

*India
of
Yogis*

INDIA OF YOGIS

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Preface

This book is in the nature of an introduction to a country which is the home of a distinct category of people, known as yogis. These yogis of India are a living expression of an ancient tradition. They practise a system which may be regarded as the oldest 'psychosomatic' training known to man. Thus, they know much which can help the occidental medical men, especially those who, together with me, have formed the new scientific school known as Sophrology, and who believe in exploiting new ideas and techniques for the exploration of the human consciousness.

The Sophrologists are beginning to learn techniques which, through changes in the state of consciousness, produce significant reactions in the psychosomatic world. We began with the revision of the old concept of 'hypnosis' as an elementary technique in this order of ideas, and are now studying different processes in which a change in the state of consciousness plays an important role.

Yoga includes, within its conceptions and practices, the change of the usual state of consciousness as an important element in all its methods. That—and none other—is the interest which Yoga has for the Sophrologist and that is what led me to make this first study of Yoga in India during a stay of about two years.

The same aim is being pursued by two other members of the International Society of Sophrology and Psychosomatic Medicine. These eminent psychiatrists are working in two other regions of the world. One of these, Dr. A. Cuveher of Nancy, France, is studying the phenomenon of Ecstasy in Occidental Religions. The other, Dr. Isaac Gubel of Buenos Aires, Argentina, is carrying out research in the interesting primitive techniques of 'Macumba', in Brazil, and of "Voodoo", in Haiti.

Our work has just begun. We have to study Zen in Japan (which had its origin in Indian Yoga) and other techniques and methods, may be, of less magnitude but not necessarily of less value, which are practised in other lands and societies in a curious 'mystical atmosphere'. Sophrology is thus organising a veritable expedition to the nooks and corners of the human consciousness that it might explore the areas which are, as yet, not clearly known, nor made use of in the normal course.

As in my book, *Letters of Silence*, in this book also, I have adopted, to the utmost limits of my capacity, an attitude of strict neutrality. I think that this is the kind of attitude which can best serve as the base and foundation for that 'bridge of understanding' which we wish to establish between the Orient and the Occident.

Obviously, it was not possible for me to visit all the Yoga centres in India. In this book I have described only those which I visited and which, according to my information, are the more representative units. I know that I must have made several mistakes of omission, and some of appreciation and evaluation. With regard to the former, I can think of the Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr (Bihar), and I am sorry that I could not meet its Founder-President, Yogini Ma Yogashakti who is now on a spiritual mission around the world. Another ashram which I could not visit is the Gurudev Ashram of Ganeshpuri, Maharashtra, and there are several more. But corrections and additions can and will be made in a subsequent edition.

In the text of the book, I have made frequent use of the First Person. This means, first, that if there are any mistakes, the responsibility is entirely mine, and, secondly, that the approach to and the evaluation of the phenomena are personal, are mine. For this reason I would place this book in the category of "First Impressions."

Obviously, for a work of this kind I required, and have received, the help and cooperation of many persons. It is equally obvious that I cannot thank them all individually. However, I would like to make mention of some to whom I am specially indebted. The first among these is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He gave me freely of his time and spiritual knowledge, and made it possible for me to contact all the other Tibetans I wanted to meet. From among these latter, yogi Guru Khamtul Rinpoche deserves my special thanks. He stayed in my house as my guest for some days and advised me on many matters connected with Tibetan Yoga.

I had never thought that this book would be published first in India. A major portion of the manuscript was written originally in Spanish, and my stay in India was coming to an end. Consequently, publishing it in India, and in English, was no easy task. Thanks, however, to the energetic effort of my publishers and the printers, and, in particular, to the personal interest and enthusiasm of Mr. S. K. Malik of the National Publishing House and Mr. Om Parkash and Mr. Sajjan Raj Jain of the

Caxton Press (P) Ltd., it has been possible for me to see my book published before my departure from here.

In rendering the Spanish part of the manuscript into English which would communicate the feel of the original, I received valuable help from Mr Kanwar Lal, who is a leading Indian author and intellectual and has specialised in the field of Indian Religion and Philosophy. Apart from his contribution in respect of language, he gave me much useful advice on several points connected with the text. For all this, I am deeply indebted to him.

Finally, I thank the government of Colombia, my country, for making it possible for me to come to India, and our Ambassador here, Colonel Manuel Agudelo G, for the encouragement he gave to me at all stages of my work.

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"In the phenomenological approach it is difficult to learn not to draw conclusions and let the different types of human existence have free expression."

LUDWIG BINSWANGER

Introduction

In this book, I have made an attempt to describe my visits to and study of the ashrams and caves of the Indian yogis, sacred rivers, those high reaches of the Himalayas to which some yogis repair for their incredibly hard search for God, centres where Yoga is practised in the way of therapy or medical research and places where Hatha Yoga is taught to Indian people as a mode of psycho-physical training. Also, I have described my first contact with the yogis of Tibet, refugees in Indian Himalayas after Communist China occupied their country.

The things written in this book should be regarded in the nature of a first 'appointment' of a patient with a medical doctor, at which the doctor speaks little, asks few questions. The questions are elementary, because with this attitude we can go more authentically to the source of the experiences. My first aim, therefore, was to clarify our idea, the ideas of the occidentals, about India.

Not long ago, whenever an occidental who had been to the orient returned home, one usually heard marvellous tales of the existence of strange techniques and mystic practices.

Today, there is a plethora of books which attempt to acquaint us with the oriental culture and psychology, and many psychologists now undertake the long, difficult, but interesting travel to India. We need this direct contact with the 'phenomena' so that we may sift all the information coming to us, information which is generally mixed with a generous quantity of fantasy, so characteristic of the oriental people, mysticism, and, sometimes, superstition. In my own case, there is the deep interest I have to confirm the yogis' affirmation of the existence of different states of consciousness known to them and completely unknown to us.

The comparison of some phenomena experienced by the yogis (before the 'great samadhi' or state of hyper-consciousness) with some psychological phenomena experienced by our patients was one of the more interesting things which claimed my attention from the beginning. I wanted to go deep into the yogi's techniques, and to know his private experience, and so, I tried to break, with respect, his barrier of silence and to use the knowledge I gained solely for the benefit of humanity.

Realising our inability to go deeper and longer into the phenomena, we tried to establish a bridge between occidental Psychiatrists, Sophrologists and Psychologists on the one hand and the Indian and Tibetan Medical Doctors on the other. We believe that with the help of Indian and Tibetan Doctors it will be less difficult to study the consciousness of the real yogis.

The question is very clear. We need to know whether the phenomena are true, whether the other states of consciousness are real, or, is all this 'oriental fantasy' and no more ?

Now, a new scientific school for the study of human states of consciousness, Sophrology, has taken the responsibility to answer this question. If the phenomena are true, if the men *can* go into a state of consciousness not known to us, the modern science need learn and make researches into these techniques and this consciousness for the benefit of humanity. We believe that the only people in the world who know the answer are the real Indian and Tibetan yogis and perhaps, some great Zen-practitioners in Japan. To have the correct answer, we have to know and meet them. We have to know the 'unknown' factor that goes into the phenomena, and that is the only way.

Of course, it is not possible to visit, in eighteen months, all the Yoga centres in India, ashrams, caves, etc. To describe all these, it will be necessary to make hundreds of books and the task will still not be finished, because Yoga pervades all India. I was keen to go to some other places and to live longer in each ashram and to know more intimately each yogi, but I did not have the time. Anyway the door is now open, and one can come back again after sometime and continue the work.

I have described here only the better-known centres and the ashrams and have given great importance to conversations with the yogis at various ashrams.

I was interested in preserving the conversations and presenting them in their original purity, risking the reader's fatigue and boredom, especially of the reader who thinks that this is a travel-book. In these conversations with the great yogis we see how Yoga appears in its pure essence, and in its living actuality. Some of these conversations were taped. Others were taken down hurriedly and in these there may be a bit of involuntary disfiguration of the themes.

This book does not pretend to be a scientific 'monograph', and still less a psychological study of the state of consciousness of the yogis. To study the latter is

a difficult and delicate task and will be possible only with the collaboration of plenty of doctors. Here, I have tried to present the actual reality of Yoga in India according to my *personal* experience. This means that this communication can have many defects. Nevertheless, this will convey some idea to the beginner interested in the study of the oriental psychosomatic techniques.

In these dialogues, which are sometime tiresome, quite often one comes across very important data like the affirmation by Swami Chidananda, one of the greatest yogis of India, when he speaks about the pseudo-perceptions experienced during the higher stages of Yoga-training. He said, "If he is a bhakta of Lord Rama, his visions shall be associated with Lord Rama, or the Japa he is doing, and the particular scripture he is absorbing. The vision will come only with reference to that. If he is a devotee of Lord Krishna . . . And if he is wise, he will hear also Lord Krishna speaking to him as he spoke to Arjuna or as he spoke to someone else. So, it will be definite, it will have a specific pattern, and it will be the result of his sadhana . . . One interesting factor is that this phenomena is not necessarily common to all."

As in my book, 'Letters of Silence', in this work also, I have tried to be neutral, impartial, objective. I have let the yogis speak in connection with their phenomena, without attempting to impose my ideas, and without taking sides in the discussions. This does not mean that I am in agreement with them, nor does it mean that I do not agree. Any personal evaluation can distort the delicate phenomena of the consciousness we are trying to study, and in which any element can be important.

The title, "India of Yogis", implies that the places described in this book were visited specially to study and to understand the fascinating India in which yogis are developing their techniques. I did not give this book the title, "Yogis of India", because I am no one to talk about the yogis as yogis. The people of India hold the yogis in very high regard and I am in no position to be a judge in these matters. So, I have no intention to present or affirm the rank and status of the various yogis. This can be done only by the Indians themselves. From another point of view, one may say that India is not one India but many Indias. It is so vast and so complex, and so rich, and so many-sided, that each one may find the India he or she is looking for. Thus, there is the India of the Politicians, and the India of Hunters and Sportsmen, and the India of the Tourists, and the India of Industrialists and Money-makers. There is also one other India, the sacred India, the India of Yogis. My book is about that India.

The book is divided into five sections, as follows :-

Section One introduces the reader to India, present and past, with reference to the spheres and aspects of this vast subcontinent and its many-sided and complex life, which are of special interest to me. By this 1st, I mean Yoga and Yogic techniques, which constitute the subject of my enquiry in relation to Sophrology, a new scientific school for the study of human consciousness. Although not entirely superficial, the treatment of themes in this section is, understandably, neither exhaustive nor scholarly. My book is in the nature of an attempt to introduce India of the yogis to the average foreigner whose knowledge of India and things Indian is rather scanty and whose notions are vague. In this section, therefore, the approach has been to provide the background knowledge for the research work attempted by me during my stay in India, glimpses of which may be seen in the rest of the book.

In the Second Section, I have described the various ashrams, the centres where yogis reside as a strange, if not unique, community. There, they live together but the members are free to follow their own practice, their individual sadhana, and to live their outer as well as inner life as they would. As I have indicated earlier, it was impossible for me, and would be for any one, to visit all the ashrams in India during the eighteen months I had at my disposal. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that eighteen years would not suffice to accomplish this task. Therefore, I confined myself to the study of the main ashrams and centres of spiritual life in India. Together, the ashrams that are covered in this book represent all that is best and the finest in the spiritual life in India, and from my own point of view, that of studying the psyche and the psychiatric aspect of the life of the yogis, these are more than representative. I am satisfied, therefore, on both these counts, and believe that I have done fair, if not full, justice to the subject as well as to the reader.

In carrying out my work of research and study I chose the method of direct contact with the yogis. At certain ashrams I stayed for weeks together, getting acclimatised, so to speak, to the spiritual atmosphere and approximating my own ways of living, to the maximum I could, to those of the inmates of the ashrams. I tried to capture the spirit of the place to the best of my ability. In any case, my knowledge of these ashrams and my experiences there are authentic and I am glad that I was able to secure, to such a large extent, the goodwill and cooperation of some of the top yogis of these ashrams,

and received the benefit of communicating with some of the most enlightened minds and personalities in the spiritual field, in India.

As a consequence of this kindness and cooperation of the great yogis, I was able to probe into their minds and to get answers to some of my questions on themes in which I was specially interested. For me, my conversations with these yogis represent material of considerable value.

Section Three deals with the application of Yoga in the field of medicine. The primary use of Yogic techniques has been recognised in India for quite some time now, and during the last quarter of a century, more and more fully-qualified medical doctors have been attracted to the world of Yoga. As a result of this, proper scientific study and use of the therapeutic aspect of Yoga have been gaining strength. Some of the well-known yogis of India of the last two or three decades were doctors who renounced the world and took to Yoga. Men like Sivananda, founder of the Sivananda Ashram belong to that category. On the other hand, there are doctors like Vaidya of Bombay and Varadani of Jaipur who might be regarded as yogis even though they have not taken to Yogic robes. I call these men a new generation of scientific yogis, and my opinion is that this synthesis of Yoga and Medicine is a step in the right direction, and will prove of immense benefit to mankind in the curing of disease and sickness, and, more than that, in the maintenance of health and vitality.

It is the last, especially, with which the Fourth Section is concerned. At several centres in India, one finds that Yogic exercises and other techniques are being used for making the body strong and graceful. Private enterprise as well as governmental interest in these activities can be seen at work in this sphere. At Chandigarh and at Delhi, I found impressive arrangements for imparting physical or, perhaps, one should say, psycho-physical education on Yogic lines. I met also some Yoga-specialists who are extremely well-versed in the knowledge of Yoga and its practical application in the field of human physiology. The West which is so very self-conscious in respect of the strong body, and the body beautiful, can certainly make use of Yogic exercises with great advantage.

Of course, the West is already making some use of Yoga, spiritually as well as for healing diseases of body and mind. India is the home of Yoga and now, an increasingly large number of foreigners—Europeans, Americans, Africans, Australians, Asians—of all continents and countries, and of all races and religions, are coming to

India and seeking solacé and tranquility, in the lap of this country and through embracing Yoga. I have been making particular enquiries on this point, and it was interesting to learn that quite a number of persons who have come and settled here as yogis were neurotics and had been treated in psychiatric clinics. Some of the foreign yogis are revered as fairly advanced in their sadhana. In a way, the Mother at Pondicherry should be considered among these, since she is French

Section Five, about Tibetan Yoga, should prove of great interest to the readers because it covers a very rich but comparatively less explored territory. It relates to the Tibetan yogis now residing in India and to the theory and practice of their Yoga. In some of its techniques, the Tibetan Yoga is not only different from the Indian Yoga, but is, in certain aspects, more advanced. Certainly, it has phenomena of their own kind and full of great psychological interest. I must confess that I have not so far succeeded much in learning about the Tibetan yogis. However, I have knocked and the door has been opened a little, and I have hopes that in the interest of possible benefit to humanity, the Tibetan yogis would collaborate and cooperate and, some day, we shall know the great secrets of the Tibetan yogis which can bestow such amazing health and longevity and such astonishing harmony and tranquility.

I have already said that my book is in the nature of a first appointment, as we say in our profession. Naturally that which has been achieved is little, and that which remains to be achieved is large. But that is how it always is in the field of research and knowledge. A beginning must be made somewhere, and the rest will follow, says Swami Karunananda. I have made the beginning, I intend to keep up my interest and my efforts and I would like to come back again and yet again to my work. But whether I come back or not, I am sure that my other colleagues, those who are known to me, and that vast body in India and all over the world who are not known to me, and even the ones who will follow us when we are no more, will carry on this useful work of research in a field so full of such tremendous potentialities for the health and harmony of the human mind. I have lit a little lamp which cannot light more than a very small area of the vast darkness of our ignorance about Yoga. It is my hope and prayer that this tiny flame will one day grow into a flood of light, and that our knowledge about the secrets and techniques of the yogis of India and the Tibetans will be both adequate and sure and we will use it with certainty and advantage for treating our patients.

It is not easy to sum up one's impressions and experiences. Even if I could do that, it is perhaps too early to assess what has been my total gain in knowledge

and in the research work I have been engaged in. Nevertheless, I can discern three clear and sharply outlined facets of the picture of Yoga as I saw it. First, there is the outstanding and overwhelming value of Yoga as a unifying force in India. From high Himalayas to India's southern most point, Cape Comorin, where the Vivekananda Rock juts out like an imposing symbol, Yoga runs across the country like its vertebral column. Across these thousands of miles which separate the two extremities of India, there are changes of custom and costume, of diet and climate, of language and religion, but in all this diversity there is one factor which is common, which is constant : Yoga.

Then there is the affirmation made by yogi after yogi that Yoga is above religion, that it does not belong to any religion as such. This is a startling piece of information, for our usual idea is that Yoga is Hindu, or, may be, Buddhist. And yet in ashram after ashram, I was told, and found for myself, that Yoga welcomes people of all religions. Swami Chidananda of Sivananda Ashram said :

“Yoga is above religion, it concerns man, the human being as a soul in the body. It has no particular religion. Just because it has come out of the genius of the Hindu people, people think : Yoga is Hindu. But, Yoga is in yourself, it is supra-religious in its application. Anyone can practise it. Buddhists, Christians, Parsees, Muslims—anyone can practise it.”

When I asked him whether Yoga was a religion, the Maharajji at Beas told me :

“No, it is not religion. I am telling you, Yoga is no religion at all. It is spiritual practices for God realisation. We do not believe in any religion. There is no question of making a Christian into a Hindu or a Hindu into a Muslim. We do not believe in all that. We have people of every religion here. We give absolutely no importance to religion. You just put an overcoat, a jacket, or a shirt on your body. You are, and remain, what you are. These clothes do not change your qualities, your human qualities. These are just outside clothes. They do not make any meaning or difference to us.”

Finally, the central fact of all the techniques of Yoga, of Yoga of all categories, Raja, Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, or the several minor ones, is that Yoga

Section I

India—Home of Yoga

India Today

India, they say, is ten thousand years old. I refer, of course, to the civilization and culture, or, perhaps one should say, the civilizations and cultures of the country. For the land, we are told, is as ancient as earth itself. In fact, the people believe that this part of the earth was the first that was created and even the exact spot with which the formation of the earth began is pointed out : where Varanasi, (popularly known as Benares) the holiest city of the Hindus, stands today. The people of old India—in all the ages of the earth and the historians in all the stages of the story of mankind. Archaeologists keep on finding more and more ancient ruins which seem to bear out the claims that are made. The remains of Harappa and Mohenjodaro are ruins of a fairly advanced civilization. This would indicate that centuries, if not millennia should be added before the date which the archaeologists fix in respect of their existence. The Vedas, India's most sacred scriptures, speak of pushing out from Aryavata, the land of the noble, the dark, swarthy short-statured dasyas—the aborigine or the people to whom the cities like Harappa and Mohanjodaro might have belonged. The Vedas themselves are regarded as having been in existence always. Even the intellectuals speak in that vein and scholars put them at 1500-2000 B.C. In any case, they are regarded among the most ancient, the earliest, books, if not as *the earliest* books of Mankind. And the Vedas speak of another race of men to fight and defeat whom was the aim and duty of the Aryan people.

All this points to the same conclusion that India has been existing as a country for a long, long period, and the absence of recorded history notwithstanding, her people may boast of a heritage of civilization and culture which, to say the least, have been there for several thousands of years. Obviously, a country with a history as long as all that, and a country as large and populous as India, is bound to be intricate and baffling, as well as interesting. In a stream like this many waters must have mingled. At the great confluence at Prayag, Allahabad, three sacred rivers join to constitute the Triveni. But the number of the rivers of India runs to scores and looking at the bewildering mixture of thoughts and cultures which is India, one thinks that it is the waters of all these rivers which have gone into the making of the

phenomenon which is India. In the description of the human body, the Indian thought speaks of *nadis*—streams, and the three main ones which are mentioned might be a reference to the Ganga, Jamuna, Saraswati—the invisible—which commingle at Prayag. I have a feeling that if research is carried out, it may be found that the geography of the entire land had been mapped out in terms of physiology.

But let us not at the moment speculate on such matters. I do not wish to consider here the ancient history of India. I wish, rather, to convey to those who have not seen it some idea as to what kind of country India is today and to make an attempt to crystallize my own impressions of this unique country, for I must say that though I have seen many countries of the world, I have seen none with which I can compare India. Most countries are mere copies of this or that 'mother' country, mere replicas, imitation articles, having no personality, no character of their own. And though there are signs of India tending towards giving herself a veneer of westernization and though an increasing sameness is in evidence in big cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, on examination all this is found to be mere gloss; the country continues to be different and incomparable and my opinion is that it will always continue to be that.

I shall come to all this a little later. Here I would like to cast a rapid glance at modern India, and convey to the reader my impressions about what she looks like and represents today, in her outer form, so that he may understand the physical surroundings, the environment, the climate, the surface features which play such an important part in shaping our mental attitude.

After all, what is of real interest to us is that which is today, not the past, but the present, not the ancient, but the modern. The ancient and the past are important, but only with reference to today, only in so far as they furnish the back-drop against which the contemporary men and women live; only as the material which provides clues to and explanations for the mentality of the people living today. For the psychiatrist, certainly, this is the only valid approach.

Of course, India's rich past is full of useful material which helps to explain why a particular kind of human personality or mentality has developed here. In fact, in India, more than in any other country, the impact of the past is so strong that it will be no straining of truth to say that the Indians are the most conservative people in the world; 'conservative' in the original, the literal sense of the word. those who 'conserve.' For, I must say that though orthodoxy is very much in evidence,

the people are, generally speaking, very tolerant, very broad-minded, very open-hearted. I have always wondered at phrases like 'secret India', 'exotic India' and 'unknown India', and all that. I found India to be open India, and not closed, fairly well lit, and not dark, understandable, once one got on to the right clues, not enigmatic. India is undoubtedly complex; and deep and high in thought and speculation, and there is such a bewildering variety of things and people, and her personality has many diverse facets. Indeed, it is quite true to say that India is a continent, like Europe, rather than one country, although it has a unity, and a triple-strong unity which stamps it as one country. With patience, oriental patience, shall we say, and honest effort, one can get to know India offensively well. Intimacy with India is, of course, something for which one has to strive and wait for years. I am certain, however, that all this talk of 'secret' and 'exotic India' is a manifestation of hasty conclusions and it distorts the image of the great land and its people.

The long and variegated story of India, which is full of a score of phases and many ups and downs, entered a new, and important, stage, only a little while ago. A "new" India emerged in 1947, when on 15th August she became independent. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, great fighter for India's freedom, and her first Prime Minister, "At the stroke of the midnight hour (14th-15th August, 1947) when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom. We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers her self again."

But this act of 'rediscovery', of discovering herself again, should not be taken literally. India has never forgotten her self. Her traditions have been maintained with a tenacity and purity which are truly amazing. Furthermore, in all these years since Independence, India has not been so much bothered about discovering herself again as to advance in each branch of knowledge and every field of endeavour along modern lines. In many ways, she is already among the advanced nations of the world. She is advanced and modern and westernized not only in respect of her big cities and hotels, cinemas and universities, hospitals and offices, houses and buildings, highways and bridges, transport and communication systems, factories, dams and plants (including one connected with atomic energy), governmental machinery and parliament, the newspapers and fashions and other paraphernalia which constitute the outer shell of modern civilization, but also in respect of her thinking. There are signs of change everywhere. And yet, it is important to remember that all these are merely surface changes. Scratch a little, rub off the outer polish and underneath you will find the same, old, India—religious, believing in, and even

world of the religious, and to some extent, superstitions. For all the apparent modernity, the things are sacred, the customs—the law and the morality—are sacred. Superstitious practices according to belief in religious mantras are the rule and evil mantras still answer more as an extraordinary event.

All this applies only to the sides. The India of small towns and more specifically, rural India is looking even in this vortex of modernity and westernisation. To put it briefly, the first most obvious difference between India and the West is that even in one's life is significant in the religious sense, and all occupations are connected with religion. Food, clothes, festivals, drinking, bathing, one's very travelling are all based on religion, on tradition. Every moment of one's life is under the controlling direction of religion; what one does and how that is done is controlled by religion. The human hands, more important for us in the West are assigned specific functions in strict conformity with the religious point of view. The right hand is considered sacred and is, therefore, used for important functions and gifts are. It is with the right hand that one eats food, takes the woman one marries and offers or receives gifts and so on. The left hand is used for lower work, in the toilet and is regarded as generally inferior. The right hand is the symbol of good; the left is heavily sinister—of evil work.

To the Europeans all this is of immense interest, for this supplies the clue to the Indian mentality. In India life is one long ritual which psychologists can interpret as a mechanism for defence for protection against the things and forces of outer-worldliness so necessary for a country and a culture full of such dangers and difficulties, for life which is so full of insoluble problems. Perhaps it is this ritual and a way of living prescribed to the minutest detail, which accounts for the fact that in India there are far fewer mental cases than in the West. Life was well-ordered here, everything was clear-cut, instructions were precise and so ritual and religion acted and still can act as barriers and shock-absorbers in the mental world. Faith may be cynical, yet cynical helps and one should not have too much anxiety and worry. In spite of poverty and hardship, in spite of a generally gloomy outlook as far as material wealth is concerned, in spite of all sorts of troubles and disturbances, the average Indian—the right sort—is a fairly cheerful and untroubled person. Life goes on as on even poor people seem to have leaps of time to relax and there are few, if any, signs of reaction or characteristics of modern life in most western countries.

I hold no brief for India and having been born and trained in the Occident, am inclined to criticise certain oriental traits. Still, I cannot but marvel at the tranquillity and peace of mind the average Indian enjoys. Is this the effect of religion? How are these people, these poverty-stricken hungry people, able to possess, such calm and serenity. The subject is a fitting one for detailed enquiry. Can India achieve a synthesis of spirit and modernity? Can the dreams of Vivekananda and Nehru, who craved for an India strong in soul as well as body, materialise? Can India produce a worthy amalgam of the secular and the spiritual? These are important, interesting and baffling questions and of special significance for the Psychologist and the Sophrologist.

At this stage I do not have the qualifications to pronounce judgement in these matters. Of one thing, however, I am sure. If India can show equal inclination for worship in India's old as well as her new temples—Nehru aptly termed India's dams and factories as her new temples—and fuse the two without injury to either, it will create a remarkable condition of synthesis and integration.

It will be stating the obvious to say that India is playing an active role in the modern world, politically as well as culturally. This is quite natural. The country is big, stretching 3217 km. from the snowbound peaks of the Himalayas, where yogis carry on their sadhana, to the Vivekananda Rock at Cape Comorin in the extreme South. In keeping with her diversity in almost every respect, the physical features of the land and the climate provide great variety. High mountains, dense forests, level plains, and scenic beauty of all types are to be met with, and superlatives like the highest and the longest, the wettest and the hottest can be freely used in the description of many of its geographical features and conditions. Bounded by the Himalayas in the North and by the sea on three of its sides, India has a clear-cut geographical unity. And since natural environment has such a tremendous effect on the conditioning of the mind of the people, in spite of seeming diversity there is an underlying unity which one discerns in the life of the people and in their thought and philosophy.

But a country is not to be thought of in terms of its mountains and rivers—of which India has many—its plateaus and plains, its forests and sea-shore or its lakes and vales. A country is the people living in it. And in this mass of land measuring, in area, 3,263,377 sq km., nearly 450 million human beings live. They constitute roughly one-seventh of the population of the world. This is a stupendous

generally speaking, two different cultures, two different kinds of things, two different ways of living were evolved. Unconsciously, even my treatment of the ashrams of India got divided into those in the North and those in the South. To revert, however, to languages. Hindi is one of the official languages of the country, yet English is popular and continues to be the medium of instruction for higher education as well as the language of administration. Rightly or wrongly, knowledge of English is considered a sign of superiority, and not only the elite but even the others like to show-off that they know this language. A great number of books and magazines and newspapers are published in the English language. This is very helpful to most of the foreigners and they find it easy to get along in India and to understand it much better than they might have if this foreign language had not been so easily and widely understood and used in this country.

Of course, the most important point to note in respect of India is that almost all the principal religions of the world are represented here. India is the home of several major faiths, and she has a tradition for religious tolerance unrivalled by any other country. The national approach is secular, and people are free to pursue whatever religion they would. This bare statement does not give the true picture of the beliefs and religions of the Indians. Hinduism, which is the dominant religion of the country, is usually defined as a way of life. All things indicate how deeply imbued is the life of the Indian with religion. From birth to death, religion is like the earth below and heaven above, like the shadow of man constantly around and about each person. Since I am concerned with the study of the mind of man, naturally I tried to think more of the influences which moulded the mentality. My view is that the major clue to the understanding of the Indian mind is religion. An average child, of course, Hindu, more than the Mohammadan is constantly going through ceremonies and *samskaras* which leave a deep impression upon his mind and contribute very largely to his mental development. As I am interested in studying Yoga, which is a philosophy that grew up several thousand years ago, naturally I tend to think in terms of Hinduism and other allied religions. Islam is a religion which is not of this soil and as such there is a wide divergence between the tenets and beliefs of Hinduism and Islam. It is not my intention to talk about this from the communal point of view. I speak solely from the philosophical point of view and only with reference to my subject of study. Since I am here to make a study of the yogis' mind and the Yogic techniques, which are thought of in terms of something connected with the philosophy of Yoga, I instinctively think of the Hindu child. This child, a boy specially, grows up within the frame-work of very clear-cut and sharply defined religious concepts. His life is divided

into four ashrams—not to be confused with the ashrams of the yogis—namely, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanprastha, and Sannyasa—the period of education and learning in which one is supposed to study and remain a celibate, the period of marriage and worldly life; the period of leading the life of the house-holder and moving out to the forests, and, finally, of renunciation of all worldly ties. Of course, I do not suggest that this is how life is being lived by the average Indian today. But the point I am making is that these centuries-old beliefs have become a part of the Indian mental make-up and it is not easy to get away from the impact of these deep-seated beliefs in the mind, in the psyche, of the Indian. Right up to his death, and in ceremonies connected with death, and even afterwards, there is this impress of religion. The cremation and throwing of the ashes in the river are not mere symbols, they are strongly held beliefs which must be practised. Here and there, one may find an electric crematorium, but even the top scientists, intellectuals, the so-called atheists and non-worshippers like to be cremated in the traditional manner.

The influence of religion may also be seen at work in the festivals of the country. Most festivals are directly associated with the question of Good and Evil, and celebrate the triumph of Truth over Falsehood. Several festivals are connected with the birthdays of great incarnations like Ram or Krishna. Then there is a host of fasts and feasts and baths and visits to the places of pilgrimage, which are all connected with religion and have religious sanction. The Indian people are the most profoundly religious people in the world, and anyone who wants to understand them properly must not overlook this all-important factor.

Another point of interest in respect of the variety and diversity of this fascinating land and her people is India's costumes. All manners of costumes and clothing are used. Now, the Western dress is becoming more and more popular. Nevertheless, the traditional ways of dressing persist. The saree and the dhoti which have been there in India for thousands of years are still widely used. In fact, the western women have started using the saree which is, perhaps, the most charming article of feminine clothing. My wife wore it while she was in India and liked it. The salwar, kameez, choli and ghagra of the women, and the turbans and the kurta, and pyjama of the men are some of the other articles of dress which one comes across. The official dress of the Indian officers and diplomats is the achkan and pyjama—a la Jawaharlal Nehru—are also seen. Food habits vary a great deal. The dishes of the north are altogether different from what is eaten in the south and there is a great diversity in the food served in the west and the east. It is customary to eat with

one's right hand and, in the south specially, there is great orthodoxy in matters connected with food.

I have already spoken of the festivals, but wish to say another word or two about these. They are marked by a spirit of abandon and gaiety which is amazing. Festivals like Deepavali—festival of lights—and Holi—the carnival of colours—are supremely expressive of the attitude of 'light and happiness'—so typical of the Indian personality.

Happiness—'anand'—the goal of men everywhere, and not of the yogi only—that elusive something which every one is seeking, but which few, if any, find. And one of the things one quickly learns in India, is that for quite a number of people, for the yogis and for the lone man out to seek salvation, say, at Gangotri, material progress means nothing—adds 'not an atom to his happiness.' Mahatma Gandhi says :

"That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice. Western nations are today groaning under the heel of the monster God of materialism. This land of ours, was once, we are told, the abode of the gods. It is not possible to conceive gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness."

This is an important point, and to me it provides a clue to the puzzle which India's story looks, at first sight. I realised that the history of India was not a history merely of wars and conquests, of pursuit of wealth, achievement and material progress. It was a history of a sustained search—what many believe to be a nobler search—for harmony and happiness.

India Yesterday

The history of India is the history of Yoga. To some this might seem a startling view. But I believe that even though the history of India is a stream of many waters, her thought and philosophy constitute its main current. And if this is conceded, who can deny that the entire thought and philosophy of India can be summed up in one word: Yoga.

Anyway, I am convinced that any one who wishes to understand India rightly should understand her philosophy. The world acknowledges that India has contributed significantly to human thought and wisdom. In this realm she is among the foremost, and western thought is beginning to realise more and more how deeply mankind is indebted to India in these matters. I am no scholar of Indian religion and philosophy. My specialisation is in the field of medicine, in psychiatry, and that, too, in western medicine and western concepts, generally, of the science that I have studied. But when I realised that to keep to the western portion of the human heritage and knowledge was to limit our own resources and, perhaps, to go wrong in some ways, I proposed that in the new scientific school for the study of the human consciousness, which I named as Sophrology, all techniques should be carefully studied and, if necessary, incorporated. Pursuing this course, I found that the techniques of India's Yoga can be of great use to us.

It is generally stated that as a philosophy, Yoga begins with Patanjali, the great sage, who propounded what is today categorised as Raja Yoga. Yet like other sages who did the same in respect of other sciences, and philosophic systems in India, Patanjali gave form to matter which lay scattered in various earlier treatises. Indeed, the beginnings of Yoga may be traced to the Upanishads. Since the Upanishads are regarded as containing the essence of the Vedas, it is quite safe to state that Yoga should be regarded as dating from the Vedas.

I would like to go even a step further. My view is that the Yoga discipline, indicating a numinous sense in the human being of something Beyond, of something more lasting than ourselves and something which is the origin and basis of our Life

and Universe is essentially pre-Vedic. After all, human nature has not changed materially during the last few thousand years, and I cannot accept that any special desires or thoughts arose in the human mind or the Indian mentality only at the time of the Vedas. It is only a matter of research in the field, and I am sure that the post-Vedic will be found to be linked up with the pre-Vedic view of life and things. Already, modern scholarship has found that, to take one example, phallic worship is a very ancient phenomenon.

The Indians appeared to have grasped the essence of the phenomenon of human life from the very beginning. They realised that, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, all problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. Seeing that Nature, as well as human nature, was composed of many conflicting and contrary ingredients, the sages of India set themselves the task of resolving the conflict, and of establishing harmony—a task to which we, of the West, have started giving our attention only now. What is more, judging from the results, it seems that they found good solutions, and were able to devise a way of living and a set of values which have, by and large, helped the Indian people to lead lives in which there has been a greater element of peace and tranquillity, and even joy, than has been the lot of the western man. This is not merely a matter of materialism vs. spiritualism. No, India never thought in such antithetic terms. Like all good phenomenologists she went to the heart of the matter, the essence of the phenomenon, and knew that material wants and their satisfaction were essential and major constituents of the object of their enquiry. In fact, India was and continues to be a highly civilized as well as a highly cultured country. She gave equally great attention to the 'outer', 'the material', as well as the 'inner' the 'spiritual'—witness her ancient wealth and material glory, her infinite array of products and the tremendous preoccupation of the people with dress, ornaments, cosmetics, the arts, architecture, decoration pieces, carvings, etc. A separate 'ashram', division of one's life, was devoted exclusively to the earning of wealth, to the possessing of material riches, and that to one's heart's content and maximum capacity 'Man doth not live by bread alone,' but that he needs bread is equally true. And the Indians knew and included this properly in their view of life.

The Indian view of life is, therefore not to be regarded as 'spiritual' or 'materialistic', etc. It was all-embracing, and based on an accurate study of the phenomenon called Man and his life. No theories were accepted which did not conform to the facts of the situation. They collected the data carefully, analysed

it fully, and only then formulated theories and prescribed practice. And—excellent thing—they believed that such study was a whole-time job, a specialised job, and they had a separate category of men to do this. The West has only now begun to think in terms of specialisation. India has always been doing that

The society was divided into classes, or 'castes' as it is popularly termed. The men who did this job of thinking, and knowing, and investigating and then teaching were the brahmins, the yogis, the rishis and munis, the sages and seers. They were regarded as the highest, like the head in the body. Then came the warrior class, the fighters whose specialisation was to defend the country and to protect the people. The third category was that of the merchants and traders. The fourth, the lowest category, comprised all the rest who were required to do the menial jobs. All this made for a clear-cut division in which each person knew his place and his duty. It removed confusion, and made for harmony. One accepted one's station and vocation, and cheerfully went on with one's life. And one of the advantages of this system was that knowledge could be passed on direct from father to son, and whether it was a science or a craft, and Yoga-Shastra or Kama-Shastra, what the ancient sages knew was preserved and preserved well.

The Indian view is that all life is Yoga ; preparation, effort, sadhana, evolution, call it what else you will, but 'Yoga' will express it best. Now, one of the essentials for all sadhana is discipline, and, therefore, whatever helped in creating a sense of discipline was good. The caste system created an unparalleled sense of social discipline, and there was little sense of the 'forced' about this. When on the battle field of Kurukshetra, the mind of Arjuna wavered, Krishna had just to tell him that as a *Kshatri* it was his *dharma*, duty, to fight, and he should have no qualms about killing. High philosophy that the soul was imperishable, etc., apart, this sense of *Kshatri's dharma* itself was enough to dispel the doubt Arjuna experienced. In his book on India, Rawlinson sums up the situation excellently : "Arjuna is aghast at the prospect of a conflict in which so many heroes are doomed to perish at the hands of their kinsfolk. Krishna consoles him by propounding the theory of Karma Yoga or union with the World-Soul by means of action. Action without attachment is the ideal. Each caste has its *dharma* or divinely appointed duty. The *dharma* of the Brahmin is religion ; of the Warrior it is war, of the Sudra it is menial service. But all service is of equal merit if it is performed in honour of Him Who is the Author of all. The warrior's duty is to slay his

concentrating on one aim : one's education, one's preparation for the next stage. If a building has to endure, the foundations must be strong, and the Indian spared no effort in giving the soundest possible training to the boy. Body, mind, soul,—all were looked after equally well, and made fit for tackling the problems of life, and yet enjoying it to the maximum, enjoying all the fruits of the orchard of life, with one proviso, that one should enjoy these in due season.

Each stage of life, therefore, becomes, in the scheme of things, a preparation for the next stage, and each life a preparation for the next, and a better, life so that, in due course, through this process of evolution, from the lower to the higher, in successive lives one attains Nirvan, Liberation and Eternal Bliss, and merges into the One Absolute, etc.

In this sense, all life is Yoga, and for each one of us, each life is an opportunity which should be utilised for utmost benefit—for sadhana towards the one aim of life, Mukti. It is believed that sooner or later all are destined to achieve this aim, though in the case of very low beings, it may take a very large number of lives. In other cases, it may take a much smaller number, but it is rarely that some one will achieve this final goal within a single life-time. What the yogi tries to do is to span the efforts of countless lives into one, and through sadhana—whatever the kind or variety, Raja, Bhakti, Jnana, or Karma—he tries to reap the fruits within the life in which he has had realisation of what the real goal of life is. The advantage to the Indians throughout history has been that spirituality has always been regarded superior to the material, so that in the five thousand years or more of a civilised existence, the names which have come down are those of great saints and sages, of philosophers and seers, of scholars and thinkers. Even the kings whom India remembers are men like Asoka and Akbar who were renowned for their spirit of tolerance and a view of life which rose above the petty and the mean. And the traditions of this country have been such that each successive generation could not but envy what the fathers and fore-fathers had achieved and an attempt was made to vie with them and to do better than what they had done.

It is not my intention to give the history of Yoga or the philosophy of Yoga. I am no scholar in this field, and my interest is strictly that of a medical man who wishes to understand this rich mine and the particular wealth it can yield for use in my own school of medicine, namely, Sophrology. Nevertheless, it is helpful to cast a quick glance at the main landmarks, and the essential teachings of the

various schools so that the point that I have been making is established, namely, that the clue to the understanding of India is her spirituality and her profoundly religious outlook and that the one thread which runs through the countless years which constitute its history is Yoga, both in its wider sense and in a special sense.

I say this because if the South is preserving that which obtained in the pre-Vedic period, then today it is enough to indicate that great emphasis is still laid there on religion, on certain forms of worship, on ritual, on spiritual discipline. Again, the aboriginal tribes scattered all over India have a number of beliefs and practices which can be explained only with reference to some elements of a category, some category, of Yoga. As for the Aryan and the post-Aryan period, the evidence, of course, is clear. The Vedic rishis were yogis of very high order, though the narrower and more specialised category of Yoga relating to a definite school of philosophy and the later categories like those of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and of the Bhagwad Gita might not have been there. It is customary to think of Vashishta as a great yogi and there are innumerable more. In any case, the rishis who gave us the Vedas, Vyasa and others, would be regarded as mahayogis whether or not their "Yoga" can be categorised according to this label or that.

Yoga is a distinct school of philosophy. It is one of the six principal schools and is generally grouped with the Samkhya school. The germs of both these philosophies are found in the Upanishads. For that matter in several Upanishads we find the germs of almost all categories of Yoga which were developed later on. The rudiments were all there. All that was done by the later writers was to formulate more clearly defined systems based on one concept or the other. For instance, Patanjali gave the Raja Yoga, through his well-known Yoga Sutras. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gita, the most celebrated and the most widely read of scriptures of the Hindus and the most philosophic religious poem of the world, gives us other categories, and creates the first real synthesis. The teachings of Krishna indicate to Arjuna the two paths, that of Karma as well as Bhakti. In advising Arjuna to do his duty, to do his Dharma, to act without worrying about the fruits of the action and in the spirit of carrying out one's duty, carrying out one's moral responsibilities, carrying out one's dharma according to the caste, Kshatriya, to which he belongs—this, too, is Yoga. Krishna interweaves one more thread with this. Let all Hindus believe in Him, concentrate on Him, dedicate the efforts of their entire life to Him, and all will be well. At its highest, the Bhakti marg, the way of the Love of the Gopis and Radha for Krishna become the Sahaj path to salvation and bliss. Along

with this Krishna indicated the third approach, of Jnana. Summarising the Vedantic philosophy in one supreme blend of poetry and philosophy, he stressed the immortality and purity of the soul. Life is mere maya, illusion, and what we have to do is to break the mirror and not be deluded by the forms that we see or, else, to understand that all the forms are but He. Thus, Gita added to the Raja Yoga of Patanjali, the Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and the Karma Yoga. This is how the four main categories were formulated and since then, and up to the modern times, nothing much has been added. There are variations on the same theme, commentaries and explanations or permutations and combinations of the various ingredients, and attempts at having integral and synthetic products. Here and there, there are some flashes of divinity. A rare intellect, a rare lover, a rare Hatha yogi, a rare Karma yogi, has come up, and personified, so to speak, in his or her life, this category or that path. The important sources are, therefore, the Upanishads, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita.

In the present times, little which is new has come up. Innumerable explanations are available but usually it is all a repetition of the same commentaries and fundamentals in one form or the other. Only in the integral Yoga of Aurobindo, is there some element of a new approach which we shall discuss in its appropriate place. Otherwise nothing new has been added.

However, during the course of all these long centuries, one very novel experiment was made and this deserves notice. The general attitude of the seers had been to associate Yoga with renunciation, with meditation on the One, or to control the mind, our chief enemy, in such a way that we can take it away from its preoccupation with the worldly and the illusory and to let it move on to the Formless. This was such a rigid approach that one could not think of yogis having anything to do with the Tamasic or the Rajasic way of life. The old myths of India are never weary of telling us how this great Yogi or that was made to fall through agency of this apsara or that sent by Indra. Thus Menaka made the sage Vishwamitra "fall", and so on. The ideal of the ascetic exemplified in that Mahayogi, Siva, who was ultimately won over by Parvati to create an altogether different ideal, was the general approach. The sensible Hindu had thought of getting over the problem by having the Varna ashrams and the normal discipline of life, but 'traditional' yogis, at times, took the matter to the other extreme, and asceticism and renunciation were emphasised out of proportion. Consequently, there was a reaction and, to cut a long story short,

the mind of man devised a philosophy where Bhoga became Yoga, a philosophy where things which are normally considered Tamasic, "anti-Yogic," were sanctified and were converted into worship. The five, "mukars," mridua, mudra, matsya, mansa or mithun--wine, parched grain or ritual gesture, fish, meat, copulation—these five became essential for a particular kind of worship. The temples of medieval India sport a variety of sculptures which is today a tourist's rage and which is symbolic representation of the philosophy, of this new school of sexual Yoga if one may call it that. This is a fascinating subject, and of immense interest to the Psychiatrist. And I am glad that serious research is being conducted in this field by modern scholars, both Indian and foreign. However, I found that few scientific men, very few doctors, and, indeed, as yet, started taking interest in this. I hope that in the years to come, medical men, psychiatrist and psychologists especially, will give attention to this aspect of Hinduism and Buddhism—to this Tamasic philosophy, to this worship of woman, to the Cult of Desire. I give a resume of the situation and one of the explanations.

"Such sculpture covers innumerable surfaces of scores of temples all over the country, and, what is more, covers them in no uncertain, self-conscious, shame-faced, apologetic, or, even, defiant manner. This is no approach of 'by your leave,' 'I'll dare you', 'to hell with your morality,' of an adolescent exploring secret crevices of a womby world. Oh, no. The utter frankness and abandon, the zest and the joy, the perfection of workmanship and the amazing beauty of the faces and figures, the evident delight in their making, and the sanction of large-sized reproduction, in wide spaces, in endless variety, and inexhaustible variations flashing from the most prominent panels which the bright light of the sun cannot but illuminate—all this must be the work either of mad people, of a society utterly degraded, or there must be reasons and justifications, for all this, a sense and meaning, some religious philosophy, behind all this. One cannot dismiss it all as the hurried and mischievous coal-and-chalk scribble of a schoolboy. And, equally, one need not be too hasty in condemning all this as wholesale depravity. In fact, one cannot do this for the simple reason that much of the mithuna sculpture is superb art, is such exquisite and delicious carving that there is hardly any trace of the consciousness that this has anything to do with sex. The spiritual bliss, the beatific expression, the joy of intermerging, of being one and not two, of reaching a stage where

each is both—all that has been caught by the chisel with surpassing excellence, and only the crudest mind will see in those representations anything but beauty, the evil would lie in the eye of such beholders themselves. Indeed, such work might be more than justified by the oft-accepted philosophy that mithuna is a way to liberation, is sadhana : that the union of male and female is symbolic of the divine, that bhoga is yoga, that the sensual and the spiritual are two aspects of the same substance, and that, as Walt Whitman puts it, ‘the soul is not more than the body.’ *

Anyway and whatever the explanations, Indian temples of Khajuraho and Konarak, Bhubaneswar, Ranakpur and fifty other places are a standing proof of how powerful this movement was during these several centuries.

On Bhakti Yoga, one could write volumes. Like the Cult of Desire, the Religion of Love became the ruling dogma for several centuries. The Cult of Radha and Krishna, symbolising the individual soul and the Universal soul, became the vogue and the way. Considering that in the most illuminated mind, in the absolutely top geniuses of the world, hardly twentyfive to thirty per cent of our total mental capacity finds expression, and considering that a majority of mankind has an intelligence quotient, a mental level, which is not much to be proud of, Bhakti marg is the easiest for the people. Love and Belief—these are the things of the heart and, therefore, Bhakti marg has been the main path. Of late, specially when the people found it difficult to take to renunciation and were reluctant to give up the good things of life and as western philosophy took hold of the East, Karma Yoga has begun to find favour with the people. Many of the most highly placed men of the India of today have preferred to style themselves as Karma yogis, and men like Gandhi and Nehru and Vinoba Bhave are regarded as such. A man like Dr. Radhakrishnan, would be regarded both as a Karma yogi and a Jnana yogi, but against the comparatively few who belong to this category, millions will be found who are Bhakti yogis. In fact, it is the opinion of some persons that even Mahatma Gandhi was a Bhakti yogi who worshipped Rama.

The conflict still exists, the conflict between the ideals of asceticism and renunciation on the one hand, and the passions on the other. I do not think that the modern Indian has been able to resolve altogether this conflict between the

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worldly and the unworldly. But I know that in India there are men who, even in the modern times, have been able to achieve harmony and tranquillity in full measure. And I know that in the history of India, in its philosophy, that is to say, in its Yoga, definitely, there is much light and wisdom which can be made use of by us for helping us in our work in the sphere of medicine.

One of the modern masters I did not count above is Aurobindo. And I would like to quote him on the two points I have made in the preceding paragraphs .

“There are many who, lamenting the by-gone glories of this great and ancient nation, speak as if the Rishis of old, the inspiring creators of thought and civilisation, were a miracle of our heroic age, not to be repeated among degenerate men and in our distressful present. This is an error and thrice an error. Ours is the eternal land, the eternal people, the eternal religion, whose strength, greatness holiness may be overclouded but can never, even for a moment, utterly cease. The hero, the Rishi, the saint, are the natural fruits of our Indian soil, and there has been no age in which they have not been born.”

And, “If we are to live at all, we must resume India’s great interrupted endeavour, we must take up boldly and execute thoroughly in the individual and in the society, in the spiritual and in the mundane life, in philosophy and religion, in art and literature, in thought, in political and economic and social formulation the full and unlimited sense of her highest spirit and knowledge. And if we do that, we shall find that the best of what comes to us draped in Occidental forms, is already implied in our own ancient wisdom and has there a greater spirit behind it, a profounder truth and self-knowledge and the capacity of a will to nobler and more ideal formations. Only we need to work out thoroughly in life what we have always known in the spirit. There and nowhere else lies the secret of the needed harmony between the essential meaning of our past culture and the environmental requirements of our future.”

Finally, may I advise the reader who is interested in knowing more of these matters to rely upon recognised authorities. One of the really high among there is Dr S Radhakrishnan, the pre-eminently learned President of India. Scholar and Professor of Philosophy, he has written books on the subject which are regarded as of surpassing value and erudition. His publications on Indian Philosophy, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita will prove of great help in understanding how the

Upanishads, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita together constitute the mainstream of Indian Yoga. About the last, the Bhagavad Gita, he says ;

The Bhagavad Gita gives us not only a metaphysics (brahmavidya) but also a discipline (yogasastra). Derived from the root yuj, to bind together, yoga means binding one's psychic powers, balancing and enhancing them. By yoking together and harnessing our energies by the most intense concentration of personality, we force the passage from the narrow ego to the transcendent personality. The spirit tears itself away from its prison house, stands out of it and reaches its own innermost being.

The Gita gives a comprehensive yoga-sastra, large, flexible and many-sided, which includes various phases of the soul's development and ascent into the Divine. The different yogas are special applications of the inner discipline which leads to the liberation of soul and a new understanding of the unity and meaning of mankind. Everything that is related to this discipline is called a yoga such as jnana-yoga or the way of knowledge, bhakti-yoga or the way of devotion, karma-yoga or the way of action.

Incidentally, Krishna too, is one of the great yogis of India. He and Arjuna are an example of the master and disciple became God and man. Krishna reveals himself to Arjuna as God. In his discourse, which people call the Gita, he is the Guru trying to lead his disciple along the right path. This wonderful phenomenon of affectivity between the guru and the yogi has been a great tradition of India and men like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Gandhi and Nehru, provide examples of this relationship in modern times. This affectivity, this phenomenon which is found at its intensest in the Indian mind, is of extremely great importance and interest to the Psychiatrist and I shall examine it in the next chapter.

The Yogi And The Guru

It is true that quite a number of us foreigners have heard of Yoga, but, usually, it is thought of as gymnastics, a set of exercises, or asanas as they are called. Some people who think that they know what Yoga means, add breathing exercises to a bit of meditation as part of the system. All this is, of course, utterly wrong. Yoga is counted among the important philosophies of India and is a very vast and intricate matter. It is divided into many categories and is so catholic and comprehensive that there is hardly any aspect of human life and thought, experience and knowledge which it does not encompass. As for the set of exercises and the gymnastics with which we occidentals usually associate the term Yoga, these are not an essential part of some categories of Yoga. Even where they do constitute an essential ingredient, they are no more than a kind of preliminary preparation for something which is far more vital and of much greater consequence.

What Yoga is and how it is classified into various categories are matters which will come up again and again in my conversations with the great living yogis of India. The entire subject is, in range, enormous and, philosophically, extremely subtle and perplexing. So, I do not want to add one more to the many attempts, usually futile, at simplification and elucidation of a subject, full and perfect understanding of which would need a lifetime of work. Indeed, there is a bewildering body of literature already available and it is far better to hear of it directly from the practitants and specialists in the field.

India is full of yogis, of great living yogis, and though much has been written on Yoga in thousands of books beginning with the Vedas, what the yogis tell is based on their own experience. It, therefore, rings true and is easier to comprehend. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of difference of opinion as to its definition, classification and efficacy. We are told, for instance, that Yoga is the discipline of the mind, the senses and the physical body, that it is a spiritual science of being and becoming, that it is a perfect, and practical, system of spiritual culture; that it is an exact science which aims at the harmonious development of the body and the mind and the soul, that it is the internal life of the soul or the spirit, and so

on and so forth. There is a plethora of explanation regarding what it is and what it can be.

Therefore, one of the questions I constantly had in mind was in respect of finding out what Yoga is. I understand that the correct answer is something like this. The word Yoga is derived from *yuj*, to unite. The reference is to the union of the human soul with the divine; to the union of the I-ness, of the ego in us, with the He-ness, the Super-ego, of the kundalini, the serpent power which resides at the *mooldhara*, below the navel, with the Sadashiv, who resides at the top of the crown, or, to put it in technical language, with the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus of Enlightenment and Bliss. By implication, all these things make Yoga a path to Realisation and Liberation, make it a way or a system whereby man's lower nature can be purified and made to ascend to a higher order, to perfection.

