

## MIRACLES OF RAJA YOGA

East-West; January-April, 1927 VOL. 2—Nos. 2-3

### Its Western Misconceptions—By Swami Yogananda

#### Hypocrisy and Hats?

It was while applying for a passport to go to Vancouver, B. C., that an immigration official became *sarcastically* fascinated with my yellow turban, the national headdress of the Hindus. The officer looked at me with pity and said, "Do you gaze at crystals, tell fortunes, swallow swords? Are you a snake charmer?" I said nothing but presented him with one of my books, and when he had read a few lines and had a look of apology in his eye for his rash inference, I looked at him smilingly and said, "Dear officer, did you know that the Hindus never had any factory where they knew the art of making crystals? Crystals are of *western* origin. Hence it is news to me that the Hindus gaze at crystals.

"As regards fortune telling, you have quite a number right here in America as well as in India. But whenever you meet an American gentleman do you ask him, "Are you a fortune teller?" Every Hindu is not a fortune teller. They don't believe in flattering an unmarried woman by telling her fortune, saying that she is going to have a good wealthy husband, and then relieve her of three or four dollars. Wise Hindus can teach you how to solve the problem of life. Your present poverty or opulence, disease or health, is brought about by your own past actions. Your present life will determine your future life. They diagnose scientifically how the law of cause and effect apply to human actions and lives. They do not believe in fate, i.e., anything happening without cause. Hence the Hindus do not like fooling people by telling them what is going to happen through the trickery of imagination, equivocal words, or by fraud. The real Hindu astrologers make a scientific study of the law of causation governing human actions and they are not satisfied with telling you the past or predicting your future only. They teach you the art of averting an unwelcome event or stimulating the fruition of a desirable event coming to you as a result of your past evil or good actions. Good astrologers tell their students only what will benefit them, and do not like to satisfy idle curiosity. They say there is no use in telling you what is coming to you anyway unless one can also show you the way to control or regulate your self-created destiny. Otherwise ignorance is bliss."

I said to the immigration officer again, "Sir, I haven't had the singular, dangerous experience of swallowing swords or taming cobras, which our wonderful street magicians often do in open daylight before the gaze of people." These snake charmers and sword swallows are our street magicians. They are skilled in slight-of-hand tricks at the same time. They do perform magic by producing optical illusions. Herein the eastern magician is superior to the western magician."

Then smilingly I asked the officer again, "I have seen some hypocritical western people wearing hats and dress suits, but I never connected hypocrisy with the wearing of hats. How did you happen to connect snake-charming with my turban?"

By this time the officer was smoothed out and in a very friendly tone he said, "I am sorry. Many good turbaned Hindus have to suffer the persecution of public opinion because some turbaned Hindu fakers have produced a wrong impression on our people."

I replied, "Well, but you cannot expect all Hindus to forsake turbans because some Hindus have not done right, just as I cannot expect all western brothers to forsake their hats because some practiced hypocrisy while wearing hats. Western tourists go to India and watch our poorly dressed coolie laborers, and see the performances of the street magicians or fakers, and they think the Hindus need to wear swallow-tail coats and neckties to be civilized. Well, you can dress a cow with a swallow-tail coat and necktie, but that would not make it civilized. Neither would a turbaned cow dressed in a robe become a spiritual Hindu."

Customs and mannerisms are non-essentials resulting from certain climatic influences. The real development of man consists of the development of his mind-power.

So the American tourist visiting India must take care not to misconceive the real Yogis of India. The real Yogis are distinctly different from the magicians, sword-swallowers, instantaneous mango tree growers. The latter are our magicians and street entertainers. The former are Great Men, very difficult to recognize due to Their child-like simplicity, yet possessing miraculous powers like those of Christ.

### **Physical and Mental Miracles**

There is no difference between physical laws and super-laws or miracles worked by the knowledge of the mechanism of the human mind. The Americans work miracles through use of *physical laws*; the Hindus work *mental* miracles. The operation of radio and tele-photo cameras are still miracles to many Hindus, and the workable miracles of the mind ...so often displayed by the Yogis of India are unknown to the Americans. In these days of marvels of constant inventions it would be wise for the Americans to at least investigate thoroughly the discovery of spiritual miracles by their Hindu brothers. Miracles are nothing but the operation of super-mental and cosmic laws. Jesus and the master-minds of India know how to operate them. To ordinary people such work appears as miracles, but they are really the result of the natural operation of certain higher, hidden laws.

