

SILENCE: ENTERING THE
COSMIC SEA OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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A WESTERN YOGI'S JOURNAL: 2000–2001



Yogacharya David R. Hickenbottom

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Silence: Entering the Cosmic Sea of Consciousness
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Yogacharya David at Cloud Mountain

FOREWORD

The search for the sacred has been with humankind since the beginning of time as shared in the earliest transcriptions from ancient sculpture, cave art, and writing. Yogacharya David (1954–2019), a Western man born in Washington State, USA, dedicated his adult life to the search inward, constantly seeking to reawaken the highest order of sacred, spiritual-universal connection with the cosmic Divine. Here is a brief introduction to the man and the yogi, stated in his own words as much as possible.¹

Throughout the ages, great masters have spoken of the sacred climb to access Divine-realization, to connect humanity with the highest truth of existence. Yogacharya David, even as a child, knew there was more than “surface life,” or what could be experienced through the five senses. He sought answers through the church as well as through science and philosophy. Then he found a teacher who spoke a new language, one of such deep inner awareness that a whole world of freedom began unfolding.

David reflects:

My life is a dedication to God. In fumbling steps and in the precision of movement, I steer my life toward that precious Goal. My Great Guru set the course, direction, and Goal. She beckons me still from her deeper life. God awakened me to that purpose when my own will would have taken me to self-destruction, or at best, to a mundane, senseless life. I pretend no greatness, nor even goodness, for there is none other good than my Heavenly Father. Truly, I can say wholeheartedly that it is by God and Guru’s Grace that I have found my Self.

I suppose it is natural to want all the world to share the sacred mystery that I feel, and it would be sheer

¹ This Foreword, or a similar version, is designed to introduce the reader to David the man and David the Yogacharya and is placed in David’s books in order to provide context.

arrogance to assume that no others do. But there is the songbird within that bursts into Divine verse and aches to share that deepest intimacy.

In 2007, David wrote an autobiographical sketch. He told the story of a young man in search of something of vaster meaning than he had so far discovered. Excerpts from this sketch place his writings and teachings into context as he takes us with him on his magnificent, challenging journey up the sacred mountain. The full autobiography can be found on The Cross and The Lotus website at: www.crossandlotus.com.

When David was nineteen years old, he had a tremendous experience:

I remember sitting under the stars on a warm summer night; it was around midnight. The stars were spread like a carpet of tiny lights above; my heart felt like it was physically breaking right down the middle. I felt a crushing weight pressing down on me and I was breaking under the strain. It was all too much for me and I made a spontaneous prayer in my agony, "Oh God, I don't know if you exist, but if you do, if I have never needed you before, I need you now. Help me!"

Amazingly, with that prayer came an instant relief. I felt that a thousand pounds of weight came off me in that moment. The tremendous pain in my heart was soothed. I was aware that in a split second, the agony I had been feeling was gone. Immediately after this unseen help came to my aid, my mind began to reason, "Well, since I prayed to God, my mind imagined getting some help and I felt relief as a result." It was my mind, not anything else, that helped me. No, it was more than the mind. I had connected with something wonderful and powerful and definitely beyond me.

David had other search experiences, but here we focus on his being invited to a talk by a wise "grandmother." David says:

Well, this "grandmother" description did not appeal to me. But... eventually, I said yes. On a Wednesday evening in March 1974, we all piled into a car and drove to a nice home in North Seattle... Mother Hamilton began to speak with such spiritual power that I felt as if my long hair was being blown straight back. She spoke of God, of Self-realization, Christ Consciousness, and renunciation. Many of the concepts were foreign to me, but I recognized that this was someone who spoke with authority and wisdom. After the talk, Mother gave each of us a hug. As I stood in line waiting, getting one person closer to Mother, my heart was beating so hard I could feel it thumping in my chest. After I hugged Mother, I remember little until I found myself sitting in the back seat of the car... Each time I came to hear Mother speak, I wondered if I would feel the same power of God, and each time it proved itself true... Before meeting Mother, I would be looking for the nearest exit if someone started speaking about God, but when Mother used the word, I knew there was a new and enlarged meaning.

David speaks of initiation into Kriya Yoga that spring. He shares, "I felt I had the means for making spiritual progress, something I could take with me everywhere. How I made contact with one of the greatest masters this world has ever seen is a great mystery to me. Every day, I thank the heavens for this greatest of gifts, a sense of gratitude that does not diminish with time, but only grows sweeter."

