

# 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

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© 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.

Dear Friends,

When I take a vow before God and Gurus it is a direction of mind-heart-body and Soul that stirs my deepest sense of determination and will.

The greatest vow to God and Guru I have made in my life was at the time of my Kriya Initiation. My vow to practice Kriya regularly and to make realization of God my highest priority brought with it many implications. It meant that I would have to meet and overcome obstacles of ego, habit and dark tendencies.

Gaining the kind of self-mastery that allows me to overcome anything and everything that has kept me from the complete realization of God is no small thing. This path touches every single part of my life. No dark corner can be kept; all parts of me must be transmuted by the Light into Light.

The idea of commitment and loyalty were not well developed in me when I started the path. Through sports I knew it took a strong determination with sacrifice to be able to win, especially the more advanced the sport became. However, I was a neophyte in understanding and implementing the principles of devotion to a spiritual path, loyalty to a teacher and dedication to God in my life. "Do your own thing in your own time" was a famous saying from the 1960s and allowed for almost an *anything goes* kind of attitude. Old *Victorian goes* notions of will, discipline, and loyalty were thought to be outmoded ways of thinking, and I certainly imbibed my share of these agreeable notions.

And then I met Mother, my Guru. Mother was a paragon of will and determination; she was exacting and no-nonsense. She was equally full of fun, loving, understanding and forgiving. She was, in short, the most balanced individual that I have ever met. But, I was not as balanced as she and I was in for many years of striving and learning



in order to be able to manifest whatever is called for in any situation, even as my beloved Guru.

It took me time to realize that with each commitment I made in life I was setting an intention, a vision along with a determination of will to achieve my vision. It took me time and experience to really feel that to be in integrity with my Soul I needed my words and deeds to be in total sync, with no deviation.

The words of the elders of my time, “A man is as good as his word” reflect this maturity of mind. It is not that I was a chronic liar or thief or anything that dark, but I lacked a depth of precision in having a complete integration of body, mind and Soul. I found that as Consciousness grew in me it demanded that exactness of alignment.

There are many ways to not keep your word, not be in alignment with your Soul, to find little escape clauses, either real or imagined, that let you break that integrity. To really delve deeper into finding the place where your body, mind and Soul all meet requires you to be completely honest with yourself as well as with others.

This kind of honesty is not often seen in the world. However, if you take the plunge into this bold, naked analysis you will be richly rewarded. The slippery, illusive mind will seek to skip, slide and hide around this openness to this truth.

Thankfully there is a great truth as Dorteia Brande is quoted to say, *Act boldly and unseen forces will come to your aid.* Act boldly, you will be supported by spiritual forces, kindred spirits, the unseen influence of saints and spiritual Masters; act boldly and you will not fail, for you are stepping out in the faith that God within and without is with you.

You must understand that there are no small or insignificant areas where you can lie to yourself. Any lie, any kept secret (as if any such thing really is a secret) will come between you and your real Self. As Jesus said, *What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.* (Luke 12:3).

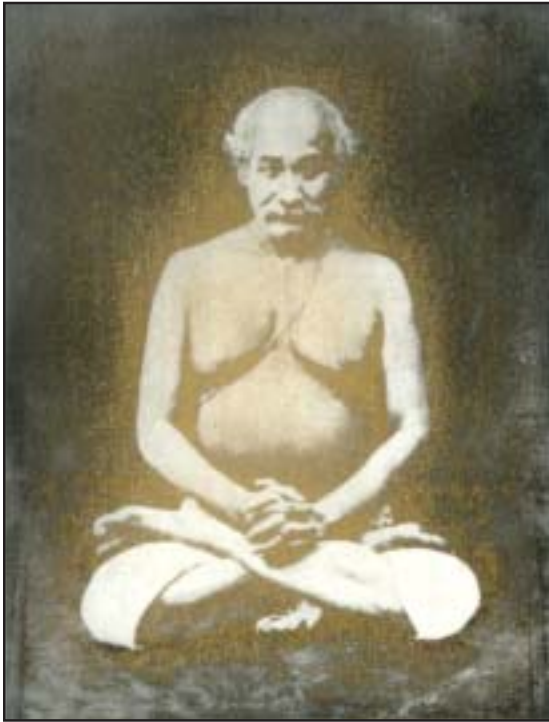
You are God’s own child. Learn to live in the open airs of honesty and integrity; be simple and plain spoken. This does not mean every thought and word needs to be shouted to the world, but live so that

you will feel at peace with who you are, how you act, what you say and decisions you make. Feel that God and the Masters are present with you and you feel right about how you live in their Presence, that you are transparent to that great Light all around you.

Your intention to live as an open book to God is the gateway of truth and spiritual growth that will guarantee you long term happiness and joy. May you closely value and keep this covenant with your Creator; the world will then shine with so many Lights of like-minded aspirants illuminating this world with His Splendor. †

*David*

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This picture has sat on Chad Hickenbottom's altar since his Kriya Initiation some years ago. The beautiful gold coloring has happened naturally with time, a marvelous revelation symbolizing the great Master's purity and spiritual power. How blessed we are to have such a great Master in our lineage. Lahiri Baba once said of his picture, "If you deem it a protection, then it is so; otherwise it is just a picture."



Mother in 1977 in India

## **If there is no evil, then what is the Devil?**

**Excerpt from a talk given by Mother Hamilton  
in Seattle, Washington on October 3, 1973**

Devotee: If there is no evil, then what or who is the Devil?

Mother: Then what or who is the devil—that is a good question isn't it? In India, of course, they have the same trinity as we do. They have Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and this is the Indian trinity. And within the Shiva aspect they have the Rudra aspect and that is the satanic force which tempts and causes you to succumb to temptation.