He who takes to this path or adopts this system, Yoga, is called a yogi. More precisely, one should say that in the earlier stages of practising Yoga, the person who is doing this is known as a sadhak, and his practice is called sadhana. The term yogi refers to one who is, if not completely realised, fairly advanced in his sadhana, who is not so much a student, but a master who has passed his examinations, if one may say so.

Indeed, it is literally a matter of examinations and the words student and master are not out of place. It is true that the aim is more or less clear but there can be, and there are, different ways of realising that aim. It is something like this. If we have to go from one place to another, we may go there by car or by train, or by plane, or ride a horse thereto, or cycle away the distance, or even trudge along on foot. All these are merely means, the end, the destination is the same. The choice of the method or the means, of course, demands much wisdom. In the considered opinion of most realised yogis and yoginis, the advice of a guru, a teacher, is indispensable in such matters. As Anandamayee puts it; "It is for the Guru to point out the method, he will show you the way to understanding and instruct you in your sadhana. It is for you to keep on practising it faithfully. But the fruit comes spontaneously in the form of Self-revelation. The power to make you grasp the Ungraspable duly manifests itself through the Guru." Now, the yogis' aim is to realise, to purify themselves, so that they can merge in God, to make the personality ascend to higher regions, to seek Liberation from the bondage of existence, etc. How one does this is of importance, but, in the final analysis, all that is just means. What is more, in a large measure, it will depend upon the individual temperament as

to what particular kind of Yoga is resorted to. Indeed, some people maintain that there can be as many ways as there are persons so that each person will have to take the ingredients of various Yogas and evolve something unique for himself—of course, with the help and sanction of the guru. In fact, one of the more familiar terms one hears in India is 'Integral Yoga', which is a synthesis of different systems with varying proportions of each. Thus, and as we shall see in a later chapter, we have the Integral Yoga of Aurobindo, and the Integral Yoga of Sivananda and so on. We shall find that some of the modern systems of Yoga almost reverse the traditional definition and approach and, instead of thinking in terms of raising the kundalini, would like the Light or Grace or the higher consciousness to descend and lift the kundalini.

Apart from the four main categories, Raja Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga, in the books one comes across many more names like Nada Yoga, Shabda Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Laya Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Nam Yoga, Maha Yoga, Vedanta Yoga, Japa Yoga. All this is confusing, and without proper guidance and help any one is bound to get lost, as in a quagmire. Before the sadhak, the aspirant, can attain a direct vision of Truth and identity with the Self, which is the final goal, he has to go a long way. We are told that a single wrong step can mean ruin, can mean that one may have to begin it all over again, and, may be, spend several future lives to rectify one single mistake. It is necessary, therefore, to have a teacher, a master, or as they call him in India, a guru. The guru is held in very high esteem in India and there are strict injunctions that there should be a total and complete surrender to the will and the wish of the master. To quote Anandamayee again: "A Guru is called He who, out of deep darkness, can reveal the hidden Truth. A Guru is not an ordinary preceptor—a Guru is He who has the capacity to deliver man from the sea of becoming (bhava sagara)." It will not be out of place to mention here that the guru is as keen to have an able and willing disciple whom he can enlighten, as the disciple is to have a guru who can properly show the way to Realisation and Truth. As we learn from Vivekananda's biography, "Great Teachers who have themselves realised the highest spiritual Truth, when they come in touch with a fit disciple, are eager to impart that Truth."

Just as there is, in all Yogic categories, agreement on the aim of Yoga, so there is full accord on this point also. The guru is essential. Without him, it is not possible to practise Yoga. The guru initiates one into the sadhana, and it is through his guidance and grace that siddhi—success, perfection, realisation—may be

achieved. Implicit faith in and obedience to the guru is an essential element in Yogic sadhana. Lucky is he who finds the right and worthy guru. It is for this reason that Shri Ramakrishna insisted that the disciples must test the guru thoroughly as "moneychangers test their coins." People are known to have roamed for years, for half a life-time and more, before they have found the Master. The time spent thus is not wasted.

It is, of course, recognised that the guru must be a worthy and competent person. As Aurobindo says, "From a humbug you can get nothing but his humbuggery. He must have something in him which makes the Divine possible, something which works even if he is not in his outer mind quite conscious of its action. If there is nothing at all spiritual in him, he is not a Guru, only a pseudo." Aurobindo's argument in respect of the need for a guru is this "A human soul and nature cannot be dealt with by a set of mental rules applicable to everybody in the same way; if it were so, there would be no need of a Guru, each could set his chart of Yogic rules before him like the rules of Sandow's exercises and follow them till he becomes the perfect Siddha", and, "Many people have a habit of doing Yoga according to their own ideas without caring for the guidance of a Guru—from whom, however, they expect an entire protection and success in sadhana even if they prance-or gambol into the wrongest paths possible"

Again, there are strange stories one hears of Masters appearing in one's dreams and directing the disciple-to-be to where he might go to meet his guru. The tradition goes back to thousands of years and is an integral part of the total educational and religious pattern of India since the misty dawn of her story. Kings and commoners alike have followed the same rule. Even today, the highest in the land as well as the lowest will do the same. All through my book, the reader will come across great gurus whose disciples run to hundreds of thousands, and it is amazing to note the reverence, faith and fervour the guru inspires.

Lot of research can and should be done on this theme of the absolute necessity of a guru in Yoga. But let us move on to another interesting aspect of the subject, namely, the different views as to the position, function and importance of the guru. I said above that one has to give all his love and loyalty to the guru, has to have unshakable faith in him, and serve him so zealously that one's very life is at the guru's disposal

All this is especially true of those who regard the 'guru as God'. This sounds sacrilegious ; but mankind believes in the 'reincarnation of the Divine.' The world's

major faiths speak in terms of the Son of God, and the Messenger of God, and the Avatars of God. Many mahatmas are regarded as embodiments of the Divine Spark. The Dalai Lama is revered by millions as a Divine Being. In several sects like the Ismaili Community of Aga Khan, or the Radhasoamis, the Leader is thought of as a Spiritual Being. This is, therefore, a fairly common approach.

Another attitude is that the guru is not God but the vehicle of His Grace. The Divine is manifested through him, and, therefore, the devotee may not go direct to the deity but receive His benediction through the guru. Repose all your trust in the guru and his guidance. Give him all your devotion, and the same spiritual benefit will be reaped as if one were in direct communication with the deity.

I would appear that both these attitudes are of immense help to the common man or woman, the capacity of whose mind may not be such as to enable one to undertake great personal initiative. The simple-minded and the simple-souled find this approach easy and suitable. But many cannot and do not accept this approach and I can see their points. My school teachers were necessary while I was studying in the school. In the University, other teachers, my professors, taught and guided me—and all thanks to them. Later, a great teacher or two guided me in the discipline I chose for specialisation and I am grateful for that. All the same, there is a limit to the capacity of any one who teaches. The school-master, for instance, could not have helped me in the University, in spite of my reverence for him? It is in this context that we see the relevance of the view that the pupil can surpass the master. Says Anandamayee: "However, the possibility of the disciple surpassing the guru exists, namely, when someone is initiated on the basis of his inner capacities and predispositions brought over from former births, his power to progress may thereby be stimulated to such an extent that he will be able to advance beyond the achievement of his guru."

This then is the third important attitude towards the guru. It is granted that the guru is essential, his guidance and help are necessary, very necessary. But he is no God, nor the Vehicle of Grace, etc. Like all teachers in all other fields of human endeavour, he can help and guide up to a point, no more. Beyond that, the sadhak must go on alone, as my friend, Sharadananda, is doing at Gangotri. At its most philosophic level, the Hindu thought recognises only the direct contact, face to face, of the individual soul and the Universal soul, of the *atma* and the *Paramatma*, and the yogi must move on to the Goal, not along with the guru, or wife or child, or

friend, or any one, but alone The path to the higher peaks, to the heights beyond ordinary heights, is narrow, very narrow On that there is no room for two and one must learn to do without the guru

I must say that all this is rather elementary, and, may be, over-simplified My approach throughout has been to go to the 'phenomena' directly, to study at the source I hope that the reader will learn more of this, and more authentically, from my conversations with the great gurus reproduced in later chapters.

I was always intrigued by the phenomenon of the sadhak-guru relationship as it exists in India In modern psychiatry, we give great importance to the phenomenon of 'transference', and the affectivity, say, of the Doctor and the Patient, Mother and the Child, Father and Son, is a matter of great psychological interest to us. For some years now, there has been a good deal of research on these matters in the field of Psychosomatic Medicine and psychotherapy and the relation between the guru and the sadhak could make for a study of extremely great value, since this affectivity, as found in India, is one of the most powerful we know of

The ancient literature, or the modern conventional literature on the subject, has hardly any reference to this on our lines. It is only when we meet really modern minds, scholars, psychologists and medical doctors, the 'University' men, men with western training and bias, that we find the kind of analysis of this vital relationship which I have been looking for. M.P Pandit, a Yoga scholar of high intellect and repute, has explained in one of his books, 'Lamps of Light', the various stages of this relationship beginning with initiation This initiation is an important ceremony, and is, psychologically, a most interesting phenomenon

"Initiation marks the establishment of a relation between the Guru and the disciple and this relation is essentially an inner one.

"The Guru enters into the being of the seeker, implants himself within him and conducts the sadhana Something of the Guru, his consciousness, *sakti*, leaps into the being of the disciple, there is what is called *saktipata*, the impact of Power from the Guru. This is the commencement of the *guru-sisya* relation on which revolves the whole course of sadhana.

"The means by which this contact is made and the relation established is called initiation, *diksa* Initiation may be formal, outer, *bahya*, which may or may not be accompanied by ritual or ceremony When the means chosen is a Mantra or ritual

like Puja, Homa etc., it is called *kriya diksa*. When there is no ritual, the initiation may be based upon touch, *sparsi*. The Guru touches the novice physically on a chosen limb and there is the transmission. It may be based upon sight, *caksusi*, the Guru just looks at him and that is enough. Or it may be mental, *manasi*, the Guru thinks of him and the movement is initiated. These three modes of *diksha* are compared respectively, in the Tantra Sastra, to the manner of the bird bringing up its young ones by the touch of its warm enfolding wings, of the fish nourishing its offspring by sight alone and of the tortoise feeding its infant by merely brooding over it. Where the initiation is not outer, it is inner, *abhyantari*, it is subtly affected. It is called the *vedha diksa*, just as the arrow of an expert hunter speeds in the direction of the sound even without sight of the object, the Shakti of the Guru strikes at the disciple wherever he be, by his sheer will.

“There are many classifications in the Sastras—some describing as many as ten different kinds of *diksha* but it is enough for our purpose to know that initiation through mantra or word or ritual is not the only way. The main thing is to effect a subtle contact between the Guru and the would-be disciple by whatever means and each Guru has his own way of establishing this potent relation with others. Through his characteristic means he enters into the being of the disciple and takes charge of his inner life, his Shakti remains there ever vigilant, ever active, ever promoting. It is of course essential that this Guru-shakti should be helped by every means to function without hindrance by the disciple. It is indispensable that no influence alien or contrary to the Shakti-in-charge should be allowed to enter into the consciousness of the disciple. Such an influence may be good in itself, may be very moral, religious and all that. Yet if it is not fully in tune with the Shakti of the Guru, if the truth that activates it is at variance with the purpose * of the active Shakti, it does have an effect of mixing up and to that extent of impeding the workings of the latter. There is even the danger of conflict between the two influences with inevitable disharmony in the being of the seeker, physical, psychological and spiritual. That is the reason why one is enjoined to be entirely faithful to one Guru to whom one has given allegiance.”

I hope that Mr. Pandit will not mind this long quotation from his book. From the point of view of the interests that I have uppermost in my mind, this is the kind of analysis and approach which we need. I have already stated that

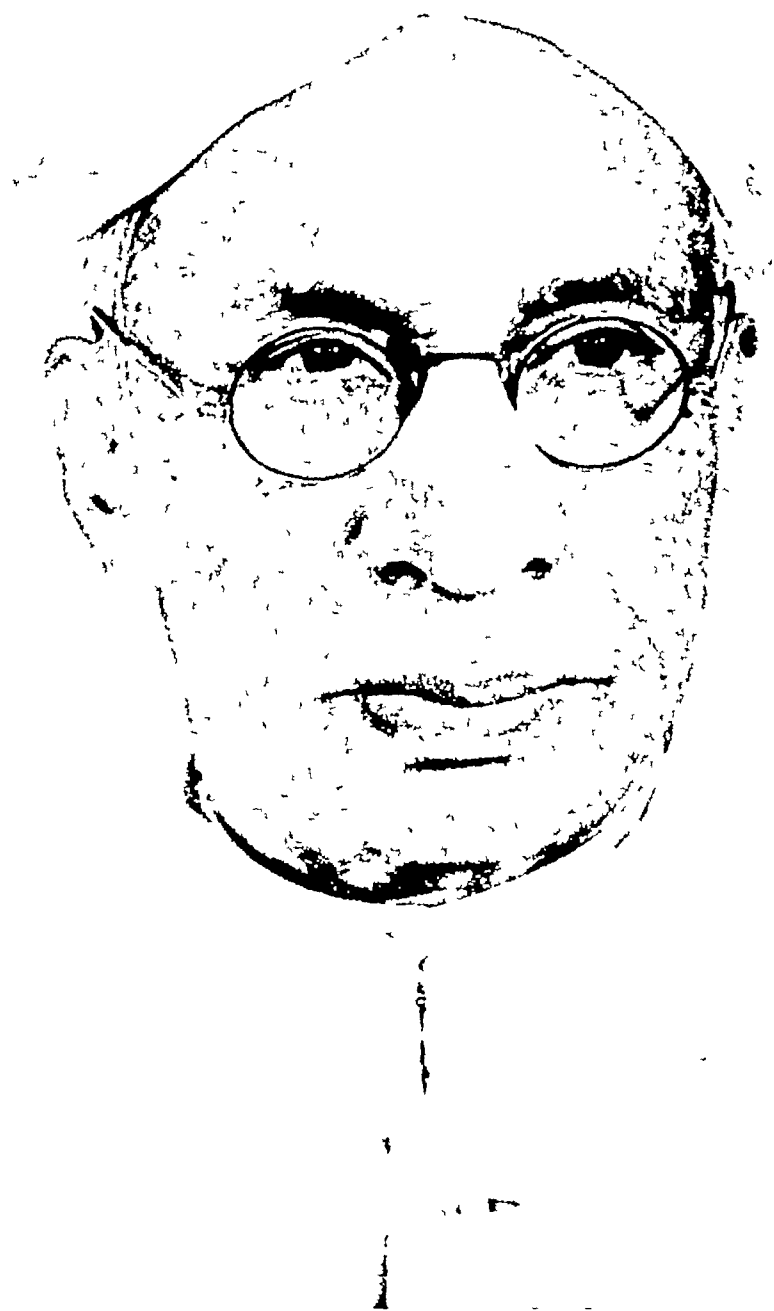
* A Power or Influence working, for instance, for withdrawal from life, would hardly be compatible with an effort for a divine fulfilment in life.

the real work on research in the field of Yoga will necessarily have to be carried out by Indian doctors or Yoga-scholars. And when this is done, I hope that themes like "Sadhak-Guru Affectivity" will be taken up in all earnestness for a thorough scientific probe.

Before concluding this summary of some of the more important aspects of the sadhak-guru relationship, I would like to point out an extremely important advantage of this institution of the guru, of Guru-Vad as it is called. It is true that one of the reasons why these masters had to be there is because no books were available and instructions had to be given orally. Yet that can only be one of the reasons, for, and as we have seen, what the guru gives to the disciple is very much more than oral instructions or the kind of knowledge which books could supply. It is a matter of a very deep relationship between two personalities, two souls, which are tuned to the same mental and spiritual wave-lengths. However, to revert to the point I wanted to make, this tradition has helped to preserve the purity of the knowledge and the techniques, and to impart a sense of unbroken continuity to almost every branch of knowledge in India, and, certainly, in the field of Yoga. Consequently, we can assert without fear of contradiction that Raja Yoga, to give one example, is being practised even today, after thousands of years, exactly as the first disciples of Patanjali, the sage who expounded this system, might have practised it. This is as helpful as it is astounding, for it allows us to study such phenomena in their pristine purity.



MAHATMA GANDHI
Father of Modern India
and a great Karma Yogi



DR RADHAKRISHNAN
*President of India and a World Famous
Scholar of Indian Philosophy*

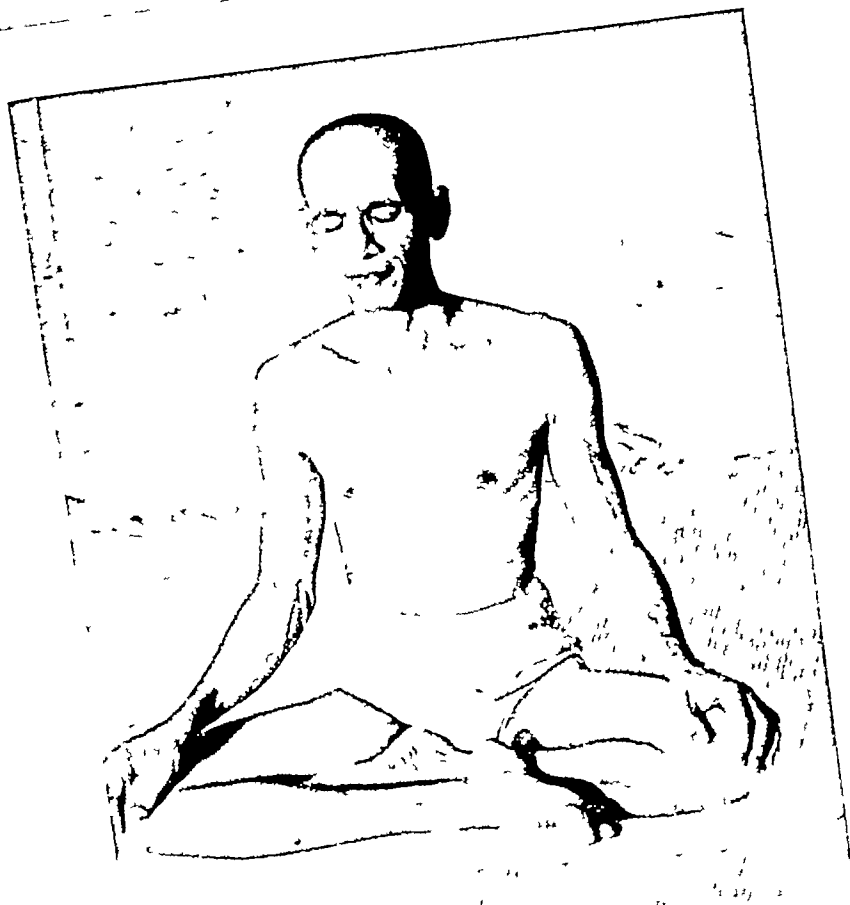
PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
Architect of Modern India
He Practised Hatha Yoga



NEHRU'S DAUGHTER INDIRA GANDHI
Prime Minister of India
and a great Yoga - enthusiast



VINOBA BHAVE
Renowned disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and
himself a great Karma Yogi now engaged in
social transformation of Modern India



SWAMI CHIDANANDA
Representative of Raja Yogis of Himalayas



Home of Yogis - where Yoga has
 practised from the Himalayas in the
 to the Rock of Vivekananda, at the



Southern most point, at Cape Comorin,
 from morning till night, all through th
 centuries





Pema La - sister of the Dalai Lama of Tibet

A Tibetan child For the Tibetan children living as refugees in Indian Himalayas, Pema La is like a mother and a symbol of their motherland



A girl from Madras In India, girls also practise Yoga

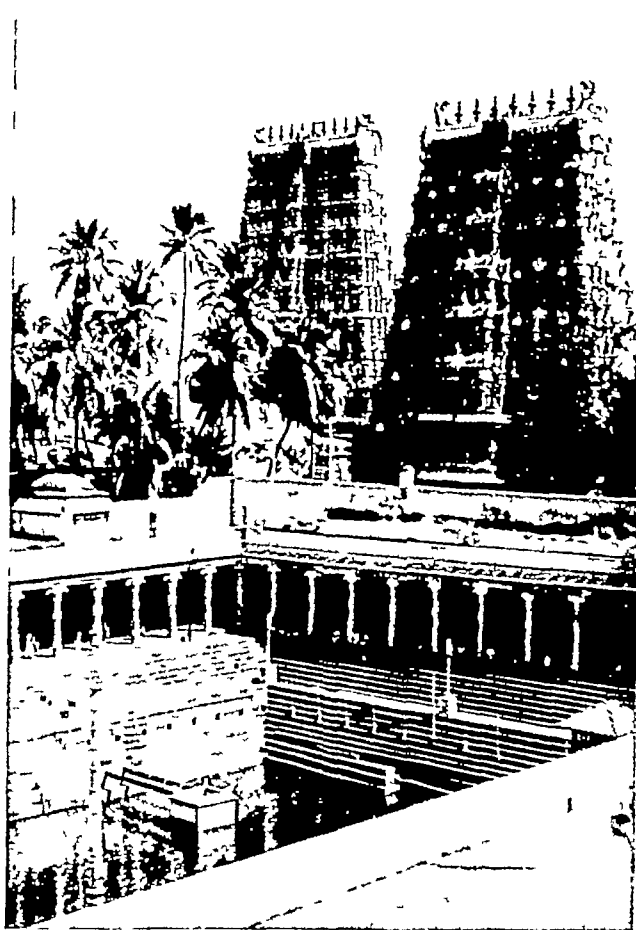


The Snake Charmer - a typical scene in the streets of Delhi



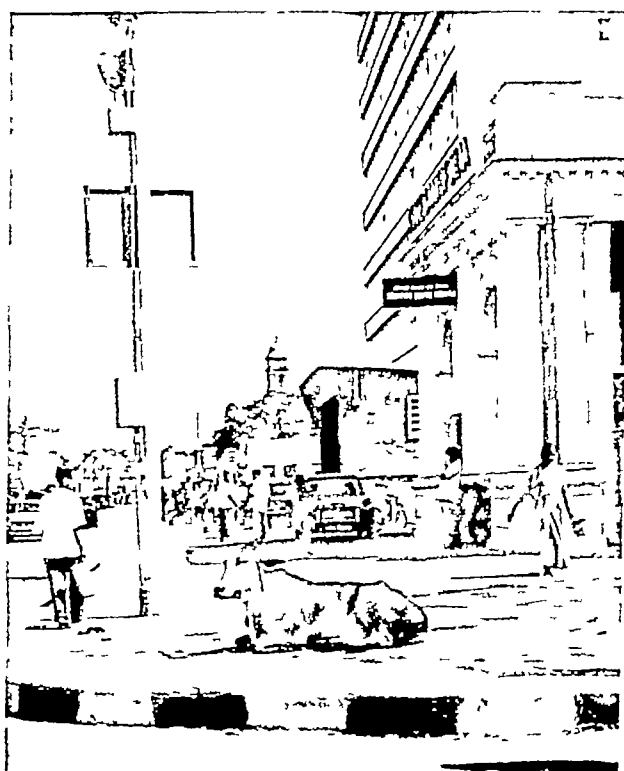
In the interior of shacks and caves of the Indian yogis, one often finds pictures of Christ placed along those of India's gods and goddesses

Ship of the Desert - the Camel, a Familiar sight in Rajasthan



The Celebrated Meenakshi Temple of Madurai, south India

A street scene in Madras In India there are tens of millions of cows The animal is regarded as sacred by the Hindus



Section II
Yogis and Ashrams

The Himalayas

Although yogis and their ashrams are to be found all over India, the Himalayas constitute the most important region for the abode of those who have renounced the worldly life. These highest mountains of the world are held sacred by the Hindus and the Hindu mythology abounds in references to this region. Countless rishis and sages, many of whom are very well-known, and great heroes of the epics are associated with the Himalayan region, and, because of their association, the places where they lived or which they visited have become doubly holy. Added to the greatness and grandeur of the Himalayas, is the glory of the Ganges, India's most sacred river. Between them, the Himalayas and the Ganges, the two create the holiest of regions in India, where every inch of land is hallowed ground. The beauty and majesty of Nature, which this whole area boasts of, would, even otherwise, attract the people. The calm and quiet found here are in sharp contrast to the noise and excitement of the towns and cities. Those who seek, as the yogis do, places which are far from the madding crowd and where they might meditate, could wish for nothing better. The Himalayas provide the ideal answer to their requirements.

The Ganges is the most sacred river of the Hindus. This river is mentioned twice in the Rîg-veda. It is divinity incarnate as waters for it descended from the heavens. The Puranas represent it as flowing from the toe of Vishnu, the Preserver, and an important member of the Hindu Trinity. The legend goes that Bhagiratha wanted the ashes of his ancestors, the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara, to be purified. These princes had been burnt by an angry glance of the sage Kapila. The Ganges descended on the earth in answer to Bhagiratha's prayers and that is why one of its names is Bhagirathi. To save the earth from the shock of her fall, Siva benignly received the mighty waters of the river on his brow, and checked their progress with his matted locks.

The Ganges is worshipped as a goddess. She is regarded as the eldest daughter of Himavat (Himalaya) and Mena, and is thus a sister of Parvati, the spouse of Siva. She is the mother of Bhishma, the mighty warrior who figures prominently in that great epic, the Mahabharat.

The yogis tell us that in various ashrams and caves and other dwellings on the banks of the Ganges or in the high Himalayas and in the deep forests and at heights where, for more than half the year, several feet of snow lie around, the environment is still what it was several thousand years ago. Here, man is face to face with Nature and God and, according to the yogis, the soul of man flies naturally towards the Soul of the Universe. It is because of all these things that many a yogi comes up to the banks of the Ganges, or to the forests and mountains that lie above Hardwar where the river enters the plains. These yogis come not only from nearby places in the North but from deep South also.

One such yogi who came to Rishikesh, near Hardwar, from the South, was Sivananda. Rishikesh is a small place, but it has all the charm and fascination which the Ganga and the Himalayas are associated with. A cool and tranquil atmosphere provides an ideal setting for Yogic sadhana and several ashrams have sprung up nearby. Sivananda came to Rishikesh, way back in 1924 when he was 37 years old. He was a doctor, Kupuswamy by name, and had been serving in Malaya. In his profession, he was known for his humanitarian bent of mind. It was on his return from that country to India that he decided to forsake the worldly life. While his relatives were still looking after his luggage, he slipped away unnoticed. Renouncing his career and mundane interests, he came to Rishikesh. He 'took' the sannyas from Guru Vishnu Devananda, who is more than a hundred years old, still alive, and is living in Kailash Ashram, which is situated between Sivananda's Ashram and Rishikesh. He settled down, practised intense austerities and became a great yogi.

He started the Sivananda Ashram in 1932. Where once there was nothing but a wild jungle, today stands a large complex of structures reflecting the many sided personality of the man who founded the Ashram. Sivananda himself was a doctor and so there is a General Hospital and an Eye Hospital. Again, as an Indian yogi, he naturally believed in the Vedic system of medicine and so, one field of the activity of the Ashram relates to the manufacture and sale of Ayurvedic medicines. The Ashram houses also the Headquarters of the Divine Life Society, which Sivananda founded in 1936. This Society is a non-sectarian institution and anyone devoted to the ideals of truth, non-violence and purity can become a member. The Society subscribes to the common fundamental principles of all the religions of the world, and of spiritual life in general. It honours all faiths and religious traditions equally, and its members recognise no distinction on account of each other's different traditional background, or religious affiliation.

Another institution which was also started by Sivananda is Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy. This was established in 1947. This Academy disseminates spiritual knowledge and trains people in Yoga and Vedanta.

Scores of Sivananda's disciples live at the Ashram and thousands of devotees flock to the place from all over India, and quite a number of foreigners visit the place. Like Sivananda, his disciples teach and train the others. Of special interest to me was the training in Yoga which is imparted in the Ashram by Swami Kṛṣṇananda. Crowds of visitors both from India and abroad come here for learning this particular aspect of Yoga as well as for advanced study. My wife and I also stayed in the Ashram for some weeks and I lived for a while, the life of the yogis and tried to learn something of the philosophy and techniques of the Yoga system. I studied, at first-hand, advanced methods and techniques relating to Yoga and meditation.

The present President of the Divine Life Society, and successor of Sivananda who died in 1963—entered the mahasamadhi, as the yogis would put it—is Swami Chidananda. This great disciple of Sivananda is also from the South and is counted among the realized yogis of India. Swami Chidananda renounced worldliness when he was only 26 years old, in 1943. Inclined from a very early age towards the life of a yogi, he had been in correspondence with Sivananda and then, one day, came and joined the Ashram. Since the day he joined he was highly valued by his master, and long before Sivananda began to rely upon him as his right-hand man. In 1947, he founded, under the guidance of his master, the Yoga Museum in which the entire philosophy of Vedanta and all the stages of Yogic sadhana are depicted through illustrations. In 1948, the post of the General Secretary of the Divine Life Society fell vacant, and Chidananda was nominated to that.

Swami Chidananda has travelled extensively in India as well as abroad. He was hailed by the Americans as the yogi of India most suited for the interpretation of Yoga to the western mind. He also toured South America and preached in Montevideo and Buenos Aires. This was in early 1962.

In addition to Swami Chidananda, whose name means one who is in the highest consciousness and bliss, there are several other very important inmates of the Ashram. Without meaning any disparagement to those who are not being mentioned, some of the important yogis I met and conversed with are, Krishnananda, present General Secretary of the Divine Life Society, and a great Vedantin and scholar of the

philosophy of Yoga ; Sharadananda, a senior disciple of Sivananda, who has now gone to Gangotri for continuing his rigorous sadhana, which he had earlier carried on for seven years, (many of his letters have been published in my book, *Letters of Silence*) ; and Swami Karunananda, white-haired and white-bearded Australian sannyasi who has the body and energy of a youth of twenty-five and whose dexterity at Yogic exercises and asanas is equalled only by his intellectual ability. I would like to mention also, Nada-Brahmanandaji, a great exponent of Nada-Yoga, who is a phenomenon, all by himself.

During my stay in the Ashram, I had the great good luck of getting to know these yogis well and to collect valuable information and material for my research and study. Later in the book, I will describe my meetings and reproduce my conversations with them.

Sivananda Ashram is just one in a region where there are hundreds of such ashrams, and where countless yogis live, some singly and others in groups. Everyday, from the caves of the Himalayan region, about two thousand yogis come to Rishikesh. And these caves are nearly 10 to 35 miles away. Of course, so far as habitations of yogis are concerned, these stretch from here to Badrinath, which is 150 miles away, and the entire area from here to that holy place is one big ashram, if one may say so. Other ashrams of some importance nearby are those of Swami Narayananandaji, who is a disciple of Ramakrishna and who was initiated into spiritual life at the Belur Math, near Calcutta, which is the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Narayanananda is also revered as a great yogi and has written a large number of philosophical works.

Mention should also be made of the Shri Puranananda Yogashram, at Lakshman Jhula. This was founded by Janardan Swamiji. Like the two other ashrams of the same name, located at Kamakhya in Assam and at Jagatpur in East Pakistan, this Ashram is managed by the Gurudev Puranananda Memorial Society. Believing that there is, in the world today, a crisis of character, this Society aims the promotion and dissemination of social knowledge, natural sciences, Yogic kriyas, elimination of illiteracy, promotion of International Fellowship, research in Yogic, Psychological and Para-psychological studies, building up of national character and sense of moral responsibility and organisation of such institutions as may render assistance to destitutes, orphans and other needy persons.

In Rishikesh one comes across several yogis of ripe old age. But at one Ashram I had occasion to meet along with Age, Childhood in Yogic robes,

for I met here the youngest yogi in India, a four-year old boy, who has taken to spiritual life.

There is a very large number of ashrams and maths at and around Hardwar. The guru or mahant of each of these ashrams has a large body of disciples and devotees, and receives great reverence. Most of these gurus are yogis of all-India fame and some of them are internationally known. Of the latter, one, Shri Mahesh Yogi, has had conspicuous success in foreign countries. This 'Bala Brahmchari' yogi is a disciple of Jagad Guru Shankaracharya. For years now he has been at the head of a movement known as Spiritual Regeneration Movement, and has been spreading knowledge of a new technique, a simple system of deep meditation, which, it is claimed, enables man to do away with all his inner conflicts and is a scientific method of enlarging the conscious mind. This Maharshi has travelled extensively and Spiritual Regeneration Movement Centres have been set up in scores of foreign countries. Mahesh Yogi has appeared on the T.V. in many countries and has also addressed the UNESCO.

Since the Maharshi's system of deep meditation has opened new avenues for scientific enquiry in the fields of human biology and social behaviour, an Academy of Meditation has been set up at Shankaracharya Nagar for carrying out research and investigation.

Yoga covers a vast field. One of the things with which it is vitally concerned, both in its theory and practice, is the realm of the mind. Consequently, yogis show a remarkable knowledge and understanding of all psychical phenomena. Likewise, lay students and scholars of psychology, especially those in India, take a keen interest in Yogic studies. One such scholar I met is Dr B. L. Atreya, formerly Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Indian Philosophy and Religion, Banaras Hindu University, and Honorary Director, Research Institute of Philosophy, Psychology and Psychical Research, Rajpura (Dehradun). Author of over twenty books of great scholarship and merit, and editor of important philosophical journals enjoying a world-wide circulation, Dr Atreya is a recognised authority on Indian Philosophy and Psychical Research.

Dr Atreya is the Research Director of the International Research Institute of Philosophy, Psychology and Psychical Research. This institute is concerned with Yogic and Psychical research and is situated on the Dehradun-Mussoorie Road in idyllic surroundings. There are several well-known ashrams nearby, such as Swami Rama

Tirtha Mission Ashram, the Shahanshahi Ashram, the Christian Meditation Centre, Shraddha Nanda Vaishnava Ashram, Vishranti Kutir and the Samata Yoga Ashram.

In conceiving and establishing the Institute at Rajpura which has over thirty foreign research professors, to say nothing of an equally large number of eminent Indians working in the same capacity, Dr. Atreya has rendered significant service to the cause of psychical research. The Institute has the backing and blessings of the Commission for Research into the Creative Faculties of Man which commends it as an Institute where an advisory committee of eminent scholars will bring scientific methods to the unexplored and hidden aspects of human life.

Yogis of Sivananda Ashram

Chidananda

Chidananda, the successor of Sivananda, President of the Divine Life Society and the Guru at the Sivananda Ashram, is cast in the ascetic mould. He is counted among the top living yogis of India and is certainly one of the most impressive personalities I came across in India. His eyes shine with a brilliant light of deep knowledge, his face expresses serenity, and his lean and taut frame bears the stamp of Yogic austerities and intense sadhana. He is a learned man and his mind and intellect are extraordinarily acute and incisive. But, more remarkable than these are the qualities of his heart. He loves equally man, beast and bird. And among men, his special attention is given to the unfortunate lepers, many of whom come to the Ashram to receive his succour and blessings. Indeed, such is his reputation for compassion that many call him the St. Francis of India.

I had heard a great deal about this yogi and was eagerly looking forward to a meeting. I was fortunate to have not one but two long and fruitful conversations with him. These are reproduced below.

Question. Swamiji, what are the main categories of Yoga? And, are these categories made with regard to the psychology of the individual, or is it a matter of philosophical distinctions?

Swami. There are three main classes of Yoga; but we can also say that there are four, because every individual has four distinctive energy potentials within himself. One potential is physical dynamism—man can walk, he can be active, and can do a lot of things. Another potential is that he can feel, he can have sentiment, emotion, feeling. This is very powerful—these feelings of the heart, different emotions, sentiments, love, hate, anger, mercy, passion, kindness and compassion. The third potential is his power to reason. The rational, intellectual power—that is the third potential, and the fourth potential is the mere power of thought, without any connection either with emotion or sentiment or with reasoning or intellect—just the primal thought power. These are all forces, but, in a way, they are four different aspects of one force—that is the central

force in an individual consciousness. There is one basic force, sometimes it makes itself manifest in feelings or it makes itself manifest in intellect, or in the acts of the physical body. It makes itself manifest as mental activity, will power. So, whatever you wish to achieve, you have to make use of this force. Thus, any activity, any achievement, any effort requires expenditure of force. Now, you have to decide which aspect of this force you would like to use, so, when you begin to analyse men, you find that all people are not endowed with the same proportion of these forces. One has got absolutely no feeling, but his intellect is very sharp, very analytical, very rational, he may have sentiment but not much of that. There may be another man who does not have much power of intellect, but is all feeling, love, devotion, faith. There are some people who do not bother too much about things, they always want to be up and doing, active, active, active. For them all is activity. They cannot keep quiet, they will express themselves in work—typical American temperament. There is another type of people who balance emotion, activity and all that—their main activity is thought. These are people of tremendous determination, tenacity, will power, if they want to get a thing, they will get it because once their mind is made up, they will not rest till they have achieved their goal. So, they have got perseverance, the power to persevere, and they never give up. Thus, it depends upon the individual temperament as to which force is more dominant, which is less.

“That means, the individual matters”.

Oh, yes, it is the dominant aspect in his personality which will decide which Yoga is best suited to a particular individual. So, different types of Yoga were formulated, keeping in view the different aspects of this force. That type of Yoga which mainly uses the intellect is Jnana Yoga. This employs Vedanta, philosophy, pure philosophy, and is all logic, all analysis, all intellect. That Yoga which makes predominant use of the power of emotion is the Yoga of devotion or love—Bhakti Yoga. Its main elements are worship, prayer, love of God, faith. The Yoga which makes use of the power of the mind is Patanjali's Raja Yoga. This involves control of the mind, mastery of the mind and the determination to check the movement of the mind. Concentration is the main element in Raja Yoga.

"And, the fourth type?" I asked.

Swami : The fourth type may be explained thus :—There are people who are complete extroverts. These people's dynamism is distracting. Such extroverts cannot have a calm or serene mind, because they are always involved in the world outside. Does that mean that such people will never be able to practise Yoga? No. They may use this extrovert tendency itself and convert it into Yoga. They should do their work in such a way that the work becomes spiritual work, becomes Yoga and so, Yoga through activity is Karma Yoga. So, this Yoga is best for the extrovert. The majority of the people in the world are either extroverts, dynamic type, or emotional type. The intellectual type and the type with firm will power of the mind are few, they are not the majority, they are the minority.

At this point someone entered with a tray of tea and some delicious Indian sweetmeats which we enjoyed thoroughly. As we sipped our tea, the Swami resumed :

The majority of the people are active because of emotion, and Bhakti Yoga is a very great solution to many neurotic conditions, to many psychological states in which a person suddenly feels that his life is empty, dry, meaningless and is about to go to pieces. But if you ensure his love for something, faith in something, then he finds an escape from his sense of emptiness, and insecurity, and his sense of not being wanted. You see, one of the most important contributory causes for many neurotic types is not being wanted by anyone. After a world war, so many orphans are left in the world, no mother, no father, society does not want them. They have no one to call their own, and no one is willing to call them his or her own. So, they are the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for. Their temperament, psychologically, becomes hard, they become juvenile delinquents, they become anti-social, they turn to hate. Now, suppose that in that condition a sudden awareness comes to them. No, I am not without anyone, God is my mother, God is my father, God is my real friend, God is my company. He is with me, God loves me, God wants me. Suppose this can be put into their heart. Then their life assumes some value, it is no longer valueless or useless. Such people feel thus. The whole world might ignore me but I know someone for

whom I am valuable, someone who has love for me. This is how many neurotic conditions are released

“Very interesting”, I commented.

Swami

Bhakti Yoga becomes a solution to many of these problems created by want of love or absence of security in the life of people. Now, in the West, people are slowly beginning to realise this and some of the clergymen and priests in churches study psychology, psychiatry, and then come back to the church with degrees and then apply their learning to their own parishioners. If it is already too late for the clergymen to go and study courses in the University, the priests take the help of good, understanding psychiatrists. If the clergyman comes across a problem, a case, he gives the religious advice and calls the psychiatrist to give the psychiatric advice. Thus, they put religion and psychiatry together. Now, there is no sharp division between religion and psychiatry. They must go hand in hand, because many of the psychological illnesses are also religious illnesses. A man becomes a sinner, a man takes to drink, a man becomes all weakness, this is against religion, it seems to be a problem of sin and punishment, God and no God; but when you go deep inside it, you find that he is not a sinner, and he is not weak, but due to some psychological state, he has become like this. Because if you tell him: you should not sin, you should not drink, he will say. Why? Who cares about what I do? There is no one to care for me, whether I do good, whether I do bad, who cares? Then the psychiatrist will say. No, no, no, someone cares, you may not know, but someone cares; you are dear to someone. Then he brings in Jesus Christ, not as a distant divine being but as someone very human, very real, very near, who cares for him. Then he will say: Really. Someone really cares for me? Really, does it matter to him whether I am bad or good? Thus Psychiatry, working with Religion, says: Yes, yes, it matters very much. If you do something bad, it will pain him; if you do good, it will give him great happiness. He wants you to be happy. Then the sinner will have a reason for being good, for not being dejected. I had a little contact with these friends when I was in the West, about three years back.

“And coming back to Karma Yoga”, I said.

Sa. ii. Karma Yoga is for the extrovert temperament. Whether you are a Vedantin or a Jnana yogi, whether you are a Raja yogi or a Bhakti yogi, all the 24 hours you cannot be in Yoga only. Everybody is not a yogi or a sannyasi. Of one Ashram in Rishikesh, there are members who live in Bombay, Calcutta, New York. Their life is such that they practise Vedanta, they pray, they do Japa, yet, at the same time, at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, they must go to the office. Among them are engineers, doctors, lawyers, business men, school teachers. They have to work, perhaps, up to 5, 6, 7 p.m. before they return home. So, their Yoga is confined to early morning hours and, in the night, they do a little prayer or meditation. But during the day, it is activity. Supposing they do not know the art of Karma Yoga, or the science of Karma Yoga, what will happen? Whatever they manage to get spiritually in their morning prayer and meditation and evening Yoga practices, will be contradicted in the day-time activity which is without any spiritual element, which is divorced from Yoga, different from Yoga. So, every day for 7, 8, 9 hours they are moving away from Yoga and for one hour in the morning they are trying to enter into Yoga, so, there is conflict and no gain. Gain of the morning is lost in the day-time activity, so, we have to safeguard the Yoga of the morning and the night for the worldly people. There is no problem for the sannyasi or monk in a monastery or a nun inside a convent, but there is a real and pressing problem for those who are working. So, if you want to sustain your gain of the daily morning-evening practice, you must see to the quality of your activity in the course of the day. Your work should be full of the spirit of Yoga, and not move away from Yoga. Then Karma Yoga becomes very helpful. A man, a seeker in the world, is Vedantin plus Karma yogi, or is Bhakti yogi plus Karma yogi, or is Raja yogi (meditation) plus Karma yogi. Thus, we see the dual importance of Karma Yoga. It is important for the extrovert. For him it is indispensable, absolutely necessary. But even for the introvert, for the Bhakti yogi or the Vedantin or the Raja yogi it is important as a supplementary Yoga to be practised in his worldly activity. So, these four Yogas are meant to help humanity through the intellectual potential, love, devotion, or through mental activity, mental potential—Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga.

Observing that the Swami had made no mention of Hatha Yoga, I remarked . In the Occident we were interested in Hatha Yoga. But the Indian people do not put Hatha Yoga into . .

Swami I will give you my view of Hatha Yoga It is like this : If a driver sits inside a car and presses the self-starter, the engine starts and then the car moves, and whatever happens when the car moves is invisible, is not seen. It is happening under the bonnet , the front of the car is covered by the bonnet and many things happen there. the piston goes up and down, the petrol circulates, etc So many things happen

“It is curious”, I was thinking, “that this yogi in the high Himalayas should be illustrating his point by referring to modern machinery, to cars ”

Swami . When you make the necessary movement, sitting on the driver's seat, you put the key in the board, turn the key and then you press the starter, then automatically these things happen. This is the natural course, the normal way for things to happen, because if you do certain things outside, certain other things happen inside. Suppose the self-starter is out of order, or something else goes wrong Then what do you do ? Instead of getting into the car and occupying the driver's seat and then starting it from there, you come down, open the bonnet, and pull the starter, from inside. Then the same things start working Thus, you directly go and activate the things from inside. Indirectly, anyhow, it happens All the things which have to happen, happen. So, Hatha Yoga can be understood in this way When you advance along the path of Yoga, when you do either Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga or Raja Yoga, your nature becomes purified

We poured ourselves another cup of tea while the Swami continued :

You know the three gunas ? Raja, Tamas, Satwa ? The whole nature becomes satwa, more and more. Satwa increases and nature becomes purified and the obstacles to the spiritual essence are removed one by one as you develop worship, goodness, self control, faith, purity, devotion, prayer. The purification takes place and the mind becomes purged of desires, the mind becomes more and more strong, you control your senses When this begins, all the grossness in your

personality goes away. Personality becomes fine, very fine, refined, purified, then subtle. When the subtlety comes, the inner powers are released whereas, when they are gross, they cannot move because your entire personality is inclined towards sin. So, the inner powers are dormant, latent, they are not released. Up to that moment, because your entire personality is inclined downwards, is involved in eating, sleeping, enjoying earthly pleasure, sex, drink, sin, sins, sins, so, it is all downwards and therefore no chance given to the inner forces to take an upward course. But as you get converted to devotion you give yourself to God, you say : I do not want money, I do not want worldly satisfaction, I do not want pleasure, I shall control myself in respect of all physical grossness, then you become fine. The same thing is found in Vedanta, Vedanta says : Oh, the world is nothing, all is useless, all is worthless, Brahman alone is real. If you turn away, you renounce, you give up, and so, when this fineness comes, the downward trend is checked, it stops, and your powers are released for upward ascent. This happens automatically. You need not know about it, you need not do anything about it. These experiences just come. You are moving along either Jnana Yoga or Vedanta Yoga or Bhakti Yoga or Raja Yoga, and you begin to have different experiences, you begin to develop certain powers, you begin to see certain visions, you begin to hear certain sounds, you begin to have ecstasy, you begin to have intuitive knowledge. This happens automatically, inside.

"Inside—that is what I am specially interested in," I remarked.

Swami : Now, man has got two separate personalities . gross and subtle, outer and inner. When he changes his entire outer life and begins Yoga, a similar change takes place in the inner subtle body also and that change can be trained to develop a particular pattern in the inner subtle body. He has got different centres and the released powers of the inner subtle body rise from one plane of consciousness to a higher plane of consciousness, till the highest plane of consciousness is reached. That takes place automatically in the Bhakta, Vedantin, Jnana, and Raja yogi. Now this is because of the purity of his life. His new vision, his new aspiration, his fineness, that is the result. Now, if, in the course of moving towards God, these things happen, kundalini is awakened, it begins to

rise from one chakra to another chakra , then the yogi says ' if this happens that happens, so, if that happens, this also must happen ' So, he thinks why should I not formulate a system by which I directly do those things which happen inside. So, they have made a technique by which through certain asanas, certain pranayamas, certain mudras, certain bandhas, certain meditation techniques, they have the feeling, this is happening, that is happening, kundalini is now awakening

These were deep waters, high philosophy, and I was glad that the Swami was explaining things so lucidly.

Chidananda continued : They are not the main aims of Jnana, or the Bhakta, or the Raja yogi, but they happen inside But a Hatha yogi, directs his aim by breathing inside, straight away. So, he thinks, if this happens, then I will get the illumination His reasoning is all right, because if kundalini arises and goes up, then illumination comes. So far as the reasoning is concerned, it is all right, but what they miss, these modern Hatha yogis—the ancient Hatha yogis were very careful—the modern Hatha yogis, what they miss is, they think only that if this happens all right, they will get the illumination They do not try to find out how, in the first instance, these things happen in the Jnana, in the Bhakti and in the Raja yogis How do these things happen? This question they do not ask, and naturally they don't seek an answer to it They want to bring the kundalini above mechanically, by force, by certain techniques. But the actual fact is that in the Jnana, Bhakta, Vedantin and Raja yogi, this happens as a result of the gradual purification of the individual

A worker of the Ashram came to remove the tea utensils, and did that so quietly that there was hardly any interruption The Yogi continued .

During Yogic life the man becomes more and more one with God He gives up all the low desires, as he learns to control his senses perfectly, as he renounces sincerely all that is gross, all that is sensual, all that is lustful, carnal, till he becomes absolutely pure Then, through the increase of satwa, through purification and refinement of the entire system, the natural forces are awakened and become active. Bhakti yogis do not

bother themselves about that, they do not pay any attention to it. They say to themselves . this has to happen, so, why should I care? Formerly, when the jnanis and bhaktas went into these practices, these things happened to many of them. If they were not wise and did not have any knowledge of secret mystical experiences, and if they realised—sometimes it happened that a great man came out of a poor farmer's family, illiterate, knowing nothing, simple, without knowledge, schooling or college education—they would be very much frightened, because many things would happen to them. When the kundalini rises, many experiences come. They did not know this, they did not even know that there are in the body certain things like this tremendous force of the kundalini which can unite one with God

But the Hatha yogi thinks that by highly activising the kundalini power, God-vision or knowledge will come. But the danger there is that he does not know that they come to the Bhakta, Vedantin, Jnani or Raja yogi as a result of his purity, self control, desirelessness, renunciation. This he does not know. He knows only the result and not the struggle and the effort which have gone into it. So, without the basis of perfect ethics, morality, highest character, absolute purity of life, you cannot be a true yogi. You see, if one takes to Hatha Yoga as a means of attaining higher spiritual experiences, there is a great risk. Illumination is a powerful activity. All these spiritual experiences are powerful processes, and only if a man has got tenacity, can he make it.

“This is interesting. Please tell me more about these risks”, I said

Swami

Now, what happens if the person is not completely pure and good? The awakened forces, when they are released, go upward. Supposing this man has not changed his life, his nature has not become pure, reasonable, and he has not become perfectly stabilised, and has not attained purity, self control, ethical perfection and all that. What happens when the powers are released in the case of such a person? They have no free the upper channels, because only purity opens these higher channels. What happens? The lower channels are still open because he is living his life, ordinary life, eating, drinking, enjoying. So, sometimes the

awakened powers, the activated powers, go down to the lower channels. Then that man falls from Yoga and becomes a debauch. He takes to very bad habits, or otherwise, sometimes, these awakened powers even go to other subtle normal currents. He has awakened uncontrollable forces. Only a Hatha yogi, who is a master, can help him, if he goes to him, he will say : Oh, what have you been doing ? What pranayamas have you been doing ? Who told you ? Nobody ! Then how did you do all this ? The person would reply : I read a book. Then, if the master is a kind man, he will tell him the way out. He will indicate some contrary pranayamas, and slowly the prana will find once again its normal course. Then everything will be over. So, that is the danger of Hatha Yoga, it is like trying to play with fire. It tries to go directly inside the psyche, and to activate through certain mechanical means, manual means.

Question : Does this mean that it is much better if Hatha Yoga is used as an auxiliary to other Yogas ?

Swami : Yes. That is the proper thing. For the modern man, that is good. A little bit of Hatha Yoga, done for having good health, good condition, and nothing else, is all right. Nothing bad will come out of this. But if you practise Hatha Yoga to have experiences, it is not good. Jnana Yoga-Hatha Yoga, would do very well. Bhakti Yoga - Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga - Hatha Yoga are good.

I was genuinely pleased with the Yogi's explanations and said : Now, I have a much clearer idea of all this. We need some classification, some comparison, like you have done. With our occidental mentality, we need a clear-cut explanation. In the Orient, the people don't need this, because they have a different mentality. We think in terms of two and two making four, four and four making eight.

Swami : Yes, in Eastern mentality, even if you give some confusing, hard-to-understand explanation, we will take what we want out of it. In the Occident, they want everything exact. In the Orient, we find out and take what is correct.

"In the Orient there is no problem. We need some clear idea", I commented.

Swami . Specific.

"Fortunately, you know our countries, and our mentality", I observed
The Swami smiled and said . That is right.

I put in another question in connection with religion. "Do you think", I asked, "that a Christian—a Catholic—or perhaps somebody without religion, but good people, can practise Yoga?"

Swami : Everybody can practise Yoga.

Question . Is it necessary for these people to go through all the Hindu practices, pujas, and all that ?

Swami . No, no, no If they need that, they will do it in their own ways. The Hindu will light a lamp, the Catholic will light a candle. The kind of service will be different, but there will be service The worship will be there, but not in our way. So, this Hindu worship is not necessary. For instance, the Bhakti yogi loves Rama, or Krishna, or Siva in India , a Catholic Bhakti yogi will love Ave Maria or Bambino Jesus, Christ.

"You have very clear ideas, indeed," I could not help saying.

Swami The worshipped will be different But the prayer, the worship, the love, the devotion, will be there. We will say . Om Namō Shiva, Om Namō Shiva, Om Namō Shiva. They will say . Ave Maria, Dios Gracias It is only the name which is different. So, the same Yoga technique can be applied, transferred to Catholic religion or Protestant, or any other religion.

"Any religion?" I asked.

Swami Yes, it can be transferred to any religion, with modifications to suit their special concepts and faith.

"So, Yoga is not a religion," I enquired.

Swami . No, Yoga is supra-religious technique.

"Excellent!" I exclaimed.

Swami : Yoga is above religion, it concerns man, the human being as a soul in the body. It has no particular religion. Just because it has come out of the genius of the Hindu people, people think - Yoga is Hindu. But, Yoga is in yourself, it is supra-religious in its application. Anyone can practise it ; Buddhists, Christians, Parsees, Muslims . . anyone can practise it.

The Swami's talk was both interesting and instructive and I would have gladly gone on listening. But I felt that I had already encroached on his valuable time beyond a reasonable limit, so I expressed my heartfelt appreciation of his courtesy and got up. However, before leaving his room, I asked him if I could have the privilege of photographing him at his daily morning exercises. He was gracious enough to give his permission for that. Accordingly, the next morning I made a film of his asanas by the Ganges. These pictures are among the most valuable of my collection of photographs, and I intend to publish some of them in my book, 'Yogic Asanas of India'.

I returned from Rishikesh to my headquarters at Delhi and it was several weeks before I could manage to visit Sivananda Ashram again. I had already written to Swami Chidananda requesting for another interview, for I had still a question or two on which I wanted to know his views. He had agreed and so we met again. This time I asked him about 'Anahat', a theme on which I was especially keen to collect all the available data. Sitting by this quiet and radiant man, I felt that he would throw on the subject some light of real use to me. I said .

