

The Cross and The Lotus Journal



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



Mother Hamilton (1977)



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

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

The Reverend Yogacharya Mother Hamilton

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

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

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

Dear friends,

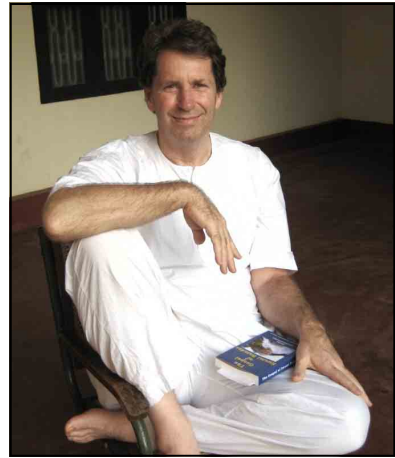
The Guru is indispensable in the ultimate climb to the summit of God-realization. But the individual challenge is to let God and Guru into the heart. Master's great devotee, Sister Gyanamata, wrote,

Once I heard the Master say, "If you shut me out, I can't come in." All the Masters say the same thing. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

But we shut them out. We shut out God, and then ask, "Why does God permit suffering?"

Remember, then, that no matter what one's deprivations—no matter if one must ever press the nose against a window and look in at happy company from which one is debarred—there is no suffering if God stands at one's side.¹

Yes, we do shut out God and Guru, in ways so instinctive that we barely notice that we have done it, so gradual and familiar that it comes upon us like a heavy chloroformed state. Once I sat next to Mother in a busy restaurant with a group of devotees. Mother wrapped me in a field of energy so that we were entirely private in a public setting as she put her full attention on me. I felt her deep in my soul and she asked me a very surprising question, "Why don't you love me completely?" Immediately I knew the answer, and after explaining it to her Mother said, "If you do not love completely then you cannot have God-realization." This shook me from a spiritual indifference that I could have comfortably lived with for a very long time. It was not easy; I had to confront the fear that created the hard casing around my heart, but it triggered me into the long process of making the heart whole and wide open.



There is a natural instinctual reaction when you feel hurt, afraid or disappointed (or a fear that you will eventually be hurt or disappointed) to close off the heart to a painful world. You do it in every sort of relationship.

In marriage and close friendships (there is no more intimate relationship than with the Guru) you oftentimes go through what may be called a honeymoon period. This is a time when the rose colored glasses makes the world look wonderful, all things are possible and you could not, and would not want to, imagine any difference between you and the beloved. It is a magic time when nature and spirit seem to combine and you walk barely touching the ground.

Then comes the fall, if not a fall then a gradual decline when the honeymoon period leaves you. Those things you thought would not make a difference now do! The heart becomes afraid and you close it off. You measure life with a ledger sheet of debits and credits, and if it does not add up in your favor, or at least come to some balance, then watch out!

There are three ways to react to these differences; the first two are well known as fight or flight. But there is a third that I call freeze; like the deer in the forest freezes as something dangerous passes by. You freeze, and some continue to stay frozen. In the heart this means to withhold. Withholding in your heart translates into withholding from doing things for another, into not talking to another, etc. Fear makes you build a wall to keep out the painful, but it also keeps out what gives you life, it keeps out God. As Kahlil Gibran wrote in the *Prophet*:

But if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure,

Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love's threshing floor,

Into a seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears.²

This is a terrible price to pay. To live life fully you have to open the heart. Jesus made this point when he said,

The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the

*LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.*³

And yet it is all too easy (seemingly easy and expedient in the beginning) to close the heart off, but at what a cost! And the cost only grows with time.

So how are you to live a life with a full heart in a sometimes cruel and indifferent world? Gibran has an answer for this too in his beautiful poetic prose:

To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.

To know the pain of too much tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of love;

And to bleed willing and joyfully.

To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;

To rest at the noon hour and meditate love’s ecstasy;

To return home at eventide with gratitude;

*And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.*⁴

There are some who imagine God-realization as a place of cold indifference to the world where nothing can cause pain or touch the heart; what a thought! This is closer to hell than heaven. In a state of realization, God’s love and compassion now pour through your heart and soul. You bleed willingly, and here is the real surprise for those who have guarded their hearts jealously, you bleed joyfully. For there is bliss in the pain of compassion when linked to the Divine! Your love, your compassion is not different from God, the Divine Source from which it has come.

There are some who imagine God as indifferent to the world of suffering, but how could this ever be so! It is through compassion that great souls, Avatars such as Mother and Master, have

come to the earth to help us all in our suffering and ignorance. You must emulate them. You must love completely; you must make your heart whole.

Do not close your heart off; rather make it a willing and perfect instrument through which God may express all of His passion and power for attaining conscious reunification (yoga) with all creation. †

David

1. From booklet: *God Alone, Selections from the letters of Sister Gyanamata.*
2. *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran; Chapter: On Love.
3. Mark 12:29-30 (NKJV)
4. *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran; Chapter: On Love.





Mother in 1970s

EASTER SERVICE

The Reverend Mother, Yogacharya M. Hamilton
Seattle, WA on April 14, 1974

The Eternal, Universal Christ Consciousness

...[Master] wrote something about Christ Consciousness which is absolutely eternal and, further than that, it is universal, because it refers to the Christ Consciousness present in every man and in every atom of space.

