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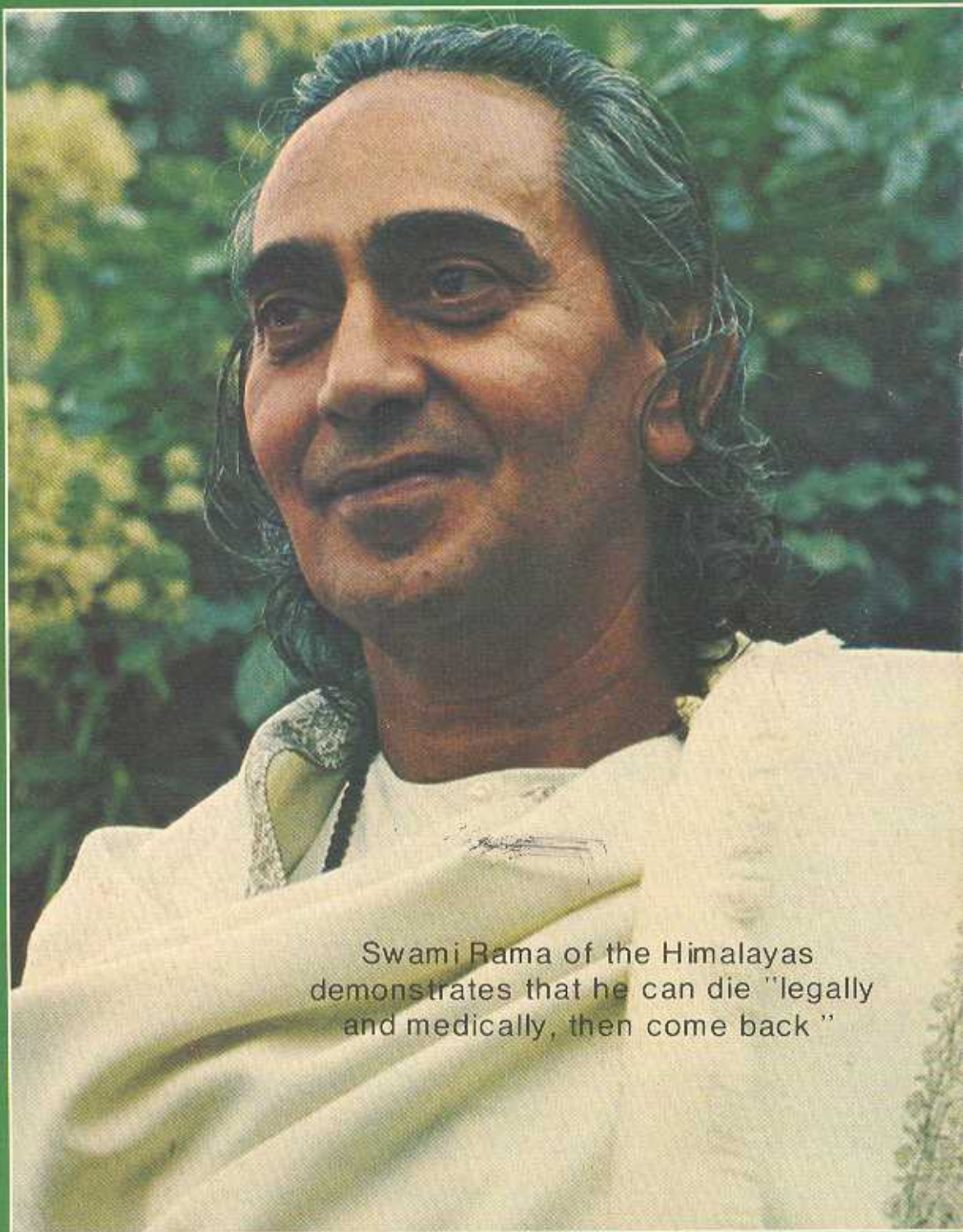
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MEDITATION: A STATE OF SLEEPLESS SLEEP

"Alpha and meditation
are not the same...
Meditation is far above
the Alpha state"
--Swami Rama



Swami Rama of the Himalayas
demonstrates that he can die "legally
and medically, then come back"

"I WILL DO SOMETHING I have never done for anyone else. . . ."

