

BERNARD, Theos: *Heaven Lies Within Us*, Rider and Co., London, 1950

There are but few Westerners who have succeeded in penetrating to the core of the Yoga traditions of India. Theos Bernard is one of the rare individuals who has done so. This remarkable jewel of a book is an unrecognised classic in yogic literature. It offers a detailed and articulate account of traditional hatha yoga practices that are rarely encountered in Western yogic texts. Theos Bernard offers clear descriptions of many lesser known practices, particularly those of the various pranayamas.

Bernard succeeds in transmitting to a Western audience an understanding of the intensity of effort required to master the traditional forms of yoga and thereby to realise experientially the profoundly transformative nature of the various disciplines.

This important text is infused with Theos Bernard's uncommon wisdom not only in regard to the yoga tradition itself, but in the conduct of life generally. It reveals his extraordinary commitment to mastering the various processes assigned to him by his teachers.

Bernard wrote only two books before his untimely death in the Himalayas while he was at the peak of his powers. Both books were concerned with providing an authentic understanding of the nature of traditional hatha yoga practice at a time when very few in the Western world had a clear sense of its nature and its consequences.

"Heaven Lies Within Us" is a unique testament to the unswerving tenacity of one who immersed himself in the full range of yoga disciplines. Theos Bernard succeeded in experiencing personally the transformative nature of a directed discipline that, according to the traditions of yoga and tantra, lead to an intensification and illumination of consciousness. He has done a great service to all who wish to deepen their own understanding of a tradition that has been developed and perfected over many centuries.

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The purpose of this volume is primarily to reveal the various practices of Yoga in some organized fashion, so that an independent student may have a basis on which he can proceed alone. p 11

A Yogi is not so much interested in finding the Fountain of Youth as he is in continuing the Spirit of Youth to the very end. p 12

I had often read in my books of Eastern teachings that when a student was ready the teacher was sure to appear; moreover, that it was far more difficult to find the disciple than to find the teacher. pp 18-19

The Four Ages

There is only one path for liberation during this age, and that is to follow the path of Truth. During the first age, the Krita, or Satya Yuga, it was through the study of the Vedas, together with the observance of Dharma.

In the second age, the Treta Yuga, men found it more difficult to adhere to the strict rules of the Vedas. Hence there came into being that body of literature known as the Smritis Scriptures; as the Laws of Manu and the Upanishads.

In the third age, the Dvapara Yuga, men gradually abandoned the rules and regulations prescribed in the Smritis; it was then that the literature known as the Puranas was revealed to them.

In the fourth and last age, the Kali Yuga, when the Dharma (the law of form and rule of right living) had all been completely destroyed, there was revealed for the liberation of men the Tantras, which, it is believed, have the power to bestow enjoyment as well as liberation. The way given for liberation was through the practice of Yoga.

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The first three of these aims are known collectively as the Trivarga; they constitute the path of enjoyment, which is the way for everyone in the beginning. The teachings assert that failure to traverse this path during one's lifetime re-imposes the necessity of his doing it in his next earthly manifestation. When this obligation, however, has been carried out, the fortunate individual is then prepared to follow the ultimate aim, which is that of renunciation. The only place where man can gain liberation is in this world. This world offers both, enjoyment and liberation; one must take each in its turn.

p 24

In order to escape being harmed by this age, he is told to live free from malice, envy, hypocrisy, hatred, falsehood; he must be frank and honest, devoted to the good of others. It is said no harm can come to him who keeps company with the Masters. It is important to strive for the highest levels of thought; for ideas are the impelling motivating force of life. To desire perfection strongly enough, to have it in a real sense the guiding star in your life, is to be on the road to it.

p 25

It was impressed upon me by my Guru that Yoga had been devised by the ancient masters as a way for the people of this age to gain a direct understanding of the Truth. And again he stressed the fact that Padmasana, Uddiyana, Nauli, and Sirshasana were the first fundamentals for the practice of Yoga.

p 34

The six processes of purification which Yoga has developed are called Shatkarmas: Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli, Trataka, and Kapalabhati. They are processes of elimination designed to clear away the impurities of the body and to correct any malformations or chronic diseases which may be due to impurities, or an imbalance of bodily vital principles.