### **Idea of Separation Leads to Fear**

There is actually no evil in the world because God is equally present everywhere and therefore we can't think of God as being evil. But man in the human state, you see, because of this idea of separation which has been implanted in his mind, is prone to build on that which is adverse. And he builds through his fears, through his lack of many things and through his desire nature which in turn brings punishment upon himself and he thinks of that with fear as something that is not good.

And gradually through the centuries, through all of the thousands of years, man has given power to an adverse force to the degree that he very definitely has complete faith in it. It's obvious. Look at your everyday life. Every single one of us has been prone to do this. We

look at our everyday lives and we see many things that we're constantly afraid of. The satanic force, in effect, is delusive; it cannot—it doesn't have any substance, in truth, except that which we give it through our own fear and through our own acceptance of it. And when we do that, then we give it power and form, and that power over long periods of years has become a mass thing for humanity, so it's a tremendous thing.

### **The Universe Requires an Opposing Force**

Actually, it's an opposing force, but in order to have this universe continue to exist there has to be two forces, just as there are two wires in this lamp—one positive and one negative. And the two working in opposite directions equally furnish the one light in the one bulb.

I was playing a tape which I made in India the last time I was there at this Ashram that I stayed in, in the Himalayas and this great God-man brought up many fascinating subjects. One of the things that he talked about was the fact—and this is a little difficult for the average individual to comprehend in the beginning of their spiritual journey because, in the first place, they shy away from it as something that they wouldn't want personally and again they look at it with fear—but they don't realize that whatever happens in the future will happen in the course of natural evolution one way or another, you see. The story that he told was that there is a savior for each planet: one individual who has been liberated from one planet and is therefore graduated to the point where they can be a savior, a guiding intelligence for a planet. Now for this planet it's called the Christ or the Krishna intelligence or the Buddha if you happen to be a Buddhist. It is that universal spirit; it is that universal power, that universal consciousness which guides it.

At all times this world must be kept in balance, so at any time where the force is going too much one way, then the opposition has to come in and create a little trouble so that it balances itself out. We don't like to think this, you see, and we shy away from it but we only have to look around us and we see that this actually happens. We have wars, we have famines, we have earthquakes; we have disease many times. We have terrific upheavals both in the human sense and

in nature, do we not? So this would seem to bear out what this man said, but it was a very interesting conversation, you know.

### **Work in Harmony with God's Laws**

For instance, you think of yourself and your own development and God-Realization has been held out to you as a supreme goal: your Oneness with God. In the beginning in the Orthodox sense that even isn't held out to you. You must concentrate fully, if you are a Christian, on Jesus the Christ, who is the savior of the world and He has vicariously atoned for all of humanity, it says. But again there is a misconception there because the atonement comes from the savior within yourself. Now there are great teachers, no doubt, who are brought here on a universal basis. This is their destinies and they work out much in their own bodies and in their own lives and this is for all of humanity. And again this is difficult to conceive, but nevertheless it is a fact; it is the truth and there are those who have actually done this. But we who are on the path here need not worry about this, because we will—what we should do, you see, is to stop struggling so hard (and yet this is man's nature to struggle) and just *to be, to become*, to work in harmony with God's law, but not to be fighting it uphill every inch of the way.

### **The Danger of Fear**

We bring so much upon ourselves because our minds are tremendously powerful. Our minds are one with this universal intelligence, this universal power of God which is equally present in every part of creation and so we are taught to think positively. But yet if you think too much positively, there is the danger of building up fear, for fear you would go back into the negative state or that the negative state would overtake the positive and again you'd be in the same position.

We as human beings don't realize how much we live in fear—constantly. To follow the spiritual path is not to give up life, as many seem to think. It is not to wear sack cloths and ashes. It is true that in the Christian Bible, Jesus said to the one young man that he should sell all of his possessions, give up everything and follow Him. But He said that to one individual. So the whole Christian world has taken that as an indication that everybody in the Christian world is supposed to do that. We are all separate cells of His one body, sepa-



rate human beings; each with our **own** destiny to fulfill and we all don't go the same path, nor should we. Nor should we.

### **God's Body is Universal**

God has taken this form. He is the Word which has taken on the word or the spirit which has taken on the form of flesh and He is dwelling among us, is He not? But this is so in each and every one of us. It didn't happen just once, 2000 years ago. This has happened since the beginning of creation and each one of us has the eternal God within us. But we haven't realized that this is the truth, that indeed at this moment we are one with our Father; that we are in fact He. Because you cannot have Him eternal, you cannot have Him infinite; you cannot have Him omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and still constantly divide Him. Although just as everything is divided and yet working in harmony in my one body and in yours, so also is it in God's eternal body, in His universal body. And so each cell, each organ, each circulatory tract, each function of this body, each part of the Infinite Intelligence has its own task to perform, its own destiny to fulfill and it must be guided by that.

### **You Must Reach out for the Higher Truth**

You must fulfill that which is for you to do. Never mind about the rest of the world, because if you become that which **you** are in God all the rest of it in the outside will be taken care of and you will find that you are working in harmony with God's laws, all the way through. We have studied so much claptrap. We've been told so many falsehoods about the way things really are and there is so much to undo before we realize the truth of existence.

Now I had a very interesting conversation tonight which is wonderful but I say that I teach you the truth. I teach you the truth as I have experienced it within myself. Yet the truth I teach you is the truth for every man from the standpoint—and this standpoint alone—that we all have the same type of body, the body of man. As each of us stand up with our arms outstretched and our feet together our bodies are made in the form of a cross. We each have seven spinal centers. We each have a brain. We have a solar plexus. We have all the organs and the male and female are divided on the outside but also they are divided within ourselves and it is this subtle serpent in the field

which the Christian scriptures talk about that creates the division. This is what the Hindus call the Kundalini force—this serpent force. It is an electrical force at the base of the spine. As the spiritual aspirant starts to climb in their spiritual consciousness (as gradually for one reason or another) they reach out for the higher knowledge, the higher truth within themselves.