### **Need for Raja Yoga**

Yoga means uniting Mind-Power with Cosmic Power. Raja Yoga consists of those principles of concentration which were easily practiced even by the Rajas or royalists of India who were engrossed with the multifarious duties of their states.

These methods of concentration, or Raja Yoga, which bring power over one's own destiny and which can turn failure—material, moral, social or spiritual—into success ...can fit in with the busy and worried life of the American Rajas and Maharajahs, the American millionaires and billionaires. Human nature is everywhere the same. The

American needs poise and spiritual strength just as much as the Hindu does. The American, because he makes the machine work hard for him, has more time than the Hindu, who has to work with his hands for his living. The American business man has more time than the proverbially spiritual Hindu to devote to developing mental miracles.

The superiority of acquiring miraculous mental powers over the acquirement of business skill is this, that the former has no limitations, whereas the latter has. The ordinary intelligent business man may be broken down by hard competition. When his business intelligence is exhausted he utterly fails. But the Hindu savant says that when your intelligence gives out you don't need to give up. One can use his unlimited super-powers for the materialization of a desire. As God is all-powerful, so also, by Raja-Yoga, or uniting with Him consciously, man becomes likewise powerful.

### **Miracles Historically Recorded**

I will give below a few authentic, historically true, miraculous achievements of the Yogis of India ...showing that they lived far ahead of the modern times and performed miracles still far remote from even the comprehension of modern material science.

About seventy years ago, the holy city of Benares was agog with the miracles of Tailanga Swami. He was two hundred fifty years old, and it is said He used to remain below or floating on the surface of the Ganges two or three days at a time; He read peoples' minds like books; He drank poisonous liquids by bowlfuls without dying, and seemingly had done all the miracles of Jesus Christ. The story goes that once, for disregarding the laws of the city, He was put in jail. He was seen the next minute walking on the roof. He had many wonderful powers. Can science tell us of anyone else who has lived for two hundred and fifty years?

### **The Miracle of Sadhu Haridas**

Another miracle of Raja Yoga was demonstrated when Sadhu Haridas permitted Himself to be buried alive under-ground for five months. In the sixteenth century, in the court of Prince Ranjit Singh—emperor of the Punjab—and under the seal of French and other European doctors, the miraculous performance of Sadhu Haridas was historically recorded. The emperor buried this Saint Haridas (after waxing the body all over and then sewing it in a sack which was then sealed in a stone chest) several hundred feet below the earth in his own courtyard for five months. Millions of people waited for the news about the Saint when He was disinterred after five months had passed. The stone chest was opened, the clothing and wax were removed, and the body was examined by French and English doctors and pronounced dead. Yet in a few minutes the Saint Sadhu Haridas blinked His eyes and came back to life. Boom! went the cannon from the ramparts of the emperor's fort at Lahore (Punjab, India), heralding and declaring that the Saint Haridas had come back to life. Millions witnessed this event, and in any comprehensive historical book on India this occurrence will be found recorded.

There are such Saints who once in a while publicly demonstrate these powers even to this day. My teacher's teacher gave a demonstration similar to that mentioned above, to my mother. But it is considered a spiritual degradation and blasphemy against God's laws for great Yogis to give such above demonstrations merely to satisfy the idle cravings of curiosity-seekers.

It took me a long time to understand my Master and His miraculous power, though I had close contact with Him. I have seen miracles, and of all the wonderful things witnessed, I shall declare to the world that I secured my A.B. degree through this miraculous power. I used to always visit and stay with Him, and neglected my college work so much that I hardly knew where my college books were. Two days before the university examination, I told my Master I wasn't going to appear at the examination. His demeanor changed suddenly and He said, "Then all My relations with you cease this instant." He insisted and said, "All I ask of you is to appear at the examination." He declared I would pass even though I had not studied. I agreed reluctantly, thinking I would write about His teachings in the answer paper to questions on the writing of Shakespeare. I just agreed literally to carry out His behest.

Next He asked me, at first gently, then vehemently, to go to a certain friend of mine and ask certain questions of him every morning of all those days that my A.B. examination lasted. This Calcutta University A.B. degree, in some respects, is more difficult to obtain than a Harvard A.B. degree. There is so much injustice and difficulty set in the path of those being examined. I did as my Master told me; and strange to say, whatever questions this friend of mine unconsciously told me to prepare for, I found those very questions in my examinations. After the first day I declared to the world that I was going to pass, and when I received the A.B. degree, my parents and friends, who had given up all hopes about the success of my college life, told me I had performed a miracle. That is why I am fond of putting the A.B. after my name in all my books and articles. The A.B. title reminds me of this singular experience. When I questioned my Master, Sri Yukteswar Giri, He just replied that *faith, works and knowledge of super-mental law* can work miracles, where physical efforts of man fail.

