



God Comes to Visit

By
**The Reverend Mother
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Mother Hamilton's Account of her Extraordinary
First Meetings with Swami Ramdas on October 22-25, 1954.

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After ten years God has once more directed my foot steps to His "Abode of Bliss." As I sit here, bathed in the peace and joy of this holy atmosphere and surrounded by those who give the most perfect love and service I have seen expressed anywhere, my mind wanders back over the years in review of the tremendous drama which has unfolded on the stage of my life since first I met Swami Ramdas, our beloved "Papa." What a saint he was—and still is—because the Divine which dwells within every man never dies! Particularly is this true of one such as Papa. His Universal Spirit still reaches out to the farthest corners of the earth to touch the hearts of men and entice them with his song of peace and joy and bliss to seek the Lord.

It was in September of 1954 that I first heard of Papa. Reverend Bob Raymer of St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote and told me that a Swami friend of his was coming to America

and would visit him and then fly to Seattle, Washington, which was my home. He asked if I would make it a point to see him and extend him any courtesy possible. I answered immediately telling him that my husband and I would be most happy to have him as our guest. However, I received a reply stating that there were too many in the Swami's party for us to accommodate. Later, after Papa had arrived and we came to know how many were in the party, we knew we could have managed easily but by then they were already established in spacious quarters in the Hotel Edmond Meany located in the University District where we lived. We have many times since thought with regret of the great privilege it would have been to have had all of them in our home and the wonderful time in God we could have had together, but there can be no doubt that the Master Architect of the Universe had already done His own plan.

Papa was expected in October. I received a call from Mrs. Max Groeger, one of Papa's devotees who had charge of the arrangements for him in Seattle, telling me when he was expected and asking if I would arrange for him to speak to the spiritual group which my husband and I headed there. I, of course, readily agreed and set about sending notices to the devotees.

The day dawned when Papa was to arrive. Mrs. Groeger telephoned and asked if I would go to the hotel and welcome him. I agreed. I donned a saree-like white robe which I wore when giving lectures, stopped at a florist shop and bought a dozen beautiful long stemmed roses to present to him and walked over to the hotel. As I stepped into the elevator to ascend to the floor where Papa was staying, I was filled with mixed emotions—anticipation at the prospect of meeting him and hope that I was not being disloyal to my own Guru in so doing. I had been a disciple of the great Master Paramhansa Yogananda for 29 years and my love and devotion for God in him was so great that even the thought of meeting another Master seemed somewhat sacrilegious. Let me hasten to add that this was not fostered as a result of anything my Guru had said but stemmed from my own feeling. During his lifetime (he entered Mahasamadhi on March 7, 1952) he taught all who followed him and taught us well, that God was equally present everywhere—in every church, in every temple, in every religion, in every man regardless of race, colour or creed, and in every atom of space. He told us that we must always pay homage to Him equally in every saint whom we were privileged to meet.

However, to continue my story, as I left the elevator and walked down the hall to where Papa's suite of rooms was located I saw two men standing outside his door. When I asked them if this was Swami Ramdas' suite they said that it was and that I should just go in. As I started through the door I saw Papa. He was alone and standing back in the room but in front of the door. He took one look at me, his childlike face broke into a broad grin and he started dancing as though he could not contain the joy of our meeting and must somehow express it. I didn't know what to think. I had never seen anyone behave in such a manner but then I had never met anyone like Papa. It was the strangest thing that had ever happened to me. I introduced myself and presented him with the roses. He greeted me sweetly and then promptly threw the roses on a table beside him without any comment. This, too, seemed strange to me because my own Guru had always been very careful to acknowledge any gift that was given to him. It wasn't until three years later when I visited Anandashram that I understood the reason for Papa's behaviour. He was garlanded

from morning until night with beautiful flowers made by the loving hands of his many devotees who wished to express their love for him. Had he not immediately taken one off to make room for another, he would have fallen with the weight of a mountain of flowers. He also told me once that sometimes the flowers housed ants and if he didn't take the garlands off quickly, they were apt to crawl all over him and bite him. Who can blame them for wanting to savor the sweet nectar of God which permeated every part of his being?

He invited me to be seated and we sat and talked for a while exchanging our views on God and His truth. I then asked him if we might meditate together not realizing that for one who had already attained there was no need to meditate. He and his Father were already one. However, he said sweetly, "Yes, let us meditate," so I sat at his feet and immediately felt myself lifted up into the presence of God. What peace, what joy, what bliss I experienced! He said afterwards that I had left body consciousness. I do not know. It was an indescribable experience. Little did I dream then that my meeting with him was to change the whole course of my life in order that I might fulfill my destiny.

