

September-October, 1959  
Volume 31-1

WRITINGS BY PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Bhagavad-Gita  
Thought Seeds

GUEST AUTHORS

Book Review

SCIENCE DIGEST

ASANAS

Yoga Postures For Health By B. Tesniere, M.D., And Brahmachari Leland

TRAVEL DIARY

Notes From an Indian Travel Diary By Sister Daya

THIS AND THAT

Letters From SRF Students

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA ON BOAT photograph taken in July 1929, Lake Chapala, Mexico

LORD KRISHNA AND COWHERDS

In his youth Sri Krishna was a cowherd. At eventide every day, Krishna and hundreds of companions would lead cows from pasture to the town of Brindaban, where the cows would be tethered to posts near the homes of their owners.

Krishna (right) is shown with a flute to his lips, symbolizing the eternal call of Spirit to men's souls.

A SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

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

By PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

Chapter XII, Stanza 12

Literal Translation

Wisdom (born) from yoga practice

Is superior to (mechanical) yoga practice; Meditation is more desirable

Than the possession

Of theoretical knowledge;

The relinquishment

Of the fruits of actions

Is (better)

Than (ineffectual, absent-minded) meditation.

Such renunciation

(Of the fruits of actions)

Is followed immediately by peace.

Spiritual Interpretation

The perception of wisdom is superior to any results of mechanical, physical and

mental efforts. In the perception of pure wisdom there is an absence of all inner tumult. Perception of the Absolute is better than the possession of theoretical knowledge, which is tinged with the relative consciousness. Further, the perception of detachment from material vibrations is greater than the initial perception of meditative Spirit—oneness without full freedom from the fruits of actions.

Then again, supreme oneness with the vibrationless peace of the Absolute is superior to the dual perceptions of meditative oneness with God and of detachment from matter.

In this stanza a comparison is made of the different spiritual practices that lead to the perception of God. It is said here that the divine perception and wisdom resulting from the eager and proper practice of yoga is better than a mechanical practice of yoga in which the mind is a battleground of distractions and warring states of consciousness.

The Bhagavad-Gita explains that realization involving the oneness of the meditator with the object, God, by meditation, is superior to the state of theoretical wisdom in which the triune knower, knowing, and known exist separately in the devotee. In other words, when the yogi is aware of divine wisdom, he is experiencing the relativity of consciousness involved in the triple factors of knowledge. In the supreme state of meditation the devotee is not conscious of the triple factors, but only of oneness with Spirit. The meditative perception of God is therefore superior to theoretical knowledge about Him.

Greater than the initial experience of the state of meditative oneness with God is constant establishment in that state; continuous ecstasy (nirbikalpa samadhi) leads to freedom from all present and past karma.

After meditative unity with Spirit is established it leads to the superior state of oneness with God plus complete escape from the bindings of material vibrations. After attaining this state the devotee realizes a still greater state of blessed tranquillity in the vibrationless Absolute.

Chapter XII, Stanzas 13, 14

Literal Translation

He who

Is

Free from hatred toward all creatures,

Is

Friendly and kind to all,

Is

Devoid of the consciousness

Of "I-ness,"

Is

Evenminded in suffering and joy,

Is

Forgiving, ever contented,

A regular yoga practitioner,

Constantly trying to know the Self

And to unite (with Spirit, by yoga),

Is

Possessed of firm determination,

With mind and discrimination

Surrendered to Me—

He

Is

Dear to Me.

Spiritual Interpretation

These stanzas mention the manifold qualities manifested in a yogi which endear him to God. He who wants to please God and attain Him should regularly and intensively practice Kriya Yoga, dissolving his restless physical ego in the perception of his true Self. When he determinedly keeps his mind surrendered in ecstasy to Spirit in the vibrationless sphere, he is able even in the human state to feel the omnipresence of the Lord.

The yogi who perceives the same Spirit pervading all creation cannot entertain hatred for any creature. Instead, he is friendly and compassionate to all. He recognizes God even in the guise of an enemy.

Possessing the evenminded blessedness of Spirit, a yogi is unruffled by material sufferings and pleasures. Finding the joy of the Divine, he is ever contented under all conditions of physical existence. He attends to his meager bodily necessities but is not attached to the ego; he considers himself to be serving God in his own body and in the bodies of all who cross his path.

Many can understand the advice of the Bhagavad-Gita about indifference to pain, but not about indifference to pleasure. Does this scripture advise the yogi to be a sphinx, an unfeeling stone, unable to appreciate life's pleasures? No, it does not give such meaningless counsel. It points out that just as a millionaire is not excited to receive the gift of a dime, so the possessor of immeasurable divine wealth does not feel elated by trivial sensory pleasures. Anyone who runs after sense joys naturally proves that he has not tasted divine bliss.

Notes From an Indian Travel Diary

Sister Daya, president of Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) and Yogoda Sat Sanga Society (YSS), is in India attending to administrative duties pertaining to the

organization there. The following extracts from her travel diary describe some of her experiences in India, beloved homeland of Paramahansa Yogananda, Guru-Founder of SRF and YSS. Sister Daya is accompanied by Sister Mataji, Sister Revati, and Brother Kriyananda, all of the SRF Mt. Washington Center in Los Angeles, California.

Howrah Railway Station, Calcutta

Sister Daya (extreme right) and her party at picnic in Botanical Gardens, Calcutta

Hashi Bose and Sister Daya at Botanical Gardens, Calcutta, March 1959

Sister Daya and her party meditating in the Botanical Gardens by the Ganges River, Calcutta, March 1959

Dear Ones:

Rishikesh April 20, 1959

This morning we visit the renowned Swami Sivananda of The Divine Life Society. Fresh in our memory is the beautiful tribute that Sivanandaji wrote about our Guru shortly after his mahasamadhi:

"A rare gem of inestimable value, the like of whom the world is yet to witness, His Holiness Sri Paramahansa Yogananda has been an ideal representative of the ancient sages and seers--the glory of India. He has rendered yeoman service in the field of spirituality. He has greatly contributed towards the spiritual progress of one and all by setting in action the spiritual dynamo that is latent in men. Sri Yogananda has made it possible for all His children to taste the

nectar that flows in abundance from the eternal source: the Vedas and Upanishads .... May Self-Realization Fellowship prosper well, shedding divine light all over the world!"

A Visit to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh

When our group arrives at the Ashram, which is situated on the bank of the Ganges, we are quickly ushered into Swamiji's presence. He is seated at a desk on which are great piles of books and papers.

How warmly he greets us! as though we had met many times before. He is so jovial that it is impossible to remain withdrawn or to feel shyness in his presence.

There is a bubbling quality in him, as though he drinks constantly from some deep inner fountain of joy and divine love.

We are introduced to several devotees and visitors who have gathered here. Some are disciples of Swamiji who have come from Europe, Indonesia, and other parts of the world. We meet here, also, two SRF members from Milwaukee who are making a tour of India.

A group of talented devotees entertain us with beautiful music played on Indian instruments; then the hospitable Swamiji serves us sweets, and presents to each of us a complete set of his books. We gather on the grounds, where Mataji and also one of the ashramites take photographs.

Full of enthusiasm, Swamiji then shows us about the Ashram. In the Eye Clinic, where one of his disciples, a lovely woman doctor, is in charge, we see patients who have had recent eye operations. We are much impressed by the modern equipment and the evidences of skillful care. We visit the Library, where copies of all the books written by or about Swami Sivananda are filed; we are amazed by the large scope of these publications. Swamiji is indeed an inspiring and prolific writer as well as an excellent organizer; nowhere else in India have we seen an ashram whose activities are so well organized.

We visit the Ayurvedic pharmacy, where we are presented with bottles of herbal medicines, which are prepared here under the watchful eyes of Swamiji. Before he took sannyas he was a medical doctor.

Shortly before our departure, the disciples and Sivanandaji sing a song composed by him. It is dedicated to Self-Realization Fellowship; or, rather, is adapted on the spot as a song of good will toward our Fellowship. As we enter our car to leave, this saintly soul presents us with lovely flowers—a symbol, I think gratefully, of his fragrant friendliness.

