

# **The Cross and The Lotus Journal**



**Summer Edition**

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# **The Cross and The Lotus Journal**

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© 2003 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.

Dear Friends,

For many this has been a time of great intensity, of difficult tests. When life is very *thick* with experience, both within and without, it can create a crisis of doubt and confusion. This time of crises strips life to what is essential and can act as a tremendous propellant to individual and collective growth.

It can be a time for spiritual growth, but it can also work the other way as well. The opportunity for growth is determined by the decisions you make in times of extremity. Making good decisions requires the mind and the will to be brought into alignment with the Light within you.



There are qualities that distinguish the one who adheres to the Light. These virtues: truthfulness; congruency of thought, word and action; courage under fire; loyalty to people and principle are universal truths. From timeless myths the world over you will find these universal principles of growth and transcendence revealed.

In every one of the principle religions of the world, such virtues are continuously made evident through stories of the Masters and through their explicit teachings. In the story of Rama we see a man who goes through much suffering. Rama is stripped of his rightful home and inheritance, he is made to wander in the wilderness, his wife is kidnapped by a vicious demon and he faces obstacles that seem insurmountable. When faced with these terrific difficulties Rama is, at times, distraught and hopeless.

Rama even has to go through death and resurrection to finally overcome all the dark obstacles. As a result of his adherence to dharma, to noble virtues, he at last defeats the prince of darkness and fulfills the glorious role for which he came. This story of Rama shows The Way for all aspiring souls.

In the West, the life of Jesus has been the outstanding symbol for The Way. In modern Christianity there is much emphasis placed on baptism with water and the acceptance of Jesus as savior. These acts are seen as the key to salvation. Indeed, acceptance of the *idea* that you are now dedicating your life to realization and you are now surrendering yourself to God is a crucial first step toward salvation, but not the last. This first act of

acceptance is to enter into the pattern of Jesus' life as The Way, and The Way must be followed in every aspect.

The Way shown by Jesus reflects those same principle-virtues shown by Rama, recorded so many years before. To pick up your cross and follow Jesus, the perfect Master, means to bring your body, mind and Spirit into wholeness. The novice accepting The Way is far different than one who has traveled The Way to its end! Jesus, like Rama, faced tremendous difficulties, including overcoming death; so must every aspirant if they are to be true to The Way.

To see your own life in the context of these great spiritual Masters may strike some as presumptuous, but these stories are intended for that *exact* purpose. Absent the application of the saints' life to your own, and you lose its real significance.

In the examples of great saints and spiritual Masters lies your hope and salvation. In their lives resides the pattern of complete self-mastery. By surrendering all that you are in quest of divine illumination, you are following The Way.

Spiritual perfection need not be seen as beyond your reach, rather it is inherent in your nature to be Self-Realized. However, The Way must be followed to overcome the lords of darkness that blind you to the Truth.

There is so much in the world to convince you that you have no share in the transcendent Reality. Following The Way means to go beyond those limiting, soul-denying worldly forces. The Way means to seek God-Realization with all your strength, all your heart, mind and will.

Then you find that by going *through* the difficulties you encounter, you move beyond them and all doubt is erased. It is by being stripped of everything but your essential Nature that you discover your true Self. And when you are made low in the world, then you may rise high in Consciousness.

Fix your mind upon the pure, transcendent God-Self, your true Nature. The great Master Jesus taught us even to rejoice in the difficulties encountered on The Way. For The Way will move you beyond suffering in ignorance, and will lead you to union with the realm of the Beautiful, the Light of God within you.

May you ever travel The Way set out before you so that you may know the crowning achievement of life, Divine Realization.

Eternally in the Light of that Spirit,

David

[Note: I was struck by the similar themes between this writing and Mother’s talk in this issue. The selection of Mother’s talk came from a suggestion by Cate after I had written this earlier the same day. The play of God is wonderful, a joyful participation of the Divine that occurs within us, through us and all around us! Jai Ram, Jai Guru, Victory to God, Victory to the Savior. David]




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[John F.] Kennedy loved a little proverb he thought was Irish, but actually came from the Indian epic Ramayana. “There are three things which are real: God, human folly and laughter. The first two are beyond our comprehension, so we must do what we can with the third.”

Richard Reeves

If Papa could not bear to see any living creatures hurt, even less could he bear to see human suffering. A saint’s heart, it is said, is the hardest and at the same time the softest—hardest so far as his own comforts and needs are concerned and softest where the sufferings of others are concerned. Papa himself used to tell us how he was often choked and moved to tears when he saw someone going through deep physical agonies. Though we called him ‘Papa’, Papa himself regarded all persons as the forms of his beloved Ram and their well-being was his first consideration in life.

From *With My Master*, by Swami Shuddhananda (page 30)



Mother Hamilton in 1954. As presented in the book  
*The World is God* by Swami Ramdas.

## **GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE GURU AND GOD THE COMPANION**

**A Talk Given by Mother Hamilton  
in Seattle, Washington  
on June 19, 1977**

I would like to read to you an article this morning written by Swami Ramdas entitled, *Spiritual Evolution*.