The momentous occasion of my first meeting with Papa ended with my offer to be of any service to him that I could. I also extended him an invitation to speak to our group the next evening which he very graciously accepted.

He arrived at our home promptly accompanied by the other members of his party, Mother Krishnabai, Swami Satchidananda, Rani Lalita Devi and Sagarlal Gupta, none of whom had been present when I met him the previous day. As I opened the door he stood there, his face aglow, beaming like a little child who had come to attend a birthday party. My heart was filled with divine love for him as I introduced him to the devotees who had been eagerly anticipating his coming. I told them it was a rare privilege to meet someone who was completely God-realized because few there are indeed who have the courage, the determination, the love and devotion necessary to offer themselves and all they have in complete surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord that He may be revealed to them in all of his wonder and glory. Papa smiled sweetly and asked what we would like to have him discuss. I told him we were eager to hear anything of his own choosing. So, knowing the depth of my love for my own Guru, he spoke to us as follows on the greatness of saints:

"Beloved Friends — You all know what it is to be in touch with a spiritual Master. Many of you must have met such a Master, basked in the sunshine of his grace, received his

influence and got your heart illumined with the light and presence of God. It is not only the inner longing for the supreme Beloved of your heart that you should have, but also the contact of a God-realised soul, spiritually illumined and spiritually perfected.

“It is said by a great saint of India that the contact of saints is the most essential thing for one who is longing for God. In fact, God leads such a struggling soul to a saint, because direct contact with the universal Spirit is not possible. You cannot have a relationship with God as you can with the personification of His spirit. Such a personification is the spiritual Master. Saints are the very embodiments or expressions of God. If you believe in them and look upon them as such, you can derive from their contact unlimited strength for your spiritual advancement. The mind is a very difficult thing to control. Although you keenly wish that the mind should always contemplate on God and think of Him constantly, it does not do so. You then require the help of a saint. This invaluable help a saint alone can give you. If you look upon him as your sole spiritual guide, his light and grace will fall on you and your heart will be freed from all impurities.

“It is said that a saint makes you like himself. Saints are often compared to the philosopher’s stone which, by its mere contact, turns any base metal into gold. But a saint is superior, for by his contact he makes you like himself. He fills you with divine radiance and joy. He awakens you to the awareness of the Spirit within you and your mind thereafter will be always in divine peace. All your desires of the senses will leave you completely and you are filled with child-like innocence, purity and love. You become the veritable expression of the Divine. This is the goal to which the spiritual Master’s guidance leads you. Ramdas can tell you from his own experience that he has become what he is by the blessings and grace of saints. Had saints not come to his help, he would have been still striving and searching to find God. But since saints’ grace came to him, his doubts ceased and he began to feel the presence of God within. God took him to Himself, absorbing him into His transcendent, all-pervading and eternal Being.

“We must keep the doors of our heart open to receive the influence when we approach saints. Then alone we can receive abundantly from them. Very few know the greatness of saints and spiritual Masters. Even when they come to us and teach us and give us the benefit of their company, we do not understand them. This is true everywhere, not merely in the Western countries but also in the Eastern countries. Very few understand saints or take advantage of their

help and grace. Their hearts are always flowing out with love, compassion and mercy towards those who come to them, and those who are open to receive the Grace are saved.

“It is said that saints transmit their powers in three ways: by thought, sight and touch. If a saint thinks of a person, even though he is far away, that person is illumined; if he looks at a person, his entire being is shaken to its very foundation, a new consciousness dawns in him, and he finds himself a different person from that moment; if the saint touches a person, he feels a tremendous change taking place in him. In that thought, look as well as touch, there is so much love and compassion for the uplift, advancement and illumination of the aspirant. The mind that seeks peace gets it in the presence of a saint by his grace. It is a peace that passeth all understanding. Man thinks that by his effort he will be able to attain God. This is entirely foolish. When we have struggled long, we come to know that we cannot realise Him by our effort. Then, in all humility we surrender to the Master, and his grace flows into us. A humble heart alone can receive grace, not a proud one. Meekness is a necessary condition.