We come away with profound admiration for this great spiritual teacher and for all that he has accomplished in spreading the universal message of The Divine Life Society. We will always remember with warm affection this man of God—his childlike simplicity and purity of heart. He truly radiates the Life Divine.

The Historic Plains of Delhi

April 21st. We travel by car to Delhi. The trip is long and the roads are dusty but we do not mind, for we see interesting sights, such as camels carrying huge bundles on their backs while camel drivers walk alongside their charges.

April 22nd. We drive about Delhi in the afternoon. Our sightseeing tour includes the beautiful U.S. Embassy. New Delhi, the capital of India, is an attractive city, with red administrative buildings and rich green lawns. History tells us that seven times great empires have risen and fallen here on the plains of Delhi. We see some of the ancient ruins, sad reminders of civilizations long gone. The most outstanding ruin in Delhi today is the Red Fort, built by Shah Jahan (who also erected the Taj Mahal in Agra). The Red Fort is in old Delhi about four miles from New Delhi.

The first glimpse of New Delhi is Connaught Place—a series of buildings circular

in design, used for dress shops, hotels, restaurants, newspaper offices, etc. The streets are wide, lined with beautiful shade trees. The buildings of the city were designed by the British, expressing a blend of European and Indian architecture. We visit Birla Temple during our stay in New Delhi; we are taken there by our good friend, Mr. B. N. Nanda, formerly Consul General of India in San Francisco. It was on the lawn of Birla House that Mahatma Gandhi was felled by an assassin's bullet, and India was plunged into mourning for the Father of the Nation.

We visit the Ivory Palace, where we see men, young and old, carving beautiful figures out of blocks of ivory. They do delicate work with what appear to be primitive instruments. We make a few purchases to bring back to the SRF ashrams—beautiful vases, and ivory pieces that we plan to put on display in the SRF Lake Shrine museum in Pacific Palisades. Later that evening we meet with students who have come to learn more about Master (Yoganandaji) and his work.

April 23rd. We leave Delhi at 6:30 a.m. by train for Agra. Prabhasda has met us here in Delhi and will go on to Brindaban with us, where he will visit for a few days with his mother-in-law. Mr. Nanda drives us to the station and we finally locate our seats on the train. We pass through beautiful and interesting countryside, dotted here and there with ancient forts and buildings dating back to the Mogul era. The ride from Delhi to Agra takes about three hours. We go to the Imperial Hotel and after freshening up we hire a car and drive to the Taj Mahal.

The Incomparable Taj Mahal in Agra

THE INCOMPARABLE TAJ MAHAL IN AGRA The world-famous mausoleum as seen from the Fortress of Agra

A little booklet titled "Agra" which I have purchased tells us that "Agra's origin is lost in the midst of antiquity. According to one Puranic legend, it was a flourishing city at the time of Lord Krishna and was included in the territories of Kamsa, his uncle." Modern Agra stands on the bank of the River Jamuna in which the beautiful Taj is reflected. The Taj Mahal is one of the wonders of the world. What a vision it is – this gleaming white marble mausoleum dedicated to the love of a man for his wife – Mumtaz Mahal, the companion of Emperor Shah Jahan for eighteen years, until her death in 1631. She bore fourteen children, dying after the birth of her last child. At that time her husband was on the battlefield. As soon as word reached him of his wife's approaching death, he fled the battle, grief-stricken; and his wife, Mumtaz, died in his arms. After that Shah Jahan lived as a mendicant for a period of time, and it was then that he envisaged this monument.

Never before have we seen such exquisite work in marble or in any other material! The floors, walls, and ceilings of the interior are of the purest white marble; the walls are decorated with inlays worked in floral and geometrical designs for which emeralds, sapphires, onyx, and jasper have been used. We walk from room to room, reliving the days of the Shah, as the guide recounts incidents in the Emperor's life. The center of the main chamber, which

is octagonal, contains the cenotaphs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan.

The last days of the Shah were not happy ones, for his ambitious son took the throne and imprisoned the ailing Shah in the fortress of Agra. When we later visited this fortress, which is not far from the Taj itself, we were told a very touching and sad story. As the Shah's eyesight grew worse, he could no longer see the Taj Mahal where rested his beloved. He installed in the wall of the apartments where he was imprisoned a large diamond set in such a way as to

clearly reflect the beautiful white building across the way. There he used to stand and look into the immense diamond, beholding therein the reflection of the Taj. The diamond has since been removed and replaced with a tiny glass that reflects the Taj. As I stood and peered into it, I could feel something of the love and anguish that must have passed through the heart and mind of the old Emperor as he stood here, centuries before, striving for a clearer image of his magnificent creation in stone.

We return to the Taj Mahal on the evening of this same day, for the moon is full and we want to behold the Taj in its light. What a scene we behold as we approach the entrance gate! The Mausoleum stands at a distance of about 1000 feet from the gateway. A watercourse of fountains, broken in the middle by a square pool with fountains playing throughout its length, divides the paved path to the main building. On either side is an avenue of cypresses, tall, sentinel-like; and extending beyond them are flower beds, lawns, and lovely trees. As one walks toward the mausoleum, one sees in the pool striking reflections of the pristine white of the marble background.

The beauty of the Taj Mahal by moonlight is beyond description. There is a hush all about us as visitors like ourselves stand, breath swept away by the exquisiteness of the scene. How to describe the beauty of the Taj? It is like a glistening teardrop, frozen in the night, reflecting the softness of the moonlight. Or, it is like a tear of the Divine Beloved, shed through the heart of a man who loved dearly. As that tear fell to earth it froze and became this exquisite monument, serving as an immortal reminder of the divine love that resides in the heart of every man. We often speak of certain scenes in Nature as being spiritually uplifting or inspiring but I can truthfully say that this building, created by man, has a unique power to stir the soul. It is no ordinary structure. Its soft, graceful lines reveal the tenderness of a great and pure love that immortalized the relationship between two souls and made it divine. Every delicate symmetrical carving, each fine inlay, manifests a perfection beyond description. One can only silently wonder at the divinity that lies within the soul of man which can thus express itself through such a fairylike structure.

We sit in the evening moonlight and meditate, and as we do so my thoughts run toward the great Divine Mother who is my own Beloved, and I wish that such a building had been reared and dedicated to Her love alone. Why has man never done so? Perhaps because the Divine Beauty cannot be captured through any form but can be expressed only through the sublimest edifice—the temple of a heart dedicated solely to love in its highest, unmanifested form. Such a pure temple I am striving to build for that sweet Divine Mother in my own heart. May She choose to come there and remain forever!

Visits to Mathura and Brindaban

Sister Daya, Sri Ghosh, and Sister Mataji on grounds of Birla Temple, Brindaban. The stone chariot and horses depict those used by Lord Krishna.

April 24th. We arise early here in Agra and prepare to drive to Brindaban, not far away. The air is cool at this hour and we hope to reach Brindaban early in order to avoid the worst of the heat. The country we drive through is flat and arid, but the well-made road to Brindaban is lined with trees that resemble the pepper trees in California. Along the road we meet a caravan of twelve camels, followed by two very young ones loping alongside their mothers, backs yet free from the burdens carried by the older camels.

The villages of India we have seen thus far have been most picturesque. Here

the mud huts have the usual thatched roofs. The women of this area wear bright-colored saris, the men their customary scanty clothing. A typical Indian scene on the roads: men in loincloths carrying huge loads of straw or other articles on their heads; women dressed in bright saris, wearing silver anklets and ornaments, walking along in groups, one or two of them carrying a child astride their hips; men and boys on bicycles trying to pass one another or the few cars driving along the left side of the roads, while the cars are trying to pass a herd of goats, or carts drawn by water buffaloes.

