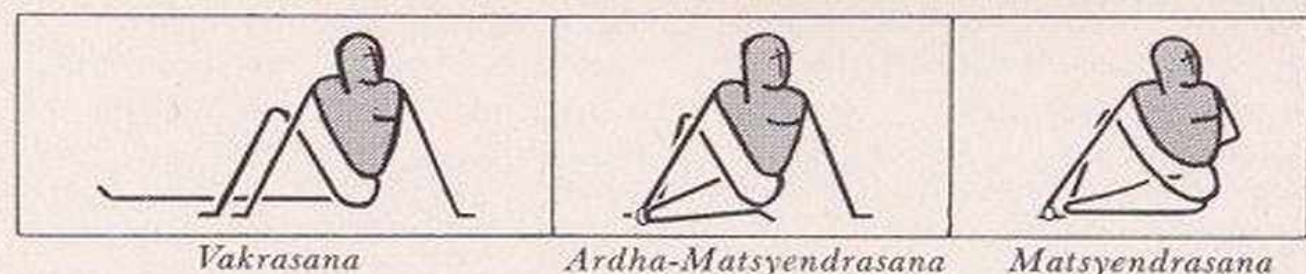


Fig. 1. The three main spine-twisting poses

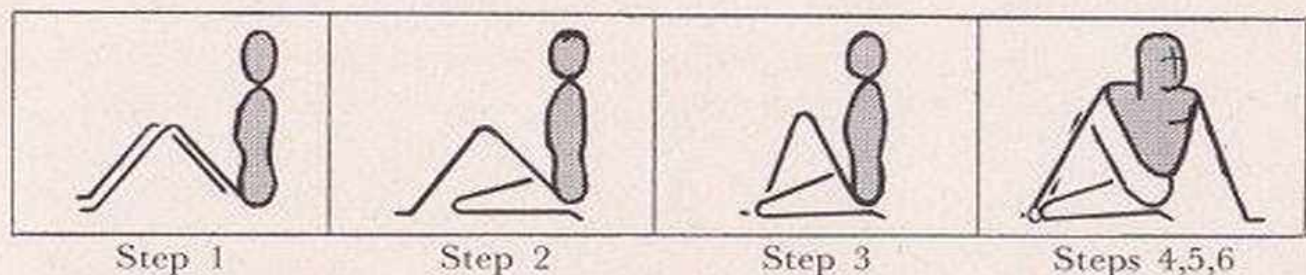


Fig. 2. How to get into *Ardha-Matsyendrasana*

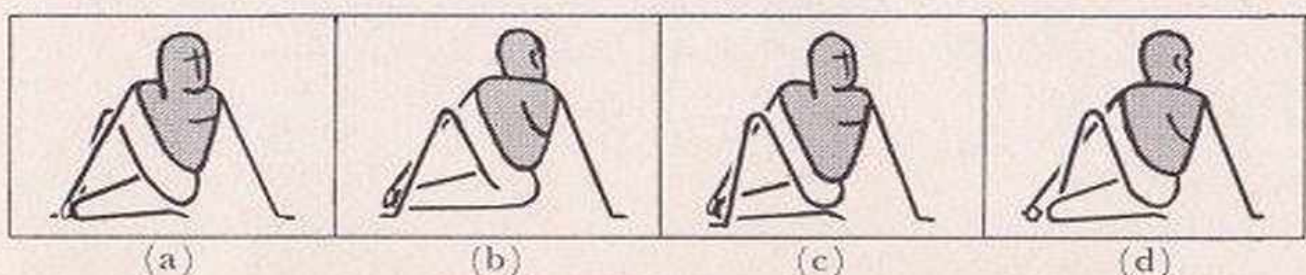


Fig. 3. Effective twist to left (a) and right (b); and ineffective twist to left (c) and right (d).

Timing, Breathing, Object of Concentration

Hold the position for a few seconds (*Fig. 3a*). Then undo the arms and legs, and rest for ten seconds. Interchange the limbs, twist the spine to the other side (*Fig. 3b*), and hold for a few seconds. Then relax in *Savasana*, the Relaxation Pose.*

The holding period should be increased gradually, fifteen seconds fortnightly, until a maximum of one minute is reached. For purposes of keeping fit, one round (*i.e.*, one twist on each side) per day is

**Self-Realization Magazine*, July 1958.

enough. For healing purposes, a daily practice of three rounds at one time, with *Savasana* at the end of the third round, is recommended.

The breathing is normal. Or one may inhale while twisting, hold the breath during the stationary period, and exhale while untwisting. The holding of the breath in the stationary period, however, should never be extended to a point of discomfort.

The attention should be focused on the spine, or on the chest, or at the place between the eyebrows.

Key Points in Practice

The pose should be done slowly, without strain or jerks. When working the forward arm into position, do so smoothly, without forcing or straining, particularly at the elbow. Holding the shoulder firmly against the knee will avoid any strain on the elbow-joint. While holding the twist, be sure to give a steady pull, not a series of jerks.

The heels should not be allowed to move for the duration of the pose; and neither the horizontally placed knee nor the hip of the upright leg should be raised off the floor. Care on these points will enable one to keep his balance better during the pose, which in turn relieves the backward arm from its balancing duty and increases its twisting action.

Keep the trunk and head erect. Strictly avoid bending the trunk and head sideways or forward, for then the twist is less pronounced. Keep the chest well expanded and you will have no tendency to bend forward or sideways.

Hints for Mastering the Pose

Performance of the Half Spinal Twist usually has to be perfected gradually. Several stumbling blocks are: placing the foot of the upright leg on the outer side of the horizontal knee (point 3 of the technique); placing the forward arm on the outer side of the upraised knee (point 5 of the technique); and, particularly, grasping the knee with the forward arm.

Some persons avoid these difficulties either by placing the foot on the inner side of the knee (*Fig. 3c*) or by turning the trunk away from the horizontal foot instead of toward it (*Fig. 3d*); but the spinal twist is then less than maximum and the pose less effective.

The pose calls for limber shoulder and hip joints, a supple spine, and a slim waistline. If one is not thus endowed by Nature, he should

not be discouraged; repeated practice of the pose will enable him to master it so completely that he will find the performance of *Ardha-Matsyendrasana* a real pleasure.

Variations of the Half Spinal Twist

There are many variations of the Half Spinal Twist. The pose for which we have given directions at the beginning of the article is actually an easy variation. All the variations may be classified under three headings, according to which part of the body is mainly involved: head, legs, or arms.

POSITION OF THE HEAD

The head may be turned forward instead of backward, thus twisting the head and trunk in opposite directions (*Fig. 4d*). The respective twists of the cervical spine and the dorso-lumbar spine are then lessened, and that is why this variation is not generally performed.

