

The Cross and The Lotus Journal



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



Mother Hamilton with Michael Downey (1976)

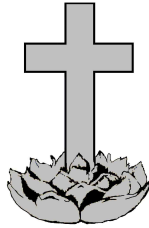


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The cross and lotus symbolizes the unity between East and West. The lotus is the sign of illumined consciousness, the thousand petal lotus of the crown chakra. The cross is the symbol of the body surrendered to the will of God. Following the way of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

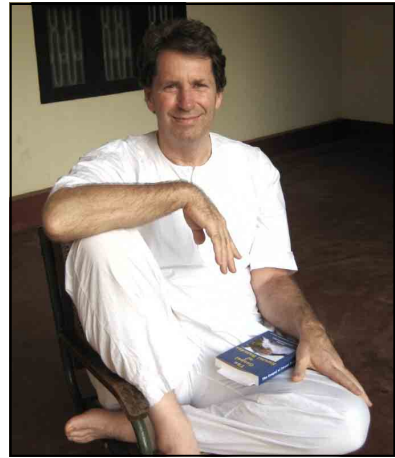
© 2008 The Cross and The Lotus Publishing is dedicated to the publication of materials that promote God-realization. Our spiritual lineage begins with Jesus Christ and Babaji and flows down to us through Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, Paramhansa Yogananda and Yogacharya Mother Hamilton.

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.

My dear friends,

This is a time of enormous change in the world. There are wars and rumors of wars, powerful earthquakes; every time we listen to the news there seems to be some catastrophe or looming problem. In the course of human events there have been many times of great strife and suffering; this is certainly a time of tremendous stress worldwide.



Upon hearing all of this turmoil one can start to feel fear for oneself, one's family, nation or the world as a whole. All of us are participants upon this world stage and it is my firm belief that we are each here for a purpose—for profound reasons that are both relevant and transcendent to the circumstances of the day. The question then becomes, “How do I interact with this world, many times with situations outside my control?”

The challenge for the spiritual aspirant is to learn how to follow the teachings of the great Galilean Master, *to be in the world, but not of it*. And as Krishna said, *as long as you breathe and eat, you are in this world and you must act; therefore act in the full consciousness that you are My instrument, without attachment*. Masters of both East and West instruct us in the same principle.

To embody this lofty principle is not easy when we are a part of and witness to such shocking pictures of suffering people and a suffering earth. Some react by becoming fearful, some angry, and some try to just hide from it all; it is easy to feel that it is all too much. One hundred thousand die in Myanmar (Burma) from a storm, eighty thousand in China from an earthquake, and those who survive, how they must suffer! How does one take in these events and more?

The human heart is limited; however Divine compassion is all-encompassing. And this is the key to being in the world and

not of it. The little bounds of the human heart must be transcended in order to feel God's love and compassion large enough for all creation.

Most of us start with a very small circle of concern. Life begins with, "What makes me feel comfortable, safe and loved?" In normal development this circle gradually expands to family, friends, intimate loved ones, children etc. In some cases love and compassion continues to grow, encompassing one's community, country, people around the world and finally all creation. This growing circle requires a transcendent view beyond only individual concerns.

When many are faced with calamities in the world their instinct is to withdraw into smaller shells of consciousness for security. For the spiritual aspirant however, feeling God's love for all creation is held out as the ultimate form of compassion. Therefore growth in compassion is growth in God-consciousness.

To be aware of your identity with the all-pervading consciousness of God means to allow your heart to be an instrument of Divine love. Divine love is all-inclusive and does not hold anyone outside of its circle. When Jesus was speaking to his disciples he posed a challenge to them: to love those who love you is no great thing, anyone will feel that, but, to love those who are outside your normal group, even extending love to those who scorn you, abuse you, misuse you—now that is something to aspire for and this kind of loving is how you will be known to be his disciples.

Yet, how are we to love in this way? You must feel that it is God who is loving and compassionate through you. When you are aware of a tragedy in the world, let your heart go out in love and compassion and feel that God is moving through your own heart. When you are part of a difficult situation, open yourself for how God is directing you to act. Take time to look behind the mask that different actors in His play are wearing and see that it is the Divine life that inhabits each one. Acknowledge that behind the mask, no matter how unlovely, there is a Soul made in

the image and likeness of God who is working to reveal its identity through the mask. Be willing to serve God within that person in whatever ways you are called upon.

One night as I was leaving the church where Mother was speaking I heard a loud argument going on across the street. A man was yelling at a woman. I started to walk in their direction and as he was raising a hand up to apparently hit her I yelled out, "May I help you?" The man stopped his hand, looked, saw me in the middle of the road and others who were in front of the church looking. He lowered his hand and said, "No." They proceeded indoors; I felt that I had done as much as I could in the circumstances. I prayed, and pray now, that these two find peace and understanding.

When you act without attachment you feel a steady flow of Divine love flowing through you; you are now in the world, not of it. When you become attached to the outcomes, desire nature and fear dam up the flow of Divine Life. Without attachment you are able to listen to that still, small voice, which is guiding and directing you. You will do exactly what God desires through you, no more and no less.