We pass through Mathura, one of the oldest cities of India and the birthplace of Sri Krishna. Mathura is the center of the Bhagavata (devotional) form of religion, and is a common goal of pilgrimage for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. We find Mathura a progressive town, with modern buildings, well-kept homes, and beautiful flowering trees with bright red blossoms. We stop briefly to visit some of the temples in Mathura and to see Vishram Ghat. Here, too, we take photos of huge water turtles that rest on the shores of the river Jamuna. The oldest shrine in Mathura is the Brahmanical temple of Kesava Den. It occupies the site where Krishna was born in Kamsa's prison. The temple itself is in ruins but a committee has now been formed to restore it.

#### Birla Temple in Brindaban

Leaving Mathura we drive on toward Brindaban, stopping at Birla Temple, a beautiful, recently constructed building of marble with graceful yet strong figures of Lord Krishna, depicting scenes from his life—all done in gold, browns, reds, and yellows—very impressive. On some of the walls, too, we see scenes taken from the Bhagavad-Gita, or finely carved figures of the Hindu gods and goddesses whose lives are related in certain scriptures of India. On the grounds of the Temple stands a huge stone obelisk on which are inscribed the entire eighteen chapters of the Gita. On the other side of the Temple we see a huge stone chariot and a pair of horses, depicting those used by Lord Krishna. We cross the street and stop for a time in Birla Rest House, having our lunch there and taking a brief nap before going on to Brindaban. Our lunch consists of cucumber sandwiches (a favorite of ours), tomatoes, potatoes, vegetable cutlets, and oranges. We eat them in the shade of our rooms.

We start out again on our journey after midday, thus avoiding the terrific heat, and arrive in Brindaban in the afternoon. Our first visit is to Prabhasda's mother-in-law, a remarkable woman who lives the simplest life, like a true devotee of God, devoting her days to meditation and thoughts of Him. We are much impressed by the beauty of her soft eyes and her peaceful expression.

We then visit the ashram of Ananda Moyi Ma. This blessed Mother has sent one of the sannyasis all the way from Rishikesh to greet us at her Brindaban ashram, expecting that we would remain there during our visit. Unfortunately, however, we are unable to do so because of other commitments, but we do rest for a time and meditate in the rooms of the Mother. How peaceful it is here! We feel all the while the tender love of Ananda Moyi Ma. How gracious and kind are Sri Bose, the secretary, and the other devotees who receive us. Reluctantly we leave the ashram and go to see some of the temples in Brindaban.

Entrance to Birla Temple, Brindaban, a recently constructed marble building dedicated to Lord Krishna. The beautiful temple contains many graceful statues of the ancient avatar.

Sister Mataji in front of stone obelisk on which are inscribed the Sanskrit characters of the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita; Birla Temple, Brindaban, India.

The Holy Cities of Brindaban and Banaras

Brindaban is sacred to all Hindus, for every nook and corner is associated with some event in the life of Sri Krishna. We enter one of the groves where stands a shrine dedicated to him, and we pluck leaves from the tamal tree under which he is supposed to have stood, playing his flute. Here he used to play with the devotees, and to hide from them when they sought him. You will remember the song, sung by Radha, "My Krishna is blue, the tamal tree is blue (repeat), so I do love you, my tamal tree. And when I die, do put me high, on the branch of the tamal tree. Where Krishna sat, there I die (repeat) on the branch of the tamal tree .. ." This is that tree. In meditation my consciousness races back through the centuries, visualizing the lila (play) of the Lord at that time. What loving vibrations pass through our beings in this grove! I can truly say that here in Brindaban, more than anywhere else in India that I have visited, one may feel in the atmosphere a spirit of love and devotion—reminders of the divine friendship that existed between Lord Krishna and his faithful devotees.

We visit the ashram of the late Swami Keshabananda, great disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya, and we sit quietly in devotion, recalling Yoganandaji's visit to this ashram in 1936, when the great Swami was still on this earth.

Bathing ghat at Banaras, seen from a boat on the river. Fifteen famous ghats in Banaras extend for four miles along the shores of the Ganges.

How quiet is the ashram now! Sadness fills our hearts that he is not here to greet us; but we stand before the samadhi mandir of this spiritual giant and feed his silent benedictions upon us.

April 26th. Yesterday we arrived by plane in Banaras. Today we drive to the temple of Vishwanatha or Golden Temple, which is crowned by a dome covered with thin plates of gold. Toward evening we drive to Dasaswamedh Ghat, immortalized in Master's autobiography, for it was here that Babaji, in the presence of Lahiri Mahasaya, Mataji (sister of Babaji), and Ram Gopal, made his "immortal promise" never to leave his physical body. Can you not imagine the tremendous thrill we feel as we stand on this sacred spot?

We then take a boat and are rowed out on the Ganges where we view the thousands of tiny oil lamps on the shore. Upstream we go and as we near another ghat we hear the sound of devotional chanting.

A bhajan is taking place in the evening stillness and we sit quietly in our boat and listen. Moving on we come to the burning ghat where the city's dead are cremated. When we leave Dasaswamedh Ghat we pass by a little hut where lives a naked ash-covered sadhu. How bright is the light in his eyes as he looks at us—a light of another world. He never accepts money. Banaras, the holy city of the Hindus, is "the epitome of all that is best in Hindu religion and philosophy.

Its rare sanctity, its hallowed memories of thousands of saints and seers and of the great deeds of preachers and reformers, its sacred temples and bathing ghats -all make it the holiest and most beloved city of the Hindus."

A Pilgrimage to the Home of Lahiri Mahasaya

April 27th. Today we visit the grandson of Lahiri Mahasaya, Abhoy Charan Lahiri, who resides in the home of our beloved Param-paramguru. What a thrill of joy passes through our beings when we enter the home and behold in a little room the wooden dais or bed on which Lahiri Mahasaya used to sit. Over the bed is spread a cloth he used, now yellow with age, and here we see the slippers worn by Lahiri Mahasaya; and the books, printed by hand, which he used. We hold in our hands the precious copy of the Bhagavad-Gita that was his. Its leaves, now yellowed, are frayed, indicating his frequent use of the book. Toward the end of the little room we see a receptacle that holds some of the ashes of the great guru. We sit quietly in this room, before the bed now become altar, and listen

as the grandson Abhoy recounts the following for us:

"There are many who worship the statue of Buddha, but who lives according to his teachings? In the same way many worship Christ, but how many daily follow his teachings? So, Lahiri Mahasaya did not wish to have his picture taken, because he did not want worship of his likeness.

But the disciples argued that there were many who would not be able to see him and who would long to know what he looked like. Therefore, Lahiri Mahasaya consented to let one picture be taken. A small wooden platform was placed in this very room where we are sitting and a camera was brought. In order to get the right focus my father, who was Tincouri Lahiri, his eldest son (then only a young boy), was asked to stand in for his father, Lahiri Mahasaya. Tincouri sat on the bench while the photographer, Ganga Dhar Babu, was getting the camera in focus. When that was done Lahiri Mahasaya was requested to sit on the bench.

"Lahiri Mahasaya asked, 'How is a photograph taken?' The photographer was rather a vain fellow in that he thought no one could rival him in photography, and my grandfather knew of the man's attitude.

Ganga Dhar described the science of photography. Then he began to take the picture of my grandfather but he saw no image registered in the camera finder. He got nervous, finding that he could not adjust the camera to catch an image. When asked what was the matter he said, 'I cannot find any image to snap.' Then grandfather replied, 'What does your science say now?' The photographer fell at his feet and said, 'My vanity is gone. Please let us have one picture.' And grandfather smiled and said, 'All right.' A photograph was taken. And that is the only picture we have of Lahiri Mahasaya."

Lahiri Mahasaya's sandals (left, cloth-wrapped) and those of his son, Tincouri Lahiri, in the home of Lahiri Mahasaya at Banaras

Marble statue of Lahiri Mahasaya in his home in Banaras. Among the articles in foreground are his slippers and his copy of the Bhagavad-Gita, handwritten in Sanskrit. Photographs on upper wall are of Lord Shiva and Sri Krishna. Below them are photographs of Lahiri Mahasaya's son Tincouri (left) and Tincouri's wife; a part of their ashes are contained in the oval-shaped jars in front of their pictures. The statue of Lahiri Mahasaya has now been removed from the Lahiri residence and placed in a Guru Mandir (temple) near Dasaswamedh Ghat in Banaras.