“Thus the spiritual Master brings about the inner awakening of the aspirant who goes to him seeking peace, freedom and joy. Based on this inner awakening of the Divine, true love dawns in his heart. Then he will love all beings and creatures, because he sees God everywhere. The whole world now stands transformed as the very image of his Beloved. He sees and loves his Beloved in everybody.

“All this happens through the grace of the Master. Anybody, whether good or bad, who comes to him can get his grace. He is like a lamp that gives light to anybody who is near it. The lamp does not make any distinction as to whether those who go near it are good or bad. It gives light to everyone equally. So does the spiritual Master. That is why it is said the Master has equal vision. When people of different temperaments and nature approach him, all of them are blessed with his light and grace. If the Master discriminates between the good and bad, where is the hope then for the fallen soul? The purpose for which the spiritual Master comes to the world is to save the fallen, to raise those who are living in a lower level, miserable and unhappy. The touch of a saint gives them a new birth, a new consciousness dawns on them. They feel happy, courageous and strong because they feel the presence of the Master with them.

“The spiritual Master never dies. He is not an ordinary person who dies and disappears from our life. When you

once depend upon him he is always there at your back to help you and guide you. If he takes you up once, you can always depend upon him, for you are always under his shelter. He will not leave you until he raises you to his status completely. As soon as Ramdas met a saint he felt that very moment the Master took his seat in his heart. His little self disappeared completely as he was possessed by the Master. He was free from temptations as his mind was made pure and desireless. By the Master's grace he could see the Beloved on the face of everybody. He was feeling every moment the presence of the divine..."

When Papa had finished his speech I asked if he would touch the heads of everyone there and transmit his grace to them in that way. He said, "Yes, Ramdas has committed himself." Hearing Papa agree, Rani Lalita Devi was first in line and almost ran from the back of the room to receive his blessing. Papa laughed and joked with her about it as he blessed her. Someone in the party said later that it was very unusual for Papa to give individual blessings to everyone in a group. No doubt she wanted to be sure she availed herself of the privilege. I was the last in line and as I knelt before him I said to him, "Papa, please ask the Divine Mother to manifest within me fully that I may be filled with light and the bliss of His presence." He looked at me, smiled, placed both of his hands on top of my head and said, "Yes, it shall be so." Realizing the tremendous power of God in him one can only imagine how I felt in receiving such a benediction.

When I arose Papa said to me, referring to the devotees present, "You have here all of your fragrant flowers together. Are you all happy now? You must, of course, feel happy." With my heart overflowing with gratitude I replied, "When God Himself has come to us why should we not feel happy?" Papa smiled a heavenly smile and said, "God has come to see God." Hearing these words the whole world seemed to stand still because they were the fulfilment of God's promise given to me several months before when I had offered myself to Him in full surrender. The gracious Lord had lifted me into the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi where, fully conscious, I lived in two worlds for eight days, moving in this state with very little sleep and almost no food. He revealed to me such wondrous things that the memory of them is forever engraved upon my soul. Then He spoke these unforgettable words: "I shall meet you face-to-face that our joy may be full." How could I doubt the reality of the vision! He had indeed come in Papa's form and my joy knew no bounds. As I stood before Papa, the bliss which permeated his whole being engulfed me like a flood. It was as though I was lifted up into the arms of God and I felt like a

little child. With tears flowing from my eyes I asked, "Will you be my Papa, too?" He smiled his ever-blissful smile and answered, "Yes, he is Papa to all. All are his children."

The next few days after Papa's visit to our home were thrilling indeed. We were privileged to attend three of the meetings which he held, two at the Chapel of the Church of the People and one at the University Unitarian Church. In all of his discourses he stressed universal love and service. He put forth a sublime Vision of a world wherein all people loved one another, lived in perfect harmony and made a veritable heaven of this earth. He had the certain knowledge not only that it could be done but that it would come to pass. He said that this faith was grounded on the truth that the world is controlled by God who is so good and merciful that He will bring about this most desirable consummation.