The metaphysical way to Christ Consciousness is graded: that way is through meditation and holding on to the after-effects of meditation. Your present consciousness is limited by the body. But when you expand it by deep meditation, you will become aware of the feelings of all people. You will be able to know all things. Marvelous realizations will come to you. Sometimes when that state comes, you feel yourself simultaneously in the stars, in the moon, and in every blade of grass. Christ Consciousness is the divine consciousness present in all of creation. We are a part of that Christ Consciousness. Each individual intelligence is a part of that Christ Intelligence, and beyond creation is the Cosmic Consciousness.

We are like the jets in the burner of a gas stove. There are many little holes through which the gas flames are pouring, but under the burner there is only one flame. We are little flames coming from the big flame of life. Beneath all the tiny jets of human life is one life; behind the flowers, behind all nature is one life.

When you feel your consciousness in every pore of creation, you have Christ Consciousness. And when you lift your consciousness from creation and see the vast eternal joy of God alone, you will be in Cosmic Consciousness. When you are in tune with that Cosmic Consciousness, which is beyond this creation, you will understand that God begat His Intelligence in the womb of creation, the Virgin Mary, and that this Intelligence of God the Father which is reflected or born in every atom of creation is the Christ Consciousness or only begotten Son.

Now, that's quite different than what we have been taught and raised with as Christians. But I learned more about Christianity from my Hindu guru than I have ever learned in all of the years of going to an orthodox church, because he taught me that God was within me, that the words that Jesus spoke were absolutely the truth, and they applied to me as well as to Him, that they applied to every man, woman, and child in this whole universe, that God was within me. It was this temple that held the living God, that He was my life, my intelligence, my strength, my supply, my love, my everything. And he took away the fear, the fear of hell and purgatory and damnation that had been so greatly placed in my mind as a child. And all of a sudden, I was lifted up, and I felt all warm and taken care of and comfortable. It was as though I'd been wrapped in a warm blanket of Spirit. I felt God's love permeate my being; I felt it all around me, and I put my mind not on sin, not on hell, not on damnation, but upon the eternal God through that Consciousness which was in the Christ Jesus.

The Resurrection

We are commemorating today the resurrection of the savior from the tomb. It is a tremendous experience for the human soul

to go through. But in every life, at some time or other, that individual soul has to come to the state of consciousness where he is willing to place himself and everything he has at the feet of God, and this Jesus had done....

[Mother reads from the Bible: St. John, Chapter 20 regarding the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.]

The Greatest Love Story Ever Told

...The story of Jesus the carpenter is the greatest love story that has ever been told. It is love that rules the world. It is love that takes man from the depths of sin, of sorrow, of crime, of darkness, and lifts him up. It makes him sublime. It is love above all else that the Christ came to teach each and every one of us. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, and your neighbor as yourself." If we would practice that golden rule every moment of our lives, if we would see only the good in people, if we would refuse to see anything but God manifesting in them, what a tremendously wonderful, beautiful world it would be. We are always criticizing; we are always harping; we are always finding fault; we are always gossiping. How much better that time could be spent by going within the sanctuary of your own soul, within your inner temple, and putting your full attention on the Lord, asking Him to reveal Himself to you.

Do you, by any chance, realize what you're missing? Do you not know that when this transformation takes place, that you become a totally new being, that your consciousness is filled with the light of God, that your feeling is one such as cannot be described, that it is the indescribable state of the bliss of God? You have a new understanding; you have a new awareness; you are given things which you never even dreamed existed. You are taken out of your body consciousness, and you are taken to far distant worlds, other planes of consciousness. It is simple for you to sit right where you are and travel over the universe, to see all of the planets and the stars and the moon. But it is easy for you to go even beyond that and see into God's inner spiritual world. There He blesses you; He lifts you up, and He shows you billions of things which mortal eyes have never seen. You will never get

this experience as long as you are constantly thinking of the things of the world; as long as you are constantly complaining, you will never get this consciousness at all, never in this world.

The World Is God

You must live the life. This is one of the requirements. But what is this life? Is it necessary to retire from the world in order that you attain this state? No, it is not. In fact, it is desirable to remain in the world, because the world is God; everything that is in this world was created by Him. Each and every one of us is His child. There is not one among all of the billions and millions of billions, whatever name you wish to place upon it, that is not the child of God. The difference is that we have not yet realized our oneness with Him. But through the experiences which come to us in living with the world, these are our tests, these tests as to how we measure up. It is that line of demarcation where *the boys are separated from the men*, it is said.

This world is a world of school, you might say, wherein we learn through the lessons which God places before us. You cannot hope just to sit and meditate and experience the reality of God, because the reality of God is everywhere equally present, and God is Life, and Life is God. You cannot escape from life. You must learn to live it, but live it in the highest way possible, giving the best of everything you have.

Jesus Is the Example

Jesus set this tremendous example to us. He went up into the mountain of His own being; He communed with God. But then He went about His Father's business, and He did his work, and He was a man, not only a teacher, but He was a man of action. He didn't hesitate to lash out at the money changers in the temple, at the priests and the Pharisees whenever they tried to stop Him from doing the work that He was trying to do for God. No one thing could be absolutely true, that when you put your feet upon the path toward your God-realization that you're not going to have a path of roses. It is the path of the crucifixion, of the total transformation of the human self into the Divine, and it is that human self which must suffer if the Divine is to come forth in all

of its glory. And there will be persecution; there will be misunderstanding; there will be revilement. I know this is true, because I meet it all the time. It takes all of the power of God in this form sometimes to come back. But I fear not, because I know He is the sole doer in this temple, and I know that without Him, I of myself can do nothing. So I place everything in His hands, and I let Him do the work. All of my consciousness is with Him every moment of my life.