### **Fourteen Stations or Lokas**

There comes a time when this force which is right under the sacrum in your spine starts to rise and when it does, then it is the consciousness which rises also and it goes through these various spinal centers; in each of which there are two powers: the positive and the negative or two worlds or two stations. Now the Christians call the way of the savior and the crucifixion *The Stations of the Cross*. Now your body is the cross and these seven stations or seven spinal centers multiplied by two make the fourteen stations. The Hindus call them the fourteen lokas or worlds and as this force goes up, the consciousness goes through (or rather the individual soul I should say) goes through these various planes of consciousness.

Now the three lower centers are those centers which keep your mind dwelling on the things of the world, on the things of the senses. The battle of Armageddon which the Hindus call the battle of Kurukshetra is fought at the heart center which is the dividing center between the three lower ones and the three upper ones. And these are the forces, so called, of good and evil or positive and negative, because each of us, whether we be man or a woman, have both the male and female within us.

### **Male and Female**

In the woman, the female or feeling—love, compassion, sympathy, that type of thing—is usually more prevalent than it is in the man. The man usually has logic, and reason, and understanding. He's more practical. This is the value of marriage because one gives to the other. Because gradually over the period of years, through the experiences which come to you in marriage, you develop the opposite side of your nature, and this is one of the big reasons for it. You get balance so that both the female and the male aspect of your body are balanced, so that you have logic and reason and practicality along

with just pure feeling and compassion and sympathy and all the rest of it, so that you come out one whole individual. These forces must be balanced within ourselves in order that we go over the top into the Oneness of God.

### **Music of the Spheres**

In the beginning only spirit existed and then from the one came the two, and we had duality which came into being. And from the two came the three, and from the three came everything else. Came everything else. And the multiplicity of everything that we see in this universe all came this way, you see. Now it is said that the Trinity rests on the four square and this is the four elements of man so in this manifestation that comes forth, there is a tremendous lesson.

In the first place, this relates with music tremendously because this whole universe was created not only spiritually but musically because it was created with sound, with power, you see. And so this power is the word and it is harmony and that harmony goes forth. And then you have the melody. You have the melody—the sound and then comes the action or the motion—the motion and that is the rhythm. That is the rhythm. And when you raise—your consciousness rises to a certain point, you are lifted up and you hear the music of the whole universe. It's called the music of the spheres.

And so this music is going on constantly and you can tell about the balance of man's mind at any given time when you listen to what type of music he is interested in at the moment. We've had some bad years the last ten years I would say. Really. Also this proceeds to art form and then these three are again developed into will and to wisdom and into action. So this is the whole hierarchy of the universe and it is said that the fire and air signs are the major notes and that the earth and the water are minor. I'm born under Capricorn, if there is anything to astrology and so I am an earth sign and always whenever God gives me anything or I sit down and play at the piano, or music that I listen to, I like minor music. It's as simple as that. I just gravitate to it naturally. There are reasons for everything, you see, and they're all scientific.

### **Going Beyond Orthodoxy**

Now those in the Orthodox faith that are still in that grade of school

have their consciousness pinned on the Savior, the one individual that has a body, is a person. But gradually as the consciousness expands, you see that God is equally present everywhere in every religion, in every single form that walks this earth and that all of it is good. All of it is good. And even the suffering is good because without it you will not grow. Even the so-called evil that comes is good. Now that seems to be a strange statement to make but nevertheless it is a fact because it is all working toward an ultimate purification and that purification must come. When people do things wrong, when they commit what we call sins in our Orthodox terminology, they punish themselves.

They have not worked in harmony with God's law with the beautiful music of life. They have created inharmony [sic] and there've been some sour notes and because of that they've created this wrong vibration. And that wrong vibration sets up a howl and it screams, and when it does then disorder happens. It's all very scientific. It's all very scientific and it's all very fascinating when you get into it. And when you realize, actually, that the Savior that is being spoken of in all the scriptures of the world—whether it be Krishna, whether it be Buddha, whether it be Christ—that they're speaking of this eternal spiritual Principle which is within each and every one of us.

And it is that Savior which must go the way of the cross (which is your body), must climb these fourteen Stations of your Cross (by whatever name you want to call them) to the hill of Golgotha (which is the hill of the skull). That's the meaning of it—it is in the Christian Bible dictionary—it is the hill of the skull. The crucifixion takes place at the sixth center or the Christ center as it is called. And so when Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life," he meant He was the eternal life principle. He was also the way. He was the truth, but in order to get to the Father, the Oneness of Spirit, you had to go through that state of consciousness, that state of being in order to go beyond **all** of duality and become one with God: who is your Self.

### **From the Anti Christ to Realization**

Now we strive and we have many mental concepts. We go through many, many experiences. Sometimes we get very prideful on the way up and there are other times when we berate ourselves and we feel

that we're not making any progress at all. And in both cases this is this human ego, this self which really is the anti-Christ within every individual which is trying to keep you from the realization of who and what you are in God. Now we have to use words to express these things and yet God in the sense of Spirit is beyond all words, all description. We think all of these things, we go into very profound spells and periods of thinking and we try to reason; we try to use logic; we use our judgment; we use our intellect. But if you're really going to come to the point where you really know (and not just mentally, not just through the things of the senses but through actual experience and realization what it means) you have to go beyond the mind.