The swami assumed a lotus position on his bed in the small, unpretentious motel room, his legs crossed and his neck, head and back forming a straight line. Then he gradually closed his eyes. When he had entered what appeared to be a deep meditative state, the color of his left foot began to pale. Then it turned yellowish-white like the foot of a corpse. When someone stuck his finger into it, the flesh remained surprisingly compressed, like clay. The swami had actually drained all the blood from his left foot while his right foot remained normal!

"It is done by willpower," said the Swami Rama, celebrated yogi, lecturer, author and philosopher, as he came out of his meditative state. "A perfect control of the mind."

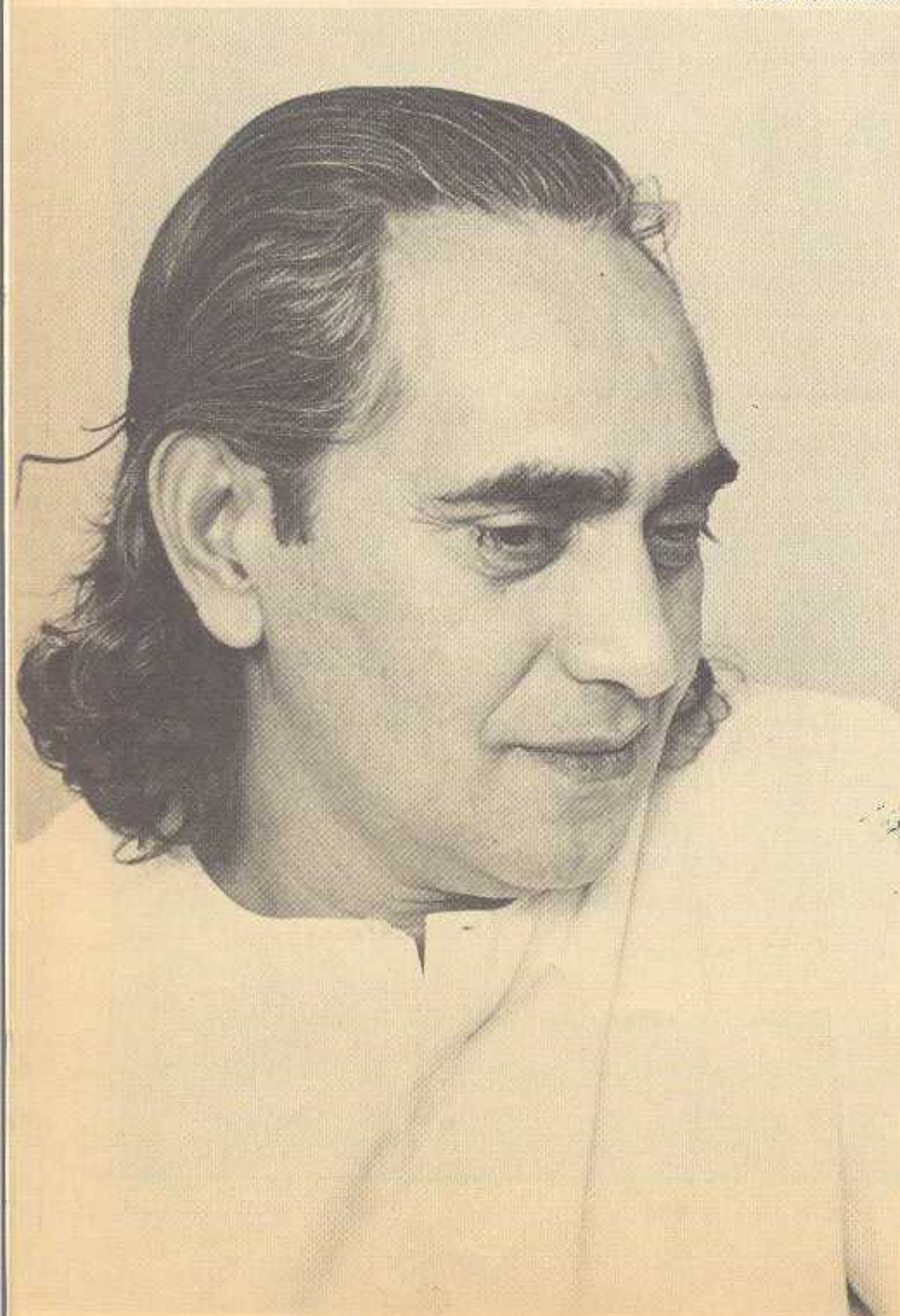
The swami asked someone to hold his wrist as he went into another meditative trance. Within a few seconds, there was no sign of pulse in the wrist!