David's Guru, the Reverend Mother Yogacharya Mildred Hamilton (1904–1991) met Paramhansa Yogananda (1893–1952), whom she affectionately called "Master," in 1925. At that time, she had been seeking deeper meaning in her life and spiritual guidance towards a truth she intuited was available but hidden from her view. Her first meeting with Master was in Seattle, Washington, USA. David said: "At that meeting when Master looked at Mother, she experienced a shock that went through her entire being."

Over time, Mother Hamilton became a Center Leader, then a Reverend, and finally, in front of thousands, Mother Hamilton received the title Yogacharya from Yogananda. She was the only woman to receive this honor, and one of only seven in total in his worldwide organization.

Yogananda followed the great Kriya lineage from India that came through Jesus, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and then Sri Yukteswar, who was Yogananda's teacher. Yogananda created a large organization in America. His aim was to "bring all into the spiritual heights he enjoyed in God." As David says: "This is the work of a spiritual master. A true Master makes you feel as if God is very close, very intimate, and very knowable."

David finds his way to this great lineage of teachers. He says:

When I came to Mother, I was definitely a diamond in the rough. Not even a diamond, but more a lump of coal hoping one day to shine with light like a brightly-lit diamond! An inner pain brought me to the path, most unwillingly. And this inner pain kept me on the path when I would have gladly wandered away, back into the world.

In his autobiography, David speaks of the testing of his resolve and the testing of his commitment by Mother Hamilton. In 1982, not only did she invite David to give talks to the devotees, but she also asked him to speak of his inner experiences. He tells us: "I had never spoken to anyone about my deepest inner experiences except to Mother, and now she was asking me to say aloud in front of others my most sacred experiences. Mother had always cautioned against talking to others about spiritual experiences." David realized the reasons not to talk and now the reasons to talk. "Not easy, this," he says. The testing was for a purpose.

Two years later, Mother Hamilton ordained David as a minister. He agreed, thinking, "I can serve. I can serve Mother, serve Truth, be a servant of God, and serve the God that is within all people—that I can do! I found a way to be a minister." David's growth continued as he developed his inner agreement to find the Divine path.

He speaks of a time in the fall of 1976 when he experienced a sudden rising of the Kundalini and entered what is called a "Mystical Crucifixion" state. He found himself living in two worlds: one the familiar, physical reality and the other a profound and difficult spiritual reality that had physical effects. Working between the polar opposites of physical and spiritual, a transformation gradually took place that changed his very core nature.

With his inward journey progressing, David accepted an ever-growing ministerial role while Mother Hamilton's health challenges increased as she continued in her resolve to serve God to her last breath. Supporting Mother Hamilton came at the same time as full-time school, full-time work, and full-time sadhana. Over time, David attended academic institutions; he received a Bachelor of Psychology and a master's degree in Applied Behavioral Science. Starting in 1984, he worked full-time as a counselor, and by 1985, he was volunteering as a mediator. Later, he was a founding partner of an innovative conflict resolution service.

Meanwhile, Mother, in planning for the continuation of the Guru-disciple lineage, told David that she was going to make him Yogacharya (teacher or master of yoga) and that she would be passing her spiritual mantle on to him. David shares: this gift "came as a deep Mystery, with inner potency and meaning that continues to unveil itself to me through the passing years. Far from feeling I deserved such an accolade, I felt deeply humbled and prayed that I would acquit myself to whatever capacity God would give me." David also says, "I, to the best of my ability, put my shoulder to the wheel of this Great Work begun so long ago."

On January 31, 1991, Yogacharya Mother Mildred Hamilton entered Mahasamadhi, a yogi's conscious exit from the body. David knew that Mother Hamilton was now in her light body. At this time, David says his task was "to find her in her universal Presence beyond the physical realm." That, plus other life decisions, led David to what he calls the "dark night of the soul," starting in 1992. David relates:

At this time, I took a leave from ministerial duties as I felt I was in no condition to help others. I was entering a dark night of the soul. Mother described this dark night as a time when the aspirant has had almost continuous communion with God, then all sense of connection disappears. This was my case, and it was to last for two years. Meanwhile, I was working full-time, going to school full-time, working part-time in an internship, and experiencing a deep emptiness inside that had no solution but to go on. Never did I doubt God or the path I was on; what I keenly knew were my own errors, all the ways I lacked the spiritual qualities I knew that I should have, and most of all, how familiar God had been to me before, and now with the curtain drawn, how helpless I felt, wanting to get that inner Presence back. There was no joy for me, and I struggled to just get through the day.