I remember that a friend of mine, seeing me a devout follower of my Master and negligent of my studies, had once ridiculed me and said, "I am sorry to tell you that your Master and God won't make you pass your examinations." And half in faith and half for the sake of argument, I replied, "Why not?" Little did I dream I would see the fulfillment of my saying later on.

My Master is still living in flesh and blood in India and I dare not tell all the wonderful things I have seen. This much I can say: throughout the whole western world I have not found a single one like Him. I would accept all the poverty, famine, and inconveniences of life in India ...in preference to the comfortable American life, just to sit at the feet of *one* like my Master. Americans who are good listeners and love real progress *now* ought to go deeper than mere *listening* to the philosophical message of India's spiritual science. They should learn the technique by which the super-miracles of the mind can be

understood and the higher laws applied ...to make life not only financially successful, but blissful in every way.

## **YOUR MOST IMPORTANT ENGAGEMENT**

—By Swami Yogananda

First come first served. That has been mostly your worst calamity. The unwelcome habits that came earliest in your life have kept you quite busy now and have crowded out many worth-while things of life. The social world moves on the wheels of certain habits. Few realize whither the social machinery is headed—to the chasm of ignorance or towards the mire of petty engagements, which choke the steady progressive activities of life.

How many times card and dancing parties, over-gorged amusement hunger, time-killing, progress-murdering mental idleness, initiativelessness, ambitionlessness ...have stood in your way and persuaded you to ignore and break your engagement with worth-while objects of life, even though you are fastidiously punctual in keeping daily engagements with useless doings.

When an overdose of drugging sleep makes you lazy and a late riser on Sunday mornings you forget your real engagement. On late waking you find the delaying-to-dress habit stands in your way, beckoning you not to go out of your home, and you easily break your engagement with the spiritually-stimulating atmosphere of the temple or church.

Your business engagements are important, and for them you sacrifice your equally important engagements of daily physical exercise, or of bathing the nerves and mind with showers of peace by meditation.

### **Evenness of Development**

Just because your business engagements have been considered most important, they have always come first in your consideration. And they yet remain most important and they will remain so until you are called away in the Mystery beyond. But I preach evenness of development and of demonstrating prosperity—I do not believe in the spiritual sense being drugged and chloroformed by business madness or *any* kind of madness. Many think that unless one is "at it" day and night he is going to be left behind. That is not true. The one-sided business-bent man, forgetful of his other duties of life, is not the truly successful man. It requires greater and greatest skill to live life evenly, rightly and successfully. He who only keeps engagement with money is left behind by God. Yet God talks to us very loudly through the pangs of hunger which He has given us so that we should get busy and make money to support our physical bodies. Yet it seems that just maintaining our physical bodies by using up all our mental powers is not the goal of life. There is little difference between eating food from a gold plate or an iron plate. The food in both cases is equally satisfying to hunger. Then why concentrate on unnecessary "necessities" or go on constantly multiplying self-created, useless desires for more? To create such

meaningless demands for luxuries is to be engaged night and day, giving one's life blood in the pursuit of getting things which one does not need.

The West is suffering from over-production due to concentration on unnecessary objects of luxury—and the East is suffering from lack of adequate production and the supply of many real necessities. The height of contrast is reached when we find some Western ladies wearing shoes with fifty dollars' worth of jewel-studded heels—and most of the Eastern women going wholly without shoes amidst clay and rain and maybe catching cold.

### **Over activity vs. Idleness**

In the West many factories close due to competition and over-production, and the East suffers from want of factories. In the West the people are too busy finding the will-o'-the-wisp of comfort; in the East some people try to preserve comfort by not being very active and by dreading material activity, which produces laziness. Comfort can only be acquired by a balanced attitude, a self-mastery which makes it possible for one to be comfortably active and actively comfortable. Engagements with Over-activity and Mr. Idleness both lead to misery. It is high time for the modern man to shake his drowsiness of centuries and systematize his life. The primitive man led a wild life in everything. The modern man has learned to apply science, psychology and system to his business, which are nothing but devices for his material comfort. The real man ought to apply the system and science to make his health, prosperity, social and international-world life and wisdom ...better and of scientific certainty. In order to do that he must not give all his time to business, which only ensures the hope of physical comfort. How people forget that increase in cost of living too luxuriously ...means the corresponding increase in using too much nerve and brain energy, expenditure of longevity ...to gain the conditions of a luxurious life! Besides, most people become so engrossed and engaged in making money that they cannot utilize the conditions of comfort after acquiring them.