Here in this little room the sublime guru used to sit and the devotees would gather around him while he gave commentaries on the scriptures. Some of the disciples would take notes. He died here on this bed. We touch his shoes, now covered with cloth to protect them, and hold his Gita, handwritten in Sanskrit. Before leaving this sacred room we sit for a while in meditation with a great-grandson of Lahiri Mahasaya, Professor Bonomani Lahiri. How full has been our day! We have realized a desire long held in our hearts—a pilgrimage to the home of Lahiri Mahasaya.

We are grateful that his relatives have given us a piece of cloth worn by our beloved Parana-paramguru.

Sri Prabhas Ghosh, vice-president of YSS, and Sister Daya, with camel driver and his heavily laden beast, on the road to Sarnath

April 29th. Today we drive to Sarnath, about five miles from Banaras. Here Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon 2500 years ago and set into motion his eternal message of Truth—the Wheel of the Law. We see the tower on the little hill where Buddha gave his first sermon and made his first converts—five disciples. The heat of this area is terrific today, so great that it is difficult to remain long out-of-doors, but we have come to see these holy places and do not intend

to be discouraged, by the midday sun.

Golden statue of Lord Buddha in Mulagandhakuti Vihara, a Buddhist temple in Sarnath, near Banaras

First we stop at Mulagandhakuti Vihara, a temple built by the Mahabodhi Society in 1931. Its walls are covered with Ajanta-style frescoes depicting events in Lord Buddha's life. I am particularly interested to see that one of the principal contributors to this Temple was the same Mary G. Foster who donated money to SRF for printing the first issue of our Self-Realization Magazine back in 1925.

What a beautiful golden figure of the Lord Buddha rests on the altar! His face expresses perfect serenity, sublime victory over life and death. Again we meditate, lotus-postured on the cool marble floor before this great Buddha.

Asoka Pillar at Sarnath (near Banaras), marking the spot where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon 2500 years ago.

Leaving the Temple we see the Asoka Pillar, which probably marks the spot where Buddha delivered his first sermon. We see here, too, the ruins of some ancient Buddhist monastery believed to have been built in the ninth century. We stop at the Museum to see priceless relics - a number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images of the Gupta era.

A Beautiful Marble Statue of the Yogavata

In the late afternoon of this same day we visit the home of another grandson of Lahiri Mahasaya, Satya Charan Lahiri. At the time of our arrival a kirtan is being held in an open hall where the Gita and other scriptures are regularly recited. Across the court stands the Guru Mandir of our blessed Lahiri Mahasaya, where, with tear-filled eyes, we prostrate ourselves before a beautiful marble likeness of him. Here, too, we see a container where some of the ashes of the great master are kept. What a divine thrill passes through us as we behold these places where Lahiri Mahasaya once lived and communed with God! There is a warm feeling of welcome and love here in this Guru Mandir. We are much impressed by the gentle mien of the grandson. Later he takes us down the narrow lane to Dasaswamedh Ghat where Lahiri Mahasaya used to take his bath in the Ganges. We pass through the lane, so narrow, where Master first met his own Guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji. As I read that portion of Master's autobiography wherein he tells us of his deep hunger that memorable day, of how he wiped his tear-swollen face and set out meekly for the market place in the "ungentle Indian sun," of how, after purchasing some things for the ashram he passed through the narrow lanes (so many here)

until he reached one inconspicuous lane, at the end of which he beheld a Christlike man in the ochre robes of a swami, of his inner tumultuous emotion, and, finally, his wing-shod steps to the feet of that divine personage, of his Guru's blessed greeting, "O my own, you have come to me!" I am transfixed with the thrilling wonder of it. We stand in that very lane! We walk on and pass the house, in the Rana Mahal section of Banaras, where Sri Yukteswarji's mother lived for many years.

Oh, these are experiences to dwell upon, and our hearts are full as we turn our steps back toward the home of the grandson, Satya Charan Lahiri. When we arrive there the kirtan has ended and the Gita is being recited. We are introduced and I am asked to speak. I tell them about our Master and about his great work started in the West, which is now spreading over the world - about the interest in the West in the eternal science of Kriya Yoga as taught by Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswarji.

We are later told that the grandson will give us a cup used by Lahiri Mahasaya

and we rejoice with tears in our eyes, remembering that only the night before we had prayed to Divine Mother that we might be given some article used by the great master to take back to America to enshrine there. Once again, our own inner cup is full, and we are indebted to the grandsons of the Yogavatar. During our stay in Banaras we take one more boat trip up the Ganges, visit the Ananda Moyi Ma ashram again, and call on the Mother's great and noble devotee, Mahamahopadhyaya Gopi Nath Kaviraj, who is recognized throughout India as one of the greats in the field of philosophy and religious learning. He is noted not only for his wisdom but for his simplicity and love for the Divine. We are much impressed by his quiet, peaceful personality. We tell him briefly about the SRF work in America, and mention that we publish a magazine, Self-Realization. He expresses his desire to receive copies and I tell him we will see that they are sent to him regularly. Then I become more bold and ask him eagerly if he will kindly write an article for publication in our magazine. He nods in assent and I gratefully thank him. All the while we are talking, I see that his mind is withdrawn, absorbed in the world of peace and love which he beholds within, and which we can feel so deeply in his gentle, wise presence. Banaras home (second floor, open arches) in which Swami Sri Yukteswar's mother lived for many years

Sri Shankaracharya Initiates Two YSS Monks

SRI SHANKARACHARYA, SISTER DAYA, AND TWO YSS MONKS

His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Bharati Krishna Tirtha of Puri, senior head in India of ancient Swami Order, on May 27th visited the Puri Yogoda Sat-Sanga Ashram, founded by Swami Sri Yukteswar (guru of Paramahansa

Yogananda). His Holiness (right) initiated into Swamihood two YSS monks (heads shown in foreground). Sister Daya (center), president of SRF-YSS, attended the sacred ceremony.

May 27th. We are in Puri. This is a memorable day. His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Bharati Krishna Tirtha of Puri, who lectured in America last year under the auspices of Self-Realization Fellowship, today visits the YSS Ashram founded in Puri in 1906 by Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri (guru of Paramahansa Yogananda).

Recently His Holiness kindly agreed to initiate into Swamihood two of our YSS Bramacharis: Robinarayan of Puri and Girinji of Ranchi. As senior head in India of the Swami Order, Sri Shankaracharya is empowered to give initiation into all the ten branches of the ancient Order. (The Giri or "mountain" branch is the one to which our gurus Sri Yukteswarji and Yoganandaji belonged.)

It is customary for those seeking Swamihood from the Jagadguru to go to him in his historic Gowardhan Math in Puri. On this occasion, however, the Shankaracharya graciously makes an exception and comes for the ceremony to our YSS Ashram in Puri. He performs the sacred rites before the pictures of the YSS-SRF line of Gurus, in the Samadhi Mandir of Swami Sri Yukteswarji on the ashram grounds.

Robinarayan will henceforth be known as Swami Hariharananda Giri, and Girinji as Swami Bidyananda Giri.

Today my heart is filled with blissful memories of my own sannyas (vows of renunciation), taken on New Year's Day in 1935 in Los Angeles in the presence of our blessed Master.

Yoga Postures For Health

By B. TESNIERE, M.D.,

And BRAHMACHARI LELAND

## ASANA INDEX

Vincent Shorthand, SRF student, demonstrates Sirshasana. Haig Koobatian, SRF asana instructor, explains benefits. The demonstration was given on Aug. 19th at the Summer Classes in SRF India Center, Los Angeles.

## SIRSHASANA-THE HEADSTAND

(Continued from last issue)

Certain questions will now be answered, and several variations of Sirshasana considered.

(1) Are there several ways of entering the Headstand?