Now, I come to another question. I am very much interested in this. By meditation or by other techniques, the yogis can see some visions, hear some sounds, go into samadhi. I ask you if it is possible that some relation exists between these visions of the yogis, this 'Omkar' sound, this anahat sound, and the characteristics of some mentally sick people curing whom is our special job

Swami : Yes, hallucinations.

I continued : Hallucinations, pseudo-perception, etc and I remember, you told me when I was here last time that is different. In your opinion, these people are pathological people, they have pathological phenomena, and these people have abnormal phenomena,

Suzuki: Yes, please go on.

Lequand: The yogi can hear things sound normally, our sick people can't hear abnormally. You see this idea comes to me quite often. I hear it. I hear this today, because you know these paranormal phenomena and don't I see the abnormal. I know the abnormal, but I don't know the paranormal. Could we discuss this at length?

Suzuki: Now, for the paranormal visions and other phenomena, there is a definite explanation as to how they are brought about. You see, when a spiritual consciousness widens and rises up, certain things are definitely brought about, in a certain way, so you can explain what happens. In abnormal phenomenon of this sort, you are not able to explain the thing. Because the yogi has worked for it, and has worked in a particular way, and it comes as a result of this work, it can be explained. When it is abnormal, it is not the result of any specific technique or process that the man has followed. It is beyond his control, and many times, there is no direct link. Sometimes, there is direct reference to some complicated sickness or some shock he might have had or some environmental peculiarity or some practice. But, in the case of the yogi's experiences—for instance, in the Bhakti yogi, if he is a bhakta of Lord Rama, his visions shall be associated with Lord Rama or the Japa he is doing, and the particular scripture he is absorbing. The vision will come only with reference to that. If he is

a devotee of Lord Krishna, his vision will be of Lord Krishna. And if he is wise, he will hear also Lord Krishna speaking to him as he spoke to Arjuna or as he spoke to someone else. So, it will be definite, it will have a specific pattern, and it will be the result of his sadhana. One interesting point is that this phenomena is not necessarily common to all. There are some spiritual sadhaks who reach the highest illumination without experiencing sound, vision or other such phenomena, and sometimes, they even go to the Guru. Oh, many other people are having various visions and darshans of God. I am unfortunate, I am not experiencing anything. The guru will say, what a fool you are! There is no hard and fast rule about that. It is not necessary that you must get it. It is wrong to think that only if you get it are there signs of spiritual progress. No, there is no such thing. It depends upon temperament. If the sadhak has a highly imaginative temperament, he will have visions. If this person does not have an imaginative temperament, he will have direct progress, but no visions. That is also possible, and so, it is not an indispensable aspect or stage of Yoga. It is not that. And, sometimes, some of these phenomena are actually demonstrable. A yogi, who experiences them can show these. For instance, he gets a vision that he is in Mount Kailash, where it is all cold and freezing. When he is deeply absorbed in that vision, if you touch him, his body will be ice-cold.

“Really”, I said, in great surprise.

Swami : When they are in the depth of that experience and if the experience is transmitted in a valid way, they are able to feel it in the physical sense also. In the abnormal way, on the other hand, it has no pattern, it is chaotic. There is chaos in their minds, and they have no control over the phenomena. The phenomena usually come up from their deep sub-conscious. It is only the projection of impressions lying in the deep sub-conscious. In the normal man, the normal healthy individual, who is not psychotic, who is sane, the sub-conscious is always under the control of the active, conscious mind and the only time when its control is relaxed is during sleep.

At this point, an inmate of the Ashram brought in tea and some snacks. As I sipped the tea, the Swami continued with his interesting explanation.

So, the only natural abnormal experiences of a healthy individual are during dreams. Every night, during dreams, he sees visions and hears sounds and all the experiences; it is a natural release of the vision and hearing faculties in that state of sleep. It is all abnormal, but there is no imbalance in mental balance, or sanity, because it is natural. Nature has provided for it. On the other hand, what happens in the case of psychosis? The same phenomena take place when he is not in the state of sleep, when he is in the waking state. If you manage to put him to sleep, during that period he becomes a little normal.

Question: So, what is the difference between these Yogic phenomena and these psychotic phenomena?

Answer: Yogic phenomena have a pattern and are the result of certain causes; they have got a certain meaning. In psychosis, there is no pattern, and there is no particular cause for the existence of the phenomena. I mean, it is not the result of certain specific processes. On the contrary, it is uncontrolled. I don't know in what way.

"We are here now, all this," I observed, and added, "We also don't know, but we try to understand and to begin to know all this."

Answer: And this is on the lower plane. The visions of a yogi are on a higher plane. It is only when his consciousness has ascended from the gross, physical consciousness to a higher, subtle consciousness that he can experience these phenomena. It is only then that he begins to see these visions. And one very interesting point in the large majority of yogis, when they begin to see these visions, they are not aware of this physical body. So, there is no interval between this stage and that. When that vision comes, he is not aware of time, space, and what is outside. The environment is totally forgotten, the vision alone counts, and he is only aware of that phenomenon, and, everything else goes. There is no intermittent stage. So, for that time, he is put into another dynamism, another consciousness. In very rare cases, these visions of the yogis have been experienced in a perfectly normal state of consciousness. They open their eyes and they see certain things, but that is very rare. In the case of an ordinary yogi, he is either getting to that state, or is in this

state. In this state, he will not get that experience. When that experience comes, this state will become unreal

“This is incredible,” I said

Swami They can have visions in the unconscious state, super-conscious state.

“Like Ramakrishna ?” I enquired

Swami Yes. Later on, he sometimes saw visions in this normal consciousness, with these eyes That was very exceptional It shows a very high state of spiritual progress, of spiritual evolution

Question One thing, Swamiji Is it possible for any yogi to go into this, to have these experiences ? Or, is it mostly the Raja yogis who get these ?

Swami Usually, such visions come mostly to Bhakti yogis

Question Mostly to Bhakti yogis ? And the Anahat ? No ?

Swami Anahat comes mostly to Hatha yogis or Raja yogis
“In Catholic religion also, the great saints had visions, sometime,” I said.

Swami Yes Catholic religion is 90% Bhakti Yoga

Question Are there many who had visions ?

Swami Yes, St. Francis of Assisi, St Teresa, etc

Question And are there some physical phenomena too ? Some people have these visions of Christ in some special states of consciousness. Only a few minutes back you told me that if one of the big yogis gets a vision that he is in Kailash, he becomes cold If this same yogi has visions of Christ, perhaps, he can be stigmatised ?

Swami : Yes, absolutely. Intense meditation can transport him to the physical plane of

“That is the power of the psyche in the body And we think that, through training, we can help in curing many mental troubles of man,” I put in.

Swami Dr Caycedo, these psychosomatic phenomena come to yogis after years and years and years of continuous practice, and character building, prayer, meditation, and so much of self-culture, so much of discipline, so much of austerity. All this comes at the end of it as a ripe fruit comes to a tree after it has grown for 8 years, 10 years, 12 years. It is only then that it begins to give fruit. So, these experiences come at the end of sadhana lasting years, after daily prayers, practice, discipline, all that. So, how can you produce it in your patients?

"I think that if we cannot produce these phenomena, we can at least learn to know the human psychology and then one day, perhaps, therapy will come." I observed.

Swami . Yes, that can be done. By the way, I saw Padre Pio twice, in Italy

Question . You saw his stigmata?

Swami Yes, he was saying mass. He wears gloves, but when he says mass he takes them off. There was only a little bandage. I saw it when he was giving the blessing. Father Pio got it many years ago, and it has never gone. All the time, for 40 years!

"Is he still living?" I asked.

Swami : He has become very old now, but I think he is living.

Question . In which year were you in Italy?

Swami . 1960-61

Question . Are you now going to Japan?

Swami : Yes, I will go, but only for 2 or 3 days. I will go also to Hong Kong for 10 days.

Question : Hong Kong? Do you know something about Subud?

Swami . Oh yes, I know. It comes from an Indonesian, Pak Subud.

Question . Is this very interesting?

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“That is the power of the psyche in the body And we think that, through training, we can help in curing many mental troubles of man,” I put in.

Swami : It is very interesting, specially from the psychiatric point of view. Some people get convulsions, and some people cry like dogs, or cats, or birds. They make noises, like some bird, or an animal, and some people run with eyes closed and even if there are 20 people in the house, they do not touch any one, and do not touch any furniture .. They run around, but they don't have any accident.*

The Swami's remarks on Subud reminded me of an important lecture delivered in Switzerland by Dr Gubel of Argentina, my great colleague who introduced Sophrology in Latin America. Dr. Gubel has carried out researches in the phenomena of Voodoo of Haiti and Macumba of Brazil, and in that lecture he had spoken of practices and techniques which seemed to have much in common with the Subud phenomena. My mind was full of exciting ideas and I began to see visions of vast possibilities in the field of psychotherapy if we could succeed in tapping all these strange techniques of different countries, races and cultures. Elsewhere, my colleagues were making researches in other techniques, and here was I, seeking light on Yoga. 'Will we succeed', I wondered—for I knew the path was long, and difficult.

I thanked the Swami for his words of wisdom and wrapped in my musings, reflecting on my hopes and misgivings, I walked back to my lodgings in the Ashram Outside, the Ganges, India's sacred river, the eternal river, swift, cool and sparkling, flowed by, unconcerned about myself, about any one's self.

*Such meetings are called Latihan by the Subud people and are held in Delhi and Calcutta once a week

Krishnananda

In big ashrams of the yogis, there are many inmates and obviously one cannot meet them all. A few top ones, the Master or the Mother, and the chief disciples—these every one wants to meet. Then one picks and chooses depending upon what one is seeking, what one wants to know and learn. At the Sivananda Ashram, I was interested in meeting three or four yogis who, I thought, would be of help to me in my researches. Of these, one was Krishnananda, who is regarded as the Philosopher of the Ashram. To meet this Intellectual my wife and I wended our way one morning to his cottage.

Sivananda Ashram spreads over a large area. Half of it, or nearly so, lies on one side of the road which runs from Rishikesh to Uttarkashi and the rest on the other side, on a plot of land overlooking the Ganges. The dwelling of Krishnananda is located at the farthest end of this portion, right above the edge of the river which flows majestically past the cliff below. The sight is glorious, indeed, and all around there is an atmosphere of quiet and harmony.

As we approached the cottage, we enquired from one of the inmates where we could find the Swami. 'There', he said, pointing towards a frail, short-statured man washing his clothes in the waters of the river. I must say, I was a little taken aback. This intellectual yogi, General Secretary of the internationally known Divine Life Society, washing his own clothes!

As we got near, he greeted us, and a little later we had the following conversation:

Question : Swamiji, can you tell me a little about Rishikesh?

Swami You know a sage, a saint, one who has felt the truth is called rishi. Have you heard this word? And there is another meaning which has come out of Rishikesh. Rishikesh means the Lord, one who has complete control over the senses. Lord of the senses is Rishikesh. The place that is presided over by Divinity or the Lord—that is Rishikesh. That is, the spelling would be Sri-kesh; but if it is Rishikesh, then it would mean the place where rishis dwell, where sages lived. This is the place where many sages lived in ancient times.

All saints and sages lived here, and the place has a special sanctity, because, according to tradition, Rama is said to have come to this place and practised austerity. He came with his brothers. Rama was the eldest. Then came Lakshmana, then Bharata, then Shatrughana, four brothers. And there are four temples in this area dedicated to these four brothers. In Rishikesh there is a temple called Bharata Mandir, the temple of Bharata, one of the brothers of Rama. And just nearby there is a temple dedicated to Shatrughana. And in Lakshmana Jhula, there is the temple of Lakshmana. And about 40 miles from here, there is another temple. So, the place is holy because of the four brothers, and it is holy on account of the great austerities performed here by several rishis. Hundreds and hundreds of rishis are supposed to have stayed here and meditated. This particular place where our Ashram is located, is called Muni-ki-reti. Muni means a saint, one who does not speak, and practises meditation. And the sands which are purified by the munis are called 'reti'. This means that these areas have been purified by the presence of the saints and sages. So, if you ask what is the special importance of Rishikesh, we can say in one sentence that it is the place where several rishis stayed and practised meditation. And the whole atmosphere is charged with that 'meditative' force. It is an indestructible force. A force that is generated by spiritual meditation is never destroyed.

"About how long ago was that?" I enquired of the Yogi

Swami Maybe 1,000, 2,000 years. Time does not matter here. It may be even 10,000 years. That power cannot be destroyed, it is such a tremendous force, and that is why people want to come here and practise Yoga, because, in addition to the force generated by yourself, you are also assisted by the forces outside.

Question : What are the names of those who practised Yoga here?

Swami We cannot tell that for certain. Names are not available. We only know that sages stayed here. Vashishta is supposed to have stayed here. There is a cave known as Vashishta Guha nearby. In the whole history of India, the first sage is Vashishta, the greatest. Nobody is equal to him.

His cave is Vashishta Guha. Some swamis are staying there now. There was an ashram founded by an old swami. A few disciples are staying there. It is not a big place. It is a small place. There is a big cave inside, under the earth.

I asked the Yogi if it was true that it was in that area that someone had written the Vedas.

Swami . Vyasa. You know the great sage called Vyasa. We don't say that the Vedas were written by anybody. They are not "written" books. They are inspiration received in spiritual meditation, and these mantras of the Vedas were uttered by sages in such spiritual meditation. These utterances or mantras were collected and grouped and edited by Vyasa, and he did his work in Badrinath.

"Is that nearby?" I asked.

Swami . Not very near. It is 150 miles from here. Upto Badrinath it is all a holy region. It is called Uttar Khand, and whoever wants to practise Yoga or meditation comes to these places. From Hardwar to Badrinath it is all holy.

"And how many ashrams are there in these places?" I queried.

Swami Many, big and small. But you will not find many ashrams like this. This is the biggest, but there are small ones where one swami lives, or two or three persons. There is a place called Uttarkashi. There also many mahatmas and sannyasis stay and practise Yoga. Higher still, there is a place called Gangotri which means the place where the Ganges descended. There also some mahatmas stay. We cannot stay there in winter, though a few manage to do that. However, I have told you that the whole region is considered sacred, very sacred, the holiest region in the whole of India.

I thanked the Yogi for his information on Rishikesh and asked: What exactly is the meaning of Vedanta-Yoga?

Swami . The source book of spiritual wisdom is the Vedas. And Vedanta means the essence of the Vedas. The philosophical and the mystical side of

the Vedas is called Vedanta. There are four sections in the Vedas. The first one consists of mantras, hymns, prayers offered to gods. The second section consists of the details regarding the utilization or use of the mantras in practical worship and sacrifice. The third section deals with certain types of meditation. The fourth section is called Upanishads; that is the Vedanta. It contains the highest knowledge. The essence of the teachings of the Vedas is the Vedanta. 'Anta' means end. The Upanishads are called the Vedanta, and anything that is connected with Upanishads, that explains the Upanishads, is also called the Vedanta. That which deals with the philosophy contained in the Upanishads is called the Vedanta.

"Yoga-Vedanta ?" I enquired.

Swami

It is a combination of two words. The Yoga as taught by Patanjali, and, also, the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita are covered by the term Yoga. The Vedanta also is a kind of Yoga because Yoga means meditation, essentially, and whatever be the method of meditation, it is meditation, principally, and so, Yoga comprises all methods of approach to Reality, whether it is through Vedantic meditation or through Love or Bhakti, through psychic concentration of the will as in Raja Yoga, or by Karma Yoga, the Yoga of unselfish activity. Any method of contemplation on the Supreme Being is called Yoga. And Yoga-Vedanta, the term as used here, is a beautiful blending of the techniques prescribed in the Yoga of Patanjali and the Upanishads. Mostly, the Vedanta is taken to be identical with Knowledge, with Wisdom. Another word for it is Jnana. You must have heard the expression Jnana-Yoga. Jnana-Yoga and Vedanta mean the same. The Yoga-Vedanta means the practice of meditation according to the techniques of Patanjali and the Upanishads. And in the Bhagavad Gita you have got a combination of both. In fact, almost all the Yogas are there in the Bhagavad Gita.

"Also the Hatha Yoga?" I asked.

Swami .

Hatha Yoga is not included because it is not considered as real Yoga. The main Yogas are only four : Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. The Hatha Yoga is the initial stage of Raja Yoga. It is not an independent Yoga. It is the preparatory stage.

Krishnananda was in bad health, and all through this conversation, he showed signs of strain, and coughed frequently. I had not put him all the questions I wanted to, but did not wish to prolong the meeting. So I requested him for another interview. He kindly agreed to that. We met again and I began : We speak now about something really important : ANAHAT. Kindly explain the phenomena clearly ?

Swami . The prana is a force that is operating in the whole world. You lift your hand with the prana; you open your mouth with the prana, you digest your food with the prana; all functions of the body are due to prana and if the prana doesn't work the body dies. That is the separation of the body from the workings of the prana. And whenever there is motion, movement, there is sound. If something moves, it makes some sound, and the prana moves in the body. It moves everywhere from head to foot, and in different parts of the body, it performs different functions ; it does different work, and it has different names when it performs different functions. They say, when a person does dispensation of justice, you call him a judge. In the court, you call a man a judge, and in the collectory you call him a collector, a magistrate. The same person can have different names according to the work that he does. He may be a policeman, he may be a professor, he may be a chancellor, he may be a president; he may be a minister. The same person can be anything. Isn't it ? And we give different names to the same person because he does different work. Like that prana is one. It is one universal force, power, that is everywhere in the universe. In science, you call it energy . . . elements. Today Science has discovered that it is energy. It is called electric energy. But prana is much subtler than electric energy. It cannot be seen. It's working is invisible and electric force is an outer form, a manifestation of prana, and this prana works everywhere in the body. When it functions, naturally it changes position, it moves, and when it moves, it makes sound. This sound is called anahat. It is a perpetual motion. It is not a temporary contact of things. It is not the sound produced by the contact of two objects as in the beating of a drum or the blowing of a trumpet. It is not that. This sound is always there, and its highest form is called OM.

“Why, Om?” I asked.

Swami . It is the original Cosmic vibration which makes itself heard in each individual, in each body, in everything. This OM is the original mystic, spiritual sound. It becomes pranic energy when it becomes a working force in the bodies or the things of the world. So, it is OM only which you hear in anahat, it is sound in a gross form. From the point of view of OM, it is gross. And when you close your ears, you will hear some sounds. You can also hear these if you concentrate.

“Then, I can try it, can I ?” I asked.

Swami You will hear it. Your concentration will have to be for a little longer duration. OM ! Some such sound you will hear very faintly. Close your ears so that outer sounds may not affect your ear drums. Outside sound should not disturb your concentration. You close the ears so that your mind may not be distracted. Close the eyes also. This mudra is called Yoni Mudra. You close all the avenues like the eyes, the nose and the ears. And then you will not hear any sound from the outside world. Then concentrate. You will begin to hear the sound inside and, if you concentrate your mind on the sound, the mind will get merged in the sound.

Question What is the etymology of the word, anahat ?

Swami It is the sound produced by non-contact. It means non-contact, ‘an’ means no, ‘ahat’ means contact ; no contact. Sound with no contact. And the prana produces the sound, not because it comes in contact with something, but simply because it moves like your breath, like wind, like air, that is how it moves. And you hear the sound. This anahat sound is used by yogis for meditation, so that the mind gets merged in that sound and gets lost. There is nothing special about it. It is only a way of concentrating.

‘A way of concentrating ! How ?’ I asked.

Swami . Yes, so that the mind may get lost in something, some object. Instead of concentrating on some other thing people prefer meditating on the sound and anahat is an object of meditation in certain types of Yoga. It is called Laya Yoga. Laya means dissolution, dissolution of the mind. The mind gets dissolved like salt put in water. It gets

dissolved in the sound and then there is no mind. When there is no mind, that is the Truth.

Question : Is the Laya Yoga a Yoga by itself ?

Swami . It is a minor Yoga. The main Yogas are four, but this is only an aid to concentration, so you cannot regard it as one of the main Yogas. It is not a perfect technique by itself. It is incomplete. It is one of the methods of fixing the mind on the target. There are many ways of concentrating. You can concentrate on a picture, you can concentrate on an idea, you can concentrate on a mark made on some wall, or some point outside. Like that you can concentrate on the sound or on some object for fixing the attention of the mind. So you cannot call it a Yoga by itself.

Question What is the Yoga that utilizes this technique of anahat most ?

Swami Raja Yoga. And there is a Yoga called Kundalini Yoga, which also uses it. Indeed, any one can use it for the purpose of concentration.

Question Can any yogi use it ?

Swami Oh, yes. He can use it. It is a question of preference.

Question Is it possible that, if a yogi tries to hear the sound, the sound comes to this yogi automatically, or is it necessary to wait, to wait for some time ?

Swami It is not a question of coming. It is already there. You have only to hear it. It is not a 'coming', as it is already there, but you don't hear it because your mind is thinking of something.

Question Does the sound exist all the time ? Only the mind.

Swami Is not able to hear it. You practise.

"Somebody told me that in anahat, there exist different notes," I remarked.

Swami Yes, yes. There are various notes. Sometimes you hear it like a bell, sometimes like a conch, sometimes like a drum, sometimes like thunder. As you go on progressing in meditation, you hear various

sounds. It is not always the same sound. Sometimes you hear it sounding like a trumpet ; sometimes like the roar of a lion, and, finally, you become calm.

I asked the Swami how long after starting one's sadhana one began to hear the anahat.

Swami . It takes some years. Of course, if you don't practise, it may take 15 years. But, even if you practise, it may take two or three years, not less, because the mind has so many desires and thoughts of the outside world that however much you may try, you won't hear anything.

Question . Did you practise some special mudra ?

Swami No, no, that is not necessary. Mudras are required only in the initial stages to block the ears , but afterwards you just close your eyes and you will hear it.

Question Now, do you hear it every day ?

Swami Yes, through concentration. Close your eyes. Don't think of anything and it will be heard. But when you think of something, you don't hear it. When the mind is outside and you think of something, you don't hear it.

Question And can you stop hearing when you like ?

Swami : Yes, through years of practice, and when the mind has no desires. A man with desires cannot be a yogi. You should not have any desire. Any desire is an obstacle. It will make the mind go out. Now, can you hear anything if it is outside ? God is within, and the mind that is without cannot hear or see God. That is the secret of Yoga.

Question . And does anahat give satisfaction also ? Is one very happy ?

Swami Yes, very happy , very, very happy. The mind becomes intensely happy.

"To us, this aspect of the Yogic life, anahat, is very important," I observed, and asked : "Do you have some books in English about anahat ?"

Swami : There is no book with many details in English. They simply mention anahat and that is all. They do not describe it.

Question : Is it necessary to hear the anahat in order to reach samadhi ?

Swami : Yes, yes, samadhi is . .

“You cannot go in samadhi without anahat,” I urged.

Swami : Of course, you may not always hear the sound ; especially in Jnana Yoga and in certain methods of Raja Yoga this anahat doesn't come on the way. It is a question of temperament and previous practice . You may or may not hear. Everyone does not hear the sound. You hear only if you concentrate. Otherwise, you will just miss it. You see, it is like this. You are walking on the road. So many people make sounds on the way, but if you are thinking of something else, you do not hear the sounds. But you can hear the sounds if you want. Do you understand me ? Like that, everyone will pass through the sound, but many will not concentrate on that and never think of it. But those who continue to think of it cannot but hear it. Everyone will pass through that stage.

Question : If sounds exist everywhere in all these different places, and you begin to hear these, if you want, one after the other, why cannot you hear there at one time, all together ?

Swami : Because your concentration is not good enough. If you concentrate fully, then with 100% concentration you will hear everything immediately. But one is generally going step by step, step by step. You are not able to see the Himalayas, all the Himalayas from here, because they are so far. But suppose you are above the Himalayas, in an aeroplane. Perhaps you will see everything. The vision will include everything.

Question : And what is the personal sensation at the moment you hear all the sounds together ?

Swami : You never feel that you are a body. You will not know anything about yourself.

Question : Is this sensation different from samadhi ? Is this another thing ?

Swami : Samadhi is much higher, much higher.

Question : Does this occur much earlier ?

Swami : This is lower ; samadhi is far higher.

Question : And is it possible to be in this state for a long time ?

Swami : You cannot stay for a long time in the 'concentration' stage. The beginner can stay only for a few minutes, sometimes only for a few seconds. He will experience it for a few minutes, then the mind will come back.

Question : Is some special diet necessary for the practice in respect of anahat ?

Swami : Why for anahat ? For any practice in Yoga You have to take suitable diet which does not irritate the body. Any food that stimulates the nerves should not be taken. You must take bland diet, diet which keeps you calm and quiet. Your system should be calm and quiet, you see. And the food should be satwic. Satwa tatwa means pure, very pure, nothing to disturb the sense or the nerves of the body. Suppose you take some stimulating drinks—whisky or any other kind of liquor—or food like meat, which stimulates the cells, which is not pure (not pure from the point of view of Yoga) the whole system is agitated. You must take food like pure vegetables, and you can take bread and all that, but you should not take any kind of stimulating food or drink.

Karunananda

Karunananda is living in a separate "kutir" nearest to the jungle. His room is situated on the second floor in one of the new buildings of the Ashram, and from the terrace one has a beautiful panoramic view of the Ganges. He practises his sadhana and does Yogic exercises usually in the jungle or some time on the terrace. He is an Australian and the people say that he is more than 60 years old. He came to India years ago and became a disciple of Sivananda and is now an important Indian yogi. My wife and I went to his room where he was to give us the interview. As we entered, we saw him busy over a manuscript written in an extremely exquisite but small hand. He was very lovingly illuminating this manuscript. I saw at a glance that the work he was doing would need years of labour and so I asked him when he would finish that. He laughed, and said : It does not matter when it will be finished. The important thing is to begin.

How true and how philosophic ! I thought. That is the way to approach all human endeavour.

We sat down and I had a very interesting conversation with him on a subject which is of great importance to doctors in the field of psychiatry.

I began : I would like to ask you some questions on the subject of sexual life in Yoga training.

Swami : We had a very good lecture on this particular subject by Swami Chidananda. He has already spoken on it, here in the Ashram.

I felt that he was not keen to talk on the theme. However, I persisted. But I think you can, if you like, answer some questions. We accept only two instincts : the sexual instinct and the destructive instinct. What is the technique which a yogi employs for sublimation of the sexual life ? Is there a special technique for the sublimation of this sexual life for becoming a pure brahmachari ?

Swami : You see, an ordinary man cannot become a pure brahmachari. Pure is one whose sexual life has never been awakened at all. It is some-

thing strange for western people and strange for most people in the world today, because now everything is related to sex. Sex is everything in people's eye. But in the traditional days a young boy used to go to a perfect teacher who looked after him right through the term, there was no thought of sex in the mind. Now, with men, unlike with women, the sexual instinct has to be awakened from outside. In the women it is awakened from within. And in the old traditional days in India, it was a common thing for young men of good families to be taken away from the family, when the boy was 10 years old and kept under a perfect teacher and no thought of sex entered the mind at all. For that reason, the energy which is in the body did not become gross, it did not become sex; it was kept, this great energy, in the body. This energy need not be physical. And with a certain energy he can better concentrate, can study better; the spiritual life is much more wide, and due to this, the energy is not attacked in a gross way.

At this moment, an inmate of the Ashram came in to have a word with the Swami. "Excuse me for a minute", said Karunanandaji. Then, after a few minutes, he resumed: We know that students can study better, and with more concentration, if they still keep a brahmachari life. Once they start mixing up with the family, their minds get divided and they cannot properly concentrate on their studies. Now, let us say, you are a man of the world, and you decide to take up some spiritual exercises, some spiritual practices, including meditation. You will find that you get such joy and tranquillity from this meditation that the sensual pleasures of life will lose a little of their colour, and meditation will please you more and more and more. So, there is a gradual weaning away from the sensual activities of all sorts, including food, sex and different activities of all sorts, . Husband and wife can learn meditation techniques together, so there is no break of the family life. Interest in family life is reduced due to the increasing preoccupation with spiritual life, and, therefore, if a man does it but his wife does not do it, it is not a happy family .

It is mainly through meditation and through the realisation that there is a strong inner life in man, that man gets real happiness. It does not have to be external life in anyway, to get joy and happiness. That

is what we enjoy from sensual activities and you find after a time that the joy is mixed with fear due to taking too much food, having too much sexual activity, too many bad nights, all these things . . . So you don't want these things. You find that the joy in spiritual life is different and is accompanied by so much profit. You see that the joy in worldly life is momentary. The intensity is momentary. The joys of spiritual life are not so intense but they last longer. And for that reason man desires them more. There are, from our point of view, no special techniques for transmuting sexual energy into spiritual energy. It is a matter of change of all life . . .

"Matter of . . . ?" I asked.

Swami It is a matter of change, of gradual change of all life and outlook, including the time you sleep, the way you sleep, the way you eat, the kind of things you eat, the company you keep, all these things. When I went to Australia there was in the beginning not even a mention about spiritual life. I just took classes in Hatha Yoga, because this Hatha Yoga activity sets up some purification in the bodies of the people, then the mind becomes clear and more active.

Question If a yogi is in practice of Hatha Yoga and meditation or Raja Yoga, does he begin to experience less sexual appetite?

Swami Yes, the appeal of all sensual appetites lessens, and the yogi even enjoys periods of fasting, periods of staying awake, things very opposite to the everyday activities and things. The reason why so many people are instinctively attracted to the yogi is the fact that he has so much vital energy stored in his body. And there are some very worldly people who would like to attach him back to this worldly life, because of that very vital energy which he possesses. But this is spiritual energy and not sensual energy.

"Not sensual energy," I interjected. "I have heard so many things and also I have read that the sexual power of the yogis is the strongest power in humanity."

Swami . Yes, this is so because sex is a force which seems to control the minds of so many people. They think that any vital energy in the body must

be sexual energy. It is not sexual power, it is full of life, being full of life and not being rajasic, satwic, having a purity of mind and being full of energy .

Question . Are most yogis brahmacharis for that reason?

Swami : Yes. You will find that you can always tell the yogis who are not brahmacharis from the yogis who are

“Who are married”, I suggested.

Swami . Who are not pure . I don't mean married or unmarried. I have in mind the yogis who are not living a pure spiritual life. They often have a very bad temperament. They have got plenty of energy, but they get quickly excited. There are also others who, even if they are married, have a very disciplined, quiet, serene life. People like to be in their company, because they can relax in their company, they can't relax in the company of rajasic people. As regards their practices, they are having a different type of life, completely

“Suppose, a yogi performs all the asanas and all these things but is not absolutely pure in his spiritual life, then ..” I said

Swami : Then you will find very often that such yogis have a very quick temper.

“Neurotics ?” I enquired.

Swami : Yes, they have a neurotic temperament. That is right.

Question : Is this so because there is a conflict between their life and their practices ?

Swami . Yes.

“And I know some yogis who are married ” Interrupting me, the Yogi said : Yes. Now, this is interesting. There are some yogis who are married to yoginis. They are doing spiritual practice together, they are living a spiritual and ideal life. At a certain stage in life, they may feel they would like to have a child. At that time, they have the sexual life, but it does not keep them away from spiritual practices as it does in the case of average persons. You find that they can regulate their sex life. Their children will be their second pleasure,

because they get greater pleasure in their spiritual life. They live most of the time as brother and sister. Very beautiful people. The average persons waste much of their energy in sensual life, and because their energy is wasted, they age very quickly.

“But, surely, everybody cannot do this,” I put in.

Swami The ideal, of course, for all people is a regulated life, in which all these different activities of the body and the mind are used in the right place and in the right proportion. Such people, you will find, lead a balanced life, which they enjoy to the full. Now, a man who is out every night in the week does not enjoy any of these nights much, because he is much too tired. On the other hand, a man who goes out one night in a week or one night in a month enjoys himself much more just that once. Life should be much more regulated and man should not be a slave of life, but should control life, be the master of life.

Question : Have you yogis concepts of repression and sublimation like we have in psychiatry?

Swami . There is a big difference between sublimation of sexual instinct and repression of this sex instinct. When the sex instinct is awakened and there is an attempt to put a stop to it, there is repression. But when you are living in surroundings, where the sex instinct is not being awakened at all, there is no repression, but sublimation. And in modern life, there are very few real brahmacharis. There are some who are trying to become brahmacharis, but then they become neurotics, because they are living in a world where sex is to be found on every side and their sexual instinct is awakened. Sexual instinct having been awakened and having been activated, they have to express it naturally or become neurotics. The thing that we must do is to remove as much as possible the excessive emphasis on sex in modern life. That is why the world is sick today. You see the difference between sublimation and repression. Repression is not good. The neurotics are all repressed people.

“You speak like a psycho-analyst”, I said, impressed by Karunanandaji’s understanding of human psychology.

Swami . Now, if they can be removed to a different atmosphere and, may be even live with pure yogis, then, temporarily, they can be cured of that.

Question . This idea of repression and sublimation—is it very old ? Has it been there for many centuries?

Swami . Yes.

“With another name, perhaps, in Sanskrit,” I said.

Swami . It is the brahmachari life.

Question : Are the brahmacharis trained in this technique of sublimation through meditation?

Swami : They are not trained in the method of sublimation. Sublimation is natural in their way of life

“Natural?” I asked.

Swami : Yes, a natural thing There is no chance of the energy becoming gross.

“It is logical that if you train the people for sublimation they can be frustrated,” I said

Swami . Yes. Unless you can take a person out of these surroundings, the gross worldly surroundings, he will not be able to sublimate his energies. But it won't be so natural as the old type of brahmachari life, when the student lived for 10 or more years with a perfect teacher.

I thanked the Yogi for his answers and got up to take our leave. Already, his eyes had moved in the direction of the manuscript. As we walked out I saw him going back, like a monk of the middle ages, to his work over the manuscript.

Sharadananda

From among the yogis I met in India, I can easily pick Swami Sharadananda as the one I have known most intimately. He and I had several meetings at which we talked for long hours. In addition, we exchanged a formidable amount of correspondence, part of which has been published in my book, *Letters of Silence*. All this gave me the opportunity to study his mind and personality closely, and, needless to add, I profited a great deal from this. Our friendship apart, my interest in this yogi was greater than in others because he had not yet 'arrived', was still 'travelling'. His sadhana was not complete, and so I was able to watch the working and unfolding of a yogi's mind during one phase of spiritual development. This provided immensely useful material for my study. As I have explained in my book, *Letters of Silence*, a major obstacle to our study of the psyche of the yogi and such phenomena relating to his life and sadhana as are of interest to us, is the traditional vow of silence which binds him and prevents him from communicating his experiences. Swami Sharadananda dared to oblige me, and, in the interest of humanity, related to me his own experiences with an amazing truthfulness, going into that kind of minute detail which is so necessary in the field of Psychiatry. It is possible that in doing all this he may have done some 'spiritual' injury to himself. But we doctors believe that the work of research and study in which we are engaged is, also, good work, God's work, and so, even if what he did was a lapse, it was all for a noble cause. All the same, I am deeply indebted to Swami Sharadananda for his assistance given so willingly to me in my study of certain Yogic phenomena.

As I said, the Swami and I met several times. These meetings spread over several months during which the Swami was constantly thinking of only one thing: the completion of his sadhana which had been interrupted on account of the 'mahasamadhi'—passing away—of his guru, Swami Sivananda. He was keen to go to Gangotri and to resume his sadhana. In due course his plans to do that matured and the brief conversation reproduced here is part of the talks we had at my last meeting with him. He is now at Gangotri, engaged in a mighty spiritual endeavour to realise, to reach God.

"This is our last meeting," I said. "You are going tomorrow morning to Gangotri, and we may not meet again. You have already helped me much in the

study of some Yogic phenomena. Today, I have to ask you more questions. Also, I took some pictures of you last time, but, unfortunately, my films were not good. I want to take some more now, this will be a wonderful souvenir for us. As you know, I have also photographed many other yogis in India. I intend to publish all these pictures. I am interested primarily in mudras. You make good mudras and you do the pranayamas very well. I have photographs of the asanas featuring Swami Chidanandaji here, near the Ganges, and Yogiraj in Delhi. But so far as pranayamas and mudras are concerned, I am interested in taking your photographs. You are first-rate in nauli. I have seen yogis all over India, but none could do nauli like you.

Swami And I have never seen anybody with so much real interest in Yoga as you. I have seen many foreigners. They come and pick up bits about Yoga, but you have got a genuine love, a real thirst for knowledge of Yoga. This is good.

I thanked the Swami for his kind words and added, "Now, some questions. What do you hope to find in the Himalayas?"

Swami : The final Illumination. We, who look for our Realisation, see our own self in all beings, from the smallest creature to the highest. To see our own self in everything means that if an insect feels angry, I must also feel angry. If a person is satisfied, I must also feel satisfied. If you are happy, I must also be happy, and if you feel sorry I must also feel sorry. That is why when you wrote, "Swamiji, then it means I must accept further frustration in my collaboration with you," I felt it so much. Can I not help him? He is a real scientist genuinely in search of knowledge. In what way can I help him? So, I said. I am prepared to help you. Like that, we try to do what we can. That is the ultimate goal. That is called Illumination, or Realisation, or God Realisation.

Question . What about samadhi? Is it different?

Swami : Samadhi! It is very broad. Samadhi is complete knowledge. In samadhi, there are stages, but there is ultimately one samadhi, where all knowledge is complete, and that is called nirvicalpa samadhi.

"Nirvicalpa"? I repeated.

Swami Nirvicalpa samadhi. But it is not so easy. That thing is not so easy. To get complete knowledge, you have to work very hard. You have to work for a long period. You will get it stage by stage. To get to samadhi, first of all, I try to identify myself with my relatives, that is one stage, the first stage. We have got a natural love for relatives, therefore, we do not find it difficult to identify ourselves with our relatives and friends. Then we enlarge our circle to include our countrymen, all Indians, and so on. Can I easily identify myself in the next stage, with the whole world? That is very difficult. You love your dog, but not the tiger, because your dog is your friend, but the tiger is not your friend. But you have to love the tiger as well as the dog if you want to reach the highest state. So, in this way, step by step, we try to get on to Illumination.

Question You hope to reach, after some time, this moment of Illumination. Will it be correct to say that until now you don't have the Illumination? You are going to Gangotri to find this Illumination. Is this your objective in undertaking this sadhana?

Swami It is so subtle and so complicated. I cannot say that I have experienced that Illumination, but, at the same time, I cannot say that I have not experienced it.

Question How many years will you spend in Gangotri?

Swami It is very difficult to be definite about these things because time taken is not always the same. It is not like preparing for a course of study or a degree. Some people study medicine for a number of years. The period for study is fixed and after the study is successfully completed, one is qualified for the degree. This is not true of spiritual life. It is something beyond us, it is not in our hands. I do not know, nor do you know, only He knows. So, when the time comes, when the moment arrives, it takes the person unawares. You see? Realised people know it, but we are ignorant, we are not able to recognise it.

Question What is your personal experience with regard to sounds and visions? Have you heard only the Omkar and anahat sound or have you also seen some visions?

Swami : Visions ? I have not paid much attention to visions. They did come, but I was not interested in them. You see, there are so many things which come . When you travelled from Delhi to Rishikesh, you saw so many places, so many factories, so many workers and all. You knew something was going on, but you did not take any interest. You came straight to Rishikesh, and asked about Sivananda Ashram, the Divine Life Society, because you were interested in them. So, you came like that. We also progress in our sadhana with a fixed aim in our mind. When we are going, we see some visions, hear some sounds and get some knowledge also. But we leave it like that, and we go on with our search, we are not detained there. If we get curious about all this, then we will be detained there. If I go on asking what is this vision, what is this sound, and so on, I will be detained there. If I am interested in something like your Sophrology then I can stop when I see the visions and hear the sounds, and examine the thing properly.

Question In Raja Yoga, your Yoga, the people are more interested in the sounds than in the visions ? Is it like this : if the sound comes, you can hear it clearly, and you like this sound better than the visions ?

Swami : Raja Yoga is purely mental. The sound is heard in other branches also. The Raja yogi is purely attached to the mind. He concentrates on the analysis of the mind. Just as you analyse your mind and body, we analyse our mind and spirit. In Nada Yoga, intellect has no part. So, a Nada yogi simply follows that sound, and that sound guides him. There, more of faith is necessary for him, but here, our intellect is necessary.

Question Is Nada Yoga a branch of Bhakti Yoga ?

Swami Yes, because they usually recite some mantra in Nada Yoga. The same mantra reflects that sound : Om, Om, is there ; or, Ram, Ram, Ram, or Om, Namō Shiva, Om, Namō Shiva, Om, Namō Shiva. Thus, he hears Om, Namō Shiva like that and, afterwards, that sound is reflected.

I moved on to another topic and asked : In connection with the sexual life, do the yogis have difficulties in achieving sublimation ? Does this sexual power become passive and do you forget all about the sexual life ?

Swami · I have experimented a great deal on this. These things, this physical law, this sexual law, the divine law I have been trying to write an article on this subject. It is very difficult, but it is possible. When I wrote the article, "Effects of the Unfulfilled Desire on the Brain,"* I thought that there was more of such stuff in my experiences—one or two incidents in connection with sexual life which can be interesting for you.

I requested the Swami to write out all these things

Swami · Yes, I will do that.

"If you remember something interesting, besides this, say, in connection with the two persons known to you who committed suicide, please write that too", I said

Swami : Yes, I will do that.

I had already formed a favourable opinion about this authentic seeker after Truth and Reality. His eagerness to help me in every possible way made a very deep impact on my mind. I wished him all success in his search for his God and bade him good-bye

* This article appears in my book, *Letters of Silence*, pp 47—60

Nada Brahmananda

If a man can be called a phenomenon, Swami Nada Brahmananda is definitely one. In India he is already well-known, because he has often demonstrated his exceptional skill as a musician and his Yogic powers in the field of his specialisation in public. The President of India and the members of India's Parliament have all seen his wonderful performances. Yet, I do not think that any attempt has been made by any doctor to verify the astonishing facts relating to the degree of control this yogi has acquired over sound-vibrations produced in the body. This control is complete. Indeed, he can command his voice to move in any direction, along any of the innumerable channels our body has. One might say that his body is a musical instrument, and he can play upon any part of it like a musician.

I checked the vibrations and found them at whatever part of the body the sound had been directed to by the yogi: the crown of the head, the root of the nose, the navel or hands. The yogis have their own spiritual, or even spiritual-cum-scientific explanations. As an occidental doctor, I can freely vouchsafe that I have verified myself, checked it all, and the vibrations were, in fact, felt wherever these had been directed.

The theory of the yogis is this. Sound is the origin and base of the Universe. The Omkar sound, the anahat sound, is the primal sound, and the Universe is still a thrill with the reverberations of that great sound, the word, which was and is God. Yoga is meditation on Him, is striving towards union with Him. Many are the paths. There are the main Yogas: the Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga. There are several more. Some are mere off-shoots. Thus, there is the Nada Yoga—the Yoga of Music though it is a part of the Bhakti Yoga. The bhakta sings the name and praises of the Lord. Narad, the great yogi of Indian mythology, is for ever singing praises of the Lord. Likewise, there was Mira, the great Rajput Queen of Chittor who was intoxicated with the love of God, Krishna, as few have been and who sang such wondrous songs to the Lord. All these were Bhakti yogis, who made song and music their way of worshipping the Lord. Indeed, bhajans and kirtans are a very familiar feature of the spiritual life of the Indian people. They constitute an integral part of Bhakti Yoga. Praising their Lord with song and

melody, chanting His name through music is a tradition as old as the earliest myths. We have already mentioned Narada, and Mira, but several other great saints have been great singers and musicians. Sur Dasa, Thyagaraja, Purandhara Dasa and many more have “sung their way to salvation”. There is thus a definite Path of Bhakti, Love of the Lord—through music and song. One epithet for the deity is ‘Ganapriya’, one who is fond of music. This is one explanation of the fact that many yogis in India make music and singing of hymns an essential part of their spiritual practice.

But this matter may be viewed from another angle also. Music is such a well-established and powerful means of bringing about change in the state of our consciousness, of human consciousness, why, even the birds and the animals respond to music, and it has now been scientifically proved that there might have been a meaning to the call of the flute of Krishna for not only the gopis but even the cows the milk-yield is better, they say ! Anyway, the use of music for elevating the soul is a technique common to all religions. The organ and bells and the singing of the hymns are nothing new for the West. Only, here in India, all this has been made into a spiritual discipline and distinct religious practice, a sadhana and a Yoga. As in other categories of Yoga, in this also, the spiritual evolution of the sadhak is the aim, and the discipline and the sadhana required may prove to be more rigorous than most people can imagine. Indian classical music is a very elaborate matter, and learning it properly requires a life-time of patient practice. The guru is indispensable, and one may have to learn it from not one but several gurus. Again, apart from the talent, which is often a matter of what one is born with, there has to be intense practice. Practice, it is said, makes for perfection. Apropos music, certainly, nothing apter could have been said. Finally, there is that mystic element, that unknown factor, that elusive something, which is known as the Divine Grace, without which, for those who believe, nothing whatever can be achieved. For me, this independent Yoga has a special interest, since it is connected with the anahat, the Omkar Sound, the sound which is the Brahman. In addition, Saraswati, who is represented with the Veena, is the goddess of Music—and to practise the Nada Yoga is to worship her, the spouse of Brahma.

Music is, therefore, a sacred matter in India. It is a divine art, and a sadhana in its own right. Learning it requires the same kind of approach as any other Yoga demands. years and years of sadhana; years and years of learning it at the feet of the guru and with the help of Divine Grace. I repeat and emphasise

this because otherwise the special distinction between Nada Brahmananda and any other musician may not be properly understood and appreciated. Nada Brahmananda is a musician of a very high calibre, and his excellence and mastery in the art are such that people from all parts of the world come to learn from him. But, he is also a yogi in the fullest meaning of the term. You cannot expect him to sing, for instance, a love-lyric for a film, or play the tango and the waltzes on his instruments—which, by the way, have been all devised and made by himself. The same over-all moral and spiritual discipline binds him which binds the other yogis. Music and song are for him sadhana, spiritual practice, to the same end—Realisation

Listening to Nada Brahmananda and marvelling at his performance, I could not help wondering how hard must have been the total training this man had to go through. Even ordinarily, those who take to music or dancing—another path, by the way, and a proper religious path of serving the Lord, in India—have to put in such hard work. All great masters, of any art whatsoever, require hard and unremitting practice. Their mastery comes at the end of an arduous, back-breaking training and practice. The work of the Nada-yogi, involving both the learning of music and doing sadhana, is bound to prove a far harder climb.

And so it is. I enquired about the life and learning of this disciple of Sivananda and the facts confirmed the view stated above.

He had his education in music from great masters. He learnt the first steps from Sri Sadasiva Bua, and then became the pupil of Ustad Alladia Khan, from whom he received training in advanced music. He finished his musical education under Tata Bua of Banaras. Then, with the music part of the sadhana over, he sought out the spiritual guru, and found one in Sivananda. He became a most devoted disciple of Sivananda—for Sivananda gave him whatever was necessary to complete his Yoga-sadhana, the spiritual sanction that music was as good a means of reaching the Lord as any other. From then onwards, Nada Brahmananda devoted himself entirely to his one interest : Nada. He has no other aim, no other desire, no other interest except to worship through music, and teach and spread Nada-Yoga. I saw for myself what a popular and affectionately loved guru he is. And I was amazed that he worked, practised, taught from early morning—brahma-mahurt—even earlier—to late at night. Yogi, indeed !

I know little about the technical side of Indian music. I was told, however, that Nada Brahmananda is a master of what is called the science of 'Tan'. Tan

Sen, Emperor Akbar's celebrated musician, was a great exponent of this science. Nada Brahmananda is regarded as the Tan Sen of today. This is a most difficult science and involves a lot of physical and psychological training. Sri Nada Brahmananda acquired his rare mastery of this after an extremely devoted and painstaking apprenticeship under great masters of the 'Tan Sen' School for nearly ten years. According to one account, "these were years of unremitting toil, training, personal service and laborious practice. Nada Brahmanandaji practised day and night. He could hardly get enough sleep. He kept practising far into the small hours of the morning."

Through all this he has acquired wonderful control over the vocal system and he can organise his articulation in most intricate patterns with mathematical precision, and to perfect split-second timings.

The secret of Nada Brahmananda's genius lies, according to Swami Chidananda, "in his control over the rate of vibration and its location in any part of the body at will. By this technique it is claimed that various diseases affecting different parts of the body can be cured as well as prevented through this internal vibration. The impulse of vocal vibration is diverted along any limb or the trunk to any part of the anatomy even as a current of electricity is directed along the circuit to any desired place or object. The peculiar feature here is that the vocal vibration thus directed is of the same rate as the corresponding *Thaan* that is being produced by the singer at a particular moment. Swami Nada Brahmanandaji is himself a living testimony to this claim and he has not known a single day of illness."

Swami Chidananda has also thrown some light on one very difficult '*tan*' which Nada Brahmananda renders. This '*tan*' is known as *Kundalini 'tan'* and "is a mysterious and novel variety where the sound vibrations are taken even deeper down than the centre of its issue, i.e., the *Nabhi*. After seven years of *Abhyasa* proved futile to achieve this *Thaan*, the Master had all but given it up, but his entry into the spiritual life under the Divine *Maha Purusha*, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, fired him with fresh zeal to take up the practice. And here some mysterious power helped him along and within a few month's *Abhyasa* day and night, Swami Nada Brahmananda attained *Siddhi* in the *Kundalini Thaan*. This was soon after he had taken holy order of *Sannyas* from his Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

“The Kundalini Thaan brings into play certain inner Pranic currents or Nadis generally not active in the majority of beings. During this Thaan, the vibrations issue solely from the Mooladhaara centre, at the base of the spinal column. The entire system is lulled into a state of complete quiescence. It almost seems as though the entire vocal system has taken a holiday and that no part of it above the Nabhi is involved in the production of the sound. It seems to be issuing from nowhere that we know of. A soft glow of peace and serenity suffuses the face of the Swami when he is engaged in producing the Kundalini

“The Kundalini Thaan has got a mysterious, soothing effect upon the hearer whose mind gets slowly captivated and held by this low and humming Nada. At this time, a sense of ecstasy seems to steal over Swami Nada Brahmanandaji who, when questioned, stated that even a short practice of this Kundalini Thaan has the peculiar effect upon him of a curious, indescribable, integral satisfaction of his entire being

“The effect of Kundalini Thaan is more psychic than physical. It achieves the cleansing of all the subtle, inner Pranic currents or in other words ‘Sarva Nadi Suddhi’

“As for the Swami Nada Brahmanandaji’s amazing control over Nada-Sakti, this, as I have already stated, is an altogether unique feat where he sends down the vibrations of vocal Nada into remote parts of the body at will. Thus, when he directs the rapid vibratory impulse of a Thaan he is executing, along the arm, it is found that the impulse travels from the centre of the sound location right along the limb to its extremity where it sets the tendons into rapid motion in perfect rhythm with the Thaan in question. At such a time the tendons at the back of his clenched fist and over the knuckles can be distinctly seen in rhythmic motion. Even as many as four pairs of muscular hands of strong young men grasping Nada Brahmanandaji’s hand tightly from shoulder upto his wrist have failed to nullify the force of this Pranic impulse thus sent under the impelling power of a rapid Thaan. This phenomenon has baffled even clever medical men, who, with the intention of close observation, have themselves personally joined in grasping Nada Brahmanandaji’s arm during this Thaan demonstration.”

All this was of great interest to me. And, as a doctor, I was astonished to find that this yogi could stop his respiration during the state known as Nada Kumbhaka, while he played on the tabla. There are other physical and psychic phenomena relating to Nada Yoga which deserve study, and I am glad to note that some Indian Institutes of psychic research are studying these phenomena.

Yogis of Sound

Radha Soami Mat is one of the major sects functioning in India. It is a fraternity which has adherents and disciples all over the world. Founded by Sri Shiv Dayal Singh Sahab, otherwise known as Soamiji Maharaj, this sect has its headquarters in Dayalbagh. Soamiji Maharaj is regarded as the Incarnation of the Supreme Being, Merciful Radha Soami by the followers of the Mat. The sect came into being on Basant Panchami—a day sacred to the Hindus—15th February, 1861.

Sri Shiv Dayal was born on 24th August, 1818 in Agra City. He was a great linguist and achieved high proficiency in classical and modern languages of India. He was spiritually inclined from his very childhood and learnt to meditate for hours on end at the incredibly young age of six. On growing up he started spreading the light that had come to him and delivered his message to the world. The foundations of this Satsang were well and truly laid by Soamiji and the movement has since acquired a vast body of followers. Radha Soami faith does not recognise the barriers of religion, race and community and has in its fold Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Mohammadans, Christians, Jews, and people from England, U S A, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany and many other lands.

According to the Radhasoamis, the message delivered by Merciful Radha Soami when He incarnated Himself on this earth in the Form of Soamiji Maharaj was a Message of Cheer, in as much as He was pleased to declare that the Supreme Being had incarnated Himself for the redemption of Jivas. The significance of the work of Sarkar Sahab—a successor—lies in the fact that he explained the true implication of this Message. Hazoor Sarkar Sahab declared that the Supreme Current of the Supreme Being would not withdraw from this earth and there could be no break in the succession of Gurus and that this arrangement would continue till the redemption of the entire creation was accomplished. There was thus no occasion for depression or despair which some people felt on the departure of Maharaj Sahab. And so, there has been continuous succession.

We are told that the Sant Mat or the philosophy of the soul, which was propounded with great force and clarity by Soamiji, is as old as man. The philoso-

phy as enunciated by Soamiji Maharaj was the fruit of deep meditation in a dark and secluded room, lasting 17 years. Soamiji says that Radha Soami is the Divine Supreme, the Lord of all, Nameless, and yet called by different names. Radha means the original Soul and Soami is the Lord, Creator, i.e., the Shabd or Nam (word) in the purest form from whom the Soul has descended.

The second Guru was Rai Bahadur Salig Ram who was known as Param Guru Hazur Maharaj. Of him, a scholar as great as Max Mueller said .