The attainment of God-realization is a gradual process. You have to progress from stage to stage before the goal is reached. The first step is strong aspiration which gives rise to concentration and purification. Then comes the inner vision and the resultant peace and bliss which leads to the full knowledge of the Reality. Next you achieve a state of all comprehensive realization of Divinity in all aspects of existence. Ultimately you get the experience of the mystic oneness and identity with God which baffles description. Hence, it must be understood by every aspirant the path which takes him to the goal of spiritual perfection should be trodden upon with determi-

nation, steadiness and patience. The transformation that is sought to be brought about is of a tremendous nature. The animal and the human have to be changed into the superhuman and Divine. Unusual haste, uncontrolled impatience and impetuous zeal should be avoided.

Every human being in whatever situation or circumstance he or she is placed possesses the right to realize the highest spiritual status. What is needed is a fixed resolve, a sustained faith and an optimistic outlook when walking on the path. There may come moments of vacillation, uncertainty and even of despair. Here the aspirant should have recourse to the society of saints. Through their inspiration and guidance he should regain strength and assurance and march onwards. Just as the flower reveals its hidden grace and fragrance, so your soul unfolds its latent qualities of all-encompassing vision, eternal wisdom and infinite bliss by a natural evolutionary urge God has implanted within you.

Saints are beacons. Saints show the path. They hearten you in your struggle. Their words should carry absolute weight with you. They can awaken and enthuse you. But you have to advance on the path by your own growing inner power and will. You should feel conscious that the Divine within is your sole refuge. It is by the constant thought and meditation of Him that you rise from the lower to the higher planes of consciousness.

When finally you are absorbed in Him, He manifests within you in all His beauty, power and glory.

Our Bible chapter this morning is from St. Luke, Chapter 11, beginning with verse 1:

1. And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.
2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.
3. Give us day by day our daily bread.
4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen  
[This traditional ending added by Mother - ed.]

That's strange; now, there are two descriptions of the Lord's Prayer in here and I happened to pick the one that's a little different. Even in the same Bible it's an amazing thing how this comes to pass.

This, of course, is Father's Day and I want to wish all of the fathers a very happy Father's Day. And I have chosen for my subject, ***God the Father, God the Guru and God the Companion***. As a matter of fact, God is everything, but He is especially seen in these three aspects. And it's a wonderful thing when you can experience Him in all three.

Now, let us take God the Father first. Before God expressed Himself as a Father, He was pure, pure Spirit, existing in space, humming His tune of bliss, perhaps. But then He decided to manifest Himself and He took on the form not only of God the Father but also of God the Mother and from the union of these two came the Son, or the Child, or the manifested universe, if you will. In everything that we learn we want to keep in mind the universality of God, to see Him everywhere, in every religion, in every form, in every atom of space because He is in all of these things.

As our Father He takes care of us, every single moment of our lives, whether or not we are aware of that fact. Do you know why? Because God is the Indwelling Presence in every single one of us. He is that Christ Consciousness, the only begotten Son. He manifested Himself as Spirit and projected Himself into the womb of Nature, which is the Mother. He took on a garment of flesh and dwelt among us. And He dwells in the flesh of every single creature, which He Himself has created.

We shouldn't go to God as a beggar. We should go as a son, demanding our rights. We have a right to expect our parent to take care of us. We have a right to His love. We have a right to all of the provisions which He alone can provide for us because He has created everything and every single thing that we make use of, regardless of what we think, how much we feel that we personally are responsible, comes from God. If we would each day, at the close of the day, look over the events of the day, the experiences of the day, and count our blessings, we would find that they were many indeed.

Now God is a strict disciplinarian as well as One who gives love to all of His children. And so He should be because we need discipline. Without discipline we would go exactly no place. I attended an event yesterday, a graduation, and somebody made the remark that people have their wish-

bone where their backbone ought to be. And I thought that was indeed a wonderful statement. And another young fellow made a very profound remark when he said that those who procrastinate won't ever go any place because they never get started. And that is true. So many people reach out for God-realization. These are the ones where the seeds are planted on ground where they will not take root. And they tell themselves they want God-realization, but in truth they still are attached to the things of the world and they want to satisfy their human desires.

But when the love for God, the devotion for God, the loyalty for God, the constant remembrance of God burns like a fire gone wild inside of you; when you're willing to give up everything you are, everything you have for God, then and then alone will you make progress on the path. The Father being within you then is pleased because He will do everything within His power to lift you up, everything! And He knows, because it is His Light shining there. But He will never impose Himself upon you, know that, because He has given each and everyone of us free will and He never takes that will away from us—the will to choose to follow His laws and work in harmony with His will, or the will to choose the other path, the opposite path which will give us nothing but trouble, ill health, disease, disharmony, the whole thing.

Every single person here I am sure has found that out because everybody goes through certain experiences in life and they find that that was not the thing they should have done, and that there is a price to be paid for it. We don't like to pay prices for things that give us pain. We don't mind if it's something we want and want badly. If you really want a beautiful piece of jewelry or a new car or a beautiful home, any of these things, you're willing to pay the price. If you want a top position in a firm you're willing to pay the price in the way of effort, in the way of applying yourself in order to get that. But when it comes to saying that you want God-realization, you want union with God then there are many who back down. They're afraid to pay the price that is required of them because they're afraid that they will lose their identity, their personality, their individuality, and there will be nothing left of them. It's true. There won't be, in the sense of their present consciousness. But that they will die, that is, leave this body in the sense that we have been taught to think of it, will not happen, because all that is given in the way of an example for us to follow in the scriptures happens right within each and every soul when that one has so purified himself as to receive it.