We have this tremendous example of the man Jesus as the man of love, the man wending His way toward God. His love for God was so great that He was faithful to Him even unto death. Now, that is real faith. There are many who give lip service; they speak out of both sides of their mouth. They are like the Janus-faced god. They have two sides to their face, and one side is the face which they put forth to the world, and the other side is the real self and what they see inside, and it is not always pretty, believe me. But these things must be overcome; they must be overcome within you. And you must keep on the path; you must continue to meditate; you must put yourself fully in the hands of God.

Seven Last Statements

You see, it is through love that the individual soul finally goes through the crucifixion. In this story that we have before us, there are given seven last words, or seven last statements. Bishop Sheen wrote this book, which is entitled, *The Seven Last Words*, many, many years ago, and I have given sermons about them many times and so have many others, because that book was an inspiration. It said in short, brief sentences exactly what the Christ experienced. And until you go through this yourself, you cannot know the true meaning of it.

1) Forgiveness

Here was this man before the multitudes, the people that He had taught, the people that He had healed, the people that He had loved and spent himself for. There were also the publicans, and the sinners, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and there were the Roman soldiers, and those who sought to crucify Him, those too were all before him. And you know what He said, "Father,

forgive them, for they know not what they do.” What a tremendous gesture of love that was. “Father, forgive them.” Can you, in your own heart, forgive your enemies for the wrongs that they have done you, either real or imagined? Can you give such love, even to going on the cross and offering your life for that?

2) Compassionate Love

And then when He was on the cross He looked down, and He saw the beloved disciple, John, and He saw his mother, and He said to her, “Mother, behold thy son.” And He said to John, “Behold thy mother.” And He gave her into the hands of the beloved disciple to take care of after He had passed on, because He knew how she would mourn.

3) Transcending Duality

There were two thieves, one on each side of the cross with Him, and these thieves have come down in history. But they are purely symbolic of the forces of good and evil within every man, because even the good one is a thief because it keeps you from total realization of your oneness with God. As long as there is any state of duality, there is a thief on your cross. But this bad thief, he was cursing, the malefactor, and he said, “They say you are King of the Jews. Why do you not save yourself if you are so great?” But the good thief said to him, “Say not so. Whatever we get we have earned.” And he said, “Lord, take me with you.” And Jesus looked down in his infinite mercy and said, “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise,” because He knew that this good force within himself, that magnetic force which was constantly trying to inspire Him to seek God, that one would go with Him. Strangely enough, it spoke about the two thieves afterwards, and it said that both of their legs were broken. That meant that both of the forces, the forces of good and evil within the body of Jesus were both broken. But it said also that His legs were not broken, which meant that, because He was the Christ made manifest, His legs were not broken and He could keep these forces within Himself, but overcome them and come back into the body and have complete mastery over them. It is only the oneness of God therein.

God Reveals the Truth

This is a tremendous symbolic meaning, and the truth has been given to me by God Himself. This is the Truth. I read so many things here and there, sometimes in things that I had never read before that my master had written, and I find that the things that I have taught through the years all of a sudden stand out before me, and it is the same Truth as I myself have experienced.

4) They Turn Away

The next thing that Jesus did was to say that He thirsted, He thirsted. And when He said this, what did they give Him? They gave Him vinegar it says. Now, what was He thirsting for? He wasn't thirsting for water; He was thirsting for love, but all that they gave Him was hate and revilement, and they wanted to crucify Him. I know so well that feeling, because you reach out when you are going through this experience, and because you are going through this experience, you are sending out a different vibration, a different aura than you ever had before, and people shy away from you. And yet you need their help, because you are going through torture. You are going through suffering such as you have never gone through before. You don't understand all that is happening to you, and you want the comfort of human companionship, of human understanding, of human love. But you don't get it. So they give you vinegar; they turn their backs on you; they talk about you; they speak about you; they revile you; they persecute you, and sometimes they spit upon you, literally.

5) Aloneness

But anyway, you continue on and continue on. But you come to that moment when you cannot find God anyplace. It is not that you do not know that He exists, because you know, you have faith, that He is there, but you all of a sudden realize that where He has been guiding you every inch of the way before, you can't find Him now. And a terrible feeling of vacancy comes, of being deserted, and you say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" God has not forsaken you, but you must come to this

moment of aloneness in the human sense in order that you might go through what is necessary to find the Divine within yourself.

6) Surrendering all to God

But having done all of this, having done everything that God has required of Him, finally He relaxed and He said, “Unto you I commend my spirit.”

7) Giving up the Ghost

And then He said, “It is finished,” and He gave up the ghost. Now, this ghost which He gave up was the human ego, which is the ghost of the real Self, or God within you.

Release of the Gordian Knot

And then, as it says in here, after the interment in the sepulcher, which is the heart center, there is an opening; there is a release of the Gordian knot in the heart center, which holds the life force there. It is a painful thing when it’s done, but gradually that subsides, and the risen Christ comes forth, and you become a new person in Christ, a new individual being filled with the light and the love of God. This light in the beginning is not the blazing light that we are given to believe, but it is a gradual light, and it increases as the soul goes along.