What a messenger of God Papa was! How universal in his every approach of life! Those who were good and those who were evil, friends and enemies, the rich and the poor, the great and the humble, were treated all alike. To Him all were the forms of his Infinite Beloved. He poured forth the love of God from his being in such great measure that all who came before him finally melted and became helpless in that love. This is the true measure of a God-realised soul. No one can claim to be spiritual and have hate and animosity in his heart for any human being. Papa's greatness lay in his simplicity, his sweetness and his childlike qualities. For him there was no pomp nor ceremony, no worship of gods nor statues, no adherence to ritual nor form. He believed only in the one Father God. Name, fame and fortune meant nothing to him because to him only the name of his beloved Ram was sweet; it was his glory alone which was to be spread throughout the earth and he considered himself to be the wealthiest of men because he forever enjoyed the bliss of God's presence and had won the eternal gold of the Spirit. The only decoration he wore was the great light which shone in his face. He dressed in a simple white shirt and dhoti and took the name Ramdas. He was indeed the humble 'servant of Ram'. As I write these things from my heart I am moved to tears because his beloved form is no longer with us but I have the certain knowledge that his blissful Spirit hovers above the earth like a shining star in the heavens lighting the way to Paradise for men everywhere.

The day for Papa's departure arrived too soon. He had asked if we were coming to the airport to see all of them off and I said, "Yes, of course, Papa. I don't want to miss a minute with you." My husband had to work, so my son-in-law, Ron Smith drove with me to the airport. Mr. Sagarlal

Gupta rode with us and we carried as much of the baggage as possible in our car. Papa and the rest of his party accompanied Mr. Groeger in his car. When we went into the airport somehow I found myself sitting alone with Papa on a bench. I shall always remember those moments. He sat there looking for all the world like a little child. I reached over and took hold of his hand and was thrilled when he made no move to take it away. He just beamed at me and started swinging one leg back and forth under the seat. A few years later when I spent many months at Anandashram I often saw him swinging his leg back and forth in this manner or gleefully slapping his knees as his feet danced up and down when either he or someone else had made a joke or said something which stirred his sense of humour. His joy was such that it was ready to bubble forth at a moment's notice.

Although the visions previously mentioned had seemed like the veriest reality and some of them had already manifested in the outer sense, still I had had great difficulty in accepting the things which God had revealed to me about myself and my own destiny. I thought surely that I must be suffering from hallucination and my soul underwent great torture as a result. Suddenly I felt a compulsion to lay the whole matter before Papa that I might have the relief of knowing the truth whatever it might be. When I described the vision to Papa and asked him to help me either accept or reject it, he turned and, looking directly at me, said, "Mother, every word that God told you was true." Then he said, "There are three ways in which visions may be verified as Truth: First, that they are confirmed by a saint, second, that they are verified in the scriptures and third, that they actually manifest and become prophecy fulfilled."

A voice was heard over the loud speaker announcing that the plane was now ready for boarding. My son-in-law had been talking to Swami Satchidananda whom he dearly loves while Papa and I were together and his face was filled with joy as he came to pay his respects to Papa and to say good-bye to him. As Papa gave us his final blessings the bliss within him communicated itself to all of us and we were as if intoxicated with the nectar of God's presence. He turned again and again to pronam to us while walking the distance between the airport and the plane. As the door closed on his beloved form we all stood there searching the windows with the hope that we would have one more glimpse of him. Suddenly we saw him silhouetted against one of the windows with his hands again raised in pronam to us. As the plane flew into the heavens carrying its precious cargo my soul soared on the wings of prayer to kneel before the Lord

and give thanks for the great blessing he had bestowed upon us.

An anti-climax which was in itself a climax cannot be left untold. Unwittingly both Mr. Groeger and Ron had parked their cars directly opposite one another in the parking lot, but back-to-back. We were all still filled with bliss and scarcely aware of anything or anyone around us. We had said goodbye to the Groegers and each of us had walked to our respective cars without noticing their close proximity. We all got in and Mr. Groeger and Ron started the cars simultaneously, backed up and locked their rear wheels together. There was no crash because both were going slowly—just a gentle interlocking of the wheels. They got out, looked at each other sheepishly, saw that there was no damage to either car, apologised to each other and drove away. As we drove down the Pacific Highway, Ron kept running off the road. His mind was so concentrated on God and on Papa and his being so filled with bliss that it seemed impossible for him to follow a straight line. As can be imagined, it was a rather dangerous situation in which to find oneself but he was completely helpless in it. However, God never fails His devotees! All of a sudden there was a loud honking of horns and the roar of many motors from behind. I looked around and there were six motorcycle policemen all riding along behind us. They followed us all the way to the city. The Lord had provided us with an escort to see us safely home! We were literally speechless. I could only say from the depths of my heart, "Papa, Papa, how truly great is your power in God and how all-encompassing your love and protection!"



Picture of Mother Hamilton from the book *World is God* by Swami Ramdas.