"I also reduced my heart beat to 12 beats a minute," the swami explained a few moments later. "The normal beat is 70 beats a minute."

"I am doing this not to show that I am a magician or a super human being, but to show that by controlling the mind one can control one's bodily functions, including the so-called involuntary muscles such as the heart and lungs."

Not quite satisfied that everyone in the room was convinced of what he had just said, the swami folded a large towel several times and placed it over his eyes. He then told a guest to hold the ends of the towel tightly behind his head so that there would be no way he could see through the towel.

Photos by Ed Ikuta



PROVING THE POWER OF MEDITATION

India's Swami Rama,
who says true meditation
is a state of
"sleepless sleep,"
has come to America to
present his case to science

BY JON SHIROTA

Then, he told another of the interviewers to write something, anything, on a pad of paper and place the pad before him on the bed.

The interviewer very hastily printed, "I was born on Maui," and placed the pad down on the bed in front of the swami's crossed legs. The motionless yogi continued to hold his head up and made no attempt to look down toward the pad. After a few more seconds of deep meditation, his lips began to move. "I was born by Maui," he finally uttered, astounding everyone. Even allowing for the slight error of *by* Maui instead of *on* Maui, it was an incredible feat. But it became even more incredible later when a close examination of the words scribbled on the pad revealed that the *on* indeed looked far more like *by*.

"What I see through my mind is much clearer than what I can see through my eyes," the Swami Rama said to his completely captive audience as he lowered the towel from in front of his face. "Eyes can commit errors—not my mind when I am in meditation. It is a projection of the mind, a third-eye demonstration."

The swami's next sentence startled the interviewers anew. "I can read any book you have in your room from here," he said matter-of-factly. "I don't have to go to the library to do research. I can read the books from wherever I am. It is called power of introspection." On the basis of what they had already seen, the interviewers were not about to challenge this remarkable claim.

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Russian scientists have been experimenting with individuals who, through the power of their minds, can scramble or confuse video and computer tapes. But the swami says, "They are only scratching the surface," and claims he himself can direct an airplane or a car to go where he wants it to by simply influencing the mind of the driver!

The implications of such an ability are utterly fantastic, but the swami says there is a safety valve: this power cannot be used for a malicious purpose. "The person having the power will lose it if he intervenes with the works of nature. Nature is life. Human beings must work harmoniously with nature or she will have them thrown out of her rank."

At 6-foot-1 and a trim 175 pounds, the stately 47-year-old Swami Rama is as eloquent in speaking each of 11 languages as he is in practicing what he has been expounding all of his life. He is a vegetarian, and his main diet while at the motel in Claremont, California was an assortment of nuts, fruits and apple juice. He does not care to attend banquets or parties where alcoholic beverages motivate guests and hosts to carry on inane conversations; even when such gatherings are held in his honor. "I do not have time."

This man dresses very simply and has very few worldly possessions. His usual attire consists of a shawl worn over an open white shirt and white trousers, a pair of sandals, and a string of mala beads given to him by a precious friend. "I do not have much to offer you," he apologized to his visitors at the motel, "but (pointing to a plastic bag of nuts on a table) please . . . help yourself."

SANSKRIT AT TWO

The ascetic swami was born in a small town in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. His parents belonged to a learned Brahmin family, but he was orphaned at the age of three months and was subsequently adopted by a great yogi and

saint of Bengal who lived in the foothills of the Himalayas. He recalls being able to read sanskrit when he was between two and three years old. Nobody had taught him—he just picked up a book one day and began reading it. "I knew how to read," he explains, "because I learned how in my previous life."

Swami Rama attended school for the first time when he was nine years old, starting in the sixth grade. Going to school was a mere formality, because he was already teaching Buddhist and Hindu scriptures in a monastery. He finished high school at 13, then attended college, which, again, was a formality. In fact, some of his philosophy professors at the university were students of his at his monastery.