p 41

My Guru conceded that it was not necessary to follow the Yoga methods of bodily purification when there was a western method just as efficacious.

p 42

If I was to teach others, he said, it was imperative that I first make an intensive study of all the teachings of their way, for men could be helped only in the light of their own experiences. Not only was I to study philosophy as it is taught in academic circles, but I was to school myself in the teachings of all the religious sects that existed in my land. He again reminded me that Truth had an infinite number of manifestations, and that no sect, order or creed had a divine prerogative on the Royal Road to Heaven. There were as many different ways as there were different kinds of people.

pp 46-47

Every system of religion and philosophy in India has recognized Yoga as the most scientific means of realizing truth. Men of great mental powers and courage in India, Tibet, and China have invariably been the product of the teachings and practice of Yoga.

Yoga teaches the existence of a subtle force in man and how this force may be controlled and made to function so that man may gain his absolute freedom. The practice of Yoga keeps the mind firm in joy and suffering. It gives one foresight in speech, in action, and in freedom saving him from all distress and apprehensions of the mind. It is the shortest and most direct path to the knowledge of all things.

p 53

The systematic study of Yoga has been in a state of decay these past several hundred years because of the idleness, ignorance, and unscrupulousness of its followers. The canker of laziness, selfishness, vanity, and delusion commenced its work of destruction at the beginning of the Kali Yoga. Corrupted rites, false ideas, and dogmatic tenets led men to corruption. The Yogis were finally compelled to retire to secret abodes. Only remnants of true Yoga are accessible today to the seeker.

The physical aspects of the body can be seen through its own instrumentality, but the abstract energies of the body require the power of spiritual perception. Yoga is the method by which this is possible.

p 57

On Observances and Abstentions

Frugality of diet is said to be most essential of the Yamas, while non-injury is the greatest of the Niyamas.

p 59

The fruit of the Pratyahara is the overcoming of the objective world by the subjective, and the exaltation of the imagination to so high a pitch as to cause all of its images to stand forth vividly on the canvas of objectivity. Pratyahara always stands at the gate leading from the outer to the inner world.

p 60

My Tantrik friend said that possibly the greatest of all hindrances to the practice of Yoga were such sensual pleasures as the enjoyment of sex, dancing, music, luxurious bedding, beautiful cosy corners, fine clothing, the eating of rich food and meats, travelling in excessive comfort, voluptuous habits, frequent feeding of guests, pleasure and reputation seeking, the enjoyment of wealth, and money-hoarding. Other hindrances were ambition (even in religious matters), bad company, false and vain

controversies, cruel, harsh speech, lying, promiscuous visiting, gregariousness. The mind dominated by sensation is doomed to fail in any attempt at self-mastery.

p 62

The Practices

The devotee, first of all, was required to learn how to sit, since this was an art which gave him control over his body and all its parts. The postures are calculated directly to hold the physical forces in balance and indirectly to develop mental and spiritual powers. In the second stage he will take up the practices of particular breathing exercises which will enable him to steady the mind so that it can be centered on one worthy object and lose itself. After he has mastered these practices, he will find that in the third stage he will be able to exercise such restraint over his senses that it will be possible for him to realize more vividly the object he holds in his mind. In the fourth he will be able to hold the object of his worship in his mind for contemplation.

It is maintained that the study and practice of Yoga purifies the body, improves the health, and strengthens the mind; that, above all, it intensifies spiritual growth.

p 67

Every effort must be used to purify and strengthen the mind. Sheer persistence will eliminate error in the long run. Ignorance is destroyed by the unbroken practice of discrimination; earnestness is the best gift of mental power. By constant introspection and by following the highest instincts, man can save himself from the bondage of this existence.

p 68

Only practice and work will provide benefits, which no teacher can impart any more than he can impart the power of reason. It is labour, and again labour. Steady practice with regularity. Spasmodic bursts of intense activity will lead nowhere, whether in Yoga or in other endeavours.