That is why we have different methods of concentration and it is more than the prayer that we are taught in the Orthodox faith. Many of these prayers have been given to us—Jesus gave us **one** prayer as an example and you pray thusly. But the prayer of the heart, each individual heart, is the great prayer which God listens to. And when the time comes when you pray outwardly to the point where all of a sudden you find that your voice has stopped and you go inside and you hear this prayer repeated inside of yourself, it's a tremendous experience. And then you go beyond that. All of a sudden even the inward prayer ceases. You'll go beyond into the silence of your own soul and you realize in truth who and what you are. It's a tremendous experience.

### **The Savior Within You**

I can't give you God-Realization. I can't tell you. I can't give you truth. I speak the truth from my own realization but you must take the methods, the techniques. You must look at the way. You must pick up your **own** cross which is your **own** body and follow your **own** Savior if you would become the disciple of Christ who dwells **within you**. Did he not say "Lo, I am with you always?" "Lo, I am with you always." That was a promise. But He has always been with us. Always. But He knew even when He asked God, "Father, if it be thy will, take this cup from my lips, but it was but for this hour that I came." He knew as man; he was born the son of man. He was the Savior of man that he, the human, must die in order that the divine, the Christ within Him be born.

And this is the way it is with every single one of us without exception. It is said that God-Realization is the pearl of great price. That doesn't mean that anybody gets it for a gift. Many things come to us as a result of the Grace of God. We are lifted up—I have myself experienced this many times and I have said, “Why me Lord?”—but it has happened and I've been lifted up. Perhaps I had earned it, I don't know. But to me it was God's grace because I hadn't done all that I thought was necessary to give me this tremendous experience in God. I didn't know about this at all. I had never heard of the things which I experienced. I had never heard of the things which God told me. And He said—He would put me through these experiences and then He would say to me. “You see, let Me take you to the Bible. What you have just experienced is what it really means.”

### **This is the Truth**

This is the truth and it is the truth for every man, but each one will experience it in his own way. He will go through different things but yet the central truth, the central experience (because it happens in the body and in the consciousness, in the spine of man) is the same and it is the truth for every man the world over. There is no difference regardless of your religious faith because when you come to that point where you are ready to surrender yourself and everything you are, everything you have at the feet of God—and that takes some doing. There are many who profess to be Christians. There are many who profess to be Buddhists or Hindus or whatever the case might be, but when you ask them, “Are you willing—for instance in the Christian world—to pick up your cross and follow the Christ, even unto death?” How many takers do you have? Very few indeed. They will go up to a point and they will be afraid to jump into the ocean, and that is the truth and you know it and I know it. †

*Thanks to Treva Koler for transcribing this talk.*

Hill after hill was climbed and now...  
Behold, the last tremendous brow.  
And the great rock that none has trod...  
A step, and now is all and God....  
- Sri Aurobindo

## Meditation and the Marketplace

by Peter Schultz

I woke up this morning very troubled—the markets haven't been cooperating and many of our recommended trades have gone the opposite way I had thought. This always causes some inner turmoil because I feel a great obligation to those who follow my advice. So it was with a heavy heart that I tugged myself out of bed this morning—this is unusual for a guy that usually springs to life in the early hours.



As always I know that God is my comfort and solace in every situation but sometimes that contact can be elusive—fortunately that was not the case this morning. I started off about five a.m. and God was there with me from the outset—He is with me still as I write this. Heaviness and worry quickly dissipated in His Infinite Light—His comforting spirit moved throughout me and made me know there is nothing to fear. There is only love and grace surrounding us every moment—it is my vow, my desire, my want, my life's ambition, to realize it every moment. There is nothing greater, more soothing, more uplifting, more gratifying, than His touch.

It was in this state that I sent out an email to all our subscribers this morning conveying that yes the markets can be like a stormy sea but nothing seems to stay for long and that soon things would most likely turn back our way. In a sense what I was really doing was conveying the same peace God blessed me with to them.

I often think about the 'ideal' situation. How would I want my life to look if I could have everything I desired? Where would I live, what would my house look like, how much money would I have, what would I fill my days with—and then all of a sudden God touches me and I realize none of it matters—all that matters is that I am with Him and THAT is the ideal situation. THAT is paradise and it is a thing to be aspired to and gotten at whatever cost. †

# MEDITATION

By Paramhansa Yogananda

*[From a Lecture given on Aug. 4, 1932]*

The voice of quietness is the voice of God; just as you hear the airplane sound, so is the Om Sound. First you feel it in your consciousness and then in the highest.

We have been discussing the essence of the Vedas; chants; the difference between loud chanting and whispered chanting; the mental and the superconscious chant. Chanting is an imitation of a vibration. But the human voice can only utter sound up to nine octaves. Human vibration is limited to the audible sounds that we hear. So, we must remember that chanting only is limited to certain vibrations of thought.

As I said before, every thought has a sound. Whenever we think anything, we think the sound of the thoughts as well as the meaning of the thought. Word means sound and thought. The highest sound and the highest vibrations are not recognized in our own consciousness, or cannot be expressed through words.

Then the question comes, how are you going to chant the indescribable? When you say, "God, God, God, God" we only give to that sound the connotation of our thought. So chanting a thought produces a sound. Ordinary chanting is based on imagination, concentration and vibration. In loud chanting you see people who are sending motion vibrations as well as thought. If your thought is increasing in depth it is fine. You must feel what you are saying and increase that feeling until thought about a certain word and the vibration of the word become one and are let loose in the ether, potent with the vibrations of thought and sound. But that is not superconscious chanting. This kind of chanting which can be expressed through your voice is divided into three parts—loud, slowly or whisperingly, or you can do it mentally. But the superconscious chanting means repeatedly, mentally listening to the actual sounds that are going on in the ether, which is not audible to the physical ear. That is superconscious chanting.

The ideal of chanting is first loud in a congregation, whisperingly if you are alone (or mentally), until your thought like a plummet goes



deeper and deeper and touches the bottom of perception; when your thought and sound become one with the feeling of the chant.