The price is great, that's true, because you have to give up that which you think is yourself; that which you think is your power; that which you think are your possessions, your dear ones, your loved ones, all the things that you have accumulated. But do you not realize that you have put a part of yourself in every single thing that you possess or that you permit to possess you? And that before you can really lay yourself at the feet of the Christ and offer yourself up to Him in totality, that you must withdraw all of yourself from all of the places that you have spread yourself and focus it upon Him alone, give yourself entirely to Him, throw everything into the ocean. And then, and then alone will you know that in truth you have given up nothing, and the price was so small, so infinitesimal in comparison to the great joy, the wonder, the bliss, the power, the wisdom, the happiness, everything that you get in place of it, that there is absolutely no comparison.

But how many are willing to make that effort? We think of Jesus crucified on a wooden cross. We think of him carrying his cross. And he instructs us, of course, that he who will not pick up his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. But each and everyone of us are made in the form of a cross as we stand upright with our arms outstretched and our feet together, And it is upon this cross that we must crucified our human ego which represents the son of man in order that we may become the Christed One, the Son of God, as indeed we were meant to be.

This Father-child relationship is a beautiful, a wonderful thing. It gives us a feeling of security; it gives us a feeling of knowing that no matter what happens to us we can always lift our eyes to the hill and ask our Father God for help. And that help is always forthcoming, in one way or another. He never fails us. Never once in my very long and full life has God ever refused me or failed me, not once. Now, He doesn't always answer my prayers in the way that I perhaps thought that He would or that He should. But always whatever He gave me was for my highest good and in accordance with His will. As I look back over the years now and I see the way I have come, much of it very, very difficult, I find that those things which He put me through, or I put myself through, if you will (and I and my Father are one), were but for my own good, for the expansion of my consciousness.

You will find throughout all of creation a period of rest followed by a period of activity. This is the rhythm of the universe. It extends in every single part. The sun goes down at night and darkness descends upon us and so we sleep, we rest our tired bodies for a while. And the next morn-

ing we wake up and we are renewed. We have new strength. We have new ideas that were given to us at the dawn of a new day. And it's beautiful when you think of the rhythm of God's universe. The ebb and the flow, like the spring when everything has appeared dead all winter long. The branches have not had any leaves on. There haven't been any flowers, any fruit. And yet the Spirit of God activates the sap in the tree. And pretty soon we have little green leaves and we have blossoms and then we have the fruit and then we have the harvest. And so it is with all of life, and so it is with man's life. It's beautiful; it's wonderful when you stop to think about it.

God is no discriminator of persons. We are all His children regardless of race, color, creed, nationality or anything else. And he who thinks otherwise (who thinks because someone else follows a different religion than his own that one is a heretic and an infidel) hasn't begun to put his feet on the first rung of the ladder of God-realization. The Christ said not so. "A new commandment I give unto ye," and I repeat this many times, "that ye love one another as I have loved you. And your neighbor as yourself."

Now, if we love one another as Christ loved us how beautiful, how wonderful it would be. He loved us enough to give his life, his personal life for us, in order that we might be lifted up, in order that we might see the example of that which must happen within every single man. And when he enjoined us to love our neighbors as ourselves it doesn't just mean the members of our church, our group. It means the members of every church, of every group regardless of where they are. It doesn't make any difference because you will find that every great religion in the world believes in the one Father God. You will find that every great religion since the beginning of history has believed in a Christ and they call them by different names in accordance with their particular language. But they are speaking of the same Father God. They are speaking of the same Divine Mother. They are speaking of the same Christ, which is universal! Universal!

How can we limit the Christ, which we know to just one form when he himself said that he is with us always? He is in **every** form! He is the first born of **every** creature. It says so in the scriptures if we would but read. But we listen to what has been taught to us in the orthodox sense and we never really stop to read and meditate upon what it says in the Bible. If we were to do that and really do it we would find that what we have been told doesn't add up exactly. And there it is right in our own Bible: the blood **of** the cross, the death **of** the cross. Not **on** but **of**! You see instances of this all through the scriptures. What does it mean? A wooden cross doesn't die

neither does it bleed. It is speaking of this human cross wherein dwells that Radiant One, the Christ, just waiting for us to discover Him, to lift ourselves up out of this mire that we have placed ourselves in and reach up for all the radiance and the glory which is God within ourselves. We do this through meditation, through constant prayer, through keeping Him in our consciousness every moment of the day. No matter where we are, what we do, let us think of Him. Let us imagine that He is doing it, because in truth He is. Let us imagine that if we must take the sense of doer-ship or have the sense of doer-ship that we do it for Him alone and no one else. This is constant meditation. But it is in the silence of your own soul where you go to meditate upon Him in this secret temple, where you truly commune with Him. It is then that you find how wonderful your Father God is.