Crucify the Ten Qualities of the Mind

I listened briefly to a few words over television recently, and the man was talking about the Christ and the fact that He was going through the crucifixion, and then came the resurrection, and he stressed the point, as has always been done in the orthodox faiths, about Satan and the Antichrist. He who will not acknowledge the Christ is an Antichrist, and he says that Satan was a loser right to start with. But He said that he would come, and that He would have to give up His throne for a thousand years, but then again he would come. And this is the way the individual soul goes.

When you go through the physical crucifixion, then you start the ascension. And after you have gone through the ascension, and while you are going through that, there is still this testing,

because the memory of what you did through these senses remains in the conscious mind. And so you still have to crucify the ten qualities of the mind. And only when that final crucifixion comes is the total crucifixion accomplished, and then the satanic force, as it is called, is laid to rest forever. Then the dead rise from the grave. And this happens within yourself, because all of those that you have peopled in your kingdom, through your thoughts, through your actions, through your speech, through the years, have lived within your kingdom, and so they were dead with Christ. And now comes the Resurrection, and they are going to rise from the grave, and they are going to live again with Christ. Such a one is permitted again to use their body for the good of humanity.

The Body Is the Cross

The bliss, the enlightenment, the peace, the joy that comes, the power of God that comes in such a one is absolutely unbelievable! Multitudes can be saved. Multitudes can be saved. But you've got to be willing to go all the way if you want to attain that state. "He who will not pick up his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple," said the Christ. And here is my cross: [*Mother standing with her feet together and her arms outstretched.*] I'm in the form of a cross, as is every single individual on this earth. And it is upon this cross that the human ego must be crucified in order that the Divine within man may be born. There is no other way out. This is the love story of the savior within every man, the love of God, the love of man, and when you have brought yourself to that point of bliss, of ecstasy, of total acceptance of God's will and total surrender to His will, then you are lifted up into that eternal love of the Christ, and you will never depart from it—never. It is secure.

...On this glorious Easter, this Resurrection, I would like to think that each one of you has the love for God so greatly that you are willing to give yourself to Him, to become His disciple, to be a witness for Him, and to go out and heal the sick and the blind and to serve the poor and the rich alike, the humble and the high, and to see Him present in each form that comes before you.

The joy comes in the serving; the joy comes in the giving, because if God had not given us this gift of life in the beginning, if He had not given us the energy, the intelligence, the power to go out and accumulate what we have, what would we have? Is it not all His? We are His children; we have the use of it, but we should not be attached to it nor possessed by it. We should give freely of everything we have, everything we are, every moment of our lives. And you know, when you do that, you will find that some way, no matter how tired you are, how ill you are, that if you make the effort, He will give you the strength.

Many times, you see, you think you can't go on, and you think that God has pushed you beyond your strength, but He never pushes you beyond your strength. He knows He can push you a little bit farther than you know that you can go. It is through this pushing a little bit farther that the growth takes place, because if we only did it our way all the time, we always save the human self. Is it not so? We always make ourselves comfortable and happy and at peace, and we would go in a nice little quiet rocking chair. We're not ready to pick up our cross and follow the Christ in order that we might be His disciples, even unto the death of the ego. People have been misled, and they think of it as going through death as a permanent state of being placed in a grave or cremated, but that is not so; it is not so. It is the ego which dies. It is the ego which dies.

If you are willing to do this, if you are willing to give your all for God, you will go within yourself and you will find this birth of the Christ within yourself. You will be lifted up into a consciousness and a state of bliss such as you never even dreamed of before, and you will have a resurrection in God. And that will be "the good news" which will be spread throughout all of the world of Christendom today, through all the world.

I ask God's blessings upon each and every one of you. I ask Him to inspire you to seek Him alone, because having Him, you have all things. "Seek ye first God and His kingdom, and then all of these other things shall be added unto you." All. You have the power within you to become lords of the universe. Do not settle for anything less than that. God's blessings be with you. †

Adoration

By Paramhansa Yogananda

Just behind the atmosphere, just behind the sunshine, just behind the pulse of ourselves, just behind the throb of our hearts, just behind our thoughts with which we pray, just behind our love, O Infinite, make us realize that Thou art the only thing we crave. Make us realize that Thou art not only in the farthest star, but Thou art twinkling in our thoughts, sparkling in our feelings and vitalizing our will. Take away all veils that hide Thee. Come, Father, come. Take away all the veils that hide Thee. No more behind the indifferent veil of nature, no more behind the obscure veil of matter, no more behind the veil of minds, no more behind the veil of souls will I perceive Thee, but behind my devotion, behind my tender perceptions, behind my inmost soul Thou art evermore.

Thou art our Father. We are Thy children. Teach us to love Thee as Jesus loved, as Mohammed loved, and as Krishna and our great Gurus loved Thee. Oh God, teach us to love Thee with the intoxicating love of the saints that we may realize that Thou art the ocean and our love is the wave. Teach us no more to pray with words but with our souls. Father, break Thy vow of silence. Speak to us through our thoughts.

Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God, one by one I close the doors of the senses lest the perfume of the rose or the song of the nightingale distract my love for Thee. I invoke Thy presence. May all men realize Thy nearness, O God, maker of our tenderest thoughts. Make us in Thy image. We offer Thee our adoration, our soul yearnings.

May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of our devotion, and may we be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts. Peace. Joy. Peace. †

Before you speak, ask yourself: is it kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve on the silence?

