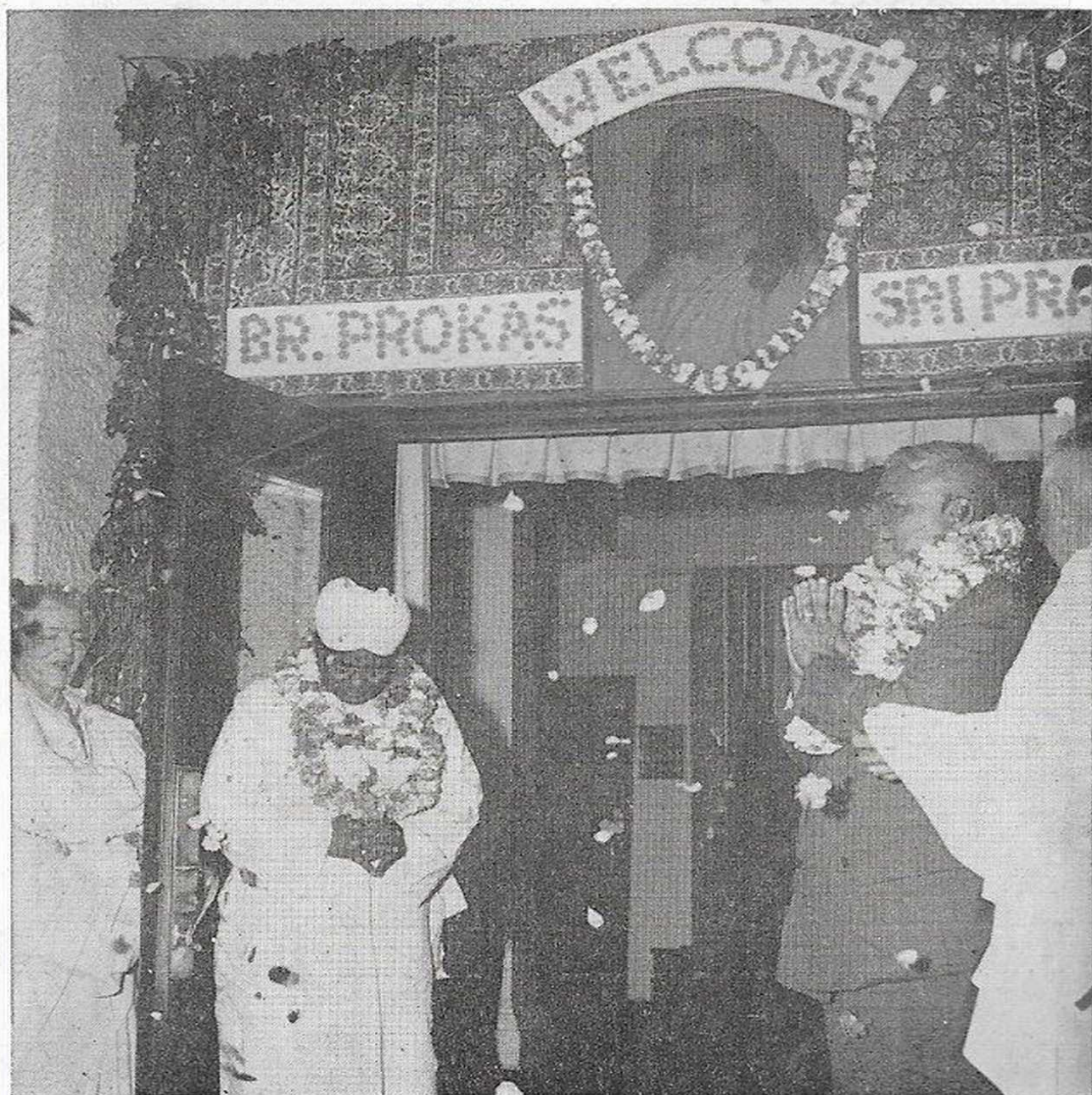


Self-Realization

MAGAZINE



Founded by PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Br. Prokas and Sri Prabhas Ghose, YSS-SRF leaders from India, are welcomed with rose-petal shower, at Mt. Washington Center, Los Angeles.