Beginners, who usually have difficulty in maintaining their balance in Sirshasana proper, may advantageously try the following variation, called Kapalasana (the "Skull Pose" in Sanskrit) or the Tripod Headstand by modern authors (Spring and Goss). Instead of interlacing the fingers and placing the forearms on the floor (step 1 of the technique), place both hands, palms down, on the floor. The hands should be shoulder-distance apart. Then place the head on the floor, the hairline being about ten inches from the hands. The rest of the technique is the same as outlined in the July 1959 issue of Sell-Realization Magazine.

This variation, by increasing the base of the pose, renders it more stable and easier to maintain, so far as balance is concerned. The disadvantage of this variation is that the whole pressure of the body is focused on the forehead- an unnecessary discomfort. The sooner one can perform the Headstand proper (the Triangle Headstand of Spring and Goss), in which the two cups of the hands embrace the sides and back of the head, thus relieving to a great extent the pressure felt in the forehead, the better it is. (In this respect, there is another advantage of the Headstand proper, which will be examined later.)

Those who achieve some proficiency in the Headstand proper may wish to try a harder way to enter the pose. Starting from position 3, slowly lift the extended legs until they reach a vertical position. Be particularly attentive not to bend the legs, at any time, in this variation; therein lies its secret and also its value. One should also lower the legs without bending them; pausing for a few seconds, if desired, when the legs reach a horizontal position. This variation -a combination of grace and strength-develops the musculature of the trunk (abdominal and back muscles) as well as a keen sense of balance.

(2) How to improve one's balance in the pose?

Bending the spine in various ways (forward, backward, sideways, even twisting), spreading the extended legs in a forward or a lateral split -variations that come under the Sanskrit name of Khagasana, the Flying-in-the-Air Pose—or locking the legs in Padmasana—Sell-Realization Magazine, January 1959 and March 1959—the Lotus Pose, are various ways to develop one's balance in the Headstand position.

## TRIPOD HEADSTAND AND KHAGASANA-FLYING-IN-THE-AIR POSE

A combination of the Lotus Pose and the Headstand is by far the most interesting variation. Called either Sirsha-Padmasana, the HeadLotus Pose, or Urdhva Padmasana, the Upward Lotus Pose, this variation may be performed in two different ways.

The easier way is to assume first the Lotus Pose, and then the Tripod Headstand (Padma-Sirshasana). This is done by sliding the knees upward along the muscles of the back of the forearms, until the knees rest on the elbows; and there—from raising them to a vertical position.

The harder way is to perform first the Triangle Headstand and then, in this

inverted position, enter the Lotus Posture (Sirsha-Padmasana). Only when the knees have become very supple through continued practice of the Lotus Pose can the feet be made to slide down (or crawl down! ) the opposite legs in the Lotus lock.

One should be quite sure of his perfect balance in Sirshasana before attempting the Head-Lotus Pose. To fall on the floor from this Upward Lotus Pose may be dangerous for the knees. However, if one has achieved mastery in Sirsha-Padmasana, he may try to bend the spine various ways (forward, backward, sideways, twist) in this position. The forward

PADMA-SIRSHASANA (TRIPOD HEAD-LOTUS POSE)

SIRSHA-PADMASANA (TRIANGLE HEAD-LOTUS POSE)

bending in the Triangle Head-Lotus pose, until the knees touch the arms, is a most remarkable variation, since in one pose it synthesizes the specific benefits of three different types of asanas: inverted pose, cross-legged pose, and spinal pose.

(3) How long to stay in the Headstand?

For health purposes the timing of one to five minutes is amply sufficient. It is known, however, that many yogis stay on their heads not merely five minutes at a time, but up to three hours.—Siva Samhita 4:46. Such yogis do not aim so much at physical improvement as at mental and spiritual development. They have first followed a strict discipline of physical and mental purification for many weeks before being permitted by their instructor to perform the Headstand for long periods of time. Moreover, their teacher allowed them sufficient time to accommodate themselves gradually to the inverted position. To follow the example of these yogis without competent supervision is to invite trouble. Further, this method of mental and spiritual development, although good, is far from being the fastest (as we shall explain in another section). Therefore we do not recommend that anyone try to stay a long time on his head, unless he does so under the direct supervision of a competent instructor.

In order to understand the innumerable effects of the Headstand, a physiological survey of the inverted action is necessary— The Sanskrit name of the Dorsalstand, Viparita Karani, means "inverted action." The name is sometimes used to designate the Headstand, although it is usually accepted as referring to the Dorsalstand. Thanks to the many physiological investigations that have been conducted in the United States and Europe, particularly since 1930, the matter may be

### Physiological Effects of Sirshasana

scientifically summed up in one sentence: all benefits of the Headstand result from the working of the law of gravity upon the upside-down body and from the compensatory reactions of the organism to the gravitational factor. All body fluids (gases, liquids) as well as solids (organs) are susceptible to the gravity pull, but the action on the circulation of blood is of particular importance. This point was most happily described in 1945 by Dr. Torsten Gordh of Stockholm. After having particularly studied the head-down position, especially during deep anesthesia, Dr. Gordh wrote that it "acted like an autotransfusion."

In waking subjects the action of the pose on the shifting of blood from the lower part of the body to the upper part is less spectacular than in deep anesthesia (because, Dr. Gordh explains, the tone of the vessels is not depressed, as it is in deep anesthesia); nevertheless it is potent enough to

produce the remarkable effects claimed by the yogis. The researches conducted in Boston in 1932 by Doctors Myerson and Loman give us a greater insight into these physiological effects of the pose.

Blood pressure changes in the vessels of the neck during changes of posture (adapted from Myerson and Loman )

As may easily be seen from the reproduction of the doctors' graph here, the blood in both the arteries and the veins in the neck region reacts to the inverted position with an increase of pressure. The rise in arterial pressure is even greater than the venous rise. (The contrary appears to be the case in the diagram, owing to the fact that the arterial pressure is expressed in mm. of mercury, whereas the venous pressure is expressed in mm. of blood, which is about thirteen times lighter than mercury.) The pressure in the carotid artery, however, gradually levels off to its original value, while the pressure in the internal jugular vein does not. The venous pressure in the cephalic extremity of the body, by staying almost stationary throughout the Dead-down position, at a level which is almost four times higher than that encountered in the head-up position, thus appears to be responsible for most of the numerous benefits of the Head-down Pose.

By further experiments with the inverted position in Boston in 1946, Doctors Wilkins, Bradley, and Friedland, determined that the rise of pressure in the internal jugular vein is due to two factors:

- (1) the hydrostatic factor, which is the immediate action of the gravity pull on the column of blood already present in the jugular vein when the inverted pose is assumed; and
- (2) the drainage factor, which takes place during the next five seconds, and consists in the emptying of the blood from the veins of the legs and abdomen into the veins of the neck and head. During a rapid inversion of the body the authors were able to separate these two factors, whereas in a slow inversion the doctors observed that the two phases merged into a "single smooth rise in pressure," as had been noted earlier by Alyerson and Loman. Yogis have always stated that the Headstand should be performed slowly. The foregoing scientific findings bear out the wisdom of the yogis' claim that a slow, smooth performance of the pose increases more gradual and easily-accepted-by-the-body physiological changes than does hasty, jerky practice.

This over-all view of the venous changes that occur during the headdown position-i.e., the shifting of the venous blood from the lower part of the body to the upper part—encompasses some more detailed observations:

- (1) that in the inverted position the veins of the legs almost collapse (Trendelenburg), while those of the face and neck become congested with blood;
- (2) that the veins of the pelvic region almost empty while the superior vena cava is doubled in volume, the heart increases its volume (Holland), and the lungs are filled with more blood (Escuclero). Because of the action of the pose on the lungs and heart, cardiac patients should not perform it (as we have mentioned in the first installment of this article).

