

The thrilling influence of saints and realized Masters awakens, within the willing heart, complete love and devotion. A divine alchemy from this contact begets a chain reaction within that produces a realized Soul of a sincere aspirant. The Soul now melts into a sacred ocean of bliss; no words are there, only pure bliss.

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

Rise above the pairs of opposites: pleasure and pain, heat and cold, sickness and health. Free yourself from the consciousness of individuality, of being separate from everyone and everything else. Keep your mind fixed steadfastly on Him. Remain inwardly unaffected as the motionless spirit you want to become. He alone is what you really are. His bliss alone is your nature.

Paramhansa Yogananda

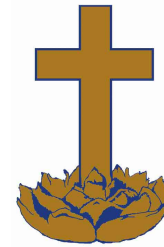
Ramdas went to the Himalayas... He wished to wander in the forest and lose himself there and never come down to the plains. The attraction was irresistible... but Ram stopped him, saying, "You must go down into the world to have my work done. You must make people think of me and talk of me."

Swami Ramdas



Babaji Grotto at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center  
after the improvement of a rock wall built by David Branscomb

# The Cross and The Lotus Journal



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*Dedicated to the Realization of God and Service to Him in All Forms*



The Reverend Mother, Yogacharya M. Hamilton



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The cross and lotus symbolizes the unity between East and West. The lotus is the sign of illumined consciousness, the thousand petal lotus of the crown chakra. The cross is the symbol of the body surrendered to the will of God. Following the way of the cross results in the resurrection of illumined consciousness.

*The Cross and the Lotus, symbol of man.  
East and West blended, join hand in hand.  
Marching toward the infinite light and life divine.*

*Lift up your eyes and see the star,  
descending from heaven where e'er you are.  
Be filled with the peace and ecstasy of God's almighty love.  
Om-Amen.*

The Reverend Yogacharya Mother Hamilton

© 2005 The Cross and The Lotus Publishing is dedicated to the publication of materials that promote God Realization. Our spiritual lineage begins with Jesus Christ and Babaji and flows down to us through Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, Paramhansa Yogananda and Yogacharya Mother Hamilton.

The Reverend Yogacharya David Hickenbottom continues this lineage with the help and support of many sincere devotees. We are dedicated to realizing God and serving devotees of every race, color, creed and religion.

Mother Hamilton often said she was the product of two fully illumined Masters, her own Guru, Paramhansa Yogananda and Swami Ramdas. We therefore feature articles about Swami Ramdas and Anandashram. We bow to the feet of Saints and realized Masters of all religions.



Easter Drawing by Lorraine Bourcier (2003)

## HAPPY EASTER!

### Calendar of Events

March	7	Master's Mahasamadhi Day
	9	Sri Yukteswar's Mahasamadhi Day
	20	Spring Equinox (4:31 a.m. PST)
	27	Easter
April	24	Swami Ramdas' Birthday (Hindu Calendar)
	24	Passover (1st day)
May	6-8	Loon Lake Retreat (in BC)
	8	Mother's Day
	10	Swami Sri Yukteswar's Birthday
	30	Memorial Day
June	19	Father's Day
	20	Summer Solstice (9:47 p.m. PDT)

Journal Editors: Larry & Cate Koler

[Continued from p. 5]

of compassion. When others attack me I first analyze myself to see if I have done something wrong. If I have done nothing improper then I think about what state of mind the other person must have had when they attacked me. We have a word in the West: it's called—projection. If someone is angry they think it is the other fellow is the one who is angry. I try to understand the person attacking. If it is possible I look for ways I might help them. My background is in counseling. If they are open to it, I try to help them.

David: Swamiji, may I ask you a question?

TB: (Laughter) You may.

David: Baba, do you have any advice for my sadhana?

TB: You are on a good path. You are right. Do not get involved with powers. Powers are not good.

David: Baba, that is what Mother Hamilton taught us, not to get involved with powers, psychic or otherwise. She used to say, "If you want to get something done, go to the president of the company. If he says, yes, do this; you know it will be done. Likewise, go to the President of the universe first, and then everything will be done correctly. As Jesus said, 'Seek ye first God and His kingdom, everything else will be added unto you.'"

Baba was wagging his head in approval at what I was saying. He seemed to like Mother's analogy of the President of the universe and knew well the saying of Jesus.

Unfortunately, Anandashram's important dates for the year were omitted from Mother's Centenary Calendar. Please mark these dates in your calendar and accept our sincere apologies for this.

#### Anandashram Important Dates 2005

Feb.	15	Pujya Mataji's Mahasamadhi Day
April	24	Beloved Papa's Jayanthi
July	21	Guru Purnima
Aug.	10	Beloved Papa's Mahasamadhi Day
Oct.	3	Pujya Mataji's Jayanthi
Nov.	12	Pujya Swamiji's Birthday
Dec.	27	Beloved Papa's Sannyas Day

Let nothing trouble you, let nothing make you afraid. All things pass away. God never changes. Patience obtains everything. God alone is enough.  
— Saint Theresa of Avila

My Dear Friends,

Hearty greetings from India! Land of saints and sacred sites. The Infinite has once again directed my steps back to Anandashram, Swami Satchidananda and then on to the Himalayas. His purpose in doing so fulfills itself as we continue our pilgrimage.

Swami Satchidananda is an ocean of love that flows to us all, as never before. His body has suffered the effects of a severe stroke, which he daily is working to overcome, but his light shines brighter than ever.

