

Sitting at the Feet of Ramdas

MOTHER HAMILTON AT ANANDASHRAM



From Writings by Swami Ramdas, Mother Hamilton, & Swami Satchidananda



THE CROSS AND THE LOTUS PUBLISHING

*SITTING AT THE
FEET OF RAMDAS*



Ralph Hamilton, Swami Ramdas, Mataji Krishnabai, Mildred Hamilton

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Swami Ramdas,
Mother Hamilton &
Swami Satchidananda

Edited by Cate J. Koler

Foreword by Reverend Lawrence J. Koler

**Sitting at the Feet of Swami Ramdas:
Mother Hamilton at Anandashram**



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L-R: Mother Hamilton, Swami Atmananda,
Ralph Hamilton, Swami Ramdas*

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DEDICATED TO

Beloved Swami Ramdas, Papa of us all,
on the Centenary of his Sannyas Day
when he renounced everything
in Quest of God.

December 27, 1922 – December 27, 2022

&

Our Guru,
The Reverend Mother
Yogacharya M. Hamilton
We bow forever at your feet.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram, Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram



Formal photo of Mother Hamilton in her minister's gown, 1960s

“I have sat under the stars in India, where there was a big red moon overhead and the whole sky was carpeted with a blanket of stars. It seemed so close that you could almost reach out and touch it. The smell and the fragrance of all of the tropical flowers permeated the air. And I have sat at the feet of the master, Ramdas, and I have watched him as he talked about God. I have listened to him and I have felt the presence of God within him. I saw the effulgence from his being just spreading and spreading and spreading, until I blinked my eyes because I thought I was hallucinating. It was just permeating and spreading everywhere.”

– *From a talk by Mother Hamilton in 1979.*

OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We are reproducing all the material in this book as it was written—thus we have retained the British style of punctuation and spelling. This was the standard for Indian writers of English and also for many Americans during the early part of the 20th century. We made this decision out of respect for the three saints whose writings we feature.

The book's introduction, editor's notes, footnotes and appendix are all written using current American style. We have, however, taken the liberty of correcting any typos/errors which appeared in the original texts, notably from the typed letters. We also added verse numbers to any Biblical quotes which Mother Hamilton included in her letters to facilitate reading, as well as the occasional comma. Bible verses are from the King James version of the Bible.

Editorial notes within the body of the book are in italics. Most of the Sanskrit/Indian terms are also in italics and are defined in the glossary. Additional information and explanations are usually included in our endnotes, rather than in footnotes on the page.

CONTENTS

Poem "To Ramdas, My Beloved Papa"	x
Foreword by Reverend Lawrence J Koler	xiii
Chapter I – God Has Come to See God	1
Chapter II – A Saint's Touch.....	9
Chapter III – At the Abode of Bliss	31
Chapter IV – Letters from Anandashram.....	101
Chapter V – Honoring Papa	141
Acknowledgements.....	155
Endnotes / Notes	156, 157
Sources / Permissions.....	158, 159
Glossary	160
Other Publications.....	165

TO RAMDAS, MY BELOVED PAPA

Father of all creation,
At Thy feet I humbly bow
To offer Thee in homage
The adoration of my soul.

I see Thy image everywhere –
In every face I meet,
I feel Thy presence active
In the patter of busy feet.

I hear Thee softly dancing
In the raindrops on the roof.
I feel Thy joy transcending
In the murmur of the brook.

The touch of Thy hand, Thy gaze, Thy thought,
Give untold bliss, eternally sought
By all whose hearts soar into flight
In search of God's great wondrous light.

The white clouds rush to meet Thee
On the wings of a gentle breeze
That they might drink of Thy spirit
And scatter Its blissful seeds.

If man could see the vision
Of that which I have seen,
He'd see Thee as Thou really art –
The fulfillment of his dreams.

Thy being is universal
In tune with Heaven above
As Thou sing Thy song eternal
Of His everlasting love.

In the ecstasy of God,
Yogacharya Mildred Hamilton

Ramdas' Birthday
April 10, 1956



FOREWORD

When Mother Hamilton first met Swami Ramdas (Papa) in a suite at the Meany Hotel in Seattle, her first glimpse from the open doorway was Papa's delighted expression as he danced and clasped his hands over his head in a sign of victory. The notion of victory was quite significant in Papa's practice and teachings because his constantly chanted mantra was Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. "Jai" translates as victory and "Ram" in this context is translated as God. Thus, the victory that Papa saw in Mother's appearance can only be taken as his recognition that Mother was victorious or that Ram was victorious in her. But she didn't know any of that at the time. And she was about to immerse herself into the spiritually dynamic world in which Papa existed.

Mother discovered that Papa was very different in expression from her own master, Paramhansa Yogananda. But she found in Papa a divine personality which she recognized from that previous divine contact. Yogananda taught his disciples to seek out saints, to spend time in their presence and that this would benefit their progress on the spiritual path. He was known as an expert on saints of all types and levels of attainment.

Paramhansa Yogananda knew of Swami Ramdas from letters that were exchanged between him and Swami Satyananda, a fellow disciple. Satyananda visited Anandashram in 1942. In 1955, Satyananda wrote an article in the ashram's publication titled: *Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Mother Krishnabai's Renunciation*.

We also know that Swami Ramdas knew about Yogananda. I presume this because of Swami Satyananda's visit, and also that there are stories of Self Realization Fellowship (SRF)

devotees, after Master's passing, asking Papa to take them as a disciple and Papa refusing saying, "I am not your guru — Yogananda is your guru." This didn't happen with Mother Hamilton as she didn't ask to be Papa's disciple, but rather she asked him for help in getting through the final steps in her path towards God-realization.

There are many stories in India of disciples seeking help from another saint, usually after their guru has passed. Meher Baba was initiated by Hazrat Babajan and later turned to Upasni Maharaj to attain his final liberation. Many SRF devotees visited Ananda Moyi Ma and many were helped by her. Papa's father was his guru, and it was from him that he received the holy mantra, Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram (Om added later). But, during his early days of sadhana (starting on December 27, 1922), he visited Ramana Maharshi and prayed for his blessing. And behold, he was granted the great boon of universal vision.

Papa played a key role in Mother's development. She needed protection, encouragement, and advice. The protection came in his invitation to come and stay at Anandashram (in 1957 thru 1958). This was critical, as it turned out, because Mother went through a severe and universal crucifixion-like experience at the ashram when Papa launched her into the final Kundalini process. She had undergone much of this before traveling to the ashram and God so arranged it that she went through the most difficult and the most painful part under Papa's guidance and protection. This is described in great detail in her book, *The Mystical Crucifixion*, published by The Cross and The Lotus Publishing in early 2022.

Mother's stay at the ashram started on October 14, 1957 and Papa was available every day. She often talked about this extraordinary fact—that Papa could maintain his Sahaja

Foreword

Samadhi state throughout the day and night. He was always open to receiving people and he never had days off or of withdrawal. Mother mentioned this many times and how it really spoke to his state of realization.

Papa was established in the highest of states and it manifested itself as sometimes quite severe. Mother told us that Papa gave her no quarter as she was going through the difficulties of extreme Kundalini heat and mental duress that accompanied her latter months at the ashram in 1958. This characteristic is a defining element in the story of what a fully realized Godman is—complete dispassion that is the result of his actionless inner state amidst the outer state of action.

Papa spent the early months of Mother's visit stabilizing Mother and steering her mind to think more and more of God and His attributes. This resulted in Mother slowly understanding just what is asked of a person on this final mile up the spiritual mountain, up the ladder of cosmic consciousness. After a few months she started to experience a restlessness and she mentioned to Papa that they would like to travel. Initially he was against it but then suggested they go to Madras. Papa knew that the ego was feeling cornered, that Mother's true Self was starting to take control and these two competing selves were having a tug-of-war between them. Mother talked a lot about this feature on the spiritual path: that of being torn between the two forces.

So, on January 2, 1958, she and Father left to travel to Madras (Chennai) and to San Thome (Saint Thomas, the Apostle) Basilica. Mother visited San Thome two other times and it was clear from the photos of her visits that this place meant a lot to her. She never discussed why she felt this way but there are several photos that Mother brought back from her 1968 and 1977 trips that show her holding the lance that was

reputed to have killed Saint Thomas and one that shows her holding a reliquary containing relics of St. Thomas's body.

They also traveled to Sri Aurobindo's ashram and to Ramanashram (the home of the great saint, Ramana Maharshi in the small town of Tiruvannamalai), which she found to be a little disappointing, in that the ashram was not well maintained at that time. It is now one of the great pilgrimage sites of India.

After they returned to the ashram, Mother was put back to work and unknowingly continued to prepare for the great ordeal that she was to undergo while there. Mother experienced a schizophrenic-like mental state during the latter part of her stay and this recurred a few times over the next two years. After her return to America, she was still very much caught between the two forces, and she was confused by these extreme and dramatic swings in her moods and emotions.

In 1960, Mother grew in understanding and found that she was over the worst of physical and mental experiences. This is when she started to see just what it was that Papa had done for her. He protected her during the worst of her Kundalini experiences by not letting her be given drugs nor put away in a hospital or sanatorium. She lamented how little western medicine knew about such things and their inability to treat some highly advanced souls in their care who are going through what are, at root, spiritual growth and development.

Many Christian saints have similar stories of this kind. They experience severe pain and mental duress, emotional imbalance, and great suffering. Sri Ramakrishna also had very difficult things to endure and he was very badly treated by people who didn't understand what he was going through. Meher Baba used to hit his head against a wall due to the difficulties that he experienced.

Foreword

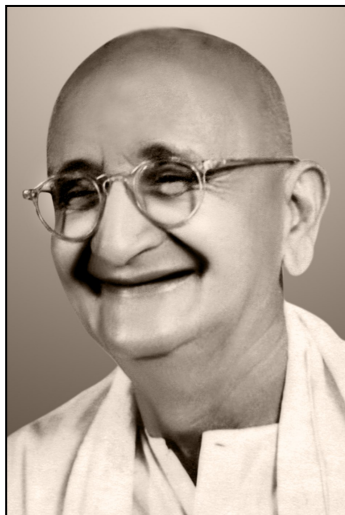
Papa once said after one of Mother's particularly difficult experiences at the ashram in 1958 that he "stood at the door with a club and warded off death."

When I knew Mother from 1976 on, she was so very full of praise for Papa that we all were transported into a great love for him. She taught from the deep wells of wisdom that she had drawn from her own master and from Papa. She initiated us into Yogananda's Kriya Yoga and she taught us the Ram mantra from Papa. She always said that she was the result of two masters.

Master brought her to the point where she knew and loved God above all things in life. This is the great and necessary gift that will take one through all of the things on the path. This precious gift endows us with endurance and strength. Without this preparation she could never have withstood and triumphed over the trials that came during her mystical crucifixion under Papa.

Rev. Lawrence J. Koler

Sitting at the Feet of Ramdas



A joyful Swami Ramdas



Mildred and Ralph Hamilton in 1954

CHAPTER ONE

“GOD HAS COME TO SEE GOD”

MOTHER HAMILTON MEETS

“PAPA” SWAMI RAMDAS

in Seattle, USA

during Swami Ramdas’ World Tour 1954

EXCERPTS from the book, *WORLD IS GOD*,
and the monthly magazine, “The Vision”

All published by Anandashram

Sitting at the Feet of Ramdas

These writings chronicle the inspiring and momentous meeting between Mother Hamilton and Swami Ramdas in 1954 in Seattle, USA during Papa's world tour. The three separate sources have been interwoven to provide the narrative with as many details as possible.

The passage below from "God Comes to Visit" by Yogacharya Mother Hamilton, was published in 1968 by Anandashram in The Vision, a monthly magazine.

Mother Hamilton Writes:

It was in September of 1954 that I first heard of Papa. Reverend Bob Raymer of St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote and told me that a Swami friend of his was coming to America and would visit him and then fly to Seattle, Washington, which was my home. He asked if I would make it a point to see him and extend him any courtesy possible. I answered immediately telling him that my husband and I would be most happy to have him as our guest. However, I received a reply stating that there were too many in the Swami's party for us to accommodate. Later, after Papa had arrived and we came to know how many were in the party, we knew we could have managed easily but by then they were already established in spacious quarters in the Hotel Edmond Meany, located in the University District where we lived. We have many times since thought with regret of the great privilege it would have been to have had all of them in our home¹ and the wonderful time in God we could have had together, but there can be no doubt that the Master Architect of the Universe had already done His own plan.

Papa was expected in October. I received a call from Mrs. Max Groeger, one of Papa's devotees, who had charge of the arrangements for him in Seattle, telling me when he was expected and asking if I would arrange for him to speak to the spiritual group which my husband and I headed there. I, of

course, readily agreed and set about sending notices to the devotees.

The day dawned when Papa was to arrive. Mrs. Groeger telephoned and asked if I would go to the hotel and welcome him. I agreed. I donned a saree-like white robe which I wore when giving lectures, stopped at a florist shop and bought a dozen beautiful long stemmed roses to present to him and walked over to the hotel. As I stepped into the elevator to ascend to the floor where Papa was staying, I was filled with mixed emotions – anticipation at the prospect of meeting him and hope that I was not being disloyal to my own Guru in so doing. I had been a disciple of the great Master Paramhansa Yogananda for 29 years and my love and devotion for God in him was so great that even the thought of meeting another Master seemed somewhat sacrilegious. Let me hasten to add that this was not fostered as a result of anything my Guru had said but stemmed from my own feeling. During his lifetime (he entered Mahasamadhi on March 7, 1952) he taught all who followed him, and taught us well, that God was equally present everywhere – in every church, in every temple, in every religion, in every man regardless of race, color or creed, and in every atom of space. He told us that we must always pay homage to Him equally in every saint whom we were privileged to meet.

However, to continue my story, as I left the elevator and walked down the hall to where Papa's suite of rooms was located I saw two men standing outside his door. When I asked them if this was Swami Ramdas' suite they said that it was and that I should just go in. As I started through the door I saw Papa. He was alone and standing back in the room but in front of the door. He took one look at me. His childlike face broke into a broad grin, and he started dancing as though he could not

contain the joy of our meeting and must somehow express it. I didn't know what to think. I had never seen anyone behave in such a manner but then I had never met anyone like Papa. It was the strangest thing that had ever happened to me. I introduced myself and presented him with the roses. He greeted me sweetly and then promptly threw the roses on a table beside him without any comment. This, too, seemed strange to me because my own Guru had always been very careful to acknowledge any gift that was given to him. It wasn't until three years later when I visited Anandashram that I understood the reason for Papa's behavior. He was garlanded from morning until night with beautiful flowers made by the loving hands of his many devotees who wished to express their love for him. Had he not immediately taken one off to make room for another, he would have fallen with the weight of a mountain of flowers. He also told me once that sometimes the flowers housed ants and if he didn't take the garlands off quickly, they were apt to crawl all over him and bite him. Who can blame them for wanting to savor the sweet nectar of God which permeated every part of his being?

He invited me to be seated and we sat and talked for a while exchanging our views on God and His truth. I then asked him if we might meditate together, not realizing that for one who had already attained there was no need to meditate. He and his Father were already one. However, he said sweetly, "Yes, let us meditate," so I sat at his feet and immediately felt myself lifted up into the presence of God. What peace, what joy, what bliss I experienced! He said afterwards that I had left body-consciousness. I do not know. It was an indescribable experience. Little did I dream then that my meeting with him was to change the whole course of my life in order that I might fulfill my destiny. *End of Part One.*

Excerpted from World is God, Chapter XIII, published in 1955.

Papa Writes:

SEATTLE: TRANSMISSION OF SPIRITUAL POWER

Among the visitors we had in Seattle Ramdas may make particular mention of two, Yogacharya Mildred Hamilton and Mr. Robert Carr. Reverend Ralph B. Hamilton and his wife Yogacharya Mildred Hamilton are ardent disciples of Swami Yogananda. Mildred Hamilton would be in a state of divine inebriation when the thought of God came into her mind. She is also a great lover of saints. She came one early morning before any other friends arrived to meet Ramdas. She said that in Ramdas' presence she felt elevated into the divine consciousness. She squatted on the carpet and with eyes closed remained for about ten minutes absolutely still, her face lit up with a spiritual glow.

Next evening Ramdas was taken to their house to meet their friends – devotees of Swami Yogananda. The meeting lasted for an hour. Here Ramdas was asked to speak a few words to the friends. Ramdas addressed the gathering on the greatness of saints and the ways in which they influence spiritual aspirants who seek their help....

The speech is given in its entirety in Chapter Two.

Sitting at the Feet of Ramdas

The following report of Papa's time in Seattle is from "Swami Ramdas' Tour Abroad" in The Vision magazine, December 1954.

The Hamiltons' Residence, October 24, 1954

A CHILD OF GOD

Taking leave of the students, Papa visited Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton at their residence. Mrs. Hamilton is a very staunch devotee of Paramhansa Yogananda. She had invited many of her friends to come and hear Papa. Introducing Papa to the gathering, she said: "We are very greatly privileged to have the blessed Swami Ramdas here with us. I am so happy I was able to see him, be with him and listen to his speech. When I sat at his feet, I felt myself to be in the presence of God, just as I felt when I sat at the feet of my Master. It looked as though time and space ceased to exist for me. As I touched Swamiji's feet, it seemed as though I touched the hem of the garment of God. Swami Ramdas is truly a child of God and I want you all to carefully listen to his words of divine wisdom. It is only once in a lifetime that you get such a rare privilege."

Chapter 1—God Has Come to See God

Part Two of the article written by Mother Hamilton and published in 1968 in "The Vision" by Anandashram is printed below:

Mother's Version Continues:

The momentous occasion of my first meeting with Papa ended with my offer to be of any service to him that I could. I also extended him an invitation to speak to our group the next evening which he very graciously accepted.

He arrived at our home, promptly accompanied by the other members of his party, Mother Krishnabai, Swami Satchidananda, Rani Lalita Devi and Sagarlal Gupta, none of whom had been present when I met him the previous day. As I opened the door he stood there, his face aglow, beaming like a little child who had come to attend a birthday party. My heart was filled with divine love for him as I introduced him to the devotees who had been eagerly anticipating his coming. I told them it was a rare privilege to meet someone who was completely God-realized because few there are indeed who have the courage, the determination, the love and devotion necessary to offer themselves and all that they have in complete surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord that He may be revealed to them in all of His wonder and glory. Papa smiled sweetly and asked what we would like to have him discuss. I told him we were eager to hear anything of his own choosing. So, knowing the depth of my love for my own Guru, he spoke to us as follows on the greatness of saints....

The speech is given in its entirety in Chapter Two.