Time passed. One night I had a vision. I was walking along a path in the desert. This desert was so beautiful, green, and lush, with flowers like springtime. The path I walked on was spongy feeling and the air smelled delicious. I felt God. Oh, it had been so long! Like parched ground receiving fresh water, I soaked up the feeling of God. As I looked behind me, from where I had come, the land was charred black, the ground hard, cracked, and broken from earthquakes, the air black with soot; I knew the dark, ugly landscape I looked upon was a true representation of what I had been experiencing. When I saw it, I let out a cry of anguish for all that I had been holding in for so long! A prayer came: "Oh Lord of the Infinite, I have missed you so much. Please never leave me again." For the next six months, I gradually emerged from the darkened gloom into a new Light. I had completed my master's degree and went on to a work in my chosen field, which was very satisfying.

One day, I received a call from some Kriyabans in Canada who were asking me to help clarify their Kriya practice, then an invitation to come and speak; there were many thirsty souls awaiting my visit. For so long, I had felt I was the last one to help others; now the Light came to me at the same time as the expressed need of others. God's ways are perfect and mysterious!

This was in 1995 and yes, David answered the "call" to engage in his ministry in a new way. Canadians got to hear David's Kriya teachings, as did Americans, and later, people in India.

David worked as a counselor and mediator until 1998, when, through a powerful inner direction, he left his professional career to work as a full-time minister. While not knowing what would come next, he gave up a position he loved and turned this new phase of his life over to God's design.

Just at that moment, Peter Schultz offered to build a tiny apartment for David. He now had a home. Then in 1998, Phyllis Victory, a long-time devotee of Mother Hamilton, sponsored him on a pilgrimage to India. Of course, one very important destination was Anandashram, and Swami Satchidananda, who was now the Godman guardian of Anandashram. There, David found Swamiji to be "an indispensable help in my realization."

Returning to America, David led a busy life teaching, holding retreats, and meeting with devotees in many cities in both the USA and Canada. He says:

On my return to America, I continued with a busy schedule of travel to work with various aspirants. Now, and after many years of fully scheduled days, I had time to simply go with the powerful stream up my spine into higher realms of consciousness. No longer was I daily crucified on the cross of vertically upward spiritual power meeting the horizontal daily demands of worldly activity. I was now free to sail into the mystical sea of consciousness without limit. One day, out of my mouth

came the idea that I should spend a year in silence and solitude; again, it was an unsolicited idea that came unbidden from some unknown depth. Never before had I considered such an idea. I don't think I had spent even a day in silence, except when there were no others about. Hence, from September 9th, 2000, to September 9th, 2001, I was in silence and seclusion.

During this time of silence, I became established in an inner state of stillness that has never left me. And then, another life surprise: toward the end of my year of solitude, an inner direction came to me. The inner direction was for me to marry Carla, a devoted aspirant who had given sincere service for the last several years to the Work. I realized that this was an important decision, one I did not take lightly as it affected many people, even the Work itself.

In his 2000–2001 journal, David speaks of the levels of reflection and inner and outer affirmation he sought to determine whether this was indeed the right direction for his life. On December 15, 2001, Reverend Larry Koler married David and Carla in a marriage ceremony that came from Mother Hamilton and was based on a ceremony Master created.

In early 2002, David and Carla left on a pilgrimage to India. David and Carla made pilgrimages to India in 2002, 2005, 2007, and 2013. Between these pilgrimages, and ongoing into 2018, David and Carla traveled to different Centers. David says:

Through this Master lineage, He has freely given the very highest means for making that journey of realization. God and the masters have decreed this Work out of love and compassion for those who desire nothing less than the highest realization. Far too often, we are unmindful of the underlying Reality that gives real peace, joy, and wisdom for all, no matter a person's circumstance. Jesus and Babaji are the headwaters of this Work, Lahiri

Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Master, and Mother bless it, and it will shine in this world as long as there are sincere seekers who desire spiritual transformation.

David closes the autobiography he wrote in 2007 with the words: "This spiritual evolution is the greatest hope for a strained world that is too often filled with conflict, intolerance, and separation. Only through individuals gaining realization of their spiritual Reality will this world come to know its full glory in the Light of the Infinite Divine."