There is a great blessing that comes with visiting holy sites and divine personages, such as Anandashram and Swami Satchidananda. Purity permeates the air—the spiritual vibration resonates in every particle of space to the receptive soul; these are not just the fancies of imagination, but a living Reality.

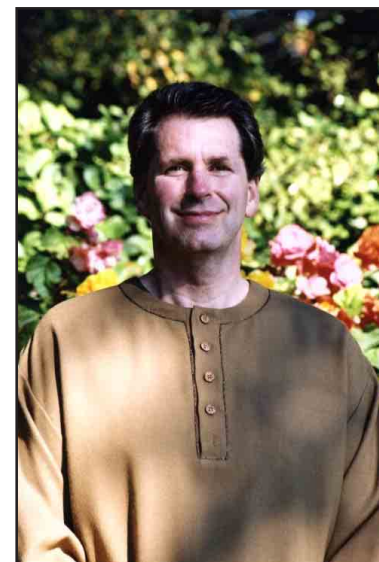
A mother (all women here are called mothers) from Israel came with a friend because they heard the Ashram was a "nice" place to visit. Upon meeting Swamiji something profound stirred within her, tears came of their own accord, she felt shaken; her mind was struggling to understand what was occurring in her. She had no previous thought or faith in saints or sacred sites.

When she asked me about what was happening to her, I said,

When the Soul is ready for awakening all the circumstances are created for that purpose, even beyond the knowledge or understanding of the mind. Realized Beings, like Swamiji, act as a catalyst that awakens God-awareness.

The mind then races to catch up to what the Soul, the supreme Self within, has already determined. The tears come from all the pent up feelings of living in a state of separation for so long and the relief and joy the Soul feels in the awakening.

It is the mind that needs purifying. The pure mind focuses on the Divine Goal and does not veer left or right. The mixed mind, partly focused on God and partly attracted to the world, meanders on a twisting, winding path; the purer the mind, the more direct the route.



Our sadhana, our spiritual practice, helps to purify the mind.

When the body, mind and soul become completely purified of their ignorance you are aware of a peaceful, blissful Presence within the Soul at all times. In fact at this time all your thoughts, will and direction come from that Infinite Self, never to be separate again. When you look out on the world you see nothing but that divine splendor in all that you perceive. Your soul is filled with a wonderful singularity of Spirit as your all in all. Such is the wonderful journey your Soul has embarked upon.

In fact, each one of us is on a path to the selfsame goal. I never tire of speaking of that goal for it alone promises to be the fulfillment of the Soul's yearnings.

While we have been at Anandashram we have received such loving service. The Ashram inmates (those who have dedicated their lives to service here), most of the workers (the paid staff) and so many visitors all demonstrate sincerity to Papa's motto, "Universal Love and Service." It truly has to be seen to be believed to what lengths all go to in order to provide what is needed and wanted; they are living examples for all of us.

I pray that you are feeling the love and joy I feel, right where you are! For the Divine Presence is deeply residing in all souls, waiting for Its own awakening. The Soul is the spark of the Divine in all of its purity, perfection and splendor, and you are that!

Determine today, to make Self-realization your first duty; make God your first love. Do not rest until you make Divine contact; then strive always to keep God with you. You are God's very own child and He is your divine heritage.

With loving blessings from the land of Bharat (the ancient name of India),

*David*

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### From David's India 2005 Journal

Upon returning to my room Lakshmi came to the door. "Thuli Baba would like to see you now." What wonder is this? Our sisters, Lakshmi and Mansi, had been telling the revered saint about us. "He wants to meet you."

Baba has been coming to Anandashram every month for seven days for some time now. He is very friendly and familiar with Swami Satchidananda.

He began a series of questions:

## The First Crucifixion

The three higher centers, heart, throat and third eye, each have a death experience (crucifixion) associated with them. St. Theresa had an experience of an angel piercing her heart with a flaming arrow.



Gianlorenzo Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Theresa* (1645-1652), Cornaro Chapel of the church of S. Maria della Vittoria in Rome

The pain was so great I screamed aloud, but the sweetness I experienced was so wonderful, I wanted the pain to go on.

– St. Theresa of Avila

...this is the Gordian knot which binds the life force to the body, and there is a definite sensation of the loosening of a knot. In my own case, it just went bang! And it was so painful that I could scarcely bear it and I had pain to some degree for three years afterward.

– Mother Hamilton (From Talk No. 80326)

The first crucifixion takes place at the heart center. This is where the battle of Armageddon is fought. It is that which the Hindus call the battle of Kurukshetra. The reason it is fought there is because this is the dividing center between the three lower ones [chakras] and the three upper ones. This is where this battle, which is neutral ground, is fought between these forces of good and evil. One lifts you up so high and gives you tremendous revelation. And the other one takes you down into the depths of your subconscious.

– Mother Hamilton (From Talk No. 760614)

### The Christ Seed's Circuit

According to Mother, there is a seed that is released from the pituitary gland every 29-1/2 days (the lunar synodic cycle). The secretions of this gland and the pineal gland cause this seed to travel down into the body:

Now, once every twenty-nine and a half days after puberty—usually at the age of twelve—there is a Master or Christ Seed which drops from this sacred claustrum\* or cloister. It is carried in the female gland, but both glands have furnished the substance. And this is the tax money which Mary and Joseph had to pay when they went to Jerusalem. It was the substance that carried this Christ Seed. [From Talk No. 600503]

In the New Testament, the term “Galilee”† is used allegorically to connote the idea of a circuit of this seed. Jesus is this seed and he drops to the cave in Bethlehem (behind the stomach), is born and from there he continues his descent into Egypt which represents the lower spinal centers.