The result of this practice opens up your heart so that you feel a vast flow, like a wide river, of love and compassion moving out to this world. You die and dissolve into an ocean of love and you know that you do not die in a literal sense, but only to the sense of separation from the infinite nature of life. You now feel that you are in communion with the universal Spirit of God and all of His creation. In fact, His creation trembles in sympathetic vibration with the one Creator of all. You realize that for all time the Omniscient Consciousness has eternally been one, without a second, permeating everything and everyone, your all and all, in all!

With this realization you resurrect as an individualized consciousness illumined with the knowledge of the universality of God, a true monotheist. You now experience yourself as a flawless instrument of love and wisdom as expressed by the Infinite. The Divine life that now pervades you is guiding you alone;

no longer do you tussle with the lower, constrictive nature of the ego. You are here to serve as God moves through you, permeating your thoughts, feelings and will. This glorious life is now yours as you serve the entirety of creation with all love and compassion!

All victory to the one all-pervasive Light, † *David*



Swami Muktananda, Swami Satchidananda, friend and David

Walks with the Master

This photo so evokes for many of us those times spent walking with Swami Satchidananda. What a joy it was to start off on a hike with him! These memories are deeply planted—there is something to be said for action with contemplation. Also, the devotee has the opportunity to align his mind with the master's—on even trivial matters, such as how the newest calf is progressing in health and growth. Each detail of the time spent with the master in this way was a chance to be educated. —Ed.



Mother in 1970s

The Holistic Master

Excerpt from a Talk Given by
The Reverend Mother, Yogacharya M. Hamilton
in Seattle, Washington on June 3, 1979

Do you know what it means to be a real devotee? It means to be willing to dedicate every thought, every word, every action to God. It means to give up your desire, your wishes, your wants, in utter following and service to God. Now, you practice that by obeying what the guru asks of you because they have nothing to gain. They have already paid the price and gained their goal. They elect to stay or to come back, whichever the case may be, in order to help you to attain that state of everlasting truth, of everlasting power, of everlasting wisdom, and everlasting bliss. They sacrifice their lives for that, but they are not to be pictured as a savior outside of the world, because as Jesus himself said that He was in the world, but not of it. He had overcome the world: *My little children, I have overcome the world, but that doesn't mean that you can't still live in it, laugh in it, play in it, feel in it, suffer in it, have just the same problems as everybody else has.* And believe me, you can get some awfully big headaches, far greater than anybody else has, because of what you

have become and because of what your job is—to help other people to God.

Many are called, but Few are Chosen

Implicit obedience to the guru is an absolute necessity, and few there are who are willing to give it. There are many who take initiation from the guru. At the moment, they think, “Well, now this time, I’m going to do something about it. I’m really going to practice my Kriya every morning, every evening; I’m going to practice the Hong-Sau, the spiritual-eye technique. I’m going to live the life. I’m going to think positively, act positively, all with the consciousness of God.” And how long does it last? I would hate to take a poll of all of the people that I have given initiation to and ask them if every single one of them have kept their vow to God and the line of gurus, headed by Jesus the Christ. How many? And yet, they wonder why their lives don’t go well. They wonder why they’re upset. They wonder why this happened and that happens. It is because they don’t do their parts. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* And the reason they aren’t chosen is because they’re too embroiled in their little selves. They are part-time devotees. Master called them, “half-baked,” and that is the way it is. When the guru finds one disciple who’s willing to go all the way, to do anything, believe me, they rejoice and are exceedingly glad.

I read a story about one of Master’s chief disciples down at the center, who was once talking to a group of people. She said that one woman came to her and said that she had studied with Master, and that she had liked him very much. But she said, “If I did everything He asked me to do, I would not have time to do anything else.” And when I stopped to think of it, that is the truth, because the Master is not interested so much in your worldly pursuits, as he is in the pursuit of your God-realization. He wants to take you to himself. You are already there, but you must realize it in your consciousness if you are to reach your goal.

You Must Pay the Supreme Price

Someone who used to be in this group, right here, called me

one day, several months ago, and told me that she had now been made a siddha, and that is a totally liberated soul. She was very egotistical about it; she was very proud. I was invited to a banquet up to Rabbi Levine's place for all of these siddhas. A master doesn't reach out and make somebody a siddha, believe me. A jivanmukta is one who has attained God-realization, but has some karma left to pay. But a siddha is a completely liberated soul; that one, who has gone all the way to the top, paid the supreme price of death and come back. Not the ghost of the real self or God, but the Holy Ghost; that one which has been divinized through all of the suffering, the purification that has taken place. That one is, indeed, a master of the earth.

It is said—I read in a book by Ramana (it wasn't by him, but it was about him; it was written by Arthur Osborne, and I think it was "Self Knowledge") where it says that there are very, very few people: "It is rare, indeed, to find such a one on earth that has gone all the way and has come back." Rare, indeed. The amazing thing about these people who are so rare is that they are truly one with God. They are truly holistic. They have the whole universe inside of themselves. While they see in the consciousness of duality, everything that is happening out here, they also see that it is God. They also see that it is God, and there is no difference in their consciousness. God, God everywhere.