From 1998 until his Mahasamadhi in 2019, David, and after their marriage, with the assistance of Carla, led a busy life hosting services in his home or in those of other sadhakas, traveling to Centers in both the USA and Canada, as well as making several pilgrimages to India. He shared his teachings in the form of retreats, poems, prayers, reflections, and discourses. David gave over one thousand talks to devotees. David described his inner journey more intimately through his journals. He conducted services for marriages, memorials, baptisms, and house blessings. In the latter part of his life, he felt called to pilgrimage to nature's cathedrals in beautiful wilderness settings and to spend time in the desert, always seeking the great Stillness.²

David knew that there was more to life than narrow materialism and superficial personality satisfactions. He sought answers; he found a teacher and teachings that nurtured an evolutionary process to realization, neverendingly bringing him surprises and taking him to new heights. David shares, as few can, the intimate internal processes required when we break free from a bound, programmed reality and truly claim our divine nature. His teachings interweave, from start to finish, a process that spirals upward to great height and promise, then descends into the valleys to gather up the lost pieces of shame, blame, and shadow, then carries these wounds

² *My Spiritual India* has David sharing his experiences during his 1998–99 pilgrimage to India and *Climbing the Sacred Mountain: Poems and Prayers of a Western Yogi*, features David's spiritual climb from 1978–2019.

lovingly up to the transformative heights. It is the climb of a sacred mountain, and, as it is with mountains, there are steep inclines, easy paths, valleys, and rivers to ford; there is false peak after false peak until the grand summit is reached. This is the sacred mountain, unique for us all. Yogacharya David's teachings reach deep into our hearts and bring a higher dimensional perspective to each of us—a perspective that can take us into our own cosmic sea of consciousness, to our own potential for self-realization—our climb!

Editor's Note: David's words are important, the essence, the meaning, and the power, so I have changed very few words in his writings. Spelling is corrected and grammar has been adjusted as required. David's life's work comes in many forms, such as journals and a large number of writings in hard copy, other material from several computers, and there are tape recordings of talks that are currently being transcribed. Many writings are undated, some dated. Where individuals are mentioned with praise, their names are included in the texts; when personal inner work is described, names are replaced with an X or Y to honor privacy. All photo images have been gifted with legal permission granted. David's writings serve as magnificent reminders of the great consciousness, power, and wisdom within the human spirit. A series of books from Yogacharya David's teachings and journals is available at www.crossandlotus.com.

It is a privilege to bring Yogacharya David's teachings forward to unify people of all faiths, people who seek a deeper relationship with the sacred, with the wisdom of our multidimensional self, and with the brilliant intelligence of Nature when She is honored as an important co-creative aspect of the Cosmic whole.

I apologize for any errors, omissions, or missed documents, and request Guru's and reader's forgiveness.

May we all put our shoulders to the wheel of this great Work—the upliftment and spiritual evolution of the individual soul, and of this beautifully-created world.



Cloud Mountain Hermitage Retreat.



INTRODUCTION

No soul can fathom all of that which we call God. But like crystal sugar, the soul may drop into the sea of consciousness, dissolve, and become one with the all-embracing love and Light of the Infinite. Yogacharya David. March 2001

I stand on the brink of going into a year of silence. By an inner command, this has come about. As I have contemplated this time, it has been shown to me how we, as human beings, avoid entering into the cosmic sea of consciousness that is God. Our true nature being the vast Spirit of Consciousness, one would think that all would be rushing to enter into that pure joy of Oneness.

Yogacharya David. September 2000

Silence—a whole year—something that Yogacharya David had never considered. Actually, not even silence for one day! Yet, in the summer of 2000, David felt a potent inner prompting directing him to enter a year of silence. And, as with all great endeavors that come from an inner well-spring centered in Divine Source, Grace responded. A few months later, on September 9th, David entered a hermitage retreat cabin at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center, Washington State.

It was as if Mother Hamilton was endowing David with an even deeper meaning to her words:

Think of the wonder and the beauty of God—His power, His love, His peace, His infinite compassion and mercy, and then go deeper. Go deeper still, until you come into the silence of your soul, until you are facetoface with the ocean of infinity—and then dive in. Go beyond all duality and feel yourself merge with that One who is All in everything. Go into the stillness of your soul and realize your oneness with Him.

Carla Gold, a devotee and friend of David at that time, later to become David's beloved wife, stated:

When David told me he was thinking of going into a silent retreat for a year, it seemed the natural course of things. I thought this undertaking was an important and essential time in his sadhana, the natural next step in his quest (as Mother Hamilton would say) "to go over the top," immersing in complete Oneness with God.