The swami studied and earned degrees in western psychology and philosophy in Europe, then lectured at Oxford in England and at the University of Frankfurt in Germany. In 1949, he became a *shankaracharya* (a rank in the Hindu faith somewhat analogous to a Pope) but renounced his position in 1952 to dedicate himself to teaching and lecturing. He is already the author of more than 18 books and is now in the process of writing an encyclopedia on yoga.

The swami came to the United States four years ago to work with scientists and doctors to establish the genuineness of the power of the mind and the soul. He has worked with Dr. Elmer Green of the Menninger Research Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, conducting investigations into voluntary control of the internal states. Swami Rama claims to be the first yogi to subject himself to modern scientific methods of testing his state of consciousness while at the highest level of meditation.

One of many astonishing demonstrations the swami performed at the Menninger Research Foundation was to stop the flow of blood from his heart for 17 seconds while in a meditative state. In the normal person, such a stoppage would indicate a dangerous unconscious cardiac condition. "I demonstrated that I can die legally and medically, then come back. I stopped my heart, my brain, my blood cells and everything else in my body, then made them function again."

The swami has also astounded doctors and scientists in Topeka by using his mental power to move a metal object by more than 30 degrees. Asked at a lecture in Los Angeles whether such activity is strenuous, the swami smiled warmly and replied, "When you move your girl friend on the dance floor, does it strain you? When Christ changed the color of water, did it strain him? It only involves organization of mind. When you have one-pointed willpower, you can move objects as well as do many other things that seem mysterious."

FREING THE INTUITIVE MIND

When another person at the lecture asked the swami how one learns meditation, he said, "If you will call or write me, I will teach you. For the moment, I can only say that you must first be convinced that meditation is very beneficial for you. You must train yourself to relax your muscle tensions. You must also learn to give rest to your heart and lung muscles, which are not under your control. Then, slowly, you must train your brain, and finally your mind."

"There may be slightly different ways of meditating in the beginning, but there is definitely only one way of calming down your mind and allowing your subconscious mind to come forward and remain very conscious during this period. And, there is only one way of going beyond your subconscious mind and letting your intuitive mind come forward."



"What I see through my mind is much clearer than what I can see through my eyes. Eyes can commit errors..."

In his *Book of Wisdom (Kathopanishadt)*, the swami explains the various stages an aspiring student must go through before he can successfully meditate. "He must first equip himself with a favorable mental background," the swami writes. "He must know the meaning of the science of yoga and how its system works."

"The next step is posture (*asana*). The student should keep his trunk, neck and head in a straight line, and the body should be made steady and absolutely motionless. Only breathing and beating of the heart continue.

The third step is breath control. A student must learn to control the nerves through *pranayama*, *prana* meaning vital force and *yama* control. "In the initial stage," says the swami, "one should try to purify his nerves by breathing deeply in a measured way, in and out, to help harmonize the system."

The fourth step is control of senses; that is, bringing the organs of senses under the control of the will.

The fifth step is concentration, which involves fixing the

mind on an external object or an internal point. "There cannot be concentration without something upon which the mind may rest," states the swami. "There should be definite purpose, attention and interest. All of us possess the ability of concentration in varying degrees. This ability should be systematically developed to the highest possible extent. Mere wrestling with the mind will not bring the desired results.

"Without control of the sense organs, concentration—which is one-pointedness of mind—would be impossible. Even thinking should be eschewed. The emotions of joy, grief, dejection should not be allowed to intrude either."

The sixth step is finally meditation, which purportedly is the continuous flow of one thought. "Concentration," says the swami, "flows into meditation like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel to another. After learning to keep your neck, head and trunk in a straight line, the student should concentrate on the exhaling and inhaling system. Then, the student should gradually switch on to the point between the two eyebrows or on the heart with closed eyes."

ONE THOUGHT ONLY

According to the swami, there are two broad categories of meditation: concrete and abstract. "In concrete meditation," he writes in his book, "the student meditates on forms such as a deity or guru. In abstract meditation, he meditates on *Pranava* or the *Atman*, which is beyond body, senses, mind, intellect and ego." The swami cautions that during meditation one should not allow access to any thought other than that which is being meditated upon.