Healing of Body, Mind, and Soul

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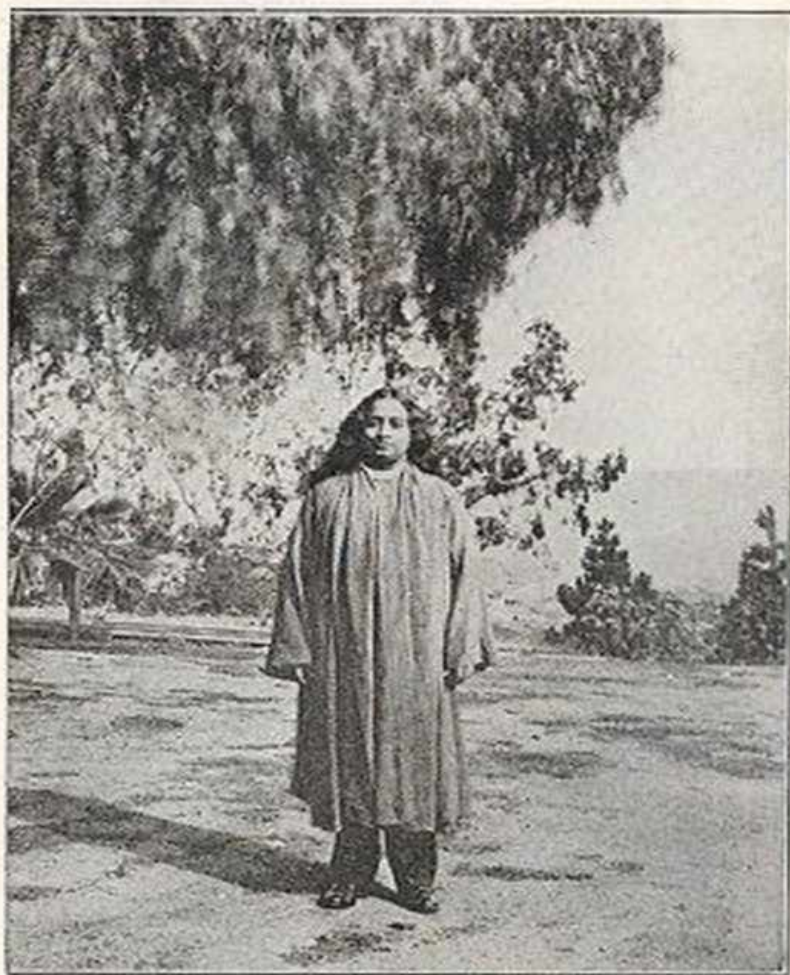
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Yoganandaji on the
grounds of SRF Mt.
Washington Center,
1926.



Ulrich Dunbar, noted sculptor, at work
on a bust of Yoganandaji, Washington,
D.C., 1927.

Realizing God in Your Daily Life

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

*(Transcript of a lecture given on October 4, 1942
in Encinitas, California)*

Even true devotees think sometimes that God does not answer their prayers. He does answer silently, through His laws; but until He is absolutely sure of the devotee He will not answer openly, He will not talk to the devotee. The Lord of Universes is so humble that He does not speak, lest in so doing He influence the devotee's use of free will to choose or reject Him. Once you know Him, there is no doubt that you will love Him! Who could resist the Irresistible? But you have to prove your unconditional love for God in order to know Him. You have to have faith. You have to *know* that even as you pray He is listening to you. Then He will make Himself known to you. He cannot then turn a deaf ear to your prayer.

Our relationship with God is not a cold impersonal one, like that between employer and employee. We are His children. He *has* to listen to us! There is no way that we can get away from the fact that we are His children. We are not merely creatures created by Him; we are a part of Him. He made us princes, but we have chosen to become slaves. He wants us to become princes once more, to return to our Kingdom. But no one, having renounced his divine heritage, will regain it without effort. We are made in His image, but we have somehow forgotten that truth. We have succumbed to the delusion that we are mortal beings, and we must sunder the veil of that delusion with the dagger of wisdom.

To attach any reality to the outward show of life shows lack of true wisdom, but God has so impressed us with His *maya*—the cosmic illusion that causes us to see as real that which is only a play of light and shadows—that it is very hard not to be influenced by it. When you are hungry, it is *maya* that makes you think you will starve unless you eat. Yet there are many persons who have fasted as long as seventy days. I have undergone long fasts, and after thirty days there is not even any sensation of hunger. But if your mind believes you cannot live without food, you will not live. That is a common delusion; its basis is solely in our minds. Because of the small number of exceptions to what appears to be a rule, science declares that human beings cannot live very long without food. There are cases, however, of people who live entirely without eating: Therese Neumann of Bavaria, and Giri Bala of Bengal,

flesh. If you do not choose to be happy no one can make you happy. Do not blame God for that! And if you choose to be happy, no one can make you unhappy. If He had not given us freedom to use our own will, we could blame Him when we are unhappy, but He did give us that freedom. It is we who make of life what it is.

You may ask why, if you have free choice, things do not turn out as you will them to be? It is because you have weakened your will, your consciousness of divine powers within you. But if you salvage your will by practicing self-control and meditation it becomes free; and as soon as your will is free you are master of your fate. But if you find that day by day you are living a life against your own conscience, you will never be free. You must take time to do the things that are good for your own welfare. No one stops you but yourself. You make yourself a prisoner of your own moods and bad habits. That is why you must train your will to be more elastic. Keep your will under control by doing the best things in life—thinking more of God, meditating more, practicing self-control, and so on.

The greatest help in your development is the habit of mental whispering to God. You will see a change in yourself that you will like very much. No matter what you do, God should be in your mind constantly. When you want to see a special show, or to buy a dress or a car you have seen, is it not true that no matter what else you may be doing your mind is constantly thinking, "How can I get those things?" Until you fulfill those desires your mind will not rest; it continually works toward fulfilling such desires. In the same manner your mind must be on God night and day. Transmute petty desires into one great desire for Him. Your mind should continually whisper, "Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day."

Mental whispers develop dynamic power to reshape matter into what you want. You do not realize how great is the power of the mind. When your mind and will are attuned to the Divine Will you do not have to move a finger in order to create changes on earth. The Divine law will work for you. All the salient accomplishments of my life have been achieved through that power of mind in tune with the will of God. When that divine dynamo is on, whatever I am wishing has to come to pass.