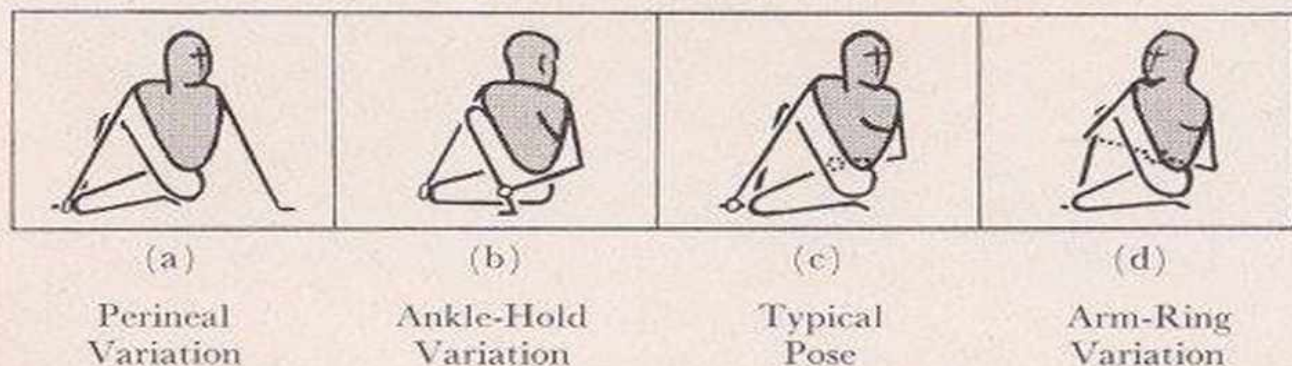
POSITION OF THE LEGS

The heel of the horizontal leg, instead of being placed next to the thigh, may be set against the perineum (*Fig. 4a*). Or one may even sit on the heel. The foot of the upright leg may be brought close to the hip of the thigh that rests on the floor (*Fig. 4b*). The closer the foot to the hip, the more difficult the position becomes.

POSITION OF THE ARMS

Instead of grasping the knee with the hand of the forward arm, one may hold the toes, or the big toe, or the ankle of the upright leg. The hand of the backward arm, instead of resting on the floor, is swung around the back in order to clutch the groin or the thigh of the leg on the floor (*Fig. 4c*). This is the pose usually described as *Ardha-Matsyendrasana*. As it is too difficult for most persons to per-

Fig. 4. Variations of *Ardha-Matsyendrasana*



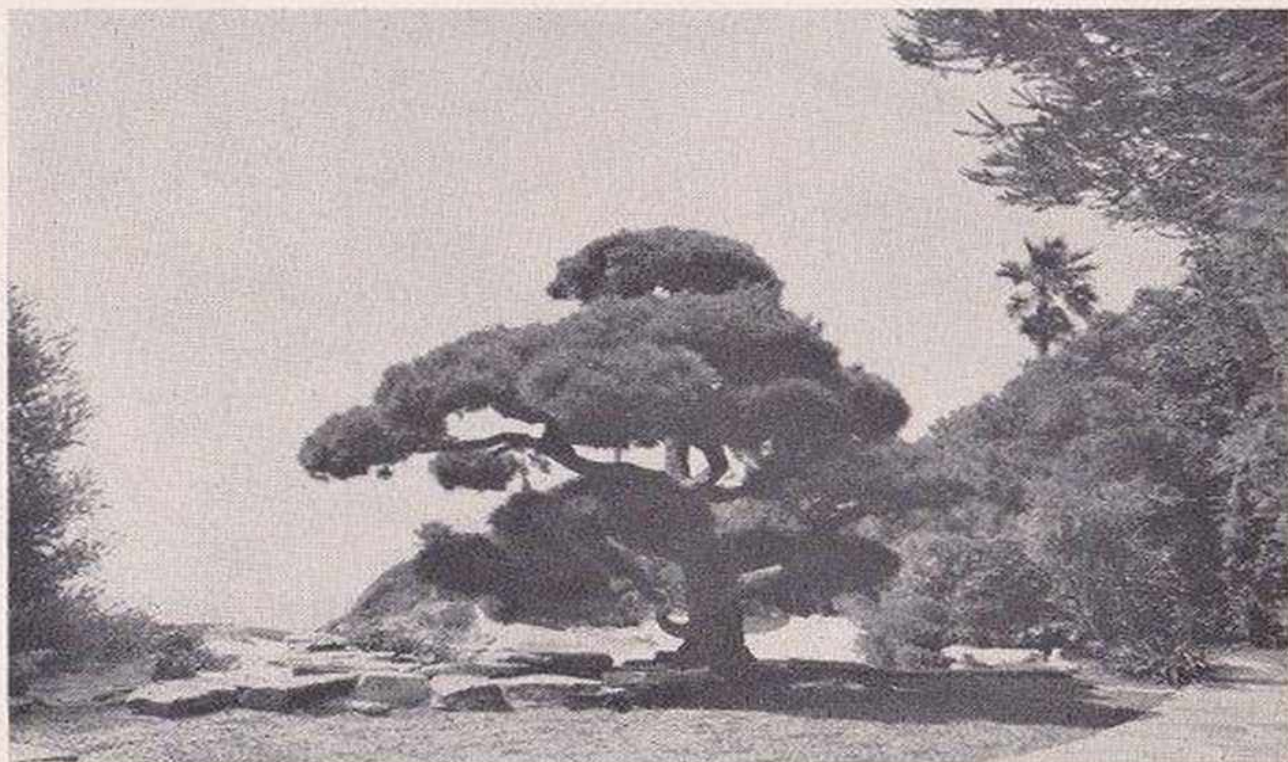
form (they content themselves with placing the hand against the back, never touching the groin or the thigh, thus reducing greatly the effectiveness of the spinal twist) we have here presented it as a variation rather than as the typical *Ardha-Matsyendrasana*.

The backward hand may even be brought further forward to seize the ankle of the upright leg brought into the hip-abutment position (*Fig. 4b*). This ankle-hold variation, known as *Baddha-Ardha-Matsyendrasana*, the Locked Half Spinal Twist, is a difficult exercise that only advanced students can perform.

Both arms may be joined at the hands to form a ring encircling the upright knee and torso. In this variation the head usually is turned forward (*Fig. 4d*).

Finally, one may practice the pose while sitting in a chair, without drawing up the legs. Twisting the spine, grasp the seat of the chair with the forward arm, and the back of the chair with the backward arm.

The physiology of *Ardha-Matsyendrasana*, and an explanation of its benefits to the spine and the organs of the trunk will be given in the May 1961 issue of *Self-Realization Magazine*.



A dwarfed pine on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean; on hermitage grounds, Self-Realization Fellowship Colony, Encinitas, California

Thought Seeds

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



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



Christ is risen from the sepulcher of my indifference, and I behold him in the light of my devotion. I, a sleeping son of God, am coming out of my bodily prison into the vast freedom of Spirit.



Teach me, O Christ, to redeem my matter-sold mind, that I may give it to Thee in prayer and ecstasy, in meditation and reverie.