Now, you may have the experience of going all the way, going beyond duality. This is possible. But when you come back it doesn't lessen your relationship with your Father God. And when you've had that blessed experience it is the most tremendous, the most joyous thing. You are filled with bliss, with peace, with happiness, with power, with all the beauty and the wonder of God. But you find that God isn't as you have had Him pictured to you, like the old man with the beard sitting up in the heaven, but that He is your playmate. That you can romp with Him, that you can play with Him. You can have fun with Him, because God is all love. He's all joy! He is perfect bliss and peace and happiness. And yet look what we have been taught.

I have a tremendous relationship with my Father God, as I've told you many, many times. And I do not hesitate to have fun with Him. I do not hesitate to talk about Him in those terms, as all of you know who have been around me for any length of time at all. I don't feel I have to go around in sackcloth and ashes. I feel that I would do Him a disservice to do this. I feel I would do Him a disservice to starve my body because it is His temple that I, the human self, am the custodian of until such time as I can realize the Divinity within myself.

Now, fasting is good. I do not say that it is not. It is very good because it helps to cleanse our body. But there are so many who have this sackcloth-and-ashes idea that you can't have anything if you're going to God. The truth of the matter is that you can enjoy everything that you have as long as you are not possessed by it nor attached to it! That is the secret of the whole thing. But don't take advantage of that. Don't take advantage of it because the minute you say that everybody thinks, "Oh, I don't have to give anything up". Of course, you do! You have to give up yourself! And

that is quite something to do because, believe me; this human ego is colossal in size. Its vanity, its pride, its sense of doer-ship is total and complete just as though it were God Himself. And it is not. It is pure delusion because there is only God prevalent in every bit of this universe because He created it; all of it came from Him.

Now, let us speak of God in the form of a Guru. We're speaking of a true Guru, one who has had the courage to give himself up and everything he possesses and go all the way to God. The word *guru* comes from the Sanskrit word meaning, "he who takes you out of the darkness into the light". This word has been bandied around in this country and made fun of and all the rest, but only by those who do not know the true meaning of it. Jesus Christ himself was the greatest of gurus. He certainly was one who came to take all of the people out of the darkness into the Light of God. Such a one comes to you only when you have risen above the orthodox ideas, the idea that everything in the Bible happened historically alone and not that it happens within yourself; because as I say over and over again, the Bible is the history of the evolution of **every man** from the human to the Divine. We will see it all!

In the Old Testament there was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", but when at the time that the Christ was suppose to come then things were to change. Man wasn't suppose to fight his fellow man and demand an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but rather to love his brothers; to realize that we are all brothers and sisters and children of the one Father God, strung together on a chain of Spirit, each one of us like a separate bead on a rosary, yet each one of us dependent upon the other. It is like your body. It is one body yet within it you have many cells, many organs, many circulatory tracts and your elimination tract and all the rest of these things are operating all within. Each of them operate and have a separate function, but all blending together they make one body! Until you realize that and until you change yourself, your thoughts and purify them (which in turn govern your actions) you will never be as you should be in God.

The Guru comes to teach the truth behind the parables. You will remember that Jesus said to his disciples, "To you it is given to know the mysteries but to others in parables," because they were not yet ready in consciousness to receive the truth. Does that make them any less? No, of course, it doesn't. It makes them in a lower grade of school, because this whole universe is a university. And God walks across the campus touching

this one on the shoulder and that one saying, “My son, come now, it is time now for you to graduate.”

Let’s go beyond even the university. Let’s do a little pioneering. Let’s get a master’s degree, a doctor’s degree. Let’s get it all! And then let’s see what we can do for it to help humanity, to take them in their consciousness a little bit closer to God.

It’s beautiful when you stop to think and relate everything, and you can see this rhythm of God, the rhythm of the universe just goes walking through every single part, every single moment of our lives. It’s beautiful; it’s wonderful.

The Guru must be the example of that which he or she teaches. Now, the Guru many times and most times is a man but there are many women gurus too in the world. But the Guru, you see, you cannot think of them as man or woman, although we are prone to do that in the outside. How can we help it with the training we have had? But that one, if they have gone all the way to God, is totally balanced, male and female, positive and negative within themselves. And because that is true, they use either the male or the female qualities in dealing with the disciples that God sends. And they are not *their* disciples they are God’s disciples because God the Father is the Supreme Guru in all of the universe! But when man has paid the full price then it is said that God and Guru are not different. Many have difficulty in accepting that because they see after the tremendous experience which we go through spiritually the same form, the same habit patterns, the same personality, maybe the same type of dress, and all the rest of it. And that one is the same but it is of the old life and purely a habit pattern because inside they have a new body in Christ because they have given themselves to Him totally, completely! They have picked up their cross and followed Him, emulating Him even unto death, the death of the human ego which brings a death-like state when you go through it. But then there is the resurrection and you go through that, too. And then there is the ascension into the heaven of your own being. And it is beautiful; it is wonderful.