Shirdi Sai Baba

Universalize Your Vision

Selections from the teachings of Swami Ramdas, compiled by Swami Muktananda of Anandashram as instructional material for Sadhana Camps.

Intuition

Intuition is the working of the inner being of a man when he has tuned his life with the universal and all-transcendent existence. When intuition really works, the egoistic sense of man is completely



absent and the experience of such a man is of a consciousness which is above the body-idea. To rise above the notion of the body does not mean the stock-stillness of the physical members but the performance of all their actions in a state of perfect self-effacement and therefore of spontaneity. If one could at all distinguish the works of intuition from those emanating from an individualistic sense, it is possible only through their results. While the former, being of a selfless nature, tend inevitably to the benefit and delight of others, the latter, being born of a personal ambition and for personal gratification, causes loss and misery to others. So intuition is the product of complete self-surrender and its work is in its inherent nature beneficial to all. In the field of spirituality, intuition is spoken of as the 'Inner Voice'. When the soul has fallen under the spell of this immortal voice, he realizes his ever free and blissful existence.

Visions

Visions and experiences show that your mind has turned Godward. They do not indicate any realization of the Self or Atman. Do not crave again and again for such experiences. They have come and they should go. The main thing is to realize Brahman. Some people hold to certain images and forms from childhood,

and those are projected out as visions. Of course, they are better than the experiences of worldly pleasures and enjoyments. In fact, there is no need for visions at all. One can have Self-realization without having them. When you go beyond all names and forms, visions stop and you know that you are the Atman, that there is nothing but the Atman. Visions come only when you are in the dual plane.

What is God-realization?

People talk of God-realization, but very few have understood what it means. To transcend time, space and causation is to realize God, to transcend the three Gunas—Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas—to rise beyond the pairs of opposites, is to realize God; to rise above name, form, change and movement is God-realization; to know that you are not the body—a bundle of sensations, mind or intellect—and finding the Truth which is beyond all these is realization of God. You see no other than your Self everywhere. To realize God is to be God, to know that you are God.

If you want to realize God, think of God constantly, then you will realize Him. Therefore, chanting of Guru-Mantra and all spiritual practices are done in order to keep your mind ever thinking, remembering, meditating on God, so that you may realize Him. By these practices you go beyond the three Gunas, and realize the Atman, Brahman, or absolute Reality. *Aham Brahmasmi*—‘I am Brahman’. This is your realization. You have found Brahman within yourself. Wherever you see, it is He. Brahman does not mean an entity, not an individual, not the ego, but the all-pervading, infinite, eternal Truth, and that Truth is the basis or support of the entire universal manifestation. †

I feel sometimes afraid, for I have nothing, no brains, no learning, no qualities required for such a work, and yet I tell Him that my heart is free from everything and so it belongs completely to Him, and Him alone. He can use me just as it will please Him best. To please Him only is the joy I seek.

Mother Teresa, from the book, *Come Be My Light*

And There Was Light

Autobiography of Jacques Lusseyran
Blind Hero of the French Resistance

[Jacques Lusseyran was blinded in an accident when he was seven years old. This is a lucid account of how Jacques discovered a second sight. There are lessons for us all in this tale of his discoveries; for there are capacities that are natural to those who are quiet and receptive enough to sense them. See a previous article featuring excerpts from J. Lusseryan: Cross and Lotus Journal published September 2007, Vol. 8 No. 3. — David]

At the age of eight everything favored my return to the world. They let me move around, they answered all the questions I asked, they were interested in all my discoveries, even the strangest. For example, how should I explain the way objects approached me when I was the one walking in their direction? Was I breathing them in or hearing them? Possibly, though that was often hard to prove. Did I see them? It seemed not. And yet, as I came closer, their mass was modified, often to the point of defining real contours, assuming a real shape in space, acquiring distinctive color, just as it happens where there is sight.

As I walked along a country road bordered by trees, I could point to each one of the trees by the road, even if they were not spaced at regular intervals. I knew whether the trees were straight and tall, carrying their branches as a body carries its head, or gathered into thickets and partly covering the ground around them.

This kind of exercise soon tired me out, I must admit, but it succeeded. And the fatigue did not come from the trees, from their number or shape, but from myself. To see them like this I had to hold myself in a state so far removed from old habits that I could not keep it up for very long. I had to let the trees come toward me, and not allow the slightest inclination to move toward them, the smallest wish to know them, to come between them and me. I could not afford to be curious or impatient or proud of my accomplishment.

After all, such a state is only what one commonly calls "attention," but I can testify that when carried to this point it is not easy. The same experiment tried with trees along the road I could practice on any object which reached a height and breadth at least as great as my own: telegraph poles, hedges, the arches of a bridge, walls along the street, the doors and windows in these walls, the places where they were set back or sloped away.

As with the sense of touch, what came to me from objects was pressure, but pressure of a kind so new to me that at first I didn't think of calling it by that name. When I became really attentive and did not oppose my own pressure to my surroundings, then trees and rocks came to me and printed their shape upon me like fingers leaving their impression in wax.

This tendency of objects to project themselves beyond their physical limits produced sensations as definite as sight or hearing. I only needed a few years to grow accustomed to them, to tame them somewhat. Like all blind people, whether they know it or not, these are the senses I use when I walk by myself either outdoors or through a house. Later I read that they call this sense "the sense of obstacles," and that some kinds of animals, bats, for instance, are highly endowed with it.