p 71

The inherent endowment bestowed by life cannot be increased immediately for one's use. This can happen only after a long and arduous training, carefully and intelligently prepared. The means and the end are to be considered, so that method and goal may be perfectly balanced. The molecular perfection of a man, advocated by Yoga, may be attained only after a prolonged period of exertion. And at the very beginning the disciple must qualify himself by ridding his body and his mind of such hindrances as I have already indicated.

p 73

On Hatha Yoga

Hatha affirms that concentration and Samadhi can be attained by the purification of the human body and by certain exercises. In this form of Yoga, stress is laid on breathing exercises, known as Pranayama. The first process in Hatha Yoga is to seek the perfection of the physical body, to make it a fitting instrument in which the mind can function.

It is erroneous to look upon Hatha Yoga as mere physical training having no spiritual counterpart. A Hatha Yogi cares for his body simply because it is the only instrument he has to help him reach his spiritual goal. pp 77-78

There are seven steps in the practice of Hatha Yoga:

1. The body is first purified.
2. The body is then made strong and enduring. This method has been called the science for the training of hardiness and vital powers.
3. The body is then made to remain still, motionless.
4. Patience is established, for the sake of faith and confidence.
5. The body is made light.
6. The body uses its powers objectively.
7. The body uses its powers subjectively, so that the mind may become unattached.

Purification provides the proper standard of health. Asana makes the body strong and durable. Mudra keeps it still. Pranayama makes it light. Pratyahara gives it patience. Dharana gives control over the senses objectively. Dhyana provides the subjective control.

Hatha Yoga is referred to as the "Supporting Tortoise," and one is cautioned to practice this Yoga system very privately. One is permitted to reveal it only to those who have faith in the system and seek after introspection. After the treasure has been attained, it may be taught to another; but until then secrecy is ordained. Hatha Yoga is supposed to be the shortest method for the purification and control of the body.

p 79

In a period when a race shows indications of physical degeneration, vice and luxury show greater prevalence, and there is demand for artificial stimulation. All exhausted natures will testify to this. In a sense, it may be said that thousands and tens of thousands of persons who are presumed to have died natural deaths have really committed a sort of progressive suicide.

By elimination and the cleansing of the body, the divine element within one is increased, and one becomes a better being physically, mentally, and morally.

pp 80-81

There are two processes of purifying the Nadis. One is mental process which includes breathing exercises; the other is a physical process. Some teachers, however, assert that Pranayama (breathing exercises) is all the therapeutics required to burn up the impurities of the body and that the Nadis will be purified if the practices are maintained for three months without interruption. This practically means that from the beginning one must have already perfected the art of yoga.

p 82

The average human being is a slave to his thoughts. He has no power over his thought life, he cannot drive away those thoughts which are undesirable and he cannot command those he desires.

The mind can never be restrained without restraining the breath; mental activity keeps pace with the respiration. As the waves roll on and on when driven by the wind and cease rolling when the wind grows still, so does the mind grow quiescent when the breath is controlled. As long as breath is restrained within the body, the mind is undisturbed. Hence, if the mind is to be steady and peace enjoyed, the breath must be regulated.

p 91

There are three ways in which the mind can be brought under control: (1) through itself; (2) through Prana; (3) through the organs of sense and action. The first process is called Dharma, which is right action, or the action which redeems the individual from the weakening tendencies of his age. It is the art of tuning the mind to special thoughts, the binding of the Chitta (the mind) to one place; thus it is purified by habituation. The second is by regulating the breath to which the mind is tied. The third method is by means of the discipline of the senses and action. The body being motionless for three hours, the mind will follow suit. Body and mind are partners; control of the body gives also control of the mind. The person who is too easy on himself will not get very far.

p 96

If a man discovers his mistakes and tries carefully to correct them, the mistakes of themselves will cease to exist. Ignorance is destroyed only by the unbroken practice of discrimination: hence, earnestness is the best gift of mental power.

pp 97-98

Silence is invariably associated with power. A silent man is one who has his emotions under his control. Silence acts on the finer aspects of one's psychological nature, and helps one to achieve his ends.