Whatever you intensely believe in your mind will materialize. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." (*Mark 11:23*)

Do not discourage yourself by entertaining the thought that you

Luther Burbank (*left*) and Yoganandaji (*right*), Santa Rosa, California, 1924. The plants (*foreground*) are edible spineless cacti—a variety developed by the great horticulturist after long experimentation. A similar cactus, presented to Yoganandaji by Burbank, was planted in 1925 on the grounds of SRF headquarters in Los Angeles.



Yoganandaji with Amelita Galli-Curci at her summer home, "Sul Monte," Catskill Mountains, New York, 1926. Their hands are folded in the Indian gesture of *pranam*—"my soul bows to your soul."

are a sinner and that God will never come to you. You then paralyze your will. Sin is a temporary delusion, and what is done is finished. It doesn't belong to you any more. But you should not commit the same error again.

Deny karma. Too many people misinterpret the meaning of karma, adopting a fatalistic attitude. You do not have to accept karma. If I tell you that somebody is standing behind you ready to hurt you because you once hit him, and you meekly say, "Well, it is my karma," and wait for him to strike you, of course you will get a blow! Why don't you try to mollify him? By pacifying him you may lessen his bitterness and remove his desire to strike you.

When you realize yourself as a child of God, what karma have you? God has no karma. And you have none, when you *know* you are His child. Every day you should affirm, "I am not a mortal being; I am not the body. I am a child of God." That is practicing the presence of God. God is free from karma. You are made in His image. You also are free from karma.

The best way to forget your weaknesses is not to think about them; otherwise you will be overwhelmed. Bring the light in and darkness never was. In that thought is one of the greatest inspirations of my life. If light is admitted into a cave where darkness has existed for thousands of years, darkness will vanish instantly. So will our faults and weaknesses vanish when we bring in the light of God. The darkness of ignorance can never enter more.

That is the philosophy of life by which we should live. Not tomorrow, but today, this minute. There cannot be any excuse for not thinking of God. Day and night, rolling in the background of your mind, God! God! God! instead of money or sex or fame. Whether you are washing dishes or digging a ditch or working in an office or a garden—whatever you may be doing, inwardly say, "Lord, manifest to me! You are right here. You are in the sun. You are in the grass. You are in the water. You are in this room. You are in my heart."

And when great love for God comes in your heart, you do not miss human love. Loving the Lord, you can never turn back to lesser loves. In Him you will find all the love of all hearts. You will find completeness. Everything that the world gives you and then takes away, leaving you in pain or disillusionment, you will find in God in a much greater way, and with no aftermath of sorrow.

Life seems such a tangible reality, and yet it is elusive. One by one we slip away. Others will come and we shall go. But the body is only a garment. How many times you have changed your clothing in this life, yet you would not say because of that that *you* have changed. Similar-



(left to right) Mrs. Yowlache; Yoganandaji; Chief Yowlache, noted Amercian Indian singer; Rita Green Breeze, poet; Mt. Washington Center, Nov. 8, 1925.



Yoganandaji and Chief Yowlache, famous American Indian baritone, Mt. Washington Center, Nov. 8, 1925. Yoganandaji is wearing the head band of the Yakima tribe of Washington, presented to him by Chief Yowlache.

ly, when you give up this bodily dress at death you do not change. You are just the same, an immortal soul, a child of God. Reincarnation means merely a change of mortal dress. But your real self will never change. You must concentrate on your real self, not on the body, which is nothing but a dress.

I sometimes think that sense perceptions are the worst enemies of man, because they make us believe we are something we are not. The sensation of cold makes us think we are cold, and the sensation of heat makes us think we are hot. If we would but deny these sensations in our minds we would feel neither cold nor heat.

One night long ago in Doxbury, Massachusetts, I went to bathe in the ocean in the moonlight. Dr. M. W. Lewis and his son Bradford accompanied me. The water felt very cold, but I reminded myself that everything is made of electricity: the same electricity that makes cold also makes heat, and the water itself is nothing more than a manifestation of electrical energies. Just as I was thinking these thoughts Bradford looked at me strangely, then turned to his father and exclaimed, "Swamiji has a light around his body!" The light of God had come over me as I refused to accept the sensation of cold and reaffirmed instead the truth that everything is made of Divine Electricity.

But if you speak about these things too much they are taken away from you. God is like a little child. He knows no guile. But if you play the slightest deceit or trickery on Him He is gone. That is why it is so hard to get hold of Him. You have to catch Him in the net of your unconditional love. *Love means craving for God.* God appreciates love more than devotion: in devotion there is distance and awe, perhaps fear; in love there is unity, at-one-ment.