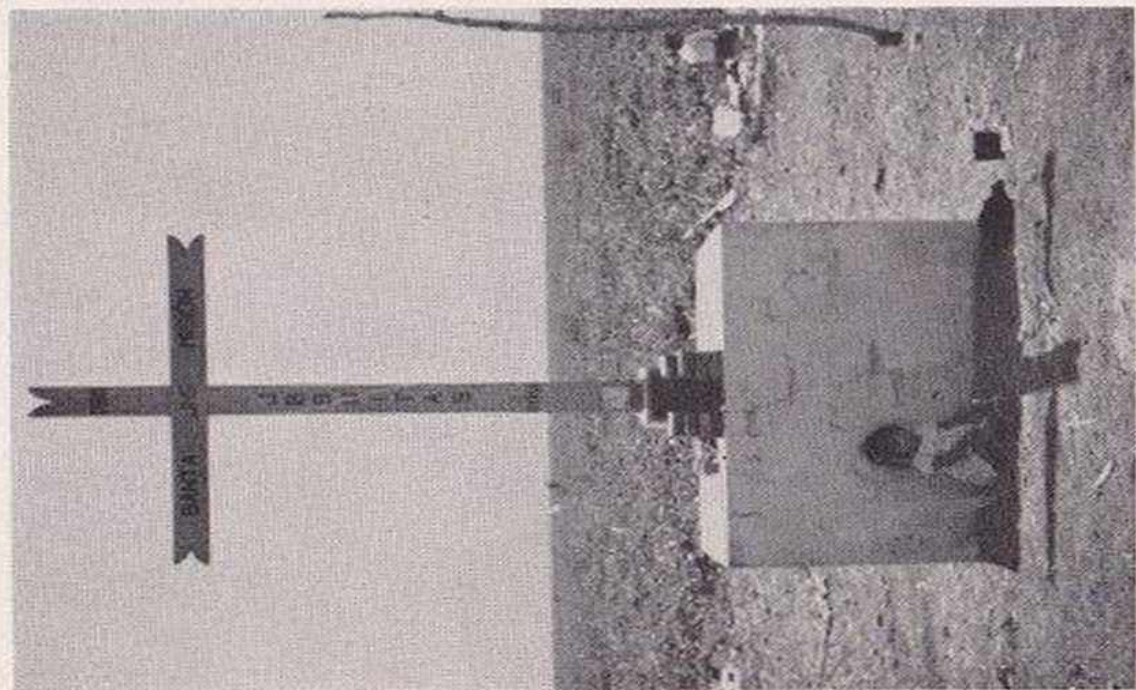
O Cosmic Light, every day I see Thee paint the sky with bright colors. I watch Thee clothe the bare soil with green grass. Thou art in the sunshine. Oh, Thou art so plainly present everywhere! I bow to Thee.



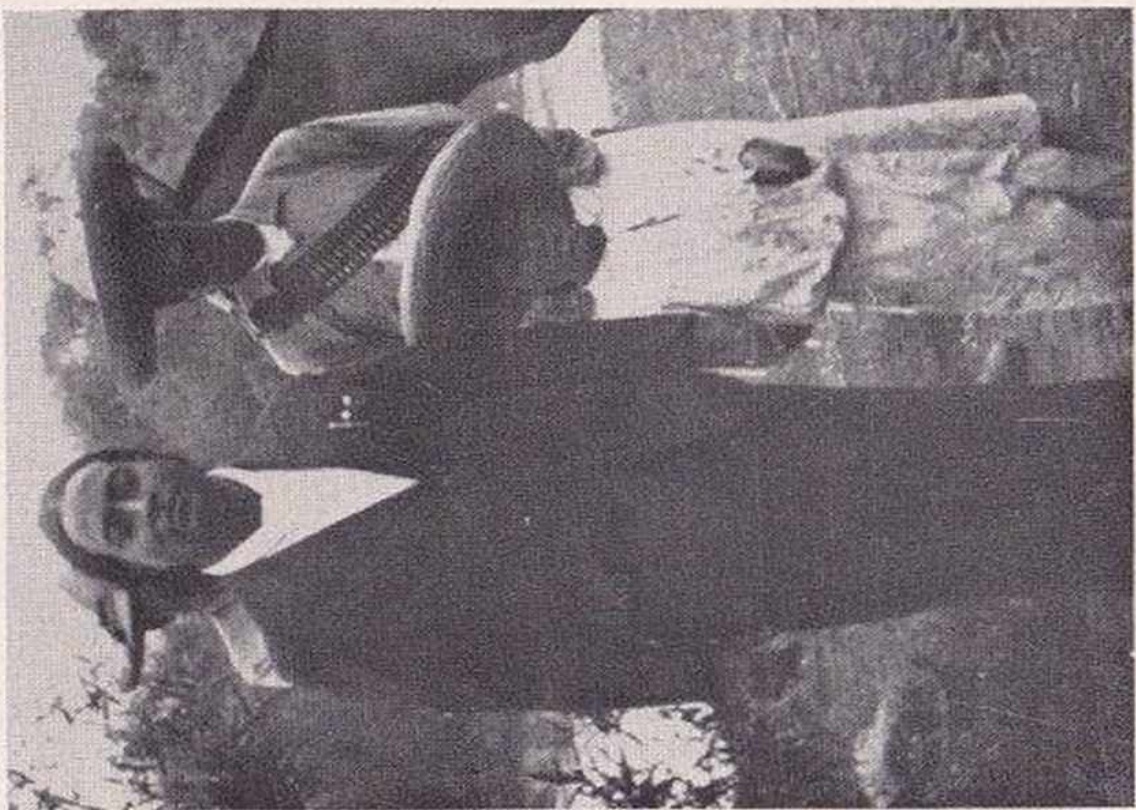
My Lord, as Thou art omnipresent, Thou canst but be present in me. Thou hast omnipotence and omniscience; these also are my soul attributes. May I be able to unfold even a fragment of That contained in my Self.



In the solitude of my mind I yearn to hear Thy voice. Take away the dreams of earthly sounds that yet lurk in my mind. I want to hear Thy quiet voice ever singing in the silence of my soul.



Wayside shrine at Chapala. Lake in background is covered with water hyacinths.



Paramahansa Yogananda and three Mexicans he met during his 1929 vacation in Mexico.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DIVINE AWAKENER, by Swami Rajeswarananda, 480 pp., paper, 1960, \$2.50 postpaid. Order from publisher: Sevasramam, Eesanya Rd., Tiruvannamalai, N. Arcot Dt., Madras State, S. India.

Swami Rajeswarananda, a distinguished disciple of the late Sri Ramana Maharshi, is editor of *The Call Divine*. Rajeswaranandaji's book is a collection of editorials written by him for that publication. His prolific pen is happily dipped in profundity. A spontaneous conversational quality, and short, pithy sentences make his writings easily assimilable. Because the book is a compilation of articles written over a long period of time, a subject is occasionally dealt with more than once, but each time from a new angle and with newly interesting observations. Swamiji expounds *Vedanta* philosophy with insight and simplicity. Many a ghost of ignorance has been banished by a bright shaft of his penetrating wisdom. Some extracts from the book follow:

Prayer

True prayer prepares a background for the movement of one's mind, an atmosphere for one's life to breathe, a contact with spiritual force, a contact with the divine machinery of fulfillment and adjustment. Prayer is a spiritual instinct. True prayer is communion with the Highest.

Prayers are quiet communion wherein man speaks and God listens, and while God speaks man listens.

Life Divine

Life is an open door; it is ever open to progress and growth. There is in it a solution for every problem. Its main purpose is in the fulfillment of Self-realization. Lift high your vision and realize that the Self is the center of your being and of every other being.

You need not flutter about only to come to blind corners of your mind and senses, like a bird that flies hither and thither blindly, from corner to corner in a room; though the windows are open, nothing restrains it, and the whole sky welcomes it.

Make the littleness in you become less and the greatness increase.

Make the separateness in you dissolve and let go your limitations, to find yourself above them. Infinity itself then beckons and welcomes you and embraces you in its bosom.

A radiant light that burns in every being is blocked off by one's own selfish thoughts and unworthy actions.

Forgetfulness of your divine heritage is undoubtedly a great calamity, a voluntary acceptance of ignorance.

Get really free and awakened to the Infinite Presence. The real soul of one and all is in the Cosmic. That is the real undying life.

Safety and dynamic power lie in our consciousness of our Source. The inner vision and guidance brighten the immortal flame and shed precious peace.

Life is not safe and smooth unless you walk in the light of the Self.

