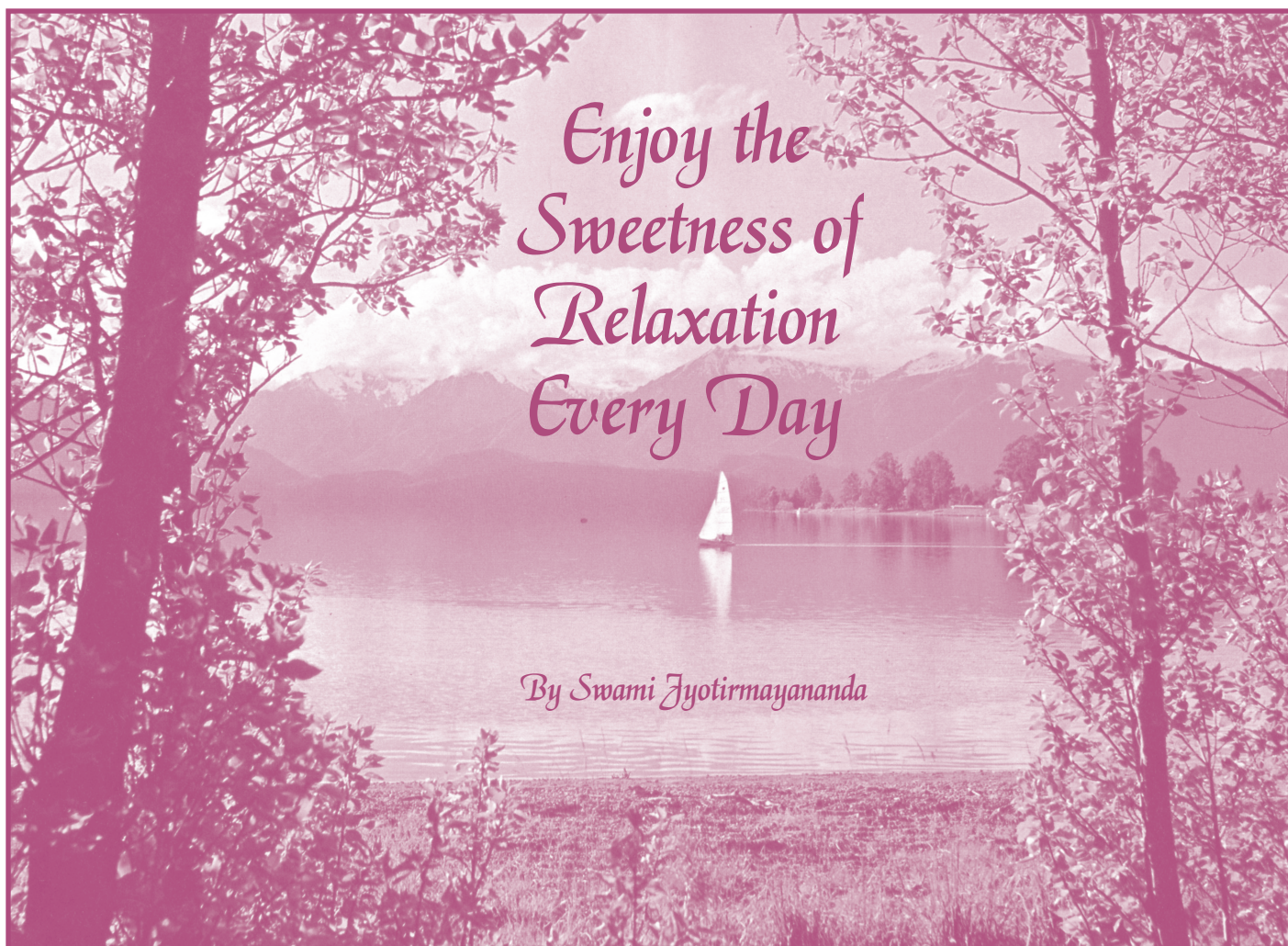




With the increasing complexities of life, people all over the world are becoming aware of the need for relaxation. Doctors and psychologists are increasingly recognizing the importance of physical relaxation for treating the various maladies of the body and mind. With all the glittering achievements of the world, if a person cannot possess a poised mind in a relaxed body, they live in vain.