But the superconscious chanting is this: Everything has a sound. Just like the sounds of the body. You cannot hear these sounds, but close your ears and you hear them. Close your ears and dive beyond the sounds of the vibrating body and you hear the sounds coming from the cosmos. That is real chanting. That is not based on imagination. That is based on the real sound. Your mind isn't creating the sound and the thought, but the mind is repeatedly listening to the sound and the thought.

Each plexus of the body has a sound. If you concentrate on the Coccyx you will have the vibration of the earth, and your thoughts will harmonize with that sound. It has the sound of the bumblebee. If you can stay in the superconscious and hear the sound of the bumblebee, that is superconscious chanting. Or, if you can get away from the individual sounds of the plexuses and listen to the Om sound, that is real chanting. When your consciousness doesn't have to imagine, but actually listens to the real sound. So, the ideal of all chants, from the standpoint of self-realization is to feel what you are chanting. Learn to chant loud, and then whisperingly and then mentally. Individually it is best to whisper or mentally chant. If you want to practice the superconscious chant, you must practice the Fifth lesson.

The original writers of the Vedas say that "Om should not be uttered by the Shudras." Shudras comes from the word Shuyata which means "to doubt." Those who doubt the existence of Spirit. They are also Kayastha. Those who have their mind on the body are called Kayasthe. Those whose mind was on the body couldn't chant the sound of Om; that is, those who think of the body cannot say Om or feel Om.

When you hear the Om, at the same time as you are chanting Om, that is the real way to chant. The Om should not be uttered by word of mouth. Om is the sound of all sounds. Your ear can hear only certain sounds. Om is a combination of all sounds—it is the universal sound. Just like when you are near the ocean, you hear the sound of all the waves. You cannot hear all the different sounds of the waves. So, this earth is the ocean and this Om sound is coming from all creation.

All the planets and everything are making a tremendous sound. If the little airplane makes such a tremendous noise, think what sound must be emanating from the earth! But we don't hear that sound because our ears are limited. There is a tremendous roar going on in the earth. And a sound that is a conglomeration of all sounds, constitutes the Om.

The Om sound isn't a simple matter. The Om sound, when you hear it, that is the sound of all the waves of this ocean of universe. When you hear it, you spread your omnipresence over all space. You expand your consciousness and become one with that sound. The word "Amen" comes from this Om sound. Amen is a mispronunciation of the sound of Om. Amen is the "faithful witness of creation (motion)."

How do you know the sound of Om is going on? By creation. How do you know there is creation? By the sound of Om. Om is the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end of creation. When you hear Om your consciousness vibrates with the sound of Om everywhere. The Shan Veda and the chanting [have] a great meaning. It means to lead you gradually. First concentrate on the thought of the vibration and then gradually to lead away from the thoughts of the vibration, to the vibration itself, and thus feel it.

All those bell[s] and other things that are used in the temples are symbols of the astral sounds. So, we must take the self-realization of the chanting. The goal of chanting is to fix the consciousness on the real sounds that can be heard in the superconscious. When you listen to the real Om, you un-cage your consciousness to the real sound and not an imaginary sound that you are producing. The idea of chanting is to take the consciousness away from the conscious to the superconsciousness. The true sound of Om is like a great gong bell—a continuous sound flowing like oil out of a barrel. It cannot be uttered by word of mouth. "He who knows, knows it and he who knows it begins to know everything."

And so, we want chanting to express a thought behind the Om and [then] gradually to listen to the real sound. All sounds represent thought and all thoughts can be expressed in sounds. All those thoughts that cannot be represented in sounds, they have their real meaning in the astral.

All thoughts appear as music in the astral world. That is how the disembodied souls know one another—by the sound. And language is music. Music is the language of God. That is why, when God comes, He talks through Om. Om projects vibrations which we hear as a sound. Being in tune with the cosmic sound one can understand all languages because all languages come from that sound. It is nothing new.

Often times I get words from other languages I never knew, through this sound. Lots of English words come through that sound to me. My language was entirely nothing. My English language is naturally very broken, but when I am in tune with that sound, my language is fluent and clear. I never studied English grammar.

**Let my voice be Thy voice; use my voice as Thy voice; use my speech as Thy speech; use my hands as Thy hands; walk through my feet and talk through my heart with Thy love; Heavenly Father, see through my eyes, hear through my ears, taste through my mouth, enjoy the fragrance of the rose through me; taste through me. Father, use my voice as Thy voice, talk through me. Heavenly Father, use my hands as Thy hands, walk through my feet, feel through my heart, work through my hands, feel through my feelings, think through my thoughts. Work through my will, intuit through my intuition. Let Thy peace flow through my peace; let my joy be Thy joy. Let my bliss be Thy bliss; let Thy wisdom flow through my wisdom; let my body be Thy body; let Thy life throb in my life.**

So you see, we have learned how the students of Jesus were talking in diverse tongues. It is because of the sound of Om. I started out from India without giving a single speech in English. On the steamer as I came across they asked me to talk. I couldn't speak English. I gave it up and was waiting for the sacrifice in the evening when I was to deliver my message. All I prayed was that God would speak through me. But that evening when they introduced me, I couldn't speak. I stood for 10 minutes and they began to laugh. I was trying to listen to the Om, but I was so confused. I remembered that the Om had all the vibrations and words—within it and I thought of my Mas-

ter and Om. Just as I heard it, the words of my Master said to me, “You can.” And I spoke. For one hour. And they were magnetized by my speech. They said, “We never heard such words.” And that they felt God was speaking through me.