If the upper part of the body is congested with blood during the Headstand, why are the legs not similarly affected during motionless standing? Physiological experiments have shown that the same filling does occur in the lower part of the body during the erect stance, but to a far less degree. Firstly, the veins of the legs are better protected against the gravitational pull (hydrostatic effect) than are the veins located above the heart. This is because the veins of the legs possess numerous valves—mechanical devices that break up the columns of venous blood when they exceed a certain height while the body is in an upright

position. The veins located above the heart, on the contrary, are almost devoid of valves. Secondly, the large veins of the abdomen possess inside their walls numerous longitudinal muscular fibers that counteract the emptying into them of the blood in the veins located above the heart (drainage effect). The veins located above the heart, on the contrary, are almost devoid of these muscular fibers. It is possible, though, that they develop through one's continual practice of the Headstand, which would explain the amazing adaptation of the Hatha Yogi's body to lengthy performance of the pose. However well adapted to the erect posture the veins of the lower part of the body may be, their action is nevertheless barely sufficient to counteract entirely the gravitational pull. In motionless standing, when the erect position is maintained for some time, as for example during the military position of attention, the legs of some persons may fill with so much blood that the brain may not receive a sufficient supply. The result (well known to army officers) is sudden fainting and a heavy fall. But when the action of the veins is supplemented by the rhythmical contractions of the skeletal muscles, as happens during walking, the circulation is powerfully stimulated, not only in the legs but throughout the system. (that is why, incidentally, walking is one of the best exercises for man, and is highly recommended by yogis.)

As far as the arteries are concerned, it has long been known that in the head-down position the blood pressure increases in the arteries of the upper part of the body, while it decreases in the arteries of the legs (Hill and Flack, London, 1909). Further investigations have shown

- (1) that these variations in arterial blood pressure are greater when the body is inverted rapidly than when it is inverted slowly, another explanation of the yogic injunction that the Headstand should be performed smoothly and not jerkily;
- (2) that even when the body is inverted rapidly, the arterial pressures are still within normal limits, confirming the yogic claim that for persons with normal blood pressure there is no danger in practicing the pose; and
- (3) that in any case these pressures are rapidly leveled off to the original arterial pressure (depressor response), protecting the brain from continuously receiving blood under higher than usual pressure. This depressor response, which takes place during the ten to twenty seconds following the assumption of the pose, is now thought to be a nervous reflex that originates in the arch of the aorta and at the bifurcation of the carotid arteries (Asmussen et al. ). At these places are located "pressoreceptors," doorkeepers of the brain circulation. Whenever the pressure rises too high, these "pressoreceptors" immediately send a message of alarm through the telephonic lines of Cyon-Ludwig's and Hering's nerves to the medulla oblongata, requesting that for the sake of the brain the medulla should moderate its action on the arterial pressure. The medulla, through the telephonic lines of the vagus nerves, then commands the heart to beat less often (Henderson and Haggard), which results in the normalization of the blood pressure in the arteries located above the heart. Recently this depressor response in the head-down position has been studied minutely in patients with high blood pressure (Greet) and associates, Cincinnati, 1950. It was found that in more than half of the patients the depressor response was absent or decreased; that is, for the duration of the position, the blood pressure in the cephalic extremity remained at a higher level than the original pressure. Interestingly enough, in a very few cases the depressor response was, on the contrary, increased; that is, the blood pressure dropped below its original level. Such patients, paradoxically receiving less

blood in the brain while tilted head-down, momentarily experienced a dizziness familiar to them in bending down or similar movements. Only one third of the patients with high blood pressure had a normal depressor response, and this was independent of their degree of high blood pressure. The high percentage Pressure changes in forearm arteries at shoulder level during passive head-down tilting of patients with high blood pressure (two thirds) of abnormal depressor responses in patients with high blood pressure justifies, therefore, the yogic proscription that such individuals should not perform the Headstand. This position, however, is far safer, even for individuals with high blood pressure, than violent expiratory and straining efforts, such as straining at stool, which is known to be the cause of many cerebral hemorrhages (Myerson and Loman). To conclude this description of physiological changes in the body during the inverted position, we would like to emphasize the unusual exercise the head-down position gives to the blood vessels, both veins and arteries, especially in the upper part of the body. Since the suppleness of the arteries is an important factor in longevity ("one is as old as his arteries"), it may be concluded that the Headstand has remarkable rejuvenating effects—a yogic claim for thousands of years.

The numerous benefits of Sirshasana will be described in the next issue of Self-Realization Magazine.

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 beauteous divine realizations.  
O Lord,  
With the soft touch of intuition  
I will tune my soul-radio  
And rid my mind of static restlessness,  
That I may hear Thy voice  
Of cosmic vibration,  
The music of atoms,  
And the melody of love  
Vibrating in my superconsciousness.  
Having Thee  
As the deepest joy of deepest meditation,  
I know that all things—  
Prosperity, health, and wisdom—  
Will be added unto me.  
Father,  
teach me  
To include the prosperity of others  
In the pursuit of my own prosperity.  
I will behold the Invisible  
In the visible forms  
Of my father, mother, and friends,  
Sent here to love and help me.  
I will show my love for God  
By loving them all with divine love.

In their human expressions of love I  
Will recognize only  
The One Divine Love.  
I am the captain of my ship  
Of good judgment, will, and activity.  
I will guide my ship of life,  
Ever beholding the polestar  
Of His peace  
Shining in the firmament  
Of my deep meditation.  
I am a prince of peace  
Sitting on the throne of poise,  
Directing the kingdom of activity.  
A GANDHIAN ROSARY  
(MOHAN-MALA):  
Compiled by R. K. Prabhu.

This attractive pocket-size volume is a compilation of extracts from writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi. A "thought" is given for each day of the year. The selections convey Gandhiji's views on prayer, God-realization, religion, fasting, marriage, Brahmacharya, India's mission, and many other subjects. Because his remarks are of necessity taken out of context, the reader should study them in the light of the Mahatma's political and personal history.

One might venture to suggest that God chose Gandhiji to be a twentieth-century instrument of divine reproach to erring mankind. This humble advocate of nonviolence, in lifting the curtain so completely on his own life, forces a thoughtful person to squirm guiltily with the realization that he himself is not, to put it gently, doing the best of which he is capable.

These words of a man whose life was dedicated to Truth are impregnated with a sacred challenge to which the divinity in man cannot but rise, stirring him to seek for himself the ultimate Truth.

Though Gandhiji was "every inch a man," his self-abnegation, his self-discipline for the sake of others, his aching concern for the masses of India and indeed for suffering peoples everywhere, his faith in non-violence and love as the only enduring remedy for the ills of the world family, reveal an endearing mother-quality. In him was a harmonious balance of the male and female qualities, the real victory in the "battle of the sexes." Gandhiji demonstrated what Paramahansa Yogananda often said: that the equal expression of these two qualities in each of us constitutes the ideal personality, pleasing to God and man.

Some extracts from the book follow:

"If love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave."

"God is not outside this earthly case of ours. Therefore, exterior proof is not of much avail, if any at all. We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses, because He is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music, which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses."

"Where there is realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within. Such testimony is to be found in

the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself."

"I believe that if in spite of the best of intentions one is led into committing mistakes, they do not really result in harm to the world or for the matter of that to any individual. God always saves the world from the consequences of

unintended errors of those who live in fear of Him."

"There is no one without faults, not even men of God. They are men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults, they strive against them, they do not hide them, and they are ever ready to correct themselves."

"Our prayer is a heart-search. It is a reminder to ourselves that we are helpless without His support. No effort is complete without prayer—without a definite recognition that the best human endeavor is of no effect if it has not Gods blessing behind it. Prayer is a call to humility. It is a call to self-purification, to inward search."

"Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil."

"Faith is a function of the heart. It must be enforced by reason. The two are not antagonistic, as some think. The more intense one's faith is, the more it whets one's reason. When faith becomes blind it dies."

"One should eat not in order to please the palate but just to keep the body going. When each organ of sense subserves the body and through it the soul, its special relish disappears and then alone does it begin to function in the way nature intended it to do. Any number of experiments is too small and no sacrifice too great for attaining this harmony with nature."