Both Human and Divine

These people can walk the streets, they can mix in every, and any, phase of human existence, and they have total control, total self-mastery, and you can't tell the difference. Because you can't tell the difference, then you are prone to either deify them, or to do the opposite: be able to accept them only as a human being. In truth, they are both. You cannot separate God from God, because God is. You cannot split any God-realized soul in half and say, this part of you is human, and that part is divine because it is divinity in human form.

I will not be isolated. I will not be idolized. I may come as a savior, but I totally disregard and refuse to accept myself as a savior in the sense that has been pictured of saviors all over the world. I am telling you the truth. This is the truth. Those of you

who will go through the total experience will come out of it and know that I speak the truth, and you will thank me for it. Because believe me, when you are put in this tremendous ...well, the top rung of the ladder, you are indeed alone. You feel isolated, and yet, you—here you are, with all the feelings, the emotions, the need for love, the need for attention, the need for service, the need for everything, that each and every one who comes before you is. There is a difference. Because you have paid the price, there is the difference, but you are totally just one person, both human and divine. Those that have the privilege of being close to such a one—believe me, it is a rare privilege. It is also a great test because they are prone, after a time, to see only the human, and to relinquish the divine; or, sometimes, vice versa, depending on their particular natures, but they can never come up with you as one whole person.

Believe me, I am ONE, WHOLE person, and I am just as human, just as capable of being human as any single one of you. I've had that all my life. I've had it with my children; I've had it with the disciples; I've had it with everybody who is on the spiritual path. They can't accept me as both the guru and a human being, but yet I am both. I'm living in a human body, for heaven's sakes. And all of you see what I go through, but what I go through is not for myself, it is for those who follow after me...

Story about Papa and a Devotee

...I would like you to become perfect disciples. Nobody can attain God-realization overnight. Although, there have been things written in books about if a man will meditate for one month straight without stopping, or so many days straight without stopping, that he will certainly get his God-realization. I've told you about the Methodist minister, who came from Malaya, and he decided that—he was very attached to Swami Ramdas—and he decided he was going up the hill, and he was going to meditate until he got his God-realization, and I was the only one he had told about it. So he disappeared. Night came, he didn't appear for meals; it was dark. Papa was tremendously worried about him; he was asking about him all over the place, and here I

was, bound by a promise not to tell where he was. So Papa sent out search parties for him, with lanterns and sticks, because there were a lot of snakes in that area, and they searched all over. They searched, and searched, and searched. Finally, they found him up on top of a hill, meditating. They asked him to come down, that Papa wanted him. He refused to come; he was going to get his God-realization. So they came down, and they told Papa about it. Papa sent them back again; and, again, he refused. And, again, they came down; and, again, Papa sent them back, and told him, "He must come down," that it was his orders that he come down. In the meantime, he said to me, "Did you know about this, Mother?" (Laughter) And there I was. (Laughter)

Anyway, finally, he came down. His name was Paul Castor; very wonderful young fellow. So Papa talked to him and rejoiced that he had come down; rejoiced in the fact that he wanted his God-realization so drastically, and all. But after he left, he said to me, "Ramdas was hoping he wouldn't come down. He was hoping that he would listen to the inner guru, instead of the outer guru."

The Master gives many, many tests to the disciple, and some of them are very, very difficult, depending on the nature of the disciple. But make sure of one thing, and that is, if the person is truly what they claim to be in God—whether they are truly God-realized—everything they do has but one purpose, and that is to help you to realize who and what you are in God.

Story about Master and a Devotee

There's a story that I read about one of Master's disciples who went down there with a pre-conceived idea of what getting his God-realization was like. He was asked to carry mortar and mix cement and all of this, to build something, and he flatly refused to do it.

He said, "Why should I do this?" He said, "This is not what I came for."

He said, "What did you come for; for meditation?"

"Yes, I came for meditation. That's all I'm going to do."

But he didn't realize that meditation, in itself, is of no value, unless you also have the worldly pursuits, the things which cut off the sharp edges to balance it, and that the guru has to work with every phase of your human nature, of your human being, in order to help you to realize this final experience of God-realization.

Total Resignation to the Will of God

It is through the worldly things that we do, through the goals which we set ourselves, in the worldly sense that we go through the experiences, both positive and negative, which finally take us to our goal. It is a wise man, indeed, who doesn't go into a deep fit of depression when he thinks he falls flat on his face, but rather that he goes inside of himself, and he said, "Lord, what is the lesson that I am to learn from this? Test me. What is the lesson? What may I learn? How can I grow from it? Here am I, Lord, take me. Do with me as you will." Such a one, with total resignation to the will of God, must surely find him in a hurry.

We say we are ready for everything, anything that God wants to give us, if we can only get that God-realization, but we don't speak the truth. We want only that which we are willing to take. Our attention is so easily transferred to something other than that which will take us on the path. Instead of saying, "My will be done," in every instance where we have a decision to make, say, "Lord, let thy will be done."

