

THE MEADVILLE-LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

THE HINDU INTERFAITH RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS OF  
H.H. MA JAYA SATI BHAGAVATI AND THE RIVER FUND

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
THE MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

VILIUS RUDRA DUNDZILA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 2006

Copyright © 2006 by Vilius Rudra Dundzila

All rights reserved

MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

FACULTY APPROVAL PAGE

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY FINAL DOCUMENT

THE HINDU INTERFAITH RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS OF  
H.H. MA JAYA SATI BHAGAVATI AND THE RIVER FUND

BY

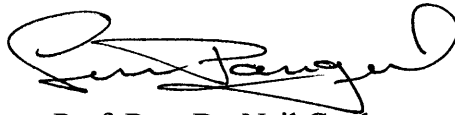
VILIUS RUDRA DUNDZILA

MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, 2006

DATE: 17 MAY 2006

FACULTY APPROVAL:

Prof. Rev. Dr. Susi Pangerl



Prof. Rev. Dr. Neil Gerdes



Prof. Rev. Dr. Jerome Stone



## DEDICATION

Om Ganesha!

Om Kali!

Om Hanuman!



In loving memory of my guru Arwind U. Vasavada (1912-1998),

I dedicate this project to my spiritual teacher

H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati,

in joyful celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her

Neem Karoli Baba Kashi Ashram in Sebastian, FL,

and to all people with HIV/AIDS,

living and dead,

especially those that Ma and her students have served,

in particular Phillip, Christine, Louie, Tom, Will, Ramūnas, and Jaya Das.

## EPIGRAPH

Children play by my River  
Sadhus<sup>1</sup> stay by my River  
Cities old by my River  
Temples made of gold by my River  
Cows stay all the day by my River  
Young men and women now die by my River  
We are all the widows who cry by my River  
1008 candles drift on the leaves that float on my River  
They light the hope of the many by my River.

-Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *The River*<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A person searching for God.

<sup>2</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *The River* (Roseland, FL: Ganga P, 1994), 1.

## VITA

NAME: Vilius Rudra Dundzila

DATE OF BIRTH: 22 October 1962

PLACE OF BIRTH: Chicago, IL

EDUCATION: B.A., University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1980  
M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1985  
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991  
M.P.S., Loyola University Chicago, 2002

ORDINATION: Lithuanian Ethnic Church Romuva, Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991

UUA CREDENTIALS: Affiliated Minister, 2002-pres.

PARISH MINISTRY: Lithuanian Ethnic Church Romuva, Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991-92  
Lithuanian Ethnic Church Romuva, Chicago, IL, 1993-2003

HIV/AIDS MINISTRY: AIDS Interfaith Ministries of Madison, WI, 1989-91  
Lithuanian AIDS Center, Vilnius, Lithuania, 1991-92  
Lithuanian Mercy Lift, Chicago, IL, 1999-2004  
AIDS Pastoral Care Network, 1999-pres.

FACULTY: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Fall 1987, 1990-91  
Madison Area Technical College, WI, 1990-91  
Beloit College, Beloit, WI, Fall 1989, Spring 1991  
Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, 1991-92  
Harry S. Truman College (City Colleges of Chicago), 1999-pres.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication .....	iv
Epigraph.....	v
Vita.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Illustrations.....	x
Abstract.....	xi
Acknowledgements.....	xii
Preface.....	xiv
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 Who is H.H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati?.....	6
Biography.....	7
Guru .....	9
Ma's Religion and Mysticism.....	11
HIV/AIDS Religious Work.....	15
Parliament of the World's Religions.....	18
Photo .....	22
Chapter 3 Ma's Verbal Teaching about HIV/AIDS .....	30
Seva: Service.....	32
Karma and Theodicy.....	36
Karma Yoga: The Path of Action .....	36
Karma: Cause and Effect .....	41
Theodicy .....	43

HIV/AIDS Care .....	46
Death .....	49
The Chidakash .....	54
Chapter 4 Art, the Visual Teaching .....	68
The Hindu Context.....	70
Art as Spiritual Practice .....	72
Art Benefiting AIDS .....	74
HIV/AIDS Art.....	75
<i>Shakti Sanchara River Painting</i> .....	76
<i>4 by 4 River Painting</i> .....	78
<i>Ancient Mother</i> .....	79
<i>Linga Ma</i> .....	82
<i>Painted Kali Reading</i> .....	83
Illustrations .....	85
Chapter 5 Ma’s Kinesthetic Teaching: Breath, Meditation, and Yoga.....	96
The Breath.....	97
Meditation .....	100
Kali Natha Yoga .....	104
Chapter 6 The River Fund.....	113
West Coast Rounds.....	115
Rounds and Feed Every One.....	118
The River House .....	124
Since 11 September 2001.....	133



South Africa .....	134
Uganda .....	134
India .....	136
Florida.....	136
Photo .....	139
Chapter 7 Conclusion.....	149
The Praxis of Ministry .....	152
Bibliography .....	161

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1 H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati giving darshan in Chicago, March 2000. ....	22
2 Poster of Ma's painting <i>The River</i> . ....	85
3 From Ma's <i>Shakti Sanchara River Painting</i> series.....	86
4 From Ma's <i>4x4 River Painting</i> series. ....	87
5 From Ma's <i>Ancient Mother</i> series. ....	88
6 The Shiva Lingam, with Shiva's face, at Kashi Ashram. ....	88
7 From Ma's <i>Linga Ma</i> series. ....	89
8 From Ma's <i>Painted Kali Reading</i> series.....	90
9 The author with former River House resident Jaya Das in December 2004. ....	139

## ABSTRACT

### THE HINDU INTERFAITH RESPONSE TO HIV/AIDS OF H.H. MA JAYA SATI BHAGAVATI AND THE RIVER FUND

BY

VILIUS RUDRA DUNDZILA

MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, 2006

This research thesis documents a comprehensive humanistic response to HIV/AIDS from a Hindu interfaith spiritual community. It explores the HIV/AIDS-related teaching and ministry of the guru H.H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati and her human care service organization the River Fund, both at Kashi Ashram in Sebastian, FL. After providing her developmental biography, it summarizes her verbal, artistic, and kinesthetic forms of teaching. She responds to HIV/AIDS with the Hindu concept of *seva* (service) that follows the Hindu religious path of Karma Yoga (action). The project then examines the history and work of the River Fund, paying a particular focus to its de facto AIDS hospice, the River House. The organization is unique in both the Hindu and American religious contexts. The project demonstrates how a medium-sized religious congregation successfully provides secular HIV/AIDS social services.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City Colleges of Chicago and Harry S Truman College provided funding for this project through the Sabbatical Leave and Professional Development programs.

First and foremost, I wish to thank H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati for allowing me to write this project about her teaching and work. I am also greatly indebted to her for being my spiritual teacher since the death of my guru.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the River Fund Executive Director Ms. Jaya Canterbury-Counts. This project would not have been possible without her invaluable assistance.

Special appreciation belongs to the River Fund, Kashi Ashram, and Kashi Sacred Art for the gracious permission I received to research archives, quote material, and reprint images in this project. I want to thank the following individuals for the help they provided in many ways: Executive Director Acharya Swami Krishnapriya Hutner, Director of Kashi Sacred Art Swami Ramayana Baba and his Assistant Mr. Sadhu Sanyas, Director of Operations Ms. Usha Quiyou, and the Director of Media Relations Ms. Sita Gange. My gratitude goes to the various members of the Kashi community who participated in interviews for this project or taught Kali Natha Yoga classes that I attended: Yoga Acharya Laxman Das, Swami Himalaya, Swami Dhumavati, Swami Bhagavati Das, Ms. Tara Dickinson, Ms. Sati Mayee Sun, Ms. Radha Louise, Ms. Rukmini Jaya, Ms. Ananda Devi, Mr. Jayanta, Mr. Babaji, and Mr. Jaya Das.

A warm thank you goes to Mr. Travis Rejman and Ms. Emily Chou of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions for their assistance in researching materials about Ma in their archives.

I wish to thank my faculty advisory committee at Meadville-Lombard for its guidance, honesty, and patience throughout this project: Prof. Rev. Dr. Susi Pangerl, Prof. Rev. Dr. Neil Gerdes, and Prof. Rev. Dr. Jerome Stone. Thanks go to my colleagues in the D.Min. program for their suggestions during the peer consultations in developing this project. My gratitude also belongs to Associate Librarian Dr. Anthony Heacock, and Library Assistant Ms. Christine Mitchell for the countless times they helped me locate hard-to-find items. I want to thank and acknowledge Prof. Dr. Wendy Doniger of the University of Chicago, Prof. Dr. Laurel Schneider and Prof. Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Terrell of the Chicago Theological Seminary for the references and resources they provided in their respective courses on Hinduism, Queer Theory, and AIDS.

Thankful appreciation goes to Harry S Truman College (City Colleges of Chicago) President Dr. Marguerite Boyd. She fully supported me in all aspects of this project. I am grateful to Adjunct Librarian Ms. Marilyn Cichon for her amazing ability to obtain obscure inter-library loan materials for this project. My appreciation extends to my colleagues Prof. Dr. Michael Swisher, Prof. Dr. William Settles, Prof. Rev. Dr. Michael McCloskey, and Prof. Olga Ruiz for their encouragement.

Finally yet importantly, my gratitude belongs to the love of my life, my husband, and my best friend Mr. George Vincent Humphrey for his support, and copy-editing.

## PREFACE

Namaste! I bow to the Divine within you!<sup>1</sup>

The dedication page of this project began with three pious Hindu phrases: “Om Ganesha!,” “Om Kali!,” and “Om Hanuman!” At the beginning of any worship service or important undertaking, devout Hindus commonly invoke this type of triple divine blessing. H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati often uses the invocation above. Her followers simply call her “Ma,” a North Indian Hindu honorific title of respect for a saintly woman. What do these phrases mean? “Om” is the primal Hindu mantra (mystic sound) that means, “Yes, verily.”<sup>2</sup> The symbol for Om (ॐ) follows the invocations. Ganesha is the Hindu god who removes obstacles. Kali is the Hindu goddess of liberation, and Ma is her devotee. Hanuman is the Hindu god of devotion and service. Ma is dedicated to him as well. Actually, these various deities manifest one monistic God who appears in a myriad of forms.

My project involves both objective and subjective relationships with my topic: I am a student of Ma and have been a volunteer of her River Fund. In 1995, I first met Ma in darshan (spiritual teaching) during one of her trips to Chicago. My guru Arwind Vasavada encouraged visits to other teachers.<sup>3</sup> As a Gay man who had been HIV+ since 1984, I was interested in Ma because of her pro-GLBT stance, and HIV/AIDS work. She became my spiritual teacher in 1999, a year after my guru’s death. I took 14 intensive courses with her from the Kashi Center for Advanced Spiritual Studies in Sebastian, FL. There, I volunteered for her River Fund and River House. I came to know the residents,

volunteers, and staff, some of whom later helped with this project. The residents I met and befriended have gracefully blessed my life.

The idea for this project came as an outgrowth of my own religious work in the HIV/AIDS arena (see my vita). I wanted the project to be unique, meaningful, and helpful, not merely an academic exercise. The original premise for this project was Buddhist and Hindu approaches to spiritual self-care for people living with HIV/AIDS. I reviewed the literature on HIV/AIDS that had a religious or spiritual perspective, most of which came from Christianity. It included psychological-spiritual approaches,<sup>4</sup> pastoral care,<sup>5</sup> ministry,<sup>6</sup> theology,<sup>7</sup> New Age,<sup>8</sup> AIDS critical theory,<sup>9</sup> documentation of ministry,<sup>10</sup> education,<sup>11</sup> worship resources,<sup>12</sup> self-help,<sup>13</sup> and collected stories.<sup>14</sup> The secular Shanti Project (now known as Shanti) and the religious Zen Hospice Project, both in San Francisco, were well-known and well-documented AIDS service organizations.<sup>15</sup> In addition, I located one book<sup>16</sup> and one unpublished project<sup>17</sup> with an eastern perspective. Outside the AIDS arena, there was one famous secularized eastern approach to reducing stress and facing disease.<sup>18</sup>

I realized that no one had researched any Hindu HIV/AIDS initiative. Of the approximately 3000 AIDS ministries that existed during the height of the pandemic<sup>19</sup> in the United States (early 1990s),<sup>20</sup> only one had a Hindu basis: Ma's River Fund. There has been no scholarly publication on Ma or the River Fund to date, although non-academic materials are available. National magazines, mostly with an Eastern spiritual focus, have carried articles about and interviews with Ma, some of which have included her HIV/AIDS work.<sup>21</sup> Several books have anthologized her as a spiritual teacher.<sup>22</sup> Local

Florida media have often reported on the River Fund.<sup>23</sup> Two valuable sources have not been published: Thomas “Billy” Byrom’s *Ma and Me*<sup>24</sup> and Ma’s autobiography *How God Found Me*.<sup>25</sup> Ma’s Hindu-based interfaith response needs to be documented so it could serve as a model that others may follow. This project is unique in that it studies Ma’s teaching about HIV/AIDS as well as her response to the pandemic. Although aspects of Ma’s life and teaching have been documented in popular media, no one has pursued an academic study of her HIV/AIDS teaching and engagement yet. It documents how she, her students, and her organization touch the hearts, minds, and souls of a humanity that hungers for God, but can no longer find God in the traditional sources.

In this project, I attempted to maintain the integrity of the Hindu religious tradition by using the conceptual terminology coming from within the tradition, with explanations. As a matter of principle, I avoided Western terms for Eastern concepts, and vice versa. I compared words with related meanings from both traditions, as I used them. Some Hindu terms have become commonplace English words, such as guru, karma, and yoga. A few of these have developed negative connotations that I needed to correct.

The notion of “common knowledge” became a second challenge. A rule of thumb considers information readily available in three sources to constitute common knowledge. What happens when different audiences do not share the same background, as is in the case of this project? Information does not easily cross disciplines. Although this project focuses on one American Hindu interfaith response to HIV/AIDS, it has several potential audiences: HIV/AIDS professionals, religious professionals, westerners interested in



Hinduism, Hindus in the west, and the public. Religious and HIV/AIDS terminologies required explanation.

To resolve both issues of specialized vocabulary and common knowledge, I gloss common Hindu vocabulary with a brief English equivalent. I do not cite references for such words, as more detailed definitions can be easily located in any tome that introduces Hinduism.<sup>26</sup> I explain and reference uncommon Hindu terms with detail. I follow the same principles for Western religious and HIV/AIDS vocabulary, with the expectation that the readers will be more familiar with these terms.

Another challenge of the project involved systematizing Ma's teaching and conveying her mysticism. She teaches verbally, emotionally, visually, artistically, and physically. She also uses meditative silence. Questions of God, the holy, and the ultimate are those that no one can answer fully. Explaining one's own spiritual experiences is inherently difficult. Translating Ma's experiences and teachings without compromising their integrity into a scholarly discourse is a main goal of this project. Moreover, Ma teaches primarily using Hindu expressions that require a faithful rendition with a Western religious lexicon.

Individuals other than the mystic often collect and edit the teachings of a mystic. The mystical experience is a first order system: it is the unmitigated reality of the actual event. Explanation of the experience is a second order system. The mystic uses the fallible medium of language to express what has happened. The description is imperfect and often requires various redactions to clarify it.<sup>27</sup> In addition to language, Ma is an inimitable mystic in that she uses art and movement to convey her mysticism. She

probably does this to overcome the limitations of language, as well as to benefit her students with different learning styles. Editing the speech or describing the art of a mystic—for example, for publication—is a third-order system: not only is it twice removed from the original, it is also conveyed via a secondary subject that lacks the original experience. Consequently, interpreting the edited writings of a mystic is a fourth-order system, three times removed from the original. This project is such an endeavor. In spite of these hermeneutic difficulties, the academic study of mysticism requires as close a proximity to the original sources as possible, as well as a genuine reading of them. Each redaction of a mystic's words, as in a research thesis, compromises the authenticity of the mystical description with each subsequent layer of editorial or interpretive praxis. The mystical, sometimes oxymoronic, and often poetic language of the mystic needs not only translation into an academic discussion, but also systematization into an organized outline as well. By virtue of personal, subjective experiences as Ma's student and objective reliance on primary sources, I hope to have presented an authentic representation of her teaching. Unfortunately, the vivacity of the original can be lost in this process.

A few minor technical details require explanation. First, the documented sources for Ma's teachings include a variety of Kashi publications such as books, pamphlets, videos, cassettes, and CDs, as well as articles and interviews in magazines, journals, newspapers, and books. I have cited all published sources with references, and I have occasionally had to supplement this material with stories from Ma's darshans that were not recorded elsewhere. Second, I have gladly agreed to Kashi's request for a pre-publication review of this project. Third, Ma gives her students spiritual names. Her

students identify themselves and refer to each other with these names. I have followed this convention in this project, after first introducing individuals with their full name.

Fourth, a few of Ma's students have the title of acharya or swami. An acharya is a senior teacher. A swami is someone who has taken the Hindu sacrament of sannyas (renunciation), i.e., final monastic vows. These titles are commonly included with individual names, as per Kashi and Hindu custom. Fifth, Hinduism professes many gods and goddesses that are manifestations of the one monistic God. In this project, the generic terms "god" and "goddess" are written in lowercase when referring to various deities. The proper noun "God" is capitalized and identifies the absolute, formless, ultimate reality that is known as Brahman or sat-chit-ananda (existence, consciousness, and bliss) in Hinduism. Sixth, capitalization serves to identify proper nouns, such as "Yoga" in Kali Natha Yoga, but not the same terms used in a generic sense, for example, when yoga refers to the general physical practice. The same distinction holds true for terms such as karma (the Hindu principle of cause and effect) vs. Karma Yoga (the path of selfless service), and other words. Seventh, the term "myth" has many connotations. I use it according to the positive, religious definition of Wendy Doniger, the leading American scholar of Hinduism: a myth is a sacred story that carries significant meaning for a community.<sup>28</sup> Seventh, the transliteration of Sanskrit terms in English omits the diacritics, except in titles of referenced works.

VRD

Hanuman Jayanti,<sup>29</sup> 15 April 2006

<sup>1</sup> This is a traditional Hindu greeting.

<sup>2</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, *Dancing with Śiva: Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism* (Kappa, HI: Himalayan Academy, 1997), 775.

<sup>3</sup> Arwind U. Vasavada, D.Litt., wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1944 under the guidance of the preeminent Hindu philosopher of the 20th century, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who later served as president of India. In the early 1950s, he studied Jungian analysis in Zurich, Switzerland, where he had several mutually illuminating encounters with Carl Gustav Jung. He moved to the United States in 1970 to help establish a Jung Institute in Chicago. He wrote or co-authored two books about Jung and Hinduism. He held spiritual discussion circles for the public in his Chicago home. This is where I first met him and began to study with him, in 1993. The relationship continued until his death. He taught me about the essence of life and guided me to discover the depths of my own spirituality. His select works are referenced in the bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Steven A. Cadwell, Robert A. Burnham, and Marshall Forstein, *Therapists on the Front Line: Psychotherapy with Gay Men in the Age of AIDS* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric P, 1994), Paul Kent Froman, *Pathways to Wellness: Strategies for Self-Empowerment in the Age of AIDS* (New York: Plume, 1990), Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *AIDS: The Ultimate Challenge* (New York: Touchstone, 1987), C. Norman Shealy and Caroline M. Myss, *AIDS: Passageway to Transformation* (Walpole, NH: Stillpoint, 1987), Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Picador, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> John E. Fortunato, *AIDS: The Spiritual Dilemma* (San Francisco: Harper, 1987), Richard P. Hardy, *Loving Men: Gay Partners, Spirituality, and AIDS* (New York: Continuum, 1998), Robert J. Perelli, *Ministry to Persons with AIDS: A Family Systems Approach*, Guides to Pastoral Care (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), Krysten Winter-Green, *HIV/AIDS: Confrontation with Being (Including Insights from Paul Tillich and C. G. Jung)* (Bristol, IN: Wyndham).

<sup>6</sup> The following list merely samples available resources: John W. Cooper, Judy E. Pickens, and Malcolm H. McKay, eds., *The AIDS Ministry Handbook: A Resource Guide for Faith Communities and AIDS Ministries* (Washington: AIDS National Interfaith Network, 1997), *HIV/AIDS Care Team Training Manual*, (Wilton Manors, FL: Catholic Charities-Broward County, [1995?]), Dan Lunney, James Hicks, and Marilyn Rauch, eds., *Communities of Care: AIDS Care Team Manual*, 3 ed. (Chicago: AIDS Pastoral Care Network, 1998), *Many Threads, One Weave 2003 Update*, (San Francisco: National Catholic AIDS Network & Catholic Charities USA, 2003), *Many Threads, One Weave: A Resource Program to Assist Parish Communities in Responding to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*, (San Francisco: National Catholic AIDS Network & Catholic Charities USA, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Donald E. Messer, *Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence: Christian Churches and the Global AIDS Crisis* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), Kenneth R. Overberg, SJ ed., *AIDS, Ethics & Religion: Embracing a World of Suffering* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), Letty M. Russell, ed., *The Church with AIDS: Renewal in the Midst of Crisis* (Louisville: Westminster, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Louise L. Hay, *The AIDS Book: Creating a Positive Approach* (Santa Monica: Hay House, 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Robin Hardy and David Groff, *The Crisis of Desire: AIDS and the Fate of Gay Brotherhood* (Boston: Houghton, 1999), Paula A. Treichler, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999), Thomas E. Yingling, ed., *AIDS and the National Body* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> AIDS National Interfaith Network and Public Media Center, *Religion in the Age of AIDS: Strategy and Theology from the AIDS & Religion in America Convocation* (Washington, DC: AIDS National Interfaith Network, 1999), Warren J. Blumenfeld and Scott W. Alexander, *AIDS and Your Religious Community: A Hands-on Guide for Local Programs* (Boston: UUA, 1991). Other books in this genre document non-religious AIDS service organizations.

<sup>11</sup> The following is an example: William R. Johnson and Cynthia A. Bouman, *Affirming Persons-Saving Lives: AIDS Awareness and Prevention Education* (Cleveland: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> The following are examples: Council of Religious AIDS Networks, *Interfaith AIDS Worship Planning Resources* (East Lansing, MI: Council of Religious AIDS Networks, [n.d.]), AIDS National Interfaith Network, *Interfaith AIDS Worship Planning Resources* (Washington, D.C.: AIDS National Interfaith Network, [n.d.]).