“Often those who came to listen to him were so inspired by his teaching that they renounced the world and began to lead the life of Sannyasis, so that it became a general belief that whoever went to Rai Salig Ram would forsake his family and become an ascetic. Nay, it was said that no one could even look at the lamp burning on the upper storey of his house without being influenced to renounce the world, to forsake his relations, and thus to become useless to the community at large. He holds five meetings day and night for the purpose of imparting religious instruction, so that he has hardly more than two hours left for sleep. Everybody is welcome, and no distinction is made between Brahman and Sudra, rich and poor, good and bad. The people are convinced that he can work miracles, but he himself regards such things as unbecoming, and below his dignity. It is said that the late Doctor Makund Lal, Assistant Surgeon to the Viceroy, was in the habit of sending to him patients who had made themselves senseless by excessive practice of Pranayama, restraint of the breath, and that by a mere look he brought them back to their senses, and taught them that this practice was of little good, and in many cases injurious.”

The Radha Soami philosophy insists that Liberation from the world can be achieved only in the human form with the guidance of Sat Guru. Sound Current, Shabd, Nam or the audible life stream is the ladder by which a seeker gradually ascends upwards to the world of the spirit. The Universe owes its being to the sound current and man can go back to the Lord only through it. What is this sound current? It is the ‘word’ of the Bible, the Nad or Udgat of Nadas, ‘Ism-i-Azam’ of the Koran and ‘Shabd’ or ‘Nam’ of the saints and mystics.

Sant Mat or Radha Soami faith stresses spiritual progress through ‘Nam Bhakti’ or ‘Nam Yoga’. The Mat requires the observance of the following :

A clean and upright life, avoidance of meat, eggs, fish, fowl and all intoxicants and alcoholic drinks, Simran or repetition of holy names, Dhyān or meditation, Bhajan or listening to the sound current.

Many people mistakenly believe that the Radha Soami path is a new religion. Saints, say the spokesmen of the path, have no religious bias and have scant respect for religious dogma. They live in the world of pure spirit. This, they tell us, was as true of Soamiji as of all other saints, past and present. Soamiji gave the teachings of the saints, like Nanak and Kabir, in a new way. Radha Soami Mat is not a religion or new Faith. It is simply a training school for following the method of Surat Shabd Yoga, which means the union (Yoga) of soul (Surat) with the Transcendent Melody (Shabd). It is a school for spiritual enlightenment and Realisation of Reality. It does not insist on any external forms of ceremonies, rites or rituals. This Reality, which is the end of all spiritual endeavour, is to be reached through Yoga. As Soamiji puts it: "With Yoga no one becometh a Giani, from the chain of birth and death he is not freed. Previous Yoga is not effective now, so Surat Shabd Yoga is recommended. Now adopt thou Sant Mat (the Path of the Saints) i.e., the method of Surat Shabd, the best of all Yogas."

Another noteworthy aspect of the functioning of this sect is that it lays great stress on the achievement of Jnana or Realisation in this world, in the midst of the many and diverse preoccupations of worldly life. The teachers of the Mat are never tired of stating that there should be no attempt to escape from the responsibilities and functions of secular life. The life and activities of the two main centres of this faith in India, at Dayal Bagh and at Beas (which was founded by Baba Jaimal Singhji in 1891), are an eloquent testimony to the trust of the founder and propagators in Karma-Yoga. People are often astonished at the westernized and up-to-date approach of the sect in matters concerning life in general. Here is what has been called 'westernization with a vengeance'. Beas is no different from New York in its approach to Science and Technology and the role they are expected to play in life. We live on the physical plane, and any neglect of things on this plane is sham-spirituality and very dangerous. The gurus of the sect feel that life should be lived beautifully and happily. A good spiritual life is not mere negative neglect of the worldly life. It is a positive straining after the life of spirit, while continuing the routine of this life, without seeking remote caves as a refuge from the din and the pressures of life here.

The tenets of the Radhasoami faith are based upon a living belief in

- (a) the existence of God,
- (b) oneness of the essence of God and spirit-entity in man, and
- (c) continuity of life after death.

It is held that there is only one God, the True Supreme Being, who is the Fountain-head of all spirituality and is the Creator of the whole Universe and that the spirit or soul of man is an emanation from the same Supreme Being

It is further held that there are three elements in the human body first, the coarse matter of which the physical body is made, second, the subtle matter of which the human mind is made, and third, the spirit (Atman) which creates and gives life to the human body and which brings about the evolution and development of man's mind and body. The human body and mind are both perishable, i.e. mortal, while the spirit is immortal, i.e. it continues to exist even after the death of the body and mind, and finally it can reach the Supreme Abode and, in some cases, merge into the Supreme Being, Merciful Radha Soami

Just as man's body has been created and endowed with life by his spirit (Atman), in like manner the entire creation has been brought into existence and endowed with life by a Parama Atman or Supreme Being. Since the essence of the Atman and the Param Atman (Paramatma) or of the spirit and the Supreme Being is one and the same, the human body created by the spirit resembles the Universe and has, therefore, been accepted as the miniature of the whole creation. The creation is called the Macrocosm and the human body, the Microcosm

According to the Radhasoami faith, the Supreme Being has blessed the human body with certain latent faculties in order that the spirit may be able to establish contact with different regions of the universe and also with the abode of the Supreme Being and thus get an opportunity of deriving maximum benefit from the human body. Just as a man can establish contact with the sun with the help of his eyes, there are apertures in man's brain by means of which the spirit in man can establish contact with higher regions of a creation. This is the reason why the Radha Soami faith specially emphasizes that man should make it the aim of his life to develop faculties of all the three kinds—physical, mental and spiritual—and make use of the faculties available in the human body, and throwing off all lethargy and ignorance, make a bold effort to achieve the object in view by adopting suitable

methods. The Radha Soami faith lays down that, with the object of acquainting mankind with the existence of these latent faculties and their great utility, the Supreme Being has been pleased to arrange for the advent on this earth, from time to time, of holy and awakened Souls. These Souls are fully conversant with the secrets pertaining to these faculties, the practical methods of awakening them and also with the way they should be used. Besides, they are competent to explain these secrets to other people and to awaken their faculties and thus enable mankind to profit by them. These Souls are known as sages, faqirs, prophets, incarnations and saints, etc.

Radhasoamis of Dayal Bagh

Dayal Bagh (Garden of the Merciful) is one of the two centres of the Radha Soami community. Situated at a distance of two miles from the city of Agra, the "Ashram" is a self-contained colony. It is well-known all over India for its various institutions—educational, medical, industrial and agricultural—which cover quite a wide range of man's needs and aspirations.

The colony provides excellent facilities for studies in all disciplines—Arts, Humanities, Education, Science, Commerce, Engineering and Technology. These facilities are available to everybody who qualifies, whether he is an inmate or not and whether he believes in the teachings of Soamiji or not.

The general approach and work of the Satsang are best summed up in the words of the present Guru, Hazur Mehtaji Sahab : "Dayal Bagh, which is not far from the City of Agra, is quiet and peaceful like a village and yet there is perfect arrangement for sanitation and cleanliness as in cities. Students, scientists and devotees keep themselves peacefully engaged in their respective activities away from the turmoil of the world, and unemployed educated youths, agriculturists and labourers get opportunities to earn their livelihood. Neither does wealth flow here, nor does anybody starve here, neither are there any big palaces and mansions here, nor are there any dilapidated huts either, neither is anyone great or big here, nor anyone small or insignificant, and if anybody here is honoured more than others, it is he, who works better or more than others. Dayal Bagh belongs to every resident, while no resident has any kind of property in anything here. In this small place, Dayal Bagh, where there is almost no illiterate person and where nobody leads a life of laziness and indolence, which is neither a village nor a town, and which is both a village and a town, enthusiasm, joy and happiness are overflowing today."

At Dayal Bagh, I could not meet the Guru, the Maharaj Mehtaji, but had a very useful and highly informative conversation with Shri Babu Ramji, the Private Secretary of the Maharaj. Babu Ramji told me a great deal about the Gururji and his life, the faith and its tenets, and the colony and its activities. I learnt that about 5,000 persons, *Satsangis* or members of the sect, lived at Dayal Bagh, where they engaged in three main activities: Industry, Agriculture and Education.

When I asked him how many yogis lived at Dayal Bagh, he answered . One, the Maharaj . I, who had come to discover and study the India of yogis had the impression that a whole religious colony, a big ashram, would have many a yogi . Furthermore, the idea one had of a yogi was that such a person would be a celibate, and his beliefs and practice would conform to the general notion we have in the west : sex is sin, marriage is taboo, and family life an obstacle on the spiritual path . Imagine my surprise, therefore, when I was told that the Maharaj had seven children, two sons and five daughters . Obviously, I was in for learning about a new kind of philosophy and religious approach .

Although only a few thousand live in the colony at Dayal Bagh, the Society claims a membership of 200,000, spread all over India and even in foreign countries . They practise techniques of meditation beginning, as a first step, with concentration in the region of the body where the spirit resides . When I questioned where this place was, Babu Ramji pointed to the spot on the forehead between the two eyes . I tried to photograph him when he was pointing to the particular spot, but he would not allow me to let my camera make a record of that .

The second step, according to him, in meditation is that there is a light within one, "like your flash", he said, pointing to my camera . The third and the final stage is when one begins to move on, through concentration, from the light to the sound . I questioned him if all people made the concentration on sound and he answered, 'yes' . I asked if we could say that the Radhasoamis were yogis of sound, Shabd yogis . He was surprised that I knew 'shabd' and answered that, of course, all people in the Ashram or colony practised it . He told me that there were three different kinds of practices .

1. Sahaj Yoga—Easy Yoga.
2. Surat (Shabd—the spirit of Sound) Yoga.
3. Shabd Yoga (real Yoga of Sound)

Then he began to speak about the six centres of the body where, according to him, the sound can be heard, and explained that at more length .

I had been struck by the similarity between the ashram of Aurobindo at Pondicherry and this colony at Dayal Bagh . I, therefore, questioned him as to the difference . He answered that in Pondicherry Ashram they did not teach spiritual practices . They taught philosophy and their way lay through philosophy . It was generally

difficult, he seemed to imply, for poor people to be initiated into the membership of the Ashram at Pondicherry. The Radhasoamis, he said, were more 'democratic'. They accept anyone. The teachings are easy and adaptable to the intellectual level of the common man.

I repeated my enquiry about the technique of concentration. He replied that "during the 24 hours of our normal living, the mind is disturbed. Our mind is going to the names and forms of things so it is occupied with only the names and forms. To get out of this state of pre-occupation, obsession with names and forms of things, we try to concentrate only on one form and only on one name". I requested him to give me an example.

Before he could answer my question, tea was brought in and poured out. Very courteously he asked me not to bother about being formal and to take my tea.

He took up my question and replied as follows: "In this Ashram we concentrate on the name of the Radha Soami and the form of His face. Then, after some training in this kind of concentration, a sadhak can go to Light and then to Sound—first the light and then the sound." It is necessary to add here that the Radhasoamis do not have to take to any special posture—padmasana, etc.—during their meditation, all that is necessary is to close the eyes and to sit erect.

Babu Ramji continued, "All force is sound, produces sound. We cannot hear it. All energy is sound and the Spirit is Energy, so the Spirit is Sound. And God is the source of Energy."

I looked at the man, a short-statured normal-looking person sitting at his table in an ordinary room. I was surprised that he could be full of such knowledge and wisdom.

He continued with his explanation: "The spirit is kinetic in the body and God is kinetic in the Universe."

This was high Philosophy and I wanted to proceed slowly, so I interrupted him with a question: "What kind is the sound? Like the sound of what, I mean." He replied, "It begins like the sound of a bell. This was the first sound in the Universe, and, by the way, that is the reason for using the bells in temples and in churches though nobody understands this sacred origin of the bell." I enquired

how long it took a sadhak to begin to hear this sound, and he answered, "This depends upon the individual, some take a long time, others less."

I questioned him whether it was necessary that the name and the form should be only one for everybody, or could these be different.

"Good question", he commented and continued, "Usually these are the same. Suppose the name is the Radha Soami and the people think of the form of His face; but sometime, the name can go and the form, the face, stays. You can see the form in the light without name"

I again questioned him as to the technique of concentration between the eyes. I asked him if this kind of spiritual practice had some connection with the concept of the microcosm. He said that there was no special technique nor was any explanation possible. "This is all a matter of practice", he affirmed.

I do not know whether this is true in all cases, but I have often found that even people in high places who think and talk of philosophy and knowledge, mind and the intellect, concepts and ideologies as naturally as we breathe, have the tendency of imperceptibly sliding down from the spiritual to the superfluous, from gospel to gossip, from metaphysical discussion to personal histories. I must confess that I myself quite often want that this should happen and I was glad, therefore, that, somehow, the conversation drifted down to a level where I did not have to struggle in the deep waters of elaborate and metaphysical theories.

I learnt from Shri Babu Ramji that he had been the member of the community since 1924—he is about sixty now. He had been working in the Ashram in Dayal Bagh since 1928 and became the Private Secretary of Soamiji in 1931. He has known two gurus. He was professor of Sanskrit and History in a college and is, therefore, quite a learned person.

One aspect of Indian life about which we occidentals are constantly puzzled is the matter of diet. We are used to freely eating non-vegetarian food, the tamasic food. In India there is an overwhelming emphasis on vegetarian food. On enquiry I learnt that in this ashram, the diet was vegetarian.

Babu Ramji now started asking me a few questions. He showed a keen interest in my work of research in the states of consciousness of the yogis. He told

me that pseudo-perceptions and hallucinations were usual in their practices. The techniques of Radhasoamis were not original but could be traced to the Yoga of Patanjali, because the repetition of one name and concentration on form of object is contained in the Yoga-sutras of that sage. He rounded off his talk by saying that there had been in all six gurus in Dayal Bagh and gave me the names and histories and the main dates connected with them. The first guru who founded the Radhasoami Mat in 1861 had passed away in 1878. The second guru had died in 1898, the next who succeeded, died in 1907 and the fourth in 1913. The fifth in succession was Sahabji Maharaj with whom he had worked as Private Secretary. He left the world in 1937, when the present Maharaj had succeeded to the *Gaddi*.

I thanked Babu Ramji with all my heart for having given me this interview and for explaining to me so clearly the essentials of the Radha Soami beliefs and techniques and left him to make a round of the colony and to have a look at its many fields of activities.

Radhasoamis of Beas

Radha Soami Colony, Beas was founded according to the official records, in the year 1891 by Param Sant Baba Jaimal Singhji and is named Dera Baba Jaimal Singh in the sacred memory of the illustrious Saint. It is situated on the west bank of river Beas, at a distance of about 3 miles from Beas Railway Station, which is on the main line from Delhi to Amritsar. Jaimal Singh was born in 1839. From his very childhood he had inclinations towards the spiritual quest and he moved from one place to another in search of a Master, who could initiate him into the Divine Secrets, and clarify to his satisfaction the real meaning of Nam and Panj (five) Shabd, frequent mention of which is made in Shri Guru Granth Sahib.

At the young age of 18 years, he went to Haridwar on a similar quest and there learnt about a sadhu, who had been performing Hatha Yoga for years in the interior of Rishi Kesh jungles in a standing posture against a tree. From him he learnt about a great Master in Agra, who alone could quench his spiritual thirst and could initiate him.

He was so much overwhelmed with zeal and desire to meet the saint that he left for Agra. On his arrival Babaji Maharaj found Soamiiji holding Satsang with recitations from Shri Granth Sahib. He listened to the Satsang with rapt attention and, thereafter, he expressed a desire to know about the teachings of Shri Granth Sahib Ji in the context of the mention therein of NAM, Dhun and Panj Shabd. This was fully explained by Soamiiji Maharaj in three or four consecutive daily satsangs, and, thereafter, he was duly initiated by Soamiiji Maharaj.

One day, while sitting in Bhajan, he was visited by Soamiiji and, on enquiry, narrated his difficulties. Soamiiji asked him to close his eyes and sit in Bhajan. The Divine hand of the great Master was placed on the young man's forehead with the result that immediately his attention was drawn within and upwards and he went into complete trance and samadhi. "Samadhi", it is often claimed, "is a state of super-consciousness of the soul and of unconsciousness of the material world. The body is dead as in deep slumber. During sleep also the body is unconscious of the world but the mind's attention falls down below the eyes. In a state of samadhi, the soul flies up above the eyes, and there is complete Anand or bliss. Then one realises the resplendent form of the Master or Guru in His full glory. There the difference between

God and the Guru (Master) vanishes and the soul realises its own glory, the glory of the Guru and of God.”

Babaji Maharaj achieved this state and was happy and contented. He expressed a desire to remain with Soamiji and to complete his course of Bhajan, etc. Soamiji did not agree to this and said that the basis or foundation of his teachings lay in the fact that a sadhak or a follower of the Path must earn his own living and should not be dependent on others for his livelihood as that would impede progress in Bhajan.

At the suggestion of Soamiji Maharaj, Babaji joined the Army as an ordinary sepoy and was stationed in Agra. For about 34 years during his service in the Army, he attended to his Bhajan and Simran with faith, humility, zeal and regularity and for as much time as could be availed of.

After retirement on a small pension, Babaji Maharaj settled down in this place, which was veritably a deserted area consisting either of deep pits or small shrubs. It is this area which is today known all over India and all over the world as the Radha Soami Colony, Beas.

This great saint passed away in 1903. He was succeeded by Maharaj Sawan Singhji who is responsible for developing the Colony, and for shaping the lives of his followers into a disciplined outlook on life and its uplift in accordance with the tenets of Radha Soami faith. His mission spread far and near and people from all walks of life—rich as well as poor, educated as well as illiterate, Hindus, Mohammadans, Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Americans, Englishmen and persons of many other countries were given the benefit of this spiritual science. At the time of death, on 2nd April 1948, of this great but most unassuming mystic—a king amongst saints and a tower of strength and sustenance for the down-trodden, poor and harijans—there were about two hundred thousand followers under his fold. Maharaj Sawan Singhji was succeeded by Sardar Bahadur Jagat Singhji who, in turn, was succeeded by the present Maharaj Charan Singhji.

Sant Mat lays great emphasis on spiritual achievement by Nam Bhakti. The manner is briefly described below :

1. A clean and upright life.
2. Abstinence from the use of meat, eggs, fish, fowl or foods which contain them.

- 3 Giving up of intoxicants in general and alcoholic drinks in particular,
- 4 Simran, i.e., repetition of holy names to draw up our mental currents by Varnatmik Nam at the eye focus or the Shriv Netra, with a view to achieve concentration and to connect us with the Dhunyatmik Nam—or the Divine Shabd. The method and other details are disclosed by the Satguru at the time of initiation
- 5 Dhyān—i.e., meditation on the form of Satguru. While the soul is below the eye-focus, this helps us in achieving concentration and, as the soul progresses upwards, the Satguru appears also in His resplendent form of Shabd—the Lord Creator of all
- 6 Bhajan—or the listening of the Sound Current. There is light inside and through that light comes the Bani or Shabd, which alone brings us in tune with Sat purush—the deathless and the ever-lasting. Here again the method and details are disclosed by the Satguru

This is the goal of all Yoga, all philosophy, all religion and mystic science and is the hope of all human aspirants ”

We stayed at the Beas Colony for several days. The present guru Maharaj is Sardar Charan Singh ji and I had the good fortune to have long talks with him. On my first interview with him, I began thus :

I am deeply interested in psychosomatic phenomena. We learn from books and from people that before they go into samadhi in the mental state called by the Buddhists, Nirvan, the yogis and the sadhus in India experience during their sadhana some psychophysical phenomena. Some Raja yogis I saw in the Himalayas, in the caves and also in some ashrams in Rishikesh, having a complete control over their physical life, can hear some special sound, can see some special visions, can make some changes in their states of consciousness. In psychiatry, this is very interesting for us. My approach to Indian Yoga is not philosophical. I am concerned with research in the psychosomatic way.

Maharaj You are only interested in the psychology of Yoga

“Yes,” I said, “we are interested in getting to know the reality of these phenomena in India.”

Maharaj . I suggest that you read the book, 'Path of the Master' , it is written by an American doctor who was a very famous surgeon, a scientific man. My predecessor, who was himself a scientist, a Master of science, has also written a book, "Science of the Soul." It is very aptly named "Science of the Soul", and is absolutely scientific in its approach to our problem, that is the problem of God realization. You see, the basic teaching of this philosophy is that the soul is the essence of the Lord, and the soul can never get a release from the process of birth and death, from the cycle of birth and death. The Lord is nowhere outside, he is just within this body, and we have to adopt a scientific approach to find the Lord within this body , this is known as Yoga of sound and light. Give it any name , after all, Yoga is a very wide term. Yoga is something which connects you with, which unites you to, the Lord You follow that path , that means, you are following the soul It is an absolutely scientific approach But all this has to be experienced. It cannot be just explained. First, one has to be intellectually satisfied as to what one wants to experience, and why one wants to experience it, then, after the intellect is satisfied as to the what and why, one can give practical shape to it and experience it. Then only can one find out whether the approach is scientific or unscientific Give it any name, call it a philosophy, call it a science, give it any name , these are all terms made by us. But that experience is an experience by itself and only after you have experienced it can you properly know and understand the basic elements of these teachings. After that you can discuss with me whatever you want to discuss. You put me any question you want, bring up any subject you want to discuss You can write to me and I will write back to you. You can, of course, discuss anything you want with me personally I will be pleased to do everything in my power to explain things.

"I will need to read the books before I speak with you ; this will take a lot of time," I said, explaining my difficulty

Maharaj Otherwise, you will not have sufficient background knowledge Unless you read the books you cannot discuss things properly Reading the books is very, very essential You should do that before writing to me, because then only will you know what to write. You

write to me if there is any doubt left in your mind All that can be explained

“If I were to read the books of all the institutions of Yoga in India, before coming to India I would have reached the age of 80, because India has produced so many books on Yoga To me, the personal contact with yogis is more important,” said I, making my position clear

Maharaj I agree with you. For that you have got to stay here and discuss it There are two ways of getting to know a philosophy. Either one can read the philosophy in books or one can know it by personal contact, understand the philosophy by discussion

I thanked Maharajji for his consideration and went on to remark I can profit a great deal Maharajji if you answer some questions Before going into samadhi, during the sadhana, the Indian yogis experience some psycho-physical phenomena. These phenomena are called anahat or Omkar sound The yogis hear some sounds or see some visions My question is this By using the techniques devised by the Radhasoamis can all the people hear this sound? Radhasoamis are called yogis of sound, isn't it?

Maharaj Soul has two aspects The power to see and the power to hear The power to see the light, the soul has eyes to see that light, call it divine light, give it any name, and power to hear that anahat sound, that Shabd or Loga, as it is called in the Bible They are all the same thing You have to see that light and know your path, and hear that sound and know the direction in which you have to go For example, you leave your house in the evening and go for a long walk and it becomes pitch dark You absolutely lose the sense of direction, and do not know which side is your residence and how you have to go back What will you do? Just stand in the darkness and try to hear some sound coming from your house, and then you will try to know the direction of your house, whether it is on the right or the left or on this side or that side Once you know the direction, if you hear a sound coming from your house, may be of your radio, may be of your dog then you try to come back to your house by following that sound. Now, on the way, because in the darkness there can be ups and downs, there can be any

dangerous thing, there can be a lake or a pit or a stone, but if you have a torch, with its help you can see your way and safely come back to your own house. Similarly, the Lord has kept a light within everyone of us. We have to know the direction of our real house by hearing that sound and to follow the path by the light of the torch.

So, we have to concentrate on that spot, that particular spot, knock on the particular door of our house. We can hear this sound just within our body. As Christ described this body is the temple of the living God. If a thing is lost in the house, we have got to find it in the house, not somewhere outside. All the outside search will be a waste of time. We have to search within this body and our spiritual journey has two paths, right from the sole of our feet to the top of our head.

The first stage is the eye centre, the second is upward. As Christ has said in the Bible knock, it shall open, seek, you shall find. You always lock a door from outside, the door is open from inside. Our consciousness is scattered in the world. The seat of the soul and the mind is neither here nor in the body but just here behind the eyes. This is the place to which Christ referred, knock, and it shall open. We have to concentrate from here. From here our consciousness spreads throughout the world through these 9 apertures. 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostrils, mouth, 2 lower apertures. Through these 9 apertures our consciousness is spread all over the world. You are sitting here, your thought may be with your children, may be with your country, may be with your friends. While being here you are not here and we have to bring, to withdraw back our consciousness to this eye centre.

"This eye centre," I remarked, fascinated by the explanation.

The Maharaj smiled and continued. This is the door of your house at which you have to knock, you have to concentrate here, at this particular spot, give it any name. And then the door of your house opens. Then you hear that sound, then you see that light, of which Christ spoke in the Bible all my body shall be full of light. That will open that single eye, that one eye, the third eye, give it any name. So, we have to concentrate here at this eye centre to open

that door, to open that eye and there you will see that light which will lead us back to our destination and there you will hear that sound which will tell us the direction of our house. So, this is known as Yoga of sound and light: surat-shabd Yoga, Anahat Yoga, give it any name. As I told you, Yoga means something which connects you. So, this method and process connects our consciousness with the Lord through that sound and a particular path and this has been described by almost every saint of every country. But this has to be experienced within yourself. You can find it described in books, you can read about it in books, but, ultimately, you know what it is only when you experience it within yourself—that light and that sound.

Question . How long will it take a man who practises this to know this sound ?

Maharaj Now, it depends first of all on your belief, your faith. If you have no faith in whatever is being taught to you, if you are not sure that it is right, you may not make any progress at all. If you are the type of person who must first satisfy his intellect by reading books, by discussion, by questions this is the path which will lead you to your destination. This is the laboratory and this is the method by which you have to work in your laboratory. When you have faith in this formula, in this scientific approach, you will be able to realize that thing, within this temple, then your mind will let you accept this teaching. With a half-hearted mind, with no faith, you will never make any progress at all. In this world our approach is that of faith. We go thousands of miles by aeroplane, we have faith in those engineers who make the machines and the pilots who fly them. So we entrust ourselves to them, if we have no faith in these scientists and in those people, we will never go anywhere by a plane, we will never travel by plane, we will never drive a car. You are doing everything due to faith. We cross bridges, we sleep in the trains, we have faith in the trains and in the people who have made these bridges. So, we think it is absolutely safe to sleep in the trains, to cross the bridges. Similarly, when we have faith in a master that whatever path he is suggesting us is right for us, then we make progress and then all depends on our individual efforts and on the Grace of the Lord, our own individual karmas, our past samskaras. There are many things which combine together and let you experience that, it is not like a physical experience, like covering 10 miles a

day and covering 300 miles in 30 days . it is not like that. To gain spiritual experience people spend their lives All depends on the individual

I interrupted Maharajji and said, ‘ that is quite right But suppose a person agrees to follow the path, believes, has full faith and is competent to practise, about how long will it take this person, a normal person ?”

The Maharaj did not allow me to complete my sentence “I understand what you mean,” he remarked, and went on to say, “I think if one is honest, one will get the result within six, seven months ”

“Six, seven months”, I said, not sure whether I had heard the Maharaj right.

Maharaj Yes. If one is honest about it.

Question Are these six, seven months to be spent in meditation every day ?

Maharaj . Of course, you have to meditate You do not do this as an experiment but for your own benefit , it is for your own advantage that you want to experience it, not to prove anything to the people.

Question Do the Radhasoamis perform some physical asanas and pranayamas ?

Maharaj . We are not very particular about that, they are normal exercises for health, routine things If you feel the need for them, you can do them as exercise; we are not against that, they are only meant to keep the body fit, but they have nothing to do with spiritual experiences For example, I personally do it fifteen, twenty, minutes everyday

“Hatha Yoga ?” I asked

Maharaj I do all the Hatha Yoga exercises which I need for my health. I have selected my own exercises, those which I think are good for me because I don’t get any time to go for long walks or to have a set or two of tennis I am always confined to my bed, to my room, to my office. These sedentary habits are not good for one’s health and, therefore, I do those exercises everyday for 15, 20 minutes in my room That is just to maintain sound health and to keep my body fit and active. I do these asanas so that I may attend properly to my duties. I have chosen exercises but these

exercises will not give me any spiritual benefit, no, never. They only enable me to keep my body in fine fettle.

“So, this is something else It has nothing to do with spiritual life.”
I observed

Maharaj This is something else, very different, that is what I say Yoga as it is understood today is more or less Hatha Yoga. But spiritual exercises are something totally different, spiritual exercises are something completely different

Question Do Radhasoamis employ concentration ?

Maharaj Yes

“With the eyes closed ?” I asked.

Maharaj Of course with eyes closed

Question Do you adopt the lotus pose in meditation ?

Maharaj We are not very particular about any pose, because, ultimately, you have to forget your body also, and forget where it is You have to rise above the body Your higher consciousness transforms the body and it hardly matters in what way you are sitting It is the mind, it is the mind which concentrates, it is the mind which you have to fix on your eye centre, concentrate on your eye centre It is the mind which is required, not the body

Question Will you then say that the moment you have closed the eyes, the mind is directed towards the third eye ?

Maharaj You see, if you try to find out something within yourself by inverting your physical eyes or try to focus at any particular point, you will damage your eyes, will strain your eyes. These eyes have nothing to do with internal spiritual experiences

“So, you just close your eyes. And then ?” I enquired

Maharaj You have just to close these eyes and forget about them, that they are this and that for you You should not strain these eyes, you should not physically invert these eyes to a particular focus. Otherwise you can

damage them. These eyes have nothing to do in spiritual experiences. They have no role to play. Now, you are not conscious of your breathing and I am not conscious of my breathing. These are normal functions of this body, this structure, the body is performing its functions. Now, our mind may not be here. We have to withdraw back our mind, withdraw our consciousness back to the eye centre. You are not to put any strain or any pressure on the eyes at all.

I was deeply engrossed in this interesting explanation of the third eye. I nodded to show that I understood and Maharaj ji proceeded :

We have a particular posture to hear that sound but that is just for very initial stages. Once you concentrate here, you don't need any hands or any feet or any ears to hear that sound. You are in touch with it.

"Very interesting, all this. You see, Maharaj ji, my interest in this is purely scientific. Sometimes, we psychiatrists feel a little unhappy. Psychiatry is facing a big crisis today. We know a little about the dynamic subconscious but we do not know the essentials of the problem of the patient. A man loses his normality, his equilibrium, his harmony, if he is suffering from schizophrenia, we cannot cure him today. What is the phenomena which the schizophrenics experience? These are absolutely good people physically. In Russia, in America, and in other countries, they have made all the analysis and all the physical research without achieving success in knowing the causes of this terrible sickness. A schizophrenic—mostly schizophrenics are young men and women—loses his normality. According to our modern researches, this man is good, this man does not have any physical alteration or deterioration. But he is broken, he is not normal. In the beginning, he begins to hear sounds. After that he begins to see visions. In the beginning, the patient tells you. I hear some voices. This is the beginning of the most difficult sickness in our field.

I don't believe the yogis in India are schizophrenics; this is the first thing, otherwise I would not have come here. But, if some men in the world can hear some voices, can see some visions and can pass from this state of consciousness and go into another, we need to learn much from them. During their sadhana, the yogis can experience some such phenomena."

The Maharaj looked obviously interested. I continued. My question is this: this yogi, this man, can go in this mental state, in this state of consciousness, but after he goes into a superior state of consciousness, he does not have any problem with these sounds, these visions, etc. How may this be explained?

Maharaj What you want to find is whether the experiences are the same, or are they different?

“Yes”, I replied, and added, “This man, perhaps, loses the normally of his body and of his consciousness, goes into some mental state where these phenomena are possible. Perhaps, they are the same, but in a pathological way, as the experience of the yogis, and he cannot come back.”

Maharaj I will tell you. You drive from here to Delhi. When you drive on the main road, the things which you will come across are exactly the same for everybody who drives on that road, but when describing them, one driver will give more attention to details, another will just mention the main things, but the main experience will be exactly the same. Whoever goes through the process, these states of consciousness inside, whoever passes through the various stages, will have some main experiences. These will be the same in all cases. There is no actual difference, but some people get lost in small things, give more importance to details, and stray away from the real, the main, path. These men are not made for progress at all, they just give themselves up to the small, unimportant details. Small things just fascinate them and detain them there, but the main experience is had by everyone who travels that path. This is always the same, whether they are people of the East or of the West or of any country, of any colour, any creed. There will be absolutely no difference in the main experience. Now, talking about those people who follow this path of sound and light and pass through these stages, their experiences are also the same.

We had been sitting in a luxuriously furnished room. We went out. The Maharaj then showed us the garden of the palace where we were, later, invited to a Party.

We spent some days at the colony where members live free and work like common people. We saw ladies of rich families picking up stones and helping to build a modern hotel especially for occidental persons—for our next visit! My next interview with the Maharaj took place on the day before we were due to leave Beas.

“We thank you very much for your hospitality and your consideration for us,” I said. “We will leave tomorrow, I think, at 5 o’ clock in the morning. I don’t know how long it will take from here to Dharamsala”.

Maharaj I think you will easily reach there in about 3, 4 hours

“Only three, four hours,” I repeated, a bit surprised

Maharaj Yes, not more than four. Pathankot is sixty miles from here and I think it is another 100 miles from there to Dharamsala. Not more than 4 hours. But you are most welcome to come back any time you want,

“Thank you, Maharaji,” I said, deeply conscious of the warmth of his welcome and sentiments. “I have a few questions to ask. This morning you were speaking in Hindi at the meeting. I think that you were saying something about Anahat.”

Maharaj . Exactly

“If I am not mistaken,” I continued, “some people were also singing something about anahat out of a book. Can you tell me what you were saying this morning?”

Maharaj You see, what you saw in the morning is called satsang. In my discourse I explained the meaning of what was being read by those people to my left, who were singing. They read from a book by some saint, may be Kabir, or Nanak, or any other saint. We do not confine ourselves to any particular saint. We can read from any saint of the east or of the west. They read it, and I just explained the meaning and the philosophy. I believe and feel that the teachings of every saint are good. Teachings are the base of every saint and every saint comes to the world only to tell us about a definite, particular, path of God Realization, or the way of going back to the door of our home after we depart from this world.

Many people give more importance to ceremonies and just lose themselves in organization. Individuals with politics come into religion, they just pretend to be religious and the reality is lost and they move far from the path. So, we are concerned with the spirituality which is at the base of every religion and that spirituality is to be found in every religion. So, I was trying to explain from that book, that we have to search the Lord within this body. If he is within this body, naturally there can be no other way to search for him but to search him in this body. That is why this body is mentioned in the Bible as the temple of the living God. So, this is the temple where we have to get in, to worship that Lord who is within this body.

Then, I explained that our spiritual journey starts from the feet, and ends at the top of the body, in the seat of the soul and the mind, just between the eyes. From here our consciousness permeates into the whole world through these 9 apertures, as I explained to you last time. You are here, you are thinking about your children, you are thinking about your country. While being here, you are not here. Your thoughts are scattered in the whole world. You have to withdraw back your consciousness, you have to bring back your thoughts, bring them back to this eye centre and when you withdraw back to this eye centre, you will hear that sound within yourself, which we call anahat, the Nad or shabd. Christ refers to it in the Bible as Loga. That is in everyone of us, but you have got to be in touch with it, this contact will be established when you withdraw back to this eye centre. Try to concentrate with all your will on this third eye, and when you are here, you hear that sound, you see that light.

Question Does Christ also speak about this sound ?

Maharaj Yes, Christ also speaks about this sound. Christ also speaks about this light. You have read in Saint John word was God. That word is sound and he also refers to it. I don't remember the exact quotation but there is a reference to that sound. Reference to that light is also there in the Bible. He says the whole body shall be full of light. To open that single eye, you have to see that light. And where is that single eye ? It is behind these eyes, it is the seat of consciousness.

We have to withdraw back to the seat of consciousness here, then we see that light, these eyes have nothing to do with that light. They are made only for the physical, outside world. You have to close these eyes and open that third eye, that single eye. Then you hear that sound, then you see that light. That sound is known as anahat, shabd. Give it any name, word, Loga, as referred to in the Bible. Then we have to see that light within ourselves and follow the spiritual journey, stage by stage, upward. Every saint who has experienced these within the body talks about that sound and light. So, if the mind tries to make research into the philosophy of any saint, whether in the east or west, the teaching will come from the saint that we should search for that within our body. So, I was just trying to explain these teachings.

Question In connection with this sound, this anahat, Maharaj ji, I would request you to open a little the door to our scientific curiosity. Do you know whether this sound exists as different kinds of sound? Can it be that one sound is different from another according to the personality of the person who hears?

Maharaj I follow your question. I will explain to you the point you have raised. Actually, the sound is one. It comes from heaven, right to your eye centre. But it comes to us at different stages. For example, a river leaves the mountains, reaches the planes, and then merges into the sea. In the mountains, the sound of the river is different, when it passes through the planes it has a different sound, when it merges into the sea, it has a different sound. The river is the same. Similarly, the sound is the same, which comes from the top, from the Father, and goes to the eye centre, but since it comes to us in many stages, so, at every stage it is heard by us as a different sound. Actually, the sound is the same, completely the same.

"It is the same," I repeated, to make sure.

Maharaj But in the beginning, you hear its echo, a kind of mixed sound. And the more you concentrate on the eye centre, the more the sound becomes clearer and clearer to you, so much so that, finally, you are in touch with the real sound, and that sound you will feel as the sound of a big bell, or a big conch and that is why we find bells at the top of the churches.

You sound the bell before you start the sermon, just to show that the sound has to come from above, the sound of the big bell must come from the Father. We can reach the Father. The idea is that it comes from above to the eye centre, and you have candles in a church. The idea behind the candles is that this body is the temple, the real church.

You get into this body and you will see light, beauty. So, you have to see that light, you have to hear that sound of the bell and conch and then make your spiritual journey inside. That is so charming and fascinating to your mind that automatically you go away from the world of the senses—attachment to that detaches you from the lower senses. Detachment never breaks any attachment. Only an attachment can break another attachment, when you are attached to something better, you are automatically detached from the other things. So, we have to concentrate, and come back to this eye centre so that we may attach ourselves to that sound, that music, silent music, inner music, and see that light. So, we are automatically detached from the lower senses. Then the mind does not run out, it stays here and makes its spiritual journey within.

Question • Suppose a person is initiated by a particular mantra, does this person begin to hear that mantra?

Maharaj No, not that way. He does not begin to hear any mantra. Mantras help only to hold your attention here, to withdraw your consciousness to the eye centre, they won't lead you to anything else. Then you have to make your spiritual journey with the help of that sound and light. You have to forget about the mantra, that is all. They are only required to bring your attention back to the eye centre.

Question Are the mantras employed by Radhasoamis different from the mantras of Hindu religion? Some people told me yesterday that the mantras used by Radhasoamis are not the same as mantras used by the other people. Can you throw some light on this?

Maharaj You see, actually this Radha Soami faith is the path of sound and light, not of mantras.

‘Not of mantras’. I exclaimed

Maharaj · These mantras, you have to repeat them just to hold the attention here.

“That is all,” I said, surprised.

Maharaj That is just to cover the first stage Because, if you have the habit of repeating something always, your concentration will be fixed on that. So, we have to repeat the name of God, the name of the Lord, so that our consciousness is drawn towards the Lord, and away from this world Therefore, you can keep any name for the Lord out of love It is immaterial as to what you say. You can give the Lord any name For example, you can give any name to your wife, your relationship with your wife is that of love, not of name, and the words merely express your love A mother may call a child by different names out of love, but her relationship with the child is that of love, not of words. Words only express her love.

The link in these matters is that of love, so we have to create that love. These words are required only to express that love in the beginning Later on, you forget about these words. So, you can keep any name for the Lord out of love He has no name, all these names we have given Him You can give any name to your wife, but the relationship will remain the same—that of love In the same way, many saints, out of love, have given different names to the Lord It is alright to repeat those names, call it a mantra if you like, but, ultimately, you have to forget about those names, you have to create that longing, that love, that desire, that real love for Him, and that love will pull you up, not these words. And that real love you will create only when you are attached to that sound and you see that light within yourself.

“And repeat it many times,” I asked

Maharaj : It is not the mechanical repetition which will help you, it is not a mathematical calculation It cannot be said as to how many times you should repeat it to obtain His love. ✓It is the intensity of your desire, your love beyond these words, which matters The words are required merely to bring back your consciousness to the eye centre.

Question Suppose, Maharajji, I come here to be initiated and I tell you · I am a Catholic and I want to try to develop this concentration with the help of the name of Christ, Lord Jesus ! Can I do that ?

Maharaj Certainly, why not ? You see, if you have faith and love for those names, you will certainly be helped in the path of progress The names will definitely help you along Ultimately, you have to go back to the sound and the light These are just means to that end The real thing is the sound and the light, not the words He has no name, that is why we call him 'nameless' One who has thousands of names like the Lord actually has no name Out of their love, saints have given Him many names In actual fact, He has no name

Question Are Radhasoamis monotheists ?

Maharaj Yes

“I asked because some people while speaking in connection with religion, say that though these people are monotheists in theory, they are polytheists in practice,” I explained

Maharaj This, I can't say, but we believe in only one God, one Creator He exists and He has created everything, and everything that has been created is perishable, but the Creator will not, cannot, perish

“Don't you have any images which you worship in your religious practices ? Until now I have not seen any ”

Maharaj · No, we have no statues, we have no temples, no ceremonies, no dogmas It is just a spiritual exercise within one's body

“But Hindus have images and idols of all their deities,” I persisted

Maharaj We don't believe in that Everything is in this body , it is a self-contained temple The image of the Lord is within this body, which you have to worship You don't need any temple, any rituals, any place, anything for worshipping God You have to just search within yourself bring back your consciousness to the eye centre and follow that path about which Christ has said knock, it shall open , seek, you

shall find. Why, knock ? Because, whenever you go towards your house, unless you reach the door, you cannot knock, and unless you knock, it will not open.

I could not help wondering at the deep influence of Christ's teachings on the thought of Maharaj ji. He went on. You always lock it from outside and it is always open from inside. Our consciousness has to be withdrawn back and we have to come back to this door of our house and here we have to knock and it will be opened from inside. Then, you will seek and you shall find, then you shall find the path leading to Him. On that path your real search begins, that is the real search to be in touch with that sound, to merge with that light, that is real seeking. For that you don't require anything from outside.

Question · Maharaj ji, I have a very important question to ask. In the Occident, the big majority in our countries do not believe in reincarnation. In our religion, also in Protestant and all other religions, we do not believe in Karma law. This is perhaps a point of difference between us. On this point, we have a big, a very big difference between occidental and Indian people. My question is this. Suppose I come to you, because you know one good technique, you know one big tradition, and I have 100% confidence in you, and I would like to develop my psychological knowledge. I come to you for training and I ask you : Please Maharaj ji, initiate me, give me one mantra, like all the people say, I believe in all your things, but I do not believe in Karma law. I am a Catholic. Will you initiate me ?

Maharaj May I ask you a little question ? In the Bible you have read, whatever you sow, so shall you reap. What is your impression about that ?

“You see,” I said, “in our countries we are not made the same way as people in India, the people here are so much interested in religion. Perhaps, you know the Bible better than I.”

Maharaj I accept the Bible. The Bible contains the teachings of Christ, and we believe in those teachings. I believe in Christianity, in the teachings

of Christ So, when Christ says : whatever you sow, so shall you reap, in my opinion, it is nothing but Karma theory Whatever you are doing now, all your actions will have reactions Whatever seed you put in the ground, that fruit you are going to reap

I thought that he was giving a rather subjective interpretation of the Bible However, I did not say so, and he continued So, that very sentence proves the whole Karma theory There are so many other things which can be explained with the help of the Bible, but, unfortunately, many things in the Bible are suppressed because they do not suit the priests That's why they suppress such things and keep them from the masses Christians who have doubts about Karma theory should read the history of the Bible. You see, whatever you sow, so shall you reap , there can be absolutely no other explanation of this than the explanation given in the Karma theory As a doctor you know that a child can be born blind, or an idiot Now, what has he done to be born that way. What sin has he done in this world, that he is born blind ? Another man is born with two eyes What good has he done ? He never got a chance to commit any sin before coming here If you don't accept the fact of sins before birth influencing this life, if you do not believe in Karma theory, if you say that he committed no sin before birth, then why is he born blind ? Why is he born an idiot ? Why is he born a lunatic ? You can't accuse the Lord of discrimination, favouritism, in making one man blind, and the other with two good eyes. He is all mercy for all people What has this soul done to come in this world in the body of a blind person ? All these questions are easily answered by the Karma theory And when you believe in the Karma theory, you have no option but to believe in the transmigration of the souls also.

"Of course, I respect your position, the Hindu position," I said, "More than half of humanity believes in the Karma theory and we respect their beliefs But I have another kind of faith, I believe only in one life, I believe, perhaps, that this life has one prize "

Maharaj "What is your conception of life after this life," said Maharaj ji, interrupting me, "Where does the soul go ? Do you believe that there is a soul in the body Where does the soul go after the body dies ?"

"This is very simply explained in our philosophy", I remarked. "In our Christain philosophy, it is very simple. The good people go to God after death."

Maharaj Go to God, just after death ?

"Go to heaven", I replied

Maharaj . Now, those people who are not good

"They go to hell," I observed.

Maharaj : So, according to you, after death, you go to God, or you go to hell

"If you were not perfect, you go to purgatory. Purgatory is another state," I explained.

Maharaj : And then they are condemned there for ever ?

"No, after having paid for their faults, after having become pure, they can go to God "

Maharaj : But they say that the souls will lie in the graves until the day of Judgement That is how your belief is

"No, not in purgatory. No," I said.

Maharaj : No, but the general belief of Catholics is that after death, souls will lie in the graves, until the day of Judgement, when Christ comes.

"No, I will try to explain the position We believe that the moment I die, if I am good and have the Grace of God, I will go directly to God , if I am not good, I will go directly perhaps to the purgatory and remain there, until I become pure Then, I can go to God. But, if I die as an evil person and do not have God's Grace, I go straight to hell and remain there for ever "

Maharaj As far as this is concerned we also believe the same thing, but we go a little ahead. If you are pure, you go to the Lord, no doubt, and if you are bad, no doubt you go to hell. We also believe in purgatory, where you just get the result of your karma, then you may go to hell, or you may go to God. But we also believe that if you

have certain desires, certain attachment to this world, they will bring you back to the human form again. We go a step ahead, not because we do not believe in these things, but because we feel that if you have a strong attachment to this worldly life, worldly desires, they may pull you back to this world again, as a human being or as a member of any other species. Then again you will get a chance to go back to the Lord. So, actually, you also believe in Karma theory. Your karmas can take you to God, and your karmas can take you to Hell. But, from where has this soul come? Where was it before it got this human form, according to your belief?

“The answer is simple,” I said, and continued, “According to our belief, the soul is created, your soul is created for you, at the moment of conception, at the moment life, human life, is conceived, at that moment the soul is created.”

Maharaj . From where does the soul come?

“From God,” I replied.

Maharaj : Why?

“This is our belief,” I rejoined.

Maharaj : No, no, not that. I am just asking you why is God creating souls and sending them down everyday? Why?

“That is God’s business,” I said.

Maharaj . You see, that will not make any explanation at all. He created this Universe in the beginning and all the souls here are getting a chance slowly to go back to Him and if they won’t make the best use of their opportunities, they can come down also. I can explain everything from the Bible. Souls do not come everytime, everyday.

I thought that we had strayed too far from what I was interested in and said, “Suppose I want to get training here, I want to know the Radha Soami technique, I want to practise Yoga. I am a Catholic and, though I believe in Karma law, I do not believe in the reincarnation of the soul. Can I learn this technique or need I become an orthodox believer in everything, to be initiated?”

Maharaj : Actually, all your belief will be intellectual belief. Even if you accept Karma theory, even if you accept the transmigration of the soul, it will all be on the level of the mind, it will all be on the level of the intellect. No, you don't follow the path ; it is mere intellectual belief , it will be just satisfying your intellect ; it is not real belief based on faith and experience. You will have an intellectual belief, for satisfying the intellect. Whether you satisfy it or not, that is a different question. The real belief you will get only when you experience it. But if you don't satisfy your intellect, your intellect won't let you experience that stage.

Question : But can I practise Yoga if I don't believe in Karma law ?

Maharaj : You can do Yoga even if you don't believe in Karma law at all.

Question : Yoga is not a religion ?

Maharaj : No, it is not religion. I am telling you, Yoga is no religion at all. It is spiritual practices for God realisation. We don't believe in any religion. There is no question of making a Christian into a Hindu or a Hindu into a Muslim. We do not believe in all that. We have people of every religion here. We give absolutely no importance to religion. You put on an overcoat or a jacket, or a shirt on your body. You are, and remain what you are. These clothes do not change your qualities, your human qualities. These are just outside clothes. They do not make any meaning or difference to us.

Question : I think these points of rebirth and transmigration of the soul are the only points on which there is a difference of opinion in our philosophies. Now, suppose I am an eclectic, I am in the centre ; in the Orient, they have their great philosophy and big experience and say . we know the reality. On the other side, we also have our great philosophy and big experience and we insist that we know the reality , it is a sort of competition. This is very interesting, Maharaj ji, for us, because some people practise Yoga in our countries. One other question now, in connection with celibacy, the state of not having any sexual relations. There are techniques to sublimate the sexual instinct, but we cannot kill the sexual instinct because it is the secret of life, if you like. If you kill the sexual instinct in humanity, humanity will perish. Sexual instinct is the instinct

for preservation of life. My question is this. In this Yoga, in this technique, is it necessary, during training, in the beginning or at any stage in the sadhana, to be completely celibate?

Maharaj No. You see, we believe in domestic householder's life. You will find everybody married here. But we insist on controlled married life, and when you get attached to that light inside, you automatically start abstaining from these things. You don't relish this relationship in that state, but no force, no austerity, no relish for the life of austerity can take the mind out of it. There has been no repression, that would have led to a bad reaction. As a medical doctor, you surely know all these things. So, we don't believe in that. We become tempered in these things when our consciousness, our mind, moves from here, and when it is attached to that sound and light within, it is a state of bliss within and the mind will not drop down so easily. We have to attach our consciousness to something better, so that we can detach it from sensual pleasure. But if you detach it from sensual pleasure and you are not attached to something better, you are just repressing it, and it is bound to cause a reaction of great force. For example, a river is flowing, and you erect a dam to stop the flowing waters of the river. How long will you hold that water? A week, 10 days. But when too much water is stored, its force will break the dam, and then it will flow out over the banks of the river. But if you construct a dam, and also make a channel for the water of the river to flow in a different direction, if you make the river flow into a different direction, the dam will be permanent, and the river will change its course. So, we don't believe in repression. We have to withdraw our consciousness to the eye centre and attach it to that Shabd or that sound and light within. We are changing the direction of the water absolutely.

I was pleased with the explanation and requested Maharaj ji to go on.

Maharaj . You are changing the direction of your mind, perhaps, towards that sound and light. So, you are automatically saved from being involved in the sensual pleasure downwards. There is no repression at all.

"I understand," I observed, and added, "I think that in the Orient you have known human psychology for many centuries

All this is very old for you ; for us, it is very new. This is a modern theory. But you are absolutely correct , the instinctive life cannot be repressed, otherwise it will lead to a 'bad reaction,' as you put it."

Maharaj : That is what I said. Only attachment can create detachment within you. Detachment never creates attachment. When you are attached to something better, you are automatically detached from other lower things. For example, a girl falls in love with a young boy. She gets attached to a young boy, she marries him, she automatically detaches herself from her mother, from her father, from her sister, from her brother, from her friends. Now, if she tries to do all this without falling in love with that man, she will never succeed, however hard she might try. You follow my point ? The moment she likes somebody else, she falls in love with somebody, all other attachments will loosen their hold on her personality, and will become meaningless for her. So, that new attachment creates detachment in her so far as other people are concerned. Without getting the love of that young man it would be impossible for her to forget her parents and brothers and sisters and to get over her attachment for her family. So, the same thing happens on the path of God realization. We have to attach ourselves to that sound and light within. Then, we are automatically detached from the senses, the lower senses. Without attaching yourself to that sound and light, you can never detach yourself from the lower senses. By running to forests, by running to mountains, by running to churches, you are just trying to repress something powerful and that will lead to a terrible reaction, a reaction of such force that it will make you a sick man.

I observed that his example was a good one and said, "All depends on the power of the attachment, of the affectivity."

Maharaj : That is right.

Question : Now a question about diet, this vegetarian diet. Is it necessary to take only vegetarian diet ?

Maharaj : In order to understand the insistence on vegetarian diet, you have to know the reasons why we suggest a vegetarian diet. This again we have to understand on the basis of Karma theory. You see, if you

have just a light shirt on your body, you can run. If you have clothes weighing 80 pounds on your body, you can't run. On the one side, you are trying to meditate, trying to get over your attachment to the world, trying to break your bonds, trying to clear your karmas in this world, trying to suppress them ; on the other hand, you are collecting sins. You see, you are collecting sins for you to carry in the future. What is the meaning or worth of that meditation? So, for the sake of your future, don't sow any bad seeds. If you have killed, you will be killed in your turn. This is the logic of the Karma theory. You will probably say : Why do you eat vegetables ? They have also got souls. This whole Universe is divided into five elements, into five classifications : earth, fire, water, ether and air. Every little thing has one element in it, one dominant element in it. The human being consists of these five elements. That is why we are known as the crown of creation. The first class consists of the vegetable plants. They have the element of water in them. Second category is the insects : they have the element of fire in them. The third class is that of birds, they have three elements. The fourth class is these animals. They don't have sense, they don't have attachment, they are all lower animals. Human beings have five elements. Now, if you pluck the flowers from your neighbour's garden, the neighbour will only come to you, and express his displeasure, nothing else. If you kill his chicken, he may abuse you, he may say unpleasant words to you. But if you kill his goat, he may file a case in the court, and may even fight with you. If you kill the neighbour, a human being, you can be hanged. That is the difference in the degree of punishment meted out to you for your crimes against the vegetable, the animal and the human worlds. Have you followed my point? So, it is a difference in degree of punishment, but punishment is there. So, the punishment you will get for cutting vegetables and eating them, will be very little, very mild, as compared to the punishment for killing the chicken, the goat, and the human being. There is thus a difference in the degree of punishment for karmas which one does in the world.