Then Jesus begins his great ascent until finally he comes to the holy city, Jerusalem, and thence to the hill of the skull, Golgotha. Mother taught that Golgotha refers directly to the skull. The third and final crucifixion occurs here at the Christ center, the sixth center and this ends his sojourn, his circuit through the body.

Remember the Christ said, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Light. Nobody can go to the Father except through me,” [John 14:6, paraphrased] which means that as the consciousness ascends the spine, it has to go through the Christ center here in order to get to God the Father who sits on the throne of your consciousness. So Jesus is the Way. He is the Truth. He is the Light within yourself. You have dissipated all of the Light which you have...and now, having suffered enough and turned your face toward God, the Christ within yourself is born and he is about to be crucified. So this happens. [From Talk No. 600400]

Mother traveled this whole circuit during her lifetime. She always said that none of us would go through it to the same extent or would have to endure the pain and suffering that she did. But, through many lifetimes each person has to travel the whole way and pay the full price, the price of admission to God's supernal realm: the ego. In the Bible, this dead ego is depicted as Jesus, the son of man, crucified on the cross.

\* Claustrum— A part of the brain—comes from Latin meaning “closed space.”

† Galilee— Comes from Hebrew word “Galil” meaning “circuit.”

TB: What is your spiritual practice?

David: I practice Kriya Yoga and Ram Nam; I also serve God in the ways He directs me, and I love Him more than the world and this body.

TB: What is your connection with this ashram?

David: My Guru, Mother Hamilton, met Papa along with Mataji and Swami Satchidananda on Papa's world tour in 1954. Mother was a disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, who left the body in 1952. Mother felt that Papa would help her to gain her full realization. She and her husband sold their house and all their belongings and traveled to here, Anandashram, in 1957; they stayed here for about a year.

TB: How long have you been practicing Kriya Yoga?

David: Since 1974. Mother initiated me into Kriya; I have practiced since. Also, on the first meeting with Mother she sang Ram Nam. Kriya Yoga and Ram Nam I have practiced over 30 years now.

TB: Do you have any fears?

David: I have not been aware of any fears since I spent a year in silence and solitude.

TB: What do you see when you look out on the world?

David: Baba, you have come as Ram to give me an examination! (hearty laughter)

I looked directly at Baba's eyes; he in mine—soul to soul—laughter and divine joy prevailed!

David: I see God in all, in you (looking at those sitting around), and in you, and you, and you, and (patting the wall next to me) in this wall.

TB: Do you see God in the world or as Spirit?

David: I see God primarily as the all-pervading Spirit of God. I also see Him in special manifestations of form as well.

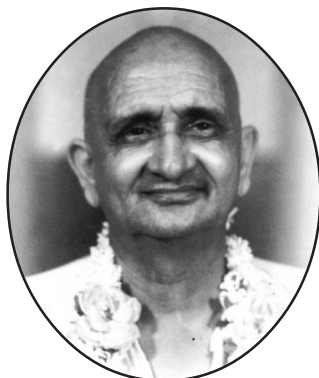
TB: Do you ever experience fear?

David: I am not aware of having any fear.

TB: How do you feel when you see others suffering, and, how do you react when others attack you, say bad things about you?

David: When I see suffering of others my heart hurts and I feel waves





Beloved Papa

## SWAMI RAMDAS MEMORIAL

Excerpt from  
A Talk Given by Mother Hamilton  
in Seattle, Washington  
on August 19, 1963

For those of you who are not aware of it, I would like to make an announcement this evening; and that is that our beloved Papa left his mortal body on July the 25th and is no longer with us in the physical form.

I am filled with mixed emotions about this happening, because on one hand I feel filled with peace, with bliss, with great joy over the fact that he has been released from this physical body which was filled with pain. And on the other hand I feel a deep personal loss. My sorrow knows no bounds over his passing.

### With Papa in India

I have told many of you of many of the experiences that I have had with Papa during the time since I have met him. When I went to India, I went through an experience which was unique. The beginning of it was filled with wonder, with bliss as I sat at his feet and listened to him pour forth all of the beauty of his Oneness with God, his great love for God, his worship with God. And then gradually, Father and I were built up in the spirit until we went through this tremendous experience, which I have described to you.

I had great trouble with that because, as you know, I have been going through many things ever since that commenced. It was as though Papa started everything that has transpired of the spirit in my life since that time. I have great difficulty understanding it because these experiences

tations of what is being described in the Christian scriptures. The Universal Christ came as Jesus of Nazareth but these teachings apply to all people—as do all of the great scriptures. They are universal.

In John 8:58, Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, this is a **Universal Being**, one who clearly has no special “chosen” people in a racial or religious sense. As Mother puts it:

And when it says that the Jews are His chosen ones it means that the Jews are those who have attained a certain state of enlightenment. [From Talk No. 780219]

Mother goes much further than this. She shows how, in the New Testament, the Jews represent the state of consciousness that allows them to live in the promised land, the land of milk and honey. She taught that the pituitary gland secretes a milk-like secretion and the pineal gland a honey-like secretion. Joseph is the allegorical pineal gland and Mary the allegorical pituitary gland.