I knew that he was the Teacher/Guru who was helping and guiding me to my own complete God-realization. It didn't feel like he was leaving us (his devotees) behind, but that he would be taking us with him! The higher he soared, and reached his own goal, the higher the rest of us would go in our own attainment. I was in complete favor and told him I would support him in whatever capacity he needed.

As Jesus said: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." (John 12:32)

We join David as he writes his summer 2000 journals before he enters his year of silence, and we follow through many journals as the full year continues to closure in September 2001. In these journals, David writes of his adjustment to silence, his daring to enter the deep subconscious sea that arises when outer activity is removed, and of his glorious times of peace, calm, and bliss as the superconscious realms also open. These momentous times are countered with obstructive forces, adverse situations, and even body pain. David finds the inner sacred power to overcome these apparent "obstacles" as they arise. David was ready for the initiation into the cosmic sea of consciousness that holds a vast potential for the human condition and connects to the super or cosmic spiritual realms available for all who seek with courage and wisdom.

As well as journaling, David wrote Dear Friends letters for the quarterly *The Cross and The Lotus Journal*; he wrote letters to the sadhakas, and he wrote a monthly greeting letter to the silent

retreat sadhakas who joined him one Saturday a month on the mountain—this greeting was read aloud by a devotee. Many of these letters are included in the text. He also developed a whole series of teachings included in Part Two of this book.

Part One

Chapter One: Prelude to a Year in Silence—features David's words as he offers a brief introduction to the adesh/spiritual command that he ought to enter a year of silence in retreat. Here we also include poems written that summer.

Chapter Two: Entering and Sustaining Silence and Chapter Three: Life's Deeper Meaning—bring us to David's entry to Cloud Mountain and his retreat hermitage—where he enters and sustains a territory of silence. These chapters include all of David's year of silence journal writings and his four Dear Friends letters he had published in the quarterly *The Cross and The Lotus Journal*, plus his Dear Friends letters he had typed and sent out to sadhakas as well as the silent satsang greeting communications. These latter communications were handwritten, and the copies we were able to recover are included here.

The sections have been separated into months accompanied by a theme that seems to stand out as crucial to David's evolving soul journey toward Universal Oneness. Where David has provided dates, they have been included at the start of his sharing.

Chapter Four: Summer Teachings: 2001—brings us to the eleventh month of David's silent retreat. As summer progresses, David stops writing his personalized journal entries and documents a series of reflections as he prepares to re-enter the world. Most of these are not dated but were all in the same August journal.

Chapter Five: Re-entering the World—ends the silent Cloud Mountain journey as the auspicious day, September 9th, arrives. Retreatants had spent the night on Cloud Mountain at the retreat Center and are ready to hear David speak, chant, and dedicate the Babaji Grotto. Writings from this time are included as well as

a selection of David's later reflections on his silent time at Cloud Mountain.

Chapter Six: Closure—brings an end to the more personal sharing portion of David's year in silence. Included are some selections of his later reflections on this special year that brought the cosmic sea of consciousness so much closer to his lived experience. And, amazingly, prepared him for another adventure, becoming a Householder Yogi.

Part Two

Chapter Seven: *Notes to Sadhakas*—includes a series of teachings David wrote, mainly between October 2000 and February 2001. Here, we find a fine synthesis of topics that support sadhana and bring many aspects of the human condition forward. An extended version of *Notes to Sadhakas* is available as a smaller booklet. In some cases, David wrote several versions of these teachings, some on computers, others in hard copy. In all cases, the latest version, or most complete version, was selected.

Appendix: Babaji-Inspired Clearing/Charging Exercises is a series on clearing and charging the subtle nadi nerves or pranic energy. These exercises, David says, were inspired by Babaji in the spring of 2001. David explains: "According to yogis, there are seventy-two thousand nadis, subtle astral nerves, in the human body. Each of these nerves is a carrier for a subtle intelligent energy called prana. Prana is responsible for our life in the physical, subtle, and astral bodies. It is the intelligent force of prana that makes us healthy. As well, it gives us the ability to move, breathe, and in all ways function."

Sadhakas were invited to a three-day retreat in April of 2001. David, still in silence, had others read from his notes. Information from that retreat has been compiled by David and is included in the Appendix.