Go inside of yourself – don't go around asking everybody else, but go inside of yourself, meditate until you find the answer. Listen, listen in the silence, in the stillness of your soul; listen for what God tells you. As you learn to work with this John the Baptist intuition, which is within you, gradually, that intuition will grow, and grow, and grow, until every time, when you go inside, it becomes just like a...an instantaneous thing that you know now because of the feeling you get, that what God is giving you is the truth.

In the beginning, you have to test it because your human mind, your human desires, come in and take over and, sometimes, mislead you. But gradually, as this power of intuition grows, then,

also gradually, you are working toward that wonderful, that beautiful, that great day, when you will have Christ-consciousness, when the John the Baptist will be absorbed into the Christhood that you have attained. Then you will not have to wonder anymore, because every thought, every word, every action which comes from you, after you have attained that state, is of God, regardless of seeming appearance.

Perfect Humanity is the Realization of Oneness with God

That's another thing in favor of God as one human being, because such a one acts all these parts out; they have obtained perfect humanity. They give to each disciple whatever that one needs, regardless of the cost to themselves, in an effort to take them into the realization of their Oneness with God: *I am that I am.*

I would like each and every one of you to make the effort to become true disciples of God; not to say to God, "This time is yours, or this act is yours, or this task is yours, and this is mine. I want to do this. I want to have pleasure in that." Let your pleasure all be in God, because He is in everything. So if you seek Him first, seek the Kingdom of Heaven within yourself, then all of the other things are added unto you. So if what He says is true, they're all added unto you, you are still you, but you are one total, complete person.

So if you ever find, or come across, anybody who is having that difficulty, tell them the truth. Tell them the truth; that the Master is also human, as well as divine, and that there is nothing but God, anywhere and everywhere. God is. He is in His heaven, which is in [the] heaven of your own being, and when you truly come into that consciousness, all is right with your world. †

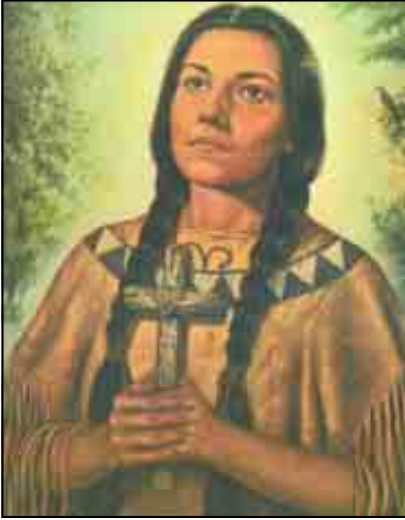
If a worthy inspiration arises in you, never hesitate to manifest it. Do not let fear rule your actions. If you give yourself over to God and practice detachment, there is no reason to be afraid that things will not turn out.

St. Teresa of Avila

Saint Kateri Tekawitha

Lily of the Mohawks, 1656-1680

By Michele Rogan



Saint Kateri was interested in Christianity when she heard the teachings of the Missionaries in her Mohawk village as a teenager, but it took her some time to gather the courage to ask to be baptized, as she knew that this would displease her uncle and others in her tribe. She had already gone against tradition by refusing to marry as a young teen, and, when she was nineteen, she was baptized “Kateri” (Catherine) on Easter Sunday.

Due to her conversion, she was shunned and taunted by her family and tribe and treated as a slave. Her life was in constant danger but she had great faith and was completely unafraid when a Mohawk brave dressed in war paint surprised her with a weapon and threatened to kill her. Kateri’s calm response unnerved him and he walked away mystified.

Kateri snuck away in the night and walked 200 miles by herself to a Christian Indian village near what is now Montreal. She spent many long hours fasting and praying for the conversion of her people. Here is a quote which is one of the few from Saint Kateri: “I am not my own, I have given myself to Jesus. He must be my only love. The state of helpless poverty that may befall me if I do not marry does not frighten me. All I need is little food and a few pieces of clothing... If I should become sick and unable to work, then I shall be like the lord on the cross. He will have mercy on me and help me I am sure.”

Kateri suffered from frail health for most of her life due to

her bout with smallpox when she was four years old. She died in 1680 and those that were present reported that all her scars disappeared and her face became like that of a young girl.

Saint Kateri was the first North American born person to be canonized by the Catholic Church. She was canonized in 1991 by Pope John Paul II. She is the patron Saint of those ridiculed for piety, ecologists, exiled people, and those who have lost their parents.

What most impressed me about Saint Kateri was her complete faith, courage and fearlessness. I believe she helped me to tap into these qualities in myself during an especially difficult time, and continues to do so. †

[For more information, refer to www.ourchurch.com]

On February 24, 2008, the Satchidananda Institute of Medical Sciences (SIMS) was opened by Swamis Satchidananda and Muktananda (in Kerala, India).



From the “Vision” Magazine: “There is a saying that imagination is everything and if we can imagine a future, we can create it, if we can create that future, others will live in it. That is the essence of success. What we see in the form of SIMS is such an imagination becoming an actuality.”

[To donate, please visit www.anandashramfoundation.org.]

THE EVERYTHINGNESS OF GOD

By Yogacharya Mother Hamilton, 1985

You are the space within me, dwelling in the cavern of my heart.

You are the force primeval, the power which makes me move and breathe and have my being.

You are the Light of the world.