Virtue

Virtue shames the world and cannot be shamed by the world. It holds up man's head with confidence, dignity, and honor. It needs no guard; otherwise it is not worth while. The repellent strength of virtue keeps one pure from worldly taint. Virtue by mere calculation and speculation is only the virtue of vice. After all, what the world calls virtue is only a name and a dream if there is no realization of one's own Supreme Self.

The Kingdom of Activity

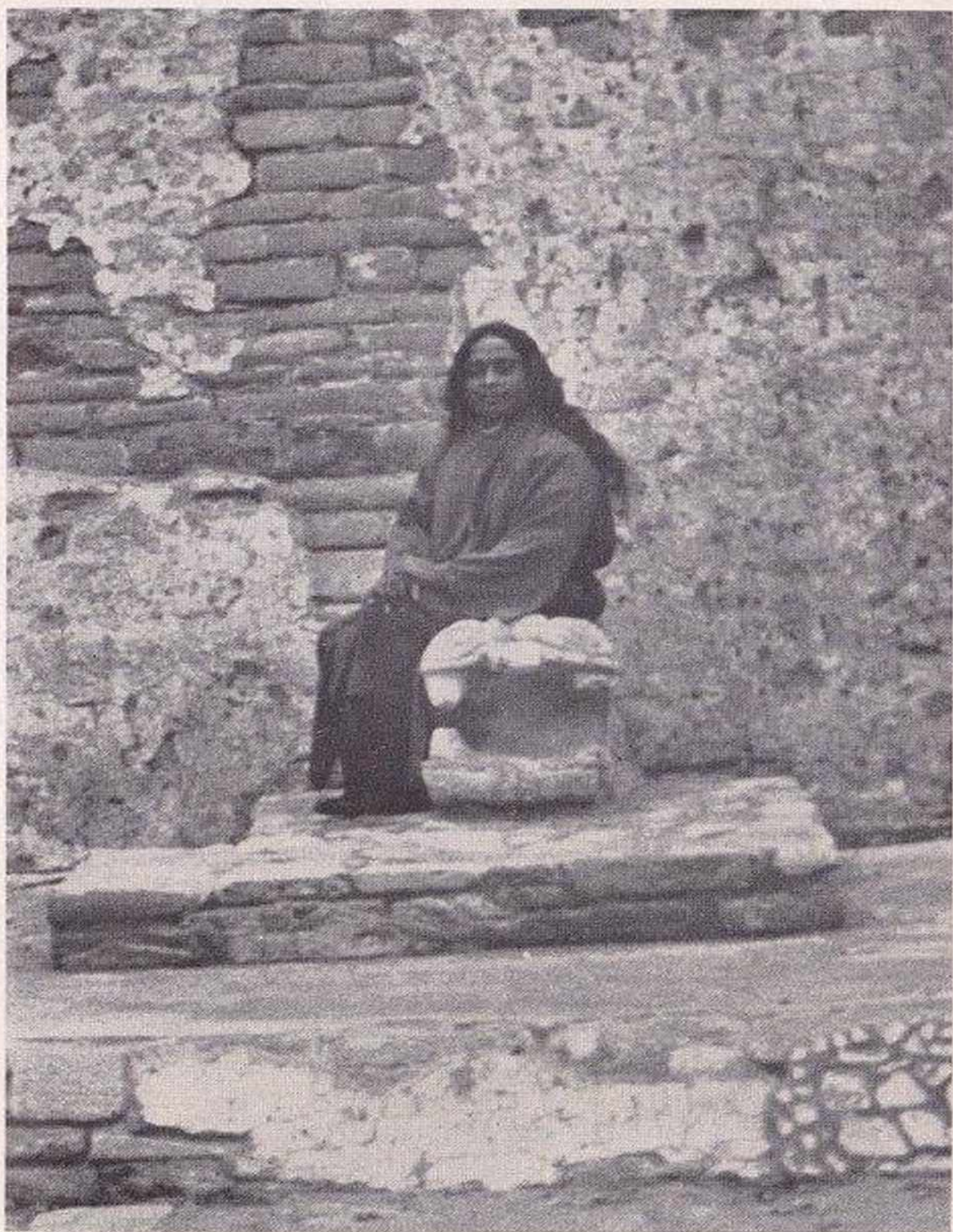
Life, in all stations and situations, is an actual and active work. Activity is God's medicine for man, and the ability to do work with grace and ease is the highest genius.

Every noble and sublime activity makes room for itself. In the nature of work there is no difference. No work is superior or inferior. No work is absolutely good or absolutely bad. The motive behind the work determines its worth.

The actions of individuals are like the index of a book, pointing out what is most remarkable in them.

In the workshop of nature everyone is active and there is no standstill. All actions take their hue from the complexion of one's heart.

You should work like a master and never like a slave. Love the art of your work. Consider how well you can do it rather than how much you can gain from it.



Paramahansa Yogananda seated on stone serpent's head
at Tenayuca pyramids, near Mexico City, July 1929

A consecrated act strikes a chord in the universe, touches moral intelligence, visits all worlds, and conveys its vibrations to eternity.

A sacred and solemn act is a treasure. And an act done well at the moment is a good action performed for all eternity.

Unselfish and egoless actions are the most radiant pages in the biography of souls.

Contentment

A wise man fastens his attention on what he has rather than on what he lacks. He who finds no satisfaction in himself, seeks for it in vain elsewhere.

He who is not satisfied with anything can satisfy no one.

He who is not contented with what he has would never be contented with what he would like to have.

Some Reflections and Inspirations

Thoroughness insures success, while carelessness invites failure. The neglect of little things defeats a great purpose. The slightest selfishness is enough to ruin the effect of a great generosity. A very thin film of selfishness is enough to stifle gigantic genius. You cannot aim at touching only the big things in life, letting the little ones suffer from neglect. Thoroughness is a method to bring about most marvelous results. It digs after facts. It makes honesty the best policy. It makes prevention better than cure. It makes practice perfect.

* * *

Patience is a fine flower in the garden of a peaceful and contented heart. It blossoms in full beauty's bloom, bearing in its cup of effort the honey of wisdom that cools many a thirsty lip. It is respectfully welcomed at all doors and praised and honored by all. For it rings and swings bells of joy wherever it goes. It is a remedy for every sorrow, a plaster for all sores. Though it may be bitter to put in practice, its fruit is always sweet. It keeps man from rolling and tumbling even in the greatest storms.

* * *

Good Conversation is an art, not within the reach of all. It is not easily got for the mere asking. It is an ambition of all, but only a few excel in it. It should be natural and spontaneous. Like ploughing, it turns up a large surface of life. It demands wisdom, wit, resolution, dexterity of retort, and the like. All these limbs of conversation should

be sound and healthy and not defective. It should not be boring or beating about the bush or nonstop. It should not be vain, verbose, or vulgar. This is no doubt an age of talk and talkers. Idle talk is as useless as idle silence. A good conversation charms everyone. It throws light on life.

* * *

Blessing is a power, marvelous and magical. It actually builds a new world about you. Cultivate the power by blessing everything that comes into your life. It is amazing in its effects, crippling the power of evil through turning on the power of good. Prove its magic today and every day of your life.

* * *

Originality is life. Imitation is suicide. The success of another cannot be copied or successfully imitated; if imitated, it cannot last long. Be original in everything. The dynamic force of originality lies latent in you. Blaze your own way instead of trying to walk in the beaten track. Grow by being original. Let your acts speak for you. Have something new to give to the world. Dive deep within. Enlightened seers

(Continued on page 36)



SAINTS AND SAGES, by Swami Sivananda, 173 pp., hard cover, 1960, \$3.00 postpaid. Order from publisher: Yoga Vedanta Academy, Sivananda Nagar Post Office, Rishikesh, Uttar Pradesh State, India.