"I suggest we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I thief it from somebody else."

"Change is a condition of progress. An honest man cannot afford to observe mechanical consistency when the mind revolts against anything as an error."

"Silence is a great help to a seeker after truth. In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after Truth, and the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height."

"Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man."

"Experience has taught me that silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man; and silence is necessary in order to surmount it. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech; he will measure every word."

"Instead of using the body as a temple of God we use it as a vehicle for indulgences, and are not ashamed to run to medical men for help in our effort to increase those indulgences and to continue to abuse the earthly tabernacle."

"A complete fast is a complete and literal denial of self. It is the truest

prayer. 'Take my life and let it be always, only, all for Thee' is not, and should not be, a mere lip or figurative expression. It has to be a reckless and joyous giving without the least reservation. Abstention from food and even water is but the mere beginning, the least part of the surrender."

"Control over thought is a long and painful and laborious process. But I am

convinced that no time, no labour, and no pain is too much for the glorious result to be reached. Purity of thought is possible only with a faith in God bordering on definite experience."

"Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well. There is nothing more potent than thought. Deed follows word and word follows thought. The world is the result of a mighty thought, and where the thought is mighty and pure the result is always mighty and pure."

"Restraint never ruins one's health. What ruins one's health is not restraint but outward suppression. A really self-restrained person grows every day from strength to strength and from peace to more peace. The very first step in self-restraint is the restraint of thoughts."

"Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral."

"The self-sacrifice of one innocent man, is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who are in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man."

"The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If, leaving duties unperformed, we run after rights, they escape us like a will o' the wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine; leave thou the fruits severely alone.' Action is duty; fruit is the rights."

"India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which it shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and godly life."

"I feel that India's mission is different from that of others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone [in the Nonviolence Movement that ultimately obtained India's political freedom]."

"India is essentially karmabhumi (land of duty) in contradistinction to bhogabhumi (land of enjoyment)."

"Brahmacharya is not mere mechanical celibacy, it means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word, and deed. As such it is the royal road to Self-realization or attainment of Brahman."

"Marriage is meant to cleanse the hearts of the couple of sordid passion and take them nearer God. Lustless love between husband and wife is not impossible. Man is not a brute. He has risen to a higher state after countless births in the brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl."

"Man is neither mere intellect nor the gross animal body nor the heart or soul, alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education."

"Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the book of humanity?"

"When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. Even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul is a delusion and a snare."

"A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine."

"Love and ahimsa [nonviolence] are matchless in their effect. But, in their play there is no fuss, show, noise, or placards. They presuppose self-confidence, which in turn presupposes self-purification. Men of stainless character and self-purification will easily inspire confidence and automatically purify the atmosphere around them."

"I do not believe . . . that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer. I believe in advaita [oneness], I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives.

Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him; and if one man falls the whole world falls to that extent."

SRF Lake Shrine, Pacific Palisades, California. At extreme left is the Gandhi World Peace Memorial. ' A small artificial island (right) is a nesting place for a pair of swans and for other water birds.

(UPPER LEFT) SRF students in SRF Cafe at India Center, Los Angeles, August 19th.

(UPPER RIGHT) A group of students practice SRF Recharging Exercises during a class review. Visible behind SRF tower-gate is the Kaiser Foundation Hospital across the street from India Center. (BELOW) Vincent Southland, SRF student, performs two yoga postures, Prastarasana (left) and Mayurasana.

#### Letters From SRF Students

"I have just read Lesson 32, which begins with the delightful poem, 'Teach Me to Seek Thee.' As so often previously, I am again overwhelmed by the greatness of Paramahansa Yogananda. His sensitive responses to the enveloping warmth of the love of God strike in me an answering chord. Even without the techniques his lessons are valuable, but with the fascinating techniques, which really work, I am eternally grateful that I sought to learn of him. Though he was a Hindu, I feel no strangeness between us. He succeeded to a marvelous degree in bridging the gap between East and West." - S.W.T., Whittier, Calif.

"I received the final Lesson yesterday. It is beyond my ability to express how much wisdom and beauty I have found in these Lessons. I find myself growing ever stronger in mind and body, and my faith in God and the Gurus is becoming deeper and clearer." - J.K., Allen Park,, Michigan.

"This has been the most wonderful year of my life. How beautiful the Lessons are! each one a precious gem that radiates a brilliant intensity of light.

Having found these profound truths, I cannot imagine continuing life without them. An immense calm has settled on my being, guiding me easily and beautifully through the day's activities. An awareness of God in all things and beings is almost a constant mental state. My meditations, though still shallow, are assuming an increasing sweetness that lures me back with renewed effort." - E.C., Detroit, Mich.

"The Lessons continue to astonish me with their warm love and basic truths. They have answered for me many unexpressed questions—questions that in my previously dull state I hadn't been aware I should have been asking!" - K.D., Mesa, Washington.

"I have enjoyed and benefited from the first Lessons. I have gained more help in meditation during the past six months than I had expected to gain in this lifetime." - S.H., San Diego, Calif.

"I have found that Hong-Sau can be practiced at any time as relief from physical discomforts such as heat or cold, and to avoid the consciousness of unpleasant situations or surroundings. On my last few visits to the dentist I told him not to use novocain. I practiced Hong-Sau while he was drilling and felt scarcely any pain. His fee was about two-thirds less than I had expected, owing to the

quickness with which the work was completed." - C.L., Miami, Florida.

"Some years ago when I enrolled as a member of SRF I did not really understand what it was all about. I trusted that the teachings would bring purpose and direction into my life, which was then chaotic. Today I feel that it has done that and much more. It is wonderful to be guided by Yogananda—one who knows the way." -J.H.C., Hatfield, Pretoria.

"After you had scolded me for not doing the physical exercises i have not once missed my 'two-a-day.' Ever since I managed to memorize the rules, the exercises have been more of a pleasure than a chore, and have clearly been beneficial. I never doubted they would be. It was just that I had decided my health was so hopeless that I might as well concentrate on making all possible spiritual progress." - H.C., Tarrytown, N.Y.

"There's no retreat like that of meditation. One could be upset from battling the most ferocious lion of worldly difficulties, but if one meditated properly afterward, peace would come upon him in spite of himself. If anyone were to approach me with a so-called 'panacea' for living, I would ask him if he has tried meditation. There is no comparison to this approach." - T.M.C., Philadelphia, Penna.

"This is truly the way to God. I do not believe any of us can be really at peace until we learn to commune with the Divine Spirit."-T.A.P., Fort Worth, Texas.

"I like your 'no nonsense' approach that puts Self-realization squarely up to the student. I spent almost twenty years searching and wandering through the theoretical bushes and byways of metaphysics. From time to time I settled down and worked a little with techniques and meditation, but it seems now that I did it all only to bolster my own pet theories so I could argue more convincingly with friends who belonged to other schools. For a long time I've been tired of the whole act; I've been earnestly seeking one who could really speak with authority—a Master of our own time and of all time. I know that I have found that Master in Paramahansa Yogananda." - R.E.S., St. Paul, Minn.

"I am a newcomer to the SRF Lessons and I am amazed at how effective they are. Already I have received great results. Truly our Guru is a chosen one of God. His presence is felt near me more and more, with the Fathers. For the first time since I, consciously started on my search for God I am overflowing with joy and love—before, everything was an effort." - G .S., Chicago, Ill.

"The blessings that have come my way since Master became my guru I cannot fully relate, because I don't know all of them. How did I manage to exist before? Life was certainly dull." - M.G., Cupertino, Cal.

"How grateful I am for being led to Master's teachings! My soul has been opened to God." - R.S., Los Angeles, Calif.

"A doctor whom I met told me that he had been in the headquarters on Mt. Washington and had experienced there a calm spiritual atmosphere such as he had found nowhere else. I have a very busy life with many problems, some of which seem to have no answer or solution; but, like a miracle, each Lesson gives me help for my most immediate need, as if I had asked for special instruction." - H.M.W., Long Beach, Calif.