<sup>13</sup> George R. Melton and Wil Garcia, *Beyond AIDS: A Journey into Healing* (Beverly Hills: Brotherhood, 1988), Paul Reed, *Serenity: Support and Guidance for People with HIV, Their Families, Friends, and Caregivers*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Celestial, 1990), Perry Tilleraas, *The Color of Light: Daily Mediations for All of Us Living with AIDS* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Neal Hitchens, *Voices That Care: Stories and Encouragements for People with AIDS/HIV and Those Who Love Them* (New York: Fireside, 1992), Ian Lucas, *Growing up Positive: Stories from a Generation of Young People Affected by AIDS* (London: Cassell, 1995), Perry Tilleraas, *Circle of Hope: Our Stories of AIDS, Addiction & Recovery* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> The following lists publications about Shanti and the Zen Hospice Project, excluding self-published materials and articles in serial publications: Linda C. M. Beech,

“Eastern and Western Attitudes in the Management of Death and the Shanti Project as an Experimental Synthesis” (California Institute of Integral Studies, 1981), Merrill Collett, *At Home with Dying : A Zen Hospice Approach* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), Charles Garfield, *Facing Death: The Shanti Project* (New York: Psychology Today), Cassette, Charles A. Garfield, Cindy Spring, and Doris Ober, *Sometimes My Heart Goes Numb: Love and Caregiving in a Time of AIDS* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), Gary Joseph Jenkins, *Motivation, Stress, and Coping among Volunteer Grief Counselors* (San Francisco: San Francisco State University, 1978), Carol Kleinmaier and Clark Henley, *Psychosocial Aspects of AIDS*, VHS, Korey McCormack, John Canalli, and Michael Tinker, *Heroism-- a Community Responds* ([New York, N.Y.]: Cinema Guild), VHS, Bobby Reynolds, *Those People* (Alexandria, Va.: PBS Video), Videocassette, "Shanti Project : File of Leaflets, Clippings and Pamphlets," (Michigan State University Library American Radicalism Collection, 1980), Sandra J. Waltz, "A Descriptive Study and Evaluation Model of Shanti Project, Berkeley, California" (California State University, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> Krandall Kraus and Paul Borja, *It's Never About What It's About: What We Learned About Living While Waiting to Die* (Los Angeles: Alyson, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Steve Peskind, *Heart Lessons from an Epidemic: Buddhist Practice and Living with HIV* (Berkeley: Parallax, [scheduled for 2004]).

<sup>18</sup> Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (Delta, 1990), Saki Santorelli, *Heal Thy Self: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine* (Random, 1999). The two authors created the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program.

<sup>19</sup> A pandemic is a geographically wide-spread epidemic that affects large population numbers.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Latz Griffin, "AIDS Care Called Spiritual Duty: Religious Groups Doing More to Help HIV Patients," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1993, 6.

<sup>21</sup> See the bibliography for the complete list.

<sup>22</sup> See the bibliography for the complete list.

<sup>23</sup> A bibliography containing such information would be an insignificant and lengthy contribution to this project.

<sup>24</sup> See: Mark Matousek, "The Agony and the Ecstasy: An Interview with Ma Jaya Bhagavati," *Yoga Journal*, March/April 1996, 91. Billy was Ma's friend, a scholar of Buddhism, and an Oxford don.

<sup>25</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *How God Found Me: The Autobiography of an American Guru* (Roseville, CA: Prima, expected 2003).

<sup>26</sup> My recommendations include the following titles: Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, *The Religious Life of Man* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1971), David R. Kinsley, *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 1982), Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, 2 ed. (Albany, NY: SUNY P, 1994), David M. Knipe, *Hinduism: Experiments in the Sacred* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1991), Kim Knott, *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), S[arvepalli] Radhakrishnan, *Indian Religions* (New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1979).

<sup>27</sup> R. L. Franklin, "Postconstructivist Approaches to Mysticism," in *The Inmate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*, ed. Robert K. C. Franklin (New York: Oxford, 1998), 236.

<sup>28</sup> Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics & Theology in Myth* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Hanuman Jayanti celebrates the appearance of Hanuman on earth. He is the god of perfect devotion and perfect service. He is one of Ma's patron gods who models service for the Kashi community. Chapter 6 discusses him.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Teach the scholars to give some of their book time to the hurting of the world.

*Ma, On Death and Dying*<sup>1</sup>

The essential religious and ministerial issue that this research thesis explores is a North American, Hindu-based, interfaith response to the world-wide HIV/AIDS pandemic: H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati (Ma) and her service organization The River Fund. Ma is a Hindu guru (spiritual master) who has been at the forefront of caring and advocating for people living with HIV/AIDS since the start of the pandemic. Since 1990, The River Fund has provided chaplaincy and relief services to people living with HIV/AIDS, and used to run The River House. For all practical purposes, it served as an AIDS hospice. Ma and The River Fund are steeped in the Hindu virtues of compassion, the Hindu path of service, and the Hindu respect for religious diversity.

Ma teaches in a variety of ways that can be categorized as verbal, visual, and physical. The later includes both private preparation and public engagement. The chapters will discuss each approach in detail. The layout of this project proceeds from Ma's religious thought and spiritual teaching to the praxis of her work.

Ma's teaching methods address educational psychologist Howard Gardner's widely accepted theory of multiple intelligences.<sup>2</sup> She offers her teaching in different formats so that people can understand it in ways that are most intuitive for them. She focuses on her students, addressing their "beliefs, understandings, and cultural



practices.”<sup>3</sup> She works with new and advanced students together, reiterating basic material as she develops a depth of understanding. She provides a community-centered environment for learning to take place.<sup>4</sup> Hinduism calls this satsang (the company of spiritual seekers). Ma teaches people as a group, and expects individuals to work together to create the reality of a kind, caring world.

Chapter 2 provides Ma’s biography with a focus on her HIV/AIDS activism. It explores the events and influences on her life that have made her the teacher that she is. This includes a series of spiritual revelations that led her to becoming one of only a few women Gurus in Hinduism today. Reflecting the liberalism of the Hindu tradition, Ma’s religion is decidedly mystical and interfaith. It demonstrates that spiritual reality cannot be confined to religious divisions imposed by humans. The chapter details Ma’s religious activism on HIV/AIDS issues.

Chapter 3 presents Ma’s verbal teaching, both spoken and written. It emphasizes her dedication to seva for people living with HIV/AIDS. Ma primarily teaches verbally. It includes creative forms of verbal expression such as poetry and prose. She offers an unequivocally clear response to the world-wide social-economical-political HIV/AIDS pandemic: she serves those living with HIV/AIDS as a spiritual discipline. Moral debates about the virus and condemnation of the sick are simply intolerable for her. Compassion and understanding are not enough either. Empathetic sentiments must translate into hands-on seva (service). Seva is the primary spiritual and religious practice of Ma’s teaching. It is her core spirituality. Her approach shatters American notions of Hindu practices, such as meditation, yoga, or rituals, as having a supernatural focus.

Seva is a physical spiritual discipline. Ma expresses her compassion by “serving people in need,” which is the slogan of her service organization The River Fund. She practices the teaching of her guru (spiritual master) H. H. Neem Karoli Baba to “Feed every one” by providing spiritual and physical nourishment to all people. Her approach of seeking God through service to humanity continues this tradition.<sup>5</sup> Ma’s understanding of God is neither the Christian literalist nor the humanist concept of God. In Hinduism, God is the ineffable Brahman, described as the combination of existence-knowledge-bliss. Brahman is simultaneously transcendent, immanent, and manifest.<sup>6</sup> AIDS spiritual authors Krandall Kraus and Paul Borja have dabbled in Hinduism. They describe God as the Self (capitalized, in distinction to the individual self) of all.<sup>7</sup> The theoretical discussion of seva from chapter 3 continues with practical examples in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 4 interprets Ma’s artistic work that has benefited HIV/AIDS. Art is another medium that Ma uses to impart spiritual guidance. Ma is one of the few, rare teachers who paint works of art to inspire her students. Ma says that each guru has her or his own “shtick,” a Yiddish word that means a trademark or characteristic practice. Art is Ma’s shtick. Her paintings impart her teaching creatively, without relying upon verbal communication or the rational left side of the brain. Some of her art specifically speaks to HIV/AIDS.

Chapter 5 discusses how Ma’s kinesthetic teaching of breathing, meditation, and yoga can help people living with HIV/AIDS. The physical is the third form of Ma’s teaching. Her physical approach combines preparatory components with engaged service. Eastern techniques of breathing, meditation, and yoga constitute the basic disciplines that

develop the spiritual capacity of individual practitioners. They greatly benefit people living with HIV/AIDS because they provide means for coping with the stress of life and illness. The disciplines are a primer for Ma's essential spiritual practice of seva.

Chapter 6 provides the history of Ma's service organization the River Fund with its various projects. The Fund provides the organizational structure that facilitates large-scale seva. It provides a distinctive example of HIV/AIDS care for several reasons. The Fund is the only North American Hindu-based service organization that focuses on HIV/AIDS. It is both Hindu and interfaith.<sup>8</sup> Its approach offers a decidedly non-Christian and non-Western model of social justice work and inter-religious cooperation. It focuses on the needs of the people it serves; it does not proselytize; and it embraces all religious paths. In this respect, the approach is remarkably similar to chaplaincy.

A concluding chapter closes the project. It summarizes Ma's HIV/AIDS teaching and the work of the River Fund. It examines the applicability of these eastern, interfaith models for western Liberal Religion in general and Unitarian Universalism in particular. It offers suggestions that American congregations could adapt.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying: Excerpts from I, the Mother* (Sebastian, FL: Ganga Press, 1994), 23.

<sup>2</sup> John D. Bransford and others, eds., *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, DC: National Academy P, 2000), 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>5</sup> Anjali Sharma, "Guru Ma: An Icon for Human Rights?," *News India-Times*, 20 October 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 696-97.

<sup>7</sup> Kraus and Borja, 106.

<sup>8</sup> *1999 Parliament of the World's Religions*, (Cape Town: 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999), 11, *Kashi Ashram: Interfaith Spiritual Community*, [internet] (Kashi Ashram, 2006, accessed 15 January 2006); available from [www.kashi.org](http://www.kashi.org), Wayne Teasdale, *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 1999), 38.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHO IS H.H. MA JAYA SATI BHAGAVATI?

There are no throw away people.

*Ma, Living with AIDS Now*<sup>1</sup>

Ma is a Hindu guru, and AIDS activist, and the founder of the River Fund service organization. She sees people struggling with the human condition in an imperfect world. She responds with compassion and assistance, seeking to provide relief. She wants to help people improve their lives. This chapter introduces Ma with a brief biography, her status as a woman guru, and her mystical form of Hinduism (see figure 1). These provide a background that illuminates Ma's engagement with HIV/AIDS. It then details her religious work on HIV/AIDS issues.

Arlo Guthrie has a wonderful way of introducing Ma.<sup>2</sup> He says that Ma "never preaches theology." Instead, she embodies the Beatitudes of Jesus:

I knew she was real because she did what Christ asked: fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and comforted those in prison. She was hugging people with AIDS while they died and taking care of crack babies. There was nothing in it for her or the people associated with her. There was nothing for sale.<sup>3</sup>

Ma's approach is similar to the theological understanding of the Confessing Church that emphasized the works of mercy expounded in the Beatitudes. The aims of the Beatitudes and Ma's teaching are remarkably similar. When Ma is asked what she teaches, she says, "cleaning, cooking, feeding, silence, and drinking from the River," i.e. the river of life.<sup>4</sup> In other words, she teaches people service and spirituality.

## Biography

Ma was born as Joyce Green to a poor, working-class, orthodox Jewish immigrant family on 5 May 1940 in Brooklyn, New York.<sup>5</sup> The following developmental events significantly influenced Ma's world-view and teaching. As a child wandering the streets, she befriended a group of African-Americans who taught her there are no throw-away people.<sup>6</sup> She wanted to become a Rabbi, but her Rabbi beat her because women were not allowed to become Rabbis.<sup>7</sup> Dying of cancer, her mother Anna taught her to care for the sick in genuine ways.<sup>8</sup> Married with children, she became a great cook and learned to feed every body who came to her door asking for food.<sup>9</sup> She befriended a transgendered family, from whom she learned about prejudice and judgment.<sup>10</sup> These experiences formed life-long themes that recur throughout her work.

Around her thirtieth birthday, Ma started practicing pranayama (Hindu breathing exercises from yoga) to lose weight.<sup>11</sup> From 1972-74, she experienced a series of spiritual revelations that transformed her life. During his time, she had four visions of the Christ who taught her to "Teach all ways, for all ways are mine."<sup>12</sup> This phrase echoes the Gospel words of Jesus, "In my Father's house there are many mansions,"<sup>13</sup> expressing acceptance for all religious and spiritual paths as equally valid. It is not unusual for Hindus to have experiences of Christ as Ma had, especially since Hinduism professes the incarnation of God, including in the non-canonical (for Hindus) form of Christ.<sup>14</sup> Next, Ma received Hindu religious and spiritual instruction for nearly two years from Swami Nityananda (c. 1896-1961).<sup>15</sup> Ma thought she was going "crazy" because of her extrasensory experiences.<sup>16</sup> She really feared ending up in a mental hospital.<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately, Ma met Swami's student Hilda Charlton in early 1974. She was able to validate Ma's awakenings and help her understand the psychic phenomena.<sup>18</sup>

Ma finally met her guru Neem Karoli Baba (ca. 1900-1973)<sup>19</sup> in a vision on 1 August 1973<sup>20</sup> or 1974 (see figure 1).<sup>21</sup> For Ma, the meeting was an overwhelming experience of love.<sup>22</sup> It was the deepest spiritual event of her life:

I felt every emotion known to a woman. I was so in love with him, I feared him as much as I loved him. He had to go! I wanted no part of him. .... He felt to me like God. He felt like he was everything and, in that moment, I knew that he was.<sup>23</sup>

The role of the guru and Ma's status as one will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

After meeting her guru, Ma began to teach yoga in her backyard, becoming a teacher in the time-honored tradition of "crazy wisdom." Within two years, she had a number of students and thirteen ashrams (hermitages) in New York City. Her earliest students hail from this period. Ma settled with her students in Sebastian, FL, opening Kashi Ashram, in 1976. It is an intentional Hindu-based interfaith religious and spiritual community.<sup>24</sup> She took the name Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati.<sup>25</sup> Subsidiary Ashrams in New York, Los Angeles (West Hollywood), Atlanta, and Santa Fe followed over the decades. Since establishing Kashi, Ma has traveled extensively around the United States with her teaching, and has even brought it to Europe, and Africa.<sup>26</sup> She emphasizes service, especially to those living with HIV/AIDS. She began her HIV/AIDS work in 1982, soon after the pandemic began.

The name Kashi is significant. Kashi (city of light) is the mythical name of Benares or Varanasi, the Hindu holy city on the sacred Ganga River.<sup>27</sup> Kashi Ashram

represents spiritual wisdom and freedom, where all people are welcome.<sup>28</sup> All sexes, races, economic classes, and sexual orientations are accepted without judgment.<sup>29</sup> This includes the sick, especially people with terminal disease such as HIV/AIDS. Kashi is the refuge for people that others have “thrown away.” At Kashi, people are human beings, and not their various identities, labels, or illnesses. People can pursue the happiness that “every God and Goddess wanted from the start of time” at the Ashram.<sup>30</sup> These traits are core to Ma’s teaching, symbolized by the name Kashi.

### **Guru**

Ma follows her guru and is one herself. The concept of a guru can be unsettling to the western, rational mind. Westerners have developed negative, misinformed stereotypes about gurus. In contrast, the Hindu concept of a guru is a positive one. A guru is a “dispeller of darkness.”<sup>31</sup> Gurus impart advanced spiritual knowledge to a student through a profound personal relationship that includes devotion, obedience, and instruction. They are spiritual masters, according to the scholar of Hinduism Daniel Gold.<sup>32</sup> In the West, they emphasize a pragmatic approach rather than a theological one, to accommodate Western skepticism. Followers practice the teachings, evaluating them empirically to determine their efficacy. Some convinced followers then turn to Indian-style “guru-devotion.”<sup>33</sup> Ma’s style reflects this approach.

A guru is the primary, dedicated, spiritual teacher of an individual. In Hinduism, it is customary to have a guru, at least formally. For religious instruction and spiritual guidance, pious Hindus turn to their gurus. The guru is supposed to lead the devotee



along the vertical access of religion, helping the devotee reach the divine. This is what Ma does.

Two western analogies to gurus may help illustrate the Hindu phenomenon. A guru resembles a spiritual director found in some of the liturgical denominations of Christianity. Both are spiritual mentors who companion spiritual aspirants. A guru also resembles a Tae Kwan Do master: both are masters of their disciplines, providing instruction to seekers, one in spirituality, and the other in Martial Arts. Coincidentally, Ma has a black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

Almost all gurus are men. Ma is one of a small number of women gurus. Very few books have been published documenting the 20<sup>th</sup> century reappearance of women gurus in Hinduism.<sup>34</sup> Religious studies scholar Karen Pechilis explains that women gurus, like Ma, did not emerge in response to Western feminism. They also do not follow Western feminist models. They participate in an “established, traditional category of religious leadership.”<sup>35</sup> They follow ascetic practices normally associated with men, in contrast to the home-oriented practices of women. This includes meditation, ego-death, and ritual worship. They desexualize themselves.<sup>36</sup> Ma gave up her family, accepted celibacy, and became a monk. Unlike men, however, most women gurus include the epithet “Ma” in their name. They also differ by teaching from the centuries-old goddess-oriented shakti (spiritual power) tradition of Hinduism.<sup>37</sup> Scholar of Hinduism David R. Kinsley notes that such women have to assume a traditional role of men in Hinduism.<sup>38</sup> In contrast to the women, most male gurus teach from the Hindu philosophical, scriptural, or devotional traditions.

The term shakti requires a definition. Shakti is the divine feminine energy that is present in men and women, but usually lies dormant.<sup>39</sup> A spirit-filled life needs to awaken shakti. It is not an object of study, but an experiential religious practice that involves physical postures, symbols, visualizations, and meditation. Iconographically, Hinduism depicts shakti as a sleeping serpent that rises through the chakras or energy centers of the body until it reaches the top of the head, where it merges with the divine energy from above. Shakti was one of the influences in the Western development of Goddess Spirituality. In terms of shakti, Ma believes a feminine influence is “vital” now since women are connected to the earth and to emotion. It is time for women to care for the earth, because “men have made a real mess of things.”<sup>40</sup> Ma emphasizes the need for both men and women to hold the “spirit of the mother” in their hearts.<sup>41</sup> The Divine Mother (God, emphasizing her female aspects) embodies shakti.

### **Ma’s Religion and Mysticism**

The third topic for this chapter is Ma’s religious outlook, to answer the question “Who is Ma?” When asked about her religion, Ma explains that she embraces all religions, but particularly identifies with Hinduism because it accepts all religions.<sup>42</sup> She refers to the Hindu tolerance for and interaction with heterodox religious systems that, for example, resulted in the Hindu synthesis of Buddhism, Jainism, and tribal religions.<sup>43</sup>

Although based in Hinduism, Ma’s teaching freely incorporates elements from other religions, especially Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Judaism (as do Unitarian Universalists, but they come from a different religious tradition than Ma does). Religious diversity, per se, is not unusual for Hinduism, as it reflects an historic Hindu tradition

currently known as Neo-Vedanta, as well as some theistic schools.<sup>44</sup> Ma's inter-religious approach does not merely accept the Hindu theory that all religions are but different paths to the same goal. Many Hindu saints share this teaching. Ma goes further and deeper, in some respects mirroring the great Hindu saint of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sri Ramakrishna. As experiments, he practiced Islam and Christianity during parts of his life in addition to various forms of his native Hinduism.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, Ma makes no proselytization efforts at all. Her Ashram does not even offer the religious services required for conversion to Hinduism or any other religion.

When pushed for a definitive answer about her religious identity, Ma says her religion is "kindness."<sup>46</sup> She clarifies that she loves humanity more than God, because God does not need human love; God wants people to love the children of God.<sup>47</sup> In other words, action, not belief, defines an individual. Her understanding comes from her personal experience. She was raised Jewish, lived as a Catholic in her first marriage, embraced Hinduism, and studied both Sikhism and Buddhism. She finds that love is a commonality in all religions. In any religion, the greatest gifts of God are kindness, compassion, and trust.<sup>48</sup> Of these, Ma emphasizes compassion.<sup>49</sup> It is from this compassion that Ma works on behalf of those living with HIV and AIDS. In Hinduism, Ma's beloved divine mother goddess Kali has a "compassionate heart" that "brims over with the waters of love."<sup>50</sup> Ma infuses this sensibility in her work.

Ma is not a theologian, although she often voices radical forms of religious thought that transgress traditional religious norms. She specifically questions and challenges religious establishments and their dogmas when they interfere with helping

people in need, especially if it involves discrimination or prejudice against people with HIV/AIDS, GLBTs, minorities, or women. From Ma's perspective, God created all people as equals; humanity set up artificial divisions between them. Her emphasis on service undercuts religious barriers by focusing on the immediate needs of people. Her teaching is not conventional religious education, i.e., doctrinal instruction. She guides people to live their lives open to the divine presence. She is a spiritual teacher. Her work addresses the emotional reality of human beings.

Ma comes from a mystical, interfaith, non-dualist, theistic tradition of Hinduism. Her teaching combines elements from the yoga, Advaita Vedanta, and Shakta Bhakti schools of Hindu religious thought. Yoga seeks union, that is re-union, with the divine. Advaita Vedanta professes a monistic unity of existence and the spirituality of the divine that can be experienced through spiritual practice blessed by grace. The Shakta Bhakti devotional movement focuses on the immanence of God as divine mother who blesses humanity and all creation. These themes persist through Ma's teaching.

Mysticism overlaps religion for Ma. Psychologist and long-term student Ram Giri wrote the introduction to Ma's book, *She Who Rides the Lion*. He explains Ma as one who "unites all dualities" and "keeps us off-balance..."<sup>51</sup> His description emphasizes Ma's mystical experiences that she conveys to her students.

One model for the study of mysticism comes from Geoffrey Parrinder, who studies mysticism. The basic mystical notion is union, but there are different types of union as well as conceptualizations of the object of union, i.e., essentially a variety of teleological goals. His paradigm classifies three categories of mysticism: mystical

monism, mystical theism, and non-religious mysticism. Mystical monism seeks union with the “pervading principle” of a given religious system, whereas theism focuses on a divinity.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the monistic experience includes a loss of identity, while the theistic one maintains identity.<sup>53</sup> Parrinder classifies theistic Hinduism under the rubric of theistic mysticism, and non-theistic Hinduism as monistic mystical process. Ma usually expresses herself theistically, sometimes with monistic sentiments. Ma is devoted to the Hindu goddess Kali, who also represents supreme reality. This accurately reflects the Hindu Mahadevi school of religious thought that worships a personal goddess who is simultaneously the absolute.<sup>54</sup> It does not fit Parrinder’s categories neatly, because it combines theism with monism, contrary to his model. Parrinder’s third category, non-religious mysticism seeks a monistic-like union with a non-religious principle like nature. It does not apply to Ma.