You cannot live in this world without killing, while you are walking, you are killing, while you are talking you are killing; when you drink water, you kill souls, this world is full of souls. As a doctor,

you understand microbes. You see, you can't avoid killing in this world, you can't live in this world without killing. When you walk, you kill thousands of insects before you reach your destination. They say that you can't avoid killing in this world, but you should try to kill the least possible. Come to the vegetable class for killing so that you may have a very little load when you have to run, when you have to go back to your Lord's House. If you are running only with a shirt on, it is not heavy, it is not a hindrance, it is not like a rope checking your progress. This will be like a part of your body. It will not be an obstacle in the way of free movement. But, if you have a heavy coat or any other heavy thing, or some other weight on your body and you are asked to walk about, this will become too big a load for you to carry and you will be crushed under its burden. You will not be able to reach the Lord's House. That is why, you see, we believe in taking only vegetarian food.

"This is more a philosophical belief than something medical", I observed. "It is more a religious belief."

Maharaj : We can find proteins and minerals in vegetables.

"But this is of secondary importance," I remarked.

Maharaj : Yes, it is of secondary importance, but there is no doubt about the presence of proteins and all that in these vegetables. I can show you many Indians living at the ripe old age of 85, 90 years, who have been vegetarians all their life and have never touched non-vegetarian food. They never had meat, but they are still healthier than many people who are taking lots of proteins, etc. through animal food. That is another belief.

I thanked Maharaj ji for everything he had done for our comfort and convenience throughout our stay.

Maharaj : You are always welcome.

I felt deeply impressed by the unfailing courtesy and politeness of Maharaj ji and the other inmates of the colony. We had indeed been made 'welcome' everywhere and when we left Beas, our hearts were full of appreciation for the hospitality and friendliness shown to us. I shall always cherish sweet memories of the place and the people we met there.

Anandamayee Ma

We live in the age of experts, of specialists. Being myself a specialist in one branch of learning, I realise how difficult it is to gather knowledge, to know for certain what is right and what is not right. Again, though heaps of books are available on every subject, it takes a life-time to read up all that is printed on any theme. Even if one could read, how can one judge what is authentic and what is not. My method of learning about things I am interested in is, therefore, a simple and modest one. I go to the source, I go to the specialist and ask him or—as in the case of the person we are concerned with here—her *Acharya's file.*

But how to find the specialist? That too is a problem. Many set up as light-givers who are themselves in the dark, and one has to be careful. And since I had no intention to waste time and engage myself in futile effort, I made it my first job to find out the really great personalities in the spiritual world of India. I talked to a swami, Shardananda, whom I met at Rishikesh, about this, and requested him to enlighten me on the point.

Being a thoughtful person, Swami Shardananda did not give an immediate reply. Instead, he wrote me a letter later on, in which he answered the question I had put. I had asked, "Who are the great living yogis of India?" He mentioned four, three of them women: Sri Ananda Ma, Mother Krishna Bai, and the Mother of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. Among the men, surprisingly enough, he made mention of only one: Acharya Vinobha Bhave.

I wondered—the psychiatrist in me could not help having that kind of feeling—if this was not "jealousy of the learned," at play. Women, yes, but among men—only one, and a 'safe' one, since "officially" we do not categorise him as a yogi.

And he advised, "Before you leave India, I request you to meet the above saints." I am glad that I followed his advice, and, thus, met three of the top yoginis of India.

Ananda Ma, or Anandamayee Ma, to give the full name by which she is known, is a 'queen' of the spiritual world. Mother Krishna Bai and the Mother at Pondicherry rarely stir out. In their case the devotees must go to the "deity." But Ananda Ma moves from ashram to ashram of her kingdom, spreading light and laughter and joy—of which, (as her name implies) she is 'full' I have met this yogini, and seen her in many photographs; and though she has great spells of silence and high moods of meditation, and much experience of ecstasy, yet the most characteristic trait in her life and personality is joy, and laughter, and serenity. I have seen her now, when she is old, and my first impression was of a woman who was not over-attractive; yet the impression lasted for a fleeting moment only. I was soon lost in admiring her joyous presence and gracious personality. A remarkable woman, I thought. And as she spoke to me and laughed the happy laughter of innocence mixed with wisdom, I knew that my quest in India was not going to be fruitless—that whether I found or did not find the secret of such an harmonious and tranquil state of mind as women like Anandamayee seemed to be in habitually, to have seen the phenomenon was gain enough.

An anecdote often related about Anandamayee is highly revealing. Having lost his wife, a man had come, all grief-stricken and inconsolable, to her, and, she had laughed out! In her view, as she told the widower, one more veil had been removed between him and God! In her own case the removing of the "veil" had begun quite early in her life. She was born in 1896, in the Tripura District in that part of Bengal which is now in East Pakistan. Growing up in a prominently Mohammadan locality, she was, even as a child, accepted as an extraordinary person, one who was not Hindu as such, but a saintly being. She was quite often found to be repeating portions of the Quran! Her name was Nirmala (the pure, the taintless) and according to her disciples and devotees, no truer name could have been given to the person who bore it. Educated but scantily, the maid was given away in marriage when she was hardly twelve, for early marriage was the custom then. Already at this age, she had developed the absent-mindedness of the other worldly person, and she would have frequent fits of seeming insensibility during which she would repeat many mantras in strange, mystical sounding languages. The husband was awestruck. This wife of his was some extraordinary person, a goddess in human form, and thinking like that he abstained from treating her as a wife. It is claimed that though married, Nirmala remained chaste—a kumari.

Kumaris, chaste virgins, are regarded in Shakti Tantra as the incarnation of the Divine, of the Mother.

She had no children of her own, but soon she began to have many spiritual sons and daughters, and people began to worship her as the Mother. Women's natural need of children, her powerful instinct for motherhood demanded that. "You may not want me, but I want you," said she. One may call it love, supreme compassion, and perhaps, in the case of an extraordinary personality like Anandamayee, such words may explain the phenomenon better. However, the psychologist cannot but regard that, basically, as a manifestation of a normal instinct of woman, that of being a mother.

The story of the flowering of the spiritual personality of Anandamayee is a fascinating one. Hundreds of incidents and anecdotes about her love and power are related by her devotees. There are two important points to note. One is that she has had no guru, no teacher, even though the guidance of the guru is, generally, indispensable on the spiritual path. Secondly, we are told that she performed no regular *sadhana* (conscious and determined spiritual endeavour) such as most other eminent saints are reported to have done. It is argued by some that "she might be a free and enlightened (*mukta* and *budha*) soul that performed all or nearly all the necessary *sadhana* in the preceding incarnation under the guidance of a *sad* (competent) *guru* and has now come to complete the inescapable round of rebirths and incidentally to give spiritual light to those coming in contact with her." Others think she is an 'avatar', a reincarnation of the Divine. The common people believe her to be that and say, "Here is Jagadamba (the Mother of the World) smiling her sweetest at you. Go and fall at her feet." Consequently thousands have flocked and continue to flock to have her darshan, to have a word from her, a bit of *prasad*—and a portion of her love and mercy.

Regarded as she is by many as the reincarnation of Sri Krishna in the form of Sri Radha, Anandamayee's path should be classified as Bhakti-Yoga. But it is best to sum up what she and her philosophy stand for in the words of her own admirers :

"Mother says that the teachings of all lines and of all teachers, provided they are genuine and proceed from the right sources, are correct and should be followed by those for whom they are meant. They may be opposed to one another, but that does not detract from each its peculiar value as a distinct path leading to the goal set before it. If this path is self-consistent and lies unblocked till the end of the journey it will not mislead, though it may carry the pilgrim to a

sectional Truth and not the whole Truth. But if the pilgrim has within him genuine aspiration for the Supreme Reality, Reality will assert itself and overtake him at any point of the journey. In that case the sectional Truth will be either brought into relation with the whole and made a step in its direction or will be converted into a medium through which the Supreme Truth will reveal itself. The Ultimate Truth is one and the way to it is also one. An earnest Seeker, free from worldly attachments and desires, has no reason for disappointment. What is needed is unfailing patience, grim resolution, persistent endeavour, unflinching faith in the Divine Providence and unconditional surrender to the Divine will, preceded by a life of purity, devotion and self-dedication.

“Mother has no line of Her own, no particular teaching or doctrine. She recognises that though at bottom the Way is unique it assumes varied forms as the temperaments and capacities of individuals are varied. The true test of real advance in spiritual life lies in the gradual purification, illumination and transformation of the human soul whereby in the end it may be restored to its lost unity with the Divine. She is at times very eloquent on the deprecation of the so-called spiritual favours including revelations, visions, locutions, etc., and exhibitions of occult powers. Not that they are always bad or inspired by dark forces, but the point to be remembered is that they have generally a tendency to deflect us from the right path, which consists in a single-minded and all-absorbing attention to the great Aim held in view. She does not, however, actually comment, even in an indirect manner, on anybody's personal experiences. She simply wants that we should be guarded against what Sri Aurobindo calls ‘the valley of the false glimmer.’ Usually these experiences arise from perverted imagination or alien powers, hostile or neutral. Self-deception, she points out, is always possible on the path. In very rare cases these favours are real and welcome and may be helpful on the path. In such cases there is no harm in allowing them to continue, though even then the sadhaka should not actively co-operate with them until he feels strongly fortified against all outer influences. It is very important to bear in mind that the strength of personal will, self-consciousness and power of rational discrimination should not suffer in any way.”

Today, Anandamayee has many followers and devotees, and presides over fifteen ashrams all over India. I saw some of her ashrams—at Dehra Dun, Benaras, Delhi. The one at Benaras is a fine and impressive institute. She does not stay at any one place for long, and in that way, keeps in direct touch with all that is happening in her spiritual kingdom.

I was unable to meet Anandamayee Ma at Dehra Dun, but she gave me an interview at Delhi. I spoke in English, she in Bengali, and the conversation was carried on with the help of an interpreter.

“I am a medical doctor and ”

Mata ji interrupted me and said, “I have heard about you. We have here a chronic asthmatic patient, you can examine him”.

“I shall be glad to”, I said and continued :

“I am interested in some special phenomena relating to the sadhana of the yogis in India. Could I ask you some questions in connection with my field of specialisation ?”

Mata ji “You can ask me any question. I will try to answer it ”

“How kind of you” I said and went on :—

“After the yogis have spent many years in sadhana they begin to hear some special sounds, and this phenomenon is called, anahat, or Omkar sound. I am specially interested in this and would like to ask you if you had some experiences in anahat.”

Mata ji Anahat means that there is no sound coming from outside, but only from inside, from a mental or spiritual or an intellectual entity. I interpret anahat as a sound without any obstacles, where there is no obstacle in the way of sound. The sound in whose way there is no obstacle—that is the anahat sound. Anahat means sound. And the yogi is one who is constantly attached to, constantly united with, the sound. You understand ?

I nodded, and the yogini proceeded with her explanation.

Mata ji : A real yogi, one who reaches the centre of the Vision, feels that he is that supreme sound, feels that he is enlightened and he is the supreme sound himself. In the ordinary sense, the yogi is a being who is enlightened with the supreme sound. From the point of view of your question since you have asked me about the anahat, the real yogis, the supreme yogis who have realised, and attained to a certain position, are constantly united with the supreme sound.

Question . Do yogis hear the anahat when they are in samadhi or not ?

Mata ji . Please repeat your question.

Question Before they go into samadhi, the yogis hear anahat. Do the yogis hear anahat during samadhi also ?

Mata ji : I will give you a very clear explanation. If you use the term hearing, then there are three things . the one who hears, secondly the sound itself, and thirdly the sound with the anahat, the anahat sound. And then there is the act of hearing. These three things will be there, if you use the term hearing. Till these three are combined together, the real thing does not come. Of course, I have not said that the real samadhi does not come. I have not said that. I only say that the real thing does not come. So, if you use the term hearing, that is the thing. Because, if it is a case of real samadhi, the question of hearing does not arise at all. Do you understand ?

“I am not sure, but this is very interesting. Please go on,” I remarked.

Mata ji : The sound itself is the Supreme Being, so there is no question of hearing. Do you follow ? Have you got anything to ask on this point ? All those three things do not combine together ; one cannot think in that supreme position, supreme state .

I persisted in my enquiry : “I would like to know whether during samadhi, the yogis have consciousness of their body, or whether they lose the consciousness of their body, and are in another state.”

Mata ji listened intently as the interpreter spoke to her in Bengali. She smiled a little as the question became clear to her. Then she spoke :

He will feel, he will realise that he is the sound itself, that he is the action of the sound, and he is the ears, that all the three are combined in him. This sound is also a part of the Supreme Being. So it means the same. When he understands, when he feels that he is the sound itself, then it means the same. It means that all the three are combined into the Supreme Being. So there is no separateness, no individual identity.

“This may be correct” I commented. “However, I would return to my question. Do the yogis have consciousness of their body or do they lose the consciousness regarding their physical body, when they are in samadhi?”

“During samadhi?”, said Mata ji letting out peals of melodious laughter.

“Yes, during samadhi?” I repeated, as I took some photographs of the yogini in a jovial mood. After a while, she continued :

When the question of forgetting comes, there is no real samadhi. Forgetting one’s own consciousness. No. When the question of forgetting comes, there is no real samadhi.

I did not quite get what she was trying to say. Fearing that the interpreter might not have conveyed her exact meaning, I said :

“That would not be real samadhi? In this case then the yogi does not forget his body. Does he have consciousness of his body during samadhi? or would you say that during samadhi he is outside and has no connection with his body?”

Mata ji : Samadhi is also a stage. The real goal should be the Being or the Universe. These are two different things, so the real goal should be to feel that there is absolutely no difference and to go beyond the question of yes or no. Such a question does not arise. Samadhi is also a stage. This will be the answer to your question: Whether there is physical

consciousness or not - whether he has consciousness of the body or not, he has to go beyond this.

"Good," I said.

Mata ji : He has to go beyond this, and this should be the goal. Samadhi also is a stage. So, we should not have attachment with real samadhi. One has to go beyond that, one has to go much beyond that. So the supreme, the real goal should be beyond that, to go even beyond samadhi.

"Beyond samadhi ?" I repeated

Mata ji : That is a stage; you have to pass through that.

Question : But, Mata ji, I have read in some books that during the sadhana and before the realisation, the yogis experience some psychological phenomena, like seeing visions—these come mostly to the Bhakti yogis—and hearing sounds—not anahat, but other sounds, that happens in the case of yogis. I would like to know if you experience these psychological phenomena before your realisation.

Mata ji : You want to know about my personal experience?

"Yes, if you don't mind," I said "You are among the biggest yoginis in India. You can speak with authority. The yogis experience psychological phenomena during their sadhana. They can see some visions, hear some sounds and experience some other things. If you can help me in this, I would be very thankful, because it is very important."

At this moment the interpreter tried to change the subject.

Mata ji : What do you think about me? Whatever do you think about my experiences?

"My opinion is that you are one of the greatest yoginis in India," I said. "About that there is no doubt. That is why all your answers have great interest. What you say has great significance for all psychiatrists. I come from a very far country and for me it is very gratifying to have had this opportunity to speak with you. I can speak with plenty of yogis, but I would like to question one who is recognised as a great yogini."

Mata ji About myself, what do you think?

“About you?” I asked, failing to catch the drift of her query

Mata ji Yes, about my personal experiences In what way do you think about me? I am asking you that

“I asked about . . .”, I started saying.

Mata ji interrupted me and said :

“No I must explain that if you ask me questions about my own view, I cannot answer them. I will not answer questions about my personal experiences, because I never answer such questions.”

“Yes, I know, all this is secret,” I remarked, appreciating her stand. “And also I know that the yogis cannot speak about their personal experiences

“I only thought that perhaps But, in any case, if you can not speak your personal experiences, you can tell me about what the yogis hear and see before their realisation. They experience these psychological phenomena. You can tell me about these experiences, in a general way.”

Mata ji There are two things : the Being and the Universe . About the body, I will give you an interesting interpretation of the body itself Body is that which is not permanent The nature of the human being is to attain more and more knowledge, that is a sort of goal before man, to learn more, to attain more and more knowledge. Similarly, in the spirit, in the soul, the same thing continues So, there is a craving in a human being, a man, to get more and more spiritual knowledge, to learn more and more. For example before attaining the supreme realisation, the same thing continues This hearing of sounds and seeing visions, all these are natural expressions of the human craving, which is in every man This is one thing Now about those visions and the other things, there are three things, the person who hears, and hearing itself, the person who sees, and the seeing itself, and the object. Always there are these three things. The person who is seeing some visions, or hearing some sounds, which happen when he passes through the course of sadhana, has to go beyond that. Am I clear?

"Yes, thank you," I said.

Mata ji : That happens throughout the Universe, during the course of sadhana, that is natural.

"Is it natural?" I questioned.

Mata ji . Yes, it is natural. That is nothing, but natural. But one's goal should be beyond that, to go above that.

Question : Suppose a yogi does not go further in his sadhana. Suppose he progresses only up to the stage when he begins to see these visions, hear these sounds. And, suppose due to some reasons he does not continue his sadhana. In this case, can the yogi lose his normality ?

Mata ji : No, but there can't be a static condition. Either he should come down or he should go up.

"Ah ! Come down or go up," I said.

Mata ji : There can't be a static condition ; he cannot remain permanently in one state,

I said : "I cannot state this with certainty, but, as a psychiatrist, I think that in such a case a yogi can, perhaps, lose his reason and become mad."

Mata ji : Somebody can get in to that condition. There is no end to seeing visions, hearing sounds. The ideal of the person who is doing sadhana should be to go above that, above those things, visions or sounds, because there is no limit to that ; they are endless and if one just stays in that state, then he cannot make further progress, further development. What you suggest may also happen. For real progress, he has to go beyond that. If he does not do that, he will have lost his goal. You follow that ?

"Yes," I said.

Mata ji : He may even go down to a lower stage when he can't go up. But, one thing is certain ; whatever stage a human being reaches, there is no doubt that he is never lost.

Question : Never lost ?

Mata ji Yes, about that there is no doubt , the effect of that is never lost. That is the course of sadhana Probably, you reach a certain stage, but you can't say that everything has become fruitless, you can't say that. There must be a fruit of that. You follow ?

I felt obliged to Mata ji for her kindness in granting me an interview and said ,

“Yes, thank you very much. Mata ji, we thank you very much for all your courtesy.”

Mata ji . The question of thanking someone arises when there is a separate individual, when he is considered separate from you There is only one soul, I am one with you. So the question of thanking does not arise

As she said this, she gave us some fruits, by way of 'prasad'. I was about to say 'thanks' again but remembering her remarks, kept quiet and merely smiled Then I said . Last week we were in Dehra Dun to make a film I saw some of your disciples in Dehra Dun in the Ashram. I photographed them Could you authorise me to finish my film today, to photograph you when you go into the large room to be with the people ?

Mata ji : I am expected to go down at half past three. There is a lecture So, if you like, you can take your pictures at that time.

We then took leave of this gracious and kind lady She had been so nice and friendly that it was difficult to realise that she was one of the great yoginis of modern India, that she was Mother to lakhs of people and that with her fifteen ashrams in India, she was like a queen, a spiritual queen

Aurobindo Ashram

The South of India is in many respects a very clear-cut entity. The climate, the food habits, and social customs, styles of clothing and even the way people are named—all this is different. Also, the South is far more deeply religious and orthodox than the North. This is understandable because in the North there was much mixture of races and culture on account of several invasions. In the South, the thought and philosophy and the way of living were preserved and conserved in their original and purer form. The languages spoken here are also distinctly different and belong to a separate 'family'. Being acquainted now with practically the entire country, I could see a clear and great difference between the North and the South. In a way, therefore, it is true to say that though all religions in India are one and the same thread of Yoga binds the thought and life of the people, whether in the North or the South or the East or the West, the ashrams of the South have a different air and aura about them than the ashrams of the North.

I had already visited and stayed at the abodes of the yogis in the North and was now out to look up great ashrams of the South. Having lived in the ashrams and even in some of the remote caves of the Himalayas, I was used to taking a bit of hardship in my stride. But I found that discovering the South was a little more difficult than discovering the North. The climate was one problem, and the means of transport another, since I had not taken my own car. The difficulty regarding transport was at times felt more keenly than one likes to confess. Between bigger cities such as Bombay, Cochin or Madurai flights are possible. But other journeys had to be undertaken by trains and quite often by buses. The trains are rather slow, especially those which link, and, therefore, stop at, all the small stations of the area. The buses are generally packed to capacity and the seats are not wide and are hard and uncomfortable. I got over the problem partly by purchasing four tickets so that the two of us, my wife and I, might occupy four seats and stand the several-hour-long journey better.

Another thing which I had to get used to in the South specially, was to eat a different kind of food from what we got in the North. In the South, even more

than in the North, one has to eat with the hand. A banana-leaf serves a plate here. The articles of food, mostly rice and some kind of dal or preparations from rice and other ingredients, are heaped on the banana leaf. Though light and easily digestible, the food was, at times, too spicy for our taste, although we had by this time got used to taking hot food in the North. In some ashrams, especially the more orthodox ones, like Sri Ramanasramam, we were not allowed to enter into the kitchen and, at places, we had to sit apart from the yogis.

In the South, the main places of interest for me were Ramana Maharshi's ashram at Tiruvannamalai, Anandashram of Ramdas at Kanhangad near Mangalore, and the Aurobindo ashram at Pondicherry. I was also interested in seeing at least two more places, Cape Comorin, the Southern-most tip of India, and Madurai, which contains one of India's most magnificent temples, and is called the "Mathura" of the south. *En route* I saw places like Cochin, home of the Jews of India, and Trivandrum. I have unforgettable memories of the entire region which now constitutes the Kerala State and of its exceptionally beautiful land-scape, sea-scape, river-scape, of its palm-trees and its general look of greenery and sheer loveliness of nature.

We went to Pondicherry from Tiruvannamalai by bus which took about six hours to put us at our destination. We were startled by the contrast between the place we had left and the place to which we had come. Tiruvannamalai is a typical Southern place, where simple folk, the humble peasantry of India, live and follow their simple, traditional ways. Pondicherry, which was a French possession once, is a typical 'French' town, with big, broad, clean highways and big buildings, and the citizens are sophisticated and modern. The look and air of modernity are all over Pondicherry.

And what is true of the two places, is true also of the two celebrated spiritual centres and their philosophies. At Tiruvannamalai shines the light of a saint of humble folk, whose appeal is to the heart and the soul direct, whose philosophy is what the people can understand readily, and the entire air there has a quietness of a different kind, that kind where the soul is stilled. At Pondicherry, too, shines a great light, equally radiant, and luminous, but the saint of Pondicherry was an intellectual saint, and the faith and the followers are associated with high intellectual culture. Indeed, when one thinks of the intellectual element in religion in modern India the name that comes uppermost is that of Aurobindo the philosopher and the saint.

his Integral Yoga. Vivekananda alone matches him, may be, in certain ways, out matches him; but in the purely intellectual effort, perhaps, he cannot rival Aurobindo. I am attempting no comparison; I am not competent to do that. I am merely thinking aloud, or perhaps, voicing what one hears from those who think that they know. Actually, no comparisons are possible, for the differences are often, one might say, almost always—in kind, and hardly ever in the degree. We have already seen that there are several categories of Yoga, and most of these saints are like top specialists in their particular faculty, in their own type of sadhana. Ramana Maharshi and Aurobindo—and their philosophy and realisations—these are not matters of contrast and comparison. One has to understand them, learn their sadhana. And who goes the way of one and who that of the other depends upon one's individual mentality.

The Pondicherry Ashram is not all located at one place. It has plenty of buildings, but these are scattered all over the town. Thus the activities of the Ashram, carried out in these various 'centres' of the Ashram, get merged into the total life and activity of Pondicherry—get integrated, the Integral Yoga way, if one may say so—with the rest. Since the essence of Aurobindo's philosophy is ascension and then descending and integrating oneself with life, nothing could have shown this approach better than the fact that the Ashram is not a distinct entity as such but seems to partake of the total life of Pondicherry. The old and new buildings of the Ashram and the old and new buildings of this obviously 'French' city are so intermixed that to see the Ashram is to see Pondicherry, and *vice versa*.

We had, however, come to see the Ashram, and for doing that all assistance and courtesy were extended to us. In places like Tiruvannamalai and Kanhangad, there is no special arrangement for looking after the people who come, from the point of view of 'national' distinctions. The westerner or the oriental—it is all the same. All are there as devotees and must be treated as such. This is even truer of the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi.

But at Pondicherry, there is first-rate arrangement in the European style for western visitors. One is served by people who are all workers of the Ashram, and it is embarrassing at times to be served by someone who was a great barrister, or is a scholar of repute. Of course, one cannot tip them. The board and lodging are, however, paid for by the guests, which is different from the practice followed at, say, Ramdas Ashram where one lives and eats without charge. And, in a way, the service

is 'superior,' for the Mother serves the food, to the people, like mothers do all over India

I met at Pondicherry all the important inmates. Nolini Kanta Gupta, Private Secretary of Sri Aurobindo, and now of the Mother. A reputed Bengali writer and intellectual, he was with Aurobindo since 1910. We met Mr Pandit who had been attracted to Yoga when he was barely twelve years old. He has been in the Ashram for twenty-six years. He is a great scholar of Tantra Yoga and a well-known writer on Yoga and Philosophy. Another scholar we met there is Dr. Indra Sen, who was Professor of Psychology for many years at Delhi University. He has been in the Ashram for several years and is a fine scholar of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy in relation to Modern Psychology. Dr. Indra Sen very kindly arranged a meeting at which I explained the fundamentals of Sophrology, the new school I have founded. I was gratified to learn that Indra Sen was able to grasp my approach and view so well and quickly, and his tribute that Sophrology was Yoga born of Western scientific knowledge pleased me immensely.

Others whom I met included Shri Champak Lal and the Pinto brothers.

L. M. Pinto is an old disciple of Aurobindo and has been given the name of Udar by the Mother. Wilfred Pinto showed me round the Ashram.

That reminds me. One day, two persons, a Frenchman and an American, came to where we were living and said that they were there to take us round. During our drive we wanted to have some refreshment and so all of us went into a Cafe. There a discussion started on philosophic aspects of Aurobindo's thought and Yoga, and it appeared that this was embarrassing for the disciples of Aurobindo. The discussion lasted several hours, and the sightseeing was postponed to the next day.

I questioned them about consciousness and other psychiatric matter and they promised to tell me more when they came again.

Next morning, however, the car drove up without our friend of the day before. Instead, it was Wilfred Pinto who had taken that job on. He showed us round, and when we tried to question him on doctrinal issues, we were politely told to speak on such matters with scholars like Pandit and Indra Sen.

Then I met the 'family' of the Mother. Lucien, for example, son of the Mother, his daughter, and the husband and the son of a daughter, and so on.

M Ange, the husband of the daughter, Madame Francoise Ange, is chief architect for planning a modern town near Pondicherry, AUROVILLE. The son of the Mother, André Morisset, lives usually in Paris. Michel Ange, son of the grand-daughter of the Mother, is about 12 years old.

Finally, we had the great good luck of being granted an interview with the Mother and had an illuminating talk with her. I wanted to photograph her but was not allowed to do that.

As I have remarked elsewhere, the Mother is counted among the three greatest yoginis, realised women, living in India today. Like the other two—Anandamayee Ma and Krishnabai—in theirs, she is supreme in her Ashram, and directs and controls all its activities.

Originally a French woman, the Mother is now an Indian citizen. She was born in Paris in 1878 and met Aurobindo in 1914. It is stated that “repeated mystic visions of a figure whom she regarded as Krishna led her to Pondicherry on March 29, 1914. And at her first glance at Sri Aurobindo, she recognised in him the Krishna of her visions and felt convinced that her place and her work were near him in India.” In her Prayers and Meditations she records her first meeting with Sri Aurobindo, thus :

“It matters not if there are hundreds of beings plunged in the densest ignorance. He whom we saw yesterday is on earth : His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign shall be indeed established on earth.

“O Lord, Divine Builder of this marvel, my heart overflows with joy and gratitude when I think of it, and my hope is boundless.

“My adoration surpasses all words and my reverence is silent ”

Appropriately enough, her (Indian) name is Mira, the same as that of the great devotee of Lord Krishna of medieval times.

Although he passed away in 1950, Sri Aurobindo had retired from active participation in the control and direction of the Ashram in 1926. He made the Mother not only the sole incharge of the Ashram and its activities, but more, and greater than that, made her a full co-sharer in “spirituality”. “The Mother’s

consciousness and mine", he said, "are the same, the one Divine Consciousness in two, because that is necessary for the play. Nothing can be done without her knowledge and force, without her consciousness—if anybody really feels her consciousness, he should know that I am there behind it and if he feels me it is the same with hers." And therefore, "the arrangement I have made for all the disciples without exception is that they should receive the light and force from her and not directly from me and be guided by her in their spiritual progress. I have made the arrangement not for any temporary purpose but because it is true and effective (considering what she is and her power)." And he added, "everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga."

The consciousness in which feelings of "love" for two countries get harmoniously integrated is a phenomenon of great interest to the psychiatrist. The Mother assumed Indian citizenship in 1954. On that occasion she said "from the first time I came to India—1914—I felt that India is my true country, the country of my soul and spirit. I had decided to realise this wish as soon as India would be free. But I had to wait."

"I am French by birth and early education. I am an Indian by choice and predilection. In my consciousness there is no antagonism between the two, on the contrary, they combine very well and complete one another. I know also that I can be of service to both equally, for my only aim in life is to give a concrete form to Sri Aurobindo's great teaching and in his teaching he reveals that all the nations are essentially one and meant to express the Divine Unity upon earth and through an organised and harmonious diversity."

But it is not enough that only India and France should be served. We must have a broader approach. In a message to America, she said in 1949:

"Stop thinking that you are of the West and others of the East. All human beings are of the same divine origin and meant to manifest on earth the unity of this origin."

We saw the various buildings and activities of the Ashram. The system of training of Pondicherry is to begin it all at the earliest stage. There is a school, a college and a university, a fine Library and excellent playground. The system is western, co-educational allowing free mixing of the sexes. Here is a

atmosphere of cleanliness, health, sanity and serenity. Of course, all people work, but each individual chooses the work best suited to his or her aptitude. For, intellectual, industrial and commercial activities are all carried on in the various institutions and factories and workshops of the Ashram. All these institutions and factories, their products and profits belong to the Mother, to the Ashram, but all the inmates get what they want, and need. The idea was to create a colony, a nucleus of modern India, as the Mother calls it, where people are freed from tensions of material anxiety and, therefore, the best and the highest in them is liberated and can find the freest and fullest expression.

The commercial and industrial activities of the Ashram are manifold : paper-making, printing, making of machinery, etc. We saw all these—and all this was good. But the one thing that we saw, and mention of which I have reserved the last is the ‘samadhi’ of Sri Aurobindo. Devotees are always there to have a look at the samadhi, and to bow to the sacred memory of one of India’s greatest saints of the modern times. And on the samadhi there is always a heap of fresh and fragrant flowers.

Aurobindo and his Ashram are very well-known, and a good deal of literature is available on all aspects of the Ashram’s history and activities and on the life and work and thought of Aurobindo. He was a great intellectual, and a great patriot, towering in both fields, but later, chose to become the great saint that he is. When in 1947, India became free, on 15th August—the date is his birth date also—he gave a message, extracts from which are quoted to show how the various elements—intellectual, potential and spiritual—got fused in his personality.

“August 15th is the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world, for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life. Indeed almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my

lifetime, though at that time they looked like impossible dreams, I can observe on this day either approaching fruition or initiated and on the way to their achievement.

I have been asked for a message on this great occasion, but I am perhaps hardly in a position to give one. All I can do is to make a personal declaration of the aims and ideals conceived in my childhood and youth and now watched in their beginning of fulfilment, because they are relevant to the freedom of India, since they are a part of what I believe to be India's future work something in which she cannot but take a leading position. For I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power and prosperity,—though these, too, she must not neglect,—and certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. Those aims and ideals were in their natural order these a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilization, the rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind which for its entire realisation would rest outwardly on an international unification of the separate existence of the peoples, preserving and securing their national life but drawing them together into an over-riding and consummating oneness, the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualisation of life to the whole race, finally, a new step in the revolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity, since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society."

As to the philosophic content of Aurobindo's integral yoga—I was told to study his books for years—it is best to sum it up from his own writing. I am giving a long 'summary' because Aurobindo's thinking is of the loftiest level in modern Indian yoga philosophy.

"In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either conscious or subconsciously a Yoga. For we mean by this term a methodical effort to attain self-perfection by the expression of the potentialities latent in the being and union of the human individual with the universal and transcendent Existence, now partially expressed in man and in the cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realise her perfection in an ever increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first upon this Earth does so. She is a

means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. Yogo, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence. A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more complete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary process of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self-fulfiment ; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already manifested or is progressively organising in her less exalted but more general operations."

True, there are different systems, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, or Jnana Yoga which produce, seemingly different results, yet, in his view, "All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are special psychological processes founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest "

Now comes the first fundamental point of dieffrence :

"The Yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose his hold upon it , he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains God, he loses life, or if he turns his efforts outward to conquer life, he is in danger of losing God. Therefore we see in India that a sharp incompatibility has been created between life in the world and spiritual growth and perfection, and although the tradition and ideal of a victorious harmony between the inner attraction and the outer demand remains, it is little exemplified. In fact, when a man turns his vision and energy inward and enters on the path of Yoga, he is supposed to be lost inevitably to the great stream of our collective existence and the secular effort of humanity. So strongly has the idea prevailed, so much has it been emphasized by prevalent philosophies

and religions that to escape from life is now commonly considered as not only the necessary condition, but the general object of Yoga. No synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which does not in its aim, reunite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life or, in its method, not only permit but favour the harmony of our inner and outer activities and experiences in the divine consummation of both. For man is precisely that—the term and symbol of a higher Existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower.”

Therefore, “the true and full object and utility of Yoga can only be accomplished when the conscious Yoga in man becomes, like the subconscious Yoga in Nature, outwardly conterminous with life itself and we can once more, looking out both on the path and the achievement, say in a more perfect and luminous sense ‘All life is Yoga’”.

Examining the various systems of Yoga at length and with great insight and scholarship, he suggests that only a rational synthesis of Yoga can help. Let us, however, not think that this is easy, easily understandable and easily practicable. “The synthesis we propose cannot, then, be arrived at either by combination in mass or by successive practice. It must, therefore, be effected by neglecting the forms and outsides of the Yogic disciplines and seizing rather on some central principle common to all which will include and utilise in the right place and proportion their particular principles, and on some central dynamic force which is the common secret of their divergent methods and capable therefore of organising a natural selection and combination of their varied energies and different utilities. We observe, first, that there still exists in India a remarkable Yogic system which in its nature synthetical and starts from a great central principle of Nature, a great dynamic force of Nature, but is a Yoga apart, not a synthesis of other schools. This system is the way of the Tantra. Owing to certain of its developments, Tantricism has fallen into discredit with those who are not Tantrics, especially on account of the developments of its left-hand path, the Vama Marga, which not only does not exceed the duality of virtue and sin and instead of replacing them by a higher rightness of action seemed to make a method of self-indulgence, and the fact of a trained social immortality. Nevertheless, in its origin, Tantricism was a very powerful and puissant system founded upon ideas which were still predominant in the Indian mind.”

two-fold division into the right-hand and left-hand paths, Dakshina Marga and Vama Marga, started from a certain profound perception. In the ancient symbolic sense of the words Dakshina and Vama, it was the distinction between the way of Knowledge and the way of Ananda,—Nature in man liberating itself by right discrimination in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities and Nature in man liberating itself by joyous acceptance in power and practice of its own energies, elements and potentialities ”

It is suggested that if we seek for the central principle in the actual methods and practices we find, that “Tantra expressly differentiates itself from the Vedic methods of Yoga”. But superficial differences of one kind or another apart, “in all the lord of the Yoga is the Purusha, the conscious Soul that knows, observes, attracts, governs But in Tantra it is rather Prakriti, the Nature-Soul, the Engery, the Will-in-Power executive in the universe. It was by learning and applying the intimate secrets that the Tantric Yogin pursued the aims of this discipline—mastery, perfection, liberation, beautitude Instead of drawing back from manifested Nature and its difficulties, he confronted them, seized and conquered But in the end, as is the general tendency of Prakriti, Tantric Yoga largely lost its principle in its machinery and became a thing of formulae and occult mechanism all the terms of the inferior human light and moral activity.

“In psychological fact this method translates itself into the progressive surrender of the ego with its whole field and all its apparatus to the Beyond-ego with its vast and incalculable but always inevitable workings Certainly, this is no short cut or easy sadhana. It requires a colossal faith, an absolute courage and above all and unflinching patience. For it implies three stages of which only the last can be wholly blissful or rapid,—the attempt of the ego to enter into contact with the Divine, the wide, full and therefore laborious preparation of the whole lower Nature by the divine working to receive and become the higher Nature, and the eventual transformation In fact, however, the divine Strength, often unobserved and behind the veil, substitutes itself for our weakness and supports us through all our failings of faith, courage and patience. It ‘makes the blind to see and the lame to stride over the hills’ The intellect becomes aware of Law that beneficently insists and a succour that upholds, the heart speaks of a Master of all things and Friend of man or a Universal Mother who upholds through all stumblings. Therefore, this path is at once the most difficult imaginab’le and yet in comparison with the magnitude of its effort and object, the most easy and sure of all.

"There are three outstanding features of this action of the higher when it works integrally on the lower nature. In the first place, it does not act according to a fixed system and succession as in the specialised methods of Yoga but with a sort of free, scattered and yet gradually intensive and purposeful working determined by the temperament of the individual in whom it operates, the helpful materials which his nature offers and the obstacles which it presents to purification and perfection. In a sense, therefore, each man in this path has his own method of Yoga. Yet there are certain broad lines of working common to all which enable us to construct not indeed a routine system, but yet some kind of Shastra or scientific method of the synthetic Yoga.

"Secondly, the process, being integral, accepts our nature such as it stands, organised by our past evolution and without rejecting anything essential compels it to undergo a divine change. Everything in us is seized by the hands of a mighty Artificer and transformed into a clear image of that which it now seeks confusedly to present.

"Thirdly, the divine Power in us uses all life as the means of this integral Yoga. Every experience and outer contact with our world-environment, however, trifling or however disastrous, is used for the work, and every inner experience even to the most repellent suffering or the most humiliating fall, becomes a step on the path to perfection. And we recognise in ourselves with opened eyes the method of God in the world. His purpose of light in the obscure, of might in weak and fallen, to delight in what is grievous and miserable. We see the divine method to be the same in the lower and in the higher working, only in the one it is pursued tardily and obscurely through the subconscious in Nature, in the other it becomes swift and self-conscious and the instrument confesses the hand of the Master. All life is a Yoga of Nature seeking to manifest God within it self. Yoga marks the stage at which this effort becomes capable of self-awareness and therefore of right completion in the individual. It is a gathering up and concentration of the elements dispersed and loosely combined in the lower evolution."

He sums it up "An integral method and an integral result. First, a complete realisation of Divine Being, not only a realisation of the one in its indivisible unity, but also in its multitude of aspects which are the realisation of the complete knowledge of it by the relative consciousness, not only a realisation of unity in the Self, but of unity in the infinite diversity of nature, world and man."

“Therefore, also, integral liberation. Not only the freedom born of unbroken contract of the individual being in all its parts with the Divine, by which it becomes free even in its separation, even in the duality One being, universal both in the world and the individual and transcendently one both in the world and beyond all universe

“By this integral realisation and liberation, the perfect harmony of the results of Knowledge, Love and Works For there is attained the complete release from ego and identification in being with the One in all and beyond all ”

Ramana Maharshi

In the Indian world of spirit, the place of Ramana Maharshi—"Bhagavan"—to his followers—is somewhere at the top. He equals Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo in lustre and stature. These three are generally regarded as the 'Light of lights,' as the leading spiritual figures of contemporary India. His following, however, is limited for reasons about which I shall talk a little later. He had been living at Madura, city of the celebrated temple of Meenakshi—which meant so much to the Maharshi. I have seen this "Mathura" of the south and its great and extremely imposing temple with its tall towers, or "gopurams" as they are called. Rising high into the sky, they point like the minarets of mosques and steeples of the churches, to the Infinite and the Absolute and symbolise the yearnings of the human soul. But what struck me most was the extraordinarily intricate and elaborate design and carving of these gopurams. There is an amalgam of so many elements, figures—divine, human and animal, mythological and fantastic—and other decorative work, that the mind is bewildered. The immense complexity of Hinduism, its symbols and myths, are all there in one great architectural composition. Obviously for a foreigner like myself it is impossible to understand it all, but I think that it would be difficult even for the Indian, for the Hindu, to grasp the total meaning and significance of this sculptured mass.

Yes, it was at this place, Madura, that Ramana Maharshi had been residing before the great change in his life occurred. He describes graphically how he was led to the path of self-realisation.

or my elders or friends ; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

“The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inward and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words ‘Now death has come , what does it mean ? What is it that is dying ? This body dies ’ And I at once dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though rigour mortis had set in and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word ‘I’ nor any other word could be uttered. ‘Well then,’ I said to myself, ‘this body is dead It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead ? Is the body I ? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the ‘I’ within me apart from it. So, I am spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death That means I am the deathless Spirit.’ All this was not dull thought , it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought process ‘I’ was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that ‘I’. From that moment onwards the ‘I’ or Self focussed attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all

Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on Other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the ‘I’ continued like the fundamental sruti note that underlies and blends with all the other notes * Whether the body was engaged in talking or anything else I was still centred on ‘I’

“Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of myself and was not consciously attracted to it I felt no perceptible or direct interest in it, much less any inclination to dwell permanently in it.”

All this took barely half an hour, and in these thirty minutes, without the aid of a guru or a long and sustained Yogic sadhana carried out for endless years on

*The monotone persisting through an Indian piece of music like the thread on which beads are strung, represents the Self persisting through all the forms of being

snowy peaks, in dense forests, on the banks of a sacred river, or in dark and lonely caves, this man had attained samadhi, the state of pure bliss' Shavasana and total concentration of the mind and the psyche that seems to be the method of this sahaja (easy) samadhi. Nevertheless it should not be viewed as easy.

We should not think that as the awakening took only half an hour it was not sadhana of the highest kind. To quote Arthur Osborne "This whole sadhana took barely half an hour, and yet it is of the utmost importance to us that it was a sadhana, a striving towards light, and not an effortless awakening; That Sri Bhagavan completed within half an hour not merely the sadhana of a lifetime, but, for most sadhakas, of many lifetimes, does not alter the fact that it was a striving by Self-enquiry such as he later enjoined on his followers."

Thus, at the early age of 17, Shri Ramana Maharshi already had the reputation of a saint. He went to live in a cave, on the Arunachala mountain held sacred by the people, near Tiruvannamalai, in Madras. I would like to say something about Tiruvannamalai before I proceed. It is a middling South Indian town 120 miles south-west of Madras. By bus it took us about 5 hours to reach there. Tiruvannamalai means 'The auspicious supreme mountain'. It is a very old town and has a big majestic temple. The character of this town is intimately linked with the character of Maharshi's teaching. Arthur Osborne says, "It is no accident that the Maharshi made Tiruvannamalai and its sacred mountain of Arunachala his home. Each of the spiritual centres of India has its own character and its own line of tradition and among them all it is Tiruvannamalai (or Arunachala) that represents the highest and most direct, the most formless and least ritualistic, of paths, that is the path of Self-enquiry, the gateway to which is the silent initiation. This is expressed in the old Tamil saying 'To see Chidambaram, to be born at Tiruvarur, to die at Benares or even to think of Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation'. Even to think of it because in the case of the direct path physical contact is necessary."

Disciples came to him from far and near and he was popularly known as Maharshi (Great Sage). His devotees called him by the divine name, 'Bhagavan'.

As his following grew, it was felt that the cave was too small for their needs and they moved on to a bigger cave in Skandashram, higher up the mountain side. Sri Ramanasramam came up at a spot, about an hour's walk from his cave, where his mother was buried. The reader might be wondering how a Hindu could be buried. Osborne explains it thus :

“The Mother died in 1922, attaining Liberation at the moment of death, through persistent effort fortified by the concentrated grace of her son. As tradition demands in the case of a Liberated Being, the body was not cremated but buried. No burial is allowed on the sacred mountain, so she was buried at its foot, at the southern most point, where a cemetery already existed.”

Sri Ramana Maharshi was already over 40. He had spent more than 20 years in Tiruvannamalai and was now a Self-Realised Sage. His younger brother, Sri Niranjanananda Swami built the Ashram and became its controller. Sri Ramana Maharshi was against all publicity and took no interest in the running of the Ashram as such. Devotees came and sought the Guru's guidance through word and presence. As Sri Ramana Maharshi was not keen on having a mass following he did not encourage the building of residential and other facilities. It was, and still is, rather difficult to find accommodation in the Ashram.

Then, in 1950, the Maharshi died. The fears that the Ashram would come to an end were soon belied. The Great Sage's presence suffused the environment. He had actually approved a will before his death, in which he had expressed the wish that the Ashram should continue as a spiritual centre. His Universal Self, the devotees feel, has been and will always be there. The Maharshi always stressed that it was the body which was leaving them not he. He made it clear that he would remain the Guru as before. He believed that, “the Guru is not the physical form, so contact will remain even after his physical form vanishes.”

A shrine was built in his memory just outside the meditation hall in which he used to sit with his devotees. The son of Sri Ramana Maharshi's brother, T. N. Venkataramana, is now the Manager-President. He is helped by an Advisory Committee of devotees.

Maharshi said that the two paths are not incompatible , and his devotees have found it so.

“It will be seen that both these paths are direct inner disciplines, independent of ritual ; so here we have another characteristic of Ramanasramam There is a minimum of ritual and organisation there People go and sit silent in meditation before the Maharshi’s shrine or in the hall where he sat for so many years with his devotees. They walk on the sacred mountain, Arunachala, or sit in their rooms. They visit or talk. They arrange to take their meals at the Asramam or prepare their own food, as they choose. There is scarcely any outer discipline. The Vedas are chanted in front of the shrine, morning and evening, as they used to be in the Maharshi’s presence in his lifetime, but even for this attendance is not compulsory. And those who do attend sit together, shoulder to shoulder, Brahmin and non-Brahmin, Hindu and foreigner, which would not please those who make a fetish of orthodoxy. This, however, does not imply laxity , the discipline comes from within.

“Pure jnana-marga and pure bhakti marga though it is, the Maharshi’s path contains a strong element of Karma-marga also, since he expects his devotees to follow it in the life of the world. Time and again someone would come to him and ask his authorisation to renounce the world, and he would not give it ”

One does not, therefore, find many yogis and sannyasis here. Most of the followers of Ramana Maharshi carry on with their worldly life, and make only occasional visits to the Ashram. Another thing which impressed me was that among the devotees who live in the Ashram, the foreigners constituted a fair proportion I am told that this is true of the visitors also. The reason for this is explained by Osborne

‘ There is no need to be a Hindu to follow it Anyone, whatever religion he professes, whether he professes any formal religion or not, can practise Self-enquiry or can worship and submit Therefore the Maharshi never expected any of his devotees to change from one religion to another Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Parsis came to him, as well as Hindus Some continued to practise the forms of their religions, others not , it was up to them ” Ramanasramam is not the right place for a ritualist or strict formalist. Those who crave for material gains, visions and powers, had better go to other places.

Different ashrams in India lay varying stress on the four categories of Yoga—Jnana, Bhakti, Raja Karma. Sri Ramana Maharshi was of the view that various margas—paths to Self-Realization are not exclusive of one another. As a psychiatrist, I was always struck by the emphasis which Indian religious and philosophic leaders placed on, what is called, the psychology of the individual. For instance, Ramana Maharshi took the temperament of the devotee into account while suggesting the path to Self-Realization. He was once asked which method is the best. His reply was simple: "that depends on the temperament of the individual. Every person is born with the samskaras (characteristics or tendencies) from his past lives. One method will prove easy to one person and another to another. There can be no general rule. Each should be allowed to go his own way—the way for which a road may be built. It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple along his own path and then gradually turn him into the supreme path when the time is ripe. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it and to turn it at once would lead to a crash."

The disciple is enjoined to resort to devotion if he is temperamentally unsuited for Self-enquiry. If neither of these methods suits him, he can gain tranquility by breath control. If health does not permit him to go in for this third method, he can always try Karma marga, the path of noble deeds and service of humanity. In this context, it is interesting as noted above, that Sri Ramana opposed renunciation. Osborne tells us that, "it is normal in India that all those who do not renounce the world to become sadhus marry, and Bhagavan discouraged renunciation. He never enjoined celibacy and he showed interest in births and marriages among the devotees."

Nevertheless, he never tried to belittle the importance of other methods and aids like satsang, breath-control, asanas, Hatha Yoga, concentration on sounds and visions, etc. Of Hatha Yoga, for instance, he says : "Even great pandits well-versed in Vedanta continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind." His words on Nada Yoga throw a flood of light on this particular method of concentration. "Meditation on nada is one of the various approved methods. Its adherents claim a very special virtue for it. According to them it is the easiest and most direct method. Just as a child is lulled to sleep by lullabies, so nada soothes one to the state of samadhi. Again, just as a king sends his state musicians to welcome his son on his return from a long journey, so also nada takes the devotee into the Lord's abode in a pleasing manner. Nada helps concentration, but after it begins to be felt, the practice should not be made an end in itself. Nada is not the objective, the subject should firmly be held. Otherwise, a blank will result. Though the subject is there even in the blank one must remember his own self. Nada Upasana (meditation on sound) is good, it is better if associated with Self-enquiry."

Talking of concentration between the eye-brows which is so prominent in the thinking of certain sects, Shri Ramana Maharshi says : "What is the use of fixing one's attention between the eye-brows ? The aim of such advice is to help the mind to concentrate. It is one of the forcible methods to check the mind and prevent its dissipation. The mind is forcibly directed into one channel and this is a help to concentration. But the method of realization is the enquiry 'Who am I ?' The present trouble affects the mind and it can only be removed by the mind." On the question of the right kind of diet for spiritual endeavours, he is absolutely clear : "Physically, the digestive and other organs are to be kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement and all foods which induce them. Mentally, take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let that interest be self-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (vairagya) and concentration."

Before I conclude this chapter, I would like to summarize briefly the aims and activities of this Ashram. Unlike Aurobindo Ashram in the South and the Beas Satsang in the North, there is no activity here in the field of industry, engineering and education. The Ashram has a fine library containing about four thousand books on religion, philosophy, Yoga and Vedanta in Indian and foreign languages.

The Ashram is an ideal place for quiet meditation. Many devotees gather in the hall and in front of the samadhi for this purpose. Study circles are held in the main hall to discuss the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and lectures are given from time to time by competent people on spiritual and philosophical questions. The Ashram normally has nearly fifty inmates who take food together in typical South Indian style. A free dispensary is also run. The birth day and the Mahanirvana day of Sri Ramana Maharshi are celebrated every year. The Ashram brings out quarterly, 'The Mountain Path,' which is edited by Mr. Arthur Osborne, an English disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Anandashram

The Founder of one of the better known ashrams in South India, Swami Ramdas, renounced the worldly life, in which he was known as Vittal Rao, in 1922. Deeply imbued in the philosophy of reaching God through the Japa of His name—Bhakti Yoga—Vittal Rao wandered as a sadhu all over India. He firmly believed in Divine Grace, abandoned himself totally to the Will of Ram and set out to achieve Realisation through the force of the Ram mantra which he never tired of reciting. He returned to the South after years of roaming around as a mendicant in search of the Light. Having obtained the Light and God-awareness, he undertook the mission of breaking the heavy chains which prevent the ignorant and the unguided from reaching Him. This “Realised” yogi, whose benign and artless smile used to draw people irresistibly to him and his message, had an astonishingly successful world tour in 1954.

The Anandashram which was founded by Swami Ramdas and has been lovingly nurtured by Mother Krishnabai ever since its inception, has brought light and wisdom to thousands of the devotees of Swami Ramdas. Swami Ramdas was one of the greatest yogis of modern times. He succeeded in burying his little self, early in life, and beheld the Supreme Spirit everywhere. Bhakti, Vairagya, Satsang and, above all, Divine Grace enabled him to taste the fruit of ultimate wisdom. As he puts it, “Grace is ever pouring on us from God as the sun is ever shedding light on all objects—opaque, translucent and transparent. But opaque objects do not reflect the light, translucent things reflect it but partially, while transparent things reflect it fully. The difference is not due to the absence or failure of sunlight, but due to the difference in the reflecting capacity of the objects. Similarly, we imbibe Grace and benefit by it, according to our capacity to receive, according to our preparedness and purity.”

Swami Ramdas was no more yogi out to save his own soul. For him God was all Love, Goodness, Compassion and Service. All his saintliness and wisdom found powerful expression on this earthly plane. He believed that service was bliss and lived it. In his own words, “Ramdas does not want anyone to lead only

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a contemplative life. One must also serve one's fellow-beings, in a selfless spirit. To serve Man is to serve God. In Karma Yoga, work is done as worship. Then alone it gives joy. It should be done as perfectly as possible, with great care and love and never in a slipshod, clumsy, irregular or half-hearted way. The inner beauty must reveal itself in outer conduct." Again Ramdas emphasizes that "In the final synthesis of an all-round spiritual experience, you realise that the whole universe is your body. Your love and service of anyone in it will be felt to be but love and service done to yourself. The spiritual joy of which he drank so deep is available to all if they remember Him and feel His being everywhere. According to him, the fittest method for this is the immersing of one's total self in His Divine Name. This recitation of the Divine Name coupled with disciplined sadhana, self-control and total faith in Him, is the surest way to Realisation.

The first Anandashram was established at Kasuragod in 1928. In 1930 they had to abandon the Ashram in rather unhappy circumstances. The present Ashram which is situated at Ramdas Nagar, 3 miles from the Kanhangad Railway Station, was opened in May, 1931. The Ashram is situated on top of a hill, with a higher hill providing the back-drop. In front there is the sea, and all around there are fair fields and sloping grounds. One's total impression is that of an extraordinarily clean and picturesque set-up.