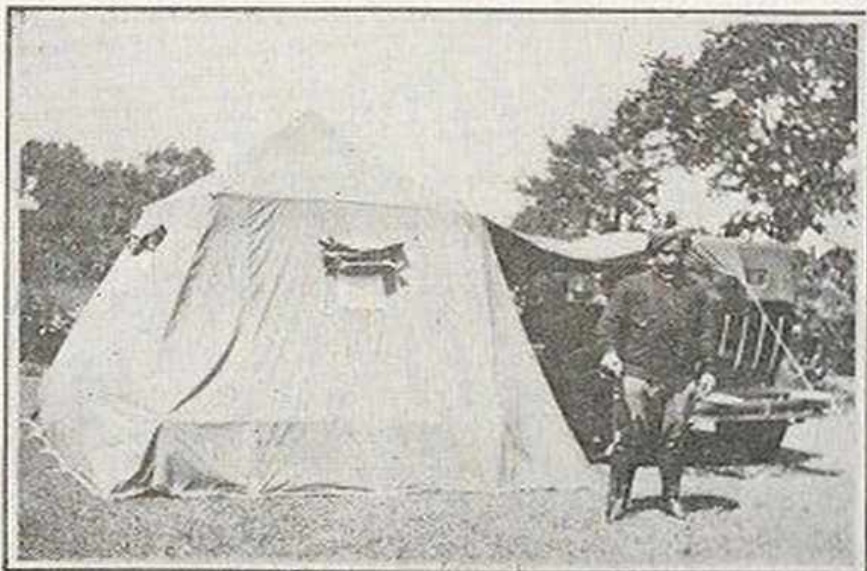
Do not despair if you do not yet feel an unconditional love for God. Salvation is for all. If you choose to delay on this path of evolution, it is your loss. You cannot stand still; you have to go forward or backward. But you must be redeemed sometime. To be redeemed is to drop the ignorance that covers the soul. You cannot see the gold if it is covered with mud. As long as the mud of ignorance besmears the golden soul you cannot see it. You are unable to think of yourself as a soul because you know only the body. The human form is the mud that you have put over your soul, and that is why you do not know what you are. Wash away the mud, forget the body by meditation, and you will know what you are. And how can you be anything but perfect, since you are His child? But you have to realize this.

You must be very secret about your love for God, and you have to be very silent about His love. You must not speak about His being with you. Be like the great ones, who inwardly think constantly of the



Yoganandaji welcoming Ralph Waldo Trine, famous author, to SRF Mt. Washington Center, 1926.

Yoganandaji, 1924, during a camping and sightseeing trip. He and three young men companions drove from New York to California in a Maxwell car (*in background at right*), and occasionally slept outdoors in the tent shown here.



things, and where I seek nothing, possessing all things after awakening from the dream of delusion.

I came to this mundane kingdom to play my dreams. My dream is done; I'll flit afar to my true place where nought awaits but immortality, ever-new joy, and unending laughter. Come with me, all who want to be there! All those who dare to come must, instantaneously and now—in mind first, then in body—forsake all else for the attainment of the Great Beloved One.



Homer Samuels Paramhansa Yogananda, and Mme. Galli-Curci (Mrs. Homer Samuels), Mt. Washington Center, 1930. The famous musicians have for many years been deep students of Self-Realization teachings. Mme. Galli-Curci took part in the dedication ceremonies of the golden lotus tower entrance of the Encinitas SRF Colony in 1948.

Yoga Postures For Health

PADMASANA — LOTUS POSTURE

By C. BERNARD

(Reprinted, by request, from March-April, 1949
issue of "Self-Realization Magazine")

There have been many different forms of exercise devised to promote better health for the body. A few of these have been based on a consideration of physical exercise as a means of improving the efficiency of the brain and nervous system to permit a greater expression of the intelligence. But in no other system of physical exercise or body control has such a peak of efficiency been reached as in the unique exercises (the discovery of Paramhansa Yogananda) taught by Self-Realization Fellowship, and in the traditional *asanas* (postures) of yoga.