"While medical science did a lot to bring about my recovery, I feel that what helped me most were my prayers and the feeling that others, friends and family, prayed with me. On my return-to-work slip, the medical doctor wrote, 'The patient made a remarkable recovery.' The doctors had told me that it would be six months before I would be able to work, but I have been at work for three

months already." - C.S.P., Parma, Ohio.

"My father, mother, daughter, son-in-law, and two grandchildren had been hit by a train on Friday. Dad was thrown from the car and had a broken pelvis and possible internal injuries. Fortunately, the others were not seriously injured. Early Sunday morning my father began to vomit dried blood and his blood pressure dropped. My brother, who is a doctor, became quite concerned and later in the day told me he thought we were going to lose Dad.

"When I wired to SRF on Sunday for prayers for my father a most peculiar feeling seemed to encompass me: a feeling that my request had reached you before the telegram and that the prayers would be answered and everything would be all right.

"When I got to the hospital the following morning, Monday, truly a miracle had happened. The doctors had been able to discontinue the transfusions and glucose, Dad had spent a fairly good night, and the crisis was over." - C.R., Little Rock, Arkansas.

"The SRF Yoga teachings have made my mood more stable; my capacity for selfless love more mature, and my enjoyment of Nature more deepened. Together with my studies in psychoanalytic psychiatry, Yoga has increased my capacity of introspection. Finally, Yoga has inspired me in the betterment of my work as a psychotherapist." - A.C. (M.D.), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

#### PRESS REVIEWS OF "WHISPERS FROM ETERNITY"

"A unique work of a unique personality. Everywhere we feel the touch of the Master Artist." - "Devotion," Jabalpur, India.

"The thoughts of a man who is probably the best-known of his faith in the West. Simply told and sincere." - "News Journal," Pensacola, Florida.

"A mind attuned to supernal experiences in cosmic consciousness.... Exquisitely lyrical prose." - "Divine Life," Rishikesh, India.

"Yogananda's writings have the same music as does The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran." - "Daily Gazette," Berkeley, Calif.

"Transparently clear in expression .... The fervor of spirituality is complemented by a wide sympathy." - "Indo-Asian Culture," Delhi, India.

"Words cannot describe the depth of soul realization attained by this Christlike master. Inspired gems-meditations of simplicity yet of great profundity." - "The Voice," Sussex, England.

"Poetic thoughts from one steeped in meditation and in communion with the Absolute. We recommend the book to all seekers of a truly religious life." - "Man in India" (journal of anthropology), Ranchi.

"Picturesque language.... ideas resplendent with truth and faith." - "Tribune," Ambala, India.

"Yogananda shows himself by precept and example an ideal guru. This book, like a rasayana or elixir of life, should be savoured and absorbed." - "Indian Review," Madras, India.

#### COMMENTS ON AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI

"The import of Autobiography of a Yogi reaches beyond the imagination of our feeble human intellect and touches the Infinite. Yoganandaji was a spiritual giant. In him a great prophet visited the shores of America." - V.B., East Orange, N.J.

"Autobiography of a Yogi, like a lightning bolt, awoke me from the hibernation of worldly life. What a flash of light when the bolt struck! Since reading the book I have traveled from a state of confusion to a world of beauty and joy that I had never dreamed existed. To know that God can be realized in this very life—what a revelation!" - E.C., Donelson, Tennessee.

"I received a true insight into the ways of God." - R.N., Huntington Station, N.Y.

"I feel compelled to pay a tribute to your great guru and guide to self-mastery. His is the first book on anything close to this subject that I have read without skepticism. I believe him implicitly. The book is so written as to capture and command the attention of anyone who is at all interested." - W.G.P., Alentone, Calif.

"I spent two delightful weeks reading and rereading it." -J.K., Danbury, Iowa.

"A marvelous, educational, and delightful book! Never before has a book like this been written!" - B.K., Beinbury, Australia.

"My brother let me read his copy, and since that time I have known true happiness, security, and peace within myself. I thank God that this book was brought to me." - J.H.T., Escaba, Michigan.

"As Yogananda's life story was unfolded I felt that at last God was speaking to me and giving me the revelation for which I had been yearning." - R.J.P., Compton, Calif.

"Nothing else I have encountered has rung so deep a response in my heart." - J.E.G.M., Rmsland, Canada.

"I am inspired by the knowledge of the soul that is revealed in this book." - H.T., Minneapolis, Minn.

"I wanted desperately to know God better, to realize the Truth, to become whole in body, mind, and spirit. I prayed one night for a teacher—someone to guide my steps. I was led to pick up Yogananda's Autobiography (which had been in my home for a year). Everything in it seemed an answer to my need and questions." - N.R., Green Bay, Wisc.

"The book touched me deeply, and I began to understand the teachings in the Holy Bible." - A. F., Detroit, Mich.

"Never before has a book had such an effect on me—such a great spiritual uplift." -E.L., Brooklyn, N.Y.

"I have been filled as never before with spiritual yearning. I have read many books on India, China, Tibet—but nothing to compare with this." - M.F., Oakland, Calif.

"It has helped me to understand passages in the New Testament that had formerly left me deeply puzzled." - H.T.C., Denver, Colorado.

"The book has enlightened me. The soundness and wisdom of the counsel of each guru mentioned therein has expanded my consciousness." -H.S., Detroit, Mich.

"Never before have I been so spiritually aroused. A student of electrical engineering, I had doubted the existence of a God concerned for His people. I could believe in a Creator, but He seemed too remote and unconcerned for His creatures. Because of Yogananda's inspired writing, this doubt exists no more." - T.M., Houston, Texas.

"The most memorable book I have ever read." - AX, Tucson, Ariz.

"It is very strange and I cannot explain it, but when I got Autobiography of a Yogi I could read only a short time when my tears would begin to flow and I would have to lay it down. That phenomenon continued throughout the time that I took to read the entire book. Then again when I read Self-Realization Magazine and the booklets that concern the Master and his teachings, the same thing happened, especially when I read about the life of Mr. James J. Lynn and his close contact with Yogananda. It isn't as though I hadn't read many other books about the higher life, but somehow anything that concerns Yogananda seems to touch me very deeply." - K.W.J., San Jose, California.

"I read Autobiography of a Yogi almost without stopping, then turned back and

reread it. No wonder it is spoken of as a book that is transforming the lives of thousands! I have since purchased Yogananda's Science of Religion and also his little booklet, Metaphysical Meditations. Science of Religion is excellent—written simply, clearly, and saying so much! and I love Metaphysical Meditations. I take it with me to work; it is beside my typewriter, and once in a while during the day I find a few minutes to read it—perfect phrases, formed with love, and set like little jewels upon every page." - M.L.W., San Diego, Calif.

"I have finished my third reading. My appreciation for this book is inexpressible. It is truly a priceless gem, radiating the light of truth and knowledge. I find Yogananda's Metaphysical Meditations most comforting and I read a few passages from it each morning." - CW..D., Corpus Christi, Texas.

"I have read Scientific Healing Affirmations by Paramahansa Yogananda. He is an outstanding figure in the history of human thought. His style is clear and pure like a diamond, his heart beats warmly and nobly for everything that leads man away from the sinister path of evil. Was it not God's will that I should become acquainted with this wonderful teacher in a very critical moment of my life, in which I was stumbling toward an abyss of despair and disdain for all values of human existence?" -W.T.O., Cologne on Rhine, Germany.

#### A NEW EDITION THE HOLY SCIENCE

By Jnanavatar Sri Yukteswar

A treatise on the underlying unity of the Bible and the Hindu scriptures, by the guru of Paramahansa Yogananda.

An English translation of the Sanskrit slokas expounded by Sri Yukteswar is included in an 8-page supplement.

SRF students at India Center, Los Angeles. The annual summer classes, held this year on August 19-21, were attended by students from twelve states and eight foreign countries.

ABOVE CENTER SRF BOOK HOUSE

Paramahansa Yogananda in Pittsburgh, Pa., 1926