You are the wisdom stemming from the deep recesses of my consciousness.

You are the ocean of love whose waves lap on the shore of creation, brought there by the ecstasy of the union between spirit and nature.

You are the bliss which lifts me on high.

You are the music of the spheres, playing a grand symphony of Your universal song of Aum.

You are the individual notes of the haunting melody of love which You sing within me to enchant my enraptured soul.

You are the beauty of form and of color, of all that springs from the earth and is seen in the sky.

You are the summit of the mountain and the lowest point of the valley and the white cloud floating overhead.

You are the twinkling star, the soft glow of the moon, and the blazing fire of the midday sun,

hung in the wall-less chamber of space, evidence of the radiant splendor of Thy wondrous Presence.

You are the fragrance of the rose and the song of the nightingale.

You are the warm summer breeze and the loud, roaring storm of winter.

You are the moisture which falls as the raindrops to water the thirsty soil.

You are the soft, white, lacy snowflakes which blanket the ground as all nature sleeps.

You are the joy of happiness and of laughter.

You are the tears of passion which expand the heart.

You are the peace which passeth all understanding.

You are the Alpha and Omega.

You are beginningless and endless.

You are man.

You are woman.

You are God.

You are the ever conscious and eternally living reality, expressing Yourself as the One and the many.

You are the great I AM, the Almighty I Am That.



AKRURA'S JOURNEY TO VRAJA

[Excerpt from Srimad Bhagavata compiled by Param Pujya Swami Satchidanandji Maharaj, Volume 2]

Helpful background information:

The Srimad Bhagavata (events concerning Krishna's life) is being narrated by Sukadeva to the noble King Parikshit for the king's enlightenment. In the story, the evil King Kamsa had a revelation that his younger sister, just married, would give birth to a son who would claim Kamsa's kingdom. Kamsa subsequently imprisoned his sister and her husband, killing her children as she gave birth. That is, until Balarama was born, then Krishna. To protect these newborns the parents secreted them out of the prison in miraculous ways and they were raised by foster parents. This segment of the Srimad Bhagavata in our narrative takes place when Krishna is still a young man. Krishna's uncle Akrura was commanded by King Kamsa to bring Krishna to the court where Krishna and his brother are to be killed. Akrura is a devotee, and although he does not want to deliver this message he is bound to by dharma. Akrura knows that Krishna is an incarnation of Divinity. As he nears his destination and is going to see Krishna for the first time he is overcome with devotion. This is the narration as he, symbol of a true bhakti, anticipates meeting the Lord of the universe.

Yogacharya David

Sri Sukadeva said: O Parikshit! While on the one hand Devarshi Narada's prayer awakened in Bhagavan Sri Krishna the desire to go to Mathura, on the other hand the noble-minded Akrura spent the night at Mathura itself, and the very next day drove in a chariot to Nanda's Gokula. While on the way, the highly blessed Akrura developed the highest form of devotion for the lotus-eyed Bhagavan Sri Krishna and began to reflect as follows: "What auspicious acts have I done. What great austerities have I performed, what charities have I made, by virtue of which I shall enjoy today the privilege of seeing Bhagavan Sri Krishna? I am a man deeply attached to the world. The desire to enjoy worldly



Original Artwork By Lakshmi of Anandashram

pleasures runs through every pore of my being. Therefore, it should be as difficult for me to gain the sight of the Lord whose glories are sung by the greatest men of virtue, as it is difficult for a Sudra to study the Vedas. But why should I feel dejected? Though of poor merit, I may yet gain the sight of Sri Krishna; for though borne away by the stream, a straw may yet cross it by mere flux of time, and touch the other shore. Today all my evil is gone; my life has achieved its purpose. For today I shall bow to

the glorious Lord's lotus feet, which Yogis ever attempt to contemplate but fail to hold fully in their heart. Kamsa, however wicked he may be, has done me a great favour indeed; for, sent by him I shall see the lotus feet of God, descended on earth, contemplating whose radiance of nails many a saint in the past got over the impassable darkness of ignorance.

Those are the feet, which are worshipped by Brahma, Siva and other gods. Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity, never for moment, leaves the service of those feet; devotees, saints and men of wisdom constantly remain devoted to them, it is those very feet which together with the cowherd boys follow the cows while grazing them in the woods. It is those feet painted as it were with the saffron on the bosom of the Gopis, I shall see today. Not only those feet, I am sure I shall see today Lord Mukunda's face of well-formed cheeks and nose splendid with smiles and love-laden looks and eyes like red lotus, and overhung with curly locks; for I see the auspicious omen of those deer passing me by the right. Lord Vishnu, the repository of all loveliness now at His own will has come down in the form of a man for relieving the burden of the earth. I shall see Him today. There is no denying the fact that my eyes will easily attain the highest fruit of their existence today. The Lord is a mere witness of both the manifest and unmanifest forms of creation. He remains untouched by the ego.