The mystic science of Yoga understood the need for relaxation thousands of years ago. Relaxation holds the secrets of recharging the body when it is fatigued, and filling the mind with joyousness when it is depressed. It is the water of life that turns the

withering limbs of the body into a tree brimming with vitality, dancing with the breeze blowing from the ocean of cosmic *prana* (vital energy). The regular practice of relaxation exercises prolongs life and prevents stress related mental developments as well as various diseases of the body caused by the disbalance in *pranic* energy.

Apart from promoting health and increasing the level of vitality, relaxation is the gateway to the development of an ethical, spiritual life. A person who is relaxed is more tolerant towards the eccentricities of others, more enduring towards the conditions of pleasure and pain, more patient in times of adversity, more resourceful in pressing

circumstances, and more aware of the deeper meanings of life. It is important, then, to gain an insight into the art of relaxation if one would have health, prosperity, material and spiritual advancement, and harmony in human relations.

The maladies caused by lack of relaxation are immense. A restless mind, nagging worries, vain vexations, sinking grief, and many other troubling developments harass the mind, robbing it of its creative insight, spiritual meaning, and mystic potentialities. And the body, which is a tool of the mind, constantly suffers from the fumes of agitation that proceed from the mind, creating in itself a disbalance in the flow of vitality, resulting in toxic developments.

Who does not know the fact that a cheerful mind arising from a relaxed body keeps one brimming with vitality for a long time, while a dejected mind burdened with frustrations continues to breathe the toxic debilitating air of boredom? The body of a depressed person succumbs to a state of abnormal fatigue, as if it is deprived of the abundance of oxygen all around, remaining impoverished in a world that surges with vitality.

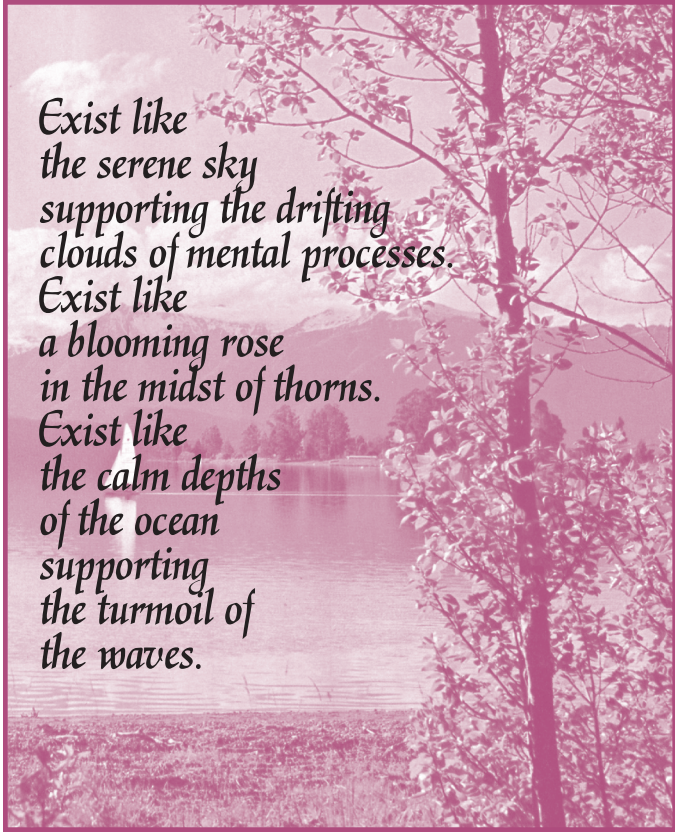
Relaxation Makes Your Life Dynamic

Relaxing the ego is a mystic art based upon spiritual enquiry into “Who am I?” The expanding mind shows you that you can exist even when the ego-center does not assert itself. You can exist without the perception of time and space, without the sense of individuality, and yet, without entering into sleep, and without coming into conflict with the realities and differentiations of day-to-day life.

You can exist like the serene sky supporting the drifting clouds of mental processes. You can exist like a blooming rose in the midst of thorns. You can exist like the calm depths of the ocean supporting the turmoil of the waves.

Thus, you can maintain the vision of transcendental silence without disturbing your daily activities. Rather, with the growing vision of transcendence, you develop the gracious art of performing actions with greater efficiency and greater understanding.

You draw actions that are more in harmony with your nature as you continue to experience the serene heights of the mind. Such actions do not create boredom, but rather, promote mental expansion. You practice *niskamya* karma—action that is free from the pressure of egoistic demands and psychological involvement. Such actions are directed towards the promotion of peace



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and harmony in the world. They encourage relaxation in others.