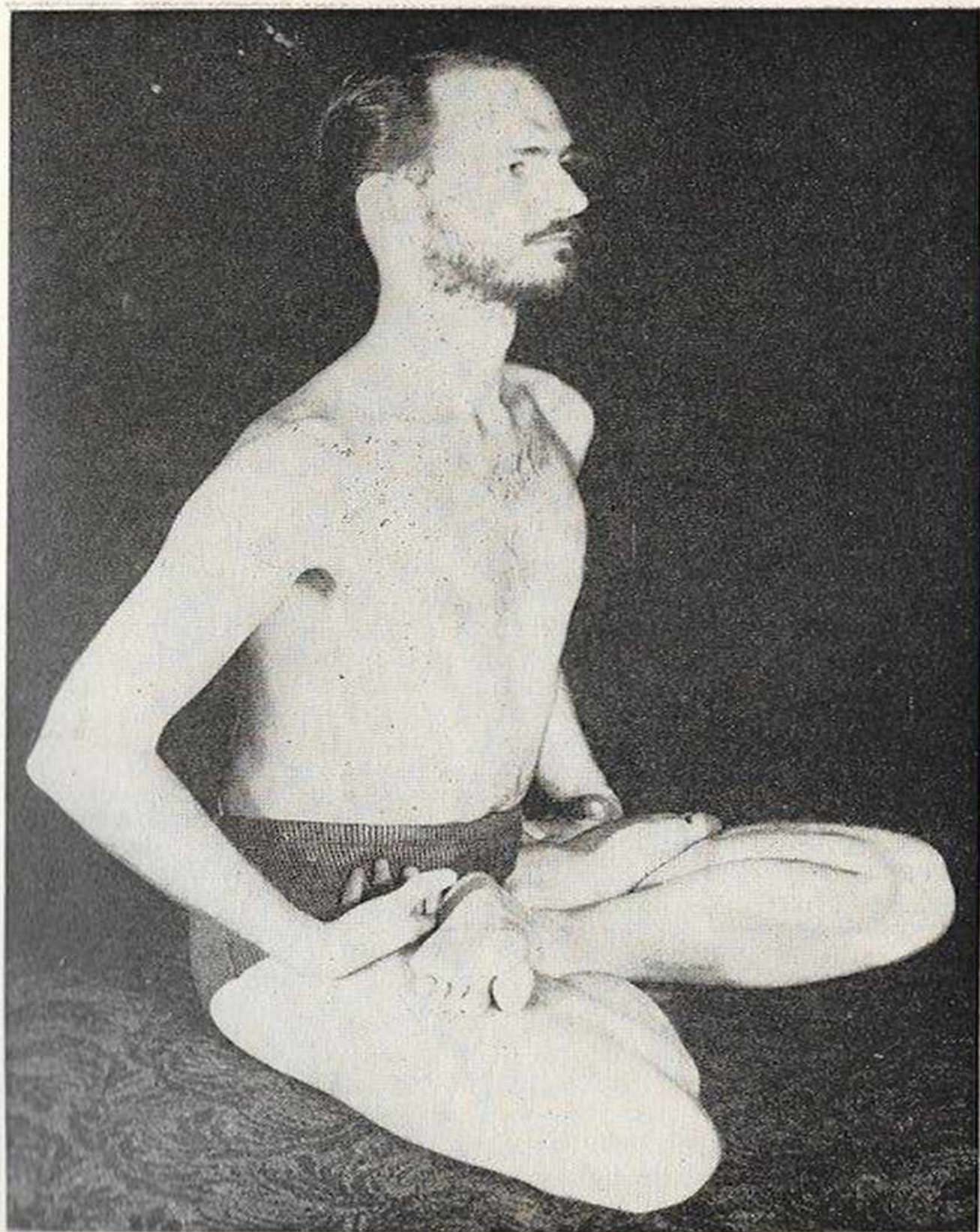
However, not every one will be able to practice the more difficult body-positions, nor is it necessary. The more difficult *asanas* are intended primarily for younger people whose joints and tendons are pliable. When the joints and tendons have been long conditioned to certain positions, such as sitting in a chair, and to certain definite limits of stretch, it is only natural that it will take some time to recondition them to respond without strain to new positions. Even so, elderly people sometimes have been able, after a period of determined practice, to master most of the *asanas*.

Now, while it is true that not everyone can master the *asanas*, anyone can enjoy the physical and mental benefits that accrue from practice of the simple, refreshing, energizing exercises taught by Self-Realization Fellowship. These anyone can practice to advantage.

Body and Mind Linked

There is such a close connection between the mind and body that a sympathetic, or we might say reciprocal, relationship exists. The condition of one will definitely affect the other. The new field of therapeutics known as "psychosomatics" is based on this fact. For example, health of body naturally reflects itself in one's mental outlook and attitude, in a feeling of self-confidence, in a generally optimistic attitude; ill health often affects one's mental outlook, inducing a sense of fear or pessimism, feelings of inferiority or incapability, and so on.

Those who indulge in moods of anger, moroseness, and pessimism will find in time that the body responds through nervousness, indi-



PADMASANA—LOTUS POSTURE

gestion, metabolic disturbances, and many forms of ill health including distinct and characteristic lesions. On the other hand, a happy frame of mind is the best medicine and health insurance. Those who are really happy seldom have much trouble with their health.

In this light we can begin to see the relationship between body-control and religion, and the necessity of practicing self-control of body and mind. If we cannot even sit still, how shall we be able to calm our minds and concentrate our mental power on God? Or on the achievement of any worthy purpose? The mind is linked to the body (or body-consciousness) through the intelligent life energy. It has been demonstrated repeatedly in research work that thoughts elicit muscular reflexes in the body, and, conversely, the activities of the body affect the mind (since even the movements of muscles are made possible only because of an activity of the mind). Therefore, the attainment of the deeper states of concentration (and in fact the entire art of scientific concentration) depends upon the ability to control the life energy, and thus to free the mind consciously from the otherwise continuous disturbing influx of sensory impressions. As long as there exists this reciprocal relationship of body and mind, calmness of mind and mental peace presume the calmness (i.e. still position) and relaxation of the body.

Not only do the various postures or *asanas* strengthen the body, but they facilitate the control of the mind through controlling the life energy. Of all the sitting positions, the one that is taught in the Self-Realization studies (sitting on a chair), and the posture about to be described, are the most scientifically correct as postural aids in establishing mental calmness and concentration.

The Lotus Posture

Yogis meditate on the seven nerve centers in the spine. The Lotus Posture is so named because many yogis first see the beautiful lotuslike luminous seven centers in the spine while meditating in this posture.

Padmasana was originally inaugurated by the yogis to prevent the body from falling to the ground during ecstasy, when the life currents in the body retire to the spine and brain. The feet are so locked as to preclude the possibility of the body's sprawling on the floor or swaying sideways, or to and fro, during certain ecstasies in which the body becomes rigid.