p 102

On Concentration

Concentration of the mind may be effected by pondering upon anything that one approves, by fixing the attention upon some object cognizable through the senses, as a point, a light (gross or subtle), space, a holy person, the tip of the nose, the centre of the tongue, Kundalini, the heart, the fire centre (navel), between the eyebrows etc. The mind, having a predilection for forms, can be easily fixed on some form. Thus it is trained to fix itself on any chosen form, and it must be brought back to the object whenever it happens to stray from it. There will be a saving of energy if the object chosen for concentration will be suited to the particular individual.

p 108

We should concentrate upon the thing which is most worthwhile to us, and review it until it acts as an obsession, or until we are conscious of the idea in all its detail.

p 109

The art of preparing mercury, so that it can be taken by the Yogi during his training, has been lost for centuries, but you can still purchase mercury to be used for medicinal purposes if you care to take it.

p 120

Gurus vary just as pupils do; each has his own particular method, suited better to one pupil than another, so I wanted to meet as many as possible in order to broaden my knowledge.

I had been instructed many years ago to study everything and accept nothing, for there would be constant change as I continued to grow. Never was I to become crystallized in static understanding. There were always deeper depths ahead, and the prerequisite for solving them was an open mind. p 121

It was easy enough to find those who could demonstrate all of Yoga's esoteric teachings. But those who possessed its esoteric knowledge were always far removed from the main highways, and known only to small groups of friends whose high regard for their noble pursuit in this life kept them from revealing to the public where they lived. p 122

The Pranayamas

Pranayama may be considered sufficiently developed when one can do Kumbhaka for five or six minutes. At this stage the Yogi may engage himself in training the mind for one-pointedness. p 129

The mere oral detailing of a practice was in no sense a full revelation of a technique. The guiding hand of a teacher was essential. p 131

The Yogi maintains a check on the breath at all times of special action, in order to make his every effort more effective. If he practices this continually, it will eventually become automatic. p 140

Pranayama is one of the most important practices of all forms of Yoga. Its aim is to enable the Yogi to obtain control over the nervous system; it is this control that gradually enables him to dominate Prana, or Vital Energy, and the mind. p 145

Strength is the only important limitation in any Yoga practice. Physical capacity alone limits the frequency, but one should measure his own limitations carefully, not attempting too much, but holding to the amount chosen at each practice until it becomes easy, then increase by small stages.

Chastity is essential for storing vital energy and in the case of a married man his wife can be most helpful if she is sympathetic and understanding. But in no circumstances must the practice of Yoga limit the wife's happiness, to which she has a right. p 147

Regularity is absolutely essential. At the minimum, one should set a course of three months' practice. Within that period a very good control may be attained.

The ideal standard for practice is that of four times during the twenty-four hours: 4 a.m., 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 10 p.m. to 12 a.m. This should be continued until it is possible for one to do eighty rounds of Kumbhaka at each sitting. This will make 320 rounds over the period of twenty-four hours.

Vachaspti, a renowned authority on Yoga, gives thirty-six counts (seconds) as the lowest ratio for Pranayama. This he designates as mild. Seventy-two seconds he looks upon as moderate, and 108 as intense Pranayama. For the tender initiate twelve counts are considered inferior, twenty-four middling, and thirty-six superior. p 149

When one finally acquires complete control over the sympathetic nervous system, one becomes master of his body and can die at will.

By Kumbhaka the efferent fibres of the Vagus are stimulated, resulting in the stimulation of the Vagal Centre in the Medulla Oblongata, which results in a slowing down of the heart's action. p 150

The Buddhists teach that too much sleep destroys all religious merit, and they claim that anyone will find an occasional vigil helpful. p 152

Kapalabhati

The first practice taken up was Kapalabhati, which is, as my teacher explained, not a Pranayama in the strictest sense.

It is a process of purifying the nerves and cleansing the Nadis and a practice which also holds considerable spiritual value. There is no regular Kumbhaka in this practice. p 154

Generally three rounds are performed at each sitting, a sitting being performed twice each day, morning and evening. As a rule ten expulsions may be added each week until 120 expulsions can be done at each round.