All men love a hero, for in him the soul within each of us intuitively recognizes itself. The life stories of great saints and sages, however far removed in purity they may be from our own, arouse in us a profound urge toward the originality and nobility of thought, word, and deed that characterize men of God. Thus is the purpose of a saint fulfilled. Mortal consciousness would have us believe that we are poor creatures. Hence it is wise to study the lives of divine men, that we may reawaken and reaffirm our soul's knowledge of its supremacy over all human limitations.

The life and activities of the great sage, Sri Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, are well known to his devotees all over the world. In his recent book, *Saints and Sages*, he gives accounts "in a nutshell"

of the lives of some of India's greatest spiritual heroes, ancient and modern. Among the latter is Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of Self-Realization Fellowship and Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society.

"Yogananda was Born a Siddha and a Yogi"

Swami Sivanandaji writes: "Yogananda was born a Siddha* and a Yogi. He used to have mystic experiences even in his childhood, and had perfect control over his body. . . . His supreme devotion to God and his Guru [Swami Sri Yukteswar of Serampore, Bengal] brought him a variety of spiritual experiences, until at last he received the experience of cosmic consciousness."

The lives of a number of the great personages described in this book will be familiar to many readers: Mahavira, Buddha, Shankara, Tulsidas, Nanak, Mira Bai, Kabir, Jesus, Saint Francis, Mohammed, and Confucius. Among the modern sages depicted in Sivanandaji's word sketches are Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, and Paramahansa Yogananda.

The following two selections from the book describe briefly the lives of two saints who are little known to Western readers.

Sambandhar, Who Drank the Milk of Divine Wisdom

Sambandhar took birth in a Brahmin family in Shiyali in the district of Tanjore. He was born of Bhagawati and Sivapadahridayar. Once the parents went with the child to a tank to take their bath. They left the child on the bank. The child cried aloud, "O Mother! O Father!" as he did not see his parents. They did not hear him, but Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati heard, and they appeared before him. Parvati gave the child milk. He drank of divine knowledge along with the milk.

The parents finished their bath and came to their son. Milk was flowing from his mouth and there were tears in his eyes. The parents asked, "Beloved child, who gave you milk?" The child sang a hymn narrating everything to his parents. They rejoiced heartily and gave him a new name, Thirugyana Sambandhar, as he had attained divine wisdom through the grace of Lord Shiva and Parvati. (He was also known by the name of Piliayar.) From that moment he began to sing the praises of Lord Shiva in the various temples. He sang soul-stirring,

*One who has attained perfection in Yoga.

sublime *thevarams* or odes. This incident occurred when Sambandhar was three years old.

Sambandhar wanted to worship the Lord at a temple in Araturai. He went on foot. He got tired and so he rested on the way in Maranpadi during the night. As he was a small boy, his tender feet were much affected by the long walk. The Lord appeared in the dreams of the priests and told them, "Sambandhar is coming to Me. Take the pearl umbrella and the pearl palanquin that you will find in the temple and hand them over to him." The priests woke up and went to the temple. They saw there the articles they had seen in their dreams. They took them, went to Maranpadi, and gave them to Sambandhar. They informed him about the Lord's command. Sambandhar knew this already, as the Lord had informed him also in a dream.

The priests performed the sacred-thread ceremony for the boy. Sambandhar had not studied the *Vedas* but he repeated stanzas of them and explained them to the priests. The priests were struck with wonder.

Appar, another great saint, heard about the glory of Sambandhar. He came from Chidambaram to Shiyali to pay his respects to Sambandhar. Sambandhar came forward to receive him. Both spoke words of affection and love.

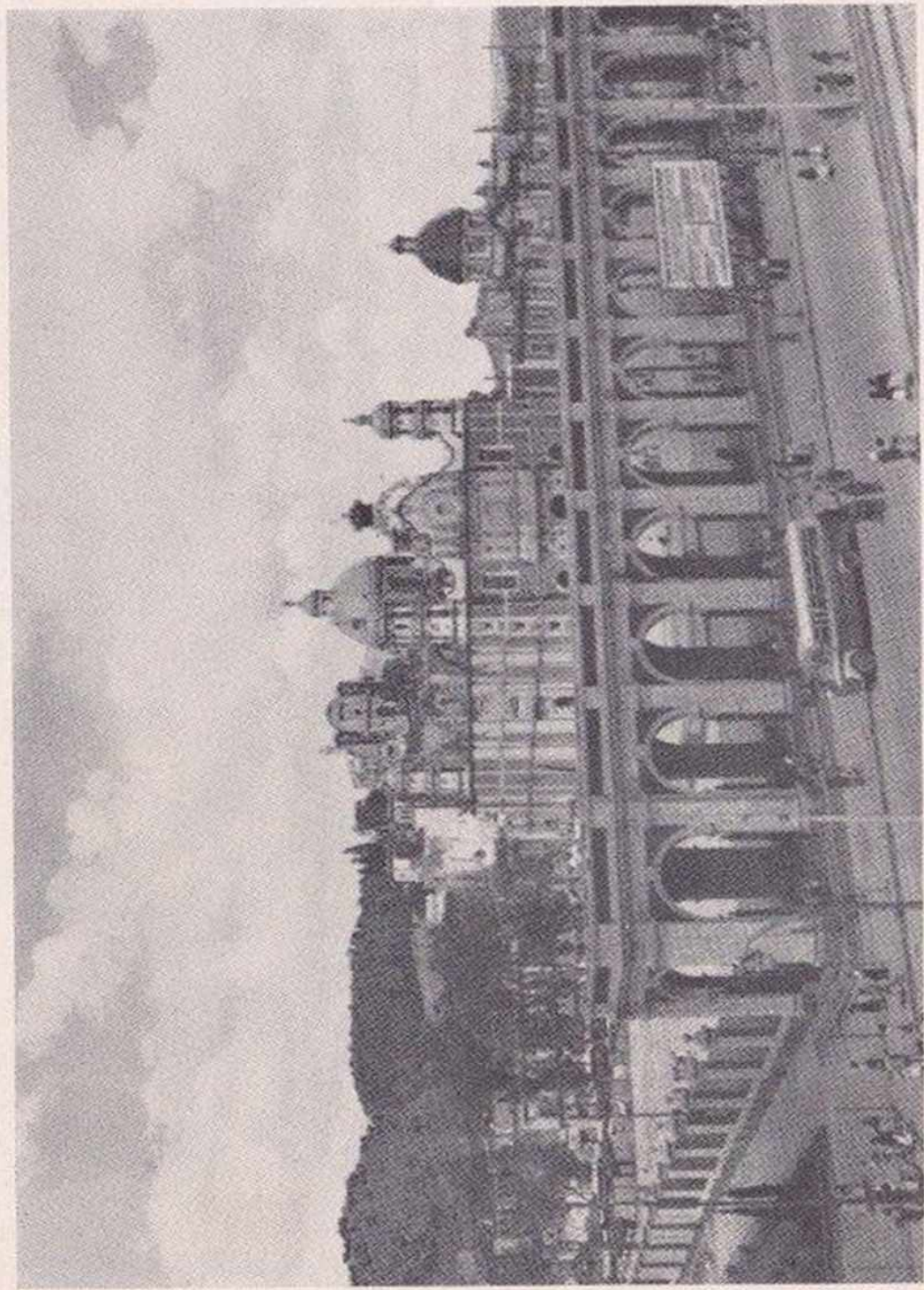
The daughter of the king of the Malava country was suffering from an incurable disease. The king tried all sorts of medicines. Finally he took her to a temple. Sambandhar visited the temple and saw the princess in an unconscious state. His heart melted. He sang a *padigam* (hymn) and worshiped Lord Shiva. The last line in each stanza ends: "Is it right for the Lord to cause suffering to this girl?" At once the princess became better. She got up and prostrated herself at the lotus feet of Sambandhar.