"After practicing meditation for a period," he continues, "the practitioner develops the habit of abstracting the mind from the senses and their objects. When the mind remains in itself and realizes its super-state, a silent state of bliss, the practitioner will experience a surge of joy and a intensification of meditation.

"The aspirant should possess full determination and should keep his mind continually informed that he is pure consciousness, distinct from body, mind, prana (vital force) and senses. With the progress of meditation, all desires and passions melt away of their own accord. The senses and the mind become passive and quiet. The aspirant becomes quite proficient in discriminating between sensual pleasures and spiritual bliss."

At his lecture, the swami stated that the brain records external and internal behaviors and that the slightest movement of the mind is recorded by the brain and the brain movements are recorded by the breath. "Consequently," he said to his listeners, "those who know the science of breath and the higher science of prana can easily control their mind. Breath is life; life is breath. All our senses are floating in the air, and we are in the air all the time. When we understand this, and understand the relationship between pranayama and the vehicle called air or oxygen, then we will understand the function of our lungs which are the store houses of our body. We will then know how to control that exchange between oxygen and carbon dioxide gas, and how to control our heart—which controls our autonomic system—and how to go beyond that part which is the unexplored or the sleeping side of our mind.

"When the mind flows without interruptions in one direction, the mind experiences enlightenment. And, in attaining the highest state of enlightenment, you will have attained universal consciousness, Christ consciousness, super-



EAGER TO PROVE the capacity of meditative power, the Swami Rama eagerly submitted to testing by the PROBE staff in a Los Angeles Motel room. At left, Assistant Publisher Dick Hennessy checks the swami's wrist. The pulse rate had diminished appreciably from its normal count.

A CHECK OF THE SWAMI'S left arm, (below) revealed that he had developed a small lump—a tumor—solely by mental concentration. Demonstrating the "third eye" in the photo at right while Dick Hennessy holds the thick hotel towel firmly in place, the swami reads the words written in place. "I was born by Maui," the swami said. He was right.



consciousness or, in other words, meditation that transcends all activity of the conscious or subconscious mind."

SURFACE THINKING AND IMITATION

According to the swami, if we live with only the known part of ourselves—with the conscious mind—we don't train the totality of the mind. The conscious mind is just floating on the surface of the thinking level, blocking a library of infinite knowledge hidden beneath it.



"We have not learned the method of unlearning," the swami says. "Much of the so-called learning process we go through is mere imitation. We imitate each other and think we are learning. We have not let our intuitive knowledge come forward and be useful in our daily lives."

Intuitive knowledge, he explains, is beyond time. With the help of meditation, the mind can go beyond time in search of this knowledge because in meditation there is no time.



"Too much relaxation causes one to lose control of oneself. It is not a creative state."

Whenever a person has a sense of time, the swami claims, that person is not meditating.

Although he has worked extensively with biofeedback equipment at the Menninger Foundation, the swami cautions those who overestimate the capacity of this equipment as applied to meditation. He even claims that most biofeedback machines sold to the public are fakes.

"A biofeedback machine cannot teach anyone to meditate," the swami replied unequivocally. "It can only tell whether you are meditating or just dreaming. It helps to record the internal state of a person, his thinking, his brain pattern, etcetera.

"A biofeedback machine used by scientists costs as much as \$4,000. How can you buy one for \$700 or less and expect it to be useful? Those who buy one for that amount and think they are learning anything from it are being fooled. The government should pass laws to prevent manufacturers of such equipment from taking advantage of the public."

Swami Rama's method of investigating the inner state of man is called *Biofeedback Meditative Method*. It is a way of recording whether or not a person is actually meditating, dreaming or sleeping. Any movement in the mind is documented by the brain, so if the brain patterns are studied, the mind can be studied also.

The swami says he is gravely concerned that almost anyone can pass for a teacher of meditation today. He blames this problem primarily on people of the western world being easily convinced that anyone from the eastern world can teach meditation. "When we invited great gurus, teachers and swamis

from all over the world to come and have their methods tested by our machines (at Menninger), they all declined," he says. "They did not want their methods examined scientifically."