Between successive rounds normal respiration is allowed to afford the needed rest. Those who feel themselves fit are permitted to double the usual number, but the minimum should be three rounds of three minutes at each sitting.

One should pay attention only to his abdominal muscles, the mind being centred on the administering of the abdominal strokes against the centre of the abdomen at the navel where spiritual energy is stored. This concentration must be maintained throughout the practice. Eventually the nervous system will become spiritually active. This will be manifest by a throbbing sensation and a form of serene light will glow at this particular centre, seen of course only with the mind's eye. p 155

Kapalabhati has no parallel as an exercise of great oxygen value. It corrects all ailments which arise from cold and is extremely helpful in arresting the approach of old age. p 155-156

A few rounds of this practice should be performed daily before doing Pranayama. Five minutes is sufficient to induce a state of trance when one has fully developed the art of Kapalabhati.

The vigour of the expulsions must be constantly watched and never reduced for the sake of speed. Vigour, speed, measuring of a single round, the number to a sitting, the total amount done in a day, should be judiciously determined according to the capacity of each individual.

I will just mention two other methods frequently used to cleanse the Nadis. One, which takes a few months, is accomplished by holding the right nostril and drawing in the breath hard through the left nostril, then suspending as long as one can comfortably, exhaling as slowly as possible through the right nostril. Repeat, reversing the process by inhaling through the right nostril, Practise this four times a day, morning, noon, sundown, midnight, six or eight times each sitting. This practice makes the body light, increasing the appetite, producing secret sounds in the heads. When this occurs the student should stop. p 156

Suryabheda Kumbhaka (Secret of the Sun) was the next process my Tantrik friend explained to me that afternoon.

Suryabheda increases the heat of the body. By this process the Yogi cures diseases which depend upon an insufficiency of oxygen. The practice rids one of pulmonary, cardiac, and dropsical diseases.

The technique is simple. It is a process of breathing in through the right nostril. After inhaling to full capacity, swallow, suspend, and do the chin lock (Jalandhara). Hold the Kumbhaka as long as possible, but do not strain. Then with a slow unbroken force exhale the breath through the left nostril. Repeat. It is important to keep some control and tension on the abdominal muscles. By the practice of putting pressure in the solar-plexus the mental side is developed. By putting pressure in any part of the trunk breathing is regulated and Kapha (phlegm) evaporated. This practice may be started with ten Pranayamas. p 157

Ujjayi

Ujjayi means "pronounced loudly." Start this practice by complete exhalation through the mouth. Then begin. Ujjayi is a deep-chest breathing exercise: take in deep breaths with the glottis slightly closed, then suspension, followed by a slow exhalation until rhythmic breathing starts.

The breath is to be drawn in through both nostrils, expanding the chest, and partially closing the glottis, making a sobbing sound of a low but sweet and uniform pitch. The abdominal muscles should be kept under control by slight contraction, which is maintained throughout the inhalation.

On completion of the inhalation, which must be smooth and uniform, a swallowing action is executed. Kumbhaka and Jalandhara follow. The real advantage lies in the Kumbhaka, but this should not be stressed to the point of suffocation nor to the point where it becomes impossible to control a smooth well-regulated exhalation, through the left nostril, or through both nostrils, with the glottis partially closed, making the same sound as before.

The period of exhalation should take twice the time of inhalation and one should seek to prolong the duration at each round. p 158

The maximum number of daily rounds [of ujjayi] should be 320, distributed over two to four sittings. Two hundred and forty are sufficient for one interested solely in the physical aspects of the practice. p 159

When the Yogi has perfected the technique of Pranayama, if he practices for only a short time daily, there is no doubt he can free himself from diseases, old age, and attain a very long life. p 160

Bhastrika

Bhastrika Kumbhaka preserves an even temperature of the body. This is equivalent to the practice of Kapalabhati with a Kumbhaka added.

In the final perfection of the practice it is absolutely essential to use Padmasana in order to be able to retain one's seat. After the correct posture, straighten the back and neck, inhale slowly until the stomach is fully expanded, then exhale forcibly through the nostrils. Then inhale and exhale rapidly with the emphasis on the exhalation. Make a noise which can be felt in the throat, chest and head.