Thus, we start the remarkable story that Mother has to tell. The inner workings and inner wisdom of the body—this is truly the mystical body of Christ, that which houses the Christ, from infancy to crucifixion to resurrection to ascension. Salvation within is found for each of us.

### The Cross and the Body

[Phil 2:8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

[Col 1:20] And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;

Often referring to the above quotes, Mother used to ask, “Now, does a wooden cross die or does it bleed?” And:

It [the Bible] speaks, as I have said many times before, of the blood **of** the cross, not on. It speaks of the death **of** the cross, not on. So a wooden cross does not bleed and neither does it die. [From Talk No. 821123]

Many, many times she would exhort us that what the New Testament symbol, the cross, is referring to is man’s body and then she would hold both her arms out, saying:

Now, your cross is the symbol of the human body because as you stand upright with your arms outstretched and your feet together, your body is in the form of a cross. And it is upon this cross that the humanness in you must be crucified. [From No. 740417]

## The Life and Teachings of The Reverend Mother, Yogacharya M. Hamilton

by Rev. Larry Koler

### The Mystical Body of Christ

Mother taught that our very bodies are churches, the temples of God. All mystics teach this in one way or the other because this is their experience: that all knowledge about Truth comes from within. God dwells in this temple “not made by hands.”\* There is a wonderful quote from Colossians:

[Col 1:18] And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church...

Mother often referred to this quote and stated that the modern Christian understanding is that the church (usually meaning the congregation) is the body of Christ. They imply that there is a mystical understanding here. Indeed, the Catholics refer to the church as the “mystical body of Christ.” Mother corrects this and asks us to look at the quote carefully and you will see that what is clearly meant is that the **body is the church**, not the other way around. **It is within our bodies that the Christ resides. The body is what he is the head of—not the congregation, not the building, not the organization.**

And does it not say, in the Bible, that the body is the church, the **body** is the church? Not the church is the body, but the body is the church, and Christ is the head of it. If it were not so, he would not have said, “This is the temple of the living God,” and “I and my Father are one.”

So this is the way it really is, not the way we have been taught down through the centuries. This is the truth of your own being. It is the Christ in every man. When a man goes through these various experiences of the spirit, and he sees Christ crucified upon a cross—many times, and most times, he thinks it is that one he has been told about that lived 2,000 years ago. But what he is seeing is his own Christ, crucified upon his own cross which is his body, that son of man. And he will also see, if he persists, the resurrection of that one from the dead. He will see the ascension of that one. Then he will know what it means when the Christ said, “And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto myself.” [From Talk No. 741016]

The Christ is universal and eternal. He has come before in other forms. Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Moses, these are all examples of other manifes-

\* See 2 Cor 5:1, Heb 9:11

were tremendous. They were drastic. They took a tremendous toll physically, mentally and spiritually. And yet I have come to see what a great service he did me.

I have told you many times that our own Master saved my physical life, not once but many times; and how deeply grateful I was for that. But now I have come to know that Papa Swami Ramdas was the means of saving my spiritual life. It was as though Master had provided the groundwork, the foundation, provided the inspiration, gave me the steadiness in the path, the love for God in him, and the love for God everywhere. And yet Papa came and picked me up from there, and lifted me into the arms of God.

### Papa Crucified the Ego

It was not an easy experience; and you see I know with everything that was in me that he crucified me. He crucified the ego in order that the divine might live. And his love for me knew no bounds because he had no thought, no care, for my body, for my mind in one way. It was only that he wanted my soul to live, to become purified, to be one with God. Still, while I underwent that experience, I saw the greatest evidence of loving kindness, of divine love and service that I have ever seen, that any man could see anywhere. Because all of the needs that he could provide for both Father and myself, physically, were taken care of with the greatest of love.

I always remember the day that I finally was able to go back into the Bhajan room, after I had been confined to my room for almost four and a half months unable to leave it. I had to be carried there. I was seated along side of him. And he looked at me with the sweetest smile on his face, one of infinite sweetness and love. He said, “Ramdas is so very happy to see you again.”

### Papa's Complete Surrender

I am filled with deep regret that I had not been able to write to him more than I did. I was always going to do it tomorrow but somehow God didn't let me. It wasn't because I didn't love him. It wasn't because I didn't want to; but it was because God just seemed to fill every moment with the experiences which He was putting me through, with the demands that He made on me. Yet my heart was with Papa; and I loved him very, very greatly.

Because I see now how complete his surrender to God was in every single detail. One cannot be on constant call by all of God's children, 24 hours a day, with no moment of privacy for oneself, and not live in complete surrender. The effect of his life upon the world cannot be estimated

at this time. There are few indeed who were privileged to witness his extreme greatness in God. He had qualified in so many ways, you see; the same ways that the Christ called upon each man to qualify. He had become like a little child and he had entered the Kingdom of Heaven.

There is a story told in India about a man who had two sons. He started out for a walk with them one day and he held one son in his arms. The other son, he held by the hand. As they walked along, all of them saw a kite floating through the air, with a string attached to it. And the son, who held his father's hand, broke away and ran after the kite. But as he ran, he fell and stumbled; while the other child held safe in his father's arms had the joy of seeing the kite, of reaching out his hand and catching it. And yet he was unhurt.

This is the difference between self-effort and self-surrender. Nowhere can we read anywhere of such complete surrender to God, as Papa had. He qualified in another way, because it said in the Bible: He who leaves father, mother, husband, wife or children for my namesake, shall have life everlasting. And this he also did. He surrendered all. He gave up everything in order that he might seek God.