Sambandhar proceeded to Tirumarugal. There a traveler was fatally bitten by a snake; his wife was bemoaning the death of her husband. Sambandhar sang a *padigam*. The traveler was brought back to life.

Once there was severe famine at Tiruvillimilalai. Sambandhar received one measure of gold every day from the Lord. He purchased provisions with the money and fed all the Shiva *bhaktas* (devotees).

In Mylapore there lived a devotee of Shiva named Sivanesa Chettiar. He had a daughter, Poompavi. Sivanesa heard about the glory

(Continued on page 47)



Basilica of Guadalupe near Mexico City. About 15,000 pilgrims come here daily to see the miraculous portrait of the Virgin Mary.

A Hymn at Easter

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA



O Christ, beloved Son of God! thou didst embark on a storm-tossed sea of prejudiced minds. Their cruel thought waves lashed thy tender heart.

Thy trial on the Cross was an immortal victory of humility over force, of soul over flesh. May thine ineffable example hearten us to bear bravely our lesser crosses.

O Great Lover of Error-Torn Humanity! In myriad hearts an unseen monument has arisen to the mightiest miracle of love — thy words: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Mayest thou remove from our eyes the cataracts of ignorance, that we see the beauty of thy message: "Love even thine enemies as thyself. Sick in mind or asleep in delusion, they are still thy brothers."

O Cosmic Christ, may we, too, conquer the Satan of dividing selfishness that prevents the gathering in sweet accord of all men in the one fold of Spirit.

As thou art Perfection, yet wert crucified, teach us not to resent the inevitable tests of life: the daily challenge to our fortitude by adversities, our self-control by temptation, and our goodwill by misunderstanding.

Purified by contemplation on thee, innumerable devotees perfume their lives with emanations from thy flower soul. O Good Shepherd! thou leadest thy countless flock to the ever-green Pastures of Peace.

Our deepest aspiration is to see the Heavenly Father with open eyes of wisdom, as thou dost; and to know like thee that we are verily His sons. *Amen.*

(Continued from page 31)

and saints of yore sounded the note of freedom by their unfoldment of originality. Power, knowledge, and victory come from within.

Develop originality by strong resolutions. Discern and discriminate the inner original feelings from the imitations in you. Winnow out all imitations and hold on to all that is original in you with a steady insight and a firm resolve till you realize yourself to be an embodiment of originality in thought, word, and deed.

* * *

False Conception of Liberty: Humanity is one. Life is one. Fellowship with humanity based on unity makes a rich life in eternal harmony. Current civilization tramples upon the vision of humanity and unity by a boast of false liberty. A person begins boring a hole in his cabin in a ship on the sea, and says that he is at liberty to do so in his own private room and that it is of no concern of others. This viewpoint is the fruit of false freedom as understood by modern civilization.

* * *

Achievement of wealth, fame, and all other worldly honors may be no real success in life. What you seem to be or what you may have achieved is not what truly counts; but what you are and how you honestly endeavor to uplift civilization by realization of the ultimate goal in life, setting thereby a brilliant example to future generations, do indeed erect an immortal monument in the world. Manhood is above all titles and degrees, riches and luxuries. Life's superstructure cannot be built on sands but needs a strong foundation, an invincible power and purpose in life. You have to be lord over yourself.

* * *

Individual and Society: It is the life of the individual that can truly effect any reform in society. To behold one's own Self in all things, and all things in one's own Self, is the very truth and purpose of life, individual as well as collective.

* * *

Ignorance is the only sin, the sin of all sins. A mistake is an effect of ignorance. When a mistake is committed, condemn yourself. Do not be ashamed to acknowledge it, though it might hurt your pride. Acknowledgment demands forgiveness. Forgiveness demands forgetfulness. Learn to forgive and forget your own mistakes as you would those of others. Never cover up a mistake. Never make another mistake by trying to carry the first mistake along with you. To acknowl-

edge a mistake is to make you strong where you had been weak. It is courage that enables you to confess your error.

Mistakes have no reality in Truth; drop them from your memory. "Forgive" and "forget" are part and parcel of each other. To err is human and to forgive is divine. Even the blackest sin will be washed snow-white, if you but fill your consciousness with joy, love and forgiveness.

* * *

Fear is not lack of faith; it is perverted faith in evil instead of good. Eject mortal fear from your consciousness and depend only on the spiritual realities. Fear can be dispelled into nothingness.

* * *

Transitoriness: Heartbeats hammer the body day and night, bringing the decay of the flesh moment by moment. The pulse beats incessantly, trumpeting the message of the transitoriness of life on earth. The upper lid of the eye taps the lower one every now and then, as the master his disciple, with the message: "Wake up from the limited and limping sight of the manifold! Get the immortal and infinite sight of the Self Without a Second!"



Sister Dayamata (*right*) with Sri Ananda Moyi Ma, famous Bengali saint, at the latter's Benares ashram on the River Ganges, September 15, 1959

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This 24-page booklet will be mailed without obligation to any inquirer. Address: Self-Realization Fellowship, 3880 San Rafael Ave., Department M, Los Angeles 65, California.

U.S. Postal Dept. Issues Mahatma Gandhi Stamps

On January 26th, India's Republic Day, the United States Postal Department in Washington, D.C., dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi two stamps (4¢ and 8¢) in its Champions of Liberty series. The ceremony was attended by Postmaster General J. Edward Day, the Hon. Dean Rusk, Secretary of State; members of Congress, and Mr. M. C. Chagla, Ambassador of India.

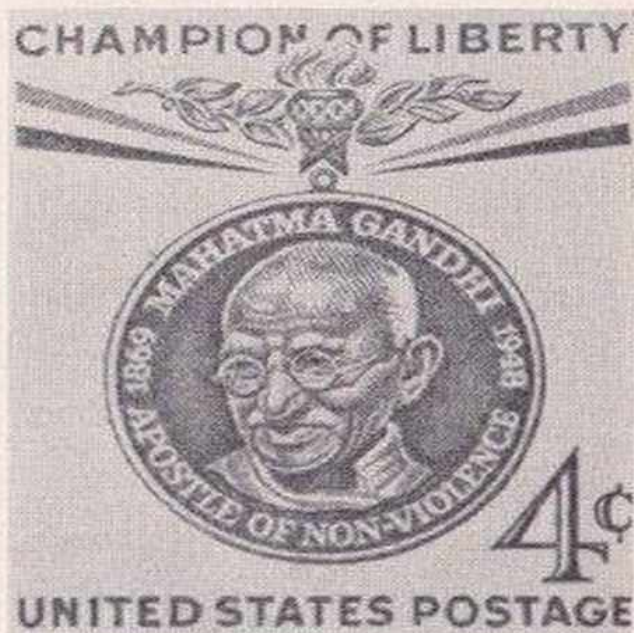
"We dedicate these stamps to a man who has become a symbol of courage and moral strength to all the peoples of the world," said the Postmaster General. "To whichever part of the world these stamps may go, they will preach a message of peace and goodwill."