Then I got courage to speak again. And in the Congress of Religions I forgot in the middle of the lecture. And the audience laughed at me. But I resumed the lecture and gave them something they never forgot. (One man happened to specially come to hear me and that is why I lost the connection, because I had thought more of him than of what I was saying.) Every teacher must know the laws of vibration—how to speak through the Holy Ghost. I know the audience is mine when I speak through the Holy Ghost. Teachers must be like that. Don’t try to see who is criticizing; just feel and speak. Let the Holy Ghost fall upon you.

When Gandhi spoke in the Congress in England, everything shook with vibration. His voice is weak but He was filled with the Holy Ghost. That is the kind of prayer and vibration you should have—not mockery.

So, the law of chanting has been greatly abused, but when you know how to chant and hear the Om then it is different, Make it more mental than physical. Chanting has great self-realization because vibration and word is the beginning of everything, and the Vedas and Buddhists and Tantras all use it. The Tantras try to find out the astral seeds of vibration. All those that want to teach, I want them to teach through the Infinite and not through the memory of books. So, feel and meditate that you may be one with the Spirit and the Spirit of God may be with you, when you are lecturing. That the Spirit of God may be with you within and without, He is the ocean of thought without end, the ocean of thought within you. †

Who is wise? He who learns from every person... Who is mighty? He who conquers his own passions.... Who is rich? He who rejoices in his portion.

Rabbi Ben Zoma

[From Pirkey Avot (Sayings of the Fathers), The Talmud]

## Gentle Flows the Perennial Grace

By Chandra Kesavan

In the pleasant afternoon of February 1995, I am watching the play of warm sunshine and cool breeze on the dancing leaves of the trees through the windows of the Swamiji's room, while listening to the deeply resonating voice. The Swamiji whom I met this morning is reading from a book of Swami Ramdas in English to the assembled devotees. He coughs, pauses and continues the reading. He reads each paragraph twice with total unconcern for the cough and discomfort. I keep wondering if this is the voice of Grace, attempting to break



down the unyielding outer crust of the mind to gain access to the inner reaches and awaken the slumbering soul. The thought of such a compassion makes my eyes misty with gratitude. The voice pours into me like a soothing warm liquid. As I close my eyes, inner noise slows down and peace takes over.

This morning as I got down from the auto-rickshaw, my companion said pointing to a tall, but unassuming figure in orange clothes leaning against a small platform, "Here is Swamiji." My mind, immediately, jumped to associate ochre clothes with orthodoxy and its confines. I mused if the Swamiji was just an orthodox ascetic or a Self-Realized soul but suddenly some gentle force from within cut off the thought unceremoniously and I felt thoroughly chastened. At night, the soul-stirring Arati song transports me to the deeper realms of the mind and gives a taste of sweet surrender. The grand finale is reached

when I feel the heart falling in one heap at the Beloved Lord's Feet in tune with "Narayanayeti Samarpayami."

Reluctantly, I surface from the irresistible spell of the Arati hour. Again the magical hour draws me into its fold next morning at the Flower Offering. At this time, there is neither any song nor musical accompaniment except a slow prosaic repetition of "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Ram;" yet the mysterious enchantment persists! I feel as light as a feather and the heart becomes a songbird as I carry the smiling flowers to place at the Lotus Feet of the Divine Pair. I resolve to seek a holy alliance in the Abode of Bliss. In earnest supplication, I beg all-merciful Papa and Mataji for admittance into Their sacred Homestead.

Well, the journey has taken me from the brief honeymoon to a not-so-magical world of Sadhana and its travails. In the first meeting which I sought with Pujya Swamiji, he said, "Look upon everything in the world as Papa Himself. Take everything as happening only by His will and surrender to it." Though these words themselves did not set my mind at rest, the solicitude with which he listened to my difficulties and the caring way in which He spoke touched me deeply.

In July 1996, I eagerly set out for my first Guru Poornima in the Ashram. In my eagerness, I chose to ignore the warning signals of a discomfort in the stomach and chest. As the train gathered speed, the pain and the burning sensation in the chest intensified. On the way, I had to seek assistance from railway doctors at three stations, fearing it could be angina pain. Strangely, each time, minutes before reaching the station, my pain would subside and I would decide to continue my journey, against the medical advice proffered to discontinue the journey.

Before reaching Salem, the ticket examiner who had been watching me curled up in knots with the misery of pain asked if I would like to detrain and get into the hospital. Before I could acquiesce, the pain subsided. In Salem, though my blood pressure and pulse rate were found to be normal, the doctors suggested hospitalization and an ECG test. I knew that I would feel not only sore disappointment, but inconsolable remorse to have missed the auspicious occasion next day in the Ashram, if tests happened to certify me physically fit.

As the Master Player was not done with His fun, He made me decide to continue the journey. The doctors warned me that they would not be responsible if anything happened to me on the way.

An hour or two after the train left Salem and the destination was about 8 hours ahead of me, I started going through the worst nightmare of my life, writhing in agony and pain. At midnight, the ticket examiner summoned a traveling doctor who gave a pill which lulled me into sleep for three-quarters of an hour. The relapse of excruciating pain in the chest felt like being branded with a red hot iron. I was almost insane with pain. I could not even groan loudly as I had spurned the advice of co-passengers and the railway staff to get hospitalized. Finally, I told the ticket examiner that I would like to be hospitalized at the next station which was either Calicut or Tellicherry. Now, it was his turn to discourage it, as he felt that there would be little of chance of getting medical help or reaching a hospital in that town at that hour of the night! He strongly advised me to grit and bear the pain till I reached Kanhangad!! The resilience and stamina of the physical body to take so much pain without slipping into unconsciousness is a great amazement. How I managed to spend the night without running amuck in the coach is still a wonder to me.