Now there are some who feel that self-surrender means to sit with one's hands folded and to leave all things to God—He is supposed to think for us, act for us, speak for us. And in one sense, He does. But to think that He will do this without any effort on our part is a complete mistake; because we must strive our utmost to do our part, to learn everything that we should learn, to do everything that we should do. But we must listen to His voice as we do these things. "I will reason, I will will, I will act; but guide Thou my reason, will and activity to the thing which I should do."

Papa made this statement once when we asked him what we should do: "Do nothing." And by that he meant that the ego, the little self should be stilled; while the greater Self—that Self within us which is God should take over and do all of the work. There is no difference, absolutely no difference between the universal "I" and the individual within each individual. There is absolutely no difference. God, the author of the universe, is in every atom of space....

....Papa lived like a child. God was his Master, his beloved Ram. You know, we think that we give of our hearts to God and yet how little we give in comparison to the great ones. What are our sorrows, our vicissitudes, our suffering, our wants, our petty trials and tribulations compared with the grandeur and the glory of the love of God—which these things bring to us because of the suffering which they take us through and the purification which they bring to our souls?

weepy state most of the time. I think the greatest tribute to Anandashram is that they live out in practice the afternoon prayer:

*And so, serving and being served  
Loving and being loved  
We shall make this a peaceful haven  
Where we the children of God  
Shall live harmoniously  
Joyfully singing His name and glories  
Till we merge our little selves  
In His eternal Being and Existence  
Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*

Unfortunately, as the cliché goes, "All good things must come to an end." The day on the calendar approached that we were scheduled to go. Neither of us wanted to leave. We each tried out different rationalizations for staying on the other, but none of them stuck. Our hearts were clear we belonged back home in Seattle. The time had come to pack our bags and buy our souvenirs.

### **Returning Home**

The last leg of our Indian experience was taking the train south down the coast to Cochin. The Ashram arranged for us to stay with another devotee family, the Choyi's. Vishnu the son, met us at the train station and guided us through the labyrinth of streets to their home. Staying with other devotees was wonderful because it gave us a way to ease back into the world after the purity and bliss of Anandashram. Our host, Reghunath was most gracious and arranged tours for us of the harbor, a Kathakali dance and souvenir shopping. As a devotee who had met papa, I asked how he stayed true to the path while being a householder. His answer was straightforward: seek balance and base your family life on the same principles as the Ashram. With that wisdom tucked away, (and some Kit Kat bars from the Duty Free store), we boarded our plane and headed home.

Three weeks later I'm still trying to put that wisdom into practice. As always, patience is a virtue and more sadhana is needed. However, I was delighted to experience at last Sunday's service that contrary to popular belief: you **can** take it with you. As I sat listening to a recording of Vinay, an inmate at Anandashram, chanting Ram Nam with the children, I was instantly transported back to the Bhajan Hall at Anandashram and bliss started washing over me all anew. Blessings to the Masters, blessings to David, blessings to you all!

**Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram**



dashram has chanting and singing Ram Nam with fellow devotees at its core. Anandashram means the “abode of bliss,” and it certainly lives up to its name. In very short order any tension you are harboring starts to melt away. It may well be the closest one can come to re-experiencing the Garden of Eden.

### At the Abode of Bliss

At Anandashram all your daily needs are joyfully and simply attended to. You’re free to make your schedule what you want it to be. Jenrri and I eased into a pattern we enjoyed after a few days. We chanted daily at the mandirs, woke up for the flower offering at the Bhajan Hall, watched for every chance to have Swami Satchidananda’s darshan, and fit in as many talks and satsangs as we had energy for. Most evenings found us ending the day at the night arati and nibbling our evening’s prasad under the bright moon as the tradewinds rustled the coconut palms above us. An unexpected bonus while at Anandashram was the countless hours of darshan we had with David. Our rooms shared a porch, which meant we also shared tea time, jokes, tears, visitors, laughter, sobs, sweets, and the gentle wisdom that flows from David like a river.

A huge benefit of going on a pilgrimage as a parent is you have a built in mechanism for not getting too serious. Kids, especially an 11 year-old boy, see to that! So we took several hikes up the hill behind the Ashram to burn off some energy. There was lots of art and projects, the cows stayed well fed, and we had a couple of outings to the beach to play in the waves of the Arabian Sea. Children help strike the equilibrium that V. Ganesan shared in his talk. They also respond readily to Papa’s frequent query of: “Where’s the fun!”

I have only fond memories of our stay at Anandashram. Warm “Hari Oms” greeted us at every turn. Grace was thick in the air and manifested in me as a great flushing of all sorts of emotions that had me in a happy-



On Our Front Porch  
with David, Lakshmi and Mansi

### Gratitude to Papa

Papa stripped me of all the things of the human, in order that he might show me the truth of my soul. And I have thought many times lately, what a tremendous service he did me! But for him, I could not sit here and tell you the truth of the cross—the way of the cross and the Christ, as I have experienced it within myself. Because he had the courage to hurt me physically, mentally, to put me through the greatest of tortures; in order that I might find the joy of God, and the truth of being. There can be no greater love than this for any man—no greater love. Do you not see this?