According to many traditions of the occult, man has a third eye, an inner eye, generally called "the eye of Siva," located in the middle of his forehead, an eye which he can bring to life in certain conditions by certain exercises. Finally, the researches undertaken by the French writer and member of the Academy, Jules Romains, have demonstrated the existence of visual perception outside the retina, situated in certain nervous centers of the skin, particularly in the hands, the forehead, the nape of the neck and the chest. I hear that more recently this kind of research has been carried on with success by physiologists, especially in the U.S.S.R.

But whatever the nature of the phenomenon, I experienced it from childhood, and its effects seems to me much more important than its cause. The indispensable condition for accurately pointing out trees along the road was to accept the trees and not try to put myself in their place.

All of us, whether we are blind or not, are terribly greedy. We want things only for ourselves. Even without realizing it, we want the universe to be like us and give us all the room in it. But a blind child learns very quickly that this cannot be. He has to learn it, for every time he forgets that he is not alone in the world he strikes against an object, hurts himself and is called to order. But each time he remembers he is rewarded, for everything comes his way.

[Jacques Lusseyran's description of his life continues. At the age of sixteen Jacques started an underground movement to resist the Nazi occupation; within a year his underground movement numbered over 600, all under the age of 21. When Jacques was twenty he was arrested and eventually sent to Buchenwald concentration camp. What follows is a very brief description of the horrors of the conditions there, but also his remarkable revelation about the nature of life. Note: The invalids' block was for those who had disabilities. It is to be remembered that the Nazis' quest for racial purity also extended to excluding anyone with a physical disability. Jacques was left alive, barely, because he had a facility with language that the SS guards found useful. — David]

No one at the Invalids' was whole, since that was the condition of entrance. As a result people were dying there at a pace which made it impossible to make any count of the block. It was a greater surprise to fall over the living than the dead. And it was from the living that danger came.

The stench was so terrible that only the smell of the crematory, which sent up smoke around the clock, managed to cover it up on days when the wind drove the smoke our way. For days and nights on end, I didn't walk around, I crawled. I made an opening for myself in the mass of flesh. My hands traveled from the stump of a leg to a dead body, from a body to a wound. I could no longer hear anything for the groaning all around me.

Toward the end of the month all of a sudden it became too much for me and I grew sick, very sick. I think it was pleurisy. They said several doctors, prisoners like me and friends of mine,

came to listen to my chest. It seems they gave me up. What else could they do? There was no medicine at all at Buchenwald, not even aspirin.

Very soon dysentery was added to pleurisy, then an infection in both ears which made me completely deaf for two weeks, then erysipelas, turning my face into a swollen pulp, with complications which threatened to bring on blood poisoning. More than fifty fellow prisoners told me all this later. I don't remember any of it myself. I had taken advantage of the first days of sickness to leave Buchenwald.

Two young boys I was very fond of, a Frenchman with one leg, and a Russian with one arm, told me that one morning in April they carried me to the hospital on a stretcher. The hospital was not a place where they took care of people, but simply a place to lay them down until they died or got well. My friends, Pavel and Louis, didn't understand what happened. Later they kept telling me that I was a "case." A year afterwards Louis was still amazed: "The day we carried you, you had a fever of 104 or more, but you were not delirious. You looked quite serene, and every now and then you would tell us not to put ourselves out on your account." I would gladly have explained it to Louis and Pavel, but the whole affair was beyond words and still is.

Sickness had rescued me from fear, it had even rescued me from death. Let me say to you simply that without it I never would have survived. From the first moments of sickness I had gone off into another world, quite consciously. I was not delirious. Louis was right, I still had the look of tranquility, more so than ever. That was the miracle.

I watched the stages of my own illness quite clearly. I saw the organs of my body blocked up or losing control one after the other, first my lungs, then my intestines, then my ears, all my muscles, and last of all my heart, which was functioning badly and filled me with a vast, unusual sound. I knew exactly what it was, this thing I was watching: my body in the act of leaving this world, not wanting to leave it right away, not even wanting to leave it at all. I could tell by the pain my body was causing me,

twisting and turning in every direction like snakes that have been cut in pieces.

Have I said that death was already there? If I have I was wrong. Sickness and pain, yes, but not death. Quite the opposite, life, and that was the unbelievable thing that had taken possession of me. I had never lived so fully before.

Life had become a substance within me. It broke into my cage, pushed by a force a thousand times stronger than I. It was certainly not made of flesh and blood, not even of ideas. It came toward me like a shimmering wave, like the caress of light. I could see it beyond my eyes and my forehead and above my head. It touched me and filled me to overflowing. I let myself float upon it.

There were names which I mumbled from the depths of my astonishment. No doubt my lips did not speak them, but they had their own song: "Providence, the Guardian Angel, Jesus Christ, God." I didn't try to turn it over in my mind. It was not just the time for metaphysics. I drew my strength from the spring. I kept on drinking and drinking still more. I was not going to leave that celestial stream. For that matter it was not strange to me, having come to me right after my old accident when I found I was blind. Here was the same thing all over again, the Life which sustained the life in me.

The Lord took pity on the poor mortal who was so helpless before him. It is true I was quite unable to help myself. All of us are incapable of healing ourselves. Now I knew it, and knew that it was true of the SS among the first. That was something to make one smile.