Systematize and schedule your engagements—let none, especially your bad habits, sway or influence your judgment. Let the secretary of your true judgment arrange your life's daily itinerary.

### **Culture Habit of Meditation**

Your engagement with business is important, but your appointment of serving others is more important, and your engagement with Meditation, Home, God and Truth is most important. Don't say you are too busy with worries and cares of keeping the wolf from the door to get time for the culture of Heavenly qualities.

Break your self-satisfied, immovable old dogged bad habits ...of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the most important engagement with Wisdom. No one else will answer for your actions, though others often become instruments in keeping you enmeshed in useless frivolities and so-called important engagements.

O sleeping Image of God, wake up—make the determination and the effort to know the right law which will enable you to keep your most important engagement with yourself—to know thyself (Soul).

Do not say, "I will meditate on the Cosmic Being tomorrow." That tomorrow will never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate tomorrow deeper, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Do not be lured by bad habits and paltry useless-vanity-engagements into crowding out God-contact.

The world creates in you bad habits, but the world will not stand responsible for your actions springing from those habits. Then why give all the time to the world? Reserve even an hour a day for actual soul to soul God-realization. Doesn't the Giver of the world itself, of your family, money and everything, deserve one twenty-fourth part of your time?

Your greatest and most important engagement is with God and seeking His Truth through the eyes of wisdom and daily discipline!

## **RECIPES—By Swami Yogananda**

### **Intellectual Recipe**

Before starting to read always select logically written books which deal with vital subjects that will benefit your life. Read a little poetry every day. That will keep your feelings exercised. Read a little from modern physical science, study a little medical science and hygiene and add to these a little study of some book that will make you laugh. This will serve as a mental appetizer and will quicken the flow of your intellectual saliva.

Intellect can be developed by the habit of daily mental exercise in reading and thinking over certain logical philosophical statements. Finding out your own views, after you have read a good book, is of inestimable value in assimilating true ideas.

If you mix sand and sugar together it is difficult for a man to separate them while eating, but in a mixture of sugar and sand the ant always gets the sugar and leaves the sand alone.

The blind reader, who swallows good and bad ideas indiscriminately, suffers from intellectual indigestion, chaos, and mental irritation, whereas the introspective reader, like the ant, separates the erroneous harmful or too sentimental views from beneficial and right expressions in the books he reads.

So select quality in the books you read, and above all discriminate and examine the salient statements in them as you read. Remember you are not a mental machine of recording others' ideas. Assimilate only the worthy ideas in books.

### **Success Recipe**

Always seek to be worthy of the position just ahead of you. Use your will power and creative brain specially to create new success. Most of us follow the beaten track. It is the new energetic explorer on the pathway of success who succeeds.

### **Spiritual Recipe**

If you read fifteen minutes, write twenty minutes, introspect thirty minutes and meditate thirty-five, you will be spending your time according to the grades of importance of your work.

### **Health Recipe**

Eating three meals a day is an extremely dangerous habit. Many are being led to their graves quickly because they eat at the sound of the dinner bell. Ignore its ominous call if you are not hungry. It is good to eat at a regular time, for a psychological expectancy is created in the body cells which helps the secretion of the digestive juices. The intelligent cells like hungry animals at the Zoo wait for the dinner hour. But never eat unless you are hungry. Eat moderately, if you are hungry. Eat less if you are a little hungry. Eat nothing if you are not hungry at all. Omit the meals which you may try to eat with little hunger and this will sharpen your hunger for the next meal. Use your will power to resist the temptation of eating three meals every day, by which the whole system, including the cells, the heart, the nerves, the stomach, has to work continuously. Give your intelligent machine occasional rest by cutting off breakfast, lunch or dinner every day. If you are very hungry and are working hard, you may safely eat three light meals daily, but if you don't do much manual labor, then two meals a day are plenty.

### **Raw Vegetable Cutlet**

One head of very finely chopped lettuce, two tablespoonfuls of finely ground pecans, three tablespoonfuls of cottage cheese, a pinch of salt, half a teaspoonful of sugar, juice of a quarter of an onion. Mix these ingredients and knead them as you would a lump of dough, then make them in the form of a cutlet and serve on a dish.