The Lotus Posture especially helps to keep the spine erect. An erect spine is necessary during meditation or ecstasy. A crooked spine pinches the nerves in the vertebrae and prevents the current from flowing unobstructedly from the cranium to the nerve endings. Pinched nerves also prevent the proper flow of energy to the bodily organs, thus

making the body more susceptible to disease. So in many ways the Lotus Posture is helpful.

Western children with supple limbs can easily practice the Lotus Posture, but adult Westerners, accustomed to sitting on chairs and to keeping their knees at right angles, or obtuse angles, often find when they try the Lotus Posture that the knee joints have hardened, making the knees intractable and unbendable.

So we advise any one who can practice the Lotus Posture, even with difficulty, to assume it for short intervals to limber up the knees, and then, after some success, for longer periods. But we do not advise Westerners to attempt long meditations in Lotus Posture; their minds would be wholly on the aching knees! The Lotus Posture *or any posture with erect spine* is helpful during meditation if it does not produce discomfort.

It is best to meditate on the floor, or in the middle of a bed equipped with a spring mattress on a flat supporting surface of boards. Then, if the student happens to go to sleep, he cannot fall far, as he might were he sitting on a chair. A spring cushion from a divan, placed on the floor, makes an adequate seat for meditation. When practiced on even a thick blanket, the meditation posture often causes the legs to go to sleep, owing to the pressure of the body on the floor; therefore, sitting on a spring cushion when meditating is best.

The Lotus Posture itself is assumed by sitting on the floor (preferably on some pad or cushion to prevent discomfort), drawing the right foot toward the body and placing it, with the sole of the foot turned upward, upon the left thigh. The left foot is then drawn toward the body and placed in a similar position upon the right thigh. In this position the left ankle crosses over on top of the right ankle. The spine is kept perfectly straight, the chin held parallel to the ground, the shoulder-blades thrown somewhat together, and the hands placed, palms upward, at the junction of thighs and abdomen. In this position the arms give some measure of support to the spine.

Unless your joints are already quite limber so that you experience little discomfort or difficulty, it is best to proceed a little slowly. There is nothing to be gained by trying to hasten unduly by extreme efforts or strain in practice the accomplishment of this or any other posture. Any exercise that will help to stretch the muscles and loosen the joints will prove helpful. It is best to practice a number of times for short periods and to sit longer when you find the position more comfortable.

"Health is the best of gains: contentment is the greatest happiness."
—*Mahabharata*.

Meditation Thoughts

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



May 2nd

Divine Mother, in the corner of my heart I have a mystic throne for Thee. The candles of my joys are dimly lighted in the hope of Thy coming. They will burn brighter when Thou comest. Whether Thou comest or not, I will wait for Thee until my tears melt away all material grossness.

May 9th

Heavenly Father, my voice was made to sing Thy glory. My heart was made to respond to Thy call. My soul was made to be the channel through which Thy love might flow uninterruptedly into all thirsty hearts.

May 16th

Mother Divine, draw aside Thy glittering veil of cosmic motion pictures and show me Thy delusion-dispersing face of mercy.

May 23rd

Teach me to pray deeply until my meditation burns with Thy flaming presence. Teach me to pray with my own soulful words and to pray with the silent piercing language of unceasing devotion.

May 30th

Today I will conquer pride by humility, wrath by love, excitement by calmness, selfishness by unselfishness, evil by good, ignorance by knowledge, and restlessness by the ineffable peace emanating from the depths of silence.

(Continued on page 45)



Yoganandaji at Niagara Falls, N.Y., 1927.

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A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE *BHAGAVAD GITA*

By PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA



Chapter VI, Verse 14

Literal Translation

With serenity and fearlessness, with steadfastness in brahmacharya (the vows of celibacy and self-discipline), with the mind controlled, with the thoughts centered on Me, the yogi should sit meditating on Me as the Final Goal.

Spiritual Interpretation

God manifests in creation as the Cosmic Vibration, which expresses itself as Cosmic Sound and Cosmic Light. The Cosmic Sound or *Aum* is the synthesis of all the sounds of the highly vibrating life forces (life-*trons*), electrons, protons, and atoms. By listening to *Aum*, the yogi becomes a true *brahmachari* or one who is attuned to Brahma. By deep concentration the devotee can hear *Aum* at any time and in any place.

The Cosmic Sound is spoken of in the Christian Bible as follows: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* The Word or *Aum* came from God; He manifests as the Cosmic Vibration in creation. The Bible also refers to the Word as the Holy Ghost or intelligent ghostlike unseen vibration that is the creator of all forms of matter. It is called Holy Ghost because this

*John 1:1.

Invisible Force is guided by the Christ Intelligence that exists in creation as the reflection or "sole begotten Son" of the transcendental God the Father. Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Ghost or the Great Comforter would come to his disciples after his bodily departure from the earth.* Kriya Yoga is a fulfillment of that blessed promise of Christ, as it gives the peoples of the world a scientific technique for contacting the holy sound.

St. John spoke of the Cosmic Sound. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,"† i.e., "I was in spiritual ecstasy with the Lord and heard behind my conscious, subconscious, and superconscious minds a voice like that of a great trumpet, the great commingled Cosmic Sound coming out of the 'thrum' of lifetrans, protons, electrons, and atoms."