The Secretary of State spoke of "the privilege to participate in a ceremony honoring a great hero and patriot of a sister nation." He continued: "One of the unforgettable evenings in my own life was an evening spent with a few dozen undergraduates at Oxford in company with Gandhi. The memory of his nobility and long-suffering patience will live forever. . . ."

"India and the United States have much in common. They are the two most populous democracies in the world. Both countries hold infinite respect for the dignity of the individual and both are composed of many different ethnic groups. Gandhi once said: 'I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house. . . . It has room for the least of God's creations.' This we believe also. We are grateful to India for her great contribution to all mankind."

Tagore's Centenary Celebrated This Year

The year 1961 will mark the centenary of Rabindranath Tagore's birth (May 6, 1861). Commemorations of the event will be held in India, America, and other lands. Public lectures on the great poet,



Gandhi stamp, enlarged

and presentations of his dramas, will be given at about twenty universities in different parts of the United States.

Fifty Tagore paintings will be exhibited during April and May at Asia Society, 112 East St., New York. A large public meeting will be held on April 19th in Town Hall, New York, at which Robert Frost and Norman Cousins will speak on "America's Tribute to Rabindranath Tagore."

A list of the commemorations planned in America may be obtained from Rabindranath Tagore Centenary Committee, 50 Kenilworth Place, Brooklyn 10, New York.

Sri Sananda Lal Ghosh, noted photographer and a brother of Paramahansa Yogananda, had the honor many years ago of taking a fine photograph of Tagore. He has mailed to SRF a shipment of prints of this photo, in small and large sizes. Their arrival in Los Angeles is expected soon.

Queen Elizabeth Visits India

Queen Elizabeth II of England recently made a visit to India. At a state banquet on January 21st, given in her honor in Delhi by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, the Queen said:

"I know that these coming weeks in India will be some of the most rewarding and instructive of my life. . . . India's achievements during recent years have aroused admiration everywhere. Yet I know that you and your Government also have a deep and abiding feeling for the past; and that you do not wish India, in all the fierce rush of the modern world, to become oblivious of the best traditions and great legacy from former generations. I am sure that in combining scientific progress with the ancient Indian values of toleration, compassion, and wisdom, India will be an example to the world."

SEND FOR A FREE "HORN OF PLENTY" BANK



Members or nonmembers of SRF who wish to demonstrate more fully in their lives the divine law of abundance are invited to write to the "Horn of Plenty Department," Self-Realization Fellowship. They will receive a free Horn of Plenty Bank and a booklet of instructions.

Letters From SRF Students

"Through SRF I have found life's meaning. The teachings have lit in me a spark of hope for the emancipation of man from all his woes. The association with SRF has changed my 'race' from a single strain to all strains; it has expanded my consciousness to include all people. It has taught me that the only way to help others truly is first to correct my own shortcomings." — *J.M., San Francisco, Calif.*

"These Lessons are unsurpassed in the joy, satisfaction and inspiration they give me." — *S.H., Perth Amboy, New Jersey.*

"The Lessons have been the beginning of a joyful journey. They are filled with such love and beauty that when I read them my heart swells in gladness and thankfulness." — *L.G., Bronx, New York.*

"How much better this world would be if each person in it could read and realize the truths in even one of the SRF Lessons!" — *H.T., Seattle, Washington.*

"The transformation in my life already is such that it seems almost miraculous. Except in the most childish forms, I've never before known faith or had any real hope. My years of sick depression are now past, and the so sorely needed discipline is becoming increasingly a part of my life. (I marvel always that through printed words one can be so aware of the Guru himself.)

"Many years ago, it was my honor and privilege to be introduced to Swami Yogananda. At that time he was a newcomer to southern California, and was speaking at various churches. Never had I looked into such soulful eyes or sensed such gentleness — he had a radiance about him; it is difficult to put my impression into words.

"Some months later I attended a banquet at Mt. Washington where I saw a remarkable demonstration of the relaxation power of cosmic rhythm as the Master played on a harmonium and sang softly. I was seated next to a reporter from the *Los Angeles Daily News*; it was his duty to remain unbiased and impersonal. Yet we both felt, and he remarked, that the Swami had raised the consciousness of everyone present. The reporter told me there was a legend circulating about town that anyone who 'touched him, or looked into the Master's eyes' would one day follow him. I am the legend fulfilled. I

am studying his teachings. If I never gain more than the beauty and peace I have received from practice of the *Hong-Sau* and *Om* techniques I shall still have traveled far." — *C.D., Paradise, California.*

"The peace and joy that I have experienced through meditation are like nothing this world can give. The Lessons of SRF are truly wonderful, going deep into the study of the soul and its oneness with God. I am finding life much more interesting, much more complete." — *G.F., Whittier, California.*

"I am deeply inspired by the dignity and simplicity of SRF teachings." — *R.K., Cambridge, Massachusetts.*

"The cell-charging exercises give me a sense of well-being and a clearer mind. I sleep better and feel healthier." — *I.S., Encinitas, Cal.*

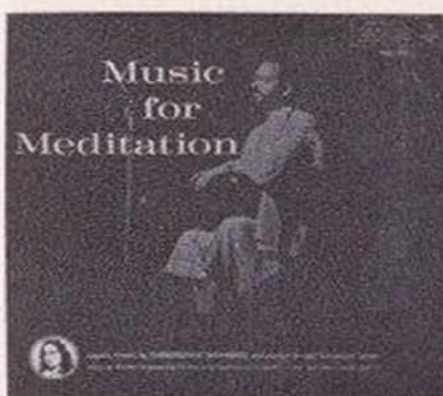
"I had just completed the energy-release technique and had started the *Hong-Sau* breathing, when I felt a strange warm glow stealing through my entire body. Gradually I felt my whole body expanding; I cannot remember whether I was breathing or not. Such great bliss filled me that I automatically began to smile; I had an insatiable desire to keep repeating: 'Master! Master! how I love thee; please let me fly away!' The whole phenomenon really was not analogous to any I ever before experienced, even during meditations. Since then my meditations have been different—more joyful and satisfying." — *E.D., Santa Monica, California.*

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come to us with this technique. The energizing exercises give strength and vitality; we know it in comparing our present state to the past one." — *Mr. and Mrs. E.G., Brugg bei Biel, Switzerland.*

"My regular practice of the SRF techniques of meditation has brought me a growing understanding, a deeper peace, and a boundless trust in the eventual triumph of divine right over the forces of evil." — *N.W., New South Wales, Australia.*

"I am thankful to God and Yogananda for having brought such a wonderful guide into my life; truly the SRF Lessons are the fulfillment of all my longings." — *J.S., Montreal, Canada.*

"I wish to thank those who were kind enough to pray in my behalf. About four weeks ago the severe pains in my neck started to subside. I am very, very grateful, for if the pains had not subsided, my doctor intended to send me for X-ray treatments. The pain had become so severe that it was difficult for me to talk, which is a necessary part of my work. I cannot express the joy that I feel in relief from pain." — *B.C., Chicago, Illinois.*

"About a year ago I wrote asking for prayers for my sister. I wish I could tell you about the good changes in her life. She had drunk since the age of seventeen, and for ten years she could not live without intoxicants. Both she and her husband quit drinking one day last September and have not touched a drop since. Her weight is down to normal and she takes pride in her appearance. She has become interested in her home and family activities." — *D.T., Compton, Calif.*

"Quite by accident I came across an issue of *Self-Realization Magazine*; it held me spellbound." — *L.B., Detroit, Michigan.*

"Your wonderful magazine is making a worthy contribution to the good of mankind." — *R.S., Trinidad, B.W.I.*

"I would feel lost without the magazine and its uplifting influence. It brings the Mother Center closer to us." — *R.C., Hartford, Connecticut.*

"Since practicing the *asanas* [described in *Self-Realization Magazine*] my body has become more flexible. I feel noticeably less fatigue and an increased sense of well-being. A painful condition that had affected my right hip has subsided; the muscles have become stretched to nearly normal length. My circulation also has improved." — *T.B., Orange City, Iowa.*

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SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

(Continued from page 33)

of Sambandhar and in his mind surrendered all his wealth and his daughter to the saint. One day Poompavi was bitten by a cobra while she was gathering flowers in the garden. She died immediately. The father cremated the body and kept the ashes in a pot.