Mother Krishnabai presides over the activities in Anandashram. For her devotees, she is purity, love, light and joy personified. For them, her beaming, child-like smile and the mother-like air about her, her eyes, bright with Divine Light, and her sweet and soaring words are an inspiration. In the words of Ramdas, "Krishna Bai's life presents a practical illustration of how an individual can live a life of spontaneous and intense activity while ever fixed in the Divine Consciousness born of complete self-surrender. The all-embracing love of the Universal Mother is now manifesting itself in all its grandeur and glory. Every one, be he Hindu, Christian, Muslim, Brahmin, Shudra or 'untouchable', who has the unique privilege of her *darshan* cannot but recognise in her his own most loving mother. Ramdas cannot find adequate words to describe the wonderful greatness of this exalted soul. The Life which Krishna Bai dedicated to the service of suffering humanity, irrespective of caste and creed, and her complete surrender to, and trust in the Almighty, entitled her to His infinite Grace. She is indeed a divine child of a divine Mother."

She is a disciple of Swami Ramdas, her Papa, in the truest and deepest sense of the term. For her, Life is Service, and her own life reflects the glory of selfless service.

Swami Ramdas was full of life and had a tremendous capacity to thrill to the many Joys which life affords. His God was not an awe-inspiring deity; He was all Love, Joy, Fun and Play. The only thing Ramdas demanded of his followers was self-surrender, and the repetition of His Name. In the teachings of Ramdas, the greatest stress is laid on Ram Nam. He says that "The Name is the link between the devotee and God. It brings the devotee face to face with Him and enables him to realize oneness with him. Take the Name with all the faith you are capable of. Repeat it without a moment's break, whether you are in the kitchen, or engaged in fetching water, taking bath, walking in the streets or doing any physical work. If you do not practise keeping the Name ever on your lips, you cannot avoid being unhappy. Know this once and for all. The Name has the power to tear up the veil of Maya or ignorance and bring you face to face with God or Truth. It gives you at once the bliss of Bhakti and Mukti. The Name is not different from Him. The Divine Name is greater than any philosophy in the world. It is the key by which you can unlock the gates to the kingdom of immortal peace and bliss."

The sacred mantra recited and given by Ramdas reads thus .

"Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram."

It is customary for devotees of Ramdas to write this thousands of times without a stop. This is regarded as an act of piety. He also pinpoints the importance of rhythm in Japa. He says . "Rhythm is a most important factor in a Mantra. The soothing melody of the repeated word, or combination of words, has a marvellous effect on the distracted mind. No letters linked together could, by their harmonious music, lull and bring peace to the mind more than 'RAM'. It is said, rightly, that 'Ram' is equal in power to the sacred syllable 'OM'.

According to one devotee, Anandashram is a "veritable mart of Divine Bliss." It is a charitable trust run on the funds supplied by the affectionate followers of Papa and Mataji. Its guiding ideals are universal love and service. It is a spiritual centre which affords facilities for the regeneration of the soul, God-realisation. There is arrangement for bhajans, japa, yajnas and the institution of spiritual

Papa taught me to remember God's name in Ram, Ram. He told me to keep on repeating always and continuously the name of God That is one. Secondly, he instructed me to look upon everything that I saw, that is all beings and creatures and things in the Universe, as His form And lastly, to feel that everything is He and that anything done by hand, any action is His service These were the disciplines he taught me I started practising these disciplines Whenever I saw anything supernatural, as light or any vision I used to be afraid that these visions and supernatural experiences come because of my ignorance and that they are like a lock to close the door to my supreme goal God realisation. If one wants individual experiences, these won't permit one to go beyond and enjoy the Eternal So, I prayed to Papa not to give me these experiences, but to give me the highest experiences only. So, without giving me many of these intermediary experiences . forms, visions, sound and light

"Without any of these!" I interjected

Mother · Yes, without any of these, I got the higher experience After getting that experience, I came to know what our mental state is Before getting the experiences, I thought I was only this body from head to foot, but after getting that experience I knew better. Papa made me realise that I am the entire Universe;, and beyond the Universal form First, as an ignorant person and before getting these experiences, I thought I was only this body . 5 feet from head to foot. After the experience I was able to know what I am the entire Universe and also the formless beyond the Universe How can one become the entire Universe ? I am speaking about this body That does not make much difference . my hand is not separate and my leg is not separate. When I say I don't give any particular importance to the hand, arm or the leg, they are all my body There is no difference

"It is one unity," I suggested

Mother : Exactly. Now is the hand separated from the leg ? Or do you find that they are all one, yourself Do you find them separate ?

"No, of course, not," I replied

I told Mataji that I found her explanation that Yoga was one unity, very interesting.

Mother : Yes, Yoga is one unity. They can't be separated. One may, of course, give more importance to one particular aspect. .

Question : One question, Mother. Do you know if some people here in the Ashram have experienced this Anahat through Bhakti Yoga without pranayama asanas, etc.

Mother : Yes. These experiences are not the same with everybody

“Not the same with everybody?” I repeated.

Mother : Some Yogis do not wish to have these experiences at all, but want to have higher experience only. Others may want to have these intermediary experiences. But we cannot say if one will have or will not have these, it is difficult to say. If they come, it is all right, because everything is He, God himself, Papa himself. If they do not come, it is still alright. I have been told by many yogis that they experienced this Anahat. I myself will tell everybody not to give any importance to this, but keep the highest experience as one's goal. I asked some devotees who have experienced this Anahat, whether they were better mentally, whether they had mental purity after experiencing this Anahat. They may experience it for a while, for a few seconds. My question is whether the devotees continue to have joy and peace in mind afterwards. They said they did not have much peace. They enjoyed that for a while, a minute or so. Afterwards, when they got up from meditation, the experience vanished.

I thanked Mataji for the very interesting answers and bade her a respectful good-bye

They do not unify They only divide and lead to strife and conflict and all this brings religion into contempt Ramakrishna laid great stress on the need for inter-religious fellowship. This can be achieved only if mankind realises the fundamental unity of all religions

Ramakrishna was a great man indeed. To give the reader an idea of his greatness, I cannot do better than to quote the words of another great Indian, Sri Aurobindo In his monumental work, "The Synthesis of Yoga," he says, "In a recent unique example, in the life of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity, first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experiences and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge."

The work begun by Ramakrishna was continued by a keen and enthusiastic band of young disciples, led by Swami Vivekananda Swami Vivekananda meditated deep and long at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) I have unforgettable memories of this beautiful area For his disciples, the very air here vibrates with the thoughts and personality of Vivekananda The Vivekananda Rock, viewed especially at sunset when it stands out as the one and only thing in a vast expanse of sea, is one of the most impressive sights I have seen in India There seems to be an invisible bridge between the rock named after him in the south, and his ashram at Almora, signifying that the thoughts and personality of Vivekananda pervade all through India. Vivekananda, great disciple of a great guru, toured the South and fired the young with enthusiasm and passion for the resurgence of India In 1893, he went to America to attend the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago. Broad sympathy, sheer eloquence and utter sincerity were the hallmarks of his speeches in Chicago They say that this swami from India was one of the most imposing personalities any world assembly has ever known Here is one description of his powerful impact on the audience

"His face glowed like fire His eyes surveyed in a sweep the huge assembly before him The whole audience grew intent, a pin could have been heard to fall. Bowing to Devi Saraswati, the Goddess of Knowledge, he addressed his audience as, 'Sisters and Brothers of America' And with that, before he had uttered another word, the whole Parliament was caught up by a great wave of enthusiasm Hundreds rose to their feet

mind, from the savage to the most enlightened, in a grand synthesis, all going in their own way towards the Goal.

“Offer such a religion and the nations will follow you. Asoka’s council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar’s, though more to the purpose, was only a parlour meeting. It was reserved for America to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every religion.”*

In the words of Romain Rolland, “He repeated with new argument but with the same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space .. He harmonised them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the Divinity inherent in man and his capacity for infinite evolution.”

The one thing which Vivekananda never stopped repeating was that all religions of the world are the common inheritance of all mankind. In Vivekananda’s philosophy, there is no question of “this is mine” and “that is yours”. As he said at the Chicago Parliament, “If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this : It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of their resistance, ‘Help and not Fight’, ‘Assimilation and not Destruction’, ‘Harmony and peace and not Dissension’.”

Vivekananda’s firm faith in the validity and legitimacy of various paths leading to the one Absolute Self, was hard and firm as a rock. His thoughts fly with the wings of an eagle whenever he discourses on the subject. The majesty of his words on this theme is rivalled only by the greatness of the content. The scriptures say, “As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they may appear, crooked or straight, all lead

* Quoted from “The Life of Swami Vivekananda by his Eastern and Western disciples ”

and industries ; to carry on educational work among the masses , to establish maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, and other humanitarian and charitable institutions and to publish and sell suitable literature.

The Mission's headquarters are at Belur, a small town on the banks of the Ganges, about four miles up Calcutta The Belur Math commands a distant view of the Dakshineswar Temple garden where Ramakrishna lived and taught. It contains a monastery, a library, a guest house, a charitable dispensary and a magnificent temple dedicated to Ramakrishna.

The Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math are distinct yet closely related institutions Both have their headquarters at Belur Math. They are world-wide organisations, working in a wide variety of fields.

I feel that nothing is as expressive of the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission as its seal. In this seal, a serpent forms a circle. This circle is crowned by the head of the serpent Immediately below is the sun rising out of blue waters, which occupy two-thirds of the circle. In the middle of the circle is a swan and below it a lotus.

The significance of the various components of the design has been explained by Vivekananda with great lucidity thus :

“The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma, the lotus, of Bhakti, and the rising sun, of Jnana. The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the swan in the picture stands for the Paramatman Therefore, the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of the Paramatman is obtained ”

In respect of its intellectual bias, and also the multifarious activities carried on through hundreds of centres in India and the world, this institution is among the most important in India.

The Yogis of Delhi

My friend, Swami Shardananda, has the orthodox view of Yoga and yogis, so that from his point of view, one ought to get away from the worldly environment. For sadhana one goes to remote regions of the Himalayas, and to put it in his words, "one cannot have a Rishikesh in Delhi" And yet, in the age in which we live and with Yoga becoming almost a craze with the upper classes, ashrams have sprung up in the cities. The inexorable law of demand and supply is at work in this sphere also. People want the "spiritual", perhaps, need it more, and so there are bound to be temples and spiritual centres of different categories

Thus it happens that there are several ashrams, of various religious denominations, in the capital of India. There are Hindu Ashrams, Buddhist Vihars, Jain Kutirs, and so on. In fact, almost all the bigger religious organisations, some of which have been talked of in this book, have established their branches and offices in Delhi. This is understandable, for the governmental help and public support have to be, if not exactly canvassed, worked for. One has to be in the lime-light today, even in the spiritual field, or one's cause is likely to be forgotten. This is an age of publicity, we require it in all fields and the spiritual field is no exception

In a way, therefore, there are many Yogic ashrams and yogis in Delhi. And several yogis, some quite important ones, keep on visiting the capital from time to time. I cannot speak of all of them, but it is necessary to mention two yogis whom I met at Delhi

First, there is Dharendra Brahmachari. He is a very well-known yogi, and eminent Indians of the present times like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, both Prime Ministers of India, and many other leaders and ministers have been trained by him in Yogic exercises

This is not to say that all credit for Jawaharlal Nehru's interest or training in Yoga should go to Dharendra Brahmachari. Nehru believed passionately in keeping fit and found quite early in his political career that for a busy man, as he had grown to be, Yogic exercises were the best solution. In a matter of minutes, one

can do a few asanas, and that helps considerably. Add to this sensible food-habits and take normal precautions against over-anxiety and worry, and there is your recipe for good health, hard work, and sane living ! It appears that a lot of Indians in the highest walks of life are following this very method and in a way this serves as a good testimonial about the usefulness of Yoga at least for this specific secular purpose. Nehru was no spiritualist in the accepted sense of the word, but he did his shirshasana regularly. It appears that he had become interested in the ancient Indian system of Yoga exercises long before Dharendra Brahmachari appeared on the scene, for I saw a picture of Nehru, the old "westernized" Nehru, dressed in an European suit of the latest style with one Buddha Bose in the latter's book, "Key to the Kingdom of Health through Yoga", published in 1938, to which Nehru had given a kind of foreword. Nevertheless Dharendraji was a frequent visitor to the Prime Minister's House while Nehru was alive, and he is generally regarded as the yogi of the elite—the yogi who has and drives his own car. He runs an ashram known as Vishwayatan Yogashram. This was located first at Jantar Mantar Road, where Yogic exercises were taught by a band of highly trained yogis, disciples of Dharendra Maharaj. Now, the Ashram has been shifted to Defence Colony in a place which, luckily for me, is very close to my own residence in New Delhi.

Consequently, I could manage to meet him several times, and we had long talks about Yoga and Yoga techniques, about his work and my work. These meetings and talks took place sometimes at my residence, and at other times at his, and a few times, we went out to the beautiful and tranquil Buddha Jayanti Park on the Ring Road. I learnt a great deal from Dharendra Maharaj, but in return, could teach him nothing beyond eating with knife and fork ! That was all the western 'Yoga' I could return for what I learnt in respect of eastern Yoga, especially Yogic exercises, and Sukshma Vyayam vidya of which he is regarded a master. He has published an excellent and well-illustrated book on this subject.

The other yogi of note whom I met at Delhi is the Yogiraj. His full name is Yogiraj Shri Siyaram Sharanji Maharaj Shri Vaishnav and if Dharendraji Maharaj is, generally speaking, the yogi of the elite, the upper classes, then the Yogiraj is the guru of the lower classes, the scheduled classes. Dharendraji lives well, has a paraphernalia of attendants, drives his own car, and is at present on a world tour during which he is being treated as a V.I.P. Yogiraj is at the other

extreme. He lives with his wife, simply, in a very poor-looking dwelling, and, as I have said earlier, is the yogi of the poor.

It would appear from the above that there would be little which is common between the two. I was, therefore, quite surprised when I learnt that the two were spiritual brothers, and had lived and worked together for sometime. How the parting of the ways came is a story which hardly concerns us. The important thing is that together or separate they have done and are doing good work for the cause of Yoga.

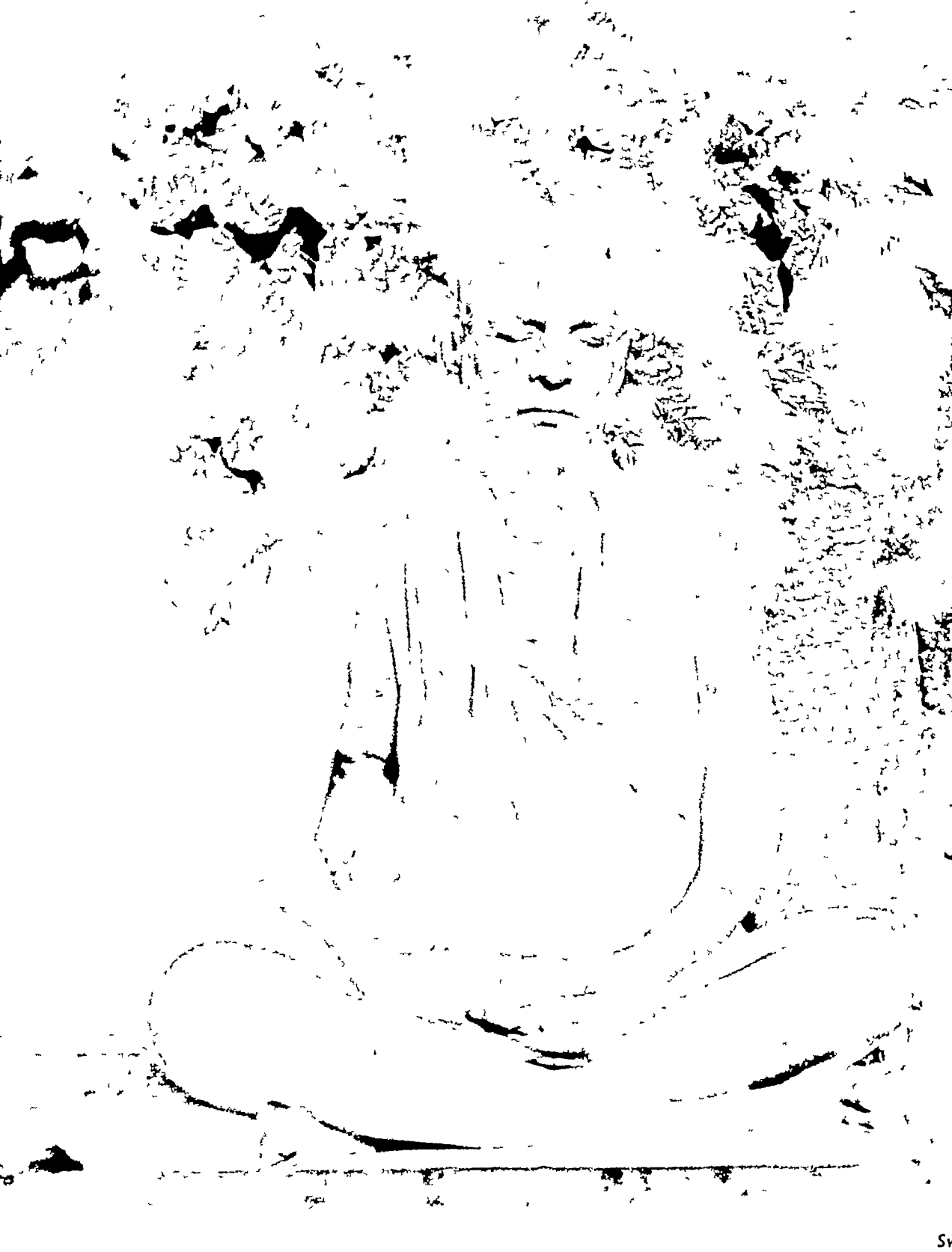
The Yogiraj runs an ashram known as Shri Vaishnav Yogashram, and is a great Raja yogi. I was keen to make a few pictures of Yogic asanas and I requested the Yogiraj to pose for me in these asanas. This, the Yogiraj did, for which I am sincerely thankful to him. Indeed, I have a feeling that I must have come to India at a time most auspicious for me, for I have received a great deal of cooperation and all possible courtesy from Indian yogis in respect of my work.



*Above Swami Vishnudevananda
He gave sannyasa to
Swami Sivananda*

*Below A rare photograph of
Swami Sivananda
with his disciples*



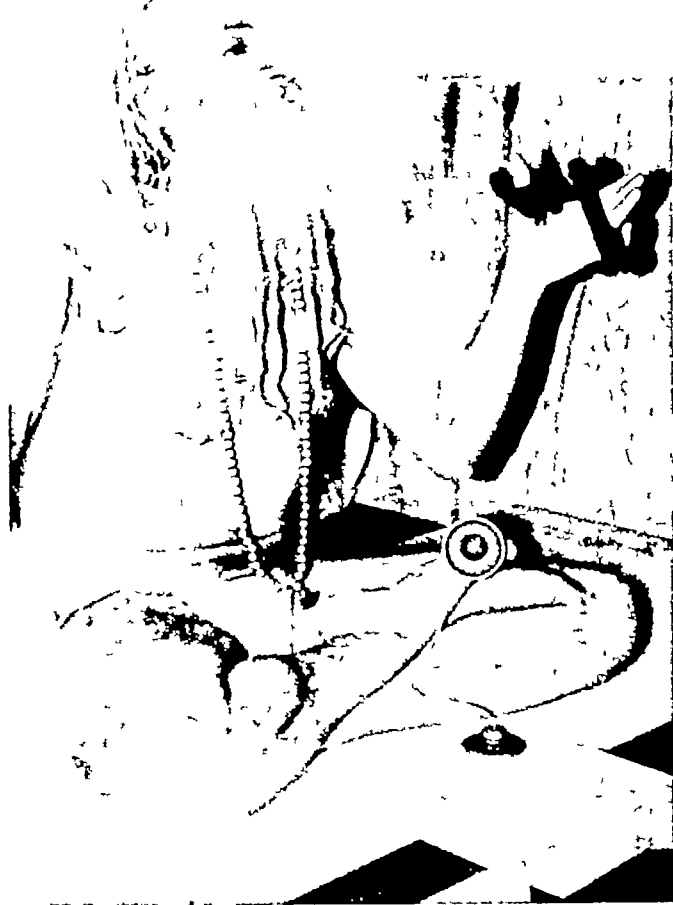




*Swami Chidananda
Successor of Swami Sivananda*



Swami Krishnananda



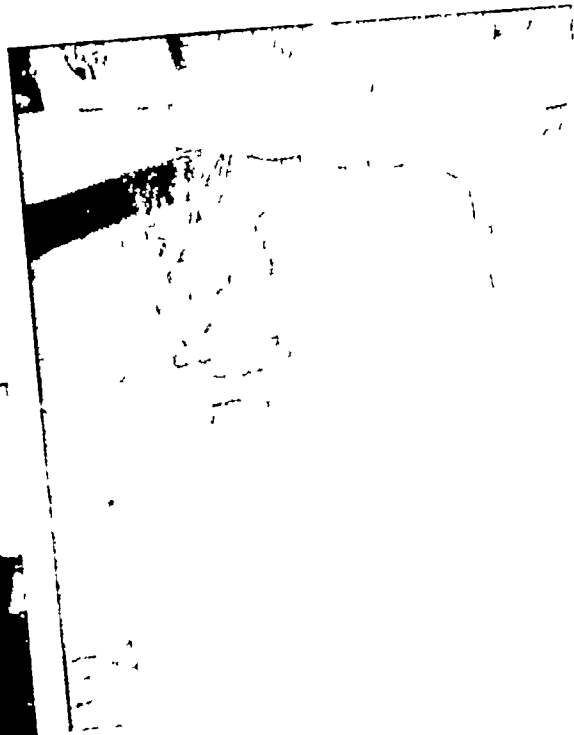
*Above Swami Karunananda,
a great Raja Yogi*

Below left Swami Shardananda

*Below Right Swami Nada
Brahmananda*



Vibrations being recorded
at the crown of the head



Vibrations starting
from the mouth



The Author recording
the vibrations in the region
of the chakras



Vibrations being
recorded at the ear

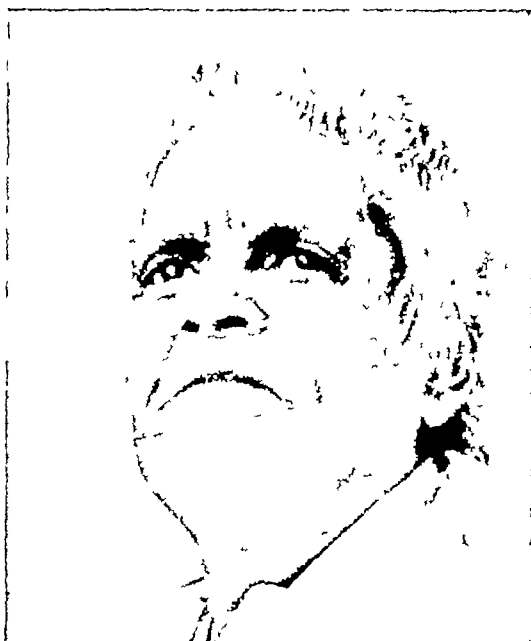
*Anandamayee Ma—regarded
India's greatest Yogini*



Anandamayee Ma's Mother



Anandamayee Ma's late husband



*Priya Devi
one of the oldest
disciples of hers*



Above left A yogi's half-shack
half-cave in Himalayas

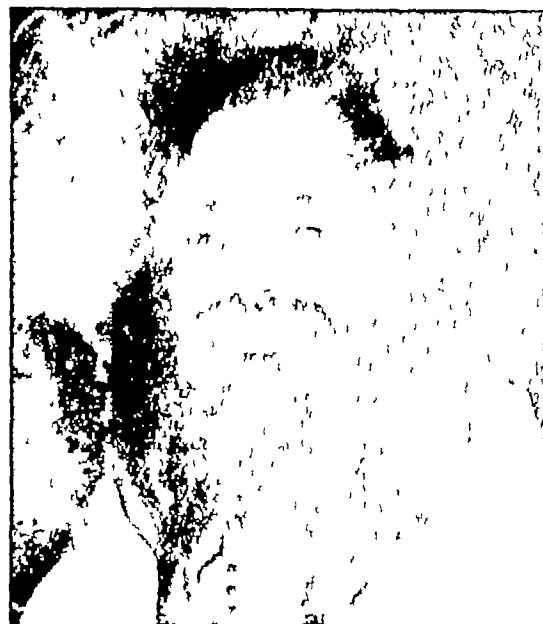
Above right Dr Atrey at work in his
research centre

Below left 100 years old Mahant Naga Baba
He has been living here for over 50 years

Below right Interior of a cave in the Himalayas



INDIAN SOCIETY
FOR
YOGIC AND YOGIC RESEARCH
भारतीय योग-तन्त्र आध्यात्मिकी परिषद्

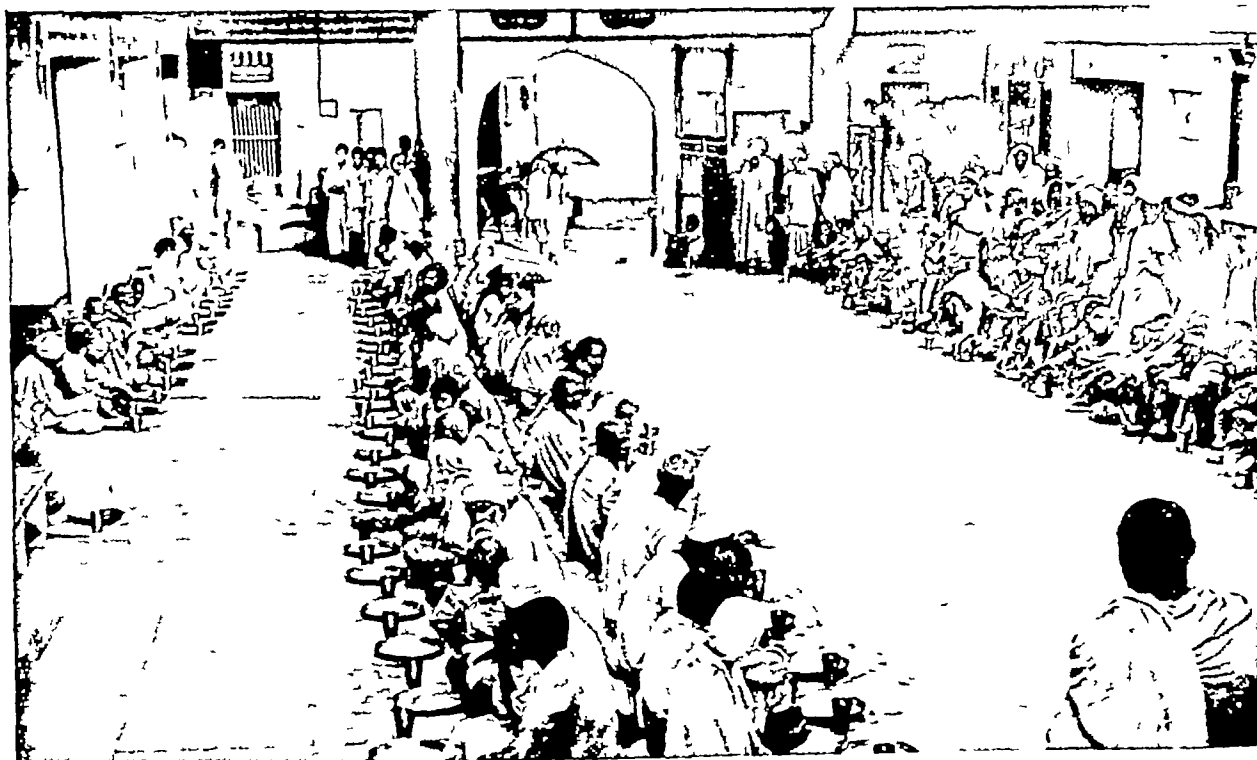


Dr. Atrey's Research Centre at Rajpura,
 Dehradun

Above right—Maharshi Mahesh Yogi

In the centre right—Swami Narayananda

Below—Rishikesh Here over thousand
 Sadhus take free meals daily



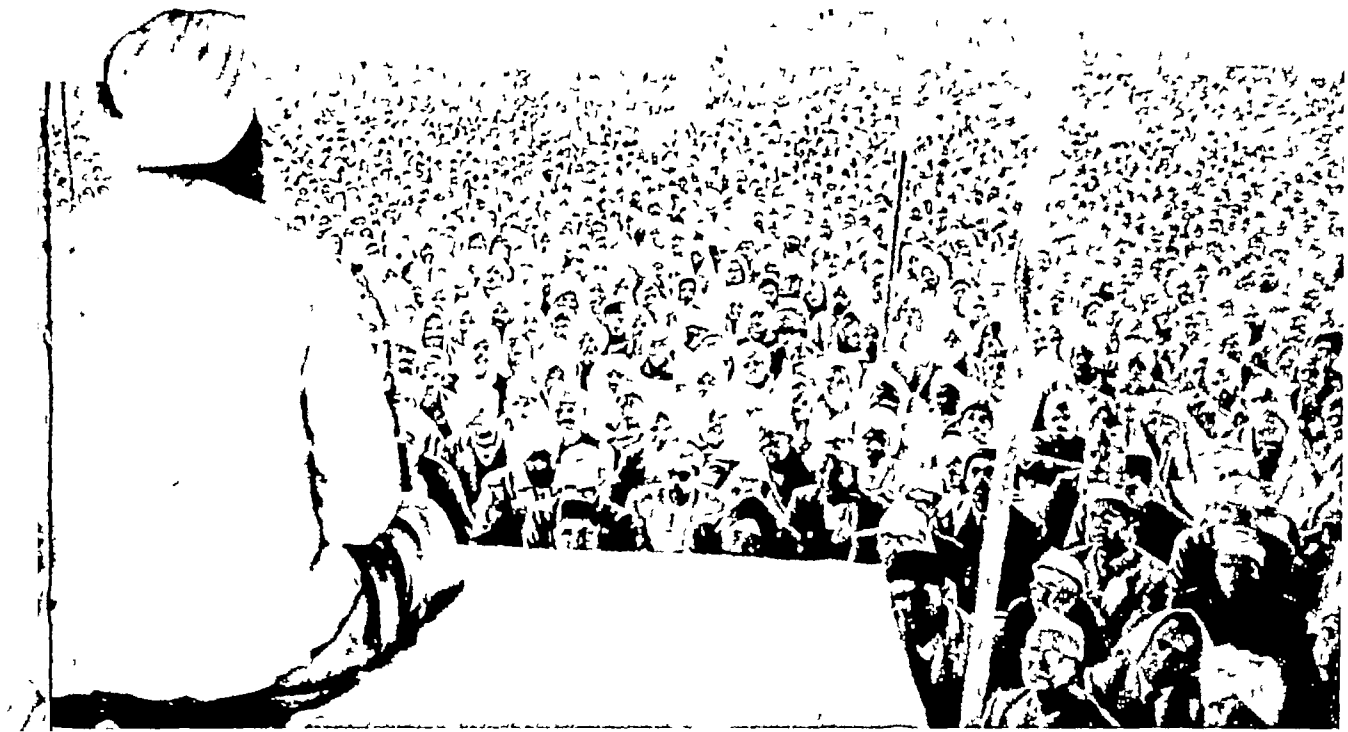


*Maharaj Charan Singh, Guru of the
Radhasoamis of Beas pointing to
the third eye*

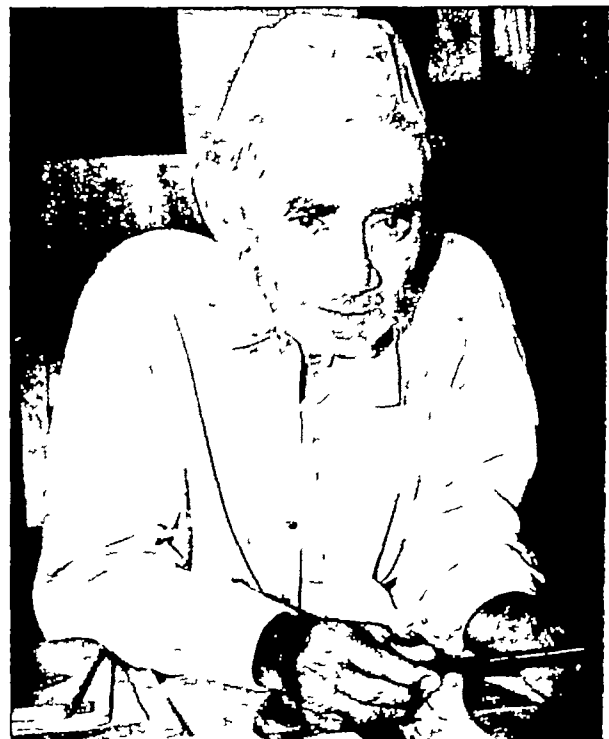


The Guru's wife





*The Satsang at Beas More than 300,000
pilgrims come here every year to attend
the Satsang*



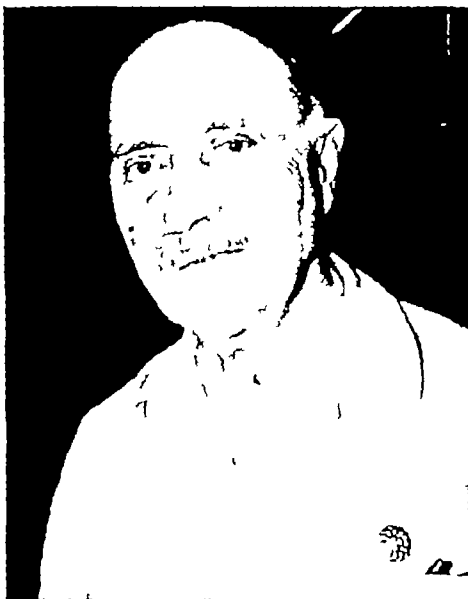
*Shri Babu Ramji, Private Sec of the Guru
of the Radha Soamis of Dayal Bagh, Agra*



*Sri Aurobindo, the great yogi of Pondicherry,
founder of one of the biggest yogic organi-
sations of modern India*



*The Mother of Sri Aurobindo
Ashram*



*M Andre Morisset, son of the
Mother*



*Madame Francoise Ange,
daughter of M Morisset*



*Michet Ange, son of Madame
Ange*

Left Yoga-Philosopher Sh M P Pandit



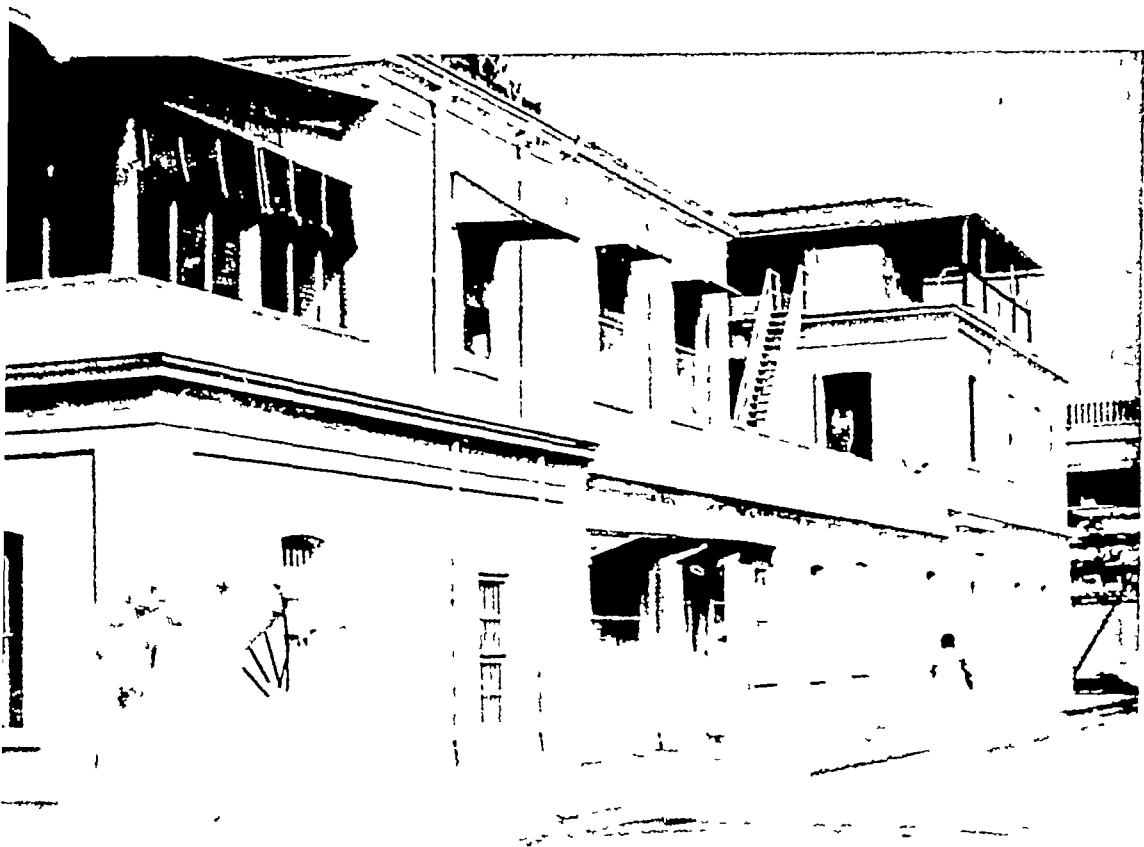
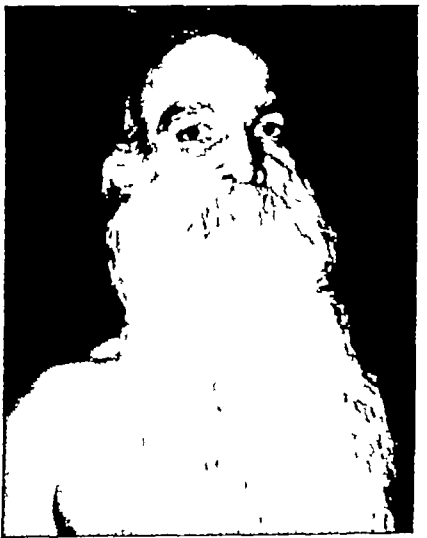
Right Scholar and Psychologist
Indira Sen



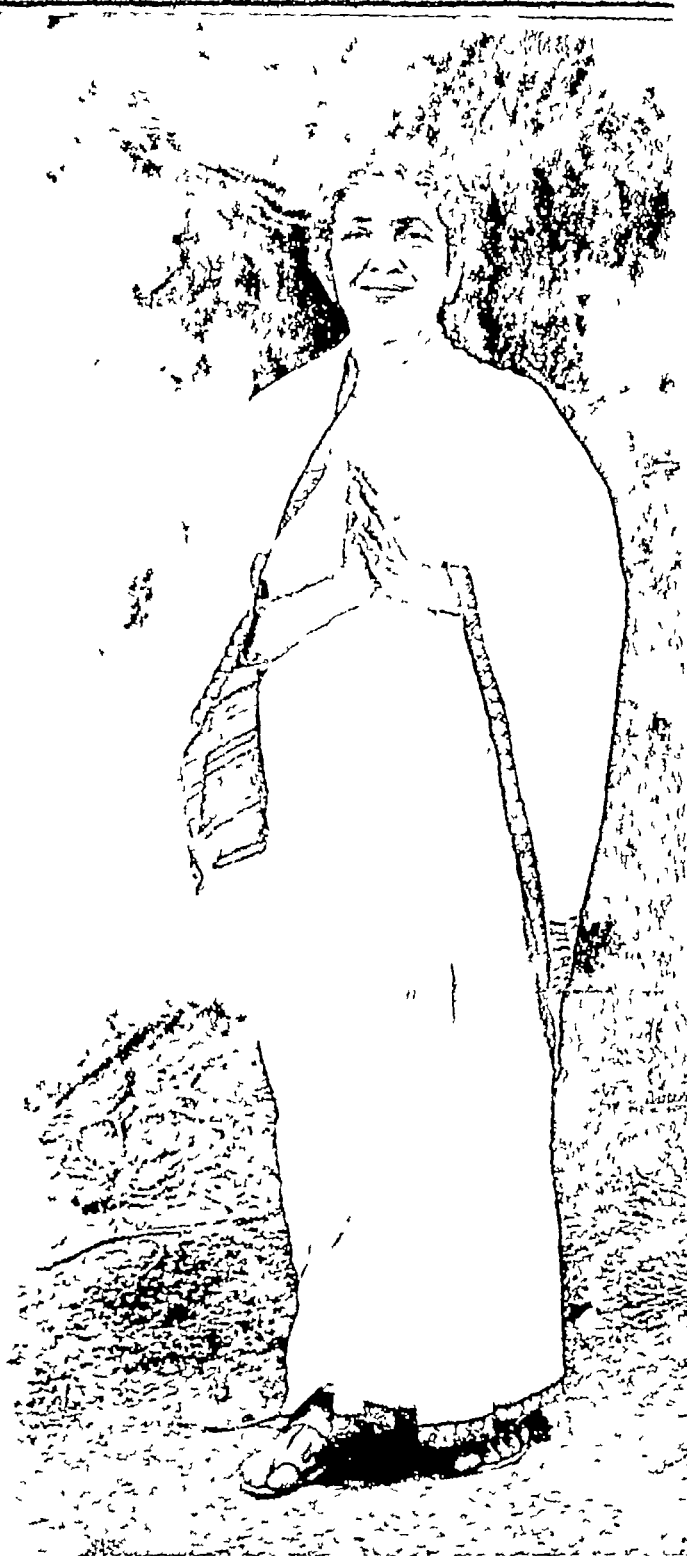
Left Private Sec Sh N K Gupta



Right Personal Attendant
Sh Champak Lal



Headquarters of
Sri Aurobindo's Ashram



Left Swami Ramdas, Great Yogi of
South India

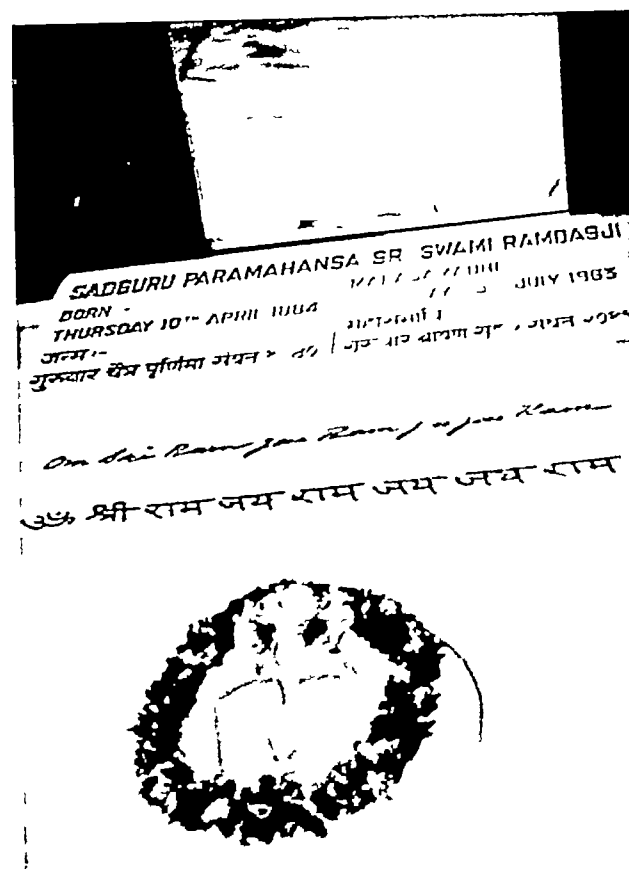
Above Mother Krishnabai, successor of
Swami Ramdas



Swami Satchidananda, Mother's
Private Secretary

Yogi of Ramdas Ashram writing
the mantra - a thousand times
and more

Fascimile reproduction of the
mantra inscribed on the Samadhi
at Anandashram





Portrait of a bearded man
one of the earliest known
portraits of the 13th century



*Swami Vivekananda
disciple of Ramakrishna Parmahansa
& founder of the Ramakrishna Math*



Ramakrishna Math

Left A typical Sadhu
of North India



Right Raja Yogi Nathji
Ananda of Bombay



Ashram of
Swami Onkarananda
Madras

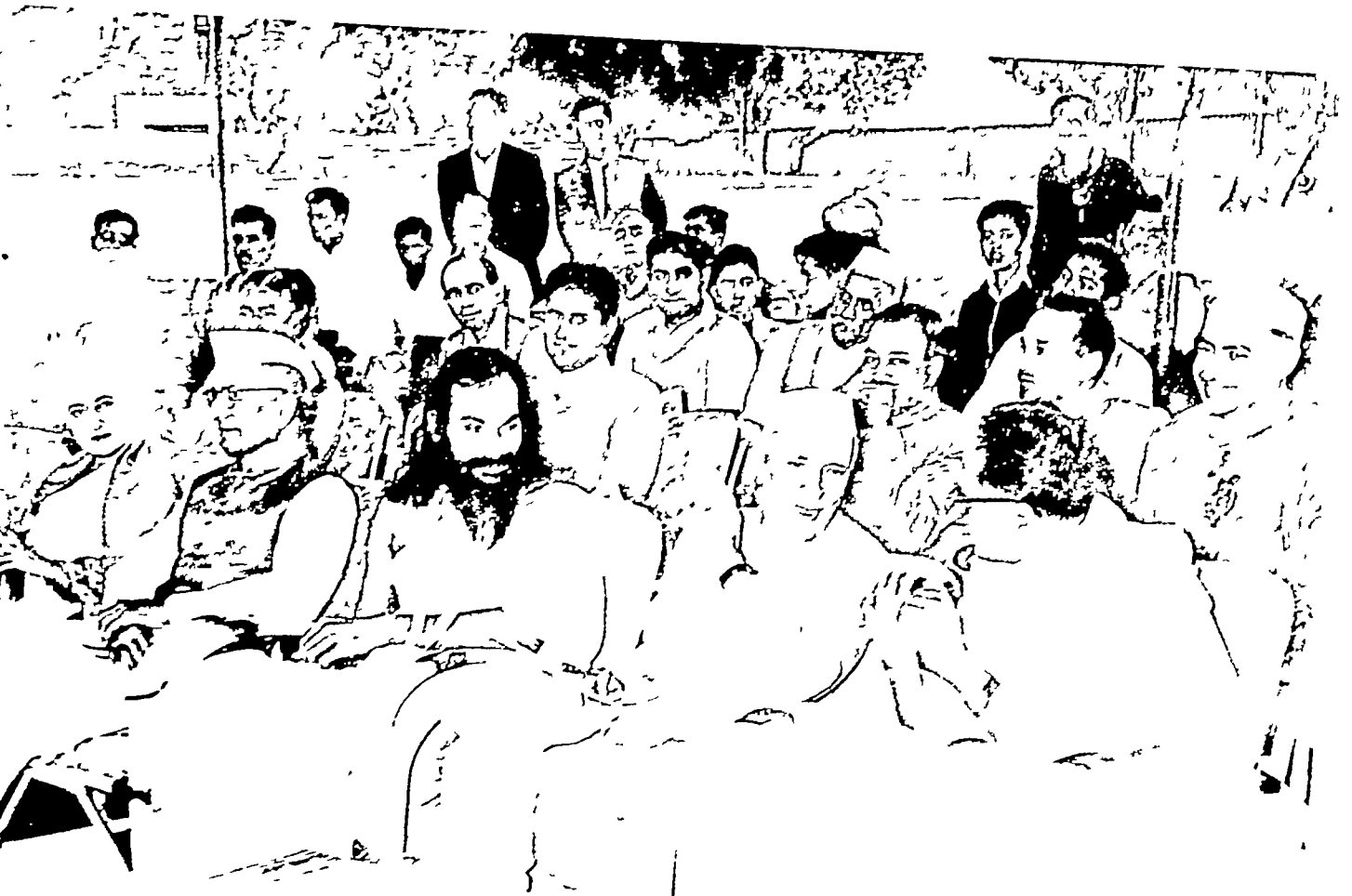
Swami Onkarananda
of Madras





Dhirendra Brahmachari with Pandit Nehru and Smt Indira Gandhi

Smt Indira Gandhi, Sh Morarji Desai, Dhirendra Brahmachari & Pt Nehru at public meeting





Ramana Maharshi, one of the greatest Indian Yogis of this century



*T N Venkataraman, nephew of
Ramana Maharshi*





*Dr S Radhakrishnan with Pt Nehru
and Dhirendra Brahmachari*



Dhirendra Brahmachari driving his car



*Shri Siyaram Sharanji Maharaj
Yogi of the common folk*

Section III

Yoga and Medicine

Yoga and Medicine

The Yogic practices and phenomena were among the chief contributory factors for the growth and development of the ancient Indian Systems of Medicine, known as the Ayurvedic. The history of Ayurveda as of most ancient Indian things went unrecorded. The traditional date, however, is about 3,000 years ago. Scholars divide the history of Ayurveda into four periods: (1) The Vedic period, (2) the period of original research and classical authors, (3) the period of compilation and also of Tantras and Siddhas (Chemist physicians), and (4) the period of stagnation and recompilation. It was about the beginning of the Christian era, that Ayurveda reached its zenith and there was much give-and-take between this system and the systems of medicine in Egypt, Greece, Rome and Arabia. Its protagonists claim that "through its influence on Greek medicine and through the influence of the Greek on Arabian medicine and of the Arabian on the medicine in Europe, the Ayurvedic system can well claim to be the chief, though remote source, from which the mighty river of Western medicine has had its beginnings."

This progress was not maintained thereafter. With the arrival of the Muslims the Unani system was introduced into the country and was the vogue for some time. The common people received treatment from practitioners of the two systems but little was done by way of any scientific investigation.

With the advent of the British in the 1830's, both these systems, which were already stagnating received further setbacks. The traditional systems of medicine were made use of by the villagers and the poorer sections of the society. Now, however, the government is, a lot to encourage their development along scientific modern lines.

Reverting now to the subject of special interest to me, i.e. Yoga therapy. I would like to quote Dr. Vinayar and Saami Kuralayan who are experts in disease in Yoga and the principles of Yogic treatment.

"Yoga is generally supposed to deal with the mind and the body. But a diligent reading of the Yoga Sutra will convince any one that the yoga system is a homeostatic mechanism. The yogic concept of the working of the mind and the body is a homeostatic mechanism."

integrated functioning ('*Samadhi*') even in the face of normal, external and internal stimuli ('*klesas*') i.e. that every person has an inherent power of adaptation. At the same time, though the tendency of body and mind is to obtain a functional balance, every irritation or stimulus from without or within (be it mechanical, chemical, electrical, biological or psychological), does bring about a certain amount of psycho-physiological disturbance ('*viksepa*'). How long this '*viksepa*' will last will depend upon the relative strength of the stimuli, on the one hand, and the homoeostatic ability of the body and mind, on the other. It is the aim of Yoga (in the sense of means—'*yukti*') to devise ways and means to help the body and mind maintain their state of balance, or regain it quickly if lost, in the face of such disturbing factors.

"*Vyadhi*"—disease—is considered as one such psycho-physiological disturbance or '*viksepa*' (Vide P.Y S I-30). We have already pointed out that the word 'Yoga', as the 'end' signifies 'integration' or *samadhi* (from *sam+a+dha*—to put together as one whole), '*vyadhi*' (from *vi+a+dha*—to put out, to disconcert) is opposite of this, i.e. disintegration, it contributes to a feeling of being 'ill' at ease ('*dukkha*') and hence it is a 'dis-case'—producing process. It is, therefore, a '*viksepa*'."

Thus, Yoga has always been concerned with harmony and fusion, rather than with disunity and strife. This is reflected in the basic tenet of Yogic therapy. To quote Dr Vinekar and Swami Kuvalyananda again, "In the treatment of diseases, there are two ways of looking at things, one is to investigate the offending factor and help its eradication and leave the body to recoup itself, once it is freed from the hands of 'marauders', another is to help the body itself to put up a brave and successful fight against the offenders and come out victorious by dint of its own efforts. The body has its own inherent powers of developing specific immunity and has also a general capacity of resisting the onslaughts or offending factors successfully"

"The attitude of Yoga towards the problem of disease, as towards everything else, is that one has to fortify one's own self rather than waste time in eradicating this or that particular offending factor "

It seems therefore, that Indian philosophy and medicine have never thought of the mind and the body as separate entities, but as mere elements in a compound. In a Government report published in 1948 one finds much emphasis laid on this aspect of Yoga. The report was submitted by the Committee on Indigenous Systems of Medicine, and was published by the Ministry of Health. It was greatly in favour of a scientific modern approach to medicine and recommended the application of scientific methods for the investigation of the Indigenous Systems of Medicine. Of special interest to me is the recommendation that psychological medicine be included as one of the main categories under which research should be conducted. I would like to quote the Report on this subject: "The study of psychology and psychiatry is one of the oldest and best cultivated of studies, in Indian medicine. The following verse in the Gita sums up the most modern psychological findings in regard to the origin of mental disturbances 'Man, musing on the objects of sense, conceiveth an attachment to these, from attachment ariseth desire; from desire anger cometh forth, from anger proceedeth delusion, from delusion confused memory, from confused memory the destruction of reason, from destruction of reason he perisheth' ". Basing his opinion on studies of such works as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Yoga Vasishtha, and Buddha Darsanas, Dr. M.V. Govindaswamy says "Many psychological doctrines and results of modern research have been anticipated and commented upon with great insight by ancient sages of India. The whole system of Ayurveda is based on the psychosomatic concept in medicine. Modern medicine is now beginning to appreciate the usefulness of the psychosomatic concept of health and diseases. Dr. Govindaswamy further adds that, on the concept of levels in the nervous system, their integration in health, and disorganisation in disease, is in a general manner anticipated by the Sankhya School of philosophy. Problems of consciousness are dealt with in a penetratingly analytical manner in "many of Indian medicine and Darsanas seem to be borne out by the researches of such Western scholars and scientists as Freud, Adler, Jung, Hughling Jackson and others. Under the Category of Basic Doctrines, we have referred to, among others, the study of Jagrat Avastha (waking consciousness), Svapna Avastha (dream consciousness) of Sushupti and Tureeya (higher levels and states of consciousness) and Chakras (extra sensorial channels of consciousness), as given in the Tantric and Yogic literature. These studies unravel the various characteristics, qualities and states of human mind and are of fundamental importance in medicine."