The rest of the story of how I reached the Ashram at the dawn of the Occasion as Beloved Swamiji was coming down the steps on his way from Bhajan Hall to Homa Mandir and how I was cocooned in the loving care of the wonderful devotees for the next two weeks is a legend. In retrospect, I dare say that it is worth going through any kind of hell just to become the recipient of so much loving care and concern in the Ashram. Love and service dance in joyful bubbles in each pore of the resident devotees. The best place to fall ill on this earth is Anandashram! As I write this account, the distinction between the Resident Divinities, Anandashram and the resident devotees blurs and blends into one resplendent light of Love. Words fail my tongue and tears well up in my eyes at any attempt to verbalize the shower of love that I was so blessed to receive from the Ashramites. No words could ever measure the depth of love one experiences in sickness and health in Anandashram! My earnest appeal to love-incarnate Papa Mataji Swamiji is to deign to transform me—a rusted

piece of iron—into a beautiful swan of love and service like the devotee friends who stood constant vigil over me by turns at the hospital.

On my subsequent visits to the Ashram, I bring my difficulties in Sadhana to Beloved Swamiji. As the very first and foremost step in Sadhana, he tells me to repeat the holy Ram Nam. As we go on repeating the Mantra even while attending to our daily tasks, distractions of the mind will gradually come down and one will gain concentration in due course. He gently points out that we need to practice it with patience. If we can apply 15 years of efforts, energy and other resources to get a degree from a college, doesn't the highest goal of life merit a fraction of such diligence and patience? The logic appeals to the novice that I am, yet I cling to the problem of restoring some semblance of sanity and order to the chaotic and scattered mind. Swamiji addresses me in gentler tones with all the patience of Mother Earth, "You must see everything, any wandering or agitation of the mind, as Papa Himself as He is all-pervading." I intercept, "But Swamiji, this would be only an intellectual exercise to me." With the light of Love shining in his eyes, he leans forward and addresses the small crowd of eager devotees who are edging closer to hear the words, "As you continue with the practice of identifying everything with Papa, the Lord of the Universe, you will gradually come to realize the Truth of it." I intuitively feel that the small assembly, just like me, repose their faith and hope more in the Grace of words.

The Sadhana of self-examination becomes increasingly uncomfortable, shredding my fragile peace into pieces as the wheel of discipline-guilt-remorse revolves faster. When I ask Swamiji how to escape the onslaught of such negative forces, he offers the palliative of Ram Nam repetition with earnest prayers to Papa to give me strength to combat these forces. He adds, "As one goes on repeating Ram Nam, the Vasanas of desires lose their stronghold. The weakening of desires makes room for sprouting of faith and devotion in the heart. When you try in right earnest to avoid the mistakes and still you repeat it, then take Papa to task." After a pause, he continues, "You have to weep and remonstrate before Him any number of times before He listens to you." I stare at him speechlessly! Will my Sadhana



ever take on such a one-pointed and intense course? Now he has subtly turned my attention to the integrity of my commitment to the quest. I must confess that in the ensuing scrutiny I do not fare well.

Swamiji's responses to our questions and problems are always marked by simplicity, frugality of words and lucidity. Yet if he sees a lingering doubt on our face seeking assurance, he goes to great lengths to elaborate on the point. Swamiji never deigns to preach or advise, but if we approach him of our own free will, blessed we become to bask in the sunshine of his genuine concern, sagely wisdom and Divine protection. His supreme detachment on the one hand and the promptness with which he reaches out to those in need of whatever kind on the other, cannot co-exist in ordinary mortals. When he interacts with guileless and spontaneous people, his eyes shine like the twinkling stars and a playful smile adorns his face. If you just happen to be on the scene, you feel wistful about your lost innocence and spontaneity of childhood. He seems discomfited in the face of adoration and public attention, when such sentiments and gestures are invariably showered on him on special occasions.

No censure passes his lips for lack of efforts or indifferent practices, but 'unsadhaka-like' attitude incurs his displeasure. Dealing with the attitude of a devotee who could not adjust to some inconvenience in the Ashram, he strongly suggests that the concerned person should stop visiting the Ashram in future and states that willingness to adjust to any inconvenience is part of one's Sadhana. Even one look or a word of censure, which is expressed usually after allowing a long tether of freedom, produces a devastating effect.

The silence that Swamiji often sports, exerts a wholesome influence on the incessant chatter of the mind and instills a quietness. In his presence, one receives an inward impetus and the quality of concentrative power improves. The repetition of the Mantra is less labored and more focused. In his presence, I seek to renew my hope to balance my stumbling efforts. Signs of vanity or pride meet with cool indifference and majestic silence. The ego is fearful of raising its hood before such an august Silence. Responding to a question about developing inner humility, the uncompromising injunction made was, "one should become dust at everybody's feet." Such crisp answers

call for lifetime(s) of Sadhana! When a fellow devotee expressed fears of failing in the tests of the Guru, he pronounced that if there are no expectations or desires in the mind of a Sadhaka, he will not be affected by anything. The fear of tests by the Guru and the consequent failing or passing of the tests do not arise in the case of such a Sadhaka. No trace of fear exists in one whose ego is totally eschewed.

By personifying gentleness, austerity in speech, silence, immense patience, humility, perfect detachment and equipoise, Swamiji exemplifies the inner qualities that a sincere seeker should imbibe. All this makes such an endearing appeal that one surely wishes to carry back some scraps of these inner treasures.

Swamiji says, “The Sadhana of a true Sadhaka is not confined only to a few hours in a day; he or she is a Sadhaka for all the 24 hours of the day.” To tread such a path is quite daunting. In the face of such an austerity of mind required to monitor each thought, word and action every moment, all my facile attempts and words are just a pretence of Sadhana. How does one work through the maze of desires, anger, lack of discipline, jealousy and laziness and arrive at the lofty heights



Drawing by Lakshmi of Anandashram

of constant awareness? It may be that I am just sitting on the riverbank, watching the colors, moods and current of the Perennial Flow, as I lack the purpose and energy to let myself into the River and glide along the cool, refreshing waters. It is for the Good Shepherd to train the truant sheep to answer His whistle and thus draw it unto Him! †

[Chandra is an Anandashram inmate.]