By virtue of His own conscious nature He ever remains free from the misapprehension of differences caused by Nescience. Through His own Yogamaya He creates in Himself by His own will special Jivas, partaking of His own divine essence with the vital airs, senses and intellectual faculties and appears to play with them various sports in the groves of Brindavan and in the cottages of the Gopis. Speech which comes in contact with and recounts His excellent virtues, deeds and the stories of His descent as Avataras, which are full of auspiciousness and remove all sin, brings life and adds grace and purity to the world; whereas speech which is indifferent to them is as useless as the decoration of a corpse. He, the Supreme Lord, has descended here in the line of Yadu. The object of His descent is to bring

happiness to the great gods, whose function is to preserve His law. The same Lord is now living in Vraja and spreading His glory, which is sung even by the gods and which is the repository of all blessings. There is no doubt that I shall see Him today. I shall see Him who is the sole refuge of all gods and all saints, who is the preceptor of the world, with whose charm there is nothing to compare in the three worlds, whose transcendent beauty is a feast to the eyes of those who possess eyes, who exhibits a form which embodies in itself all those graces which are coveted even by Lakshmi, the Goddess of Beauty. I shall certainly see Him today, for since this morning I have seen many good omens.

What shall I do when I shall see them from a distance? O, I would directly alight from the chariot and without doubt bow to the feet of the best of persons, Sri Balarama and Sri Krishna who rule the universe, the feet, which even the Yogis constantly, cherish in their mind for the attainment of Self-Realization. Along with them, I shall pay my respects to their friends, the cowherd boys of Brindavan. When I shall fall prostrate at His feet, the omniscient Lord will certainly place His lotus-like palm on the head of this poor self, the palm that guarantees protection to men who terrified by the all-devouring serpent of Time, resort to Him for shelter. Indra and Bali attained the dominion of the three worlds by making offerings to those palms, which fragrant like the lotus, refreshed with their touch the women of Vraja fatigued during the Rasa dance. I am certain Sri Krishna will not take me for an enemy though I am a messenger sent by Kamsa; for He sees everything. He is inside and outside every mind; being the knower established in every individual heart, He sees its activity with His unclouded vision. When I shall fall at His feet with folded hands, the Lord will smilingly look on me with eyes full of mercy. All my sins of many births will be immediately destroyed and being rid of all fears I shall get absorbed in infinite Bliss.

I am His relation, His well wisher and friend; in fact I am devoted to Him alone and to no other Deity. He will therefore take me up in His long arms and embrace me. That will at once sanc-

tify me and shatter my bondage of Karma. After His embrace, I will again bow to Him and remain standing with folded hands. Then the glorious Lord will address me as “Uncle Akrura”. It is to enact such sweet sports that He has taken birth as a human being. Welcomed by Sri Krishna in this manner, my life indeed, will become extremely blessed. Fie upon the creature who does not earn the loving regards of Sri Krishna. True, He looks upon all with an equal eye. He has no friend or beloved, no enemy or object of dislike; and there is none who deserves to be treated with indifference by Him either. Yet, He attends to the desires of His devotees, just as the wish-yielding tree grants the desires of those who resort to it. For, He is Love personified. When I shall humbly stand before Him with bowed head, Sri Balarama will embrace me with a smile, and holding me by both the hands will lead me into the house, and after the customary attentions will ask me about Kamsa’s activities, and as to how he behaves with his kith and kin.”

Sri Sukadeva said: O Parikshit! Thus thinking of Sri Krishna all his way, Akrura arrived at Gokula in his chariot when the sun had already set. In Vraja he clearly saw the Lord’s footprints with their distinctive marks of lotus, barley-seed, goad etc. He thought these footprints were the same, the dust of which is sought after and worshipped by great gods like Brahma, who place it on their crown; they were the special ornaments of the earth. With growing impatience through joy at their sight and through excess of love, his hair standing on end, his eyes overflowing with tears. Akrura alighted from the chariot and falling flat on the ground began to roll in the dust, thinking these were the particles of dust of the Lord’s feet and muttering “Blessed are these, and most blessed am I”.

O Parikshit! The mental state of Akrura as described above, from the moment he received Kamsa’s message, is the great object of life of every being invested with a body. It is the supreme duty of every living being to cultivate without hypocrisy, and without fear or sorrow, this line of thought with regard to the Lord’s images, marks, sports, shrines and virtues, etc. In Vraja, Akrura saw the two brothers, Sri Krishna and Balarama in the

milking shed, wearing yellow and blue garments respectively. He saw that the Eternal and Foremost Person, the Supreme Ruler and First Cause of the Universe, was manifested with all his parts in the form of the two brothers, Sri Balarama and Sri Krishna, for the protection of the world.

Overwhelmed with affection, Akrura quickly sprang down from the chariot and fell prostrate at the feet of Sri Krishna and Sri Rama. His eyes were bedimmed with tears of joy at the sight of the glorious Lords, the hair on his body stood on end, and his voice being choked with feelings of love, he could not even say who he was. But the blessed Lord Krishna, who is ever kind to those who seek His protection, understood who he was, and with His hands marked with the discus drew him near and embraced him with great delight and affection. The high-souled Sri Balarama also embraced him as he stood before Him with great humility, and taking him by his hands let him into the residence accompanied by Sri Krishna. †

Gitanjali

By Rabindanath Tagore

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

Letter from Arunachula

By Raul Becerra

Hari Om to All,

I apologize for taking so long to write to you all about this pilgrimage to Ramanashram, but as many of you know, time in India seems different. At times it seems as if time stands still and other times it moves very quickly. Anyway this is the case for me!