Though my friends who are adherents of the Indian system will probably disagree with me, I feel that the government is doing a good deal for the growth

and progress of Ayurveda and Yogic therapy along scientific lines. I met Dr. C. Dwarkanath, who is Adviser to the Government of India on these matters. We talked for about three hours. What follows is a resume of our conversation.

In 1960-61, the Government of India set up a committee to go into the question of research in Yoga-therapy in India. This committee consisted of representatives of the Health and Education Ministries, namely, Dr. B K Anand, well-known Neuro-physiologist and Professor at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Dr. Krishna of Patna Medical College, Dr Narayanaswami, Professor of Ayurvedic Medicine, Madras, and Dr. C, Dwarkanath, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of Health. Explaining the work of the committee to me, Dr. Dwarkanath said, "The Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of investigating the potentialities of Yoga-therapy and to help in exploring ways and means for the development of Yogic techniques and Yoga-therapy in India. Yoga-therapy is an old thing, but there had been no scientific study or proper control over this and we were requested to evaluate its techniques. It is, therefore, necessary to organise this therapy from the psychosomatic point of view and to give financial assistance to Yogic centres, where scientific study of Yoga is being conducted. For example, the state of metabolism of the yogis in samadhi was studied and E.E.G. and other modern tests and examinations were carried out during our research.

"Dr. Anand carried out experiments in the Department of Neuro-Physiology at the All India Institute with the help of some yogis in the state of samadhi. Unfortunately, only one yogi proved of some use in the experiment. This yogi was the only one who was able to go into a deep state of concentration, into a kind of 'experimental' samadhi. It is interesting to find that in this state of consciousness, this yogi's sensorial impulses did not come up to his brain and did not produce any sensorial stimulation or any alteration in the Alpha of the E. E. G. Another observation was that during this state, the E E. G did not give any kind of unusual demonstration of sleep. On the contrary, the yogi's consciousness was very clear."

"The real difficulty," Dr Dwarkanath added, "was to find yogis, real yagis. Because these people are not 'allowed' to pass their experiences on to the scientific people, the Government realised that there are two ways, two lines, along which research could be developed :

One, Neuro-Physiological and Psychological research in Yoga methods, and, second, application of Yoga methods in therapy in the psychosomatic field. In connection with the first, the Government had given economic assistance to the Lonavla Institute, especially for the original work and invention of the Electro-Nasogram. This technique tries to detect the influence of pranamayama on the nasal mucosa."

"In connection with the second," Dr. Dwarkanath went on, "the government is helping to develop the research on the cure of Asthma by Yoga-therapy. The difficulty in this kind of clinical research," Dr. Dwarkanath continued, "was that the patients would not be available in the hospital for the number of days necessary. Yoga therapy requires much longer period than some other systems do and, in India, the checking of patients for the purpose of research when they go out of the clinic after therapy is difficult.

"In all such work, difficulties crop up and progress in this field was interrupted for sometime on one account or another. Now, the Government have planned to create mobile laboratories on jeeps so that those who wish to carry out research can go to see the yogis and check the phenomena in the right environment—where the yogis live their 'normal' lives. The government has realised that the answer to many questions can be found only by these methods so that we will now make the laboratories move to the yogis instead of trying to bring the yogis to the laboratories "

Then Dr Dwarkanath began to speak about Indian medicine. He showed keen interest, in psychosomatic phenomena and told me that the modern psychosomatic medicine had its real origin in the Vedas. He explained to me that one of the important aspects of Ayurveda is the therapy of the mind (mental therapy). Dr Dwarkanath has written about all this at length in his "Introduction to Kayachikitsa". I quote :

"The mental or the psychic components of the chikitsya-purusha represent an unstable equilibrium of the rajas and tamas, which are susceptible to imbalance—the *satwa*, the third factor being responsible for mental equipoise, clarity, cheerfulness etc. It (the *manas*) is the seat of emotional stresses of different kinds.

On the side of the soma, the tridoshas represent the three-fold physical factors or components, which are also in a state of unstable equilibrium and are, therefore, susceptible to imbalance.

“An imbalance of the equilibria of both the *mansika* (psychic) and *sharirika* (somatic) *doshas*, is brought about by three exciting causes, viz *asatmyendriyarthasamyoga* (the hyper, hypo and perverse correlation of arthas or objects with the special senses), *pragnaparadha* (volitional transgressions and errors in judgment) and *parinama* (seasonal or meteorological crises)

In view of the multiplicity and variability of the doshas—both the *manasika* and *sharirika*—innumerable kinds of diseases and disease syndromes are stated to be produced. An imbalance of the equilibrium of the *manas*, is stated to result in the production of libidinal impulses, anger, greed, infatuation, envy, conceit, arrogance, anxiety-states, remorse, fear-complex, exhilaration etc. The disturbed equilibrium of the *sharirika doshas*, on the other hand, leads to the production of such diseases and disease-syndromes as, fevers, diarrhoea, dropsical swellings, consumption, asthma, polyurea (especially of the type of diabetes), leprosy and other skin diseases etc.”

The Doctor is a great scholar of Ayurveda. His “Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda,” in three volumes and “Introduction to Kaya-Chakitsa” are regarded as very valuable contribution to the literature on Ayurveda. He is at present writing a book called “Digestion and Metabolism in Ayurveda”.

Our meeting was held at the Doctor's house. I observed that my host, who was without shoes, was now sitting in the chair in *padamasana* in the manner of the yogis. Dr Dwarkanath is sixty years old with a life time of experience and scholarship behind him. Curious to know a little about his personal life I asked him whether he was an Ayurvedic doctor or an Allopathic one. He answered that he was both. ‘I studied Ayurvedic in Madras, in Government School of Indian Medicine and studied Allopathic medicine in Germany (Hamburg)’

Dr. Dwarkanath became Professor in the same Institute at Madras where he had studied and was Principal of the Government College, Mysore during 1948-56. Then, during 1956-59, he was Professor of Medicine in All India Post-Graduate Centre of Ayurveda and, since 1959, he has been Adviser to the Government of India in the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine, including Yoga, in the Ministry of Health

I questioned the Doctor about the money the Government was spending on Yoga research every year. Dr. Dwarkanath answered that funds were not allocated on yearly basis, but for each Plan-period which was five years. He told me that in the Third Plan thirty million rupees or 4 million dollars were earmarked for this purpose. This would amount to an yearly allocation of 800,000 dollars. In the next plan, the Fourth in the series, the allocation would be rupees fifty million. Of course, Dr. Dwarkanath hastened to add, this sum would be allocated for all systems of indigenous medicine and not Ayurveda and Yoga-therapy only.

I was told that as far as Yoga-therapy is concerned, the Government plans to give assistance to only two centres one of these is the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, where research is being conducted in the Department of Neuro-physiology under Dr. Anand, who is also the Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Government, and the other, the Lonavla Institute. The Government of India was also watching with interest the work being done by Dr. Wadia, well-known Psychiatrist of Bombay.

I said to Dr. Dwarkanath, "I have heard that the Government is also helping Dharendra Brahmachari to the extent of Rs 40,000 a year. I learnt that the assistance was being given by the Education Ministry." Explaining the position, Dr. Dwarkanath said That kind of work as well as that of the Yoga specialists at Delhi and Chandigarh was being looked after by departments concerned with Physical Education.

Then we started talking about Sophrology and the states of human consciousness. He questioned me about our ideas relating to Yoga. I explained that our attempt was to adopt the usual approach of phenomenologists. We try to go to the essence of the problem. We do not begin with any theories in our mind. We accept no affirmation, we reject no affirmation. Our first problem is to know the phenomena. Then, perhaps, we can begin to understand the core, the central point, the essence. We do not know the psychology or the physiology of the yogi. We do not know what is true, what is not true. We must ascertain that first, and then by natural processes we may, perhaps, begin to understand the essentiality of the phenomenon. That is the way of the new school of research in phenomenology. Phenomenology tries to go to the essence of the problem. It may be difficult to understand Phenomenology and to accept its approach, but once the people start working in accordance with the principles of phenomenology, once they

take to this approach, they get into the habit of being phenomenologists. I believe that we do not have any other way of going into the reality of the phenomenon, to the essence of the problem. For example, if I come to India and have, all the time, the theories of Freud in my mind, I will be looking out for and will find only those elements in Yoga which fit in with my ideas and conceptions. Obviously, I will move in the wrong direction. I may come to wrong conclusions and distort the reality of the phenomenon. Like this our research in human consciousness has been becoming more and more difficult because there are already so many theories and schools in this field. As it is, the phenomenon is the same, but there is a confusing variety of theories and explanations. In phenomenology we try to forget the explanations and try to go to the heart of the matter, to the essence, through the natural processes of knowledge.

After I had had my say, Dr. Dwarkanath began to explain to me the concept of the mind according to Ayurveda. For the Ayurvedic theorists, he said, "the mind is neither corporeal nor incorporeal. And it has five levels. The conscious is called 'jagarata', the wakeful, and the subconscious ("according to your idea of the subconscious," said the Doctor) is known as 'swapna'. The fifth level is 'samadhi'." Then, coming to Yoga, he said, "Yoga is the stopping of the mental processes. The mind becomes absolutely tranquil and can perceive Nature in its purity. The Raja yogi controls his body to the extent that no external stimulation or agitation can disturb the mind. So the mind of the yogi does not sleep, and is open to high perceptions and closed to low perceptions."

I had asked for a brief interview. The doctor had been extremely kind and had graciously given me so much of his valuable time, and so much of his learning and scholarship. I am really grateful to him.

I thanked him for clarifying several points and for explaining Yoga and other connected matters. We then spoke about the possibility of future collaboration between Sophrologists and the Government of India. I told him that I was planning to come back to India in connection with a scientific expedition to Gangotri. I suggested that we Sophrologists could contribute the 'human' part of the expedition - a few Indian members of our Society like Dr. Vinekar, Dr. Varadani and Dr. Austin, and some foreign doctors from Spain, South America and Switzerland who would be glad to come to India for the cause. The Government of India could lend

us the mobile laboratory, jeeps and other material help 'Indeed, Dr Dwarkanath', I closed on a note of utmost earnestness, "I offer this collaboration on behalf of my Society" I am glad to record that he responded with equal earnestness, saying that he was happy to have my offer and hoped with all his heart that this collaboration would be possible.

Lonavla

My main interest in visiting India was to explore the possibilities of collaboration between Yoga and modern medicine. Nothing was, therefore, more heartening for me than to see the extremely good work being done by some distinguished men of medicine who believe in Yoga and whom I call a new generation of scientific yogis. They do not cursorily and uncereemoniously dismiss Yoga as trickery and something beneath their notice. After all, Yoga could not have survived for thousands of years without having some built-in and inherent strength.

One Institute where I saw a team of medical men working in a truly scientific manner is the Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla. This institute was founded by Swami Kuvalyananda who passed away, after a distinguished record of service to Yoga, only a little while ago. He and Sri Yogendra, of the Yoga Institute of Bombay, were both disciples of the same guru, His Holiness Paramahansa Shree Madhavadasji, who was a pioneer in the field of scientific research into various aspects of Yoga. Both these disciples later established institutes where Yoga and Yoga-therapy are being approached in a scientific way. It will interest the reader to know that Swami Kuvalyananda remained a sannyasi throughout his life, whereas the other pupil married a doctor who is helping him in his work in Bombay. Between them, they were responsible for the setting-up of two of the most important Yoga Institutes of the world. There has always been what might be called a 'cordial' controversy as to which institute is older. There is nothing unhealthy or fierce about this controversy and it has actually led to much progress in the propagation of scientific Yoga.

Coming back to the Lonavla Institute, the idea of Swami Kuvalyananda was to teach Yoga to people engaged in worldly life. The Institute is not essentially concerned with the spiritual aspect of Yoga. He attracted a band of fully-qualified doctors, who became his disciples, and colleagues in scientific exploration of Yogic techniques. Consequently, during the forty years of its existence, the Institute has done remarkably good work.

I spent an interesting and instructive week there, and discussed many matters of common interest with Dr S. L. Vinekar who was then the Director of Research and

other medical men at the Institute. This Institute is specialising in asthma therapy through Yoga techniques and I was impressed by the mass of evidence and statistics, the Institute gave me with regard to the successful treatment of chronic asthma by method evolved here. Dr. Bhole, a very capable doctor, told me with justifiable pride that they had cured about 60% of the patients with them over the last ten years. I do not think it necessary to go into the technical details of the research at the Institute connected with asthma. It would be enough to say that the Institute works an excellent combination of classical Indian Hatha Yoga and the modern concept of the respiratory and its quarterly journal, *Yoga Mimamsa* which the Institute has been going out for more than two decades, provides a wealth of information on the subject of Yoga and medicine.

The group I took to publishing scientific material of high value and made use of the depth, clinical data and scientific graphs to explain and illustrate the matter. In a short time, the editors and contributors took up important problems and expressed them thoroughly as they had been investigated in the laboratory of the Institute. Topics like 'Blood-pressure and Yoga', 'Yoga and prostate', 'X-ray experiment on Dhauti kriya', 'Physiology of the Asanas,' 'X-ray experiment on the diaphragm of ribs,' 'Carbon dioxide elimination in pranayama,' 'Acid-base Equilibrium,' 'Studies in Alveolar Air,' 'Researches in 'Nauli' and several other equally important topics may still be studied with profit in back numbers of *Yoga Mimamsa*. Throughout the approach has been one hundred per cent scientific.

Now by dint of basis of an up-to-date scientific research laboratory and of an excellent staff which, at the time of my visit, consisted of the following:

1. Dr. M. V. Bhole, M.B.B.S., M.Sc. (Med.)
2. Dr. S. L. Vinckar, Joint Director of Research, B.A. (Hons.) M.B.B.S. with scientific research training in America. He is an advanced student of Yoga.
3. Dr. P. V. Karambellkar, Deputy Director of Scientific Research, M.Sc. and a few assistants.

I learn from a letter of Dr. Vinckar that he has now left the institute and that Dr. Karambellkar is now the Director of the Institute.

The Institute receives grants from the Governments of India and Maharashtra. Its laboratory is well-equipped to study actions of the brain, the heart, and the different nerve centres in the body. Research on the physiological and

psycho-physiological aspects of Yogic phenomena is being conducted here. Indian and foreign scholars and scientists have paid rich tributes to the Kaivalyadhama. In 1954, the Government of India appointed a Committee of eminent medical scientists with Dr. Basudeva Narayan, the then Dean of the Patna Medical College and the Vice-Chancellor of the Patna University, as its Chairman. This Committee made the following remarks in its report :

“This centre should also develop into a training centre where students from different parts of India who possess a scientific and or medical background, could be trained. Some of them may be sufficiently interested in the scientific aspects of Yoga as to form a nucleus of research workers in the field.”

In 1957, Dr. M A Wenger of the University of California (U S A.) and Dr. B.K Bagchi of the University of Michigan (U.S.A.) stayed at the Kaivalyadhama for six weeks and after careful observation made the following statement : “Throughout we found an atmosphere of quiet, culture and scholarship. All in all, Kaivalyadhama appears to us to be unique in India, and in fact in the world. Our own research has convinced us that information of fundamental importance can be gathered in an institution like Kaivalyadhama.”

In 1961, Dr. R V. Sathe, an eminent educationist spoke of this “Samiti” in the following complimentary terms .

“I am really amazed at the amount of work that is being done here with the equipment that it has. It has got the most modern instruments suitable to the conduct of enquiries in this institution here ; and though there might be scope for more instruments and more material in this place, I think the equipment they possess is capable of yielding very valuable work and results. The staff of the institution also has people who have taken personal interest in Yoga and who have made work on Yoga as a career for their lives.”

Kaivalyadhama Ashram always intended to spread its work outside Lonavla and is running a Yogic health centre in Bombay with the help of funds provided by the Governmental and private agencies.

Any account of this institute would be incomplete without a detailed reference to electro-nasography, a new and revolutionary approach in neuro-physiological research. The credit for this goes to my friend, Dr. S. L. Vinekar. The

importance of this new approach lies in the fact that it is an attempt to utilise a new possible parameter in the field of Neuro-physiological research, which, if found dependable, may hold excellent prospects in Applied Physiology and Medicine. This is especially so because a new approach seems to be amenable to a proper violational control through respiratory manipulation.

In the words of Dr. S.L. Vinekar, "An attempt was made initially, by means of a Vernier Potentiometer, to see whether the human nasala mucosa did present a varying electrical potential. On ascertaining the presence of such a potential, special electrodes were prepared for attachments to various parts of the nostrils. These were attached to the areas of inferior turbinate bones and the two septa, and attempts were made to obtain records of the activity on an Offner 8-channel Type Electro-encephalograph. At first, the volume and frequency of breathing were registered by recording the range of costal movements with a strain gauge. Later on, for greater accuracy, the force and frequency of respiration were recorded by means of thermistors, attached just below the nostrils."

Investigations were conducted along most scientific lines and 185 patients were tested over a period of one year. The cases were divided into two broad categories, for testing nasal breathing, and with nose-block and oral breathing, the aim being to test whether there was any correlation between respiratory impulse as such and the inherent electrical activity, if any, of the nasal mucosa. Among the important findings are :

1. Though the frequency of the sinusoidal waves was mostly determined by that of respiratory rate, their amplitude was not necessarily regulated by either the force or volume of breathing. In Meditation, especially, the amplitude was found to decrease considerably, though the force and volume of respiration did not show any marked changes, only the frequency being altered.
2. The post-meditational S-R reactions, showed a definite lower range than the pre-meditational S-R reactions. So too, the post-meditational normal readings are lower than the initial readings

All this is good work and I am glad that the Government of India has been giving the necessary financial help for this and other investigations of this kind. I am the more happy because my friend Dr. Vinekar has been directly connected with

this achievement. He is one of the foremost yoga-therapists in India today and it was gratifying for me that he should have appreciated the concepts of my new school, Sophrology and given me support and encouragement in my work in India. In a letter he wrote to me some time ago, he said :

“The more I think of Sophrology, the more do I feel satisfied that it might meet the needs of a separate scientific discipline to study the psychosomatic inter-relationships, not only in medicine, but in all the behaviour constellations of human persona. If techniques and factors that contribute to a betterment of these behavioural expressions are studied scientifically and applied in our day-to-day life, I am sure it would go a long way to the real advancement of humanity. For a long while, I was myself preoccupied with thoughts as to how to avoid scientific investigations in Yoga from being exploited by various quacks and charlatans for their personal gains—as also how to divest the existing techniques (as those of Yoga, Zen, etc.) of their many accretions, without sacrificing their inherent advantages. Your suggestions seem to point the way to this.”*

Flattered as I am by this, I know that the cause of our own research and work will benefit greatly from the research and work of such talented doctors as Dr. Vinekar and such first-rate Institutes as the Kaivalyadhama of Lonavla.

* Letters of Silence p 130

Bombay

One of the pioneering institutes for Yoga studies and research was founded in 1918 by Shri Yogendra. The Yoga Institute is now flourishing under the guidance of its Founder-President and his wife, Smt Sita Devi Yogendra, who is the Medical Director in-charge of the Ladies Section. I visited the Institute and carried a pleasant and favourable impression of Shri Yogendra, his wife and the work and functioning of the institute. The Yoga Institute is nicely situated at Santa Cruz, a healthy suburb of Bombay facing the famous Juhu beach, and between the beautiful mountain ranges of the Western Ghats.

In ancient India, every known school of thought accepted Yoga as absolutely necessary for life's final achievement. But even to positive sciences such as biology, therapeutics, anatomy, physiology, psychology, etc and to cultural arts such as music, dancing, literature, painting, sculpture, etc Yoga has been a constant source of inspiration.

Great gurus who nurse the age-old traditions of Yoga with the care and affection of a fond parent pass their knowledge only to the discerning and the deserving. To them Yoga is something sacred, and, therefore, it cannot be safe in the hands of the unwise and the impure. Shri Yogendra was lucky to meet a great guru in Paramhansa Madhavadasa ji, in 1916, when he himself was only 18 years of age. The distinguished guru was born in 1798 and entered mahasamadhi in 1921.

Shri Yogendra proved an apt pupil and in the lifetime of the Master himself, he founded The Yoga Institute on Christmas day in 1918, in Versova, near Bombay. The Institute can take some credit for the popularity which Yoga now enjoys. It helped to establish the great worth and relevance of Yoga in our times to householders in India and abroad. Over the years, the Institute has grown into an international organization where classes are held, patients are treated, active research work—both academic and scientific—is undertaken, and the moral and spiritual message of Yoga is broadcast,

Convinced of the import of and need for Yoga, and feeling sure that given the necessary rational, utilitarian and scientific interpretation, Yoga some day will emerge as the scientific world culture teaching healthy and sane methods of living Shri Yogendra left for Europe and the United States and finally succeeded in founding The Yoga Institute of America on the Bear mountains, near New York, by the end of 1919. The Institute had accommodation for twenty beds, and it was here that hundreds of Western students were trained in, and patients clinically treated through, Yoga. In 1923, Yogendra returned to India.

The Indian Institute undertook the publication of authoritative scientific texts in 1928. Yoga, the official journal of the Institute, made its appearance in 1933. This monthly journal contains articles on Yoga traditions, techniques and culture—both academic and scientific—as reorientated by the Yoga Institute. It is supplemented with illustrations. Other smaller publications on Yoga for the layman were also published during these years.

It was in 1936 that, to expand its activities, and to permanently locate the international headquarters at a more central place, the Institute was shifted to Bombay. The Institute now provides facilities for research on scientific, academic, educational and therapeutic aspects of Yoga. A small laboratory, a reference library and competent guides are available for the purpose. Compiling of laboratory, clinical and statistical data on the merits of Yoga practices in cooperation with the scientific corroborators, comparative studies of modern advancements in physical and mental cultures showing specific values of Yoga methodology in these respects and the replacement of vague ideas regarding practical Yoga by scientific demonstrations and conclusions, are some of the main achievements of investigations conducted by the Institute. X-ray, electrocardiogram, diagraphy in high frequency and similar modern methods are employed to assure scientific precision.

I was told that laboratory data on the asanas revealed that these could not be applied uniformly to both men and women, and that the physiotherapeutic effects vary with individuals in proportion to their osteopathic requirements. Experiments were also conducted on neti, basti, vamana dhouti and other kriyas of Hatha yoga, the Yogendra rhythm of breathing, the dynamic and static variants, psychosomatic altruism through Yoga, pranayama in relation to therapy and numerous clinical, laboratory and psychoanalytical methods evolved by this Institute on the basis of traditional Yoga. A hospital based on Yoga-psychosomatic treatment where chronic

Some refractory cases of refractory nature are treated either as inpatients or outpatients as decided by the Institute.

The Institute also maintains a fully equipped clinic for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes and admits all patients except those suffering from contagious diseases. It also provides examination by registered practitioners and consultations. Yoga treatment, both out and inpatients are admitted freely. The experience of thousands of patients disappointed with all curative methods and treatment at the Institute and of the thousands so treated nearly all have benefited considerably. Patients once treated at the Institute are made sufficiently self-reliant to avoid ailment through preventive measures and self-treatment as recommended by Yoga and taught to them during treatment. Patients suffering from all types and variety of disease concerning the various parts of the human system have benefited from the Yoga therapy at the Institute.

The Institute publishes books in Library and Pocket editions. Some books have been translated in several Indian and foreign languages. Over 30 titles have been published so far. Some of the more important among these are "Yoga Asanas Simplified", "Hatha Yoga Simplified", "Yoga Hygiene Simplified," and "Yoga Personal Hygiene," all by Sri Yogendra—and "Yoga for Women Simplified", by Sri Sri Devi Yogendra.

The Institute also conducts a six-month course for training social workers, teachers, health instructors and serious students of Yoga, both men and women, who may in their turn promote Yoga education as formulated here comprising Hatha, Raja and other traditions of Yoga.

I was pleased to learn that the Institute is in cultural contact, whether through membership, through the Yoga education centres conducted by their own Yoga teachers, through visiting students and patients, through sale or publications of literature or through distinguished correspondents, with institutions of like interests and aims in many countries in all continents.

Jaipur

Firmly convinced as I am of the need for a sustained and properly organized collaboration between Yoga-specialists and medical men who are not sceptical about the great potentials of Yoga for curing the human mind and body, there were many occasions for me to feel dejected about my plans, during my stay in India. Unfortunately, for our work and the welfare of man, not many men of outstanding merit in the world of medicine are interested in or willing to work with people who know and understand Yoga. More often than not, the people who have mastered the techniques of Yoga are without medical education. Moreover, many of the practicers are but quacks and charlatans whose only interest is to make quick money by gulling the credulous. Finally, for one reason or the other the doctor and the yogi do not get along together, for each is, usually, more concerned with his pride in his own specialisation rather than with fulfilling their real aim, helping and serving humanity. This is indeed a deplorable state of affairs. Obviously, if any progress is to be made in our work, we need collaboration, sincere collaboration.

I cannot claim to have intimate knowledge and understanding of Yoga and Yogic techniques. Yet, with the limited knowledge I have gained, I have no hesitation in pleading for a thorough-going research into the rich possibilities which Yoga offers. In this connection the work being done at the Yogic Treatment-cum-Research Centre, Jaipur under Dr. N.L. Varadani has brought before us interesting and useful data. The paper presented by Dr. N.L. Varadani and Dr. D.P. Gupta at the World Congress on Diabetes in the Tropics, 1966, could be regarded as an important milestone on the road to progress in the fusion of Yogic and medicinal efforts for the good of man. Here is work of excellent quality being done by people who know the real from the false.

The Yogic Treatment-cum-Research Centre in Jaipur was established in August 1961. The basic object of establishing this Centre was to treat cases of Diabetes Mellitus with Yoga Kriyas only and to assess its therapeutic value, and to establish the exact position of Yoga as a measure of treatment for Diabetes.

Mellitus and to conduct such Laboratory or other experimental investigations as may be deemed fit to explain the mechanism by which Yoga produces these results.

Today, the centre is a 20-bed indoor hospital, financed by Government of India and administered by the Rajasthan State Government. The work is in the hands of Dr. Varadani and Swami Anandananda. Together they make yet another yogi-and-doctor team which has done valuable work. They feel that 'as matters stand at present, medicine has remained more occupied with the problem of rehabilitation of the physically disabled whereas the Yogic attitude towards disease has ever been that each individual ought to be able to fortify his own self by helping his body to put its fight against any offender, and achieve victory by dint of its own effort, because the body, in unison with the mind, possesses the inherent powers of developing specific immunity as well as capacity to resist the onslaught of the most offending agents. And for the diabetic, 'Yoga' does not prescribe mere exercises but provides a composite treatment in a way in the psychosomatic field of medicine by eliminating psycho-physical tension."

It would be wrong, they go on, to "treat Yogic therapy lightly or as being unscientific. In fact, without in any way waxing eloquent in praise of Hatha Yoga, we reckon it far from unsafe to suggest that if treatment for diabetes is preceded by a proper course of Hatha-yogic drill to break off tensions, one may confidently hope to achieve a fair amount of success in combating the disease, unless, of course, it is too advanced already. No doubt, success in this endeavour would require a good understanding and close cooperation between the well-equipped doctor with latest laboratory equipment, and the Yogic therapist, because the latter just cannot afford to go ahead without the former. That apart, we have got to adapt and modify, in fact, streamline our Yogic practice, so that it becomes of the fullest possible value to the suffering mankind "

The main work which this Centre is doing concerns Diabetes. Diabetes is today regarded as a serious ailment, for though it does not kill the man, yet, it is responsible for many vascular complications, and disabilities. A world wide research is being carried on to know the exact etiology of this complex syndrome. Since the days of Profs Banti and Best, Pancreas is considered to be the causative factor of this disease and inadequacy of B cell of Langerhan as the pathology.

During this past decade valuable research has been conducted in this field and many new hypotheses have been put forward. These pertain to knowing

whether the depletion of the activity of B cells in the pancreas is the cause or the resultant effect of the factors responsible for Diabetes

Various theories of Insulin antagonism, Insulin Inhibitors, Synalbuminism and the type of available Insulin, are mentioned and yet the picture is far from clear so far the etiological possibility is concerned, and the Medical Science continues to remain in illusion.

After 5 years of work, and after having observed about 250 diabetics live on pure Yoga therapy, without any other medication, Dr. Varadani is convinced that 'Insulin Deficiency' alone could not be the cause of Diabetes and quite a large number of Diabetics can manage without any Anti-Diabetogenic Drugs

Tranquillity of mind is found to be the chief factor helping the diabetics improve, as concluded from day to day examination of their urine and blood sugar. This, of course, also holds good for normal human beings, who are subject to temporary hyperglycemia and Glycosuria as a result of strong emotional stress.

It was a definite observation, that whenever any of the inpatient diabetics underwent on acute emotional disturbance, all other factors remaining the same, they showed a temporary rise in their urine and blood sugar. The experience with the patients convinced Dr. Varadani that 'stress' is quite an important factor in precipitating diabetes in a good percentage of cases, at least in the initial stages or in the continuation of this condition. These findings are in agreement with those of many other workers in the field. It has been observed that in cases of pre-diabetics, stress of pregnancy, infection, etc has proved to be the precipitating factor. It is interesting to note that 3 cases belonging to the group which did not respond, though having the milder variety of diabetes, were not able to improve because they were unable to change their mental attitude and brooding nature.

Yoga has great power of bringing about tranquillity and lasting calmness, which is so essential for diabetics in particular and every one in general. Some of the important features at this centre which help combat this stress are :

- 1 Removal from the site and circumstances of stress.
2. Regularisation in the daily routine may partly account for tranquillity, since it breaks the vicious cycle of hurry and responsibility.

3. There is an atmosphere of devotion and prayer, which further adds to the peace of mind.
4. Many of the 'Yogic asanas' bring about tranquillity of mind and increase in willpower, to enable the patient to face the situation in an appealing manner.
5. The doctor and Swami ji keep in personal touch with the patients and by discussing, understanding and suggesting, they help them out of their emotions and strains.

All this leaves no doubt as to the role of stress in amelioration or deterioration of diabetic state. Apart from the effect of Yoga in Diabetes, it has proved very useful in remedying cases of chronic allergic rhinitis, chronic bronchitis with Asthma, various gastro intestinal disorders, psychosis, neurosis, mental depression and allied conditions. This needs a further detailed study to establish the exact position of Yoga in various varieties of diseases.

It will now only be proper to organise this centre further for highly technical research and for conducting various Endocrinological and metabolic studies in search of Mechanism of action of Yoga. To make it a success, collaboration of similar Medical Research Institutes in India and outside, and training of the present personnel for higher research purposes, is essential.

Madras

Madras is among India's biggest cities and the more important state capitals. It is a clean city, a well-run city. There is a general air of neatness and orderliness about the place which makes it different from and more pleasing than cities like Delhi and Calcutta. There are many big and impressive buildings, the University, public institutes, government offices, the courts, hospitals, business houses, hotels, temples and several churches. And the famous Marina beach is justly famous. It is a fine beach, and as I write this I can recall not only the sight but can even smell the salt-fresh fragrance of the breeze.

However, my interest in Madras rests on different grounds. I was interested in visiting the city partly on account of the fact that it is the epitome of the south, and, in its thought and activity, culture and customs, attitudes and approaches, in its strange amalgam of the western and the eastern, it reflects the mind and mentality of the South, the ancient South as well as the modern South. By normal standards of a foreigner, I have travelled fairly extensively in the South, yet it is hardly possible to see every nook and corner of even one region of India, and so, it helps, sometimes, to go to some place which provides all the clues to the understanding of the people of that region. For the South of India, the city of Madras serves that purpose. I had seen the temple-village, Tiruvannamalai, and I had seen the temple-city Madurai, and whatever else was lacking in completing the total picture, I found in Madras.

One surprising fact that struck me again and again was that for all their urbanisation, and the veneer of westernisation, the people of Madras were, generally speaking, fairly orthodox and religious ; and I must admit that orthodoxy can be a good thing, if it includes such insistence on cleanliness, personal and environmental, as obtains in this part of India. I found also that the city and its people had more interest in religious learning, and Yoga and Yoga practice, than is usual with the city people. Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, all these have 'Religion' and 'Yoga', but not in the way Madras has. Madras has both more and better of these, is ahead of the other cities both in respect of quantity as well as quality, and the interest is fairly learned and

scholarly. It is understandable, therefore, that a firm of this city should be India's leading publishers of books on Hindu Religion and Philosophy.

This is not to say that in Madras one does not find all that goes with a modern city. The point I wish to make is that there is religion too in the atmosphere and it constitutes an integral part of the life of the city. In fact, all places of tourist's interest in the State are holy places. I wonder if any other state of India can boast of that.

My second interest was to check up how much of real progress had been made in respect of the cure of polio cases through Yoga which one institute was specialising in. The name of this Institute is Kriya Mother Solachi Yoga Rehabilitation Centre and it disseminates knowledge and conducts practice of the Kriya Yoga, which is a part or form of the Raja Yoga. The founder-president of the Institute is Yogi S. A. Ramiah, M. A. B Sc., Physiotherapist and Geologist. He was proceeding to U.S.A. in 1944 for an advanced course in Geology, when Tuberculosis struck him. Years of illness made him turn, through meditation, to a religious way of thought and life, and he became a disciple of a Kriya yogi, the kind of yogi who believed that Kriya was the 'Death of Death.' In course of time he became the founder-president of Kriya Babaji Sangh—named after Kriya Babaji. At his institute profound secret yogic techniques of kriyas are taught and they are based mainly on the teachings of a great Tamil Yogi, Mulaguru Kriya Babaji Nagaraj, who attained siddhi or perfection in the Himalayas in the third century A.D. The most important activity of Kriya Babaji Sangh and Kriya Yoga Ashram is the treatment of patients according to the facilities that are available in the different centres. Research is carried on in the field of Kriya Yogic Therapy and all members, particularly Kriya Yoga Ashramites, are trained in Yogic therapy and physio-therapy so as to assist in the treatment of patients.

The most important technique of the Master's five-fold path of Yoga which consists of 144 kriyas is Kriya Kundalini Pranayamam. After teaching this Kriya Kundalini Pranayamam, members are initiated into the secret Kriya Dhayana, for which secret Kriya Yoga classes are held and such people who have been initiated into Kriya Kundalini Pranayamam may not be cremated, but they should be buried with a samadhi built over their grave, if needed.

The Institute has arrangements for the following

Yogic Therapy ; Traction , Exercise Therapy ; Hydrotherapy ; Shortwave Diathermy, Infra-red and Ultra-Violet Radiology, Electrotherapy , Heliotherapy, Violet Ray Therapy, Long-Wave Diathermy ; Dietotherapy, Honey Treatment ; Medical Gymnastics, Massage, etc.

I am always a little suspicious of the people who claim to do all that. Attempting too many things will obviously mean specialisation in none , no spectacular advance in any field can be expected. Therefore, for me it was a startling piece of information that through massage and other means some polio cases had been successfully cured The Sangh has branches at Bombay, in Malaya, Ceylon, and Viet Nam

Before I close this brief account of the Kriya Baba Sangh, I may refer to some questions of a questionnaire issued by the Yoga Institute, Santa Cruz, Bombay—which is doing good work in collecting all such data on Yoga—and the answers given by the Kriya Baba Sangha These throw interesting light both on some points connected with Yoga therapy in India, generally, and the work and views of the Kriya Baba Institute of Madras.

Question Do you think Yoga practices are like a system of Therapy to treat diseases ?

Answer : Yes.

Question : Do you agree to treat patients in Hospitals where patients are treated through other modern systems of medicine ?

Answer : Yes, and we have done that work since 1950.

Question . What diseases you are sure you will be able to treat successfully and where ?

Answer . Functional disorders like diabetes, hypertension, and chronic Polio, cerebral pains, etc.—in Rehabilitation Centre and Hospitals.

Question : What other nature cure or similar instruments you will need for Yoga treatment ?

Answer Naturo-pathy and Yogic Therapy are synonymous It is good to supplement these with electro-medical treatment.

Question : Do you insist on any clinical investigations to be carried out on the patients for diagnosis and prognosis ?

Answer : Essential.

Question : If the nation were spending Rs 883 crores annually on physical education alone, how much amount out of this will you want the government to spend on Yoga for the same purpose ?

Answer : Rs. 40 (forty) crores.

Question : If the nation were spending Rs 609 crores annually on Health programme, how much amount you will want the government to spend on Yoga for the same purpose ?

Answer : Rs 40 (forty) crores

Question : Are there any other ways than Physical Education and Health, in which money can be spent on Yoga, for benefiting the country ?

Answer : Departments of Yoga should be opened in all universities on the graduate and post-graduate level and all medical colleges should have courses in Yogic Therapy. Part of the defence budget should be set apart for Yogic training and the nation would benefit by prevention and cure of diseases by Yogic therapy and Kriyas.

Delhi

For the work for which I came to India, New Delhi was my headquarters. It was the base for all operations connected with my plans and projects ; and, though there may be a little work being done here and there in the Capital which might deserve notice in the context of Yoga and Medicine, my main object in including Delhi in this section is to relate some facts about my own aims, and the progress I have made in achieving these. I am going to talk about my work in connection with the new school which I founded, namely Sophrology, and about my mission of interesting the medical men of India in its study.

Sophrology is a new scientific school which studies the phenomena of human consciousness. Some people have called it the science of psycho-physical harmony. In their research work sophrologists are learning and revising all the techniques and methods which can produce favourable change in the ordinary state of human consciousness. In our approach to human pathology, we give great importance to the state of the consciousness of the sick. We believe that through this emphasis, on the state of consciousness, we shall carve a new way to therapy, and knowledge of man. For that reason, I have been greatly interested in studying the methods and techniques of Indian Yoga. I believe that by studying the yogic state of consciousness we shall increase our knowledge of the reality of human psychology.*

In their initial stage, all new ideas need to overcome obstacles and difficulties. Tolerance and patience are required to deal with people who at first do not comprehend these ideas. Sophrology has got over these initial difficulties in India, and has founded the Indian Society of Sophrology and Psychosomatic Medicine. It has realised its great desire of establishing a bridge between occidental and oriental doctors. I am happy that this project has been duly completed, and Sophrology has begun its official, scientific existence in India. We are happy that we have already begun using the ancient and sacred methods of Yoga in our medical practice.*

*Extracts from speech delivered on July 20, 1966, in New Delhi

All this would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of the Indian doctors. I sincerely thank, in the name of the International Society of Sophrology and Psychosomatic Medicine, all the Indian doctors and Yoga specialists who have accepted our ideas and assisted us in our work. The evidence of their faith and cooperation is the practice of the ideas of Sophrology, in important private clinics of Delhi.

When I came to India, my plan was to interest people here in the scientific school of Sophrology and to enlist the support of Indian medical men, Yoga therapists, Yoga practitioners and yogis, for exploiting the rich possibilities of incorporating Yogic techniques in our medical practice. As I wrote to my dear friend, Dr Vinckar of Bombay :

"I am thoroughly convinced of the importance of yoga in the therapeutic field . . . That is why I have come to India, that I might learn the fundamentals of Yoga with the help of specialists here . . . Perhaps, it is not wrong to say that a new generation of scientific yogis has come into existence... . I believe that the process of achieving a synthesis of science and Yoga has begun . . . Collaboration between the new school of Sophrology and these 'new' yogis can be significant and can open a new path . . . Sophrology attempts to develop an officially recognised relation between the doctors on the one hand, and the Yoga specialists, on the other. The Yoga specialists can be admitted in the Society of Sophrology as advisers on Yoga therapy. The great yogis can help us to develop the right techniques regarding the states of consciousness." *

When I explained the concepts and objectives of Sophrology to Prof. Indra Sen in Pondicherry, he immediately grasped them and readily appreciated the vital role they could play in modern life. I was gratified to hear from him the following :

' Sophrology is a splendid conception. It is original, has great justification and surely has a future. Harmony of integration or unity are the pivot and the forms, which have to be defined, classified, and investigated in relation to the conditions of the body, the mind and the environment, in states of health as well as disease. But primarily states

*Letters of Silence pp 146-148,

of health. It is an empirical study, but involving a normative approach. As such it gets very near to Yoga. It is, in fact, Yoga born of Western scientific knowledge. That is how I have understood Sophrology and I wish it all progress and success.”*

I feel that the way has been finally cleared for serious research in the field. With people like Dr. Vinekar, Dr. Indra Sen, Dr. Bhatnagar and Dr. Austin—both of Delhi—and Dr. Varadani of Jaipur, keenly interested in our new scientific school, I see no reason why progress should not be made in our work.

Dr. C. L. Bhatnagar, M.B.B.S., Zen (Vienna), well-known Indian specialist in the field of Psychosomatic Medicine, has now taken over as President of the Indian Society of Sophrology and Psychosomatic Medicine. I am happy to say that Dr. Bhatnagar has been developing our techniques in his clinic at No. 18, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi, where we have now the new head-office of the Indian Society.

The Indian Office of the International Society is located at Dr. S. A. Austin's Nursing House at D-8 Green Park, New Delhi. Dr. S. A. Austin, M.B.B.S., D.P.M.I. F.P.S., has been nominated Representative of the International Society for India. He thinks highly of Sophrology. In a speech made in Delhi he said :

“Sophrotherapy has come handy for gynaecologists, dental surgeons, psychiatrists and other specialists in branches of medicine. It has also become an integral technique in psychotherapy. Sophrology has come to India with a view to incorporate Yoga in its methods. We do hope, that in times to come, we would have ensured full success.”**

We intend to organise in no distant future courses of Yoga and Yoga therapy in Delhi for the occidental Sophrologists. These courses can be the living nucleus for a true contact between the Sophrologists of the two sides of the world. I am sure that many Sophrologists including myself will willingly come to India to help in the course of Yoga and Yoga-therapy organised by the Indian Society.

Thus Delhi can be the centre for work of both the Indian Society and the International Society. The International Society has great confidence that Indian doctors of the new branch will help develop contact with the Tibetan doctors living

*Letters of Silence p. 126

**Extract from a speech delivered in New Delhi

in the Himalayas and begin the extremely interesting work of making a scientific study of Tibetan Yoga. All in all through collaboration between Indian medical doctors and specialists in Yoga-therapy for research on Indian Yoga, and Tibetan doctors in connection with Tibetan Yoga, the Indian Society can play a very vital role and be a prominent branch of the International Society

The International Society, on the other hand, will make all efforts to profit from the advice of Indian doctors. Already, it has appointed for that purpose, Dr Vinckar of Bombay and Dr Varadani of Jaipur about whose work I have already spoken elsewhere, as Counsellors on matters connected with Yoga

Since all these contacts for our work need necessarily be between medically qualified persons, we have laid down specific criteria for membership of the Society .

1. All qualified medical men and dental surgeons with registerable qualifications as per Indian Medical Act can become Ordinary members.
- 2 All clinical psychologists and Yoga-specialists with more than six years' experience, will be entitled to become Associate members

Of course, it is necessary for these members to have training in Sophrology. This will be organised by the Indian Society.

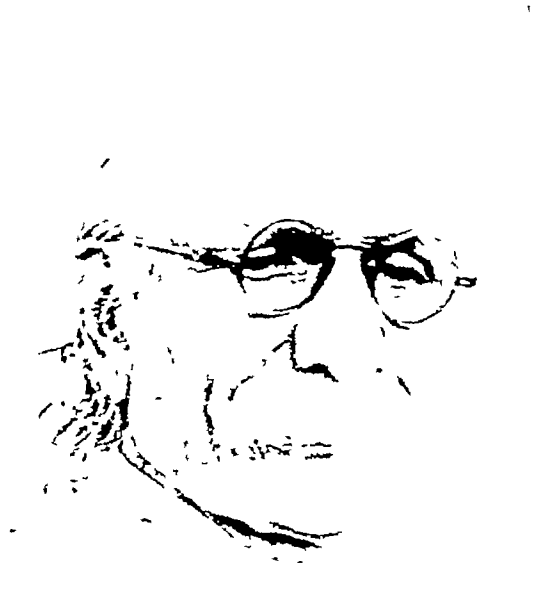
The Indian doctors, I hope, will also try to make contact with others working in Delhi or other places in India in Yoga research, to gain knowledge about yogis and their phenomena. This is work of great value but also of great magnitude. I have taken only the first step. The way is long, but I am sure that with their great ability and crusading spirit the Indian Sophrologists will one day cover it all and reach the goal



Left Paramhansa Madhavdas ji Maharaj, Guru of Swami Kuvalayananda and Yogendra Maharaj

Below Left Swami Kuvalayananda, disciple of Madhavdas ji and Founder of Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla

Below Right Yogendra Maharaj, disciple of Madhavdas ji and Founder of the Yoga Institute, Santa Cruz, Bombay

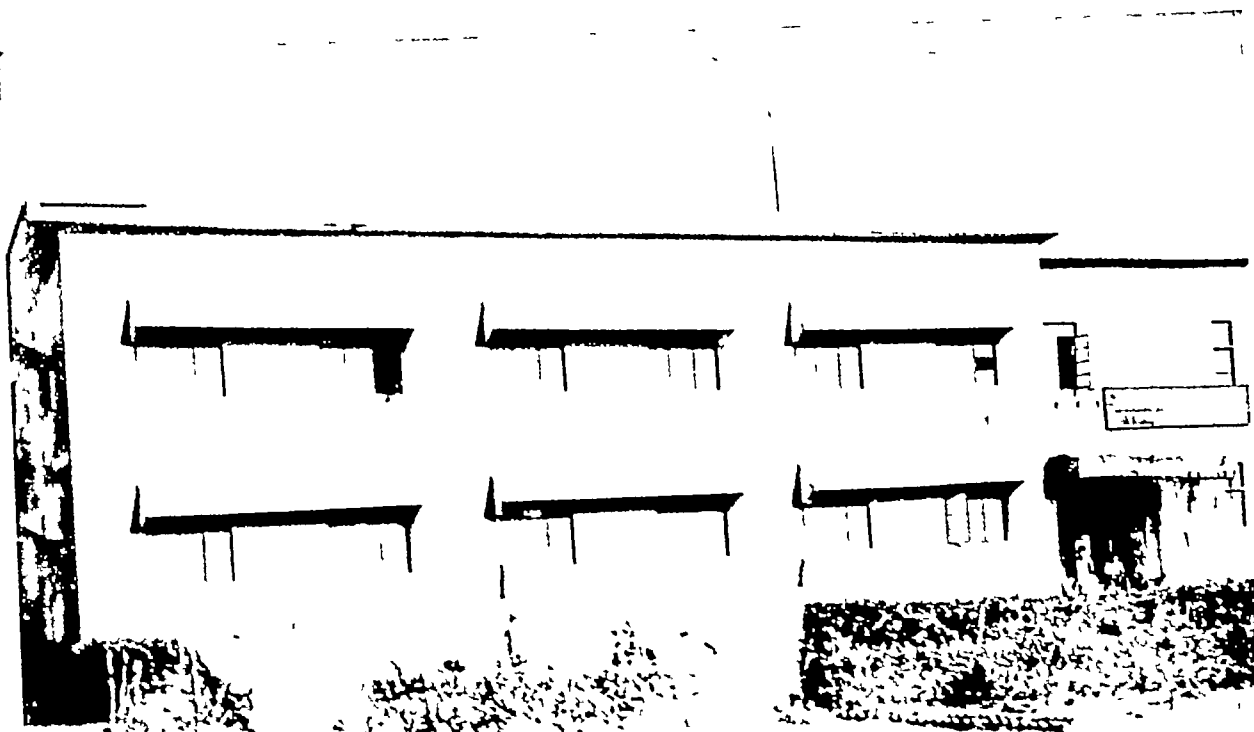




Left Dr S L. Vinekar, a great disciple of Swami Kuvalayananda.

Right Dr P V. Karambelkar and Dr M V Bhole—eminent doctors working at Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla

Below Yogic Hospital of Lonavla



*Above Dr Mrs Vinekar, 'Scientific
yogini' of Kaivalyadhama, Bombay*

*Below Kaivalyadhama, Marine Drive,
Bombay*





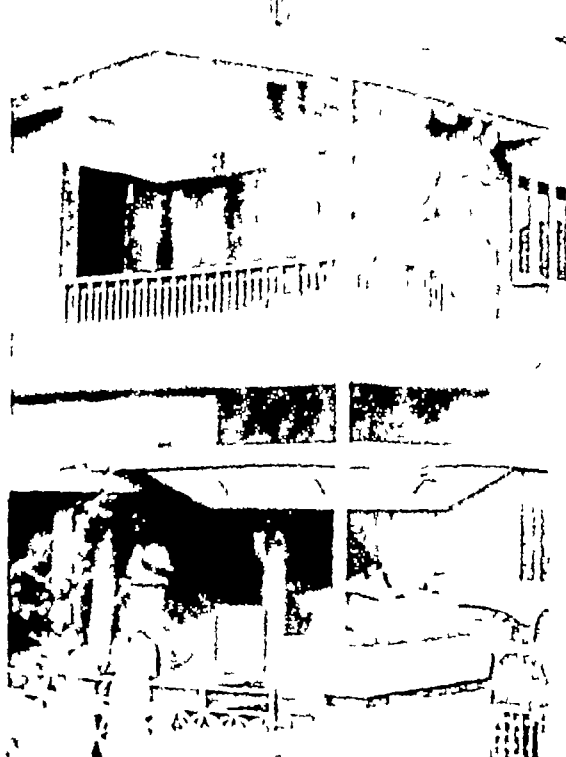
Above The Dalai Lama of Tibet with the
Author in New Delhi

Below Dr C L Bhatnagar, President of
the Indian Society of Sophrology and Psy-
chosomatic Medicine, greeting the Dalai
Lama in Indian style





Dr. S. A. Austin, Vice President of India and His Excellency Manuel Agudelo, Ambassador of Colombia in India, listening to the speech of Dr. S. A. Austin at a public meeting in New Delhi



Austins Nursing Home in New Delhi, where the office of the International Society of Sophrology and Psychosomatic Medicine is located



Dr. Zakir Husain, Vice President of India and His Excellency Manuel Agudelo, Ambassador of Colombia in India, listening to the speech of Dr. S. A. Austin at a public meeting in New Delhi



The Author speaking on Sophrology to a gathering of doctors in the Hall of the Medical Association, Jaipur



*A patient being treated by yoga-therapy
at Kriya Baba Sangh Institute, Madras*

*Yogi S A A Ramaiah, of Kriya Baba
Sangh, Madras, Specialist in Yoga-
Physio-therapy*



Section IV

The Yoga Specialists

Delhi

Yoga is a many-sided phenomenon. For some it is a spiritual matter, for others, something physical, or psychosomatic ; and for yet another set of thinkers, it is all these and very much more. Few deny, however, its use and efficacy for keeping fit. For thousands of years now, the people of India have relied on Yogic exercises for physical fitness. Now, with an almost revolutionary interest in Yoga in the western world, one can understand why the Indians themselves, the people as well as the government should be using Yoga in all earnestness for at least that for which its utility is beyond doubt. Consequently, there is a great deal of Yogic activity in the name of physical education, conducted by qualified Yoga-specialists. They are running several centres, some of which have been set up by the Government. I saw two such centres, one at Delhi and the other at Chandigarh and was impressed by the work done at each. The organisers of both were trained by the same guru, and, my mind thinks of these centres as one unit—'linked' in the same way as Kuvalyananda's Institute at Lonavla and Yogendra's Yoga Institute at Bombay.

The Yoga Ashram (of Delhi) was first established in Lahore (now a part of Pakistan) in 1924 and was rehabilitated and reorganised after the Partition, in New Delhi in 1948. The Ashram arranges regular Yogic practical-training classes both in the mornings and evenings, six days in a week. It imparts scientific training along modern lines in surroundings which are quiet and refreshing. It also arranges lectures on Yoga and Health and has provision for psychosomatic treatment of physical and mental disorders.

The Ashram has also organized a Yoga International for spreading the message of Yoga abroad. Some eminent personalities including Mr B. P. Sinha, former Chief Justice of India, Mr. Blomberg of the U S A and Dr Majudhovaghr of Iran are taking active interest in the venture.

The activities of the Ashram are looked after by its Director, Sri R. S. Suri, a respected Yoga-specialist with an interesting background. He has shown the path

of health to high and low alike. Among his pupils, he can count the late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, and other Indians and foreigners of note

In 1935, while still a student, Mr Suri fell a victim to the then dreaded Tuberculosis of the intestines. A chance meeting with an old class-mate led him to Yoga, and to health and happiness. Now he is dedicated to guiding ailing human beings to the path of health and serenity through Yoga. He is a no-nonsense master of Yoga who decries the building up of Yoga into a mysterious, magical phenomenon. Mr. Suri has worked hard to evolve new techniques and has adapted Yoga to modern needs. Notable among his innovations are massage and hot and cold sponge which he administers for particular ailments.

Mr. Suri firmly believes that by a few simple exercises, relaxation through deep breathing and systematic massage, some of the chronic diseases like neurosis, psychosis, hypertension, insomnia, diabetes and persistent constipation can be cured and many patients of these ailments, whom he has cured, stand testimony to his belief.

Age does not matter in the least to Mr Suri. He says that, "Years may stiffen muscles and joints, but as long as one breathes he is fit for Yoga." Along with instructions in asanas Mr Suri also explains the effect of the asanas on the system. In the words of a disciple, he tells the people practising asanas, "this will cure you of diabetes this will cure you of asthma this activates the liver . this improves your thyroids and parathyroids .," Call it a lesson in auto-suggestion or what you will, his voice certainly produces a soothing effect on the system. Among the proud achievements of Mr. Suri is his treatment of late Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He recalls with great satisfaction how a course of Yogic treatment relieved him of asthma and helped him address Parliament on the opening day of the budget session in 1957. The Surgeon to the President, F F. Buckler, said in a letter - "I have had the good fortune of seeing Mr. Suri at work with the President. Mr. Suri is a Yoga culturist and physio-therapist. His treatment of the President in the instance of his asthma was notably effective and improved the President's general condition and asthma to a great extent. His system is well based and thoughtful."

One good feature of Suri's approach is that he does not believe in occult practices. He gives of his knowledge generously in his talks and discussions.

His sole aim is to see the human personality flower in its fullness with the integration of the body and the mind.

He lays great stress on living this life, here and now, in a planned, beautiful way, without waste, without the strains and stresses that make a nervous wreck of so many. He says .