Sivanesa invited Sambandhar to the place. Sambandhar came to Mylapore. The devotees informed the saint of the death of the girl. Sambandhar asked Sivanesa to bring the pot of ashes at once. Poompavi came out of the pot, as Lakshmi had emerged from a lotus. The father's heart was filled with delight. There was a rain of flowers from celestial regions.

Sambandhar says in one of his *padigams*: "O foolish man! Do not let days pass uselessly. Serve Shiva! Hear His praise; meditate on His form. Repeat the *Panchakshara* always. Live in the company of the devotees of Lord Shiva. Serve them. His Name will remove all evils and dangers that are likely to fall on you and your family. Worship Lord Shiva. He will confer on you bliss and immortality."

Narsi Mehta, Devotee of Lord Krishna

Narsi Mehta belonged to a Brahmin family of Junagarh in Kathiawar, Gujarat. He was born of a poor family. From his boyhood he had great devotion. He always sang songs of Lord Krishna and *Gopi Lila* and danced in ecstasy. He lived with his brother. As Narsi did not care for household matters and as he was not earning anything, his brother's wife used to taunt and ill-treat him. He never entertained the idea of earning his livelihood; he had a firm conviction that Lord Krishna would provide him with all his wants. This belief was due to his previous *samskaras* (karma). He was of a happy-go-lucky nature. He practiced *tapasya* (austerities) at Gopinath. He had the *darshan* (sight) of Lord Krishna through the grace of Lord Shiva. He came back to his house and got married. He had a son by the name of Shyamaldass and a daughter by the name of Kunwarbai.

He was a contemporary of Mira Bai (16th century). He would address Lord Krishna in terms of equality. He was a simple-minded and frank *bhakta* (devotee of God as a Person). He saw Lord Krishna everywhere and in everything. He had *Para Bhakti* and cosmic consciousness. He composed a poem entitled *Hari Mala*. It is said that his daughter's marriage was conducted by Lord Krishna Himself with great pomp and éclat. As Narsi was very poor, his rich marriage-presents to Kunwarbai's mother-in-law greatly astonished all.

Many miracles happened in his life. He had direct vision of Lord Krishna on several occasions. Once he was going along with his brother on a road. He was very hungry. He could not get any food. Lord Krishna assumed the form of a shepherd boy and gave him good food in a small cottage. Narsi asked his orthodox brother to partake of the food and said to him that it was Lord Krishna Himself who was serving him. His brother had no faith.* Later the brothers continued on their journey. Narsi's brother had forgotten to take his vessel from the cottage. He ran back to the place and found the vessel, but neither the cottage nor the shepherd boy was there. Narsi's brother repented very much for not having taken food with Narsi.

Aid From a Divine "Stand-In"

On another occasion, Narsi was performing *sraddha* (annual offering to departed souls) for his father. There was a shortage of ghee (butter) for the ceremony. Narsi went to the bazaar to purchase the ghee. On the way he met a *kirtan* (religious singing party) and joined it. He was singing *Hari Bhajans* and dancing in an ecstatic mood. He entirely forgot about the ceremony and the ghee. His poor wife was waiting anxiously for him. Two miracles happened. It was all the grace of Lord Krishna to help his devotee. Firstly, the sun did not move in the firmament; it stood still. Nobody knew how much time had actually passed. Secondly, Lord Krishna assumed the form of Narsi, brought the ghee, and handed it to the wife. She gave a mild rebuke to Krishna who was acting the part of Narsi. All the Brahmins were well fed and departed when the function was over. Narsi's wife was arranging things and cleaning the room and the verandah. Then came Narsi with ghee in hand; he apologized to his wife for being late.

After the death of his wife and son he devoted all his time to worship and to singing the Name of the Lord. He broke caste rules and observances. He sang at *kirtans* everywhere, even in the homes of sweepers and men of inferior castes. The other *Nagar-Brahmins* hated him and outcasted him. They refused to admit him to a certain feast. Another miracle happened. Each Brahmin suddenly found at his side the figure of a low-caste man. The Brahmins were cowed down and began to show Narsi respect. They openly admitted that he was a great *bhakta*.

*The brother, an orthodox Brahmin, would not eat food offered by a non-Brahmin shepherd. (*Editor's Note*)

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In this *Yuga* the world has not produced a greater *bhakta* than Narsi. His devotion was of a unique nature. He has pointed out to the world the path of devotion. That is the reason why he still lives in our hearts.

In his inspiring song, "*Vaishnava janatho thene kahiye*," he gives a fine description of a true devotee of God. The song is sung even today and was one of the daily prayer songs of Mahatma Gandhi.

Rabia, a Great Islamic Saint

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

Guru Nanak Tells of the True Account

When the fifteenth-century mystic and poet, Guru Nanak, was a boy of seven, he was sent to Gopal Pandha to learn Hindi. The teacher asked him to read a book. Nanak replied, "What will it avail me to know all else but not to have a knowledge of God?"

The teacher wrote the Hindi alphabet for him on a wooden slate. Nanak said to him, "Please tell me, sir, what books you have studied? What is the extent of your knowledge?" The teacher replied, "I know mathematics and the accounts necessary for shopkeeping." The boy said, "This knowledge will not in any way help you in obtaining true freedom." The teacher was much astonished at his words. He said, "Nanak, tell me something which would help me in the attainment of salvation."

The boy replied, "Burn worldly love, make its ashes into ink, and make the intellect into fine paper. Now use the love of God as your pen and your heart as the writer, and under the instructions of your Guru, write and meditate. Write the Name of the Lord and His praises, and say: 'He has no limit this side or the other.' O teacher, learn to write this account!"



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"Had I read all the great books, past and present, none could have impressed me more than *Autobiography of a Yogi*. No one could have been more inspired, in his endeavors to explain God's relationship to man, than was Paramahansa Yogananda." — K.K., Huntsville, Texas.

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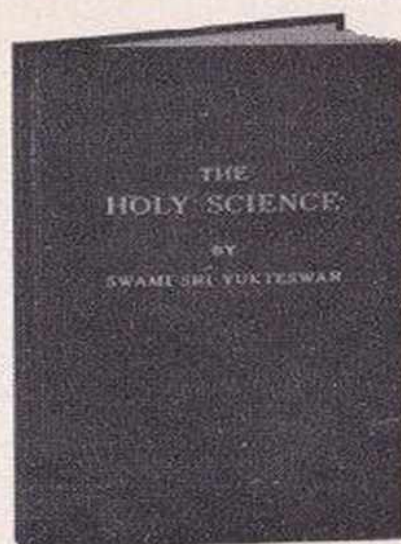
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