In the authoritative book by Patanjali, *Aum* is spoken of as the symbol of Iswara or God. He refers to *Aum* as a Cosmic Sound continuously flowing in the ether, unutterable by any human voice, and fully known only to the illuminated. Further, Patanjali says that deep concentration on *Aum* is a means of liberation. Many people who do not understand the inward meaning of the scriptures think that by softly or loudly chanting *Aum* they can reach the superconsciousness. The Hindu scriptures, however, point out that a *kayastha*—he whose mind is identified with the *kaya* or body—cannot possibly hear the true *Aum* sound. In ancient times only the knowers of Brahma were allowed to utter *Aum* because only they were able at will to hear the Cosmic Sound and to perceive, behind it, the presence of God.

The scriptures classify ordinary chanting as (1) repeated loud utterance of the word *Aum*, (2) repetitions of *Aum* in whispers, and (3) continuous chanting of *Aum* in one's mind, listening to it mentally. Superconscious chanting, however, is that in which the mind is deeply directed to the repetition of, and the profound listening to, the Cosmic Sound as it vibrates in the ether. This is the true way of contacting God as He is expressed in creation.

Patanjali meant that only that yogi can attain God whose mind is fixed on the Cosmic Sound, the external Divine Manifestation. Such a yogi is an accomplished *brahmachari*. His heart is overflowing with the sacred joy that follows perception of *Aum*. When a devotee experiences the bliss of God (the comfort of the Holy Ghost) behind the Cosmic Sound, his heart becomes serene; he loses all fear of ever being diverted from his exalted state or of becoming entangled in material sensations. A yogi who has united his soul with the Cosmic Sound and thereby experiences its ineffable bliss is spoken of as united to the Lord. His

*John 14:26

†Rev. 1:10.

heart, filled with divine joy, is no longer subject to likes and dislikes, as is the ordinary person's heart during the contacts with matter and its essential oppositional states.

An avowed man of renunciation, fearlessly, with serene heart and controlled mind, can think of God as his Supreme Goal; but in a higher state the yogi becomes one with God; having found the Lord through *Aum* and its *pratipadya* (the cosmic bliss that follows after the perception of the Cosmic Sound or Holy Ghost), he achieves complete liberation.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of by the Hindus as *Aum*, by the Mohammedans as *Amin*, and by the Christians as *Amen* or the Word. In *Revelation* 3:14 we find this definition: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." This *Amen* is the Cosmic Sound which, as a divine witness, faithfully accompanies all vibrating creation from its beginning even as a sound accompanies or declares the running of a motor. In other words, *Amen* or *Aum* is an "ear-witness" that declares, as accessible to all devotees, the tangible presence in all creation of the Creator.

The Hindu Bible (*Bhagavad Gita*), the Christian Bible, and the greatest book on yoga (Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*) unanimously declare the the Cosmic Sound to be the outward manifestation or witness of the Lord in creation. Krishna, Jesus, and Patanjali all taught that man must receive the Holy Ghost (the Comforter) in order to reach the Christ Intelligence within it and God the Father existing beyond it (beyond *Aum* or vibratory creation). All souls have descended into matter from God the Father beyond creation, God the Son or Christ Intelligence, and God the Holy Ghost. Every soul has therefore to ascend to the Spirit (Unmanifested Absolute) through the stages of Its triune manifestation—Holy Ghost, Son, and Father (*Aum-Tat-Sat* of the Hindu scriptures).

Chapter VI, Verse 15

Literal Translation

The self-governed yogi whose mind is under ceaseless control attains the peace of My being—the final Nirvana (deliverance).

Spiritual Interpretation

By practicing the eightfold yoga, the devotee first experiences ecstasy for a short time; by deeper practice he is able to remain divinely entranced for longer periods. The ecstatic state of perception of God without perception of the universe is called *sabikalpa samadhi* or *sampragyata samadhi*. It is seldom or never possible for a yogi to remain during his entire lifetime in the bodily inactive state of *sabikalpa samadhi*.

An interesting historical incident, one to which my father was an eyewitness, may be recounted here. Certain Bhukailash princes of Calcutta

(Continued on page 46)

(Continued from page 33)

ordered a pound dug in their property at Sundarban Forest in Bengal. In the course of this operation, the bodies of seven men were dug up from a great depth in the ground. Geologists testified that the men must have been interred about 200 years previously. Thousands of people in Calcutta flocked to see the men, who were engrossed in a state of ecstasy, exhibiting no outward signs of life, their bodies in a perfect state of preservation.

Failing to rouse the saints by the application of hot towels on the head, the princes, against the protestations of friends, ordered servants to drive hot pokers into the bodies. This barbaric treatment forced the seven saints to return to outward consciousness. One of them sternly addressed a Bhukailash prince:

"The seven of us had planned to remain for a few more years in this ecstatic state in order to destroy our past karma and attain liberation. Since you have cruelly disturbed us, you must suffer your own karma."

The seven saints then simultaneously passed away. Their bodies, which soon decayed, were publicly cremated. (The Bhukailash princes, soon after, died suddenly.)

The seven saints had been experiencing an unusually prolonged state of *sabikalpa samadhi*. This bodily inert state has its dangers. Therefore the properly instructed yogi learns to enter, and leave, the *sabikalpa samadhi* state at will. This achievement enables him to retain his God-communion in the active state of worldly affairs.