Let us now turn to the voice of Yogacharya David.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

PRELUDE TO A YEAR IN SILENCE

Dear Friends,³

I am writing to you all. My most humble apologies if I have not contacted you before this. My one excuse has been the demands on my time, which in no way reflect the love and caring in my heart. I have made a very big decision in my life. As of Saturday, September 9th, 2000, I am entering into a year of silence. An inner prompting has made me do this, and I have felt it to be the right thing to do. Cloud Mountain Retreat Center has opened its doors to me, and I will be staying in a cabin there. It has been built for this kind of retreat. They will provide me with food and check in on me if necessary. They have a wonderful staff, which currently includes my nephew, Chad. So, all is arranged for this year of time. I will not be taking my computer with me. Carla Gold will be monitoring my email for some time. If you wish to send me a message that way, she will get it to me. If you wish to write me, I will keep my P.O. Box. I would love to hear from you.

The purpose of this silent time is not known to me. I do not know if it is time to deepen my search for realization. I have also been reflecting on the decline in values, most directly here in the West, and the lack of desire by so many to seek and express the Light of Self-realization. So, this time seems connected with both of these issues. It should prove to be an interesting time for me, and I hope for you.

Carla Gold has also agreed to be the contact person for the Center Leaders, and we have a new tape of the month that Elaine Cone is coordinating. If you have questions of this nature or any

³ This Dear Friends letter is from September, placed here to provide context for the journal entries and the year of silence.

other, you may contact Carla. Know that you are in my heart, often in my thoughts, and in Spirit, we are forever connected. I once read that Good-Bye meant “God be with you.” So Good-Bye and may blessings shower upon you without end.



Sadhana⁴

A sadhaka is one who practices sadhana. Sadhana is any spiritual practice taught by one’s guru that puts the mind on God in order to purify the mind of desire nature and attachments. Desire nature and attachments are the stock and trade of the ego. Ego is the idea of separation from God and the identification with the body. Separation from God is a product of the human mind.

Therefore, it is the idea of separation that must be surrendered and crucified. Once this idea is eliminated through the crucifixion of the ego, the resurrection of the true Self-nature arises. This Self is the Christ, Krishna, or Buddha nature. With the resurrection of the Christ nature complete, then all sense of separation is ended.

The universal nature of Light, Consciousness, and Bliss is beheld to be everywhere, continuously, naturally. This realization is called Sahaja Samadhi, meaning natural or complete realization. All experience is then seen as a continuous manifestation of the Supreme Spirit of God. It is one, without a second. The sadhaka, which is of the ego nature, disappears along with the idea of separation. Sadhana is no longer practiced, as the mind is totally purified of the idea of separation. There is literally no one left to do sadhana. This state of consciousness is rarely known today, but is attainable by all sadhakas everywhere, until complete realization—more sadhana!

⁴ Chapter One writings are from David’s materials and are included to present a context for his time in silence.

Why Sadhana?

Why is sadhana necessary? From the beginning, God, Paramatman (the Supreme Self), gave his offspring, atmans (souls), free will. With free will, His atmans assumed masks of ignorance. Like Halloween characters, the masked children frightened and delighted one another. The masks became so familiar, the atmans began to think of themselves as the character of the mask they wore. Oh, what an enthralling play! And, the play has gone on and on as long as the atman children have wished. Sometimes, children here and there will tire of the game. Usually, it is at a time the other children are picking on them or they are frightened. But then the scene changes and once again they are enthralled with the play. So, the fickle-minded players return.

Finally, some of the players really desire to give the play up. Tired of the alternations between the pleasure and pain of the play, they focus their mind continuously on giving up the mask and the play. Others in the play want them to continue, so they seek to engage them over and over, trying to entice them back again. After some false starts, these others set about in earnest to give up the play. They ignore all the outer distractions, but new doubts assail them. “Who am I without the mask?” they ask. “Perhaps I wear one of those horrible masks beneath this one; what if I leave the play and I’m lonely? Perhaps I am no one without the mask.” Thus, the doubts come again and again. For those who overcome the doubts, the moment of Truth finally comes. Even as they donned the mask in some unremembered past, now they doff it. Low and behold, what do they find? They are who they have always been deep down behind the mask. The atman. Not only that, but they now remember that they are also the Paramatman, the Supreme Self.

Adoration

Heavenly Father, Divine Mother
 I lay the blossoms of my devotion
 On the altar of my love for Thee
 My listening mind waits in silence
 While my soul softly opens in prayer to receive Thy light.
 Gradually, I am aware of Thy presence
 Enfolding me in Thy arms of everlasting bliss.
 Suddenly I realize
 I am not my body
 I am not my mind
 I am not my soul
 Thou hast absorbed these in thy flame of eternal light.
 I am forever one with Thee.