Another scholar of mysticism, Robert Ellwood has a model for the study of mysticism that can help develop a fuller understanding of Ma. Ellwood’s review of the theories of mysticism delineates two categories. The “classical” approach views mysticism as an experience beyond description that uses the religious understanding of the mystic as a basis for understanding the experience.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, the “constructivist” position maintains that the mystical experience is so enmeshed in interpretation and tradition that there can be no untainted or trans-religious mystical experience.<sup>56</sup> Ellwood discretely sides with the classical approach of a direct, intuitive experience outside ordinary reality that is later described using the religious-cultural vocabulary available to the mystic. Ma reflects the classical approach in that she primarily uses the religious

language of Hinduism to describe her experiences. Unlike the classical approach that focuses on a single religion, she easily relates her experiences with Buddhist, Sikh, Christian, and Jewish terminology, essentially disproving the constructivist approach that maintains the impossibility of translating religious experience between religions.

### **HIV/AIDS Religious Work**

Since 1982, Ma has focused on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, then known as GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency).<sup>57</sup> Ma has a pervasive commitment to people living with HIV and AIDS, as she writes in a *Breathe and Dance* meditation: “I shall live for my many dead and my many living with this disease, AIDS.”<sup>58</sup> Providing food, housing, education, and companionship are examples of seva (service), but not pity and condescension. She seeks to “heal the hearts of humanity’s sorrow in this time of the AIDS plague” with holiness.<sup>59</sup> Ma’s interest in caring for the sick draws health care professionals and chaplains to her ashram (15% of the residents work in health care,<sup>60</sup> such as nurses or psychologists; several residents are ministers). Encouraging people who are uncomfortable with seva, she often repeats a favorite teaching of hers, that “there are no throw-away people.” No one can discount others for any reason at all, since all people deserve equal worth, dignity, and respect. Ma, in essence, challenges people adverse to seva. She confronts their complacency, isolation, and lack of compassion.

Journalist of eastern religious paths Mark Matousek credits Ma with doing more for AIDS than “any other religious leader in the United States.”<sup>61</sup> Scholar of gurus Vasudha Narayanan writes that Ma is “unique in the intensity and passion” of her dedication to people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>62</sup> Even orthodox Hindus have taken note,

when *Hinduism Today* called Ma the “AIDS Angel of Kashi.”<sup>63</sup> Ma’s engagement in HIV/AIDS encompasses spiritual teaching, human care, social efforts, and religious activism.

Ma has been a prominent and outspoken religious leader on HIV/AIDS issues. Referring to the spiritual leaders of the world, Ma says she “wants to kick and scream for them to remove their blinders and begin to see that they are needed in hospital wards and hospices for a kind word and a gentle touch.”<sup>64</sup> She frequently emphasizes that the religious leadership of the world has not done and is still not doing enough for HIV/AIDS.<sup>65</sup> She hates how humanity has mistreated the dying, condemning them instead of consoling them with love: “They reached for God and found in their blindness—due to the disease of AIDS—only the dark of fear.”<sup>66</sup> Instead of a negative theology filled with pejorative anti-AIDS prejudice that some churches regrettably preach, she offers the practicality of pastoral care. She wants to end all types of bigotry, not just AIDS-related. She rages against judgment and discrimination of all kinds. She teaches that people are not born with judgment, but learn it as a bad mistake.<sup>67</sup> No religion teaches bigotry, but religions find ways of interpreting scriptures to make them support their prejudices. Ma’s goal in life is to teach all about the “God of Mercy and Compassion.”<sup>68</sup> That God is not the god of dogma and theology. Responding to Christians who claim AIDS as a vengeance on Gay people, Ma often says that she does “not know that Christ.” She intimates they have made an idol of Christ out of their own prejudices. Her Christ is the God of mercy and compassion. The spiritual path is the one that is wide “open” to all people. It challenges the individual to accept all people and all

situations as part of the human family, without excluding anyone. Ma teaches, “If you are small and tight in life, the experience of God is just that: small and tight.”<sup>69</sup> With such statements, she counters the discrimination and stigmatization coming from religious communities about HIV/AIDS.

Ma is renowned for attempting to persuade religious leaders of the world to do something positive about HIV and AIDS. About the pandemic, she explains: “Because the pain is horrendous, it’s a holocaust, it’s genocide, it’s bigotry and prejudice, and none of us has the right to do anything other than to serve.”<sup>70</sup> Ma interprets church avoidance of AIDS ministry as homophobia, because AIDS initially affected mostly Gay men in the United States.<sup>71</sup> In audience with the Pope, Ma showed him a picture of a child dying from AIDS.<sup>72</sup> Her point was the need for condoms to protect people from infection.<sup>73</sup>

Religions, Christianity in particular, have difficulty dealing with sexuality—especially homosexuality and promiscuity—and addiction because these issues offend religious sensibilities.<sup>74</sup> Humanity does not live up to the perfection of religious ideals. The reality of human embodiment—em-body-ment—is a particular problem for religion. Western religions under Neo-Platonic influence have developed theologies that have separated the body as evil matter from the pure goodness of the spirit.<sup>75</sup> Sexuality became an evil pleasure that was necessary for procreation. Religions provide idealistic answers to sexuality that quickly translate into moral condemnation. Instead of applying the golden rule embedded in all religions, religious leaders fall into the temptation of self-righteousness.



## Parliament of the World's Religions

The Parliament of the World's Religions has been at the forefront of Ma's religious AIDS work. A century after the first Parliament, the second Parliament was held in Chicago in 1993. Ma chastised the Parliament for not including AIDS on its agenda.<sup>76</sup> She implored the assembled delegates to address their respective religious leadership to "do something about AIDS."<sup>77</sup> H.H. the Dalai Lama took up Ma's cause and spoke on behalf of HIV/AIDS at the closing session.<sup>78</sup> The final document of the Parliament, *Declaration toward a Global Ethic*, made no mention of HIV/AIDS among its many noble goals.<sup>79</sup> Ma wrote a letter to Parliament leadership objecting to the intentional omission of HIV/AIDS from the draft document.<sup>80</sup>

Ma gave a presentation about HIV/AIDS called "Overcoming Life and Death with Abundance" at the Parliament to a crowd of "thousands."<sup>81</sup> She related her experiences with the HIV/AIDS community.<sup>82</sup> Her talking points were removing stigma, supporting political action, advocating prevention, and providing hands-on care. Care includes spiritual and material comfort, as well as combating the fear of death that is especially prevalent in the United States and the West.<sup>83</sup>

Ma became a Trustee of the Parliament in 1995.<sup>84</sup> During the planning for the next Parliament meeting, Ma and Cleve Jones, the founder of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, wrote a "Statement of Conscience from People of Faith Regarding the HIV/AIDS Pandemic." It provided a five-point program for humane treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS that addressed religious-spiritual, economic, medical, justice, and commemorative issues regarding the pandemic.<sup>85</sup> Ma circulated it among the other

Parliament Trustees and organizers with a cover letter about that year's celebration of World AIDS Day at the Parliament.<sup>86</sup> Prominent religious leaders from around the world signed the document, including then UUA president John Buehrens.

The River Fund brought eighty panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt to commemorate World AIDS Day at the 1999 Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa. It was the first Quilt display in the country, and probably the continent.<sup>87</sup> Ma led the Quilt opening ceremony and presented two sessions entitled "Voice into the Millennium: The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt" with Jones.<sup>88</sup> They discussed the impact of the Quilt and its use for both remembrance and healing. The resulting document of the Parliament, *A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*, once again made no mention of HIV/AIDS.<sup>89</sup>

At the 2004 Parliament in Barcelona, Rev. Ken South, a longtime AIDS activist, and The River Fund organized a day-long symposium called "Exploring the Face of AIDS."<sup>90</sup> It was one of the official symposia of the Parliament, bringing AIDS to prominence. Unfortunately, Ma was not able to attend, due a sudden death in her immediate family, but she sent her representatives. The director of Ma's orphanage in Uganda Rev. Centurio Oblaboro and Ma's student and AIDS activist from South Africa Troy Truter represented her. Her message was that "religious leaders could have an enormous impact on battling the AIDS pandemic."<sup>91</sup> By the time of this third modern Parliament, 40 million people were infected world-wide, AIDS had been declared a pandemic, and the united voice of the world's religious leaders had remained silent on the issue. Scripture, ignorance, and discrimination were the three factors that kept many

leaders from speaking out.<sup>92</sup> Sex, especially, was the taboo topic, according to South.<sup>93</sup> In spite of silence, inaction, or AIDS-phobic reaction from world-wide religious leadership, many religious groups across the globe were running successful AIDS ministries at the grass-roots level. This Parliament did not issue a concluding statement.

To a lesser extent, Ma is also involved in other inter-religious venues, where she advocates for HIV/AIDS, and other causes.<sup>94</sup> In 1998, she was the keynote speaker at the AIDS and Religion in America convocation, sponsored by the Ford Foundation.<sup>95</sup> In 2001, she was an invited religious delegate to the United Nations Special Session on HIV/AIDS.<sup>96</sup> Locally, she is a board member of Project Response, the regional AIDS service organization.<sup>97</sup>

Ma has received a series of distinguished awards for her work: Sikh Dharma Woman of Peace 1994, induction in the Morehouse College Board of Preachers 2002, Martin Luther King International Chapel Hall of Honor 2003-04, Interparliamentary Paradigm of Peace Award 2004, and the Mata Maha Mandaleshwar (“One Who has Crossed the Ocean of Bliss”) in 2006.<sup>98</sup> Even the handful of Ma’s detractors and critics cannot find fault with her service work.<sup>99</sup> Matousek gives Ma a testimonial for her exemplary service work. Of all the spiritual teachers he has visited, he has “never seen anyone work as beautifully with the sick, the dying, and the poor” as Ma, whom he calls a “raucous woman from Brooklyn.”<sup>100</sup>

This chapter provided a biography of Ma’s life. A series of extraordinary spiritual experiences led to her to becoming a guru (spiritual master) over thirty years ago. Her

teaching particularly emphasizes selfless service for the poor, homeless, and ill, especially people living with HIV/AIDS. Ma has been an outspoken religious advocate for HIV/AIDS issues, in particular through the Parliament of the World's Religions. Her work with HIV/AIDS has gained her some notoriety.

## Photo



1 H. H. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati giving darshan in Chicago, March 2000.<sup>101</sup>

A picture of Ma's guru H.H. Neem Karoli Baba hangs in the background.

<sup>1</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications).

<sup>2</sup> He is the folk singer son of the legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie. He was born Jewish, but converted to Roman Catholicism after a 10-minute long vision of Christ and experience of his love in the early 1970s. He has been a student of Ma since 1982. Arsenio Orteza, "Arlo and Ma," *The Christian Century* (1993): 493.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Kindness," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae," ([n. d.]).

<sup>6</sup> Vasudha Narayanan, "Gurus and Goddesses, Deities and Devotees," in *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States*, ed. Karen Pechilis (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 152.

<sup>7</sup> Ma occasionally relates this event from her life history during darshan.

<sup>8</sup> Sorah Dubitsky, "Service: The Heart of Life: An Interview with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati," *Miracle Journeys Magazine*, January/February 2004, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Matousek, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 26 February 2005.

<sup>11</sup> Malka Drucker, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati," in *White Fire: A Portrait of Spiritual Leaders in America*, ed. Malka Drucker (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2003), 187.

<sup>12</sup> Narayanan, 157.

<sup>13</sup> (Jn 14: 2).

<sup>14</sup> Hal Bridges, *American Mysticism: From William James to Zen* (New York: Harper, 1970), 78.

<sup>15</sup> Narayanan, 152-54.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>19</sup> The following sources document Neem Karoli Baba's life and teaching: Ram Dass, ed., *Miracle of Love: Stories About Neem Karoli Baba* (Santa Fe, NM: Hanuman Foundation, 1995), Ravi Prakash Pande, *Divine Reality: Shri Baba Neeb Karori Ji Maharaj* (Kainchi, India: Shri Kainchi Hanuman Mandir and Ashram, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> *Ma Jaya*, (1998-2006, accessed 18 February 2006); available from <http://www.kashi.org/majaya>.

<sup>21</sup> Narayanan, 155.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Matousek, 95.

<sup>24</sup> Narayanan, 156. The Ashram had 150 residents in the late 1990s and currently has about 80. See: *Kashi Ashram*, (Fellowship for Intentional Community, 2005, accessed 22 March 2006); available from [http://directory.ic.org/records/?action=view&page=view&record\\_id=2680](http://directory.ic.org/records/?action=view&page=view&record_id=2680), Lavina Melwani, "The Selfless Life of Serving Shiva in All: Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, AIDS Angel of Kashi," *Hinduism Today*, February 1999, 38.

<sup>25</sup> Matousek, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae."

<sup>27</sup> Melwani, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother: A Selection from a Work in Progress* (Roseland, FL: Ganga Press, 1994), 31.

<sup>29</sup> Melwani, 38.

<sup>30</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan

<sup>31</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 727.

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Gold, *Comprehending the Guru: Toward a Grammar of Religious Perception*, ed. Carl A. Raschke, American Academy of Religion Academy Series, vol. 57 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 121.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>34</sup> Linda Johnsen, *Daughters of the Goddess: Women Saints of India* (St. Paul, MN: Yes International P, 1994), Karen Pechilis, *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Pechilis.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Kinsley, 138.

<sup>39</sup> Knipe, 114.

<sup>40</sup> Mariana Caplan, *Do You Need a Guru?: Understanding the Student-Teacher Relationship in an Era of False Prophets* (London: Thorsons, 2002), 110.

<sup>41</sup> Dubitsky, 15.

<sup>42</sup> Matousek, 97.

<sup>43</sup> Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy, and Practice* (Prescott, AZ: Hohm P, 1998), 508.

<sup>44</sup> Bridges, 78, Flood, 249, 257-58, 262, Peter Tufts Robinson, *Four Spiritualities: Expressions of Self, Expressions of Spirit: A Psychology of Contemporary Spiritual Choice* (Palo Alto: Davies-Black, 1996), 38.

<sup>45</sup> *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center, 1942), 33-35.

<sup>46</sup> Loinette Lippe, "Ma Jaya from the Holy Land of Brooklyn," *Shambala Sun: Creating Enlightened Society*, March 1995, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations* (Sebastian, FL: Ganga P, 1994), 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video).

<sup>49</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," (Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 1995), 5.

<sup>50</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.

<sup>51</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion Rides My Beating Heart* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, 1997), [4, 5].



<sup>52</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, *Mysticism in the World's Religions* (Oxford: One World, 1996), 14.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>54</sup> David R. Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition* (Berkeley: U California P, 1997), 132.

<sup>55</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *Mysticism and Religion*, 2 ed. (New York: Seven Bridges, 1999), 16-18.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>57</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>58</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Breathe and Dance with the Gods* (Sebastian, FL: Ganga Press, 1994), 24.

<sup>59</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *The River*, [vii].

<sup>60</sup> *Kashi Ashram: Interfaith Spiritual Community*.

<sup>61</sup> Matousek, 93.

<sup>62</sup> Narayanan, 162.

<sup>63</sup> Melwani, 37.

<sup>64</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan

<sup>66</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 12.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>68</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>70</sup> Matousek, 96.

<sup>71</sup> Kathy Mirkin, "Healing & Religion," *Conscious Choice: Resources For Responsible Decision Making*, November/December 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Matousek, 96.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>74</sup> Messer, 21-24.

<sup>75</sup> Augustine is a primary example of this tendency: James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *A Sense of Sexuality: Christian Love and Intimacy* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 96-98.

<sup>76</sup> Matousek, 93.

<sup>77</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," (Roseland, FL: River Fund, 1993), 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Declaration toward a Global Ethic*, (Chicago: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993).

<sup>80</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, Letter to David Ramage, Daniel Gomez-Ibanez, and Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 3 September 1993.

<sup>81</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "How the AIDS Pandemic Changed My Life," in *Awakening the Spirit, Inspiring the Soul: 30 Stories of Interspiritual Discovery in the Community of Faiths*, ed. Wayne Teasdale and Martha Howard (Woodstock, VT: Sky Light Paths, 2004), 64.

<sup>82</sup> *1993 Parliament of the World's Religions Program*, (Chicago: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993), 46.

<sup>83</sup> Griffin, 6, Mirkin.

<sup>84</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae."

<sup>85</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati and Cleve Jones, *Statement of Conscience Regarding the HIV/AIDS Pandemic* [internet] (The River Fund, 1999, accessed 1 June 2003); available from <http://www.riverfund.org/soc/facts.htm>, "The River Fund [Newsletter]," (1999).

<sup>86</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, An Open Appeal to People of Faith About the AIDS Pandemic, Sebastian, FL 1999.

<sup>87</sup> Brahma Das [Richard] [Rosenkranz], "The 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions [Press Release]," (Chicago, IL: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999), [4].

<sup>88</sup> *1999 Parliament of the World's Religions*, 240, 70, 194.

<sup>89</sup> *A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*, (Cape Town: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999).

<sup>90</sup> *Program Book: Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*, (Barcelona: 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions, 2004), 75.

<sup>91</sup> Judy Martin, "Faith & Healing: Activists and Clergy Try to Get the World's Religions on the Same Page About Fighting AIDS," *A & U: America's AIDS Magazine*, October 2004, 24.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>94</sup> Ma has been a Delegate for the United Religions Initiative (URI), and Kashi Ashram is a URI "cooperating circle" for interfaith dialog: *Cc Listing by Region*, [internet] (United Religions Initiative, 2004, accessed 15 November 2005); available from [http://www.uri.org/CC\\_Listing\\_by\\_Region.html](http://www.uri.org/CC_Listing_by_Region.html), Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae." In 2000, Ma was an invited delegate to the United Nations' sponsored Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders: Andrew Cohen, "Don't Ask Why--Just Do Something!: An Interview with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati," *What is Enlightenment?* 2001, 78.

<sup>95</sup> "Atlanta AIDS Assembly: Have Religions Failed to Serve Sufferers," *Hinduism Today*, February 1999. Page?

<sup>96</sup> Jaya Canterbury-Counts, "Interview," (Kashi Ashram, Sebastian, FL, 27 December 2004).

<sup>97</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae." She is also an Advisory Board member for Equal Partners in Faith, the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, and the Gardner's Syndrome Association.

<sup>98</sup> "American Jewish Woman Given Mata Maha Mandaleshwar Title," *India Abroad (New York Edition)*, 10 February 2006, Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae."

<sup>99</sup> Billy Cox, "Charges Break Heart of Group's Spiritual Leader," *Florida Today*, 3 February 2002, Billy Cox, "Ex-Members Rip Enclave: Divisive Words Crack Harmonious Facade at Religious Ashram near Sebastian," *Florida Today*, 3 February 2002, Tom Kiskan, "Kashi Devotees Feed Inner-City Homeless, Dispute Claims They're

in Cult [Sic.]," *Ventura County Star*, 12 July 2003, Lippe, "The Strangers among Us," *People*, 19 April 1993.

<sup>100</sup> Matousek, 92.

<sup>101</sup> Photo used with permission.

## CHAPTER 3

### MA'S VERBAL TEACHING ABOUT HIV/AIDS

In this time of wars, and countries bleeding into the earth, in this time of illness and hunger and children going to sleep without clothes or food, in this time of AIDS—we need God.

*Ma, She Who Rides the Lion*<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores Ma's verbal teachings related to HIV/AIDS. It focuses on her religious discourse that addresses both eastern and western spiritual concerns. The introduction reviews the format and sources of Ma's teaching. This is important background information. The discussion then concentrates on seva (service), karma and theodicy, and HIV/AIDS care.

Ma teaches through a variety of formats. Verbal teaching particularly influences those individuals whose learning styles respond well to oral and written input. Auditory learners learn by hearing and listening, whereas visual learners learn by seeing and looking, including printed texts.<sup>2</sup> To accommodate both styles, Ma teaches in-person verbally to a live audience or asynchronously in written form via the internet and published works. She also uses creative writing to convey her teaching.

In the Hindu tradition of gurus (spiritual masters), Ma gives darshan (spiritual teaching). Darshan literally is the vision of the divine, i.e. beholding a sacred image in a Hindu temple.<sup>3</sup> The term also applies to gurus, in which case it means beholding the guru and receiving spiritual teaching from her.<sup>4</sup> Ma gives verbal darshan several times a week

in Kashi. It usually begins with about 15 minutes of Hindu chanting, followed by approximately an hour of spiritual teaching, guided meditation, and questions and answers. Longer sessions occur during her intensive retreats. Ma interacts very personally with the individuals in her satsang (congregation). Private issues are openly discussed in this very intimate setting that is typical of Hinduism, but alien to the Western personalized notions of confidentiality. This chapter focuses on the information conveyed during the teaching and discussion.

For those who cannot be present at Kashi, Ma offers a conference-call “Live Audio Darshan” about once a month for the public, and a separate private one for her ashram residents in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York. Further, Kashi has published 15 professionally-produced videos, cassettes, and a CD with darshans of Ma. It used to produce darshan pamphlets, similar to church brochures. Adopting modern technological innovations, Ma writes a daily e-mail darshan that is subsequently posted to the Kashi web site. In addition, Ma has written meditation, poetry, and prose, published in 2 books and 5 booklets.<sup>5</sup>

All of the published sources begin in the early 1990s, during the American apex of the AIDS crisis. Several items have a specific focus on HIV/AIDS. A book of poetry, *The River* serves as an extended poetic reflection on life and death, accompanied by Ma’s illustrations. The epigraph to this project comes from this work. Four videos address living with terminal disease: *Living with AIDS Now*, *Living with Death*, *Living with Illness*, *Dying Without Fear*, and *Death and Awareness*. Ma also wrote and illustrated *Bones and Ash* as an extended eulogy in loving memory for a dear friend, Billy,<sup>6</sup> who

died of leukemia. Its themes of life, love, God, spirituality, service, and death provide an inspiring set of spiritual meditations for the AIDS era.

### **Seva: Service**

Hinduism typically offers religious ritual, meditation, or yoga as its primary religious and spiritual practices. Ma has a different emphasis. Her teaching essentially addresses two issues. First, people need to stop “that inner war within one’s own being.” Peace cannot come to the world if one cannot find peace within.<sup>7</sup> In other words, inner peace leads to outer peace. Ma offers spiritual practices to attain this peace. The inner practices are preparatory steps for her principal practice, seva, i.e., “serving another human being.” This is the second component of Ma’s teaching. The spiritual work of the world is helping each other out, for people depend on one another.<sup>8</sup> Ma summarizes this double teaching with a rhetorical question. She asks people how they could make their life more meaningful. Her answer is unequivocally clear: take care of yourself, and take care of others.<sup>9</sup>

Ma wants her students to take prayer and put it “into action.” She uses the pious metaphor of palms pressed together that need to open, reach out, and help someone.<sup>10</sup> Religions traditionally emphasize prayer as the primary individual and communal form of spiritual practice.<sup>11</sup> The closed hands prepare the individual with devotional stillness, i.e., the inner peace. Opened hands transform into compassionate engagement in the world. This is the spiritual work of the world. It is seva in Hinduism, a term Ma frequently uses. Seva overcomes individual self-centeredness by opening up to the needs of others. It cultivates compassion.

Interviewer Sorah Dubitsky notes the contrast between Ma and most other spiritual teachers who emphasize meditation and prayer. Ma teaches these spiritual practices, but the deep, soul-filled, core form of spiritual expression for Ma is seva. She offers a parable about people who claim that God does not answer their prayers. God, indeed, answers, and that response is “take care of my children.”<sup>12</sup> Seva is doing God’s work on the earth.

Seva is Ma’s solution to the centuries-old Christian polemic between faith and good works. Her conclusion is that good works are essential. The faith that accompanies such works is a faith in humanity, not in religious doctrine. For seva, religion does not matter, but the ability to serve does. Seva is the Hindu form of the golden rule. Religion reporter Lucky Severson has noted that all religions share a belief in unselfish love.<sup>13</sup> People of many different faiths can follow their own religions, but they need to practice good works. Such deeds as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, and taking care of the sick are universal to all religions. This compassionate engagement likewise applies to people who experience religious doubt or do not believe in God. On the negative side, faith can too often reflect dogmatic correctness instead of the key message of a religion. Seva is that key.

In the American religious context, seva is not merely service, but altruism. It is generosity with no expectation of any sort of repayment. It is the principle of doing good without expecting anything, good or otherwise, in return, as defined by sociologist Kristen Renwick Monroe.<sup>14</sup> It contrasts the worldly patterns of selfishness and greed. Ultimately, altruism is a communal experience.<sup>15</sup> Monroe has documented that altruists



view other people in the world not as strangers, but as fellow humans. She has defined three ethical factors that encourage altruism: the individual perspective of her- or himself, the value placed on others, and the response to religious teaching.<sup>16</sup>

Ma's teaching corresponds to Monroe's definition of altruism. Seva gives without expectation of return. It emphasizes getting out of one's own isolated self for the benefit of others. It views people as God's creations. Everyone carries a divine spark within, for example, as expressed in the Hindu greeting of namaste, discussed previously. It responds to the dual fact of life that everyone seeks happiness and experiences suffering. This chapter focuses on these topics.

Everyone needs to serve. Ma wants everybody, especially religious leaders, to take responsibility and care for a "speck of this earth."<sup>17</sup> Everyone can find something she or he can manage, as long as they are sincere. For people who feel they lack the psychological, emotional, or spiritual wherewithal for this kind of work, Ma says, "start very small," and "let it grow."<sup>18</sup> The goal is not to save the world, but to help someone else.<sup>19</sup> Fear of failure should not stop anyone, because otherwise that person's life and love will end up being wasted.<sup>20</sup> Service enables people to share their God-given talents and skills that otherwise might stagnate.<sup>21</sup>

Ma is very persuasive in encouraging people to serve. Ma's students very clearly illustrate her "direct" form of teaching. According to Acharya Swami Krishnapriya and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, the respective directors of Ma's ashrams in Sebastian, FL and Atlanta, GA, Ma's "love for her students ... is so great that she is not shy to risk their displeasure in helping them to untie the knots of the heart and overcome the obstacles of

the mind.”<sup>22</sup> She challenges and confronts her students in her charismatic manner. She seeks for them to have open hearts of love without doubt and confusion.

For Ma, seva means helping those in need, especially the homeless, the hungry, and the sick, in particular people living with HIV/AIDS. Ma has a special affinity for the downtrodden members of society. She first learned this spiritual virtue from the four African Americans she befriended as a child under the boardwalk in Brooklyn. She looks upon all people, no matter their state, as children of God as Divine Mother: “All are her children; each and every human being upon the Earth is the Divine Mother’s child.”<sup>23</sup> This metaphor emphasizes the motherliness of God who cares for her children. Ma teaches to hug those that no one else wants to hug.<sup>24</sup> She approaches people as her children, treating them with compassion, kindness, and sometimes tough love.

Ma offers multiple approaches for AIDS-related seva. Her concern is for the many who are sick and who “die alone, hungry, afraid.”<sup>25</sup> Her response to AIDS is to provide warmth to people by caring for them, and her care programs focus on the marginal elements of society.<sup>26</sup> She emphasizes that many do not have access to treatment because they are poor, homeless, or social outcasts, such as street people, prostitutes, and drug addicts.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, people in developing countries have very limited access to health care for economic reasons.

Living well for Ma means a passionate life full of awareness and care for others.<sup>28</sup> She gives the example of how the Gay community has responded to HIV/AIDS: people helping each other. People feel better when they serve. Ma devoutly teaches that such service fills “life with the richness of God.”<sup>29</sup> The divine offers fullness for living a rich

life. Seva helps people get outside themselves to see both the beauty and misery of the world around them. It frees people from their own individual concerns to care for something greater.

In the mid-1990s, Ma taught those who were recovering from HIV/AIDS due to improved medications to “make a dent in this world” by caring for others, fighting AIDS bigotry, and not wasting life with guilt.<sup>30</sup> She refers to the people who had benefited from HAART by regaining their health. People living with AIDS cannot lose hope. They need to remain optimistic. They need to look forward to their futures and make plans.

### **Karma and Theodicy**

In Hinduism, Ma’s teaching about seva translates into one of the two meanings of karma: Karma Yoga (the path of action, i.e., service to others), and the karma of cause and effect. Ma’s interpretation of both forms of karma serves as a Hindu response to the western dilemma of theodicy.

### **Karma Yoga: The Path of Action**

Seva is a form of Karma Yoga (a.k.a. Karma Marga), one of the four traditional Hindu paths of spiritual and religious practice, the others being bhakti (devotion), jnana (intuitive self-knowledge), and raja (self-control).<sup>31</sup> Each one is suited to different personality types. Psychologist Peter Richardson has tried to correlate the four paths to Western psychological models, specifically using the Meyers-Briggs inventory. Although Ma’s personal practice includes Richardson’s “journey of unity” (mysticism) and the “journey of devotion,” her primary teaching is the “journey of works.” It attends to a practical and lifelong responsibility to individuals, institutions, and community. It is

physical, experiential, and direct. It requires hand and body work. It is very pragmatic, rather than theoretical.<sup>32</sup> However, Richardson's model expects the work-oriented individual to focus primarily on organizations, not on individuals, as Ma does.

All four paths lead to moksha (liberation). Moksha can be technically defined as freedom from karma.<sup>33</sup> Ma teaches that the fastest way to moksha is through service.<sup>34</sup> She seeks nothing less than divine liberty for her students through seva. Her approach to moksha contrasts some other Hindu outlooks that seek escape from the world rather than engagement in it. For Ma, moksha means loving what you do, regardless of the religion a person follows. It is a freedom to love, and to embody that love. It is not a coercion to do something good, but the desire to do so. This is spiritual freedom, as Ma explains, "There is no job too messy, there is no person you can't serve."<sup>35</sup> Moksha is the freedom to love all, to have compassion, to serve, and to give.

Karma Yoga and seva are not major emphases in Hinduism today, although Swami Vivekananda codified them as one of the four Hindu paths in modern Hinduism. He succinctly defined the concept as "unselfishness and good works" for the purpose of religious freedom.<sup>36</sup> His 50-page book on Karma Yoga (compiled by his disciples from his writings) constitutes the main Hindu discussion of the subject in the modern era. The bulk of it situates Karma Yoga within traditional Hindu religious teaching. It builds character, reflects the human psychological drive to act, helps others, adheres to dharma (the Hindu law of duty, i.e., right action), benefits the doer, develops selflessness, achieves freedom, and leads to the ultimate religious goal. His discussion is generally non-theistic. He concludes by extolling the Buddha as the perfect example of Karma

Yoga (this serves as an example of the syncretism between Hindu religious thought with other religious teachings, noted earlier).<sup>37</sup> Following the teaching of his guru Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda added that Karma Yoga as service to humanity is worship of God. This became a cornerstone of the Ramakrishna Mission that he founded.

For his part, the preeminent Hindu philosopher and apologist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan simply defines Karma Yoga as “service,” “work,” or “action,” glossing it with the Buddhist concept of “right action,” apparently in the wake of Swami Vivekananda. Its purpose is identical to all the Hindu religious paths: the human discovery of the innate eternal.<sup>38</sup> Contemporary scholar of Hinduism Arvind Sharma reiterates the traditional view of Karma Yoga that emphasizes completion of duty and detachment from the results of one’s own work.<sup>39</sup> None of the authors discuss seva separately from Karma Yoga, although there is a difference in emphasis. Karma Yoga traditionally stresses fulfilling dharma (duty) without expectation of or attachment to the results of work. Seva stresses service to those in need, and has acquired the modern connotation of serving others as divine worship, as in Ma’s teaching.

Ma is rather unique in promoting seva, following the teachings of her guru who also taught service as spiritual discipline.<sup>40</sup> For example, only three of the women gurus in Pechilis’ anthology mention seva: H. H. Mata Amritanandamayi (Ammachi) has a seva organization, while H. H. Bhagavati Sri Sri Vijaswari Devi (Ma Karunamayi) and H. H. Anandamayi Ma include it in their teaching.<sup>41</sup> As noted earlier, the Ramakrishna Mission also emphasizes seva in its educational, medical, and relief work. Most western Hindu teachers emphasize the other Hindu paths, primarily ritual worship or “self-help” such as

yoga and meditation.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to the lack of emphasis on service currently in Hinduism, scholar of spirituality Roger Walsh lists service as one of the seven essential spiritual paths in the world's religions.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Parker Palmer stresses the importance of service in an active life.<sup>44</sup>

The challenge of *seva* and Karma Yoga is engaging the world while maintaining a connection to the divine. Worldly work normally brings about entanglement with the world and leads away from a spiritual focus. The traditional Hindu solution to this very practical dilemma is the renunciation of selfish desire in human action. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the practitioner of Karma Yoga, i.e., the one who performs *seva*, consecrates her or his deeds as a gift to others, instead of working for personal gain. Likewise, Ma clearly reiterates this core Hindu teaching that proper action must be “free from desire and selfish purpose.”<sup>45</sup> Personal interests are abandoned. This requires expanding individual consciousness to care for all humans and all of creation as one's own. All of life becomes an expression of love and service. Human action, thus, becomes part of the divine will.<sup>46</sup> To manifest this profound goal, Ma teaches not to see if someone has received: “I do not look back to see who is taking my love.”<sup>47</sup> That, too, would be an attachment of expectations. As with altruism, *seva* must be undertaken without “attachment to the fruit of action,” i.e., without any desire for outcome or reward.<sup>48</sup> This means abandoning any expectation of results. In other words, people are to do their best, and then let it be. This is a hard concept to fathom, especially living in a society that mandates evaluation at every level of performance. Ultimately, Ma focuses on the selflessness of *seva*.

The discussion of seva in terms of Christian good works, western altruism, and Karma Yoga raises the question if the Hindu concept of seva has a western equivalent. Seva simply means selfless service. As Karma Yoga, it is a core Hindu practice. However, seva undertaken for the merit of one's own liberation is not truly selfless. True seva has no such ulterior motive. It eschews any desire for accomplishment. It engages the world to benefit it, but without developing an attachment—an ego-identification—to the results of action. It is a simple, almost self-evident idea in Hinduism. Is there an accurate translation for the word “seva?” One equivalent would be “good works,” a Christian term that Radhakrishnan invoked. Christians undertake good works for the Kingdom of God, in accordance with the Beatitudes, at least according to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology the Confessing Church. Linguistically, seva is diakonia, the Christian theological term from the Greek for serving people in need. In contrast to seva, good works and diakonia expect results and respond to an implied command. For Liberal Religion, seva approximates the drive for social justice. It is the work done to improve life and society for all people, in particular the disenfranchised. Whereas Unitarian Universalist social justice ministry tends to focus on social and political action at organizational and governmental levels, seva emphasizes hands-on care. Furthermore, seva resembles community ministry, i.e., the focus on the larger world and its needs beyond the walls of the church. Seva does not have the professional emphasis of community ministry: it does not require any sort of ministerial or specialized education. Anyone can participate in seva, at any given moment. Finally, the umbrella term “human

care” encompasses seva, good works, diakonia, social justice, and community ministry. This project employs the phrase “human care” occasionally.

#### Karma: Cause and Effect

The second meaning of the term karma is the Hindu natural law of cause and effect. It is similar to the Christian teaching that one reaps what one sows. In Hinduism, current events result from habituated past choices and actions. The choices individuals face and the decisions they make are karmic phenomena. Karma is not destiny. It results from patterns of past behavior. Spiritual practice broadens the available karmic alternatives an individual perceives. Ma repeatedly emphasizes available choices in the face of karma. At any instance, an individual has at least seven alternative possibilities, but past karma blinds individuals from most of them. They perceive only the tried and true ones they are most familiar or comfortable with. These may not be the best choices, but they seem easy. Spirituality essentially deprograms the karmic conditioning, making it possible to view more alternatives.<sup>49</sup>

Ma also explains karma in western terms, with the inverted paraphrase, “What you reap, you will sow.”<sup>50</sup> This means people treat others the way they were treated, unless they can break the cycle. Ma emphasizes that people can react to karma in positive, non-fatalistic ways. This involves understanding one’s own mistakes, learning from them, and forgiving one’s self for them.<sup>51</sup> When a challenging situation arises, Ma instructs her students to stop and breathe, instead of reacting automatically. Ma’s long-term solution to the problem of karma is seva because it repeatedly requires individuals to deny their own selfish habits and impulses.



Ma's teachings about karma correspond to modern Hindu thought. Radhakrishnan describes karma positively. He denounces the popular fatalism association with karma, instead emphasizing reason and ethical action.<sup>52</sup> He explains karma creates "limiting conditions of human action."<sup>53</sup> Due to karma, past actions set the conditions of an individual's existence. It is neither fate nor pre-determination. However, it only affects the natural level, but not the freedom to choose. The spirit can transcend karma. He psychologically reinterprets habituated actions that become karma. He reiterates that human "self-discipline" can overcome such self-taught inclinations.<sup>54</sup> He concludes that the present results from past karma, while the future is up to the individual.<sup>55</sup> He later added that atoning acts of self-conquest (as in self-control) can overcome karma.<sup>56</sup> His positive spin on karma asserts that all sincere labors translate into good within karma. Good will eventually lead to no less than liberation.<sup>57</sup>

Sharma notes that compassion overcomes karma.<sup>58</sup> This is very important for and similar to Ma's teaching. The moral response to the troubles of the world should be helping others. The karma attributed to others—that they deserve their fate—cannot be an excuse not to help people, but it is unfortunately used in this pejorative manner. Not responding to a call for assistance generates negative karma. He relates a parable about Gandhi, wherein his mentor taught him that doing nothing in the face of suffering enacts bad karma.<sup>59</sup> Karma Yoga overcomes karma, in other words.<sup>60</sup> Dominique Lapierre's novel *City of Joy* illustrates karma along the lines of Sharma's linkage between karma and compassion: joy arises out of misery because of compassion. In this joy, the individual fulfills his or her duty and dissipates karma.<sup>61</sup>

## Theodicy

Ma has specifically addressed the relationship between karma and AIDS. She riles against eastern-influenced claims of karmic punishment. She vehemently denies that AIDS is a result of “bad karma” or a punishment from God.<sup>62</sup> Her explanation about karma addresses theodicy, i.e., how a good God could have created a world that contains evil and suffering. Speaking theistically, she explains, “God doesn’t punish with AIDS,” because “God is love.”<sup>63</sup> Traditional Hinduism would agree with Ma, in that it believes that demons, not God, cause disease.<sup>64</sup> AIDS cultural theorist Paula Treichler has documented an endless list of condemnations against AIDS, many of them coming from the religious community.<sup>65</sup> In response to such stances, Ma says that she does not “know a God who would hurt someone.”<sup>66</sup> No God would inflict AIDS or any other disease on anyone: illness is the way of nature. It is a scientific fact that viruses are indiscriminate. The pejorative theologies that purport AIDS as God’s wrath cannot account for people who are infected, but do not subscribe to the categories of risk behavior: babies, spouses, hemophiliacs, etc. No one deserves AIDS; no one deserves to suffer. Karma and God do not cause disease.

Per Ma, those who lay blame for the disease have small minds and have no compassion or love.<sup>67</sup> Ma’s response to accusations against people with HIV/AIDS is an equivocal demand “NOT TO JUDGE” (emphasis in original).<sup>68</sup> No one can know another’s karma.<sup>69</sup> Instead, Ma instructs people to put themselves in the shoes of those who suffer.<sup>70</sup> This encourages an empathetic response to the needs of others.

Ma provides several stories to illustrate and further explain both karma and theodicy. The first one comes from her cancer-ridden mother. When Ma asked her mother why she was sick, her mother told her to stop asking “why” since there are no answers.<sup>71</sup> Ma adds her mother gave her “a good smack upside the head.”<sup>72</sup> The teaching is not to question why things happen the way they do, because no one can explain it. Bad things happen; it is the way of world. People can and should respond with kindness when things go wrong for others.

A second narrative comes from the “so what” guru that Ma met during an extended trip to India in 1977.<sup>73</sup> She tells the following account during darshan. She received an invitation to visit a sage who knew the secret of life. She climbed up the side of a hill to his hermitage. When she arrived, she asked him about the secret of life. “So what,” was his reply. She asked for an explanation, and got the same reply, “So what.” His answer means all the individual trivialities of life are insignificant in comparison to the greatness of life itself. There are no reasonable answers to the myriad of life’s questions; meaning comes from the transcendence and immanence of life as a whole.

A third parable comes from a Hindu religious story. The god Rudra, called the weeper,<sup>74</sup> controls anger and strong emotions, using them as fuel to good. He can be angry without reacting to it in hostile ways. Hindu scriptures record his descent to Earth, where he saw the cruelty of people. He cried out of compassion for the self-inflicted suffering of humanity. Trees (*Eleocarpus ganitrus* or blue marble tree) grew up where his tears fell; they bore seeds called rudraksha (tears of God).<sup>75</sup> In Ma’s version, he shed tears of blood.<sup>76</sup> The incident explains that God did not create the problems of the world;

people did. Humans have abandoned each other, leaving people “alone do die and suffer.”<sup>77</sup> God offers abundance to face all of life in response to the problems of life. In this fullness of God, Ma teaches to serve people. Her message is to share the abundance by caring for those in need. The plenty exceeds the trials and tribulations of life.<sup>78</sup>

New Age issues are closely related to Karma and theodicy. Ma refutes New Age miasmatic beliefs about illness, that you should love your disease and accept it. “I hate AIDS,” she says, “and how it has robbed their dignity,” referring to people living with AIDS. Ma’s response to AIDS (or any illness) is to fight it spiritually and physically.<sup>79</sup> Elaborating Ma’s stance, AIDS novelist Paul Monette denies claims that self-love and positive thinking cure disease.<sup>80</sup> They contribute to wellness, but they are not the cure. Such claims blame the person for their illness due to an implicit spiritual weakness. AIDS spiritual activist Paul Reed argues that the New Age approach of blaming the patient for the disease is just a redaction of the Christian view of AIDS as God’s punishment.<sup>81</sup> Pastoral psychologist Robert Perelli calls this the “moral scapegoat” approach.<sup>82</sup> Such approaches lead to the rejection of the sick, instead of proving them the care they need. Monette notes that none of New Age teachers would visit people with AIDS.<sup>83</sup> This contrasts Ma’s hands-on stance. Her approach denies New Age claims that disease is a manifestation of spiritual inadequacy, which in itself is a theodicy.

This discussion raises questions about the ontology of disease. Ma’s approach corresponds to contemporary holistic understanding of AIDS and other illnesses.<sup>84</sup> Scholar of spirituality Jack Shea analyzes the relationship between spirituality and health care. Spirituality is but one of four interrelated components that contribute to the health

and well-being of an individual. The others are physical, psychological, and social factors.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, cultural critic Susan Sontag has studied how the language and practices regarding illness contribute to suffering and prevent healing. She concluded that physical disease has a physical cause, not a mental or spiritual one, although the later two aspects of the human ontology do influence physical wholeness.<sup>86</sup> For her part, Ma offers reasonable, pragmatic suggestions regarding people living with HIV/AIDS. People need medical care, spiritual practice, and physical exercise to live well. She provides a basic Hindu solution for success in life: eat right, love right, breathe deeply, and meditate.<sup>87</sup> Hindu morality includes the kind of physical self-care that Ma advocates.<sup>88</sup> She adds two more axioms: celebrate life and judge not.<sup>89</sup> In addition to medical care, Ma advocates alternative health care, such as vitamins, chiropractic, herbs, massage, and Chinese medicine.<sup>90</sup>

Ma's response to the challenge of karma and to the problem of theodicy is *seva*. It helps alleviate past karma by learning to make better choices in the present. It shows that God has not abandoned the world by giving people the ability to help each other. It does not seek answers to unanswerable philosophical questions. Ma has taken the question of "Why?" (why is there suffering, disease, pain, etc.?) and transformed it into a Zen Buddhist koan: the question boggles the mind. Although there is no answer, the response is clear in Ma's teaching: to serve.

### **HIV/AIDS Care**

Ma's approach to HIV and AIDS is not religious, but spiritual. Pastoral psychologist John Fortunato defines the spiritual as the "journey of the soul."<sup>91</sup> He

advocates people living with AIDS explore eastern paths.<sup>92</sup> Ma provides a guide to that journey. AIDS is an issue that many want to ignore, but it cannot be “pushed into the closet.” Ma admonishes the world not to forget people with AIDS.<sup>93</sup>

Writing in the mid-1990s when many were dying from AIDS, Ma emphasized the seriousness of serving the dying: “To work with the dying, to work in the streets taking care of so many has been a blessing to all of us.”<sup>94</sup> In serving others, Ma receives 10 times or a 100 times more than she gives.<sup>95</sup> Her first and foremost rule for working with the sick and those close to death is not treating people as their disease: they are human beings.<sup>96</sup> She reminds that life is not only the disease and its consequences.<sup>97</sup> She often repeats the phrase “I am not the disease” as a mantra (spiritual formula) to use as a reminder.<sup>98</sup>

Ma notes that some people think they are dying, but they are actually filled with life. Ma tells people to ignore doctor’s claims about how much time someone has to live, because people believe them to be death sentences. They give up, and succumb to the disease.<sup>99</sup> She tells the dying to fight because, “You are not dead till you’re dead.”<sup>100</sup> In other words, do not give up. Ma tells patients not to resign themselves to notions that they are about to die: this is self-defeating.<sup>101</sup> Ma is a fighter, as mentioned earlier.

Ma encourages care-givers to lay a hand on the sick and the dying with gentleness: on their chest, or on the head. In the contact, they should really feel the person, and not just stroke her or him.<sup>102</sup> She encourages people to touch the sick and to speak to them, but not to ignore them or to talk about them in their presence. Even if someone is unconscious, that person can hear others and feel their attitude.<sup>103</sup> People

need physical comfort. The sick should allow those near them take care of them, but only those who can give care: keep the annoying people away. For many, accepting help from someone is hard.<sup>104</sup>

Ma suggests that perhaps AIDS has given people a chance to discover a spiritual life for themselves: one should not take life for granted.<sup>105</sup> Perelli agrees with this conclusion, based on the evidence he collected. People living with AIDS often seek a connection with God and a supportive religious community.<sup>106</sup> Kraus and Borja describe how some people give into their terminal illness, while others use it as an inspiration to straighten out their lives.<sup>107</sup> Psychotherapist Michael Mancilla and HIV/AIDS reporter Lisa Troshinsky cite studies that document physical health improvements of people with AIDS who revamped their lives in response to the disease.<sup>108</sup> Psychologist Gina O'Connell Higgins has documented activism, such as seva, as a means of self-healing.<sup>109</sup>

Ma gives several examples. First, she describes how her mother grew closer to God and goodness, as cancer ravaged her body one organ after another. She compares her situation to those dying from AIDS, "I have found in my young who are dying so needlessly and painfully the great beauty of the light."<sup>110</sup> They were "beaten by the tongues of the wicked and cruel," but have "picked up the armor of God's love in the last days of their lives."<sup>111</sup> Some people find God in the midst of adversity. Higgins would label such individuals as resilient adults.<sup>112</sup> Ma is not saying that illness makes one a saint, but that she has seen miracles happen.

Second, Ma tells the story of Timmy, a dying 29-year old. He thought that, as a Gay man with AIDS, his soul could not "go into the light."<sup>113</sup> The light refers to the light

that people report from their near-death experiences. It also is a Tibetan metaphor for the path to the afterlife. Homophobia and the stigma of the disease limited what he could believe and denied the truth of God that proclaims, "I created you in my image."<sup>114</sup> Ma comforted him and taught him to love himself, so that he would not fear death. To find peace, he had to confront his own guilt.

Third, Ma tells a similar history of Jaya Hanuman who studied with his spiritual teacher for many years and went to India with him many times. His teacher ultimately rejected him, ostensibly for being Gay and HIV+. Hinduism, like all human creations, is not perfect. He was crushed. He moved from Los Angeles to Kashi, where he found peace. He died in Ma's arms (may he rest in peace).<sup>115</sup>

## Death

Death was a prominent factor in American AIDS care up to the mid-1990s. Many sources about Ma come from that period, and, therefore, focus on death. The statistics from the period are overwhelming. In the United States, 60% of AIDS patients used to die.<sup>116</sup> After combination drug therapies known as HAART were introduced in 1995, the American mortality rate for AIDS patients dropped by 2/3.<sup>117</sup> Currently, minorities, especially African Americans, account for nearly 3/4 of new infections; African Americans alone account for half of the AIDS deaths.<sup>118</sup> The epidemic has become an issue of racial and economic justice in the United States. The work of The River Fund targets such disenfranchised populations. Although medicines have curtailed progression of the disease and improved the lives of people with HIV/AIDS in the developed countries, world-wide AIDS mortality rate still hovers at 52%.<sup>119</sup> That means that one of



every two individuals with HIV will die, given the current conditions. In 2005, 4.9 million people were newly infected with HIV, while 3.1 million died of AIDS.<sup>120</sup> Most countries do not have the medical infrastructures or finances to provide adequate HIV/AIDS care. In response, the River Fund supports two programs abroad. In light of these numbers, Ma's focus on death from the early 1990's is still warranted.

Ma teaches that people need to prepare for physical death through spiritual practice. Her heart goes out to those in a pre-death state who only experience suffering, instead of the joy of life.<sup>121</sup> She wants to prepare them for the dying process in a pragmatic way. She tends not to offer religious forms of consolation.

Ma teaches to accept death as a fact, without obsessing about it.<sup>122</sup> Taboos inhibit talking about death in western culture, and western religions euphemize its discussion with otherworldly religious platitudes of "going home," "meeting one's maker," and the like. In contrast, Ma's approach to death is frank, detailed, and direct. To supplement the western religious approach, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross has provided a modern psychological model that she adapted to AIDS as well.<sup>123</sup> It documents how the terminally ill cope with their diseases and impending deaths as well as how mourners accept their losses, but it is not a guide for the dying. Like Kübler-Ross, Ma prepares people for death largely based on her own experiences of caring for the dying.

Ma refers to the Hindu metaphor that death is like a leaf ready to fall off a tree.<sup>124</sup> The leaf ripens, matures, and withers, growing back again. She wants people to overcome their fear of death. Accepting death is accepting life. Death is just the last step in life. Death is not a "boogey-man," a "skeleton," or "blackness," as commonly depicted in

American culture.<sup>125</sup> There is nothing to fear in death; life, in fact, is scary.<sup>126</sup> Ma explains that people can “conquer death by not being afraid of death.” She continues, “By living life completely, you conquer death.” She insists on practicing meditation to develop this sensibility.<sup>127</sup> She instructs people to “sit in the silence of this moment and face death.”<sup>128</sup> Instead of fear, people need to trust that death is just another moment of life. The only reason for fearing death is fear of the unfamiliar. In fact, living life with an acceptance of life will bring about a fuller life.<sup>129</sup>

The dignity of so many men and women who died of AIDS without fear amazes Ma.<sup>130</sup> Ma believes meaning and purpose comes from the fullness of life, not from the circumstances of death:

When death comes early  
to those with AIDS  
my children will be able to show them  
the beauty of Death’s journey  
they will squeeze all they can  
from the grapes of life  
and squeeze Death, too.<sup>131</sup>

Ma advocates a full, rich life with the metaphor of taking all the succulent drops of juice from the grape that represents life. Such a life filled with purpose leads to a meaningful death. A good death is one that concludes a rich life, and not one that bemoans a wasted life.

In preparing people for death (and life), Ma uses the image of eating food to represent consuming the world. She says, “Eat the pain and joy. Consume it all, good or bad. Devour it and spit it out. Then you will be free to die.”<sup>132</sup> For those living with HIV/AIDS, Ma speaks literally of devouring the pain and consumption.<sup>133</sup> It is not a

suppression of it, but an acceptance. Life continues in spite of the illness, but the patient needs to partake of that life by consuming the disease. This is a challenge for most as it symbolizes fighting instead of resignation. This image of the world as food counters the idea of being eaten alive by the world and AIDS. Ma essentially teaches to ‘buck the system’ of a world that “worships life and fears death.”<sup>134</sup>

Consuming the world as food is a prevalent image in Ma’s teaching. It echoes the start of her spiritual practices through attempts at weight loss. This religious image of eating the world actually comes from Hinduism. Ma regularly quotes the provoking mystic poetry of the Bengali saint Ramprasad Sen (1720-1781) with adoration. Writing in a time of repeated famines, his image for total devotion to God in the form of Kali is one of consumption: “I shall devour thee utterly, Kali Ma! ... Thou must devour me first, or I myself shall eat Thee up.”<sup>135</sup> This reflects Kali’s Hindu metaphorical predilection for eating the flesh off the bones in the cremation grounds. Having divinity take human flesh in this manner serves as a symbol of moksha in Hinduism: salvation comes by the grace of God. It is not easy; in fact, it is painful because it represents the death of ego. Ma explains Ramprasad’s words as the need “to consume all life” while living on earth. That life is the Mother.<sup>136</sup> The alternative is to be eaten alive by life, a passive stance that Ma vehemently rejects. Like Ma, Ramprasad advocates a devotional, active approach to the challenges of life. Reversing the metaphor in his poem, Ramprasad appears to seek a total merger with the goddess by eating her, until he explains his purpose: “I shall install Thee in my heart.” He symbolically eats her to experience her as part of his own being, using the metaphor of the heart as a temple. Theophagy is the ritual eating of god. For

Ramprasad, to love god and to worship god one needs the intimacy of ingesting god.

Christian communion can have similar sentiments.

Ma offers practical suggestions for preparing for death. Some of her advice for the dying comes from her reading of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.<sup>137</sup> Ma advocates getting ready for death by learning to breathe deeply.<sup>138</sup> Awareness of death at the time of death is important. When dying, the person needs to recognize that he or she is dying. That is the time to “kiss” the earthly existence goodbye.<sup>139</sup> Simplifying the complex religious imagery of Tibetan Buddhism, Ma explains that a light will appear at death. This is “the light of eternity.”<sup>140</sup> Mircea Eliade identifies this symbol as meeting with the ultimate reality. It is “pure being.” The same light can appear in deep meditation.<sup>141</sup>

Simultaneously, it is a void, a release, and a journey, according to Ma. The person needs to go into the brightest part of light they see. Of paramount importance is letting everything go, instead of clinging to earthly attachments that cannot transcend death.<sup>142</sup> Fortunato notes that such a profound ability to let go can only come from a deep spiritual practice.<sup>143</sup> Per Ma, feeling this release will free the person in the process of dying.<sup>144</sup>

No one should be in pain due to illness. Especially before death, people need to get the right pain killers. Otherwise, the mind focuses on the pain and loses awareness of life.<sup>145</sup> The person needs to remain aware, for the benefit of mindfulness and meditation.<sup>146</sup> In a prayerful dialog with Kali, Ma laments that “no one can be expected to greet death with the extreme amount of pain at the end of the horrendous disease, AIDS.”<sup>147</sup> The pain of disease ravages life and destroys the possibility of a peaceful death. The response Ma receives from her goddess is a spiritual life, filled with

devotional love: “Tell them that they are loved no matter how they have lived. Teach them that it is good to be soft inside. Teach them of unconditional love. Teach them to forgive life.”<sup>148</sup> The best preparation for death is a primary religious goal of life: learning to live and love without judgment.<sup>149</sup>

Ma expands her teaching about preparing for death to everyone: everyone should live as if she or he were about to die. She says, “All the nonsense would fly away.”<sup>150</sup> People spend too much time on unimportant matters, forgetting about the reality that is life. With a consciousness of death, people “see the mundane and realize what is not important in life.”<sup>151</sup> Acknowledging death brings about a discernment that reveals meaningful priorities and discards the rest as unimportant.

### The Chidakash

Ma’s teaching includes instructions regarding grief and coping. She experiences profound grief for all those who have died:

When the tears fall upon the ground  
in my hour of mourning for humanity’s needs  
I always remember that my Baba<sup>152</sup> loves me  
and my chelas<sup>153</sup> love me.<sup>154</sup>

She accepts her mourning and consoles herself by remembering her relationship to her guru and students. It is in this community that Ma can overcome her grief. Ma sits “at the feet of [her] Guru” for his strength.<sup>155</sup> This pious Hindu phrase denotes prostration and obedience to the spiritual master. Ma says her strength to care for people with AIDS and other diseases comes from her guru.<sup>156</sup> She also meditates every night, relinquishing herself of her daily burdens.<sup>157</sup> She models this for her students. In darshan, she explains

how she asks God to take the pain and suffering of the day from her. She offers her open hands, saying, "Take this from me, Ma."

In a poem about Kali, Ma ascribes the following words of concern to the goddess: "I, the Mother, walk the cremation ground looking for my children who should be walking the Earth singing happy tunes and not thinking of rebirth."<sup>158</sup> People may mourn alone or in groups; however the goddess mourns with humanity, not just for AIDS. God wants people to be happy. When someone dies, Ma reminds herself in prayer that the life and death of the person matters, not her own grief. She warns against grief becoming self-absorption.<sup>159</sup> Current religious and psychological approaches to self-care closely resemble Ma's teaching.<sup>160</sup>

Ma teaches to transform grief into compassionate service: "When I have lost someone with AIDS, I go outright out and serve another person with AIDS."<sup>161</sup> She says to bring grief to those who are alone and need someone to be with them. She does not mean to mourn with them, but to be with them. She does this in memory of those who have died: "I can hear the sound of my many dead's voices coming from our Ganga. 'Live for us, Ma. Live and tell of this time of the plague AIDS.'"<sup>162</sup> The Ganga is the pond at Kashi with the ashes of thousands of dead. It gets its name from the Hindu sacred Ganga River. For those who feel they have faced too many deaths and done too much work, Ma reminds them that their lives have been blessed by being so close to death. They have gotten to know death, unlike most people. They have seen firsthand that there is nothing to fear about death.<sup>163</sup>

How do Ma and her students cope with their traumatic work? Burnout and grief are related issues. At a basic level, Ma says she and her students do not burn out because in giving, they receive. Service becomes a current of energy that replenishes the caregiver. This is a common religious teaching, but it is not entirely satisfactory for many. For Ma, the key is to focus on the person being served and remain detached. It is especially important to give up expectations, as discussed earlier, i.e., not to think about getting something out of the service for either the person or oneself. Instead, Ma teaches her students to be thankful for serving another.<sup>164</sup> Kashi Ashram provides a supportive religious community that helps its members cope with their work.

Ma offers a second coping strategy. She conveys a teaching from her teacher Swami Nityananda. She learned it from him or his successor Swami Muktananda, with whom she personally studied while in India in 1977. It is called the chidakash, the “heart space over the head.” It is the spiritual heart, filled with compassionate detachment. It is free of ego.<sup>165</sup> Detachment does not mean “not caring,” rather it is a “huge well of compassion.” It is freedom from judgment. This freedom sets priorities, makes the right choices, and responds appropriately.<sup>166</sup>

Swami Nityananda’s students compiled his teachings in what has come to be known the Chidakash Gita, later published in English as *The Sky of the Heart*. The Chidakash is the “state of divine consciousness” or the “heart of the whole universe.”<sup>167</sup> It symbolically resides in the crown of the head, where Hindus believe the human and divine spirits meet and merge. It is the experience of “absolute consciousness.”<sup>168</sup> In western terms, the state may be a peek experience from which one sees the world with a

divine perspective. This must be the sixth stage of Fowlers' faith development.<sup>169</sup> Even in Hinduism, the achievement of this level of spiritual development is rare.

Access to the chidakash comes through a breathing technique. Ma explains she inhales into the heart and exhales into the heart space over the head, where “there is no emotionalism.”<sup>170</sup> She does this three times, and then stays there. It is a place where heartbreak does not happen from the horrors of life. She wants her students to go there as well: “Just breathe into your heart three times and out of the top of your head three times.”<sup>171</sup> Given the description, it appears that the breaths Ma recommends will not actualize the individual into a super-conscious state. The breaths serve another purpose. They center the person in a state of mindfulness. They remind the individual of the spiritual work they are about to undertake. They evoke the consciousness necessary to undertake this work.

In working with the poor, the sick, and the suffering, Ma resides in the chidakash. She explains that she lives in the chidakash when she, for example, “[holds] a young man in his thirties who looks seventy due to AIDS.”<sup>172</sup> Ma has a real-life story about the chidakash that demonstrates how service is not about the one who serves, but the person being served. It underscores the need for the spiritual practice of the chidakash. Ma gives the horrific example of a girl forced to drink Drano by her father. The many possible responses include, for example, anger, going after the father, or helping the girl. The answer to the question about how to respond comes from the chidakash: it provides seva. First, Ma says, take care of girl and her needs. Comfort her in life.<sup>173</sup> Serving her will take a long time. Everything else comes later or does not matter. Anger prevents true



service. Going after the father in a personal vendetta would only respond to personal needs; it is not service. Service is not about the self, the care giver, but the people who are in need. The chidakash helps keep the person focused on compassion and service.

This chapter has presented Ma's teaching regarding HIV/AIDS. Much of it reflects her general philosophy. Ma uses several different verbal forms to teach. She provides private spiritual exercises to prepare individuals for the all-important public practice of seva. Seva belongs to the Hindu religious path of serving the world with detachment known as Karma Yoga. For Ma, it is the most important answer to karma, the Hindu law of causation. The free-will choice for doing good works counters the other forces that constrain life. Although there is no satisfactory answer to the dilemma of theodicy, seva responds to problem of an imperfect world by lending a helping hand to solve the problems of the world. In terms of seva, HIV/AIDS care is a leading concern for Ma and her students. She prepares people for physical death through spiritual practices that overcoming the fear of death. She copes with her grief through spiritual practice, especially the expansive consciousness known as the chidakash, the heart space over the head.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Robert J. Sternberg and Wendy M. Williams, *Educational Psychology* (Boston: Allyn, 2002), 126-27.

<sup>3</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 707.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3 ed. (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), [16].

<sup>5</sup> All of Ma's works are listed in the bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Thomas "Billy" Byrom, mentioned earlier.

<sup>7</sup> Caplan, 111.

<sup>8</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video).

<sup>10</sup> Caplan, 111.

<sup>11</sup> Jane E. Vennard, *A Praying Congregation: The Art of Teaching Spiritual Practice* (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Dubitsky, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Lucky Severson, "Altruism," *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, 24 March 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Kristen R. Monroe, *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-9.

<sup>16</sup> Severson.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>19</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>20</sup> Cohen, 80.

<sup>21</sup> Dubitsky, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Swami Krishnapriya [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., *Kali Natha Yoga as Taught by Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: The Ancient Art of Balancing Power and Love through the Practice of Yoga, Meditation and Breath* (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2006), 47.

<sup>23</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 30.

<sup>24</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications).

<sup>25</sup> "Unite in the Fight: U.S. Tour of the South African AIDS Memorial Quilt," ([Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund and Ma Jaya River School, 2000), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.

<sup>30</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>31</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *Vivekananda: The Yogas and Other Works*, ed. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center, 1953), 96, 201, 405, 457, 577-78.

<sup>32</sup> Robinson, 107.

<sup>33</sup> Denise Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Mysticism: East and West* (New York: Oxford, 1996), 56.

<sup>34</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan

<sup>35</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*, 20.

<sup>36</sup> Swami Vivekananda, 504.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 508.

<sup>38</sup> Radhakrishnan, 54, 56, S[arvepalli] Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (New Delhi: Indus, 1993), 58.

<sup>39</sup> Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism for Our Times* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996), 35.

<sup>40</sup> Dass, ed., 236.

<sup>41</sup> Pechilis, 208, 231, 234; 167; 102.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Walsh, *Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind* (New York: Wiley, 1999), 251-59.

<sup>44</sup> Parker Palmer, *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

<sup>45</sup> Bhagavad Gita 4: 19.

<sup>46</sup> Swami Varadananda, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga, Lecture, Chicago, IL, 23 January 2005, Swami Vivekananda.

<sup>47</sup> Cohen, 81.

<sup>48</sup> Bhagavad Gita 4: 20

<sup>49</sup> Ma taught extensively on such karmic phenomenon during her Exploring Karma and Living in the Stream of Consciousness intensive that I attended in 28-30 December 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Robert N. Minor, *Radhakrishnan: A Religious Biography* (Albany: SUNY, 1987), 20.

<sup>53</sup> S[arvepalli] Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Rev. ed., 2 vols. (New Delhi: Oxford, 1999), I 246.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>56</sup> Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Religions*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Sharma, *Hinduism for Our Times*, 30.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>61</sup> Dominique Lapierre, *City of Joy*, trans. Kathryn Spink (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1985), 35.

- <sup>62</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.
- <sup>63</sup> Mirkin.
- <sup>64</sup> David Kinsley, *Health, Healing, and Religion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 1996), 60.
- <sup>65</sup> Paula A. Teichler, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS* (Durham: Duke UP, 1999), 12-13, 15, 16, 36-37.
- <sup>66</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan
- <sup>67</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.
- <sup>68</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Daily Prayer: May 12, 2004* [internet] (Kashi Ashram, 2004, accessed 14 May 2004); available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>. Emphasis in original.
- <sup>69</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Spiritual Life: Answers and Questions #2," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994), 4.
- <sup>70</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.
- <sup>71</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.
- <sup>72</sup> Matousek, 149.
- <sup>73</sup> Narayanan, 156.
- <sup>74</sup> Alain Daniélou, *The Myths and Gods of India: The Classic Work on Hindu Polytheism from the Princeton Bollingen Series* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1991), 194.
- <sup>75</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 399, 799, "The Story of Rudraksha Beads," ([Sebastian, FL]: [Ma's India], [n. d.]), Swami Himalaya [Parker], Experience Kali Natha Yoga with Swami Himalaya of Kashi Ashram, workshop, Ann Arbor, MI, 23 April 2005.
- <sup>76</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 21.
- <sup>77</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 18.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>79</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.

- <sup>80</sup> Paul Monette, *Last Watch of the Night: Essays Too Personal and Otherwise* (New York: Harcourt, 1994), 83.
- <sup>81</sup> Reed, 39.
- <sup>82</sup> Perelli, 38.
- <sup>83</sup> Monette, 83.
- <sup>84</sup> Reed, 61.
- <sup>85</sup> John Shea, *Spirituality and Health Care: Researching toward a Holistic Future* (Chicago: Park Ridge Center, 2000), 39, 42-43.
- <sup>86</sup> Sontag, 131.
- <sup>87</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.
- <sup>88</sup> Prakash N. Desai, *Health and Medicine in the Hindu Tradition, Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 95.
- <sup>89</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.
- <sup>90</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.
- <sup>91</sup> Fortunato, 7.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.
- <sup>93</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.
- <sup>94</sup> "The River Fund [Benefit Brochure]," (1998), 3.
- <sup>95</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.
- <sup>96</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.
- <sup>97</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 30.
- <sup>98</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan
- <sup>99</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>101</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>102</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Answers to Questions About Death #2," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994), 3.
- <sup>103</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.
- <sup>104</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.
- <sup>105</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.
- <sup>106</sup> Perelli, 19, 22.
- <sup>107</sup> Kraus and Borja, 4.
- <sup>108</sup> Michael Mancilla and Lisa Troshinsky, *Love in the Time of HIV: The Gay Man's Guide to Sex, Dating, and Relationships* (New York: Guilford, 2003), 164-65.
- <sup>109</sup> Gina O'Connell Higgins, *Resilient Adults: Overcoming a Cruel Past* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 227-8.
- <sup>110</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 7.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid., 7-8.
- <sup>112</sup> Higgins, 19-23.
- <sup>113</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 1.
- <sup>114</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 2.
- <sup>115</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.
- <sup>116</sup> *Many Threads, One Weave: A Resource Program to Assist Parish Communities in Responding to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*, C-15.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid., C-10.
- <sup>118</sup> UNAIDS and WHO, *AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2005* (Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 2005), 66.
- <sup>119</sup> UNAIDS, *2004 Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic: Executive Summary* (Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 2005), 3. This is the most current data available.
- <sup>120</sup> UNAIDS and WHO, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 77.

<sup>121</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Answers to Questions About Death #1," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994), 4.

<sup>122</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>123</sup> Fortunato, 113-14, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *AIDS: The Ultimate Challenge* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, and Their Own Families* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

<sup>124</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Answers to Questions About Death #1," 1.

<sup>125</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.

<sup>126</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.

<sup>127</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *No Boundaries: Darshan with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati* (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation).

<sup>128</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.

<sup>129</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.

<sup>130</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 25.

<sup>131</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Bones and Ash* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Press, 1995), 125.

<sup>132</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 28-29.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> "The Tantric Mother Within: Men's Intensive [Brochure]," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2000).

<sup>136</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Kali Tantra," (Sebastian, FL: [n.d.]), 2.

<sup>137</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.

<sup>138</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>139</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*



- <sup>141</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One* (New York: Harper, 1962), 43-44.
- <sup>142</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.
- <sup>143</sup> Fortunato, 21.
- <sup>144</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>146</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.
- <sup>147</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *On Death and Dying*, 21.
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid., 22.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>150</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>152</sup> Ma's guru Neem Karoli Baba.
- <sup>153</sup> Ma's spiritual students
- <sup>154</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Bones and Ash*, 56.
- <sup>155</sup> Melwani, 38.
- <sup>156</sup> Matousek, 96.
- <sup>157</sup> Melwani, 38.
- <sup>158</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 3.
- <sup>159</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Grief," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994), 1.
- <sup>160</sup> Reed, 50.
- <sup>161</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Grief," 4.
- <sup>162</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Breathe and Dance with the Gods*, 1.
- <sup>163</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.

<sup>164</sup> Dubitsky, 14.

<sup>165</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 30.

<sup>166</sup> Cohen, 80.

<sup>167</sup> Swami Nityananda, *The Sky of the Heart: Jewels of Wisdom from Nityananda*, ed. Swami Chetanananda, trans. M. U. Hatengdi (Portland, OR: Rudra P, 1996), 22.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>169</sup> James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 199-213.

<sup>170</sup> Melwani, 38.

<sup>171</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Daily Prayer: June 6, 2000* [internet] (Kashi Ashram, 2000, accessed 8 June 2000); available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>.

<sup>172</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 30.

<sup>173</sup> Cohen, 148.

## CHAPTER 4

### ART, THE VISUAL TEACHING

My paintings are a meditation for me, but they are also my chance to serve others, a way of saying, “Hey, world, here are my hands, here is my heart, here are my paintings.”

Perhaps they can help those in need, that’s all.

Ma<sup>1</sup>

Ma’s aesthetic work attends to the emotional needs of humanity in a non-verbal way. Art communicates without language to convey spiritual truths that cannot find expression with words. She draws religious icons that are not mere *objects d’art*, i.e., art for its own sake. Her art is highly symbolic and religious, relying on Hindu imagery. Its depictions invoke the elusiveness of ultimate meaning. Ma has created multiple named series of paintings and some sculptures as well. This project focuses on paintings that address HIV/AIDS, specifically five series that depict either the Ganga River or a goddess. Her bold, modern, and abstract style breaks with the Hindu iconographic tradition. Some of her work deals with HIV/AIDS. This chapter first introduces the format and sources of Ma’s art. Next, it progresses through three topics: Ma’s art within the Hindu context, the spiritual practice of art, and Ma’s art as service on behalf of HIV/AIDS. Finally, it interprets five series of paintings that have influenced HIV/AIDS.

Ma’s art reflects the creativity of the right-hemisphere in the brain. It addresses visual learners, i.e. those who learn by seeing and looking.<sup>2</sup> Fortunato notes that the aesthetic is an inherently spiritual pursuit, concerned with creativity, not rational logic.<sup>3</sup>

According to psychologist David Elkins, art functions by avoiding the “logical mind” and addressing the “imaginal depths of the soul” directly. The soul prefers “image, symbol, metaphor, and simile” over “linear language.”<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Ma does not usually explain her paintings, because the art is a visual, not verbal, medium. The rare times when she does interpret one of her paintings provide insights into her iconographic imagery. According to Radha Louise, an enthusiast of Ma’s art, some people are simply drawn to physical images, rather than words. This is a unique group of Ma’s students. Ma works with these people through her art.<sup>5</sup>

Religious art invites the viewer to a personal encounter with the image and with the divinity represented by it. It has an immanent religious value that transcends the physical. The artistry inspires and consoles. It evokes a spiritual, physical, and psychological experience from the beholder. It is a visible sign of an unseen, soulful reality that is both present in and transcends the known world. Hindus use the term *murtis* (icons) to designate such images. An analogous Western example would be Eastern Orthodox icons that the faithful venerate for the sacred reality they represent. Symbols such as Ma’s paintings and other religious icons connect the individual to a transcendent point: they open up a spiritual or divine consciousness beyond daily awareness. The symbolic and religious nature of art provides for open-ended meaning. Instead of a specific, literal reading, it offers a depth meaning and interpretation that develops and expands over time. The symbols are not flat.

Ma’s artwork went on public display in 1990. The previous year, a visitor to Kashi suggested Ma exhibit her art.<sup>6</sup> Kashi has brought her work to Munich, Paris, Rome,

and to 30 galleries and exhibits across the United States.<sup>7</sup> Of course, Kashi has much of her art on permanent display.

### **The Hindu Context**

Ma provides an American form of artistic expression in the modern Hindu religious artistic tradition. Indian art historian Vidya Dehejia notes the recent Western impact on Indian art comes, in part, from the Indian diaspora living, in particular, in the United States and England. The art responds to modernity with links to the past of the subcontinent. Myth and history as well as indigenous folk traditions take on new, modern forms through artistic reinterpretation using Western styles and techniques.<sup>8</sup> Ma's art pursues Hindu themes in Western form, reflecting her American background. With its use of canvas, acrylic, oil, markers, and stylistics, it does not imitate Indian art or the Hindu tradition. Ma essentially reverses Dehejia's paradigm by starting with a Western artistic form and filling it with Hindu imagery. Her art is religious to the core, although it relies exclusively on "secular" western artistic techniques. It does not imitate the Hindu iconographic tradition. A double challenge results: one of content for the westerner, and of form for the Hindu. Westerners need religious and interpretive lenses to understand the content because the imagery and its concepts are alien to western culture. On the other hand, Hindus recognize some of the imagery, but find the style and form estranging. Ma also contrasts the Hindu iconographic tradition by signing her art, like some modern Hindu artists, whereas older images were painted anonymously and even collectively.

Hindu art historian George Michell finds that the film industry has stylistically influenced current Hindu iconography, more than the religious tradition. This includes

such details as “lurid” colors.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the ubiquitous proliferation of Hindu images via inexpensive prints resembles the spread of movie posters. Like Dehejia, he acknowledges that some artists include religious themes in their work, but under Western influence that began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the current religious tradition, Ma does not repeat modern, glitzy, popular forms of Hindu artistic expression in her work. Instead, she has created multiple series of original work. Only one piece has been published for mass distribution: a poster of *The River* (see figure 2).

James Bae references Indian art historian Ananda K. Coomaraswamy for a critical approach to studying Hindu religious art. Hindu art has an innate utilitarian purpose: spiritual inspiration and religious instruction.<sup>11</sup> Art has this unique spiritual power because it represents “the natural and universal language of the human soul,” per pastoral psychologist David Elkins.<sup>12</sup> According to Coomaraswamy, there are two primary steps in the interpretation of Hindu art. First, the artist’s perspective that gave rise to an artwork must be not only understood, but also accepted.<sup>13</sup> That statement combines four ideas: the artist has a point of view; the artwork expresses that view; the viewer must understand the artist’s vision; and, finally, the viewer must suspend his/her own disbelief to agree to the artistic idea. In other words, religious art expresses the inner spiritual reality of an artist. It invites the viewer to contemplation and dialog. In a similar vein, scholar of religious art Karen Stone emphasizes the need to suspend judgments and cultural biases when viewing and interpreting art.<sup>14</sup> Coomaraswamy expects the viewer of religious art to internalize the work.<sup>15</sup>

Second, sacred art captures the inspiration of the artist and conveys it to the viewer of the artwork. The inspiration does not come from aesthetics, but flows from a divine source. Artists embody that divinity in their work. They offer it to their viewers for their experience: “the spiritual function of art is to deliver an intimate experience of divinity.”<sup>16</sup> Religious art serves as a catalyst for meditation and worship. The symbolic representation in the art portrays a reality beyond the human and physical realm.<sup>17</sup> It possesses a rational logic that focuses on the deep artistic intention. Even secular art has a spiritual level of interpretation.<sup>18</sup>

For her part, Ma depicts her mystical visions of Hindu deities and the Ganga River in her work. She represents them rather symbolically, as if they had their origins in a dream or trance. Viewers need to behold the resulting painting and contemplate all of its details. This is not a process of interpretation, but meditation. They need to be open to a variety of unexpected possibilities the art may reveal.

### **Art as Spiritual Practice**

Ma’s artwork is a spiritual practice for her. Painting is meditation, devotion, and prayer. She likes to paint in the early morning. Consequently, her paintings take on the newness of each day.<sup>19</sup> They are inspired works. The plurality of God’s forms and formlessness sometimes come to Ma “as impulse by the stroke of a paint brush,” according to an exhibit catalog.<sup>20</sup> The divine becomes manifest in the human world through Ma’s sacred art. Ma says she paints “like a child,” with great simplicity. She intends for her art to flow into the hearts of her students.<sup>21</sup> Ma expresses her spirituality and beliefs visually through her art in unmitigated form.<sup>22</sup>

Puja (ritual worship) accompanies each painting. The artistic media often include Ganga water and vibhuti (sacred ash). In a broader sense, puja is a passionate, joyous festival of life and death. Ma describes it as “the deepest celebration of the moment.” For Ma, the act of painting is worship.<sup>23</sup> Other Hindu artists share a similar understanding.<sup>24</sup> Reflecting the Hindu tradition, Ma brings her sacred images to life. At the simplest level, even a devoted prayer before an image gives it life.<sup>25</sup> Each series and sometimes each painting represent a teaching that Ma explains. As murtis (sacred images) infused with symbolic spiritual meaning, the paintings continue to provide darshan (spiritual teaching).

Ma offers her art as darshan. Her art is a spiritual practice for her students, but it is not art therapy in the traditional sense.<sup>26</sup> Instead of painting as therapy, Ma’s students use her art as a meditation tool. Ma advocates meditating or focusing on the art with a religious intensity. The art becomes a medium of transcendent rapture that Ma calls a “moment of stillness, where longing and fulfillment are one.”<sup>27</sup> It feels “like making love” when the devotees realize that they are not alone.<sup>28</sup> They experience the love of God through the art.<sup>29</sup> Ma teaches through the paintings, without words, according to her students: “Ma can see who you are, underneath who you present in the world.”<sup>30</sup> The essence of the paintings emerges from the silence. The viewer does not have to figure the paintings out, because whatever meaning comes from within. The paintings are alive, not just works of art. Similarly, Hindus temple images are brought to life during their consecration rites. Viewers should contemplatively concentrate on the paintings. This makes a deeper spiritual connection possible.<sup>31</sup>



### **Art Benefiting AIDS**

There is a service dimension to Ma's artwork. Proceeds from eight of her exhibits have benefited AIDS service organizations in the United States and Europe.<sup>32</sup> In presenting the paintings, Ma did not establish a direct link between the art and AIDS, but she did encourage people to help those who suffer. In this sense, the paintings do inspire service.

Some of the benefits supported infants with AIDS. In one of her opening speeches, Ma explains a suffering baby is beyond human comprehension. The plight of the babies evokes humility from her: "to be able to serve these babies, to feed, to touch, to hold in my arms close to my breast" is the greatest honor. She wants people to care for them. People should accept the babies as they are, and not neglect them or anyone with HIV or AIDS. Everyone needs to touch and hold the sick to comfort them.<sup>33</sup>

Another form of service that Ma's art provides is healing. All of Ma's art promotes health and healing indirectly. Art has an inherent capacity to heal by "reach[ing] into the imaginal depths of the soul," according to art therapist Shaun McNiff.<sup>34</sup> Art, after all, is the creative product of the soul. Ma's paintings are not just works of art that someone would randomly buy. Ma usually paints for someone. Each painting has a specific purpose. Each person is unique before Ma. She treats each person as an individual. In a painting, Ma addresses the needs of the person, including their health issues. Ma "may tell you what you need to heal yourself." Whether the person is HIV+, has cancer, or suffers from arthritis, Ma will give her or him the shakti "juice" to go on and live.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Ma benefits the world by capturing even the simplest "act

of kindness or act of love” in a creative work.<sup>36</sup> There is a vicarious quality because a sacred image can inspire goodness in others.

### **HIV/AIDS Art**

Ma paints in thematic series. There are five series of paintings that have a direct impact on HIV/AIDS. These are the *Shakti Sanchara River Paintings*, the *4 by 4 River Paintings*, the *Ancient Mother* series, the *Linga Ma* series, and the *Painted Kali Readings*. After a general artistic introduction to Ma’s visual work, this section will interpret these paintings.

The California-based art critic Suzanne Duca has interpreted Ma as an “untrained” artist who is an “outsider” to the art world. She categorizes Ma’s art as “naïve.”<sup>37</sup> Ma’s paintings emphasize the two dimensional plane of the canvas. They rely heavily on “high simplified images” that rest on that plane, per Duca. This “simplified” content is nonetheless highly symbolic. Ma uses frontal views and outlines of shapes in painting the contents. She prefers vivid colors and contrasts. She frequently paints with broad, animated strokes. Some of her work has abstract tendencies. Duca describes her art as “fresh,” “sensuous,” and “mystical.”<sup>38</sup> It combines Hindu mythology with personal experience and emotion that reveals her spirituality.<sup>39</sup> Some of Ma’s paintings include multiple narrative perspectives, depicting various parts of a story or theme simultaneously in different sections of the canvas. The current curator for Ma’s art, Swami Ramayana Baba describes this feature as “figurative/expressionist.”<sup>40</sup> It uses figures to convey the sense of form, but the form often verges on the abstract. The contrast between form and abstract corresponds to the Hindu duality of God both as the

formless absolute and God embodied in form. Ma's designs have a bold expressiveness to them that attracts the attention of the viewer to significant details. Overall, her art invites contemplation. It contributes Hindu imagery to the Goddess Spirituality movement.<sup>41</sup>

Over the years, it has increased in sophistication and developed abstract forms.<sup>42</sup>

Ma's art typically maintains an exterior focus on the viewer. The various parts of the contents face the viewer standing in front of the painting. This organization accounts for the two-dimensional perspective that provides a flattened, frontal view that Duca has noted.<sup>43</sup> The painted elements provide darshan in the traditional Hindu sense of the word by giving a vision of the divine to behold. They have religious and didactic purposes.

One detailed example will clarify this point. In many of the paintings, the goddess dances on the banks of the river, with her back to the river, because she faces the viewer.

Although she celebrates at the river, she does not look at it. Instead, she looks at person gazing at the painting. She, therefore, gives darshan.

#### *Shakti Sanchara River Painting*

Ma's most productive theme has become the River Series with all of its variations. In Hinduism, the Ganga River has deep religious dimensions without easy explanation. It flows from the heavens to the earth. It gives life, nourishes it, and receives the dead. It also washes away sins. It represents physical and spiritual renewal, as well as moksha after death. As mentioned, Kashi Ashram has a Ganga Pond with the ashes of thousands who have died, mostly from AIDS. In place of the physical devotion that Hindus express to the river in India, Ma offers her artistic representations of the river for devotion and meditation. In this sense, India's most holy river flows, in iconographic

form, across Ma's canvases. Ma prayerfully washes the canvases of her paintings with Ganga water, before beginning to paint.<sup>44</sup> She acknowledges that the river takes on form and simultaneously presents the abstract.<sup>45</sup>

Ma painted a variant series of the River Paintings, called the *Shakti Sanchara River Painting* from 2000 to 2002 (see figure 3).<sup>46</sup> "Shakti Sanchara" is the transmission of spiritual energy from guru to disciple in Hinduism. It is a rare form of profound blessing. Ma personalized the River painting for an individual, based on that person's Hindu astrological reading.<sup>47</sup> She dictated an original explanation to accompany each painting, describing the elements in it. For people living with HIV/AIDS, Ma provided personalized instruction and suggestions for maintaining their health. These descriptions provide a wealth of information for interpreting the content of Ma's art. The compact size of the paintings (14" x 18") makes them ideal for personal meditation and reflection.

The paintings show the flowing Ganga River with plants, houses, and temples on its shores. Duca notes how Ma contrasts sharp colors and uses thick strokes to depict scenes from the edge of the river.<sup>48</sup> A few objects appear on the banks. In the foreground, Kali dances next to her khuti (hut) that has temple bells hanging from the roof. Hindus ring a bell as they enter temples. The tree of life, ripe with fruits of spiritual knowledge, and jungle foliage grow on the shore. Nagas zigzag across the painting. In Sanskrit, nagas are snakes, often cobras. In contrast to western religious associations with serpents, nagas are sacred and they grant blessing. By the shedding of their skin, they represent the detaching of the ego and the renewal of life. They are sacred in Hinduism. In Ma's

version, these snakes represent kundalini, the spiritual energy found in the body. They offer protection.

The flowing river of life divides the painting. On the opposite shore, ghats (steps) lead into the river for bathing. Hindus bathe in the river to worship God and wash away their sins. A dhuni (fire altar) burns with a Hindu ritual flame. At Kashi as in Hinduism, devotees offer rice with their prayers in the dhuni. It is a physical form of supplication. Ma's guru Baba has a prominent khuti with temple bells. A Shiva lingam is enshrined next to it. An oval-shaped, erect, cylindrical, aniconic stone represents the god Shiva and God as formless abstract.<sup>49</sup> Shiva's symbol the trident decorates the lingam as well as the khutis. Sometimes the body of the goddess Kali forms a trident herself. In the far background, a sun shines in the sky, or a moon and stars illuminate the night. Birds, representing moksha (liberation), fly through the sky.

#### *4 by 4 River Painting*

Starting in 1999, River paintings became much larger, measuring 4 by 4 feet.<sup>50</sup> These large works include the same elements as previously, but often contain more of them, many on a grander scale. The enlarged sizes fill the dimensions of the canvas. They are rich in detail. Many goddesses, gods, and their various symbols appear. Ma comments that the elements have transformed the river from tranquility to vibrancy. The paintings tell the spiritual story of those who seek "God in all forms."<sup>51</sup> The impressive size makes a monumental impact on the viewer.

Ma painted several *4 by 4 River Paintings* for the River Fund and the River House. One will be interpreted (see figure 4). The buildings and the temples have labels,

unlike other similar paintings. Each specifically blesses the River Fund in someone's name. For example, Kali's khuti reads "Ma's River Fund." Similar labels appear on Baba's khuti, the Shiva lingam, and the dhuni. They invoke Ma's two beloved deities Kali and Shiva, two principle teachers Swami Nityananda and Shirdi Sai Baba, and her guru Neem Karoli Baba. The repetition seeks to shower blessings on the work of the River Fund.

The dominant colors of this painting are red and black. There are the colors of the goddess Kali, whose image is noticeably absent from the painting. Her nagas and colors represent her symbolically. Red is also the color of AIDS ribbons and blood. The Ganga River is painted black. It flows filled with the ashes of all who have died of HIV/AIDS. The blackness of the goddess absorbs all the darkness and evil of the world. The sky is orange, the Hindu color of renunciation. A golden red sun shines in the sky. Golden red foliage grows along the river. Gold is Kali's hidden, interior color that she reveals in her universal form. The color represents hope. The tree of life has many ripe, red fruits, ready to be plucked or to fall to the ground. These offer nourishment to people living with HIV/AIDS. The largeness of the contents, the brilliant colors, and the exuberance of the style all signify abundance.

### *Ancient Mother*

Ma created several relatively abstract series of paintings that portrayed various aspects of the divine mother in the 1990s. Most of them focused on symbolic, iconographic, or aniconic depictions of Hindu goddesses. Many are painted in a symbolic or outline form. The representational imagery emphasizes the head, hair, and usually the

breasts of the divine mother. She is very important to Ma, because she represents both the concreteness of daily life and “the Void, the nothingness beyond it all.”<sup>52</sup> In other words, there is always something more to life beyond human perception. She concerns herself with humanity’s needs.<sup>53</sup> Her immanence, presence, and consciousness in each individual and in each moment of the day make her so important.

The *Ancient Mother* series from 1994-95<sup>54</sup> focuses the image of the divine mother goddess on a single symbol (see figure 5). In this case, the face of the goddess appears as a pillar, i.e., a Shiva lingam, although Ma does not identify it as such. A broad black uncapped lingam column forms the face of the mother. Similarly, a lingam sometimes depicts the face of Shiva in Hindu iconography, as at Kashi Ashram (see figure 6). This goddess has a “tremendous amount of volume” requiring “enormous amounts of paint,” according to Ma’s description. The dept of the paint is palpable on the canvas. Per Ma, the blackness reflects the entire universe.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the huge 4’ by 4’ size of the image overwhelms the viewer with the divine face. Hindu temples often enshrine super-human-sized murtis of the gods for the same purpose.

As seen in several examples, black is an important primary color in Ma’s work. The blackness of Kali teaches the devotee “to devour all that is put in [his/her] way towards liberation, towards service, to become a free person...”<sup>56</sup> The darkness of the goddess can overcome all problems. The color black, being the absolute color of divinity, offers comfort to a troubled world: “If I, the Mother, love the dark of night, then even in your darkest hours, all is right.”<sup>57</sup> Black is a color of safety and protection because it is the color of the divine mother in her most fierce form.

The goddess has only two thick strands of hair that form the outer outline of her hairstyle. She bears a triple line on her forehead, the sectarian Shiva marking. She has a small hollow circle for her third eye. This is the spiritual center of the body in Hinduism. Her broad two oval eyes extend beyond the edges of her otherwise featureless face. They are orange—the color of renunciation—with red pupils. They gaze intensely, appearing angry. She has a simple nose and a red outline for her opened mouth. The absence of breasts notably diverges from Ma's typical artistic practice that emphasizes breasts. Some of the *Ancient Mother* paintings are even more abstract than the present example.

For the *Ancient Mother* paintings, Ma would first wash the canvas with color to create a background of abstract, flowing streams. These strongly resemble Ma's highly abstract Creation Series, not discussed in this project.<sup>58</sup> This creates the effect that the Ancient Mother emerges with form from the formless flow of creation. As in the examples provided, the background paint sometimes splashes on the head of the Ancient Mother, as if someone were performing abishekam (libations) on her. It is the Hindu ritual of pouring milk and other liquids onto the Shiva lingam. Ma used to perform this liturgy at Kashi.<sup>59</sup>

Ma explains the *Ancient Mother* is two forms of the Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist goddess Tara: the Tara of the Manikarnika Ghat on the Ganga River and the Black Tara. The former takes the souls of the dead across, and the later receives the ashes of dead as they are scattered in the sacred river.<sup>60</sup> This is the Hindu custom. At Kashi, the ashes are poured into the Ganga Pond. Crossing the river is a religious symbol of both heavenly rest (between lifetimes) and liberation (from the body). It represents transition from one



life to the next. It also signifies the merger of the individual human life with the universal divine consciousness. In “I, The Mother,” a meditative poem, Ma writes about the Ganga, receiving the dead:

It is the Ganga who receives them.  
It is the Ganga who cools their heated souls.  
It is the Ganga who makes them whole.  
And when the look for scarred bodies wasted in their youth, all they see is  
God’s reflection on the waiting waters.<sup>61</sup>

The verses offer comfort to a moment of grief with the promise of bliss in God and reincarnation. In this association of the river as goddesses with death, Duca connects Ma’s art to her dedicated care for people with AIDS.<sup>62</sup>

### *Linga Ma*

A second divine mother sub-series offers a different association with HIV/AIDS. The *Linga Ma* paintings from 1995-96<sup>63</sup> are very simple and yet sophisticated (see figure 7). They are likewise huge, 4’ by 4’, impressing the divine image on the beholder. The canvas frames a great, central, black, oval-capped rectangle that has two plain eyes and a mouth. The unicolor eyes are horizontal ovals, extending from the side of the head. The mouth frowns in sadness, revealing a few white teeth. A narrow black band emanates upwards from the center of the face, continuing off the upper edge of the canvas. This nose is reminiscent of a thin lingam.

The *Linga Ma* has a specific connection to HIV/AIDS.<sup>64</sup> She is “so strong in this time of AIDS, this time of suffering,” in the face of so much pain and death.<sup>65</sup> This pillar of strength inspires others. The goddess has this power because she is both man and woman, both love and thought, both human and divine. She is androgynous: the male

lingam becomes the mother to bear the suffering of humanity. This reflects the Hindu belief that the soul and God has no gender, but both manifest in gendered form. Jung called these psychological archetypes the animus and the anima. The goddess carries and buries the dead while caressing the living. She taps into all her resources, becoming the universal fullness. She takes the suffering of humanity to the lingam, symbolically offering it and releasing it to God.

### *Painted Kali Reading*

A unique form of darshan that Ma offers is a *Painted Kali Reading*, started in 1990 (see figure 8).<sup>66</sup> It began in Los Angeles, during darshan to people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>67</sup> Like the Shakti Sanchara paintings, it exclusively focuses on the individual in a highly personal way. It is deeper, though, because it is an individual dialog between the supplicant and Ma during the intimacy of darshan. The aspirant experiences a personal moment of darshan with Ma. She guides the individual in finding answers to her or his profound spiritual and life questions. She addresses HIV/AIDS issues directly.

During the readings, Ma talks to people about their problems, embracing them in her arms. She manages to free them of their pain with her love that “wip[es] out anything and everything that had gone before,” attests even the skeptical Buddhist observer Loinette Lippe.<sup>68</sup> Ma has a charisma to help people release their sorrow and find freedom. Lippe compared Ma, in this respect, to Emma Lazarus’s words: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”<sup>69</sup> She comments that the churches would be full if clergy had Ma’s charisma to give their congregants the attention that Ma gives her visitors and students.<sup>70</sup>

Ma engages the supplicant in a personal conversation during darshan as she paints a Kali image for her or him. Sometimes the image is Tara, and rarely is it Shiva. The resulting image is a personal murti (sacred image) for prayer, meditation, and other devotion. Like a sthaphathi (sculptor) who pierces the eyes of a murti during its consecration, Ma finishes the image by filling its eyes with thick pools of paint. She raises the image for all to behold. The paint flows down in streams of tears. As mentioned, God sheds tears for humanity. Many gurus have some sort of spiritual contrivance that they use in their teaching to help their students learn. For Ma, it is the painted Kali readings.

Ma's paintings speak to the human condition, evoking health and healing in a holistic sense. This chapter examined how Ma's art contributes to modern Hindu religious art. It examined her and her students' spiritual practices associated with her art. It reviewed how her art has served HIV/AIDS, in terms of financial benefits and less tangible healing. It finally focused on five series of Ma's paintings that have responded to the AIDS: the *Shakti Sanchara River Painting*, the *4 by 4 River Painting*, the *Ancient Mother*, the *Linga Ma*, and the *Painted Kali Reading* series. Of all Ma's art, the *Linga Ma* is the specific form of the mother who has the strength to face HIV/AIDS. Each series reflects an important strand of Ma's religious thought in visual form.

## Illustrations



Ma Jaya

*The River*

2 Poster of Ma's painting *The River*.<sup>71</sup>



3 From Ma's *Shakti Sanchara River Painting* series.<sup>72</sup>



4 From Ma's 4x4 River Painting series.<sup>73</sup>

5 From Ma's Ancient Mother series.



6 The Shiva Lingam, with Shiva's face, at Kashi Ashram.<sup>75</sup>



5 From Ma's *Ancient Mother* series.<sup>74</sup>



6 The Shiva Lingam, with Shiva's face, at Kashi Ashram.<sup>75</sup>



7 From Ma's *Linga Ma* series.<sup>76</sup>





8 From Ma's *Painted Kali Reading* series.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>71</sup> James C. Bae, "Introduction: The Spirit of Art," in *In a World of Gods and Goddesses: The Mystic Art of Indra Sharma* (San Rafael, CA: Mandala, 2001), 10-11.

<sup>72</sup> Elkins, 122.

<sup>73</sup> Bae, 10-11.

<sup>74</sup> Karen Stone, *Image and Spirit: Finding Meaning in Visual Art* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2003), 58.

<sup>75</sup> Bae, 10-11.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Stone, xiv.

---

<sup>1</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, ed., "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," ([n. d.]), [38].

<sup>2</sup> Sternberg and Williams, 126-27.

<sup>3</sup> Fortunato, 8.

<sup>44</sup> David N. Elkins, *Beyond Religion: A Personal Program for Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Traditional Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1998), 132, 138.

<sup>5</sup> Radha Louise, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Suzanne Duca, "Ma Jaya," *Visions*, Summer 1994, 41.

<sup>7</sup> ed. Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," (n. d.), [34].

<sup>8</sup> Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art, Art & Ideas* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 420-423.

<sup>9</sup> George Michell, *Hindu Art and Architecture, World of Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 211.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>11</sup> James C. Bae, "Introduction: The Spirit of Art," in *In a World of Gods and Goddesses: The Mystic Art of Indra Sharma* (San Rafael, CA: Mandala, 2001), 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> Elkins, 122.

<sup>13</sup> Bae, 10-11.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Stone, *Image and Spirit: Finding Meaning in Visual Art* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2003), 58.

<sup>15</sup> Bae, 10-11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Stone, xiv.

<sup>19</sup> Duca, 41.

<sup>20</sup> *The Sacred in Art [Exhibit Catalog]*, (Chicago: 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993), [3].

<sup>21</sup> Salvatore Conti, "Ma Jaya: The River Series," ([Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.]), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Duca, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], "The Ancient Mother," ed. Salvatore Conti ([Sebastian, FL]: Kashi Foundation, 1993), [1-2].

<sup>24</sup> Bae, 10.

<sup>25</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], [2].

<sup>26</sup> Kristen L. Mauk and Nola K. Schmidt, *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 2004), 258-59.

<sup>27</sup> Conti, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], [1-2].

<sup>30</sup> Louise,

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Mario Bigetti and Salvatore Conti, eds., *Ma Jaya: Antica Madre, Oceano Di Latte* (Roma: A.C.O.R., 1993), 8, Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," 34.

<sup>33</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], *A Message from Ma Jaya About Babies with AIDS for Those Attending The "Dessine-Moi Un Mouyton" Benefit Show in Paris* ([Sebastian, FL]: [River Fund], 1991).

<sup>34</sup> Elkins, 132.

<sup>35</sup> Louise,

<sup>36</sup> *The Sacred in Art [Exhibit Catalog]*, [3].

<sup>37</sup> Duca, 39.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," [35].

<sup>41</sup> Duca, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>44</sup> Ma explains this in darshan.

<sup>45</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], "Mother Ganga Series," ed. Salvatore Conti ([Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.]), 1.

<sup>46</sup> 18" x 14", acrylic on canvas. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Shakti Sanchara River Painting: My Rudra Painting*, 2000?, Sebastian, FL, Swami Ramayana Baba, Interview by Author, 4 April 2006.

<sup>47</sup> "Shakti Sanchara River Painting [Brochure]," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Sacred Art, 2000?).

<sup>48</sup> Duca, 39.

<sup>49</sup> Wendy Doniger, *Hindu Myths* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1994), 137, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 819-20.

<sup>50</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," [6].

<sup>51</sup> Ibid , [5].

<sup>52</sup> Emphasis in original. Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*.

<sup>53</sup> Dubitsky, 15.

<sup>54</sup> Acrylic on canvas, 4'x4'. Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," [12].

<sup>55</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], "The Ancient Mother," [1].

<sup>56</sup> [Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati], "Kashi Lineage Series," ([Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n. d.]), [1].

<sup>57</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> The series was Ma's first art for public viewing, begun in 1986. Swami Ramayana Baba, Interview by Author

<sup>59</sup> I have seen a photo of the ritual at Kashi.

<sup>60</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], "The Ancient Mother," [1].

<sup>61</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Duca, 41.

<sup>63</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)," [10].

<sup>64</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, Interview, Interview, Sebastian, FL, 25 March 2005.

<sup>65</sup> Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati], "Linga Ma," ([Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.]), [1].

<sup>66</sup> Swami Ramayana Baba, Interview by Author

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Lippe, 8.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>71</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *The River*, print, 21" x 28", 1994, Kashi Church Foundation, Sebastian, FL. Used with permission.

<sup>72</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Shakti Sanchara River Painting: My Rudra*, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 14", 2000, Rudra Dundzila collection, Chicago, IL.

<sup>73</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *4x4 River Painting: The River Fund*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48" ca. 2000-1, The River Fund, Sebastian, FL. Used with permission.

<sup>74</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Ancient Mother*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48" ca. 1994-95, Kashi Sacred Art, Sebastian, FL. Used with permission.

<sup>75</sup> Used with permission.

<sup>76</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Linga Ma*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48", ca. 1995-96, Kashi Sacred Art, Sebastian, FL. Used with permission.

<sup>77</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Painted Kali Reading*, #722, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 14", ca. 2000, Rudra Dundzila collection, Chicago, IL.

## CHAPTER 5

### MA'S KINESTHETIC TEACHING: BREATH, MEDITATION, AND YOGA

The music of the soul is cool and fragrant, and you can wear the sounds and notes  
on your being as you become who you are.

Ma<sup>1</sup>

The basic kinesthetic forms of Ma's spiritual teaching include breathing, meditation, and Kali Natha Yoga. She frequently emphasizes the three. Unlike in some variants of Hinduism, the three do not constitute the superior forms of spiritual practices. For Ma and her students, they provide spiritual, mental, and physical preparation for the most important spiritual act, seva (service). They develop breath control, clarity of focus, and physical well-being. These skills especially benefit people living with HIV/AIDS, because they provide psycho-physiological means for self-regulation.

The physical exercises discussed in this chapter are hands-on forms of Ma's teaching. They are an embodied form of spirituality, intrinsic to the core of Hinduism. They are whole-body spiritual practices. Individuals with bodily-kinesthetic learning styles have a proclivity for touching and doing.<sup>2</sup> They perform best using their bodies. The body is their primary organ of perception. Active personality types will appreciate the physical dynamics involved in the exercises, although developing concentration may challenge them. People who prefer contemplation, on the other hand, should enjoy the intense focus the exercises require, as they develop body-based spiritual experiences. It is noteworthy that western approaches to body-spirituality tend to focus on sexuality, not on

the eastern associations of the body with yoga and meditation.<sup>3</sup> Western religion generally does not have a tradition of body-based spiritual practices that exercise and develop the body. Instead, the West has emphasized the denial of the body in religious spiritual acts of self-mortification. The sources for this chapter come from Ma's darshans, interviews, and several publications.

### **The Breath**

Pranayama (breath control) is an elemental spiritual exercise in Ma's teaching. It is the fourth of the traditional eight limbs of Yoga, according to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, the theoretical scripture that codified Yoga.<sup>4</sup> The practice of breathing with awareness eventually leads to the capability of breath control.<sup>5</sup> An uncontrolled breath has no focus and is subject to rampant emotions.<sup>6</sup> Awareness of the breath develops consciousness of one's own existence.<sup>7</sup> It is an emergent property that is greater<sup>7</sup> than the simple knowledge of the breath because it brings about a transcendental awareness of the individual. For Ma, the breath brings ecstasy. It centers the individual, because no one can draw breath from the past or for the future. The breath only exists in the present moment.<sup>8</sup> The breath is the great equalizer of humanity.<sup>9</sup> Fortunato notes the focus on awareness of the present moment contradicts the emphasis on activity.<sup>10</sup>

Watching the breath come in and out with awareness is Ma's basic form of meditation: the same breath is the breath of God and the experience of love.<sup>11</sup> The depth of the breath leads to the heart where the spiritual aspirant can find both God and the inner guru.<sup>12</sup> The "breath becomes something wonderful" to the practitioner.<sup>13</sup> The reason is simple: people can participate in their own breath, enjoy it, and gain the benefits from



it. Following the breath is a meditation. Ma encourages her students to take a few minutes of times each morning and evening for conscious breathing.

Ma first started pranayama (the yogic breathing exercises) to lose weight. After she married Salvatore DiFiore at 15, she gained weight over the years. Once, her husband asked her to eat a little less.<sup>14</sup> She was about 32 years old and weighed 275 pounds. Diets had failed her. She went to Jack LaLanne's health club for five-minute yogic breathing techniques to lose weight. She thought if a few minutes will make her lose a little weight, many hours would help her lose lots of weight. She practiced pranayama intensely for long stretches of time.<sup>15</sup> Her students fondly recall that she likes to "always overdo everything."<sup>16</sup> This led her to a series of spiritual awakenings, described earlier.

The breath teaches awareness. Ma calls awareness "bearing witness."<sup>17</sup> Paying attention to the one's own breathing develops higher consciousness and an inner depth.<sup>18</sup> Awareness is the salvation that the world gone mad currently needs.<sup>19</sup> Ma tells a Buddhist story about monks living their mundane lives just like everyone else. Unlike the rest of humanity, they lived with awareness because they followed their breath.<sup>20</sup> Their lives were filled with passion and compassion. Ma's student Jaya Devi Bhagavati explains that following the breath keeps the individual in absolute presence and awareness. The person moves with the breath from one moment to the next, without falling back into the past or racing ahead into the future.<sup>21</sup> Pure awareness, as opposed to "mind content," is a fundamental objective of mediation (although Ma discusses it in conjunction with intentional breathing), according to psychiatrist Arthur Deikman who has studied the medical and psychological benefits of mediation.<sup>22</sup> Such awareness is important to people

with HIV/AIDS because it helps them stay centered. Ma's teaching on awareness corresponds to the Hindu tradition of meditation that seeks to purify consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

The practice that Ma teaches sounds simple and easy: breathing in, be aware of the inward breath; breathing out, be aware of the outward breath.<sup>24</sup> In reality, maintaining the focus on the breath is a challenge because the mind wanders easily. Ma offers the English mantra "not now" to counter distraction.<sup>25</sup> The exercise essentially focuses the mind on the breath, using the breath like a metronome that serves as a reminder as it ticks. Many Eastern meditation techniques begin with simple breathing exercises, while some consistently maintain a focus on the breath. Deikman classifies the world's models of mediation into two complementary systems: concentration and mindfulness.<sup>26</sup> Ma's system represents the school of concentration because it maintains a focus on an object of meditation, typically the breath (or the chakras, as we shall later see).

Ma teaches that the breath can consume fear, anger, and anything else that life offers as a challenge. This includes the negative emotions that people with HIV/AIDS experience. The receptive ability to release oneself from attachment is one of the proven benefits of mediation.<sup>27</sup> Fortunato cites the adage, "power is in the yielding," to describe this phenomenon.<sup>28</sup> To explain this capacity, Ma reiterates a Hindu teaching that the body is a furnace. It can use everything in life as fuel. The challenge is to consume life instead of life consuming the individual.<sup>29</sup> Again, Ma uses the pervasive image of eating, discussed earlier. It teaches her students to be active participants in a spiritual life dedicated to the world. The same breath that can control the painful emotions can also be used to develop such virtues as compassion.<sup>30</sup> It can "absorb" the world with all its

challenges.<sup>31</sup> Reminiscent of Tibetan Tonglen practice that is part of the Kashi tradition, Ma teaches to breathe in all the “hate and darkness” and to breathe out “love to everyone.”<sup>32</sup> She gives the specific example of jealousy and envy: they can kill a person “worse than AIDS.”<sup>33</sup> The ego generates these emotions to protect itself, but such emotions destroy the quality of life. Fear is another powerful, limiting emotion that stems from the ego. “Fear of rejection, fear of love, fear of God” all block human potential. Ma says to burn these as fuel for the journey of life.<sup>34</sup> This capability is especially important for people with HIV/AIDS, because it helps them cope with the challenges they experience in life.

For health gains, Ma advocates Kapalabhati breathing, the breath of fire. It cleanses, boosts immunity, and assuages stress.<sup>35</sup> This breath is a traditional breathing technique of Yoga, well suited to HIV/AIDS. The pandemic has a very high level of associated psycho-social stress factors that include homophobia, AIDS hysteria, debilitating disease, terminal illness, facing death, and other issues.<sup>36</sup> In the fire breath, the individual sits in a simple cross-legged yoga posture. The breath begins with a normal inhalation, followed by an uninterrupted series of quick, short, powerful, forced exhalations. The inhalation reflex quickly follows each exhalation. Each cycle lasts about one second. The breath is exhausted after about 30 seconds to a minute.<sup>37</sup> After a pause with normal breathing, the practitioner can repeat the procedure.

### **Meditation**

Following the breath is the basis for Ma’s meditation technique. Ma explains meditation teaches silence, “which has no face or religion and has all the faces of all the

religions.”<sup>38</sup> This is a mystical teaching. In other words, anyone can meditate, regardless of religion. The most basic form of meditation that Ma offers is sitting and centering in silence for 5 minutes. The meditation simply focuses on the breath, nothing else: The point is not to fight or control the mind, but to ignore it. The mind is nothing more than a rushing flow of ideas. Ma’s solution to the troublesome current of thoughts is the challenge of letting the heart “take over the mind.”<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, the purpose of meditation is the spiritual goal of ego-death, as Ma explains: “Meditation is all about learning how to die—and your ego does not want to die.”<sup>40</sup> Meditation detaches the individual from the selfish trappings of the ego, making it easier for the person to experience spiritual clarity and insight.

Religious imagery commonly accompanies Ma’s breath meditations. Her booklet *Breathe and Dance with the Gods* is a poetic meditation on the breath.<sup>41</sup> It begins with simple awareness of the breath, the body, and of life. It includes teachings on the breath from her guru Baba. It progresses through a series of spiritual aphorisms, each linked to the rising and falling of the breath. The reader reads a line with an inhalation, and the paired concluding line with an exhalation. The book finishes with an infusion of the emotional traits needed to live a good life: joy, kindness, and compassion. The breath becomes the vehicle for living a life dedicated to HIV/AIDS spiritual activism and to “every human heart.” The breath meditation closes with Baba’s teaching to “Breathe in and feed everyone,” and to “Breathe out and feed everyone.”<sup>42</sup>

A more complex form of Ma’s meditation focuses on the chakras. In guided meditation, Ma uses the breath to lead people through the seven chakras. Breath and

awareness become synonymous when she leads meditation.<sup>43</sup> The individual follows Ma's voice and instructions. The focus is dual: on the breath and on Ma's words about the breath. Ma uses the human body, specifically the major chakras, as the guide in this technique.

In Hinduism, the chakras are the seven main subtle energy centers of the human body, found along the spine. In scientific terms, they are the nerve ganglia in the spinal cord. The seven centers are the following: base of the spine, below the navel, solar plexus, heart center, throat, third eye, and crown of the head.<sup>44</sup> In order, they represent basic human needs, sexuality and creativity, physical power, passion and forgiveness, speech and truth, spiritual wisdom, and the connection to the divine or enlightenment. The divine resides in the heart and the third eye, in addition to the top of the head. The top chakra also represents peace, healing, and silence. Various lotus flower arrangements depict each center symbolically. A seed mantra (harmonic sound), a color, and a letter of the Sanskrit alphabet are associated with each one as well.<sup>45</sup> Some people find the details of this esoteric system puzzling. The chakras are bodily focal points with spiritual connotations. They are vaguely reminiscent of the western seven corporal works of mercy or its negative, the seven deadly sins. The system serves as a daily physical reminder of spiritual virtues.

In meditation, Ma uniquely describes each of the chakras. She instructs her audience to breathe in and out at each chakra, as she vividly portrays the chakra. The meditation goes up through all the chakras, and then comes back down, typically focusing on the spiritual center of the third eye and the love-filled heart, where the

meditation ends.<sup>46</sup> At the top of the head, the human spirit meets with the divine spirit, by whatever vocabulary the aspirant calls it.<sup>47</sup> Sometimes, the meditation goes over the head to higher chakras above the physical body. Following the chakras produces a partial body-scan, a meditation that progressively concentrates on each part of the body.<sup>48</sup> It focuses on points of the body that are normally outside daily consciousness. The symbolic association with each chakra helps develop spiritual virtues for the practitioner by highlighting them in meditation.