The Lord does not wish His children indefinitely to remain inactive in ecstasy. He wants them to work out His drama in a state of divine realization (*nirbikalpa samadhi* or *asampragyata samadhi*). By entering this highest state the yogi is liberated. He can retain his divine realization during the conscious, subconscious, and superconscious states. The advanced yogi, being united with God, can watch his own body while it is working or while it is inactive in ecstasy, even as God can watch it. The yogi, one with the Divine Ocean, watches It and his little bodily wave as one and the same thing.

Such a yogi is spoken of as having attained the supreme state of *nirvana* or complete ego-extinguishment. The soul does not vanish, but, retaining its individuality, expands into the Spirit. *Nirvana* signifies the final extinction, by destruction of all rebirth-making unfulfilled desires, of the karmic causes that compel a soul to reincarnate.

Chapter VI, Verse 16

Literal Translation

O Arjuna! The gourmand, the scanty eater, the person who oversleeps, the one who sleeps too little—none of these find success in yoga.

Spiritual Interpretation

The beginner-yogi should abstain from all excesses, lest his body become an obstruction in the path of divine progress. Over-eating causes disease. Eating insufficiently leads to physical and mental weakness. Oversleep dulls the nervous system; too little sleep produces a tendency to sleep against one's will. All these unbalanced states are obstacles for the yogi.

Yoga scriptures enjoin that the aspirant should be a "proper-ecarian"; that is, he should have a balanced diet, one with sufficient protein, fat, carbohydrates, and mineral salts.

When the devotee tries to meditate on a full stomach, he may be conscious of the bodily load and of his breathing instead of the breathless joyous state of superconsciousness.

Yogis point out that oversleep makes the body lazy; the throat and nasal passages become filled with phlegm. The devotee should always keep his body free from the accumulation of excessive mucus. If a mucusless diet of raw food is found helpful, the yogi should follow it religiously.

Loss of sleep destroys mental freshness. A dull mind cannot concentrate on the joy of soul within. Some yogis advise sleep in the earlier part of the night; after sleep, performing ablutions, and cleaning the mouth and nostrils, the devotee should practice Kriya Yoga. Some yogis advise those who have their time under their control to sleep in the afternoon for five hours, and to practice yoga and ecstasy meditations during the greater part of the night.

Sleep is spoken of as pseudo-ecstasy. The ego is dragged into slumberland and compelled by fatigue to enter subconsciously the state of the peaceful soul.

Avoiding all excesses in the enjoyment of the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, the advanced yogi is able to go consciously beyond the state of sleep and thus to enjoy the unending bliss of the superconsciousness.

Chapter VI, Verse 17

Literal Translation

He who with proper regularity eats, relaxes, works, sleeps, and remains awake will find yoga the destroyer of suffering.

Spiritual Interpretation

The yogi should be temperate in all his habits. This stanza points out that the novice-yogi should not continue unbrokenly in meditation (with the exception of a few hours of sleep), thus ignoring the performance of good outward actions. It is unnatural for a beginner in the path of yoga to remain in the superconscious state of ecstasy alternated

only by sleep and not also by proper activities.

This stanza admits of a deeper spiritual interpretation. During the practice of yoga, swallowing air is called "astral eating." The devotee learns to distill life force out of air and thus to reinforce his supply of *prana*; his body is gradually freed from bondage to solid and liquid foods. The yogi is advised to be regular in the eating of this air food. He should avoid excessive swallowing of air or too little breathing of air. Excessive or forceful breathing or wilfully holding the breath in the lungs is harmful. Similarly, the person who unscientifically breathes in insufficient air will poison his blood by too great an accumulation of venous blood.

"Regularity in relaxation" (recreation) signifies that the yogi should not breathe too heavily or too scantily but evenly. By "regularity in work" the yogi learns to perform divine actions in bringing true seekers to the path of God in a temperate way, and less by his words than by his example. He does not try to act like the missionary who works hard to save other souls but who forgets to save his own soul by contacting God through meditation—preferring, instead, his nightly slumber!

The dreamless state of subconscious sleep, the dream subconscious state, and the state of wakefulness have a deep meaning that is explained by yogis in the following way: The ordinary person experiences these three states, which, connected as they are with the body and matter, are collectively called the delusive dream state. The true wakeful state is perceived when the yogi rises above all his subconscious and conscious dream states and is conscious in the ever-wakefulness of God. The devotee, according to the esoteric interpretation of this stanza, is advised not to indulge excessively in the sleep of delusion or in the dream perception of worldly experiences. He is also advised in the initial state not to sleep too little (to remain too little conscious of the material) by trying to stay in the state of divine ecstasy all the time. The beginner-yogi should strike a balance between worthy activities and deep meditation. He who, in a balanced way, tries to be both human and divine will automatically find that he experiences equal joy whether he is in the state of human activity or in the state of deep meditation.

When a novice-yogi tries continuously to remain in ecstasy and to perform no good outward works, he is unsuccessful in destroying his mortal karma. The yogi who is not lazy and who performs both divine and worldly duties to please both God and man burns out his seeds of karma. By mastery over outer activities, transforming their material nature by divine thoughts, the yogi attains liberation.

"Discrimination of the real means the determination that the nature of the self is eternal while all that is perceptible is otherwise."—*Shankara-charya*.

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