—YOGACHARYA MOTHER HAMILTON

Within the next couple of weeks, I'll be entering into a period of silence. The reason for this is not fully explained to me. I was speaking to my mother this morning. She said, "Well, you must feel very strongly about this." She's struggling to get her mind around this concept.

I think whenever any of us are confronted with some discipline, with some sadhana, it stirs something inside of us. Of course, we oftentimes try to project ourselves into that sadhana ourselves and see whether it's something that we could do—would be willing to do. We read about these great spiritual masters, and sometimes it's as if we're looking at a distant mountain, one that is very high, a powerful presence, one that stirs something deep inside of us. And yet at the same time, it seems distant, it seems unattainable, unreachable.

Whenever any one of us takes on some spiritual discipline, it helps to purify not only that one but the others who are around that one. That's true for every one of us. When you take time for

deepened prayer and meditation, when you make the effort to purify your life and your consciousness, as you dig deeper beyond the everyday circumstances of your life and go into that higher realm of Divine Consciousness, then it creates a certain power within you, a certain ability to uplift not only your own consciousness but all consciousness.

Jesus once said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32) Now no one, I think, would deny that Jesus was lifted up, but when we look at all of humankind since that time, it doesn't appear that the second part may be true: has he lifted up all of humankind with him? In one sense, you can say not all humankind has entered into heavenly consciousness, but has that Divine Consciousness within Jesus had a powerful impact on this world? Did it help to uplift the consciousness of those who were around him, near him, following with him into the light? And has that continued to spread out over this world? And I think, you can say that he has had a very powerful effect.

But the inward meaning is something different. When the Christ Consciousness within you is lifted up, in other words, when you place it front and center of your own consciousness, and you draw all of your life-force up through the spine and into the Christ center—the ajna within your own body, within your own being—then all the humankind within you, all the human tendencies are lifted up in that action and drawn into heavenly consciousness. As you do that repeatedly, consistently, persistently, the mind is gradually purified. Eventually, you feel yourself more and more to be one with that Universal Divine Life that resides within you. Less and less do you feel identified with this body vehicle and with your tendencies that keep you glued to this world. More and more do you experience your freedom, your joy, your absolute consciousness, and, Sat Chit Ananda.

Unless this evidence is coming into our life, unless we are experiencing greater joy, greater light, greater purity, then we need to continue our sadhana. We need to intensify our sadhana, our prayer,

our meditation, to ask God to intensify our own desire to know Him, to be embraced by Him, to be purified by Him, to be uplifted by Him, to attain to His consciousness.

It should be quite interesting. I've never done anything like this before. It's been interesting to watch myself. I haven't entertained any fear about it that I've noticed. It's like: "Well, God's just taking me on an adventure, and I'll just let Him lead me by the hand." He's the one who gave me the injunction. I trust that He'll give me everything needed to make this successful. But, of course, if you want to send prayers, I would never refuse those . . . I would like it very much if you all continue to meet and support each other, love each other, be an example for each other, be what a spiritual family should be.

I know that God's blessings and the masters' blessings are with you. And any time you focus here, at the heart, or here, at the ajna, that inner communion is there, that there is no separation, and that we might not ever be separate in any real way when that kind of communion is there. I've counted it as my greatest privilege in this lifetime to be with Mother and to serve her in whatever capacity.

Awaken the Light of the World

Not all can take this time in silence as I am doing, either due to circumstances or temperament. So, I do this for all. But be with me daily. For a minute, five minutes, an hour. Be in that silence. And from that silence, see the Light of the world, that Light which lighteth every man and woman, and awaken Itself in the world. Let that Light shake off sleep's angel's dust and awaken to a mighty roar! See that Light shining in your hands, your feet, your whole body, mind, and the altar of your heart. Then see sparks of that fiery wave jump to others, and from them to others still, awakening in them their own sleeping Light. Like a conflagration, that Light spreads over the world, awakening joy, peace, right thoughts and activity. The darkness of past ignorance seems as a dream. All the world arises to be a City of Light upon the hill. Every individual's antenna of heart and mind is attuned to that frequency of Light and

harmony. "Arise, Awake!" is the thunderous call. "Forsake sleep and know your Divinity as never before."

Join with me. Bring the power of God within you and know this world is in for change. Be on the crest of that wave of change and ride it in joy! Hari Om Tat Sat

Two Thieves Steal Inward Sight

Two thieves steal from us inward sight
Closing our eyes to earthly pleasures and woes,
Yet focusing the attention on the One
We move inward the spinal Way.