Then inhale through the right nostril, filling the abdomen, suspend, and fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. Kumbhaka is to be done just as long as one can do it comfortably. After the suspension, exhale through the left nostril and then inhale through the same nostril, again suspending the breath, and exhale through the right nostril. This completes one round.

Each expulsion of breath must be sudden. The automatic exhalation is much slower. The process imitates the action of a blacksmith's bellows. Practise slowly at the start, then gradually increase the number of Rechakas (exhalations), until there are 120 a minute. p 161

The increased blood circulation all over the body from the practise of Bhastrika tones up the entire nervous system. A prolonged practice arouses every atom of the body, setting the entire system in motion until it is wholly reconstructed and purified. In time, occult forces are awakened and one becomes a new and infinitely more powerful being.

In the beginning the bodily heat is increased by the quickened circulation, which is followed by a reduced bodily temperature due to profuse respiration and the rapid and violent respiratory movements which end in Kumbhaka. When a lively circulation of the blood is accompanied by a free perspiration, impure matter is eliminated and the strength and nourishment of the body are better maintained. p 162

The practice should be done at least twice a day until a good heat is worked up or pressure is felt in the temples. Then one should rest before continuing. If fatigue is

experienced during practice, fill the lungs through the right nostril, suspend as long as possible, and exhale through the left nostril. pp 162-163

Bhastrika Kumbhaka enables the Yogi to alter his specific gravity at will. It increases his appetite, cures pulmonary and hepatic diseases, purifies his system, destroys the impurities which accumulate at the entrance of the Brahma Nadi, quickly awakens Kundalini, and affords him great pleasure.

It is the finest exercise for the vascular and nervous systems that human genius has ever discovered. It awakens and electrifies the nervous system to an unimaginable extent. p 163

As soon as Kundalini has been moved, Bhastrika should be practised plentifully in order to awaken it. When this has been perfected one may suit his own desire as to whether or no other Kumbhakas are practised. Bhastrika and Ujjayi are considered the best varieties of Pranayama. They should always follow after complete evacuation and a complete bath. It is advisable to use ghee sparingly when practising Bhastrika. Buttermilk is permitted. The main meal should be in the middle of the day. pp 163-164

Puraka (inhalation) causes growth and nourishment and equalizes the vital principles. Kumbhaka (retention) causes stability and increases the security of life; and Rechaka (exhalation) removes all sin and gives complete control over the body. p 166

The best results will be obtained if one particular form of practice is selected and developed to the highest possible degree before trying to do them all. pp 166-167

On Asanas

Postures are practised to equalize and still bodily forces, to control circulation and respiration, and to bring the spine to its natural curve.

The heart action becomes slower, and gradually one feels that one scarcely has a body. Delivered from the awareness of physical conditions, the mind can engage in meditation for lengthy periods.

There is not a single posture which does not indirectly lead to spiritual progress. Some directly help to arouse spiritual forces. Two classifications of the Asanas, however, are made: spiritual and physical. The latter sort are used for the purpose of establishing a balance in the various physiological functions of the body so that its energies may possess the ultimate organic vigour. Chief of these are Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, and Halasana. p 181

One of the aims of Yoga is to train the will power. A steady posture must not be neglected if the student wishes to bring both his body and mind under the domination of his will. Asanas are a primary prerequisite to either physical or mental development. p 182

Certain poses are calculated to bring a rich supply of blood to the brain and to various parts of the spine, directly benefiting the brain, the spinal cord, and the sympathetic nervous system. Sirshana supplies the brain, Halasana supplies the dorsal and lumbar region of the spine.

The beginner must ponder on such matters as Self-investigation and Self-control. This means pondering upon sincerity.

It is essential to withdraw from all passions or else give way to them and thus rid the mind of them. p 183

Reflections on Personal Experiences

I had been keeping up the practice of Uddiyana for some years; so I found no difficulty in doing the exercises 1500 times. This would usually occupy me for about half an hour. Then I would devote fifteen minutes to Nauli, which is the isolation of the recti muscles, so that they may be rolled in all directions.