But there was one thing left which I could do: not refuse God's help, the breath he was blowing upon me. That was the one battle I had to fight, hard and wonderful all at once: not to let my body be taken by the fear. For fear kills, and joy maintains life.

Slowly I came back from the dead, and when, one morning, one of my neighbors—I found out later he was an atheist and thought he was doing the right thing—shouted in my ear that I didn't have a chance in the world of getting through it, so I had

better prepare myself, he got my answer full in the face, a burst of laughter. He didn't understand that laugh, but he never forgot it.

On May 8, I left the hospital on my two feet. I was nothing but skin and bones, but I had recovered. The fact was I was so happy that now Buchenwald seemed to me a place which if not welcome was at least possible. If they didn't give me any bread to eat, I would feed on hope.

It was the truth. I still had eleven months ahead of me in the camp. But today I have not a single evil memory of those three hundred and thirty days of extreme wretchedness. I was carried by a hand. I was covered by a wing. One doesn't call such living emotions by their names. I hardly needed to look out for myself, and such concern would have seemed to me ridiculous. I knew it was dangerous and it was forbidden. I was free now to help the others; not always, not much, but in my own way I could help.

I could try to show other people how to go about holding on to life. I could turn toward them the flow of light and joy which had grown so abundant in me. From that time on they stopped stealing my bread or my soup. It never happened again. Often my comrades would wake me up in the night and take me to comfort someone, sometimes a long way off in another block.

Almost everyone forgot I was a student. I became "the blind Frenchman." For many, I was just "the man who didn't die." Hundreds of people confided in me. The men were determined to talk to me. They spoke to me in French, in Russian, in German, in Polish. I did the best I could to understand them all. That is how I lived, how I survived. The rest I cannot describe. †

God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

— C.S. Lewis

GOD ALONE

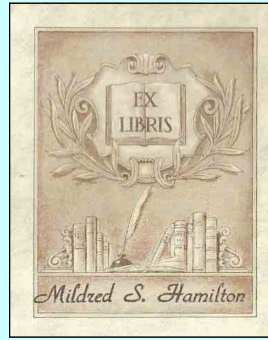
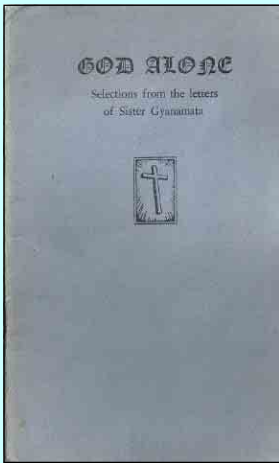
Excerpts from God Alone, Selections from the letters of Sister Gyanamata



[Sister Gyanamata met Master while living in Seattle, Washington in the mid 1920s. She was married to a professor at the University of Washington and her son became a lawyer in Seattle. Sister Gyanamata and Mother Hamilton knew each other well; although Mother was of an age to be Gyanamata's daughter, as

fellow devotees of Master's they were kindred spirits. They often visited and since Sister had an extensive library, including rare books from India and of Eastern Philosophy, she invited Mother over to read from those books anytime she wanted. Mother had the highest regard for Sister Gyanamata. You can imagine how rare it was to find someone interested in a swami and yoga in the 1920s, and then to find such an exalted disciple and devotee right in your own town was a very great blessing.

Later Gyanamata moved to Mt. Washington to be close to Master and she served as interim administrative head of the organization while Master was in India. A woman of tremendous intellect and will, she was absolutely devoted to Master. She was always mindful of Master's real spiritual nature and was never over-familiar with him. For instance, whenever she was in the same room with Master, even when talking to others, she never had her back turned towards Master. It was rare that Master gave Indian names or titles to disciples; perhaps only a handful. Gyana, also spelled jnana, means wisdom or discrimination, mata means mother. Her love, devotion and wisdom made her the embodiment of a mother of wisdom. — David]



The selections in this article come from an early copy of Sister Gyanamata’s letters that was found in Mother’s library.

We make too much of feeling, even admitting that the right sort of feeling is very enjoyable. What does it matter how you feel? Bear your lot as long as it is the will of God that you should do so. Act rightly, and in due time the right feeling of peace and joy will come.

As to the possibility of the entry of evil forces when the mind is made receptive to spiritual blessings, you need have no fear if you center your mind on God. When meditating, do not allow yourself to slip into a negative or dreamy state. Keep concentrated firmly upon the Divine Goal.

If you do not receive the blessing of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or Vibration, do not be worried or anxious. Keep ever seeking a higher state of consciousness. God will give you the reward in His own good time and way.

May your devotion shine like a special star in the skies, for generations of mankind to be guided to God and ideal Guru-devotion.

— Paramhansa Yogananda (from Frontispiece)

While emotional outbursts are always to be avoided, and for myself I intensely dislike them, always feeling that I have degraded myself even if one seems to happen without my volition, still I am sure that they occasionally do good, if they go deep enough. I had one the other day which I mention only because I found through it the cure for something that has been troubling me.

The cure lay in the resolute control of my mind by the operation of my will. I say that there was no use to ask help from the Guru, nor to put my trust in the deepening of meditation; I must help myself first. The mere thinking of this thought took effect immediately. I deliberately “forsook this mental upheaval” as I had vowed before God and Guru to do, and it took instantaneous effect. I have since had other experiences of my ability to instantly control my mind, *if I chose to do so.*

Waking in the night or early morning, I always used to find joy present within me. I have changed.