I shall never forget the years since I met Papa. I shall never forget any moment of the time I spent with him. Each moment is burned into my brain, into my heart and into my soul. I have awakened in the night, since I found out that he has passed from his body and I have wept bitter tears. Because, in one way, I wanted his physical form to remain upon the Earth: because when one of these great ones passes, it is as though the light has gone from the Earth. This seems the way to us in our human consciousness and yet, in truth, it is not so, because there is no such thing as death. Such a one is liberated while still in the body and they merely but drop this garment that they may follow the will of God, either to become one with Him, to rest in the bosom of his infinity; or to take on a new form and come again—to inspire and to lift mankind up into the arms of the infinite.

### The Greatest of Lights was Among Us

We do not know what will happen. We only know that the greatest of lights was among us; and that we who were privileged to cross the path of such a one, have been blessed indeed. Papa influenced and touched the lives of thousands, all over the Earth. He was personal and yet he was impersonal. He was static and yet he was dynamic. He left everything to God—everything. Even the slightest thought—the slightest thought, the slightest word, the slightest action were all directed by his beloved Ram—his Master, his Mother, his Beloved.

If each of us could attain one small part of the glory of God which was within him, how great our lives would be. Do you know what it means to surrender yourself to God completely? How we take up our time with all of the little things of life. How we actually fail to surrender ourselves to the infinite.

There was one month that he spent fully in meditation upon God in a cave, with almost nothing to eat. He would go around to the villagers and beg enough rice to put in his lota, and when he had it filled sufficiently, he would take it back and boil just enough to keep his body alive—without

salt, without any flavor, without any condiments and with the clear water which he got from the stream. This is all that he had. And he kept the name of God ever upon his lips. And because he gave himself so completely to God, he became filled with His light; he became filled with His bliss. When he finally left the cave, he came across a man and he ran up to him and he threw his arms around him.

And he said, “Oh you are He, you are He, my beloved.” And the man was naturally frightened. He didn’t know what in the world was happening, but later he understood. Because Ramdas saw God every place, in every one.

It is said that when an individual arrives at the stage where he can see God in the greatest knave, in the greatest criminal; and see that shining light in that one and say to him, “Oh, I see you there, my beloved. You are only He coming to test me, to tempt me in this form.” That one is truly near his liberation.

### Let Us Sit at His Feet

Let us feel our oneness with Papa’s spirit, because that spirit was so great in God that there was no difference, no difference at all. Let us sit at his children, at his feet, and be filled with joy at his passing. And let us pray for all of those of us who are left, that we may be filled with the same spirit as He himself was filled with; and that those who are to succeed him will be given the strength and the inspiration and the light to carry on that which he started.

All paths led to Papa. Remember that he never took initiation from anybody but God. He never gave anybody the title of Swami; he was too humble, too childlike, too surrendered to God to do this. He saw no difference in any creed; all were welcome at his feet, to worship his beloved Father God, his beloved Ram. What a tremendous thing. No matter who the Guru was, what the faith was, what the denomination was, how all were attracted to him! Why? Because of the tremendous love of God which he poured forth equally upon all. This is what drew them, his power of love.

There was no backbiting, no proselytizing. I remember how many times that he wrote (or that he put in the magazine at my request) things that my own Master, my own Guru had written. What universality! What universality. All were welcome. Everyone wrote whatever they felt about God and it was published in his little magazine, called “The Vision.” How many do that? How many do that?

rushed in. We followed and came to a table where we could pay Rs 20 to have a “special darshan” (mostly express lines for westerners that avoid the long waits). A “pseudo” swami presented himself and offered to be our hired guide. He ushered us from line to line as we crowded with other worshippers through the series of queues that preceded each of the major stations for worship within the temple. The experience was the opposite of quiet and serene, it was loud and crowded with lots of jostling through cramped quarters. The priests were kind and explained the rituals we were partaking, but I nonetheless left the temple feeling processed instead of uplifted. David said he thought going to temple in Jesus’ day would have been similar. I ended up being pushed further away from the orthodox religions and closer to the quiet meditations of Ramana Ashram. At the Ashram, the inmates are encouraged to ponder the question, “Who am I?” When all the layers of this question are peeled away, it leads to the realization: I am part and parcel of the omnipresent God that is in everything.

### To Anandashram

The time had come to move on to the main destination of our trip—Anandashram. We arrived at Kanhangad station at 3:30 in the morning and made our way across the multiple railroad tracks to get ourselves from the northbound platform over to the main station. Anandashram had sent a taxi to meet us, so we were on our way through the deserted dark streets in a matter of minutes. The next day brought a late sleep in, then a gradual exploration of the Ashram with Jonni acting as guide. Where Sri Ramana Ashram had a more formal and ritualistic feel, Anandashram felt informal and personable. Ramana Ashram has individual inquiry at its core; Anan-



Arunachalesvara Temple

Ashram was housed there between 1899 and 1922, prior to moving to the current Ashram site. We also visited the cave where Papa meditated after being lifted up into bliss by a single glance from Ramana Maharshi. This was a day of literally treading in the footsteps of the masters. I carried my sandals so my bare feet could caress the same cool smooth granite stepping-stones that their feet touched. At the caves we meditated where the masters had meditated. I did my best to savor each step, and linger over each breath. The day warmed up quickly and we realized (and Jonni knew by experience) the path back to the Ashram would become a scorcher. We made our way into town instead and caught an auto-rickshaw to a shaded rooftop restaurant with fresh pineapple juice. All the senses were filled to overflowing and it was time to just “chill out.”