Breathing slows
Mind stills
Heart rests
Lush, calm is here.

Lightning flashes in darkness,
Stream of Aum floods silence,
Constrained mind expands,
Blissful joy rises within.

Now inner revelation unfolds
Unspeakable truth makes itself known,
Transformation makes me new
At last, I know my Self true.

Truth comes in such hidden Ways,
The world continues its preoccupations,
One here and there hears the call,
The world thus-wise becomes enlightened!⁵

⁵ All poems in Chapter One were in David's summer 2000 journals.

The Flower Glories in the Sun

The flower glories in the sun.
 It proclaims:
 "Is there any greater than I?"
 And it listens intently to the echo.

The flower, today is, tomorrow is not.
 It cares not for the branch that produces it.
 It knows not the trunk that fed it.
 It imagines not the roots that made life possible.

It sees the sun
 But wants only praise from it.
 Receive the breeze as a kiss
 Only to increase the blossom's vanity.

O small insignificant flower,
 You cannot appreciate the thousand other blooms around you,
 But more than that
 You deny yourself the joy of gratitude!

Birds Herald a New Day

The chirps of birds herald a new day,
 Streaks of dawn pierce the dark,
 Heaviness of night yields
 Blessed Day begins!

Inner awakenings stir deep,
 Signs of change come gradual,
 Yearning outdistances knowing
 Dawn comes too slowly!

I stumble in pre-dawn hours,
 But see my faults more clearly.
 Hope alternates with despair,
 Far too gradually does the sun come!

Sight now awakens
 Stronger my steps grow,
 I help one here and there
 Those whose eyes are darkened still.

A new day dawns
 The world awakens
 And shakes off the dreamer's trance
 Songs of praise resonate from high towers.

The sun is for all,
 Fear abandons itself to gratitude,
 Loneliness becomes omnipresence
 And life knows joy anew!

What Presence Moves Within?

What presence moves within?
 Little do I know or realize
 What wonders will come
 In creeping Lightning streaks.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock"
 But who opens,
 Who will open,
 To inner Light and Beauty?

I, I open
 Not to go out!
 But to let Him in
 I receive Him.

And in that communion
Of heart, of soul, of Spirit
A spiritual feast ensues,
Filled with love, wisdom, joy!

O what promise is there
To you and to me
But . . . who opens,
Who will open?

The feast is spread
And, who will receive
The universal One
Who knocks at our door?

O Lord, My Prayer

O Lord, Thou hast given me intelligence, reason, and feeling.
Please, O Lord, guide Thou my intelligence, reason, and feeling.
Thou hast also given power of will, movement, creativity, and energy.
Please O Lord, guide me in the use of will, movement, creativity, and energy.
O Lord, finally Thou hast given me things material: money, home, family and friends, and all possessions.

O Lord, make me a good steward of things material and a worthy member of the human race.
Thank You, Lord, for hearing my prayer, for I know You know my thoughts even before I do.
I pray this prayer to impress it into my own mind.
I pray not to change You; I pray to change my self!

One day God showed me how, in the same way, fear can sweep across a crowd and move humans to panic, that Light can sweep across this whole world and change the minds and hearts of all.

In that sweep of Light, hearts will soften, one towards the other. The Light of Supreme Intelligence will suddenly make dark and unseemly behavior look disagreeable. Humankind will look upon the past cruelties, unnatural passions, addictions, and oppressions as an inexplicable dream upon awakening to a bright new dawn. May the Light of that dawn speedily make its way to Now!

O Lord, change not my circumstances; change me!

When I was young, I used to pray, “Lord, give me friends and good grades,” expecting them to come without effort on my part. I now see the folly of this. Today I might pray, “Lord, inspire me to study and learn well, and let me be a friend to all that I might earn their loyalty and friendship in return.”

They said: “Show me a miracle!” and their eyes were blind. Closeness to God manifests as gratitude and awe at the stupendous miracles of the ordinary. I just used a rubber band and marveled at its ability to stretch and return to its original shape. I send an email and am astounded to be connected to anywhere in the world in an instant. To see planes the size of a palace suspended in the air. And these are the least. Recently, we had a birth. To think this baby started from two cells that became one. Think on that miracle that is also the pattern for all that is. Then that one became the many cells that make up the whole. Finally, the many cells come to realize they are really one. O the miracle of life. The heart bursts in love and appreciation for all that is. Yes, gratitude, wonder, and awe happen at the feet of the Infinite. What greater gift than this? What greater miracle?