“Deep concentration, deep relaxation, and deep meditation revitalize the blood stream and the nervous system. All tensions are eased and fatigue wiped out. The glands function harmoniously and one becomes immune to disease. You become enlightened, you spread light. You do not then differentiate between the self and the universe. The individual self becomes the universal self. All low emotions disappear.”

“This,” says Mr. Suri, “is salvation. This is kaivalyapad. Salvation is something which you enjoy in this world. This is the goal of peace, power, and bliss which I want everyone to enjoy.”

The Health Ministry of the Government of India has also turned its attention to this Institute and I understand that a substantial grant has been recommended.

There are several western yogis and yoginis living in India. I met two of them at Delhi. One is Indira Devi, originally from Russia, who is a mystic Hatha yogini. She has an Ashram in Poona and has published several books on Yoga. The other is Esther Diaz Braun. She is a Catholic Hatha yogini, and a teacher of Hatha Yoga in Spain, where she has three centres. Her Guru was an Indian Swami, Selvarajan Yesudian—a name which is famous in Switzerland. She has been here, in India, for some months now and has been travelling a lot, visiting different ashrams and Hatha Yoga centres. She has been to Rishikesh and met Swamis Chidananda and Karunananda and others. She is now taking further training in India from Yoga-specialists like Mr. Suri.

Chandigarh

Another centre where good work is being done in the field of building health through Yoga is the Yoga Training Centre at Chandigarh. The guiding spirit of this centre is Mr. Dev Vohra, Punjab State Organiser, Yoga Physical Training. This enthusiastic 'young' Yoga-culturist and Physio-therapist of 59 odd years is also the Founder-Director of Nature-Yogic Health Home in Karnal, Punjab. His faith in combating disease through Yogic exercises is tremendous. Indeed, it is infectious.

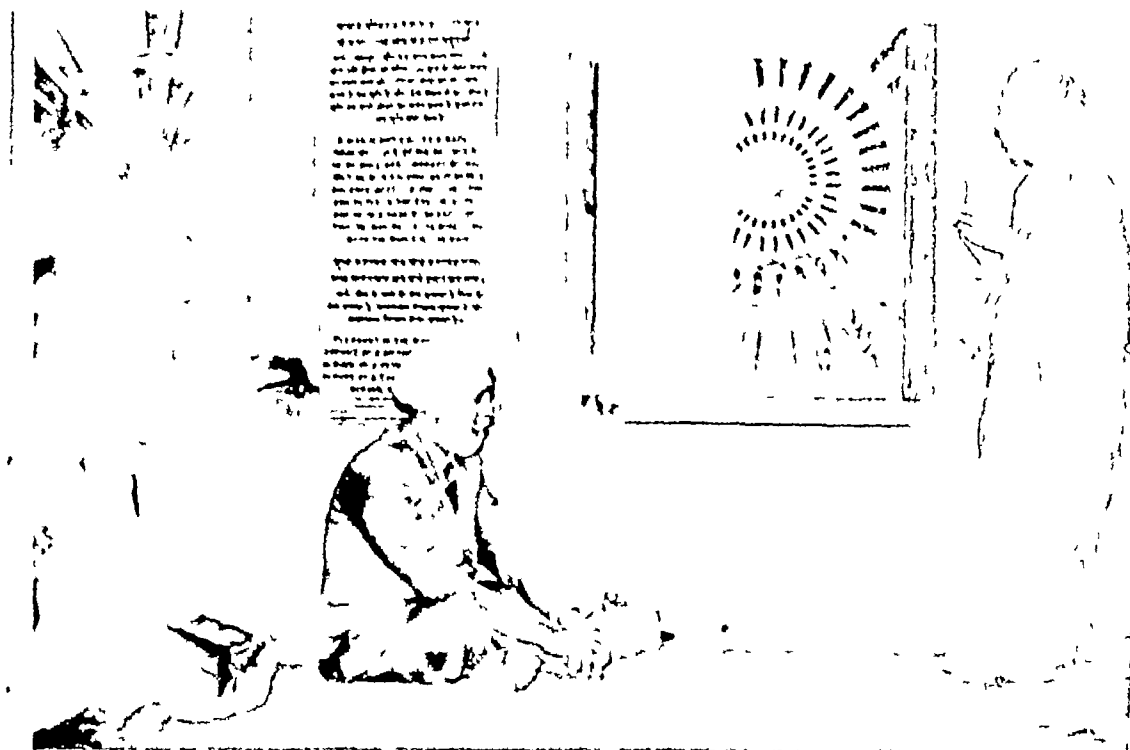
Prime Minister Nehru was a great Yoga-enthusiast and his belief in and practice of Yogic exercises was a source of strength to the advocates of "physical fitness through Yogic exercises". "Fitness through Yoga" was no mere slogan for Nehru. He said once,

"For many years I have practised a few simple selected Yoga Asanas, whenever I have had the chance and I have profited greatly by them.

"There is a poise in this method and unruffled calm, even while exercising the body. Strength and fitness are gained without any waste of energy or disturbance of the mind. And because of this, Asanas are suited to any age."

These words might be taken as the mantra of the Yoga training centre at Chandigarh. In India, Punjab is regarded as the state with the healthiest men and women. The Government is very keen on keeping its youth fighting fit. I was told that the state contributes the largest share to the Indian armed forces, and the number of men it sends up is quite out of proportion to its population. When I visited the centre, I was greatly impressed by the dynamism of the organisation. The trainees at the centre were in excellent health and the efficiency and crusading spirit of Dr. Dev Vohra was in evidence everywhere.

Dr. Dev Vohra first thought of organising such a centre when he was in jail as a political prisoner in 1929. The insanitary conditions there were causing quick and heavy damage to the health of Dr. Vohra and his fellow-prisoners. The pioneering



Indira Devi, of Russian origin, giving a discourse in the Buddhist temple at Birla Mandir



Foreign Yoginis in India receiving training at Yoga Prasar Samiti Centre

Shri R S Suri of Yoga Prasar Samiti, New Delhi, has done important work at his Centre



The Approach

Anyone who knows anything about Yoga knows that one of the important sources which has to be tapped for Yogic research is Tibetan Yoga. I knew this and normally one would have gone to Tibet for this work. But that was neither possible nor necessary. Because of the upheaval caused by the Chinese action in respect of Tibet, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as well as countless other Tibetans, had to leave their country and settle down in India, which has become a second home to them. The Tibetan yogis are thus here in India, and I could meet them and make an attempt to know their theories and techniques without leaving India. Also, since they happen to be in India, they legitimately belong to this study, "India of Yogis".

Tibetan Yoga philosophy and techniques had been imported into Tibet from India nearly a thousand years ago. This fact emerged several times from my conversations with Tibetans on Yoga. They freely admit that India is the home of Yoga and it was from here that its theories and practice were disseminated to the rest of the world. Whether Yoga went to the outside world along with Buddhism or Hinduism, as part of the Buddhist religion or the Hindu, are matters which have got to be examined. But, by and large, it is safe to state that the knowledge of Yoga was spread in the medieval period through Buddhism. Certainly, so far as the Tibetans are concerned, it got fully integrated with the faith of the people, with Buddhism.

It is a long and complicated history and I cannot discuss it here with the thoroughness it deserves. Nor can I go into the details of what transformation the original theories underwent in the lands to which they were exported. Nevertheless, a summary of the history and development and a reference to the essence of Tibetan Yoga and Indian Yoga are necessary for the understanding of the matter and these are incorporated in what follows. For the rest, I have tried to gain my knowledge through my usual method of studying the phenomenon itself and going straight to those who know about the matter.

In passing, I should add that I have already indicated by using the term Tibetan Yoga, that there is a difference between the two. This is explained in two ways.

The Dalai Lama of Tibet

As I planned my course of research in Tibetan Yoga, it became clear to me that, first and foremost, it was necessary to meet His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and to seek his blessings and help. Though in exile, the Dalai Lama is still regarded by his people as their spiritual and temporal head. I knew that if I met him, I would benefit from his wealth of spiritual knowledge and, also, once he was inclined to help, other Tibetans would readily extend their help and cooperation. I, therefore, requested that an interview be granted, and the necessary permission having been obtained, I proceeded to Dharamsala from Beas, where my wife and I had been staying to study the Radha Soami Faith.

We went from Beas to Dharamsala by car. During my journey up to Dharamsala and from there to the residence of the Dalai Lama, I was thinking about the life of His Holiness and about the Tibetan people who were now living away from their motherland as refugees.

I had already read the autobiography of His Holiness, and knew something about his land and people. The Government in Tibet under the Dalai Lama was one of the most singular systems of government in the present world. The Dalai Lama was both the spiritual and the temporal head of the realm. He is the fourteenth in succession and succeeded to his position as head of the state and spiritual master of his people, when he was four and a half years old. The Tibetan custom is that after the death of the previous incumbent in office—whether of the High Lama of a monastery or the head of the state—a search is made for his reincarnation. Thus, it is believed that each Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of his predecessor. We learn that the first Dalai Lama, who was born in 1391 A.D., was an incarnation of the Buddha of Mercy known in Tibetan as CHENRESI, which makes the present Dalai Lama, too, a reincarnation of the Buddha. Until the reincarnation can be found, or during the minority of the Dalai Lama, regents are appointed by the National Assembly to govern the country. The search is made after consultation with learned lamas and state oracles who, having observed certain signs and tokens of one kind or another, direct where the search should be made and instruct how to recognise the future Dalai Lama. After the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, the

search for a successor led to the little village of Taktser in the north-east of Tibet, where a boy, born in the year 1935, was identified as the reincarnation they were looking for.

The search having been successfully concluded and the appointment having been officialised, the future Dalai Lama was taken away from his home and brought up and educated in accordance with his new station. In due course he took over from the people, lay and spiritual, who had acted in the name of the Dalai Lama during the time he was still growing up.

By the way, it was not the first Dalai Lama who had become the temporal-spiritual ruler of Tibet. The first of the Dalai Lamas who assumed these powers was the fifth in succession. This happened in 1652. The Chinese emperor, Shun-Chih, invited the fifth Dalai Lama and made him his religious guru and gave him the homage due to the king of Tibet. From then onwards, for three hundred years, there was unbroken succession of the Dalai Lamas as spiritual and temporal rulers of Tibet.

The predecessor of the present Dalai Lama had proved to be a very beneficent ruler and His Holiness has always held his memory and achievements in high regard. Inspired by the great work of his predecessor, His Holiness, too, had vowed to dedicate himself to the service of his people. Unfortunately, the world events made his reign a period of great upheaval for Tibet, so that this young man, who had been brought up in the tradition of peace and love for all, believing that mercy and non-violence are the supreme virtues, had to assume, at the age of sixteen, the responsibility of facing a brutal invasion by the Chinese.

It was a curious irony of fate that he should have been called upon to handle a situation unprecedented and unparalleled in the history of his country, and to face a ruthless enemy on the one hand, and, on the other, that his own inclination should have lain so strongly towards loving kindness for all. When he was on a visit to India in connection with the Buddha Jayanti celebrations, he had been powerfully moved by the memory of Mahatma Gandhi. He had visited Rajghat, India's simple but beautiful memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, whom he considers a true disciple of Lord Buddha and a true believer in peace and harmony. Musing there, he had felt sure that had Gandhi been alive, he would have thrown all his will and strength into a peaceful campaign for the freedom of Tibetan

His Holiness came out to meet us. I felt an extraordinary sensation, a sort of fraternal emotion rather than a feeling that I was in the presence of a great man. He came over, put his hands forward and embraced me as if we were old friends. Then I shook hands with him, and greeted him. He took us inside his reception room, with my hand still in the fold of his gentle hands. My psychological impression at the time was that he was sad, that he needed some human contact, affection. I questioned His Holiness as to how long it had been since he had held human hands like that. The interpreter looked a trifle annoyed and said, "Doctor, you cannot put questions of this kind to His Holiness".

In the room to which we were led for the interview, the private secretary to His Holiness and the interpreter sat apart, not near. They were paying all proper respect to a living "God". The room was well-furnished, and there was a beautiful carpet on the floor. There was a radiogram in the room, and the furniture was all modern. A dog—a Tibetan dog—came in and sat down between me and His Holiness.

The conversation started. I sensed that His Holiness knew English quite well. Writing on Religion in his autobiography, he states, 'I can only write on these matters with confidence in Tibetan, and for an English translation I have to rely on others. I can only hope that the translation is a precise rendering.' This might apply to Tibetan metaphysical terms for which no exact equivalents are available, but I am sure that, in general, his knowledge of English is fairly good. In fact, at one or two places, he corrected my English and even the way the interpreter was explaining some points.

He felt happy over my interest in Tibetan Yoga and was pleasantly surprised when I questioned him on 'Dumo', a Yogic phenomenon which is peculiarly Tibetan. But, I anticipate. I began

"We are very happy to know Your Holiness personally. For a long time, we have been interested in your life and in all the Tibetan people. I have read your autobiography in Spanish. I read it some time ago, in Madrid."

His Holiness I would like to know your opinion on the quality of the translation. Some people have reported to me that it was not properly rendered in some languages.

Question . In Spanish ?

His Holiness No, in other languages

“In Spanish, it is first class,” I remarked

His Holiness · I heard that the French version is not good.

“But in Spanish it is excellent,” I said

His Holiness What do you think of the chapter on religion ?

I said that I had read the last chapter which deals with Buddhism in Tibet and thought that in Spanish it read quite well “I do not know why it was not translated well in French,” I added “Well, Your Holiness”, I continued, “I am a Medical Doctor, a Psychiatrist I am here in India because I am very much interested in the psychosomatic phenomena experienced by yogis From the very beginning, I was very keen to converse with Your Holiness about the Tibetan Yoga and especially about the psychophysical phenomena experienced by the Tibetan yogis I shall be greatly obliged if Your Holiness could help me Could Your Holiness help me in establishing contact with some Tibetan yogis living in India, so that I might make psychological research into their experiences ?”

His Holiness . You won't mind meeting these yogis and Tibetan doctors anywhere “In any part of India,” I replied “I can go to visit them anywhere in India ”

His Holiness · We have a medical unit here, and the best doctors are available here.

“Thank you very much,” I said, fully conscious of my good luck

His Holiness . You can visit the doctors after you have finished your talk with me There are some Yoga experts in Dharamsala For what purpose do you want to contact the yogis ? Is it only for information to be used in your work or do you want to study Tibetan Yoga and the way to practise it ?

Question I have been doing research in human psychology, specially in the different states of human consciousness I have contacted Indian yogis and learnt about their experiences. Now, if I can see some

Tibetan yogis, it will be of great help to me in my study of psychological phenomena. You see, the yogis can see some visions and hear some special sounds : the anahat sound. I am interested specially in this phenomenon. Could Your Holiness throw some light on this ?

His Holiness : There are five positions based on the teachings, called '*Abis Anahat Aban Kala*'. They are teachings. There are five different eyes and six intuitive parts. Perhaps, you may be interested in that. These subjects are very well described, fully described, very clearly explained. But to practise them you must develop concentration.

Question : Concentration ?

His Holiness : In Hindi it is called Samadhī.

Question . Is it called concentration in Tibetan ?

His Holiness , No, in Tibetan we call it 'Shi-ney'. Its equivalent in Sanskrit is Samadhī and in English it is called concentration. Actually, Samadhī would be equivalent to 'Ting-Nge-Zin' in Tibetan. 'Shi-ney' is a part of it. You can develop these divine powers, this visual intuitive power to see objects, which may be millions of miles away, very clearly. Some people can see up to only a few miles, some can see beyond death, and so on. It depends on the development of your visual intuitive power. You can also hear the divine sound with the aid of divine audibility. Another of these intuitive powers is to understand others, read others' minds. If you could practise that with me at this moment, there would be no need for exchanging any words. Immediate answer can be obtained by intuitive contact.

Question . Is it possible for your Holiness to know my thoughts this moment ?

His Holiness . I have a strong belief in it. I am practising a certain sadhana, which may take about six months. It takes time. And for developing these powers, I require to spend one year in a secluded place to develop concentration all the time. Then the power will

gradually come. When you develop this power, you can witness what is happening in many other places, if you like to. In order to develop that intuitive power, you must develop the power of concentration first. Then, once you have developed the power of concentration as a background, you can intuitively understand things and you can desire or order whatever things you like.

Question : Has Your Holiness practised the physical techniques of Yoga ?

His Holiness When I was taught, all this was included in the doctrine. So, naturally, I had to learn and go through the practical exercises, etc. But I have not practised them as a daily discipline.

Question In India, I saw some yogis, like Radhasoamis in Beas, who concentrated on the third eye, between the two eyes. These people don't practise any other technique like Raja yogis do ; they don't perform kriyas and asanas. No, these Radhasoamis only practise concentration on the third eye. One small book was published in connection with the 'third eye' some years ago. Could your Holiness say something on that ?

His Holiness : What is the name of this book ?
 "This book is called, 'The Third Eye'. It is written by Lobsang Rampa", I replied.

His Holiness and the interpreter both had a hearty laugh which disconcerted me a little. After a while, His Holiness continued.

His Holiness : It is absolutely wrong. The conception of the third eye is there, but his description is all false. The Buddhist concept on concentration is very concrete, to introspect, to fix all your attention on one object. That is a different thing. Once you know how to do it, it will give you many powers.

Question : Do the Tibetans also have some special techniques like they have in India, to concentrate on this place, some special place or not ?

His Holiness : Yes. According to Tantric practices, if you concentrate, there are special places where you have to concentrate. It is a different

question because there are so many other places of your body to concentrate on. But, if you concentrate as you go high, you concentrate on your upper portion, that will give you clarity in your vision, and if you concentrate on your lower portion, your vision will not be so clear. It makes the removal of dullness easy, but both the practices are essential. If you are suffering from a mental dullness, then you have to concentrate higher to enable you to rise up. But, if your mind is restless or excited, then it is better for you to concentrate on a lower portion to control the mind. This is the general rule for meditation.

“In Tibet ?” I asked.

His Holiness Actually, this is preserved in Tibet, but originally it came from India. It provides the base of Buddhist Tantrism. It is an entity, if you believe in it, if you practise it. So, authentically, it exists in Tibet, no matter whether it has come from India or not.

“Very interesting, all this,” I remarked.

His Holiness So, the situation is very strange. It was all translated from Indian books into Tibetan, many centuries ago. But the original books are not available in India now, and there are no translations either. So, people naturally think that it is something new, something which the Tibetans have created.

Question : One point, Your Holiness, about Dumo. Dumo is practised by Tibetan yogis. I heard also something about the phenomenon of Levitation in Tibetan Yoga. It is normal, the people say, for Tibetan yogis, only Tibetan yogis can practise Levitation. I would like to ask Your Holiness this : What is your opinion about Dumo, and what exactly is this Levitation ?

His Holiness : Actually, this originated from an Indian teacher called Naropa. He was a student at an Indian University.

Question : Dumo was originated by Naropa ? In Tibet ?

His Holiness : There are six teachings given by Naropa and the Domo practice is just one of them, one of the six. It is only mentioned there in this doctrine called Naropa's doctrine. Otherwise, these teachings are available in all Tantric practices. Unless the fire of Domo is ignited, it cannot melt the high dot. You see, Dr Caycedo, if the heat is not created, psychic heat, psycho-physical heat is not created it cannot give you the pleasant feeling for high meditation and if that stage is not reached, then deep concentration is not possible. The consciousness, which is used through our eyes and ears, all these five substances, has a very rough course, in comparison to the subtle one, including the consciousness of the mind. You see, we have six types of consciousness, not just five of the senses, but six, with one in the mind, and they are divided into two parts one coarse, and the other subtle. And in the dream state, we use that part of the consciousness, the subtle consciousness. When a man faints, he goes out of consciousness, then he experiences it in the most subtle form, and at the time of the last breath it is the subtlest.

You see, this is true, generally speaking, of a normal death which is not caused by immediate, sudden reasons—gun shot or something like that. This is true more in the case of a person who has had an illness for a very long time, who has gone very weak and is slowly going towards a normal death, natural death. When he dies, and as the consciousness becomes deeper and deeper, he loses his feeling gradually, and he comes to a stage of subtle consciousness at the moment of the last breath. Generally speaking, at the time we dispose of the body by cremation or by burial, it will be having the subtlest state of mind and consciousness. But, we cannot make use of that at that moment, because at that stage the person is just unconscious and is either fainting or has already fainted. So, we can't make use of that. So, what the wise Buddhist yogis do is that when they are still alive, they try to attain that stage, that subtle stage, and make use of it by abolishing the coarse. You could develop that state and concentration, achieve deep concentration. If that state is changed into

concentration on a point or vision concentration, your consciousness can become quite precious. According to Buddhist philosophy, that stage of consciousness becomes very powerful for destroying ignorance.

Question · And what about Levitation ? I heard some time ago that Tibetan yogis practise this technique, in padmasana, and can, without experiencing any pain, go down slowly.

His Holiness · This is an exercise, and for that you must know how to hold your breath Then you can do it.

Question · Is it something like pranayama ?

His Holiness : Yes. Only better In pranayama, you just draw your breath In this case, you draw it in and you control it for as long a time as you can.

“It is wonderful,” I said.

We talked for one hour more in connection with the techniques used by some Tibetan yogis for losing weight, an aspect of training in Levitation, a kind of breath-control training. His Holiness spoke to me of people who learn how to fall gradually and gently so as not to get hurt in the process. After training for Levitation through meditation and concentration, the body of a Tibetan yogi can be disintegrated in a single moment of realisation A High Lama knows when he would die. Then he calls the brother lamas and after a few days of concentration, the body disappears His Holiness affirmed the truth of this

I questioned whether this was a kind of suicide, like Buddhist monks committing suicide through burning, as in Saigon I asked whether Tibetans “accepted” suicide His Holiness laughed gently and said, “This is completely different We don’t regard it as suicide in that way. It is something high—this disintegration ”

During this period, my wife was authorised to take photographs of the room of His Holiness Our conversation lasted about 3 hours I could not get much material for my use because often the Dalai Lama discussed things unrelated to the subject of my enquiry, and that, too, very elaborately, while I waited patiently, feeling a little awkward and confused.

Afterwards, when I became friendly with the Tibetans and got to know them better, I learnt that that was a habit inherent in their personality

I thanked His Holiness and said that I would not take any more of his valuable time. I requested him for the addresses and names of the yogis in Dalhousie because I had learnt that some Tibetan yogis living there were practising the phenomena we had discussed. He said that he would give a letter for his representative in Dalhousie, and I could then meet these yogis

Before we left the room, His Holiness very kindly and graciously gave me an autographed copy of his autobiography "My Land and My People," in the English language. Looking at his signature in the Tibetan language, I tried to decipher what his real name was but could not get it from the book. My curiosity was aroused, but I did not consider it discreet to ask others. I learnt later when I looked into another publication of the Dalai Lama "An Introduction To Buddhism", which is a reprint of a part of his autobiography, that the name of His Holiness is Gejyong Tenzin Ghratsho

He came out with us. Nostalgic memories of his home made him look a little sad. He glanced around and asked me whether I liked the area, the Indian Himalayas. Then he put his arm round my neck and said in a wistful voice, "This is like Tibet." My wife said that we would pray to God that the Tibetans should get their country back soon. I added that the heroic people of Tibet living in the Indian mountains had all their hopes and faith and trust in one name. The Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama asked my wife if she would like to see the Nursery where Tibetans born in India were looked after. "Of course," she replied eagerly and enquired whether she could also make a movie and take photographs to show in other countries. He said, "I will introduce you to my sister who is in charge of the Nursery." Then, with a pleasant laugh, he added, "you can take a movie film of me also." When my wife said that our cameras were in the car because we had not been allowed to bring these in, he sent someone to fetch them. Then my wife took movie pictures of His Holiness. At this moment, I was surprised by a question put by the Dalai Lama

"How do you hypnotise people?" he said, with the innocence of a child. I was surprised because I had not mentioned anything about our practice in psychiatry. I realised that he was given a detailed information about people visiting him. I was

wondering as to what I should say. My reply was, "Techniques of this kind are now being revised by the scientists of our Society of Sophrology". He asked if it was the same team of doctors who were going to start a hospital of Sophro-therapy in Delhi. I confirmed that and told him that ours was an International society having branches in many countries and, now, also in India. I expressed the hope that with his permission some Tibetan doctors would also come forward, cooperate with us, and give us the benefit of their experiences. The Dalai Lama said, "You can go and meet my private doctor. Take my interpreter with you. He will be glad to show you some Tibetan medical techniques." Finally, and while my wife was busy making the movie, he pleasantly remarked that I could make a movie of these techniques. We said good-bye to His Holiness and he was good enough to say that when he came to Delhi we could continue the interesting conversation. The interpreter took us back to the reception room and, after twenty minutes, the private secretary of His Holiness came with the letter of introduction the Dalai Lama had promised to give.

On our way back to our guest-house, in Dharamsala, we took the precaution of not returning by car. Also, we were in need of fresh air to think about the important interview and the interesting conversation we had just had. We returned on foot.

We came to Dalhousie, and visited the Tibetan monasteries in that place. There, I made the acquaintance of the Guru Khamtul Rinpoche, Head Lama of the Tibetan Craft Community, of whom I shall speak presently. In Dalhousie there is a spacious Nunnery located in a very large area where there live nearly 20 Tibetan Nuns. The Nunnery is looked after by a kind lady, Freda Bedi, who took us round and showed us the place. Thanks to the courtesy of Freda Bedi, three yoginis agreed to let me photograph them. I understand that lama yoginis of Tibet do not allow themselves to be photographed and I am really grateful both to Freda Bedi and the yoginis for their friendliness.

Theories and Practices

After visiting whatever monasteries I could see, I returned to Delhi. I kept up my contact with His Holiness through letters and kept in touch with other Tibetans. I met His Holiness when he visited Delhi in early August. Then, a few days later, the Guru Khamtul Rinpoche came to Delhi with three of his disciples and very kindly accepted my invitation to stay with me. He and his three disciples and the interpreter, Nam Gyal Gampo, a young Tibetan whom I had met during my earlier visit at a monastery near Dalhousie, were my guests for some days.

Khamtul Rinpoche belongs to the Dukpa Kagyudpa sect of the Tibetan yogis. His monastery was in Dege, Eastern Tibet. Its name was Khamgar Phuntsok Choling and it had 200 branch monasteries throughout Kham (E Tibet), of which Khamtul Rinpoche was the Head Lama. In Tibet they concentrated on studying and practising the Dharma and in particular the higher Yogic meditations for which the Dukpas are renowned.

In 1957, the hostilities with the Chinese in Kham increased. The Chinese were trying to impose their own ideology and were attempting to influence the running of the monasteries in order to eradicate religion. Because of his position, the Chinese were anxious to imprison or kill Khamtul Rinpoche. When the conditions became very difficult and dangerous, he escaped secretly with about 15 monks, taking with them only those books and images which could be safely concealed on their bodies. Kham is far from Central Tibet, and they experienced much hostility and difficulties on the way to India. On arrival they received the news that their monastery had been destroyed and all the monks in it killed.

They then stayed in Kalimpong, but their ignorance of Indian customs, and of the languages, made life very difficult. For sometime they managed by selling Tibetan articles which they had brought with them except, of course, the rare and very important books and images with which it would have been foolish to part, as they are irreplaceable. However, this could not go on and so, Khamtul Rinpoche decided that the best way to obtain money to live and at the same time help preserve the holy Dharma was to start printing rare Tibetan scriptures, since, in Tibet, all the books were being destroyed. The Indian Government gave them a grant for a printing press which has since been used solely for printing Tibetan scriptures and other religious works.

Then, a large number of Khamtul Rinpoche's lay followers from Tibet came and asked him to help them as they were very poor. As all these people have a very strong devotion towards religion, and deep attachment and loyalty towards Khamtul Rinpoche and the Dukpa Kagyudpa sect, Rinpoche and his monks could not desert them. After five years the group moved to Palampur (near Dharamsala) where more followers joined them. There, they began producing crafts in order to become self-supporting. However, the conditions in Palampur were unsatisfactory and, in 1965, they moved to Dalhousie, and the Tibetan Craft Community was founded. More people joined and are still joining. A school was started for the children, teaching Tibetan, Punjabi, English, Arithmetic and Geography. The crafts produced are paintings, carpets, Bhutanese books, etc.

It was the head of this community who was my guest and, naturally, I wanted to make all the use I could of his visit.

I put several questions to this Tibetan yogi and received plenty of information and advice. The first question I asked the guru was: "What is the difference between Rinpoche and Tulku, since to us both are incarnations?" The guru told me that Tulku was a 'low' incarnation, whereas Rinpoche was a high incarnation. The Guru himself had become the head of his community when he was only five years old and, as we have noted earlier in the case of the Dalai Lama, according to Tibetan custom selection is made after the death of the last chief of the person in whom the departed one has reincarnated himself. This guru is the 8th incarnation of the Founder of the Tibetan Order of which he is the head. Before the Chinese action his organisation consisted of more than 200 monasteries in which lived ten thousand lamas. He was the chief of the community. Today in his monastery at Dalhousie, there are in all 50 lamas out of which there are six tulkus and nine yogis.

I questioned him as to how many Tibetan yogis were living in India. He said that it was very difficult to be exact. The entire organisation had been disrupted and some people had come to India while others had gone to Sikkim. He said, "One great yogi is living in Sikkim, His Holiness the Gyal Walng Karmapa. He is recognised as one of the highest yogis. Some other yogis are living in Darjeeling." I carefully noted this down because I had plans to go to Sikkim after the completion of my manuscript, and before leaving India, so that I might meet His Holiness in Sikkim and if possible the other yogis in Darjeeling,

I asked the Rinpoche whether his disciples were setting up new monasteries for Tibetan yogis in Kulu Valley. I told him that the Dalai Lama had authorised me to ask him the questions at Dalhousie but at that time he would not reply to my questions. I said: 'Could I repeat those questions now?'

He was a little confused and talked to the interpreter in Tibetan before the latter told me that the Rinpoche would be glad to answer my questions. I then asked the guru a question in respect of disintegration. I asked him if he knew that in their monasteries in Tibet there had been some cases of disintegration. He would not commit himself and said merely that he had *heard* something of that sort. I questioned: 'What is the technique? What is the process?' The Rinpoche said: 'For about one week the lama goes into a room and when we open the door after the week we don't see the lama. We find only some nails and hair on the floor and the rest is found to have disappeared.'

I repeated my question: 'Had he seen any case of disintegration?'

Once again, he had some consultation with the interpreter. Then he said that he had seen something like that. He had once seen the reduction of the body. However, there had been some confusion. The lama had died and then his body had begun to shrink and had gone down to the size of an arm and he inserted this—from the elbow to the hand. Then that small body was cremated. There was no total disintegration.

I then asked him about another phenomenon in which I was interested, namely, Levitation. I said: 'I have heard that in the Dharmachakra rotation, the yogis perform Levitation.' He kept silent, but I insisted on receiving a definite reply. He then said that he had never seen the phenomenon but had heard something. Then I named the three yogis who, I had learned, practised Levitation. Two times, after consulting with the interpreter, he said that he had heard that someone performed it and gave me the name of the yogi as Thang.

Before his departure, the Guru Khentse Rinpoche gave me some more literature including an excellent volume of the History of Buddhism in Tibet. This should prove useful to the reader who is desirous of knowing more about the subject, and I am, therefore, reproducing relevant portions. For me, it is of great personal value because it provides the authentic Tibetan version of the history.

There are three main aspects of Buddhism known as the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle), the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) and the Vajrayana (the indestructible Vehicle, i.e., the Tantra). They are called vehicles because they carry one to Nirvana. All three were preached by Lord Buddha in accordance with the capacity of the audience—the higher Vajrayana teachings being reserved for those few who were ready to receive them. Every Buddhist country practises one or other of these aspects, but in Tibet they studied and practised all three !

In Tibet there were four schools of Buddhism—the Nyingmapa (Ancient Ones) founded by Guru Pedma Sambhava, the Sakyapa (Tawny Earth), the Kagyudpa (Oral Tradition) and the Gelukpa (The Virtuous Ones). There was little difference in these sects except for a different line of tradition and the emphasis each placed on study or meditation. All lived harmoniously side by side and studied from each other.

In India, in about the 10th century, there was a great Indian Tantric saint named Telopa who was extremely advanced in meditation and had many occult powers. Because his mind was so pure and perfect he was able to receive teachings directly from the Dharmakaya aspect of the Buddha. These teachings he then transmitted orally to another siddha named Naropa, a learned Pandit of the Nalanda and Vikramashila Universities. Naropa then taught the Tibetan yogi Marpa, who in turn instructed his illustrious pupil Milarepa. Milarepa is the most famous yogi of Tibet and he composed many songs on the Dharma which are still loved and sung by Tibetans.

Milarepa had a very learned disciple named Dagpo Lhaje (Gampopa). He had countless pupils, but four of them, being especially advanced, founded four separate traditions within the Kagyudpa sect. One of these four disciples was named Phagmo Drupa and he had among his numerous disciples, 8 of especial merit who founded a further 8 subjects. One of these 8 disciples, Lingjirepa, who was born about 800 years ago, had a very eminent pupil named Domgon Tsangpa Gyarey and it was he who founded the Dukpa Kagyudpa sect. He built a monastery in a place called Ngam which became very famous and so many people became the followers of this monastery that there was a proverb that half the poor people in Tibet were Dukpas, and half of the Dukpas were Siddhas (realised Tantric saints).

One very high Dukpa Lama named Ngawang Zangpo had three disciples who built a monastery each—one between Tibet and China, one between Tibet and

India, and one in Eastern Tibet. The one who built in East Tibet (Kham) was called Kham Terphel and he was the first Khamtul Rinpoche. The present one is the eighth incarnation. The Dulpas were renowned throughout Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan for the number of advanced Yogis which were found in their sect. These yogis spend 11 or most of their lives meditating in cave in order to gain direct realization of the most transcendental truths, and they pass down their Yogic tradition to worthy disciples.

Of the names mentioned in the history of Buddhism in Tibet in the resume given above, one is that of Naropa. With this great Indian yogi are associated what are called "The six Yogas". The celebrated 'Dumo' is one of these six. The other five are the Illusory Body Yoga, the Dream Yoga, the Light Yoga, the Bardo Yoga, and the Transformation Yoga. Dumo constitutes the Foundation and the mainstay of the Path, and for me it is a phenomenon of great psychological interest to find how a supposed tiny flame existing in our system can make the whole body 'blaze like a ball of fire'. However, before I write more about Dumo, let me clarify a point about Tibetan Yoga system.

As in the case of Indian Yoga, so in respect of Tibetan Yoga also, sometime two, sometime three, sometime six categories of Yoga are mentioned. This is confusing for those who do not understand how these categories are made. Essentially, there is no contradiction in the statement. The figure three is given with reference to the Yogas meant for control of the body the mind and the mouth. When one talks in terms of two Yogas, one means the two major practices known as the "Arising Yoga" and the "Perfecting Yoga". The former is also called the Yoga of Creation or the Yoga of Growth and serves as a preparatory stage for the second category in which the individual perfects himself. The "Arising Yoga" emphasises practices and concentration and visualisation and, what may be called, the "Basic Yogic and Traditional Training". However, all this is the preliminary effort for the higher Yoga and serves merely as a kind of ground-work, especially for the "Perfecting Yoga" which is an advanced practice. The objective in this is to direct the Prana into the central channel and to convert the pranas into *Wisdom-Light*. This helps in the Realisation of what is known as the *Dharm-Kaya*, the first of the three bodies of the Buddha. Then, from this *Dharm-kaya*, one moves on to the realisation of the second body of the Buddha called *Sambhog Kaya*. Firstly, one raises oneself up to the *Nirman-Kaya*, the Body of Transformation or the Incarnated Body. Although exact translations are not possible, *Dharm-Kaya* may

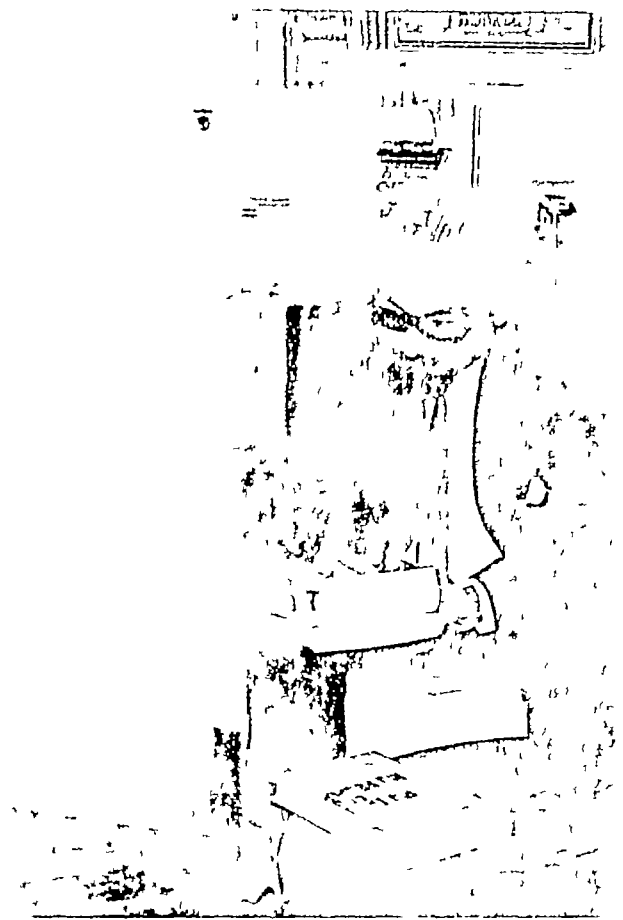
be loosely translated as the body of Truth and Sambhog Kaya as the body of Enjoyment

The so-called six Yogas are part of the Perfecting Yoga. The first two of these are Heat Yoga, generally known as *Dumo*, and the Yoga of the Illusory Body. These are the two primary ones. Other four are usually regarded as subsidiary and are called the Yogas of Light, of Dream, of Bardo and of Transformation.

All these, however, pertain to what is known as the Tantric philosophy. We have already seen that the Tibetans, who are all Buddhist, have evolved, generally speaking, their own special brand of Buddhism. The two broad categories of Buddhism, namely, Mahayana and Hinayana, the broad or the big vehicle and the narrow or the little vehicle, constitute the basis. It is Tantric practices which are largely valued. Basically the aims are the same as those of Buddhism. These combined with Yoga-char practice of Yoga, gave us the Tibetan Yoga. It is within this framework that the categories and explanations we have been talking about are to be considered and understood.

All these must be understood clearly for there is a possibility of further confusion. In English translations, one comes across terms like Foundation, Path, and Accomplishment. They can be understood as relating to Buddhism generally as well as to Tantrism. Generally, however, Foundation means the basic principles of Tantric Buddhism, the Path is the way of action or practices and accomplishment of fruit, and Accomplishment is the Realisation of the basic objectives. To give one example, the idea of the six Yogas is the notion that the body-mind complex of each one of us contains the potential, the Innate Body-Nature, for developing and arriving at the Tri-kaya, the three bodies of God-head. The Path of the six Yogas is to be practised, just as any other techniques, methods and spiritual exercises are followed, for accomplishment of obtaining the Tri-kaya.

The similarity between Indian Tantric practices and Tibetan Tantric practices obtains to the point of nearly complete identification of one with the other. The placement of the "consciousness"—*kundalini* for India—is at the same point in the body and it has to be raised to the same point in the head. On the way, there are the chakras, four or six in Tibetan Yoga, seven, in all, including the two extremities, in the Indian philosophy. And both talk in terms of the bindoo, *Tig-Le* in the Tibetan, meaning drop or dot which stands for the quintessence of the vital energy, and stands also for the Highest in both systems. The raising of the *Kundalini*



Above With the Dalai Lama of Tibet at Dharamsala

*Below Personal Physicians of the Dalai Lama, Dr Yeskay
Thonden and Dr Trogawa Gyurmi Ngawang, at Dharamsala*





Above Mr T C Tara, Private Secretary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Below His Holiness's private doctor explaining to the author a point of Therapy in Tibetan Medicine Dharamsala





Below Tibetan Yoginis of the Nunnery at Dalhousie

Above Meeting the Tibetan Lama doctors Lobsang Tenpa and Goshe Ugen Tseren. Lama Tseren Tulku (in the centre) acted as an interpreter





Below Left Chullo Yogi

Below Right Jamyano Yogi

Above Khamtul Rinpoche with his great guru Abu Rinpoche Chullo, Jamyano and Tinley are Guru Khamtul's disciples

Below in the Centre Tinley, the only Yogi who, according to Guru Khamtul Rinpoche, can perform 'Levitation'



power or the consciousness, or making the Tig-Le flow through the nadis, the channels of the body, is accomplished through more or less the same process, basically depending upon the concept of the three channels, the central channel and two others, one to the right and one to the left. In both systems the central channel is the channel that counts and the yogi is concerned with opening it and letting the fluid of bliss flow through it.

And the concept of Great Bliss, Mahasukh, is also identical in both. In the six Yogas of Naropa methods are suggested for reaching this. If, after certain measures have been tried out one still fails to achieve the Great Bliss, one is told to apply the Wisdom-Mother mudras, by visualising the sexual act with a Dakini. Dakinis are female-sky travellers who could correspond with the goddesses as well as yaksinis of the Hindu mythology. These Dakinis are Tantric goddesses and the chief amongst them are of five colours, white, blue, yellow, red and green. Each of these colours has an esoteric significance. The chief ones are known as the Five Immortal Sisters, and are regarded as incarnation of the Goddess, Durga, their abode being in the Tibetan Himalayas, though other traditions represent them as dwelling in Mount Kailash region or on Mount Everest, etc.

Of course, the sexual act in the context is a spiritual exercise, and the Dakini is to be first consecrated, made into a Goddess, fully worthy of worship, for then the yogi himself is the Buddha. This whole philosophy of the conversion of the sexual act into an instrument of Bliss, and of the female into the Goddess, is an issue of great complexity, and of great importance to psychologists. This new philosophy of the Cult of Desire is, as I have already remarked, being examined critically by modern scholars and deserves detailed study by medical doctors, specially those who are interested in enlarging their knowledge and, may be, in revising their ideas on matters of sex.

To revert to Domo which is one of the "specialities" of Tibetan Yoga. They say that in Tibet the history of this practice goes back to ten thousand years and the pre-Buddhist, the Bonbelievers and their ancestors were practising it. Certainly, it constitutes a most important element of Tibetan Yoga and deserves much more attention than I can give it here. It sounds fantastic but it is claimed that he who has reached the highest point in the practice of Domo acquires vast powers. One "can radiate beams of light from one's body, can stand in the sun without casting a shadow, can make his body vanish, can transform stones into gold and walk upon water

without sinking, can enter into fire without being burnt, can melt a snow-mountain with his Dumo, can travel to a far-off cosmos in a few seconds and fly in the sky and walk through rocks and mountains " And, all these are nothing compared to what lies ahead for him who has reached further perfection in the Dumo practice.

Literally, the term Dumo means 'a fierce woman who can destroy all desires and passions,' and it is therefore to be regarded as the Fire of Transcendental Wisdom that burns up all ignorance and vice. That is why it is enjoined upon the yogi to practise Dumo even when he is practising other Yogas. Indeed, Dumo is the foundation of Tibetan Yoga, and, as a phenomenon, deserves careful and detailed study by medical science.

I shall conclude this section and the book by referring the reader to my earlier study, 'Letters of Silence'. In that, in a letter to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I have summarised my approach and views in respect of our contact with the Tibetan yogis and of our study of their techniques from the point of view of their feasibility for incorporation into the new school of science, with which I am connected, namely, Sophrology. I said. "As I explained to Your Holiness personally, we in the West have founded a Scientific School with Psychiatrists and Specialists in Psychosomatic Medicine as members. This School is interested in the study of the phenomena of the human consciousness. We want to know the various states of consciousness in order to explore a new way to the cure of some mental ailments. We have ventured upon the exploration of the Eastern mentality from a new angle. We believe that in the East there are men who know about states of consciousness which are not only ignored but even denied by us. I am convinced, after my personal experience of living for more than a year in India, and after visiting ashrams and meeting yogis, that a new state of consciousness can be developed in man and if he is trained to live in it, this fact in itself would represent the cure of some of the psychological and psychosomatic illnesses. This is not the occasion to explain to Your Holiness the phenomena which I have observed so far, but I believe Your Holiness understands me.

"We might have been too ambitious in attempting to start the study of the states of consciousness in the East with experiences of the yogis. They are men who, after a Titanic training, know better than any of us psychiatrists, the different states of consciousness and some of the phenomena inherent in such states, as pseudo-perceptions, delusions, states of 'Absence', etc. known to the Western psychiatrists

as symptoms of grave maladies. Unfortunately for our study, the yogis adhere strictly to the Law of Silence. They guard their secrets zealously, to be disclosed only to the disciple when he, in turn, acquires the necessary qualifications.

"Trusting in the warm welcome Your Holiness gave me, and in the belief that Your Holiness is convinced of the purity of my intentions, I dare now to seek your help in the difficult path which we are taking.

"It is not our intention to violate the secrets of the yogis, but to pursue the scientific study of the various states of consciousness for the good of Humanity. Could not this study be carried out by Tibetan doctors? Who is better qualified than them to collaborate with us in this work of far-reaching significance to the welfare of man?"

"The welfare of man! That, I am sure, is the concern of all of us, yogis and doctors, and all who strive in one way or the other, towards light, towards knowledge. I have no doubt that that is what the yogis of yore were trying to work for, and what is dearest to the hearts of the yogis of today, Tibetan, Indian or of any other nationality. May we scientists and doctors hope, therefore, that the knowledge gained by yogis, from the Buddha to the Dalai Lama and other Buddhists, and from Vashishtha to Vivekananda and other Hindus, will be put into the common pool for this common cause, the welfare of man.

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Glossary of Oriental Terms

Anahat :	(also anahad), the First Sound, the Omkar sound, in the Universe, also, the mystic sounds heard by yogis.
ananda .	bliss, eternal joy; a suffix usually put at the end of the names of the swamis—as in Vivekananda, Chidananda
asana :	yogic postures.
ashram :	(a) dwelling of the yogis, (b) any of the four stages in man's life (brahmachariya, grihstha, vanaprastha, sannyasa)
atma :	soul, spirit
atman :	supreme soul
Ayurveda	ancient Hindu science of medicine and surgery.
Aum, Om, Omkar :	the first manifested sound , also called Pranava
bani, vani :	vani means speech , bani, form of the same word, stands for speech or sayings of God, gurus, saints, etc.
Bardo (Tibetan) :	one of the six yogas of Naropa—the intermediate stage between death and rebirth
Bhagavan :	the Lord of the Universe , applied also to realised persons of great eminence
bhakta :	a worshipper of a “personal” God
bhakti :	devotion to God
Bhakti-Yoga	one of the four main Yogas—the path of attaining salvation through Bhakti
bhoga :	enjoyment or experience of the worldly life , opposite of Yoga.
Brahma :	one member of the Hindu Trinity , the other two are Vishnu and Siva
brahmachariya :	The first of the four stages of man's life according to old Hindu division , life of the student.
Brahman	the Self, the all-pervading Principle.
Brahmin .	one of the four Hindu castes, and the highest
buddhi :	intellect , Wisdom, the same, which when attained, makes one the Buddha.
chakra :	literally a circle , (1) one of the centres on the subtle path for prana, the vital force, to travel in the body ; chakras are also known as padmas , (2) a circle of devotees.

chikitsa :	therapy.
chitta :	mind ; sometime regarded as the sub-conscious mind.
Dakinis (Tibetan)	"sky-travellers"—goddesses or female deities of Tantrism.
devata :	deity.
devi :	goddess ; in popular usage stands for Durga or Parvatī, spouse of Śiva.
dharma :	the Law ; duty , doctrine or teachings , principles. It is maintained that in its fullest sense the word is untranslatable.
dharmakaya :	one of the three bodies covered by the term 'trikaya', the 'Body of Truth', or 'Real Body' of the Buddha.
dhauti, dhoti :	literally an article of dress, the lower garment worn in India by both men and women ; one of the practices in Kriya.
dhyana .	meditation or concentration ; in Tibetan Yoga used as an equivalent of samadhi.
dosh :	defect or fault, moral or physical, so that the term is applied both in the field of religion and of therapy
Dumo (Tibetan)	The 'mystic' fire produced in the navel chakra through the practice of Yoga of the same name.
Durga :	one of the chief Hindu goddesses ; spouse of Śiva.
gopis :	daughters or wives of the cowherds of Vrindavana, near Mathura, associated with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Viṣṇu.
grihstha :	the second of the four ashrams, stages of life; house-holder's life
gunas :	qualities , refers to the three qualities, Tamsic, Rajasic, Satvic, making for three different temperaments.
guru :	teacher, especially the spiritual teacher.
Hatha Yoga :	the Yoga of physical perfection
Hinayana :	one of the two major divisions of Buddhism ; the Little Vehicle.
ida	the channel on the right of sushumna, the central canal of the subtle body.
japa :	repetition of the Lord's name.
ji :	a suffix used as a mark of respect as in Swamiji, Gandhiji.
jiva :	the living being, as jivatma, the individual soul.
jivan :	life.
jivan-mukta :	one who is liberated in this life
jnan	knowledge, philosophic insight.
jnani	one who has knowledge or philosophic insight
jnana-Yoga :	Yoga of Knowledge , one of the four main Yogas.

karma :	action, especially that operating through the Law of cause and effect.
kaya :	body.
kriya :	Hatha-Yogic exercises.
kshatri :	one of the four castes, the 'warrior' class, ranking next to the Brahmins.
kundalini :	the primordial cosmic energy located in the individual
Laya-Yoga :	laya is absorption, hence the Yoga of Absorption.
maha :	great; used as a prefix to many words to add the sense of greatness, as in maharaj, great king, maharshi, great rishi; mahatma, great atma
mahamudra :	eternal sleep, used to denote the death of realised beings, also eternal communion with God.
mahasukhi :	The Great Bliss; synonym for Nirvana.
Mahayana :	the Great Vehicle—one of the two main divisions of Buddhism.
manas :	mind; actually one of the four parts or aspects of the Mind, chitta, buddhi and ahankar being the other three.
manoh :	of the mind, mental; as against sharirik, of the body.
mantra :	a sacred formula for invoking the deity
marg :	literally, path, the way, e.g. Bhakti Marg, Jnana Marg.
math :	monastery
maya :	illusion—especially the Illusion which causes the world to appear as real
moksha :	same as mukti or nirvana, liberation from bondage of the world.
mudra :	a gesture or posture.
mukti :	liberation from bondage of the world
muni :	one who is 'moun', silent; a sage or an ascetic.
nada :	sound, mystic sound, music
Nada-Yoga :	yoga of sound, or of music.
nadi :	literally stream, psychic nerve or mystical channel.
nauli :	one of the practices in Kriya.
nirmala-kaya :	one of the three Bodies of the Buddha, the Transformation Body.
nirvana :	the state of final Release, ultimate Liberation.
nirvikalpa samadhi :	perfect absorption in divine meditation.
padamasana :	the lotus-posture

pandit :	used as a prefix for the Brahman caste ; a learned man.
paramatma :	the supreme soul
paramhansa :	the highest stage of a sannyasi ; used as an epithet for some of the highest sages as for Sri Ramakrishna.
Parvatī :	another name of the Goddess Durga, spouse of Siva.
pingla :	the subtle channel to the left of the sushumna.
prana :	breath, vital energy, etc.
pranayama :	control of breath ; a part of Hatha Yoga.
Radha :	associated with Sri Krishna, represents the individual soul ; some-time also the primal soul
Raja-Yoga :	one of the four main Yogas , the Yoga of Patanjali.
rajas :	one of the three gunas ; refers to the passionate temperament.
rinpoche .	high incarnation.
rishi :	a sage.
roga :	disease.
sad-guru, sat-guru :	the good or the true guru ; for certain sects the adjectives indicate different spiritual stages of the guru himself.
sadhak, sadhana :	sadhana is spiritual discipline or spiritual practice ; one who is engaged in sadhana is a sadhak.
sadhu :	holy man.
sahasrara :	the chakra of spiritual energy at the crown of the head.
samadhi :	state of super-consciousness.
sannyasa :	fourth stage of life, of renunciation.
sannyasi :	one who has renounced the world.
sambogh-kaya (Tibetan) :	one of the three bodies of the Buddha ; the Divine Body or the Body of Enjoyment.
sansar :	the world ; standing for the wheel of transmigration and the cycle of birth and death.
sanskara :	impressions, including tendencies due to impressions from past life ; also rites.
sant :	saint ; a holy person.
satsang :	literally, the True Association , assembly of people to hear a spiritual master.
satvic :	one of the gunas—the “pure”
shabda :	sound , shabad is another form of the same word. The term is used also in all senses of the words bani and nada.
sharir :	body.
shastra :	treatise ; usually refers to scriptures.

shirsasana :	one of the asanas in which one stands on one's head.
shri or sri :	a prefix of respect and honour.
shakti :	energy, primordial energy.
siddha, siddhi :	siddhi is perfection, achievement of one's goal. He who has completed his sadhana attains siddhi, becomes a siddha.
Siva :	a member of the Hindu Trinity, husband of Durga or Parvati.
sukshma :	subtle, sukshma sharir would be the subtle body.
sushumna :	the central channel of the subtle body.
swami, soami :	master ; or lord ; used as a title for religious teachers.
tamas :	one of the three gunas standing for ignorance, darkness.
tapas, tapasya :	penance, practice of austerities.
tantras :	doctrine or scriptures relating to mystic formulas and rites for the worship of Siva and Shakti in Indian Religion, and of the Buddha and the Goddess in Buddhism.
tatva :	principle, essence, reality.
tig le (Tibetan) :	the vital source of physical energy.
trikaya :	the three Bodies of Buddhahood.
tulku (Tibetan) :	an incarnation.
uddiyana :	one of the asanas a Kriya practices
vairagya :	detachment from the world.
vanaprastha :	the third stage of life, when the house-holder leaves the house and moves to the forest.
vayu :	air.
vedanta :	a system of Hindu philosophy based on Upanishads and containing the 'end' or essence of the Vedas, the main source 'scripture' of the Hindus.
Vishnu :	one of the Hindu Trinity.
vyadhi :	opposite of samadhi; literally disintegration, the state of mental
Yoga :	literally union; system or path leading to the union of individual soul with the supreme soul
yogi :	man practising Yoga.
yogini :	woman practising Yoga.