Exploring the Depths of Relaxation

When you begin to understand the glory of physical relaxation, you will soon understand that a deeper level within you must be touched and worked upon in order to let the body relax more and more. And this is the level of the mind.

Your mind has various depths. The profound unconscious contains the roots of your egoism. Your subconscious contains the subtle desires and complexes of the mind. These undercurrent factors of the mind influence your conscious life in the day-to-day world. As the deeper movements of the unconscious continue, the intellect is stirred to action, the vital forces are agitated, the senses begin to race among the sense objects, and your entire personality is caught in turmoil.

When you understand, through spiritual enquiry and reflection, that you are deeper than your ego, you learn the art of extending the practice of repose beyond the limits of the body and the nervous system. You learn the art of relaxing your mind.

Though the mind must be engaged in interaction with the practical necessities of the everyday world, yet you are like a bird seated on a tender branch of a tree, ready to leave the branch and fly into the vast sky. The events of daily life afford you joy and a sense of satisfaction, because they serve the process of evolution of your inward life—but you are not caught by them.

You learn the mystic art of surrendering your will to Divine Will. Just as your im-

patience will not help a train to run faster, your impatience with different developments of life will not make things better. By profound understanding of the law of life, you will realize that you are placed in a world that moves with a divine plan, a supra-mental order. There is no need to sigh and grieve over the happenings of the world. It is your duty to act according to your capacity, and according to your insight; but it is foolish to become obsessively attached to an expected reward or a preconceived development in the external world.

Rather, as you advance, allow yourself to experience relaxation in every plane of your being. Physical strength and flexibility, harmonization of the pranic functions, mental repose, surrender of the egoistic will to the Divine Will, spiritual communion with the Universal Self—these sublime benefits of relaxation, attained progressively in your Godward movement, ultimately endow you with peace beyond your understanding, with Bliss beyond your expectations.



Begin the practice of relaxation while lying straight on the floor, on your back. The heels are gently in contact, the arms rest on both sides, palms facing the floor, or in contact with the thighs. Your eyes are closed.

Begin with breathing deeply. Inhale, feeling as if you are drinking nectar from the ocean of life, and fill your lungs. Then exhale slowly until your lungs are empty. Continue 10 to 15 times.

Then, inhale deeply, but do not exhale with a conscious effort. Watch the process of exhalation set up by the functions of Nature. See the breath coming out slowly by the operation of *apana* (the outgoing movement of *prana*). Practice this 10 to 15 times.

Now, detach yourself from your attention on breath. Command your body by the gentle force of will to relax from the toes of the feet to the crown of the head. See the pressure of the limbs being lifted from your consciousness. See the tide of relaxation sweeping over your body. See the energy of *prana* flowing into your body as water flows from a higher level to fill a lower level.

See your body lying on the floor. Walk out of the body by the mental act of visualization. In the beginning, it is an act of imagination. Later, it is a mystic process of separating the mind from the body. Visualize your body, as if you are observing it from a distance. See your body far away, like a rock in a distant place. Feel that you are soaring in the sky.

Feel that you are beholding the vastness of space during a full moonlit night. You are reclining on the fleecy clouds, and are enjoying the starry atmosphere enveloped in the gentle light of the moon. When your mind expands, the body enters into a perfect state of relaxation.

Stay with an overpowering sense of expansion and a sweet experience of relaxation in the body for as long as you can. Overcome sleep, dullness and inertia by constant practice. These are obstacles in the practice of relaxation.

Avoid entering into mental activities, memories of the past, plans for the future, worries about vexing problems – let the mind relax. The greater the mental relaxation, the greater is the possibility of controlling *prana*, and directing it to different parts of the body, in order to promote health and long life.

Swim delightfully in the ocean of expansion. Refresh every fiber of your body with the breeze of relaxation.

*Shavasana or Dead Pose is the repose of the body.
Pratyahara or withdrawal of the senses is the repose of the senses.
Shama or serenity is the repose of the mind.
Santosh or contentment is the repose of the intellect (buddhi).
Surrender to God with the development of elevated feeling and
Divine Love is the repose of the ego.
Intuition realization of the Self through Samadhi
is the repose of the soul.
Herein the river enters into the shining sea —
Individuality is surrendered to the intrinsic universality of life.*