ALPHA AND OTHER WAVES

One of the popular terms arising from exploration into the mind is *alpha wave*. Again, the swami points out a common misconception and says emphatically, "Alpha and meditation are not the same. Alpha is created by relaxation. It is not a high state. Once, when I hooked my German Shepherd dog to the biofeedback machine, he created 75 percent alpha."

Alpha, according to scientists, is actually a brain wave that occurs when one feels nothing. It has a frequency between eight and 13 cycles per second. A faster cycle, called beta, signifies disturbance. Waves slower than alpha are theta and delta. Although they usually occur during drowsiness or sleep, the swami believes theta waves can occur during a creative state or during periods of concentration.

"Too much relaxation causes one to lose control of oneself," the swami claims. "It is not a creative state. Relaxation should be voluntary or experienced during voluntary control of the internal state."

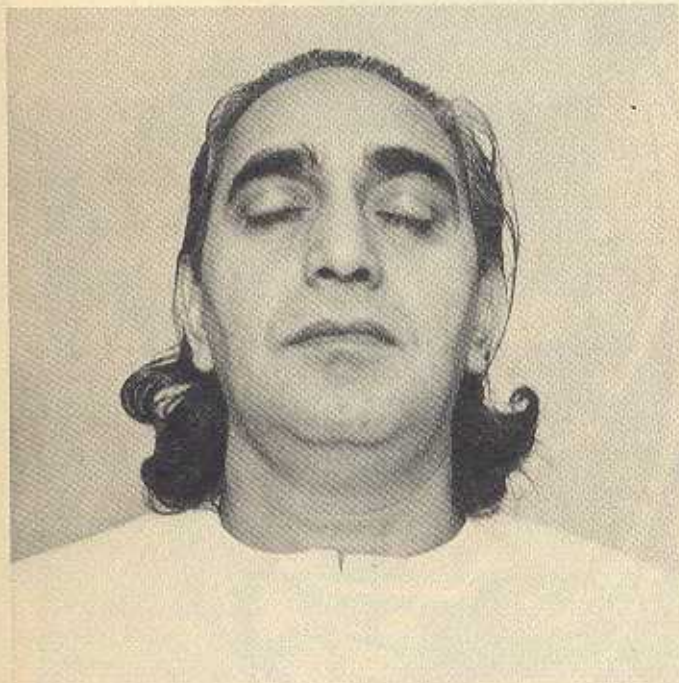
A method of relaxation which the swami disapproves of is hypnosis. "People are already hypnotized. Why more hypnosis? In hypnosis, anything we understand and explore doesn't come under our power. It never helps to grow or learn. Meditation is far above the alpha state.

The swami says there are four common waves known to man, *but*, "to those who have done intense research in the

field, there are six. When one is in a meditative state, there appear only flat waves. If you go beyond the flat waves, you are asleep. To maintain a steady flat wave, you must be between a state of concentration and sleep. I call it a 'sleepless sleep.' It is during that state that you can attain perfect relaxation. Your mind is at complete rest and the brain does not move."

The swami astounded scientists at Dr. Green's laboratory when he proved that he can produce delta waves—long regarded as the sign of deep sleep—while awake. He produced delta waves for 25 minutes, then "awoke" and reported accurately what had happened in the room during his state of "sleepless sleep."

The swami plans to establish a school of meditation in education to help the materialistic, constantly hurrying people of the western world. "Much of the heart diseases, ulcers,



"Your mind is at complete rest,
and the brain does not move."

nervous tensions and migraine headaches can be avoided if they learn to relax through meditation," he claims, adding that the mind is even responsible for creating cancer. As the cancerous growth enlarges, he explains, the mind weakens. Therefore, the mind cannot dissolve that which it has created.

"I can prove this," the swami says. "I can develop a tumor on my arm in two seconds and dissolve it in one one-hundredth (1/100) of a second." He has done so under laboratory conditions.

Asked whether or not he can cure chronic headaches, he replies, "Why not? If in ten minutes that person does not feel better, then I am not a swami. Many of our illnesses are due to subconscious worry and stress. They are due to our brain behavior."

What about multiple sclerosis? Says Swami Rama, "There is no disease that cannot be cured!"