I arrived at Tiruvannamalai Ramanasram on December 2 about 5:00 p.m. I arrived just two days before the end of the annual tradition of lighting the beacon of Arunachala. This is done for eleven days. The priests get a huge pot (7ft by 7ft) and take it up the hill. They put ghee (butter) and wicks in the pot and maneuver this lighted pot close to the top and at 6:00 p.m. it is on the top. You can see this flame for many miles. People gather at sunset at the walkway in front of Bhagavan's Samadhi Temple and sing "Om Arunachala Siva". I asked a Brahman Priest and locals but the explanations they gave me just didn't feel right. I came across a book at Anandashram, *Message from Arunachala*, by Paul Brunton which says: "Ancient tradition had dedicated this hill and its temple to God Siva, who had appeared upon the peak-top in the form of spouting flames and so custom—had established the habit of lighting the beacon in annual remembrance of the event which had ended the darkness that had formerly enveloped the world."

On December 4, after having breakfast in the dining hall at the ashram I decided to visit Virupaksha cave about 300 ft behind Bhagavan's Samadhi Temple up the mountain.

I left my foot wear in the room. I thought that I would just go up to the cave and meditate for a little while. As I was leaving the cave, a boy approached me and asked if I wanted to see a Siva cave. I said that I had no footwear. He said that it was no problem—that it was only 15 minutes from there. I thought for a moment. What's 15 minutes? Two hours later and we were only halfway up the hill and it wasn't that bad without footwear. He



was walking up Arunachala without sandals like it was a walk in the park. No problem for him. For me it was a bit of a challenge. Coming down it was hard on these feet.

He told me that Siva's foot and head and arms were on the hill. Further up the hill I realized that I should have brought my camera and promised to do this again at a later date. As we were coming down it started to rain lightly. It took two and half hours to come down. When I got to the bottom of the hill, I went to the room to wash and went to bed. That night and the next five days it rained, it just poured. For a moment, I thought I was in Seattle.

The next couple of days I noticed a bruise on the right big toe, purple in color. I thought "Uh-oh!" I went to the doctor and the toe was infected. He cut out a piece of the skin and gave me a tetanus shot. The five days of rain bought some time for the toe to heal. On December 9th, the forecast was light rain in the morning to clear late in the morning. I chose this day to find Arunachala. I called my guide to meet me at the ashram at 6 a.m. This time I had sandals. We started the climb and the clouds cleared about 10 a.m. We passed the halfway point at 10:30 a.m.

and as he mentioned earlier there was the foot of Siva and the hand. To see the head one had to climb further up. What a sight!

We reached the top at 11:30 a.m. and had tea with his friends— all in their early 20s who lived in a hut at the top. We rested for a half hour and then it was time to descend. At the hottest time of the day! I was not looking forward to this. It looked so long to the bottom. I thought it would take all day. I had never felt this kind of heat before in my life—not only from the sun but from within me and from Arunachala Siva. This hill emanates a lot of heat. Arunachala is the Sansrit word for red mountain. Sacred red hill Siva—I can attest to that.

On the way down, I had to stop many times to rest and cool down. Pouring water over this neck and head. At times I couldn't catch my breath. The heart was beating so fast I used yoga to try to slow down the parts but it didn't help. I thought for a moment that the time had come for me to drop this body. This was no exaggeration. But what better place to drop the body! As we got closer to the bottom of the hill, I saw water in sight. I thanked God over and over for creating water. It was so beautiful. The water was running off the pond from Virupaksha Cave. I submerged myself in the water to try to cool down. Finally I just laid down on a big rock next to the pond and went to sleep. It was worth all the struggle and discomfort to climb Arunachala. I guess I don't have the endurance I used to have.

I was scheduled to leave Ramanashram December 21st but I just kept extending my stay. It just didn't feel like it was the right time for me to leave. My daily practice became the pradakshina, the walking around, of Arunachala. Sometimes the locals would encourage me with "Very Good! Very Good! Yes! Yes! Yes!" I thought that it was time for me to "double-up" i.e. increase the effort. So, my day started by getting up at four a.m., meditating and then doing the pradakshina of the inside passage. As soon as these feet hit the trail, I was compelled to be silent. No worries. No thoughts. Bhagavan said that doing pradakshina keeps the mind in a sattva guna state. This was a very blissful time. Sixteen days! In the mystic!



Sri Arunachaleswara Temple

On the 23rd of December it was full moon! Auspicious! The day that people put their worries at the feet of Siva....to rest. To walk around Arunachala means to visit all the temples on the path around Arunachala....temple to Siva's sons, to Hanuman....On this day at least 100,000 people come to lay their worries at His feet. A sight I will never forget. It looked like a river of humanity merging with the ocean of bliss!