Jesus in this prayer in the Bible this morning says, “Pray thusly, Our Father which art in heaven” and as I’ve told some of you before, when I was in India going through this tremendous spiritual experience God told me that I should replace the word *Our* Father with *My* Father because it personalized it and it made it a more personal experience. *My* Father, which art in the heaven of my own being, you see. And it goes on and on and tells you, “Hallowed be thy name.” We would honor His name; honor

His name every moment. Keep His sacred name upon our lips. Swami Ramdas, whose article I read to you this morning, went all the way to God just by repeating the name of God. “Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Ram,” in his own language which means, “Victory to God”, “Victory to God through the power of the Holy Ghost” because that word *Aum* [also Om] is the Word. It is spelled A U M; it comes from the Sanskrit and it is the sound that regulates the power, the vibration of everything in this universe. We call it, “Amen” but it was derived from this original Sanskrit term.

So, it is beautiful and it is wonderful when you think what the meaning is of this particular prayer. “My Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come...” We’re begging God to bring us into the consciousness of His kingdom, which is within us because each of us is a separate universe within ourselves. Each single one of us. And we are the king or the president, if you will, of that domain in there. Our subjects are the thoughts, the words, the actions that we ourselves have brought into existence, and sometimes we don’t like to live with them. And especially when you start meditating and God gives you visions of that which you have done in the past and which you must cross on the way back to Him. We don’t think very much of them. We are prone to think that they are outside entities, like ghosts or vampires or whatever, and that they come to us, but this is not so. It is what we ourselves have created within ourselves.

“Thy will be done.” We must do the will of God at all times, follow His will. How do you tell the differences between your will and God’s will? You go within the silence of your own soul, and you listen to that wee, small voice which it is in the beginning. And it comes and it goes, but you get definite instructions, a hunch perhaps, that this is what you should do or you shouldn’t do. And you should never go against it. But before you make a final decision test each spirit as it comes because not every spirit is from God. Now, if God is everything, you say, how come? We’re talking about that delusive something which only takes form and is given substance through our faith and belief in it. If we were to know that there’s nothing but God and God is all good, all wonder, all beauty, all wisdom, all power, and that nothing else existed, where would Satan and the devil and hellfire and damnation be? We wouldn’t have it, would we?

So rather than call people miserable sinners I prefer to call them all children of God. Some are naughty; some are good. But to call them sinners is to put the very thought into their mind which will make them that because your mind is powerful and you will become that upon which your

powerful mind dwells. This is an absolute truth. For every action there's an opposite and equal reaction. So if I think of all of you as children of God, blessed by Him and see the wonder and the beauty of God's Light in you, and express only that, then you will take that into your consciousness and you will try to live up to it. And you do. I have seen so many changes in the lives of the ones that I have worked with now for many, many years, almost thirty years. And many have come and many have gone, but I have seen that Light in them. I have seen the potential in them. Each one has a special destiny to fulfill, but unless the desire of the heart is what it should be people don't always fulfill their destiny so they must come back again and again until that spark is lit in their hearts and the desire within them is for God alone.

Do you think that you're giving up so much when you have that desire for Him alone? No. You're not giving up anything. Rather, you're depriving yourself if you don't give up everything for Him because God *is* everything and if you have your Oneness with Him then you have access to every single thing in the universe! When man has realized that Oneness he has tapped the fountain of everything that is good and wonderful and beautiful. And when he needs it, it will be given to him.

So the Guru comes as one comes to take you when you are ready for that last mile. They teach you the truth. They give you the method for going within yourself and finding that truth. They guide you. They direct you up to the point where you must do it by yourself, because the price must be paid by you. It is the pearl of great price and you can't ever expect somebody else to touch you on the shoulder and say, "I give you God-realization" because it won't work. It isn't a thing of vicarious atonement because it is the savior within yourself that must be crucified on your own cross, which is your own body. If you wish to think of it in that way, in that sense it is vicarious atonement, but you pay the price for your Christhood. You must. And when that Christ child is born within you and as it grows in stature and power, in consciousness, you become a light on a hilltop to light the way for others.

Now God as a Companion is someone we take with us wherever we go. We many times ask ourselves the question how does God know every thought, word and action as it says in the scriptures that He does, even to a sparrow that falleth? The reason He does is because He is that Life, that Intelligence, that Power within each and every one of us and wherever we go we take Him with us.

Now He is a tremendous Companion. I many times meet people who are very high in spiritual consciousness and they speak constantly of God. They speak to Him. I think of one woman in particular and she said, "You know, I woke up this morning and the Spirit told me this or the Spirit told me that. And I'm listening for His voice of direction. I want to know whether I should do it. First He said one thing and then He said the other, but I want to make sure that I get it right." And you have this with you if you can only take hold of it and use it. Just think of what a tremendous treasure and gift you carry right within yourself in God as the Companion, because He is there so you can draw on Him for friendship. You can draw on Him for help of any kind at all. Any kind at all.

The man who thinks he can get happiness from possessing the things on the outside is very much deluded believe me. Because true happiness comes to the individual who is not attached to anything in the outside. That one is the wealthiest one in the world because having given up everything for his Father and found his Oneness with Him everything that the Father has is his! And Jesus said that all we had to do to get that was to pick up our cross and follow him.

So we deprive ourselves! We think that we have to hang onto these things in the outer sense and we don't at all! All we have to do is to hang onto Him. And if we do that, believe me, we will get everything and more that our hearts ever desired. We become creatures of Light. That blazing Light will go forth from us. We will be able to speak truth. We will be able to write truth. We will be the living example of the truth of God in human form. And we were all meant to be that way. We weren't meant to be creatures that were groveling on the earth, constantly begging for alms, but we were meant to be sharers, heirs with Christ in His kingdom of God.

Now, I probably won't see you again until this fall and then only for a couple of weeks. Then I'm going on a wonderful journey to Europe, to India where I hope to come back with a great deal to share with you. I don't know why I'm going as I've told you before, but that I have to go is very much uppermost within me. So all I do is to blindly obey God's direction within me. It's always been the way between God and myself, you know. He gives me a feeling and He doesn't tell me why I must do this. He just says, "Do it". So then I do it and then I find out after I've met the test, learned the lessons, taken the test and passed the examination as to what it was all about. And so it is with all of life.

So I wish you Godspeed. May His blessings be upon you this whole summer. I would like you instead of chasing here and there and every-

where, trying to make up for not being able to come here, to sit in the quietness of the temple of your own soul and find Him there; to have fellowship with one another; to get together upon occasion as you have been doing and to worship Him; and to love one another and to serve one another. And when we come together in the fall, even though I am not here, I would like to think that all of the time that we spend together is not wasted, that still you will come and you will add the power of God within you to the power of God in every other one who comes. And these dear ones who work so faithfully to serve you, to administer to you when I am not here deserve crowns of glory, believe me, because they give you everything they have. And you should give them, in turn, the love of God within you because that helps them to become greater, to become true ministers of God, to be a success in their effort to serve Him in every way possible.

So don't forget to be brothers and sisters in God. Let the Christ within you lead you until you find one day that in truth you and your Father are one.

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Mother, Papa and Swami Satchidananda  
at Anandashram [Kerala State, India] in 1958

# St. Teresa of Avila

by John Durkin\*

This article is composed of three parts: a short biography, and a synopsis of her last and best known work, *The Interior Castle*, and an introduction to St. Teresa's concepts of prayer.

## Part A: Biography

Mother Teresa of Jesus, now known as St. Teresa of Avila, was born Teresa Sanchez Cepeda Davila y Ahumada in Avila, Spain on March 28, 1515. She died in Alba on October 4, 1582. In historical context, she was born less than 20 years after Columbus discovered America, lived during a time when Spain was at the height of its power and wealth, and died six years before the destruction of the Spanish Armada by the British navy in 1588. Indeed one of her brothers died fighting for Spain in Chile.



St Teresa - Engraving

Great religious forces were rumbling throughout Europe. Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of the Wittenburg castle church in 1517, an important marker in the Protestant Reformation. The Council of Trent from 1545 to 1563 with its *Index of Prohibited Books* (not removed until 1966) and the increased efforts of the Spanish Inquisition which had started in 1478 to suppress other heresies (stopped in 1834) represented components of the Counter-Reformation. Actually the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Inquisition were complex processes that brought out both the best and worst in people; they are mentioned only to give a picture of the times. We still have our official and unofficial inquisitions and lists of prohibited books.

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Interest in spirituality was high; the Illuminists were talking and writing about methods of contemplation (meditation in non-Christian terms). Their writings would fit right in with spiritual writings today although we would have to develop an understanding of some of the terminology used and translate them into terms that would have meaning in our particular approach.

Teresa's grandfather was a forced convert from Judaism who succeeded in having his children married into families of nobility. As a result, Teresa was raised in relative wealth and privilege. Most biographies of her use the clichés of a supposedly strict and pious father and a religious mother who kept a stash of hidden romance novels. In reality her mother married at 15, had 7 children of her own and 2 from her husband's previous marriage, and died at 33. Her father was constantly concerned with the protection of a large and vulnerable family in a climate where support was fickle and life very cheap.

Much is made of Teresa's early interest in stories about religious heroes and martyrs. When she was five she convinced her brother to run away with her to the land of the Moors where they could be martyred and become famous saints. Their uncle found them a short distance from home and brought them home. Later she was involved in building a type of cave in the family backyard so she would be a hermit. This could be the early signs of a saint or the normal behavior of a child with an active imagination.

This interest in romantic views of religion declined when she discovered boys and parties. The spiritual tendencies soon returned but the attraction to and skill in dealing with social situations were very pronounced for the rest of her life. Teresa was beautiful, charming, and adventurous. Not a happy combination for sixteenth century Spanish parents. The tragedy of her mother's death when Teresa was 15 resulted in a crisis of indecision related to her future life. Possibilities seemed to be the unattractive option of marrying or the slightly more acceptable option of joining a convent.

At the age of 20 she entered the Carmelite monastery in Avila against the wishes of her father, although he soon relented. Her first 25 years in convents were a combination of serious illnesses and conflicts between her interest in spirituality and the social life around her. This conflict was made much worse by inept confessors who attributed her mystical experiences to the devil, delusions, mental illness, or the work of an overactive imagination. It was only when someone with both spiritual experience and

theological expertise reassured her that her “consolations” were indications of the work of the spirit and that she should continue her spiritual practices that she was able to start to resolve these conflicts.

About 1560, at the age of 45, Teresa expanded her own spiritual development to include the return of the Carmelite Order to the stricter rule of its beginnings. A small group of sisters formed around her at that time and in 1562 she opened her first reformed convent, St. Joseph of Avila. Other convents and monasteries soon followed, always with difficulty and considerable resistance. In 1567 she convinced St. John of the Cross (see the March, 2003 edition of this Journal) to join her movement.



“The Ecstasy of St. Teresa”  
by Gianlorenzo Bernini

Although usually tired and in poor health, Teresa travelled back and forth in very primitive conditions among these various institutions. One of her most famous lines comes from a time when she was traveling and her wagon was swept away by a river. Teresa is supposed to have said, “God, if this is how you treat your friends, not much wonder you have so few.” The line probably came from another context but why ruin a good story.

Teresa commented frequently on her lack of education. Actually her education was poor even for women of her time and her writings lack the formal theological knowledge and grammatical structures that would characterize a theologian of her time. Her images and metaphors are all the more easily understood however because little previous academic knowledge is required. Claiming lack of knowledge and poor understanding also was a good ruse for dealing with church authorities and the Inquisition in particular. I love the fact that when the Inquisition was examining one of

her books, she wrote another repeating much of the same information and still claiming her lack of qualifications. Moreover all of her works are still in print 400 years later and are available in almost all of the languages of the world; most of those who regarded themselves as superior are long forgotten.

Today some writers focus on St. Teresa's being a woman as the most important feature of her work. I'm sure she would want both men and women to keep their attention on her message rather than her sex. Besides she maintained intense life-long relationships with a number of men such as St. John of the Cross and Jerome Gracian who were her principal supporters and who paid dearly for their defense of her. Some of her most vicious enemies were women both inside and outside the convents. The church authorities all were male however and she constantly had to find ways over, under, and around them. Her writing has an especial appeal for women though, as it is addressed to her sisters.

### **Part B: The Interior Castle**

*The Interior Castle* is St. Teresa's final and most mature book. In it she describes a person's spiritual development in terms of a series of seven mansions within a large castle. These mansions are not stacked on top of each other but rather above, below, in front and behind each other in a beautiful crystal globe. This means that progress toward the central or seventh mansion is not the same for everyone.

As the spirit moves from outer mansions to more central ones, distractions and hindrances become more subtle, approaches to prayer become deeper and more mystical and the experience of God becomes more unitive. In the central or "Seventh Mansion" is the Divine Being in the greatest splendor, illuminating and beautifying all the other mansions, with the illumination increasing as the spirit approaches the center.

### **Part C: Approaches to Prayer**

St. Teresa extolled the virtues of all approaches to prayer including adoration, intercession, and reflection on events in Christ's life and the lives of the saints. However it is her degrees of mystical prayer that are of most interest. A prerequisite for all mystical prayer involves recollection, a repeated act of the will and grace from God where the attention is brought back to our practice. This process ceases only when God grants us the gift of mystical or contemplative prayer.

Contemplative or mystical prayer (similar to meditation in other traditions) has three principal degrees: prayer of the quiet, prayer of (prom-

ised) union, and prayer of spiritual marriage. The principal characteristic of prayer of the quiet is the temporary cessation of thoughts and sensations. There is a feeling that God is close by and we experience peace and deep satisfaction even though we know we have not reached our goal. Sometimes tears come to our eyes and we have no wish to leave this blessed state.

In the prayer of (promised) union we usually are unable to sense, think, or remember in the usual manner. We have no sense of ourselves but still experience incredibly deep spiritual feelings. These feelings often are difficult to describe to others. While the body and mind are asleep to the things of the world, the interior senses of the soul are intensely awake. Even the breath is or seems to be suspended and we experience what St. Teresa called a “death full of delight”. The mind may in some sense want to try and understand what is going on but just doesn’t have the energy. In the “Fifth and Sixth Mansions of the Interior Castle”, this prayer gradually deepens as God prepares the individual for the final stage of prayer.

St. Teresa warns about attempting to create these states and images through the imagination. These efforts will mislead us and cause us to detour on a trail that leads further and further from the true path. On the other hand Teresa also warns of the dangers of allowing the “devil” or those that do not understand to convince us that we are suffering delusions. Mental balance and discussions with others who have shared such experiences are to be sought. In addition we must understand that these states are not the final goal or the “Seventh Mansion” and the spirit must push on.

St. Teresa called her final degree of mystical prayer the “Prayer of Spiritual Marriage”. This is a continuous state of feeling one in the spirit with God. There is a constant experience of God’s presence within even when external events are difficult and outward distress is felt. The spirit is in the “Seventh Mansion,” in direct and continuous union with the Divine. All feelings of separation disappear; indeed there is the feeling that God would pursue us if there were any thoughts or actions of division. Individuals at this degree of prayer development experience continuous feelings of love for other people regardless of the responses they receive in return. While they often are very active in the world, these enlightened individuals experience a sense of merely following what God requires next without effort or worry.

Jesus was central to St. Teresa’s concepts and experiences of mystical prayer. Her approach was theistic rather than monistic, involving an in-

tense relationship with a personal deity as opposed to absorption in an undifferentiated Absolute. She knew the difference between the two and had tried monistic approaches but felt that making Jesus central to her prayer life was the basis of her spiritual development. In India she would have been recognized as a bhakti mystic.

A brief summary of St. Teresa's insights fails to convey either the subtlety or the energy of her writings. Most libraries contain at least her *Interior Castle* and many will have a complete collection of her works; these are easy to read and convey great benefit.

Following is a translation of her most famous poem found on a bookmark she was using in her breviary at the time of her death.

*Let nothing upset you,  
Nothing frighten you,  
All things pass,  
God alone endures.  
Patience  
Yields everything of value.  
Who has God  
Lacks nothing;  
God alone satisfies.*

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## LOON LAKE RETREAT



Main Building for Retreat

On the Memorial Day weekend, many of us spent time at a retreat on Loon Lake in British Columbia. This retreat center is owned by the University of British Columbia and Ruth Lamb arranged for us to meet there. David taught us about the Katha Upanishad's teaching on Adhyatma Yoga.



Down at the lake, Peter in the lead, giving Jerry marching instructions.



A view from the hand operated ferry

### More Loon Lake



David, John, Elaine, Connie & Chris



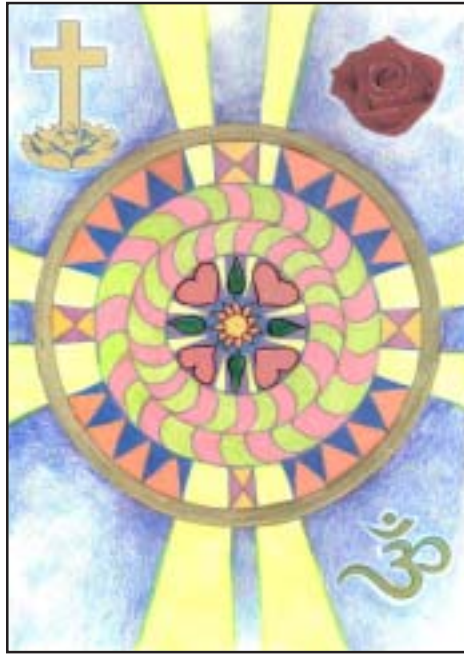
Ruth - Getting thanks from David for arranging retreat



Dianne, Peggy, Jerry, Win & Carla  
(Dianne taught Hatha Yoga classes)

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Vasishta, Guru to Lord Rama, said: “The Creator as well as His creation is Pure Consciousness. When that is realized it is known as Brahman.”



Drawing by Lorraine Bourcier

### Calendar of Events

June	15	Father's Day
	21	Summer Solstice (11:10 a.m. PDT)
July	1	Canada Day
	4	Independence Day
	13	Guru Purnima Day
	25	Babaji's Remembrance Day
August	2	Mahasamadhi of Swami Ramdas
Sept.	1	Labor Day
	23	Fall Equinox (2:47 a.m. PDT)
	25	Mother Krishnabai's Birthday
	26	Lahiri Mahasaya's Birthday
	30	Mahasamadhi of Lahiri Mahasaya

Perfect surrender means to attune your conscious mind to that inner *still small voice* of intuitive wisdom. When you are surrendered in this way all your actions are perfectly attuned, you feel endless peace, joy bubbles up in you from some hidden spring, and you know that you and your heavenly Father are one. Through perfect surrender the Infinite Light of Being shines without restriction; every cell of your Being sings with the vibration of bliss!

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

Take the attitude that nothing can hurt you – that the relation between the physical processes and the mind is established by yourself. You are the one [who] determines your reaction to things. For instance, some days you may experience heat and should it suddenly turn cold, you don't like it. Your mind permits you to become too conscious of the cold, but once you have adjusted your mind to it you don't mind it any more. Take a neutral attitude toward cold and heat and you will be able to clearly balance them.

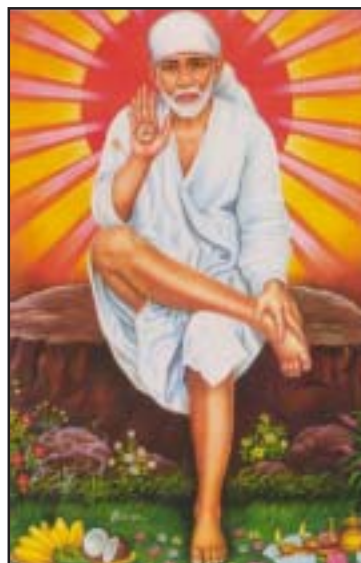
[From "Overcoming Pain"  
June 23, 1947]  
*Paramhansa Yogananda*

In fact, service is the keynote of a selfless and dedicated life.

The spirit of love and service daunts every danger and boldly faces and endures hard toil and great suffering which it meets in the path towards its fulfillment.

Trials and obstacles are only to steel the will for the purpose.

Swami Ramdas



Shirdi Sai Baba