The next day proved to be one of the most memorable for me. Jonni invited us to accompany her to a talk by V. Ganesan, Ramana Maharshi’s nephew. His cottage is outside of town, surrounded by farms and palm trees. In his message, he was careful to explain this was a “sharing time”. He wasn’t espousing any great truth that we were supposed to wait with baited breath to receive; instead the morning was spent in sharing and communication. His topic was Krishna’s response to Arjuna’s request for a single word to sum up all the verses of the Gita. He explained that the one word Krishna uttered is usually translated into English as “Equal”, but it had nagged him that this didn’t sound like a very spiritual word. He told the story of having an epiphany when he watched his mother carefully trying to keep all his medicine in a teaspoon as she walked across the room. His revelation was that the same Sanskrit word also means “Equilibrium” or balance. Now this is a word with some spiritual punch! And the power of the word equally applies to a teaspoon as it does to a pond, a river, or ocean. At any volume or depth, water will seek its level, its equilibrium or balance point. The lesson is, we should be like the water, always seeking balance whether in the big picture or in minutia.

### Visit to The Temple

On our last day in Tiruvannamalai we went to Arunachaleshvara Temple, an immense temple precinct over a thousand years old near the center of town. Its gateways are marked by tall tapering pylons called *gopuras* that are encrusted with carvings of Hindu deities. Within the precinct there were all sorts of goings on: places to buy souvenirs, some food stands, elephants doing stunts for coins, and worshipers taking meals in various courtyards. When we arrived, everyone was waiting for the innermost temple to open. After 20 minutes the gates finally opened and the throng

### All Paths Lead to God

To him the world was God, and God was equally present everywhere. And he knew that each one took that which was his own; he followed that path, that way, that Guru which he himself was ready for. But that one was welcome, just as welcome, to Papa, as all the rest. He talked about all paths, all faiths, all masters; and they were all expressions of the infinite Beloved. All of us could pattern our lives after him.

He gave me a sense of universality, a knowledge that God was equally present, that His hand was working everywhere. He said to me one time, “You know, when you get up there, you will not know the difference between good and evil.” I am still aware, and yet I am not aware because I see God working in every way, to every expression—even through that which seems to be evil. Because, ultimately, through the sorrow and the suffering it causes, it results in good.

Let us lift our hearts and our minds to God and keep them there. Let us worship Him forever—become One with Him, become One with Him. What bliss, what wonder, what glory it is to be one with the Father!

### We Have All Been Touched by Papa

May God forever bless Papa for all that he has done for all of us! Because there is not one in this room, nor one of those in the world whom he has touched, who has not been influenced in some way—for good and for God. So let us offer up the gratitude of our hearts and our worship to God in him and hold his memory forever sacred. May his blessings be upon us all.

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### HE WOKE ME

How I came to pine for him  
 Is no longer a mystery.  
 I was asleep and He woke me.  
 He threw light on my heart  
 And filled it with love for Him.  
 The story soon ends.  
 He saw me and I saw Him:  
 He drew me to Him  
 As a magnet does a needle.  
 With fiery longing I rushed to Him;  
 I caught Him in my tiny arms  
 And melted into His sweet being.  
 –Swami Ramdas

## Backwater Cruise in Kerala

From My India Journal by Jonni Anderson

Wednesday January 26th, 2005

Greg has arranged for 17 of us from Anandashram to go on a dinner cruise in the backwaters for about 4 hours this evening. Should be great fun! Most of us gathered at Reception and we piled into our bus. The bus then stopped to pick up Shyam, Krishnabai, Ramdas and their daughter Meena. We drove through beautiful backcountry and after about half an hour we reached a dirt trail on the riverbank leading to the boat dock. Moored there was a charming, ancient, flat-deck boat with a living room right behind a steering wheel rising out of the front deck, two bedrooms and bathrooms with western toilets, a shower, and a tiny kitchen at the back. The roof was thatched and had an upper deck reached by some rickety steps on the front deck.



The river is shallow and calm, a granny-apple green. We look out on long, flat boats filled with sand being poled to some unknown site across the river. Some of the boats are so full they seem mere inches above the water.

The riverbanks are shored up with beautiful, even stonework on both banks. A flock of white birds rests on the water, then rises up as if at some private command, revealing their black under-wings. Mesmerizing!



In India I was confronted with THE artifacts of Thomas: a cross he carved into stone with his own hands, the 2000 year old altar painting he brought from Israel of Mother Mary and Baby Jesus, and the spear tip a Brahmin priest thrust into his chest to end the teachings of this heretic to Hinduism. We first visited San Thome Cathedral where Thomas was buried (until being moved to the Vatican) and the adjacent museum, and St. Thomas Mount, a rock outcropping at the edge of the city where Thomas was martyred after fleeing there in hopes of finding sanctuary. Our last visit to Little Mount Caves was on the spur of the moment as we headed out of town toward Sri Ramana Ashram. Here near the Adyar River, Saint Thomas first sought refuge from the Brahmin priests in a large cave. Legend has it he was trapped in the cave as the Brahmins approached, and he escaped by pushing on the back wall of solid rock, which miraculously gave way to provide his escape hatch.

### To Tiruvannamalai and Ramanashram

During the following four-hour drive to Tiruvannamalai I awakened to the importance of our trip. I pondered the past days' experiences. Deep down I now *knew* Jesus walked the earth. That wasn't there before. Our serendipitous quest continued. We arrived at the Ashram at a most auspicious time—afternoon tea! After tea we settled into our accommodations and met up with Jonni Anderson from Hornby Island who had already been in India for the past month. The ashram was beautiful and spotlessly clean with a bevy of mischievous monkeys. I knew nothing of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings and set about to glean as much as I could. We had four days to become quick studies.