I regard it as a trial, a test sent by God for the good of my soul. If one can delight in God only when He comes as joy—what is he?

But suppose God comes only as pain? That it takes a spiritual hero to endure.

If, in the darkness, the mind never wavers, if love and longing never grow weak, it is then that you prove to yourself that you really have the love of God.

The spiritual training Master has given me has been, and is, perfect. The Guru cannot be judged, if he is to be judged at all, by the rules that apply to a friendship between equals. I have always known this.

So beginning at the very first, if anything happened that disappointed me or caused me pain, instantly my soul asked, “What did you come here for? Was it for honor, distinction, favors, or pleasure?”

As promptly the answer came: “No. For God. For God alone.”

I was kneeling in prayer in the chapel ... I was thinking of something that was coming into my life that filled me with apprehension. I knew that it was not the will of God that I should be saved from the experience. Even at that moment it was moving toward me. Suddenly God told me the prayer He would listen to, and I said quickly, "Change no circumstance of my life. Change *me*."

There are experiences that the soul never forgets, but which cannot properly be expressed. My prayer was answered instantly. I was changed. Trying to put this into words, all I could compare it to was a window being opened in an overheated room, and a cool, refreshing breeze blowing in. It is not getting our own way that gives joy; it is attunement with the Divine Will.

If I could, I would like to engrave upon the heart of the disciple two basic truths: First, you can have only your own; and your own will surely come to you. Indeed, you cannot escape it. Second, that the Guru is always the Guru, in every act and utterance, even if he is not consciously acting as such.

In our hearts, perhaps subconsciously, we really prefer what our karma gives us to that which another receives, knowing that it is what we need.

For the disciple to permit the thought that he is being unfairly treated to enter his mind is fatal. The will of God flows to the disciple through the Guru at all times. If we accept our discipline in the right spirit, it will strengthen our character as nothing else could.

I have come to measure spiritual advancement, not alone by the light that surrounds one when he meditates or by the visions he has of the saints, but by what he is able to endure in the hard cold light of day.

Jesus' transfiguration on the mount is not the only thing that is told of him. Just possibly it is not the most important. It is said that for the joy which was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and for that reason is set down at the right

hand of God. His greatness was not only that he could go into meditation and gloriously realize his oneness with the Father, his absolute identity, but also that he could *endure*.

I always remember this truth when I mentally try to find a way of escape from something that seems too hard for me. I think then: “I am escaping, not overcoming.”

My Divine and Blessed Master:

For many years—I think from the very first time I saw you—I have wanted to offer you, as the outpouring of my own heart, the poem I am about to copy. But I thought I had no right to do so, until I had had certain experiences. All these years I have waited. On Monday afternoon I was thinking of you, and of our relationship—but when do I think of anything else? This poem came to my remembrance, and the wish I had had so long to write it to you. I do not think things out. Suddenly an intuitive flash shows me some truth, whole and complete, which has been hidden from me before. I know with sureness. So, in such a flash, I saw that the poem (from *Songs of Kabir*) conveyed exactly what has been taking place between your Holiness and myself wordlessly, and that I had the right to copy it and offer it to you:

*It is the mercy of my true
Guru that
Has made me to know
the unknown;*

*I have learned from Him
how to walk
Without feet, to see
without eyes,
To hear without ears,
to drink
Without mouth, to fly
without wings.*

I have brought my love

*and my meditation
Into the land where there is
No sun and moon, nor day
and night.*

*Without eating, I have tasted
of the
Sweetness of nectar; and with-
out
Water, I have quenched my
thirst.*

*Where there is the response
of delight
There is the fullness of joy.*





Calendar of Events

Mar.	7	Paramhansa Yogananda's Mahasamadhi (1952)
	9	Swami Sri Yukteswar's Mahasamadhi (1936)
	19	Spring Equinox (10:48 p.m. PDT)
	23	Easter (Seattle Sunrise: 7:05 a.m. PDT)
April	20	Swami Ramdas' Birthday (Hindu Calendar) (1884) Hanuman's Birthday
May	10	Swami Sri Yukteswar's Birthday (1855)
	11	Mother's Day
	26	Memorial Day
June	15	Father's Day
	20	Summer Solstice (4:59 p.m. PDT)

Each generation represents a group of souls that have chosen to come together to accomplish some great task. It is incumbent that you, both individually and collectively, discover the deeper meaning for incarnating at this present time and place. You cannot reach that deeper meaning without a sincere search, a search that takes you beyond the appearances of things. Strive to do your best, bring out the boldness of your purpose and let nothing dissuade you from its fulfillment.

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

You must learn to be sincere within and without. You can say a thing kindly and you can say it with meanness. Be sincere and kind. Don't be short with people. Be friendly and sincere. Familiarity should never bring contempt. As soon as your words lose their effect on others and as soon as they cease to affect you, then it is wrong familiarity. I never let anyone be familiar with me. I want to respect everybody and I want others to respect me. Otherwise what is the use?

Paramhansa Yogananda

Success in life depends upon a daring and determined course taken up through unshakable faith and confidence. Vacillation is the greatest handicap to success. By taking complete refuge in the Almighty, you should decide upon a definite line of action, and then, by an unflinching perseverance, carry it out through good or ill. When taking such a step, do not rely for help and guidance from anybody in the world except upon your Self.

Swami Ramdas