## In His Presence

By Cate Koler

When you make a pilgrimage you usually expect hardships, tremendous obstacles and grueling trials. I have just made a pilgrimage to see Swami Satchidananda in Hyderabad, India but God in His mercy made the journey surprisingly smooth. I was so aware of His Presence always with me that the amazingly few



Swamiji in January, 2006

bodily complaints I had were insignificant and easily borne.

Two years before I had been privileged to spend four months at Anandashram under the guidance of Swami Satchidanandaji. During this time he was strong enough to give almost daily talks during morning satsang, to take two walks per day around the ashram grounds (often giving an impromptu talk during the evening walk) and one or two additional darshans. I also had several precious private sessions with him. His presence, teachings and encouragement had given me the spiritual boost I had been looking for and I went home renewed.

On this trip, I spent the first three of my seven weeks in Anandashram. But Swamiji was still in Hyderabad, where he'd been for two months, staying with devotees and receiving physiotherapy for stroke-related physical challenges. I tried to settle down to focusing on my sadhana—in particular purifying my mind and heart through the practice of repeating the Ram Nam mantra. But I missed

Swamiji so much—to see him again had been the main reason I had come to India. Everywhere I walked in the ashram evoked a memory of walking behind him; the Centenary Hall and the Ramana building reminded me of darshan with him. It seemed like every day devotees would hear something different—*he is coming back soon, he is not coming*. I knew that God had His reasons for having me in this situation but my heart was experiencing emotional upheavals and an intense longing.

Finally I felt the inner direction so acutely that I knew I must immediately leave for Hyderabad to see him. Such was my determination that I would brook no opposition. Swamiji was at that time very unwell and was not allowed to see anyone but doctors, nurses and attendants. Yet I knew I must go. “If Papa is prompting you so strongly you may come,” I was told. “But you might not be able to see him.” I took a bus that very day.

By the time I reached Hyderabad Swamiji had recovered greatly from that set-back and I was able to be admitted to his room shortly after my arrival. I spent four blissful days there, seeing him three or four times a day. Swamiji’s body has been greatly diminished in strength since I saw him two years ago; he is still physically challenged from the stroke and cannot walk or use his right hand very much. He experiences occasional angina pain and almost daily pain from leg cramps/spasms that keep him awake most of the night. Yet what spiritual power radiates from his eyes! What love embraces you when he smiles!

Swamiji is so surrendered to his great guru, Papa, and to God’s will that he has stayed in the body in spite of the suffering he undergoes each and every day. He has remained here out of love for the devotees and each one who comes before him is given exactly what help he needs—whether for material, emotional or spiritual problems. And who can know what important work he is doing on the non-physical plane for this troubled world?

In a conversation with him, in which he referred to something that had taken place two years before, I again had the distinct feeling that I was a conduit for the love he was sending to our whole spiritual group. Papa had been so instrumental to Mother’s spiritual develop-



Cate's Second Last Day with Swamiji (Feb.20, 2006)

ment and it seemed that Swamiji had taken on an important role for Mother's disciples. Whether or not they have been to India, all of Mother's children are a special part of the Anandashram family and under the care and protection of the saints there.

I returned to Anandashram feeling "full" and able to wholeheartedly engage in the program there. God also blessed me with a second trip to Hyderabad for Swamiji's darshan before my return home.

How fortunate we are—that Mother arranged that both Swamiji and David love and guide us on our inner pilgrimage back to Him! †

***Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram.***

The world is so small and time is running so fast that we have no time to hold a grudge against anyone.

Swami Satchidananda, February 20, 2006



David with Christine Baldigara and Andrew Schmidt at the gravesite ceremony for Mother's Mahasamadhi Day - January 31, 2006.

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Pictured here is Shyam in his new wheelchair. Thank you to all those who helped make this possible through your contributions. And a special thank you to Jonni Anderson who took the lead in finding the right chair and arranging for its delivery from New York to the Ashram in South India. You may notice the beautiful look on Shyam's face, a reflection of a wonderful soul.





In the Canteen at Anandashram, Mother's picture is garlanded in honor of her Mahasamadhi Day, January 31, 2006.

### Calendar of Events

March	1	Ash Wednesday
	7	Paramhansa Yogananda's Mahasamadhi (1952)
	9	Sri Yukteswar's Mahasamadhi (1936)
	20	Spring Equinox (10:23 a.m. PST)
April	13	Swami Ramdas' Birthday (Hindu Calendar) (1884)
		Hanuman's Birthday
	16	Easter (Sunrise: 7:19 a.m. PDT)
May	10	Swami Sri Yukteswar's Birthday
	14	Mother's Day
	15	75th Anniversary of Anandashram
	29	Memorial Day
June	18	Father's Day
	21	Summer Solstice (5:27 a.m. PDT)

I live in the natural flow of balance and abundance. I am fed from hidden Sources of Spiritual Springs; Living Waters fill me with grace, inner assurance and comfort. Oh Infinite Source of warming, embracing love, no one compares to Thee! No earthly lover or experience can give to me so completely. In vain have I looked outside of me for what has always been residing within. Oh Infinite Wonder, show me in constantly unfolding ways how you care for and embrace this child of Your Heart.

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

The voice of quietness is the voice of God; just as you hear the airplane sound, so is the Om Sound. First you feel it in your consciousness and then in the highest.

*Paramhansa Yogananda*

God-vision is nothing but to realize and feel His presence within yourself and everywhere about you, because God is an all-prevailing spirit, permeating the entire universe.

Swami Ramdas



Arati Light in the Bhajan Hall at Anandashram