Pilgrimages, ancient temples, ashrams that start and end the day with God's Name filled me with the inspiration and intention to know the Self. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. †

**O Arunachala, You root out the ego of those
who meditate on you at heart.**

- Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Memories of Mother

A Rare Soul

By Pujya Swami Satchidananda

In January, 2004, while staying at Anandashram, we celebrated the anniversary of Mother's Mahasamedi Day. What follows below is the introduction and concluding remarks to the program by Swami Satchidananda. It was wonderful to hear him speak so lovingly of our Guru and we only hope that we can live up to the kind words he spoke about us as well.—ed.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Today we are going to observe the Mahasamedi Day of our beloved Mother Hamilton. Mother Hamilton is one of the rare souls who was very much devoted to the Lord from her early days and had attained illumination after she came to Anandashram and had the contact with beloved Papa. She was here for about a year and had some wonderful experiences. After going back from here she could lead a number of seekers and guide them to the path of God Realization. Now, our friends who have come here are devotees of Mother Hamilton and will give out their own experiences about the Mother whom we remember very much, particularly today. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram.

[At this point short talks were given by Peter Schultz, Larry Koler, Cate Koler and Swami Muktananda.]

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Now all of you heard something about our Mother Hamilton. Hearing is nothing; seeing is more important. But you missed that. I had the occasion of closely moving with her for about a year and the moment I think of her she is standing before my mental vision—so forcefully, so strongly. We meet so many people every day in our life but very few leave certain impressions in us. But some leave such indelible impressions that they are unforgettable characters. Mother was one of them.



Papa, Mataji and Mother Hamilton, 1957

The peculiar thing I noticed in her was: she was God-mad. When she came and saw Papa for the first time—I mean in the ashram first time—her first request was, “Papa, we have come here. We must realize God before we go back.” That was her first prayer. So you can imagine how intensely she was aspiring for the highest experience and went like that...she got it and not only got it she passed on to many others also.

We can see some of her disciples and they say, as you have not seen the master, Mother Hamilton, seeing the disciples is to see the master. So, how lovingly they are talking about the Mother! That type of devotion is very, very rare. Disciples, who are so intensely devoted to the Mother, naturally develop the qualities of the Mother and ultimately realize their oneness with the Mother. We got an occasion to hear from three of her—Mother’s devotees and are surely very much benefitted by knowing something about the Mother. Our humble homage to the Mother again and again.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram †

[Those who wish to read more about Mother’s stay in Anandashram should refer to the latter part of the book, “Gospel of Swami Ramdas” by Swami Satchidananda published by Anandashram Press.]

Loon Lake

By Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

We happily gathered again for our bi-annual retreat. Each time the topic is dictated by the Infinite, sometimes not until the last minute are His plans completely known! Where two or more are gathered in my Name, there I am, is proven fresh each time we come together.



We focused on Master's teachings with his commentary on the great Patanjali's writings. Patanjali outlined the spiritual path in his *Ashtanga Yoga*, the eight limbed path of yoga. In par-



Michele Rogan, Greg Hough & Kathy Smith



ticular we examined the vrittis (also known as chittwa), the primordial feelings that lead to the attitude of likes and dislikes. With these areas personally clarified we then worked on strategies for disentangling ourselves from these snares that are the very basis for our ignorance of our oneness with God.

For the last time at Loon Lake we met at the old lodge; from now on we will meet in the new facilities with their improved bathrooms etc. However, we will miss the wonderful *vibrational* feeling from our years in the old lodge. †

Calendar of Events

June	15	Father's Day
	20	Summer Solstice (4:59 p.m. PDT)
July	1	Canada Day
	4	Independence Day
	18	Guru Purnima
	25	Babaji's Remembrance Day
Aug.	6	Papa's Mahasamadhi Day (1963)
Sept.	22	Fall Equinox (8:45 a.m. PDT)
	26	Lahiri Mahasaya's Mahasamadhi Day (1895)
	28	Mother Krishnabai's Birthday (1903)
	30	Lahiri Mahasaya's Birthday (1828)

God is calling to you. He calls through your aspiration to attain the ultimate Freedom, He calls to you in your time of desperate prayers, He calls to you in the silence of your inmost Self. He wants for you to awaken more than you yourself want it. Open your heart and soul to His will, His love and His yearning and He will carry you up as on wings of eagles to His infinite kingdom.

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

I am older than the first vapors of Heaven, or the first baby star that was born out of the womb of the blue Heavens. I was born before life opened its eyes on earth's cradle. I was born and my mind worked beneath my skiey skull. My thoughts spread in the veins of the all-pervading Cosmic Rays and tingled in the space cells of my finite body. I breathed the breath of life into everything. I am the oldest in existence, for it is my One self, my One memory, which has been thinking through all the human brains of all incarnations in all Eternity. . . All souls who have known this, know that they too are

As Old as I.

Paramhansa Yogananda

Let your service be done in a spirit of spontaneous love, which is by itself a great balm and a source of unlimited joy and peace. True service lies in your not being conscious of having done anything to anybody, while you are busily engaged in relieving the pains and sorrows of people around you. A marvellous depth of patience, a spirit of never-failing forgiveness and a capacity to suffer cheerfully for the sake of others—all these will then be yours.

Swami Ramdas