The morning after our arrival we took the 2 km trek across Arunachala to experience Skandashram and Virupaksha caves. Bhagavan Ramana meditated and lived at both caves. His



Jenri & Friends at Ramanashram

## A Father - Son Pilgrimage to India

by Greg Hough

Our month-long India trip began in Chennai on the east coast of south India after a trans-Pacific flight and layover in Singapore. From Chennai we traveled by hired car to Tiruvannamalai, the site of Arunachala, a sacred mountain and Sri Ramana Ashram founded by Ramana Maharshi. From Tiruvannamalai we traveled by overnight train to Kanhangad on the west coast and our two-week stay at Anandashram. The final leg was another train trip to Kochi (Cochin) where we departed back across the Pacific via Singapore and Seoul, Korea.

That gives you a sense of our route, but the great joy of the trip was how it unfolded with one pearl of wisdom after another like the prayer beads on a Mala. We were blessed to have David and Carla as guides, and their inspiration brought us to the best places for our spiritual growth. Every day brought new adventures, every destination a new understanding of the path we trod.



Jenri & Greg at Little Mount Caves

### Pilgrimage to St. Thomas' Sites

Our first adventures began right away in Chennai. From the guidebook description and our itinerary, I expected it to be simple: land, do some shopping, and leave. Lucky for us we were under David's wing and we were shown the story of St. Thomas, doubting Thomas, a direct disciple of Christ. Thomas is known to have ministered first on the west then the east coast of India from 54–72 A.D. Growing up a pragmatic protestant in Minnesota (close to Lake Wobegon) it was never important whether you truly believed in the life and miracles of Jesus. If the closest you could come was accepting the Bible as a very well told myth, that was okay so long as you did your best to live by the Golden Rule.

We are served tea on the upper deck; the boat anchored for this ritual; the motor stopped and only the swish against the sides to break the perfect quiet. After tea I join Corliss at the lower side opening to dangle and splash our feet, like children, in the warm water. There are a thousand photo ops, and Carla mans the video camera for posterity.

We continue upstream and eventually anchor at a cement dock. There is a flurry to step ashore, then we all wait while the strong young men and the parents lift Shyam and his wheelchair to the dock. Across the isthmus, and, in glorious living colour, we discover a beach of red/gold sand stretching as far as the eye can see, the magnificent surf crashes up and out as we all catch our breaths and race forward!



We have walked through a tiny strung-out village to reach this seashore. Few people live there but the few we see greet us respectfully. We chat briefly and carry on unaware of the spectacular vision awaiting us at the end of the trail.

The young men bring Shyam to the edge of the sand ridge overlooking the beach but most of us had already run into the water—the men stripping down to shorts or dhotis, the women either paddling the edges or plunging right in fully clothed.

Such joy!

I walk with Corliss along the water's edge picking up shells, (as I always do) and getting wet to mid thighs.

For about an hour we play—running back to take photos where our things rest near Shyam’s wheelchair. I wish that Shyam could experience this bliss; then look up to see that the men have carried him to the water’s edge. He has an exquisite smile on his sweet face as the warm ocean tickles his toes and wets the cuffs of his rolled up trousers.

Later, as the sun turns red and approaches the horizon, and Jenrri has attracted a group of Indian boys all trying to copy his back flips, we all spontaneously string out along the sea-made ridge, hands together as in prayer watching the florescent red sun melt into the Arabian Sea. As the last sliver slips into the ocean a dolphin rises in full breach before our awe-filled eyes.



Applause, last sliver gone now, washes of bliss and gratitude!  
Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram!

We gather our belongings and quietly start back to the boat, there to enjoy the hot, spicy dinner waiting for us aboard.

Under the silvery glow of a huge, full moon, riding home to Anandashram, we are at peace...surely, this is heaven!

Money can buy the husk of many things, but not the kernel. It brings you food but not appetite, medicine but not health, acquaintances but not friends, servants but not faithfulness, days of joy but not peace or happiness.

– Henrik Ibsen

## Abode of Bliss

by Carla G. Hickenbottom

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Anandashram is truly an abode of Bliss!

This is the last day that we are here at the ashram and David and I were going to the office to get access to a computer to send articles for this publication. We happened to arrive just at a time



when Swamiji’s door was open, a thrilling moment for all because that means devotees can go and sit with Swamiji. There were others already in the room and as God continues to bless me every moment, I was privileged to be sitting very close to Swamiji and right in front!

Swamiji started to look at me with his gentle eyes and I felt as though I was looking at the whole universe emanating from this powerful God-man. As he looked at me, I felt my whole being uplifted in God and my back immediately straightened up, feeling this powerful Presence lovingly surrounding me with so much love, so much warmth and tenderness. My heart opened up and so many walls of separation seemed to just softly disappear as I felt Swamiji’s continued loving glance. He smiled ever so sweetly at me and just held me locked in his Bliss.

We were then asked to leave and as we walked out, tears of joy, happiness and so much gratitude poured out of me. I was swimming in an ocean of Bliss and Love. I pronammed to David and thanked him for all that he has done to bring me closer to God.

Anandashram is truly an ABODE OF BLISS!

Jai Mother

Jai Swamiji

Jai David

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram