

# The Cross and The Lotus Journal



June 2006, Vol. 7 No. 2

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



Mother Hamilton with Swami Satchidananda in 1977



## The Cross and The Lotus Journal

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

*The Cross and the Lotus, symbol of man.  
East and West blended, join hand in hand.  
Marching toward the infinite light and life divine.  
Lift up your eyes and see the star,  
descending from heaven where e'er you are.  
Be filled with the peace and ecstasy of God's almighty love.  
Om-Amen.*

The Reverend Yogacharya Mother Hamilton

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© 2006 The Cross and The Lotus Publishing is dedicated to the publication of materials that promote God Realization. Our spiritual lineage begins with Jesus Christ and Babaji and flows down to us through Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, Paramhansa Yogananda and Yogacharya Mother Hamilton.

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

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

Dear Friends,

It is with great gratitude that we celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anandashram. At a time when scandals, betrayals of trust and financial impropriety all are pasted on the headlines of newspapers everywhere, it is indeed heartening to be able to point to Anandashram as a positive example of the highest integrity.

Years before Anandashram's founding, when living a householder's life, Papa Ramdas became absorbed in the spiritual practice of chanting Ram Nam, putting to tune

the words *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*; meaning *Victory to God, Victory to God*. After this practice took over Papa's life he felt impelled to leave his family; he donned the colorful ochre robes of a Swami and wandered all over India. Papa was purified through this practice of Ram Nam to the extent he gained the rare Universal Vision, Sahaja Samadhi, experiencing God Consciousness without effort or interruption. After several years of penniless travel Swami Ramdas established an Ashram for spiritual activities and the upliftment of souls of every race, creed, nationality and religion.

This Universal Vision was not only a gain for Papa, but a boon for the entire world. Jesus once declared:

***And I, if I am lifted up from earth*** [ly state of consciousness into the Heavenly State of Consciousness], ***will draw all peoples to Myself*** [rapidly increase the spiritual evolution for all Mankind]. [John 12:32]



This statement is true for any soul that gains complete liberation in his or her lifetime here on earth. Freed souls such as Papa are portals to Infinity; once established in Divine Consciousness their forms and personalities become divinized. All those who come to such a Master, approaching that one in sincerity, humility and receptivity become divinized themselves. This was the experience for Mother Hamilton when she traveled to Anandashram in 1957.

Anandashram has had the rare phenomenon of having successors to Papa who are pure, realized souls in their own right. Mother Krishnabai and Swami Satchidananda have continued in the divine Light that Papa manifested to the world. In fact Papa's watchwords of *universal love and service* have found expression in so many inmates of the Ashram that the acts of kindness flowing from a desire to serve and love are far too many to know, much less to recount. To be in the midst of this vibrancy of Spirit is a wonder.

I used the word *gratitude* at the beginning of this writing. Gratitude has deepened its meaning for me through time and experience. As one approaches God-Consciousness gratitude becomes a spontaneous feeling whose significance continues to grow. Like a bud that bursts into bloom gratitude yearns to break out of any confines in the heart to reveal all its petals of loving expression.

I find that kind of gratitude working in my heart as I think upon the great gifts Anandashram has given to all of us. To quote once again from Jesus:

***Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*** [John 15:13]

There are many ways to *lay down one's life for your friends*. Certainly to give one's life in service to God and to God within each one you meet is laying down your life for your friends. Most people are filled with their own thoughts and feelings, so much so they rarely really see another for who he or she really is. Going one step further, seeing the inherent Divine Spark within another is all the more rare in life. Papa saw God in each one he met; he felt this was the greatest way to help souls to evolve. To emulate the great Masters such as Papa, Mataji and Swami Satchidananda by serving God in one and all (*laying down your life*) is

the greatest form of gratitude and respect you can make.

Let us celebrate the anniversary of Anandashram by reflecting on what it stands for: its purity of purpose, its desire to serve and love one and all and to lift all humanity into Divine Realms. Make it your deep intention to emulate the great Masters: love and serve God in all whom you meet; seek to realize God with all of your heart, mind and soul; fulfill the great purpose for your incarnation, even as Papa found in his own life and extended to Anandashram, the Abode of Bliss. We are indeed blessed to have this sacred example in the world and I extend my loving gratitude for its presence in our world. †

In Divine Love and Gratitude,

*David*

*In celebration of Anandashram's 75th Anniversary, May 15, 2006, we are featuring articles about Anandashram and its Saints.*

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



Bhajan Hall, Anandashram



Mother in the 1960s

## Papa and Ram Nam

**This letter was written by Mother from Anandashram, December 1957. It was sent to devotees in the USA and later published in “The Vision”.**

This is the birth month of the Christ, that Holy Season when it seems as though the whole world is still, waiting in breathless expectancy for the glory of His coming. I, too, feel His spirit upon me as I go within my Temple and lay the flowers of my devotion upon the altar of my love for Him. As I kneel before Him in adoration, my heart is filled to overflowing because, through Him, I have been brought to the foot of the Father God—Ramdas, and I live in a house of bliss—Anandashram. Three years ago as I sat beside Papa in the Seattle Airport waiting until it was time for his plane to take off, I said to him, “Papa, shall I ever see you again?” He smiled his ever-blissful smile and answered, “If the wish of the devotee’s heart is great enough, God always grants his desire.” It was these words which lit the candle of determination within our hearts until, through the grace of God, the power of prayer and the necessary acts of renunciation, we, my husband and I, can bear testimony to the truth of Papa’s statement because here we are in sacred India basking in the light of his presence.

These are wonderful days filled to the brim with the love and wisdom of God. Each morning Papa comes out to watch and supervise the building of a new platform under the neem and banyan trees. This was badly needed because wherever Papa is, there the devotees gather like bees to sip the nectar of God which flows constantly from his lips. The result was that not only did the space provided under the banyan tree become a little overcrowded at times, but also there was insufficient shade to protect everyone from the hot sun. The new platform extends straight across, between and around both trees, with broad steps leading up from the road which is to be widened also. It will be truly beautiful when it is finished.

It has been most interesting for us as Westerners to watch the development of this work which is all done by hand and without the benefit of machinery. The steps and the walls are made of native stone which is shaped and curved with a hand tool. Everything, including heavy stones, baskets of fill dirt, baskets of mortar and plaster, etc, is transported from place to place on the heads of men and women. It is a particularly novel sight to see the brown skinned women, many of them with beautiful faces and statuesque bodies, balance these baskets on top of a small gunnysack-type cap which covers their heads, carry them gracefully from one place to another and, with equal grace, bend from the waist down to do whatever work is necessary on the ground. They have been accustomed to doing this since childhood. As a group of us sat back watching this act of God's lila going on under the trees one of Papa's devotees who is an artist as well as an architect, remarked that it would make a perfectly beautiful mural and we all agreed with him wholeheartedly.

From 10:30 until 1:30 Papa reads, rests and has his lunch. Then comes the most perfect time of the day when we are privileged to go to his room and gather round his feet. A comfortable armchair, the seat, back and arms of which are covered with a beautiful blue cushion-like material embroidered in white, together with a small footstool padded with the same material, make a charming frame for his beloved form. A small boy sits with his back against the wall pulling a rope which waves a punkah back and forth over Papa's head, providing the breeze necessary to keep the room comfortable.

We sit in semi-lotus posture forming a half circle around him and, with everything in readiness, Papa beams at us, seems to listen while God tells him whether he should open a book and read to us, tell us a story or just open his mouth and let the pure wisdom and glory of God pour forth from his lips, and then for two hours the world ceases to exist because he takes us into the land beyond time and space where we meet his Beloved face-to-face. Sometimes he reads to us—lately from Naimy’s *The Book of Mirdad* and Gibran’s *Jesus the Son of Man*—and when he reads, the words take on a new form and beauty because he breathes into them the Spirit of the living God. At other times he tells us stories of saints, gently pointing out the moral involved; again he tells of the days when he was searching for God, subjecting himself to every hardship and austerity known to man. But the most wonderful tale of all, which is truly not a story but the greatest ever-living reality, is about the day when God took him up and, making him one with Himself, gave him Universal Vision wherein he sees His light everywhere and all beings as himself. Ah Papa, what a rare privilege to be in your presence—nay, to even think of you, because to think of you is to think of God and brings us one step nearer to our goal.

In the November issue of “The Vision” was a small supplement which read:

*The readers of The Vision are hereby informed that Swami Ramdas’ general health continues to be fairly good. He is not observing mauna or silence. He is normally active. But as complete rest is considered necessary, he has stopped touring for three years and correspondence for the future.*

As a result of this notice loving friends and devotees everywhere, not able to believe the assurance given that Papa’s health continues to be fairly good, are telephoning long distance, sending telegrams and writing letters of anxious inquiry until he is fairly deluged with them. He sits in the midst of it, blesses them for their love and concern, and laughs at the wonderful lila God is providing for him. He says that for years he has been answering many letters every day but that all of a sudden, as he tried to dictate, he commenced to have a headache. As long as he dictated, the headache persisted. When he

stopped dictating, the headache ceased. This continued day after day until he realized that this was God's way of telling him that He did not wish him to write any more letters. He says he has poured himself out in all of the books which he has written and that the devotee will find the answer to every problem, to every inquiry if he will but continue to read and study his teachings. He does have some rheumatic pain and slight general debility due to age, but if all of his loved ones could be here and see him pursue all of his usual activities in normal fashion, their fears would cease and they could again take up the constant repetition of Ram Nam which alone will keep him here and take them to God.

It is his feeling that with the cessation of his traveling and writing activities, his constant communion with God will not only serve them, but the whole world, in a far greater manner. He is always available to all who wish to come and see him and it is his greatest prayer that, forgetting all else, they will fix their full attention upon the one God, the Author of their beings, and through repetition of His Holy Name, find that it is Papa himself who sits upon the altar of their hearts.

After dinner and his evening walk we all gather together in the Bhajan Hall to sing sacred songs and for Arati. There are some wonderful voices both among the devotees at the Ashram and those who come to visit so we have many wonderful evenings. The whole atmosphere becomes so greatly charged with the Spirit of God that the sparrows fly in and add their voices in the chanting of His Blessed Name. It seemed as though I must be dreaming when one evening, having been in deep meditation, I opened my eyes and saw a sparrow and a large honey bee sitting close together on the floor before Papa as though they, too, had come to worship at his feet.

And over the whole Ashram hovers the Spirit of the Divine Mother, the Blessed Mother Krishnabai who, with her heavenly smile and her bliss-filled eyes, ministers to all of her children everywhere.

Oh, Blessed Lord Jesus, here is the fulfillment of your dream! Here is Divine Love and "Peace on Earth Good Will Toward All Men!" †

**In separation from God is man's greatest misery.**

*Mahatma Gandhi*

## Papa—Like a Little Child

Excerpt from a talk given by Mother Hamilton in Seattle, Washington  
On May 15, 1977 entitled, “A Little Child Shall Lead Them”

As no doubt you know—you could not help but know—I read a great deal to you from Swami Ramdas’ writings. The reason I do this is because this great master had picked up his cross and had followed the Christ. Not in that way perhaps, although he always carried the Christian Bible with him. He carried, also, the works of the Buddha and he carried the works of Krishna. These three scriptures he lived with as he sought God within himself.

He was a completely illumined soul and every word that came from that man’s mouth was a jewel of wisdom from God. I feel very honored, very privileged to have spent a full year with him and to have had him by my side when I went through this most tremendous experience of walking the way of my own cross, of giving myself to God completely, of crucifying my human ego and of having him help me with the transformation into the Divine. I pay tribute to him in every way possible as I do to my own guru, the one who started me on the path, who opened up a completely new world for me. He [Yogananda] taught me the ways and the means. I went the way and used the means and then at the final test when man must decide if he wants to be his real Self or continue on in the little human self, then God sent me to this great master [Papa]. So this is why I read so much of his writings to you because I consider him to be so great in God.....

....It is wonderful when you get this universal vision and you follow the path that Ramdas followed as he described so vividly here. [Mother is referring to an article of Papa’s entitled, *The Divine Alchemy*—editor.]

It was not an easy path. Any of you who have read *In the Vision of God*, *In Quest of God*, know what tremendous obstacles this man had in his path and how he kept on. He surmounted every single one of them. How did he do this? By simply chanting the name of God, by keeping God’s name on his lips eternally, constantly, by seeing God in every form that came to him, in every experience of his life and he became like a little child.

I know this because I was with this master in very intimate circumstances day after day. Many of us would gather in his room and we would listen to him and his childlike laughter. His complete faith and trust in his Father God was the most beautiful thing you would want to see. For him there was nothing but God everywhere, nothing but light, nothing but bliss. All were his children, every one of them. He had realized this Oneness with God which all of us as Christians strive to attain. Yet we say that Christ is the only one who can teach us and as I discussed with you last Sunday, there have been many, many Christs on this earth. Is God so limited that He can create only one? †



## Papa's Inaugural Address

Opening Ceremony of Anandashram, May 15, 1931

**Ramdas has the supreme delight to speak to you today a few words at the inauguration of this holy ashram. The ideal which the ashram holds before it is universal love and service, based upon a vision of divinity in all beings and creatures of the world. Here every man, woman or child, to whatever denomination, creed, or caste the person may belong, shall have free access. This is a place where every effort will be made to cultivate the spirit of mutual love and service, so that what is realized within its walls may prove as an example for the right conduct of human life in the outside world. The Lord is our help and guide in all matters. May He with all His bounty shower His blessings on the great service which this home of love and bliss has undertaken to discharge.**

## Our Beloved Papa—in Commemoration

**A speech given by Mother Hamilton to Papa's disciples at the home of Sree D.V.S. Gupta on the anniversary of Papa's Mahasamadhi.**

I am very privileged to be with all of you this evening when we are gathered together to do honor to our Beloved Papa. It has been ten years since I was at the Ashram with Papa but I am sure most of you have heard of me. It has been a wonderful ten years filled with service and love for God. Everyone says, "How far I have to go to attain Him!" However, if we but keep our full attention upon God and Guru and stop looking for results, the day will come when we are lifted up into the arms of the Infinite Beloved and we will see Him face-to-face. Let us pray to Him, "Open my eyes that I may see Thy face. Open my ears that I may hear Your footsteps everywhere. Open my heart that I may feel the glory of Thy love."

No doubt most of you have read the account of my first meeting with Papa in the recent issues of *The Vision*. It was a very great honor and privilege to meet him and to receive an invitation from him to visit him in India. We sold everything we had, gave up all of our worldly possessions and came here to continue our quest for our God-realization. In the process I paid the supreme price but there is one thing each of us must do if we want this supreme experience and that is to love God more than we love ourselves. We must surrender to Him everything we are, everything we have, not keeping anything for ourselves.

Now what does this mean? It doesn't mean that we can't enjoy all of the good things that the Heavenly Father has given us. It means simply that we must not be attached to them nor possessed by them. It doesn't mean that we must leave the world and go into seclusion. We must stand right where we are wherever God has placed us. Papa was a great believer in this. He didn't want anyone outside of those who [were] directly connected with him in the Ashram to stay there too long. He wanted to give the eternal Truth to those who came before him and then asked them to apply that Truth to their everyday lives. He said we must take God with us because in reality He is within each of us and wherever we go, there He is also.

We cannot escape from Him. This is a wonderful thought. If we know that He is forever with us dwelling within this temple which He has cre-

ated, then we cannot help but give Him the best we have to offer in every department of our lives. Don't work for *you*. Don't work for your families. Don't work for your employers. Work only for God in all that you do and you will render a greater service to those you love and are responsible for than you ever dreamed possible.

The Christian scriptures say, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." People don't want to give up their worldly desires. They don't realize that the very things they so desperately hang on to are the very things which cause them trouble and worry. If they would only empty themselves of their desires and lay everything they are and everything they have at the feet of God, He would take their burdens and fill them with the bliss of His presence. *Let go and let God* as Papa said.

He was completely universal. How fortunate you are to have him for your Guru! He was one of the greatest ones who ever lived. All paths led to Papa. There was no person who was not made welcome regardless of race, color or creed. No matter who their Guru, the devotee was still welcome because God was within that one. He asked for nothing and he gave everything freely and wholeheartedly twenty-four hours a day. How wonderful he was, how sweet! But above all, he was such a joyous saint.

Do you remember how he used to sit outdoors on the platform under the banyan tree or in his room and tell stories? He would be so filled with joy at his own jokes, his own stories, that he would slap his knees as his feet danced up and down. I remember so well the evenings when we sat with him under the stars. As he talked to us about God the effulgence, the spiritual light which permeated his being would shine forth and gradually spread as far as the eye could see. Afterward many of us would gather together and talked about it in awe and wonder. We knew we had seen Divinity made manifest in human form.

In the Christian scriptures it says that, "Jesus gave up the ghost." Everyone in the Christian world thinks that at this point Jesus died a physical death in the way that we accept it but this is not the true meaning of it. It means that He *gave up* the human ego, the *ghost* of the real *Self*. The scriptures say further that after the resurrection He appeared to His disciples and gave them the power of the *Holy Ghost* or the Divine ego.

When the soul attains this oneness with God, this consciousness of the bliss of the Divine Presence within, it is lifted into a new dimension where that which was once human has been transformed into the Divine. Man cannot function consciously through a body without an ego—a center from which a sense of I-ness stems. The ego which remains after the crucifixion or transformation is indeed *Holy* but it is still a *ghost* and must forever remain so as long as it retains a form.

Dedicate your lives to God and to your Guru. What greater thing is there in this world? As many of you may have heard, I paid the supreme price at the ashram when Papa put me through the mystical crucifixion. The sadhana which I undertook was tremendous and the physical suffering I had to endure was beyond human conception but out of the experience came revelations so real, so powerful, so wonderful about the true meaning of the scriptures that they and the price I had to pay for the *Pearl* was great indeed. The experience was shattering and crucifying in every aspect, so much so that the nerve centers in my spine were paralyzed and when I was finally able to leave for America I had to travel by plane and wheelchair.

Yet, having given God everything in full measure with all of my heart and mind and soul, today I am able to stand before you like this with perfect health and strength and consciousness. This body has been subject to so much. It has had seven operations, a serious heart condition, tuberculosis, intestinal nerve ulcers and Asiatic dysentery. It has had three children, has lost some and has been paralyzed twice. It has been cold and hungry and endured beatings. And last but certainly not least, it was put through the crucifixion under Papa's direction. Still, in spite of all of this, here I stand before you. Why? Because I love God more than I love myself and I gave myself to Him in full measure. If I can do it, being one mere small woman, so can you. The same God that was in Papa so abundantly and in me is in every single one of His creatures all over the world. We are all one family in Him.

This is the religion of man which Papa taught. It is a universal religion that has no organization and no outer form. Organizations are binding and we should not be bound. The Master comes to bring us freedom. He

doesn't come to keep us in bondage. Still we insist on binding ourselves. We constantly want to start new organizations, to build a new form around Truth and to label it. I and those who follow with me to God call ourselves "The Master's Disciples" because God is the Master and we are all—each and every one of us—His disciples. If those I work with must have an organization which is called by a name, then this is it because every man, woman and child in this world is a member of God's organization. Let us only want to belong to God, as in Truth we do already.

The Guru comes to lead us to Him and it is said that God and Guru are not different. Don't you see, if we forget all the names and all of the religious forms and said, "Come all of my brothers and sisters—let us all kneel down and worship the one Father-God," what a wonderful world it would be! We wouldn't need the United Nations. We wouldn't need Unesco. We would have Masters at the head of nations instead of presidents and kings. It is the truth and one day this will come to pass.

We who have had the privilege of seeing the Universal Vision manifested in Papa must all work together to attain that goal of perfect harmony and unity. The seeds must be planted. This is what he came for and he had the dream and the certain knowledge that God would bring it to pass. He is depending on you and you and you and me—every one of us who were with him—to make this vision a reality.

How do we do it? We don't go out and attempt to reform the world. We reform the world within ourselves. My Guru, Paramhansa Yogananda said constantly, "Change yourself and you will change thousands." If we don't like the chaotic conditions in the world today, we must remember that it is we who made them so. Every thought, every word, every action which emanates from man carries with it its own vibration. For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction. If man sends forth from himself thoughts of hate, lust, greed and power a vibratory force is built up adversely. When these thoughts, words and actions from every man are multiplied they cause spontaneous combustion and we have as a result wars, famine, disease and tremendous upheavals in nature. The only way to change the world is to change ourselves because the world is made up of individuals. We must

start right where we are. We must strive with everything we have to be what we should be in order that we may attain our God-realization. When we find our oneness with Him we are filled with the radiance of His eternal presence and He can use us as a candle on a hilltop to light the way for others.

This is a special day on which we have all gathered together to pay homage to our Beloved Papa. We can show him no greater love; do him no greater honor than to begin today to live the Truth which he taught. He is still with us in the consciousness of the Spirit because there is no such thing as death. God is life and life is eternal. What we think of as death is only a little deeper sleep and we awaken to a new dawn, a new day and a new world in God with a new opportunity for awareness of Him. We must take advantage of every moment we are here to draw ever closer to Him and when we sing the sacred Ram Nam chant we should close our eyes and do it with full concentration. We must not just sit and sing looking at everyone and the things around us, thinking of a thousand other things. We must think of the meaning of the words we are singing and take them deep into our consciousness. We must sing to God—sing only to Him with your full attention upon Him. “Lord, let my attention be forever fixed upon Thee. Let me love Thee, let me serve Thee, let me worship Thee alone. Thou art all and All in all.” So when you sing “Om Sri Ram Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram” think of what you are saying: “Victory to God, Victory to God.” You can do no greater service to yourself or to your Guru.

May your blessed Guru be forever enthroned upon the altar of your hearts. Through constant communion with Him you will become one with the Heavenly Father in whom he dwells. †


**In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.**

Proverbs 16:9

**Taking the first footstep with a good thought, the second with a good word, and the third with a good deed, I entered Paradise.**

Zoroaster

*A letter written by Swami Ramdas to Mother's husband, Ralph Hamilton five years after they visited Anandashram.*



**ANANDASHRAM**  
(Public Charitable Trust)

Phone: KANHANGAD 36

F. O. ANANDASHRAM,  
KANHANGAD, S. Hy.

**26th April 1963**

Beloved Friend,

Happy to receive your loving letter of the 17th April. It is good news that Mother has recovered from her recent illness and except for slight physical weakness she is all right. She is indeed a great spiritual force and she is imparting the light divine to everyone who comes in contact with her. We are also getting letters from her friends, offering homage to her. May God grant her strength to continue her spiritual ministry.

Both Mother Krishnabai and Ramdas are keeping fairly good health.

Now-a-days we have in the Ashram a number of friends from the West. The Ashram activities are running smoothly by the grace of God. May His grace ever pour upon you all.

Love and blessings to you, Mother and all others there.

*Thank you for  
your loving gift  
of \$ 10/-*

*R*

Ever your Self,  
*Ramdas*

Mr. Ralph B. Hamilton  
Seattle, USA

## Congratulations Anandashram

*To mark the 75th anniversary of Anandashram, we sent a hand-stitched tapestry/banner expressing the love and gratitude the devotees of this path feel for Anandashram, its saints and devotees. The letter below accompanied the banner. – Cate Koler*

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

**Congratulations on Anandashram's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

Beloved Swami Satchidanandaji, Swami Muktananda, Swami Sannyasananda and Ashram inmates,

How can words express what Anandashram has meant to all of us here! It has nourished our souls, instructed us on the Path, and allowed us to have the Darshan of Saints and the company of wonderful souls. God surely blessed the world that day 75 years ago when Beloved Papa and Mataji founded Anandashram.

While at the ashram this January/February I was prompted within by Mother Krishnabai and Mother Hamilton to help create a commemorative work of art that would express our gratitude to Anandashram and its Saints and Devotees. I first took this idea to artist, Lorraine Bourcier, a longtime disciple of Mother Hamilton's who drew the design on paper. Then I took that drawing to master craftswoman, Lois Hickenbottom, another disciple of Mother's and Yogacharya David's sister-in-law. Without her inspiration, expertise and hard-work, the project would have remained a dream. A disciple of David's, Connie Meisner was prompted to make a donation that paid for all the beautiful materials. And last, but not least, Yogacharya David and his wife Carla had a plaque made to be displayed beside this work.

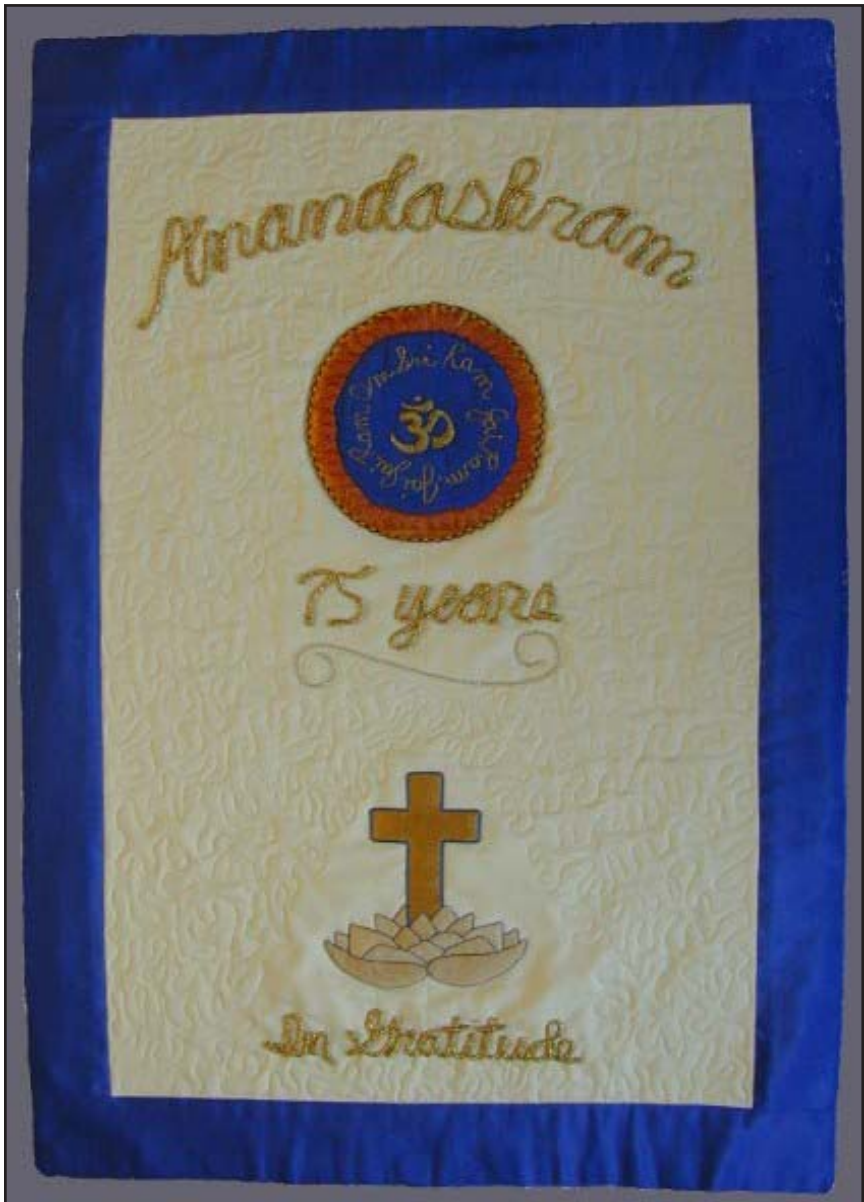
The design includes an adaptation of the Ashram symbol and one below it, the Cross and the Lotus, which represents the path Mother Hamilton taught, a blend of Christian and Hindu Yogic teachings.

May the Lord bless Anandashram! May its motto of Universal Love and Service spread throughout the world and inspire all to the Realization of their Oneness with Him!

We prostrate before you. In love and gratitude,

Disciples of Mother Hamilton and Yogacharya David Hickenbottom





*The banner that was hand-stitched by Lois Hickenbottom and Cate Koler and sent to Anandashram to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the ashram. Design assistance by Lorraine Bourcier.*

*This plaque is to be displayed beside the banner shown on the previous page.*




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*The following letter was written by Yogacharya David and sent to Swami Satchidananda the day after the 75th Anniversary celebrations.*

May 16, 2006

My dearest Swamiji,

My heart is full as I write to you. Last night we had a kirtan to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Anandashram. What gratitude fills the heart as I think on the many, many blessings I, and all of us here, have received from Papa, Mataji, you, and all the inmates so happily ensconced in God's Abode of Bliss.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> we chanted in remembrance of the Ashram while at our Loon Lake Retreat. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May we watched the DVD of your voice-over film of Papa's earlier days as he went about his day. What joy to see such a God-man in ordinary activities and the perfect service from Mataji, yourself and others to Papa. I also read from letters that Mother Hamilton sent from the Ashram during their stay in 1957-8. In one letter Mother wrote:

*The longer I am here the more convinced I am that Papa knows every God-blessed thought and word that passes through our minds and mouths because as certainly as I think*

*or say something in our room, I no more than get with him again when he has the stage all set with an answer to the very thing I have thought or said. I asked him one day if he knew exactly what went on inside of everyone and he grinned and said, "Ramdas knows and he knows not." Very enlightening but I asked God what he meant and He told me that when Papa's consciousness is in the absolute state which is beyond duality he does not know because he is not functioning on that plane but when he is functioning in the dynamic state of Christ Consciousness he knows all things. I am glad God talks to me and tells me some of the things I want to know.*

Along with the readings and the film we also, of course, chanted Ram Nam. The atmosphere was surcharged with spiritual vibrancy, blessings from Papa, Mataji, Mother and yourself. How can one properly describe or give justice to the blessings that have come to all here, nay come to those all over the world whether they know it or not, for the upliftment of all mankind by your Grace.

Each day we pray for your health; **your total and complete recovery**. I know it has been a long struggle, yet I also feel what great blessings have come to the world in your sufferings. As Papa said at one time (quoting from memory) *the flower exudes more of its perfumed fragrance when it is crushed than at any other time*. Surely your fragrance continues to waft over vast oceans and we feel you as a living Presence; as a powerful and uplifting Spiritual Force.

May you receive my, and our, deepest love and gratitude for all that you do, for the Ashram and the many blessings we have received from so many selfless sadhakas there, and for Papa and Mataji and their boundless spiritual blessings.

You are ever in our thoughts, ever in our hearts. †

In deepest love and gratitude

*David*

## My Pilgrimage to India

By Raul Becerra

Hari Om,

When I arrived at Anandashram (afternoon of February 22, 2006) and was assigned a room, I unpacked, put on my kirta (shirt) and pajamas (pants), got a meal and walked around that beautiful sanctuary. I felt I was home.

The next morning at 5:45 am and every morning, seven days a week Swami Sannyasananda opens the doors to the Mahasamadhi Shrines and has a brief ceremony before we start chanting *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* and walk around Papa's or Mataji's tombs<sup>1</sup> in a clockwise direction chanting His holy name. I remember my first morning in Papa's shrine chanting *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram* for a half an hour; I was weeping like a child who just lost his mother.

Every morning before breakfast everybody would gather at the Bhajan Hall chanting and offering prasad in the form of a flower and placing it on the shrine of Papa and Mataji. If you want to see what the Bhajan Hall and the Mahasamadhi shrines look like see the ashram website.<sup>2</sup>

At every meal at the dining hall the men would be on one side of the hall and the women on the other side; this is a rule at the ashram and I think a good one. As one enters the hall you hear music on tape—either Papa or someone else singing, *Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*; the whole time one is eating the chanting goes on. What a beautiful tradition!

The whole time I was at the ashram there was a constant remembrance of his Holy Name—eating, talking, chanting, walking, and sleeping—nothing but God everywhere!

I am very grateful to Swami Sannyasananda in assisting me with my pilgrimage in India. Without his assistance it would not have been possible for me to travel all over India in such a short time. Swami would say, “If Papa wants it to happen it will,” and it did. In twenty-two days I was able to spend time at Sri Ramanashram; Saint Thomas' cave in Madras or Chennai as it is called now; from there I



went to Hyderabad to receive Swami Satchidananda's darshan<sup>3</sup>; then to North Kolkata<sup>4</sup> to see the Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda Mahasamadhi shrines; the Kali Temple<sup>5</sup> and of course I had to see Master's house<sup>6</sup> and what a blessing that was. After three days in this region it was time for me to go to New Delhi to see the Taj Mahal and Krishna's birth place, and my last stop (as a bonus) for five days in Rishikesh on the Ganges right across from a statue of Shiva in a full lotus in Samadhi, what a holy trip this was!

I am very thankful for the connection between Mother and Papa, without it this trip would not have been possible. Truly a blessing from my Guru Mother and Papa: everything went smoothly the whole blessed pilgrimage, not even a bump along the way. God, Christ, Guru.

My visit to Anandashram was filled with peace and bliss. The love and hospitality was there for all. God willing, I will be back to that very Holy Land. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. †

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1 Called Mandirs: buildings for worship have been built on the locations of where Papa and Mataji were cremated.

2 <http://imageevent.com/anandakutir>

3 Swami Satchidananda was on an extended stay in Hyderabad at this time.

4 Also known as Calcutta

5 Kali Temple at Dakshineswar where Ramakrishna lived and practiced intense sadhana; also where Master had the vision of Kali, the Divine Mother when visiting with his sister and brother-in-law.

6 At 4 Gupar Road, boyhood home to Yoganandaji

## My Visit to Anandashram, January 30, 1996

By Larry Koler

After traveling by air from Bombay to Mangalore, I took a taxi and arrived at Anandashram in Kanhangad at about 2:30 pm. Upon alighting from the taxi, I immediately met Swami Vishwananda who was all love and service to me. I asked him if Swami Satchidananda was at the ashram and whether I could meet him. Swami Vishwananda informed me that Swamiji was resting and that I could meet him at 3:15 pm. He asked me if I had eaten and offered me some tea or coffee.

After being given room 52 in the “L” building and having a rest, I went to Swamiji’s meeting room for darshan. Gopi\* was reading from Papa’s book, *The Divine Life*. What a beautiful voice Gopi has; his inflection in reading was very good and Papa’s words really came alive. I found myself fully focused on the whole reading at the end of which Swamiji came in from the back room and sat down.

Swami Vishwananda motioned me forward to meet Swamiji. I then sat in front of him, to his right. We exchanged a few sentences while he was greeting others and dealing with the many things for which he is responsible. As I sat at his feet, a divine mood settled on me and I felt the

Presence of God very strongly. My only prior experience with this was from being in my guru’s presence (Mother Hamilton was my guru) and at first I just assumed it was her energy and spirit.

I had written a letter to Swamiji a month before asking if I might visit the ashram and also interview him regarding Mother Hamilton’s visit to Anandashram in 1957. He had replied in a fax that I was most welcome. Today, he said that he did not remember much of Mother’s time at the ashram in 1957-1958 but he would be glad to have a talk soon.




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\* Gopi became Swami Muktananda in 1999.

I asked if the room that we were sitting in was the one where Papa used to meet his devotees. He answered that it was the Bhajan Hall. We said goodbye to Swamiji and as we walked towards it, I felt uplifted in God. I mentioned this feeling to Swami Vishwananda. I felt anticipation mounting as I realized that I was actually going to see where Papa used to sit for darshan. For some reason, this thought seemed too wondrous; it was a dream come true.

Swami Vishwananda preceded me into the Bhajan Hall. As I turned right and saw a life-sized photograph of Papa placed on a cushioned chair, a wonderful feeling of peace enfolded me. Tears poured from my eyes as I thought of the wonderful gift that God had given the world by coming in Papa's blessed form. I remained silent for a minute or two and then Swami Vishwananda showed me into Papa's Samadhi room. Again, the feeling of peace overwhelmed me and tears poured anew. I was so struck by the thought of Papa actually living in this holy building. My mind struggled to actualize it, to realize what these walls had witnessed. Though Papa's humility gave the impression of a simple ascetic and though he gave us easy access to difficult theological and mystical issues, his spiritual stature is infinite and the effulgence from his Spirit radiated out from this small room and changed the world. His presence is still felt here on this earth, ever giving, ever loving and compassionate.

Swami Vishwananda and I then went down to the kitchen and had some coffee. We had a wonderful talk about Papa. He explained that he had known Papa since 1942, and we talked of how special Papa was and how the world has benefited from God manifesting in this unique way. I told him of how Mother Hamilton taught as much from Papa's teachings and writings as she did from her own guru, Paramhansa Yogananda. All of us disciples came to love Papa, Mataji and Swamiji very much because of the wonderful stories that Mother told us about them and from Papa's many books: *In Quest of God* being especially transforming.

Mother Krishnabai is also a large part of the experience at Anandashram in ways that are unexpected. Her touch is everywhere evident. How greatly she gave of herself so that all visitors can make the most of the spiritual opportunity that God has given this world

through Papa. Such beauty and peace she brought to the ashram's setting! My mind often turns to Mataji and a spontaneous prayer of gratitude goes up to her for what she gives to us all. Before visiting Anandashram, I knew that she was integral to Papa's story and to the spiritual upliftment of mankind. Now, when I read some story about Mataji's compassion and wisdom I feel tears come to my eyes and I feel the great love that she continues to shower on the world.

Swami Satchidananda's darshan has changed me permanently. The spiritual vibrations that issue forth from him are strong and pure and filled with God. He allowed me to interview him on video camera regarding Mother Hamilton's 1957 trip to the ashram. It went off very well and he remembered a great deal from that time. Mother was there for 9 or 10 months. Some of her stay at the ashram is described in *The Gospel of Swami Ramdas*, but he filled in many parts that I had never heard.

Over the next few days we had several conversations about Papa and Mataji, Mother Hamilton and the spiritual life. He taught me several important lessons. I still feel God's Grace coming from him. It is as though the many miles that separate us are not real, and it gives me a profound peace when I vividly remember sitting at his feet.

These experiences have made me know that Anandashram is a God-charged place, a Tirtha (sacred area), as Swami Satyananda Giri calls it in Papa's Silver Jubilee publication. All the many things that are claimed for Perfect Masters are evident at this holy site. Papa's very body was purified for the use of the world. Each place that he touched is holy. Each person who met him is blessed. Each person who served him is worthy of respect. †

*This article was written after Larry's first visit to Anandashram in 1996. Since his visit several of Mother's and David's devotees have made the pilgrimage there. The article was originally published in the Summer 1998 edition of the newsletter, "Om Sri Ram", a periodical by the Satsang Foundation of San Diego.*

## Tune in With the Cosmic Sound

From “Metaphysical Meditations” by Paramhansa Yogananda

Listen to the cosmic sound in the sensitive right side of your head. Feel it spreading through the brain. Hear its continuous pounding roar. Now hear and feel it spreading over the spine and bursting open the doors of the heart. Feel it resounding through every tissue, every feeling, every cord of your nerves. Every blood cell, every thought is dancing on the sea of roaring vibration.



Observe the spread of the volume of the cosmic sound. It sweeps through the body and mind into the earth and the surrounding atmosphere, into the airless ether, and into millions of universes of matter.

Meditate on the marching spread of the cosmic sound. It has passed through the physical universes to the subtle shining veins of rays that hold all matter in manifestation.

The cosmic sound is commingling with millions of multicolored rays. The cosmic sound has entered the realm of cosmic rays. Listen to, behold, and feel the embrace of the cosmic sound and the eternal light. The cosmic sound now pierces through the heart-fires of cosmic energy and they both melt within the bosom of cosmic consciousness and cosmic joy. The body melts into the universe. The universe melts into the soundless voice. The sound melts into the all-shining light. And the light enters the bosom of infinite joy. †

# Together: Revealing the Divine Image

By Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

We have continued to have retreats in order to meet the needs of aspirants to go deeper into the removal of barriers that keep the Divine Image from being revealed within us.

**Kriya Initiation:** As in keeping with my inner direction in these past few years, I have been giving Kriya Yoga Initiation in small groups at various Centers. On the Spring Equinox I gave Kriya Initiation in Ashland, Oregon. Peter Schultz, Center Leader, has been holding meditation meetings since moving to Ashland. The Presence of our lineage Masters was very powerful. What a precious gift and a sacred honor to carry on this tradition as decreed by Master and Mother. Our Kriya Family grows.

**Forgiveness Workshops:** On Hornby Island, B.C. we recently met to discuss practical methods for forgiveness, creating definite results that freed the participants of past injuries and gave them ongoing tools for staying *clean and clear* in the future. Phyllis Victory arranged for a magnificent location and hosted the workshop on Hornby. Connie Meisner, Center Leader for Prince Rupert, B.C. hosted a Forgiveness Workshop making all the arrangements for my time there. A third workshop was held in Bellingham, WA, hosted by Center Leader, Charmie Gilcrease.

The deeper we go into forgiveness the more it is realized that the lack of forgiveness (of letting go) keeps us from enjoying complete physical, mental/emotional and spiritual health. Forgiveness enacted on the deeper levels, using specific techniques, allows us to free ourselves of the chains that tie us to anchors of the murky past. New health and fresh life-energy (prana) flows as a refreshing and life-giving baptism as we truly let go of past hurts and injuries.

**Resistance and Fear on Our Spiritual Path** was the topic for our semi-annual retreat at Loon Lake, near Maple Ridge, B.C. nestled in the Malcolm Knapp Research Forest. Here we examined the ubiquitous obstacles that human nature puts before us when meditating and diving deeply in our communion with God. It is of comfort to know that such obstacles are shared by all aspirants; far from being alone we share a commonality in our desire nature and fears pulled along by the ego. What

is even more powerful is the fact that we also share uplifting cherished dreams and desires planted in our hearts by God for complete Realization. Evening chanting led by Cate Koler and morning Kriya Meditations deepened our contact with the Divine. 🙏



The retreat on Hornby Island was held here, nestled between heaven & earth.



Hornby Island. L-R: Chad Hickenbottom, Michael Selby, Larry and Cate Koler.



Yogacharya David beside the altar for the Anniversary Celebration of Anandashram. L-R: Mother Krishnabai, Swami Ramdas & Swami Satchidananda.



Devotees in deep concentration at the Loon Lake Retreat. Lois Hickenbottom and Geraldine Di Ciccio seated on the couch in the foreground.



Lorraine Bourcier

### Calendar of Events

|       |    |  |
|-------|----|--|
| June  | 18 | Father's Day                             |
|       | 21 | Summer Solstice (5:27 a.m. PDT)          |
| July  | 1  | Canada Day                               |
|       | 4  | Independence Day                         |
|       | 10 | Guru Purnima                             |
|       | 25 | Babaji's Remembrance Day                 |
|       | 30 | Papa's Mahasamadhi Day (1963)            |
| Sept. | 22 | Mother Krishnabai's Birthday (1903)      |
|       | 22 | Fall Equinox (9:03 a.m. PDT)             |
|       | 26 | Lahiri Mahasaya's Mahasamadhi Day (1895) |
|       | 30 | Lahiri Mahasaya's Birthday (1828)        |

The heart of every religion, and mystic, is love. Love universalized recognizes itself in all people, in all of creation. Only by having the heart revealed will you know the unity of Spirit. Only by knowing unity of Spirit can you completely realize God.

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

Self-Realization Fellowship is not a sect but offers a technique by which you can calm the body and the mind. To become a member, it is not necessary to change your religion. What is necessary is to establish a fellowship of all religions and to find the quickest route that leads to God.

*Paramhansa Yogananda*

There is no mystery about Yoga. Simple union and the resultant identity with God is Yoga. Control of mind and senses through a systematic practice suited to each individual temperament and nature constitute the way. The end is everlasting joy and freedom—a vision of Divine light and peace—a life surcharged with transcendent beauty, love and rapture.

Swami Ramdas