I had maintained my Yogic discipline all those years in order to be ready to carry on my work under a teacher. The next eight or ten days [after having met with an accomplished teacher] were to be a period of a spiritual tuning up. p 192

A quarter to six I set as the time to begin standing on my head for half an hour. I must caution everyone to proceed slowly in developing this practice.

It is a relatively simple matter to find one's capacity in this or in any other practice of Yoga. When you first go up on your head, you will experience a feeling of complete relaxation, but as you begin to approach your capacity you will inevitably feel a nervous tension creeping over the body; this will manifest itself in a desire to wiggle, to kick your legs, to move them in all directions. Your mind will, at the same time, begin to wander; you will become very time-conscious and will want to look at your timepiece every ten seconds or so, under the impression that several minutes have passed. Small beads of perspiration will begin to break out all over the body. It is time to stop. p 193

By daily practice you will find that ultimately these distressing manifestations will subside. Then only, when you have attained a peace and have become utterly unaware of the passage of time, will you realize that you have reached a point when you try to increase the effort a trifle, until you begin to sense the approaching nervous tension; then hold on for a bit. It is always advisable to stay far within your limits. pp 193-194

Nothing was to be gained, I knew, by continuing for a full hour and then never be able to do it again. I would accomplish a great deal more if I could hold to a schedule over a period of months.

On finishing the head stand, I began my Pranayama practice. Eventually, I would devote most of the time to this practice, whose purpose was to provide the key to the

Yogic way of life, but for this one must be in perfect condition, if results are to be achieved. p 194

I began to practice with Bhastrika, which is a nerve-cleansing exercise that is required of all who intend to take up the practice of Yoga. p 195

By this time my body was warm enough to practise the Asanas. It is customary to practise these after everything else has been done, making rather a side issue of them. This is a little trick to overcome the monotony. As the student will discover, in Yoga it is all work and no play. p 197

Seminal fluid is potential power. When preserved it is indirectly metamorphosed into a subtle form called Ojah and stored in the brain as so much mental energy, to nourish the nervous system and to be formed into Spiritual Life. p 212

The best period for mental activity is between midnight and sunrise. The morning between four and six is a particularly favourable time for intense concentration.

The evening is less favourable to mental activity. The lull in action and the quality of darkness tend to suspend mental action, so this period is more favourable to review meditation. Do not try to study at this time. p 216

It is an elementary form of meditation when the student, after taking his posture, closes his eyes and causes his breath to flow smoothly and easily and then draws upon his imagination to create a beautiful situation which is the symbol of his highest ideals. It should represent to him some spiritual concept: Christ, the Virgin Mary, Buddha, Krishna, or some other deity, or the face of his Guru.

This he puts in his heart, where he surrounds the image with an ocean of light, or nectar, and holds it while mentally reviewing his creations. Any sort of beautiful situation may be created. It will differ according to one's imaginative capacity. When built up, this concept and this alone must be constantly meditated upon. Do not change from one to another. First master one and perfect it. Only then will the feelings be sufficiently assured to allow another. If one so chooses. pp 219-220

At first it will be found that the mind can only held for a few moments on the chosen imagery. When it wanders it must be brought back again and again to the same concept. Meditation must continue, and gradually it will respond to the student's commands.

One should endeavour to bring meditation to a duration of three hours, or even more, if it be possible. p 220

The ultimate success of all Yoga practices depends upon awakening Kundalini. On Kundalini is founded the whole of Hatha Yoga teachings and practices. The nervous system furnishes the physiological basis of this system of Yoga. p 232

Ordinary creation is from spirit to matter, but Yoga reverses this process and seeks to change matter into spirit. It is creative energy in a static state, spiritual force itself.
p 233

Kundalini, it must be understood, is not an object of hearing but a most subtle thing in the form of light.
p 234

Siddhis are spoken of as possessions; they can become hindrances exposing the possessor to evil tendencies. They are not evil in themselves and become evil only when they are the instrument of demeritorious actions. They can be a wonderful stimulus to progress if kept secret and applied only on the most carefully considered occasions. pp 237-238