Under Ma's guidance, chakra meditation seeks to raise Kundalini energy. This spiritual energy rests at the base of the spine. Hinduism associates it with feminine divine energy. It represents the spiritual energy present in the body. It seeks to connect with the divine energy in the universe. It reflects the macrocosm of the universe in the microcosm of the body. The progression of Kundalini through the seven spiritual centers of the body addresses the various goals of a spiritual life: grounding, creativity, energy, love, right speech, clear vision, and the connection to the divine. It rises through the chakras to unite with divine power coming from the heavens at the top of the head. Iconographically, Kundalini appears as a coiled serpent that ascends from the base of the spine to the top of the head.<sup>49</sup> The connection between the human and divine at the crown represents the mystical union with God, as taught in Hindu Tantra. At the crown, amrit (the sacred nectar of the gods) flows down, bringing healing and nourishment to the body.<sup>50</sup> Ma's guided meditations usually last about 20-40 minutes. Ma's teaching accurately represents the Hindu tradition of Tantra and Kundalini, without any of the Western misinterpretation or sexualization of it.<sup>51</sup>

At the top of the head in guided meditation, Ma often instructs her audience to induce self-healing: “Heal, I say, heal!” She wants her students to place themselves in a sense of holistic wellness, out of which the body, psyche, and spirit can find healing. For people with HIV/AIDS, this brings about a self-empowerment that strengthens the body’s own healing capacity with a positive attitude. Ma invokes healing with the phrase “split the tension.”<sup>52</sup> It is a tool for facing and relieving stress. As in traditional Hindu healing rituals, Ma takes this moment to infuse divine healing power.<sup>53</sup> In Hinduism, part of the role of Guru is spiritual healer who, by the grace of God, can invoke physical health.<sup>54</sup> Research has proven that meditation can enhance healing and wellness.<sup>55</sup>

Ma’s student Jaya Devi Bhagavati provides a simplified form of Ma’s meditation for the public. She focuses on the chakras, breathing into each one progressively, while maintaining awareness of the breath and the chakra. She focuses on the symbolic meaning of each chakra. After a few breaths on one chakra, she proceeds to the next one. From the top of the head, she returns to the third eye and the heart. In her technique, she inhales on one chakra and then exhales on the next one. Healing comes as the silent stillness of God at the top of the head.<sup>56</sup>

### **Kali Natha Yoga**

The practices of attentive breathing and meditation contribute to Kali Natha Yoga. In traditional Hindu yoga, postures, breathing, and meditation are merely steps on a continuum of practice.<sup>57</sup> Ma’s teaching maintains a similar progression. Ma began to teach yoga in her backyard in Brooklyn, in 1974.<sup>58</sup> Yoga Acharya Laxman Das translates the Sanskrit title of “Kali Natha Yoga” into English as, “The Yoga of One Who Worships

the Divine Mother Kali.”<sup>59</sup> Ma created this form of yoga. It is a spiritual yoga. It combines prayer and worship for the monistic purpose of oneness.<sup>60</sup> The essence of this Yoga is a moving prayer. It is a puja (worship). It recognizes the body as a temple. Its postures come from a series of movements in long, ancient dances, according to Yoga instructor Swami Himalaya.<sup>61</sup> The Yoga unites the devotion to Kali with the ancient Natha lineage of yogis. In other words, it feminizes a masculine yogic tradition.<sup>62</sup> It releases Shakti, the power of love.<sup>63</sup> It evokes the feminine qualities of “receptivity and compassion.”<sup>64</sup> Adept yoga practitioners describe it as a “graceful and fluid style of yoga.”<sup>65</sup>

Kali is the Hindu divine mother who relieves humans of pain and suffering, as discussed previously. The Nathas are a teaching lineage, conveyed by men and women, whereas most traditional schools pass their teachings only through men, according to yoga instructor Swami Himalaya.<sup>66</sup> The Hindu-Buddhist Natha sect emerged within Tantrism during the 9<sup>th</sup> century and codified the physical practice of yoga along the lines of self-discovery and self-knowledge. Their system is called Natha Yoga, referring to its combination of Kundalini, based in Tantra, with Hatha Yoga, the posture-based system defined by Patanjali.<sup>67</sup>

Ma’s Yoga combines traditional components of yoga, such a breathing techniques, postures, and meditation, with mantras (sacred prayer formulas) and mudras (hand positions). Its benefits include the traditional corporeal gains of any physical exercise or yoga practice, as well as spiritual development.<sup>68</sup> The health benefits of Kali Natha Yoga are the same as with other forms of yoga.<sup>69</sup> In particular, yoga balances and



distributes the medicines in the body, and releases toxins. It boosts the immune system by controlling the breath, calming the mind, and empowering the individual.<sup>70</sup> Yoga, in general, provides scientifically documented health benefits.<sup>71</sup> To these ends, the Atlanta Ashram holds yoga classes for people living with HIV/AIDS and other illnesses.

Ma calls her Yoga, “a Yoga of ‘intent.’”<sup>72</sup> The primary intent is devotion.<sup>73</sup> This is very important. It is a dedication to the present moment during Yoga practice. In other words, participants focus on the yoga, clearing their minds of distractions. They visualize the postures as they undertake the postures, even if they cannot perform them fully. The intention results in the profound experience obtained via the postures.<sup>74</sup> The Yoga provides a spiritual depth to practitioners who are seeking something more meaningful than the physicality of the various forms of yoga that have been popular of late. According to Jaya Devi Bhagavati, Ma’s yoga “really brings in the depth and the authentic essence of yoga.”<sup>75</sup> The goal of the yoga is developing a prayerful, personal connection to the divine within.<sup>76</sup> Perfection of the Yoga practice connects the practitioner with her or his own divine nature.<sup>77</sup>

Ma particularly encourages the sick to practice Kali Natha Yoga. Unlike most schools of yoga in the United States, one does not have to be physically fit to practice Kali Natha Yoga.<sup>78</sup> Ma’s Yoga is well suited for people living with HIV/AIDS and other physical ailments. Most forms of yoga are exclusively geared for the healthy and seek perfection of the asanas (the yogic postures) in their minutest detail. In contrast, anyone in a bed or a chair can perform Ma’s Yoga and gain its benefits, each person according to her or his own physical ability.<sup>79</sup> The intent of the parishioners is important: they

visualize themselves in the complete posture, regardless of their physical capacity. This includes individuals with limited mobility. Drawing the attention of the breath and the stretches of the Yoga to “painful and tight” parts of the body brings “circulation and restoration.” Everyone gains the physical benefits, according to each individual’s physical ability.<sup>80</sup> For example, one person may be able to do a complete stretch, while another one can only complete 10% of it. Both reap the same benefits, because both have exercised the limits of their body, safely. There is no coercion from the instructor, who teaches with a loving compassion for the participants. There is no artificial goal of a complete or perfect posture. In this form of yoga, disease can be prevented and healing can happen.<sup>81</sup> Perfection of the poses is not a requirement in Kali Natha Yoga, unlike in other schools of yoga. Individuals need to modify the poses as needed to suit the constitution of their bodies. This requires an awareness of the body. The goal is to bring the body to the point of resistance, but not to cross that threshold and cause pain.<sup>82</sup> Everyone visualizes the postures in their complete form: this intent gains the spiritual benefits of the Yoga.

This chapter introduced three sets of physical exercises that Ma teaches. The first was the simplicity of breathing with awareness. The second was meditation focused on the breath and the subtle energy centers of the body, called the chakras. The third was Ma’s school of physical postures called Kali Natha Yoga. This worship-filled approach seeks spiritual benefits. Anyone, the healthy and the ill, can practice it with appreciation.

These practices benefit people living with HIV and AIDS by developing concentration, self-awareness, self-mastery, and physical well-being.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., [5].

<sup>2</sup> Sternberg and Williams, 126-27.

<sup>3</sup> However, modern embodied spirituality typically focuses on sexuality, ignoring other corporal forms of spiritual practice: Elkins, 141-66, Joe Holland, "A Postmodern Vision of Spirituality and Society," in *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*, ed. David Ray Griffin (Albany: SUNY, 1998), 51, James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Wisdom of the Body: Making Sense of Our Sexuality* (New York: Crossroad, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Yoga Sutras 2: 29.

<sup>5</sup> Yoga Sutras 2: 50-51.

<sup>6</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Answers to Questions About Death #2," 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Kali Who Swallows the Universe," *Parabola: Myth, Tradition, and the Search for Meaning*, Summer 1998, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Answers to Questions About Death #2," 1.

<sup>10</sup> Fortunato, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with AIDS Now*.

<sup>12</sup> Sharma, "Guru Ma: An Icon for Human Rights?."

<sup>13</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Kali Tantra."

<sup>14</sup> Narayanan, 152.

<sup>15</sup> Drucker, 187.

<sup>16</sup> Swami Himalaya [Parker],

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, 80.

<sup>18</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 7.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Kali Who Swallows the Universe," 21.

<sup>21</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati and others, *Awakening the Transformative Power of Shakti* (Berkeley, CA: Conference Recording Service). Jaya Devi Bhagavati is a yoga teacher who runs the Atlanta Ashram and Yoga Studio.

<sup>22</sup> Arthur J. Deikman, *The Observing Self: Mysticism and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Beacon, 1982), 137.

<sup>23</sup> Ninian Smart, "The Purification of Consciousness and the Negative Path," in *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983), 117.

<sup>24</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Death*.

<sup>25</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *No Boundaries*.

<sup>26</sup> Deikman, 136.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>28</sup> Fortunato, 110.

<sup>29</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.

<sup>30</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," 5.

<sup>31</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.

<sup>33</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*.

<sup>34</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 8.

<sup>36</sup> Perelli, 44-52.

<sup>37</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 8, Lucy Lidell, *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga* (New York: Fireside, 1983), 72.

<sup>38</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 8 January 2005.

<sup>39</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 44.

<sup>40</sup> Laxman Das, *Yoga & World Peace*(2003, accessed 11 March 2005); available from <http://www.kashi-la.org/YogaA.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Breathe and Dance with the Gods*.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *No Boundaries*.

<sup>44</sup> Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami.

<sup>45</sup> Feuerstein, 469-72.

<sup>46</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Chakra Balancing Meditation* (Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation).

<sup>47</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Daily Prayer: January 10, 2003* [internet] (Kashi Ashram, 2003, accessed 12 January 2003); available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>.

<sup>48</sup> Kabat-Zinn, 76-77.

<sup>49</sup> Feuerstein, 473-74, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, 751.

<sup>50</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Tantra: The Lost Art* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications).

<sup>51</sup> Feuerstein, 473-75, David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yogini: "Tantric Sex" In Its South Asian Contexts* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2003), 7-13.

<sup>52</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, Global Live Audio Darshan

<sup>53</sup> Kinsley, *Health, Healing, and Religion*, 68.

<sup>54</sup> Desai, 104-12.

<sup>55</sup> Mauk and Schmidt, 254.

<sup>56</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati and others, *Awakening the Transformative Power of Shakti*.

<sup>57</sup> Carmody and Carmody, 42.

<sup>58</sup> Laxman Das, Interview with Author, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005. He is the Yoga Acharya of Kali Natha Yoga and one of the leaders for the Los Angeles Ashram.

<sup>59</sup> Laxman Das, *Yoga & World Peace*.

<sup>60</sup> *Kali Natha Yoga*, [internet] (Kashi Ashram Foundation, 2004, accessed 29 April 2005); available from <http://www.kashi.org/kaliyoga.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> Swami Himalaya [Parker],

<sup>62</sup> *Kali Natha Yoga*.

<sup>63</sup> Swami Himalaya [Parker],

<sup>64</sup> Jayanta and Babaji, Experience Kali Natha Yoga Workshop, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005. Jayanta and Babaji are Kali Natha Yoga instructors, trained by Ma.

<sup>65</sup> "Yoga of Humanity: Kali Natha Yoga," *Florida Fitness: Magazine for Your Mind and Body* [2004?], 15.

<sup>66</sup> Swami Himalaya [Parker],

<sup>67</sup> Flood, 98, 100, 144.

<sup>68</sup> *Kali Natha Yoga*.

<sup>69</sup> Fredricka Whitfield, *Weekend House Call: Yoga and Your Health* [internet] (CNN, 2003, accessed 22 March 2006); available from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0307/06/sm.22.html>. The program contains an interview with Jaya Devi Bhagavati, one of Ma's yoga instructors.

<sup>70</sup> Laxman Das, Interview with Author.

<sup>71</sup> Kabat-Zinn, 96, 100, Mauk and Schmidt, 254.

<sup>72</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 4.

<sup>73</sup> Laxman Das, *Yoga & World Peace*.

<sup>74</sup> Jayanta and Babaji,

<sup>75</sup> Whitfield.

<sup>76</sup> Swami Himalaya Parker, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 13 April 2005. Swami Himalaya has been Ma's student and a Yoga teacher for many years.

<sup>77</sup> Laxman Das, Interview with Author

<sup>78</sup> [Hutner] and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds., 4.

<sup>79</sup> Laxman Das, Interview with Author

<sup>80</sup> Parker,

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Jayanta and Babaji,

## CHAPTER 6

### THE RIVER FUND

Feed every one.

Neem Karoli Baba<sup>1</sup>

You actually have to do something with your own being.

Ma<sup>2</sup>

The River Fund is the service branch of the Kashi Church Foundation, i.e., Ma's Florida ashram. It provides direct hands-on services to individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases. The "River" refers to the Ganga, the Hindu river of life. These services include street relief, meal programs, educational workshops, and commemorative activities. The less tangible service is care for the individual. Volunteers do not merely deliver supplies; they visit with people, take an interest in their lives, and comfort them. The western term for this is chaplaincy. Ma calls it seva (service). Because of Ma's focus on the poor and the sick, the western religious analogy to seva might be termed "social justice ministry." This chapter briefly introduces the Fund and its history. It then details its three of main programs: West Coast Rounds, Rounds/Feed Every One, and the River House. It concludes with a survey of operations since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

The information about the River Fund comes from archival and published materials, supplemented by interviews. The offices of the Fund have moved several times, each time paring down the volume of collected materials. Materials were also lost



due to several damaging hurricanes.<sup>3</sup> Local media reports amply illustrate the activities of the Fund, but they focus on events with a public view, such as fundraisers, educational seminars, and World AIDS Day celebrations. Invaluable details of the nitty-gritty hands-on care that the Fund provides come from interviews.

The River Fund provides the formal structure that enables the Hindu spiritual path of seva to become a significant worldly reality. Ma teaches that the greatest gift is to serve.<sup>4</sup> It is a bodily-kinesthetic practice, i.e., touching and doing.<sup>5</sup> It translates spirituality into concrete form. That may seem like a self-contradictory statement, but it is a worldly necessity. Liberal theologian James Luther Adams explained that the establishment of a humane society requires both form and power. A “social incarnation” is necessary to give shape to justice.<sup>6</sup> In other words, uncoordinated individual efforts are not enough to affect the modern world in a substantial way. Therefore, the Fund became an umbrella organization that assumed various initiatives, created new programs, secured financing for its work, and embodied Ma’s vision in the social service sector. The Fund would be best described as a community ministry.<sup>7</sup> According to congregational theory, the Fund models the human service role that a congregation plays in its community.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will reflect on this role of the Fund in each sub-section.

Ma established the River Fund in 1990.<sup>9</sup> She teaches service, and she practices what she preaches.<sup>10</sup> Before the Fund, Ma and various individuals at Kashi Ashram provided different relief services to the homeless, the poor, and people in hospices, mostly in Indian River County.<sup>11</sup> The efforts contributed to local meals-on-wheels programs and soup kitchens.<sup>12</sup> In the words of Fund volunteer Rukmini Jaya, Ma took

this work to a “higher, greater” level with the Fund.<sup>13</sup> Billy helped focus Ma’s teaching about the spiritual experience of seva, by suggesting an organizational form for it.<sup>14</sup> Bina Frank took up the task and became the first director of the Fund.<sup>15</sup> In its first two years, it provided support for 12 Florida organizations that serve the HIV/AIDS population, the poor, and the elderly.<sup>16</sup> It became a member of the National Association of People with AIDS.<sup>17</sup> It maintained this level of programming until 2002.<sup>18</sup> After 9/11/2001, the Fund had to scale back its programs due to financial constraints. The programs the Fund offered were constantly evolving, adapting to new and emerging needs.<sup>19</sup>

The River Fund is a volunteer-run organization. Its staff came from Kashi Ashram, receiving room and board at the Ashram with a stipend for personal expenses, much as a nun does in a convent. The Ashram, after all, is a hermitage, and its residents are monks (Ma calls both her women and men monks).

In Ma’s teaching, the Hindu god Hanuman is the divine image that inspires and promotes service.<sup>20</sup> He also embodies humility.<sup>21</sup> He is the monkey god who symbolizes perfect devotion and perfect service, depending on the Hindu path that an individual follows. Ma’s guru Neem Karoli Baba emphasized Hanuman in his teaching.

### **West Coast Rounds**

During the American height of the AIDS pandemic from 1989 to 1996, Ma had extended her work to two distant locations heavily stricken by AIDS: Los Angeles and San Francisco. She has an Ashram in West Hollywood that invited her: “Ma, we need you out here.”<sup>22</sup> In the early 1990s, HIV/AIDS carried an immediacy of concern, as discussed previously. There were limited medications available, and many people were

dying. Ma took approximately four trips a year to provide comfort to people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>23</sup> On most trips, one day was spent in San Francisco and five in Los Angeles. The trips ended when HAART began to curtail the rapid progression of AIDS.<sup>24</sup> With people living longer and regaining quality of life, the AIDS profile had changed.

Ma led a group of 20 people around to different places to touch the most people.<sup>25</sup> They went on Rounds for 3 days visiting several hundred people at about six different AIDS wards and hospices. The volunteers provided human care with candy striped cheer. Ma countered the isolation many of the patients experienced from the stigma surrounding AIDS. For example, Ma jumped into bed with a man, covered with the worst case of Kaposi's Sarcoma she had seen. People were afraid to touch him. Ma hugged him. He screamed at first, and then laughed.<sup>26</sup>

Friday nights, Ma would hold a free, public darshan (spiritual teaching) at the Los Angeles Ashram. It was all open; anyone could come. The attendees were black and white, gay and straight. People came from the hospices and nursing homes that had been visited. This included children, parents, and "everybody," per Fund volunteer Swami Dhumavati. In her teaching, Ma was very direct and simple, "very raw" and "unadulterated." Her teaching was full of life, death, and pain. Saturday and Sunday, Ma would see people in a more private space: 40 people in a tiny room. She would talk to each person individually.<sup>27</sup> In a Kashi testimonial, Kali Baba—himself HIV+—describes the effects of Ma's unconditional love and miraculous work. She transformed lives, "from people who have cried for the first time in decades to those who have been able to

stop crying for the first time in years.”<sup>28</sup> A free brunch and dinner were served on the weekend.<sup>29</sup>

Monette described the sea of humanity that came to see Ma. There were people in wheelchairs and on floor mats as well as many others, “packed like sardines.” Many engaged in the hustle and bustle of serving a vegetarian feast to the assembled guests. The scene shattered Monette’s expectations of a guru. He was very impressed that people were comforting the sick and “nothing ... smacked of religion.”<sup>30</sup>

Fundraising was a major undertaking. Each trip cost about \$10,000 to pay for food, rentals, accommodations, transportation, airfare, and other expenses. This was more money than the River Fund could raise on its own. Kashi in Florida underwrote the trips at first, as the Los Angeles Ashram developed its resources. People from Los Angeles and Florida pledged \$250 per trip. Drag shows served as fundraisers (Ma has a fondness for transvestites).<sup>31</sup> Five years into the program and a year before it ended, April 1995 was the first time that Los Angeles was able to cover the cost of a trip.<sup>32</sup>

The trips inspired and mobilized Ma’s students in Los Angeles to continue the work with rounds in between her visits. Ma’s other ashrams undertook similar programs with the same intensity. Ma’s students in all her Ashrams touch people’s lives—one by one—with personal attention, love, and blessing. They provide community and foster a sense of belonging. They embody social justice by making the inherent worth and dignity of each person a tangible reality.

The trips happened at a time of crisis that most religious organizations were ignoring or shunning. Many churches condemned AIDS and distanced themselves from

caring for the sick. Ma brought the love of God to people rejected by society and cast out from their churches as modern lepers. She soothed their souls in their time of great need. She helped people connect to God and find peace within. Although she was not alone in providing a positive religious response, she was one of very few religious figures in the forefront of AIDS care.

In terms of congregationalism, the example of West Coast Rounds demonstrates how a small committed religious group focused its outreach efforts on a single, urgent issue. This narrow, dedicated focus involved all the participants in administration, organization, preparation, or hands-on service delivery. Unlike at Kashi in Florida, the Los Angeles Ashram had only two to three residents. The rest of the volunteers were congregational members from the local community. A small religious community can provide effective chaplaincy care.

### **Rounds and Feed Every One**

“Rounds” were an early activity of the Fund. The Fund took this function into its sphere of responsibility from various individual efforts at the Ashram.<sup>33</sup> The model for rounds came from Ma’s first trip to visit AIDS patients in Los Angeles.<sup>34</sup> The Fund organized the logistics for Ma and a group of volunteers to visit patients in local hospitals, nursing homes, and other care facilities that provided medical care to people living with AIDS. Many patients were dying because HAART had not yet been developed. Rounds happened twice each week. The Fund collected donations, including treats for the patients, such as cookies, fruit, cheese, and crackers. The Kashi kitchen baked “trays and trays” of cookies, while the Fund secured in-kind contributions from

local grocery stores for the other items.<sup>35</sup> The treats were important because Rounds visited institutions that received public financing and, therefore, had limited budgets for surplus food. Moreover, the patients, all of whom came from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, appreciated the gifts.

The service that Rounds provided patients was a cross between chaplaincy and candy striping. These visits were similar to the ones on the West Coast. The volunteers offered peer pastoral care and comfort as well as cheer and treats. They visited the patients and talked with them, providing social companionship. Many patients did not have any other visitors because their family or friends shunned them, or they did not have any relatives or acquaintances. They volunteers tried to meet special requests of the patients, such as providing books, magazines, toiletries, slippers, socks, cards, etc. Holidays included special treats, such as wrapped gifts for Christmas, chocolates for Easter, or flowers for Mother's Day.

Rounds visited six to ten facilities, mostly in West Palm Beach, FL. The city is about 115 miles south of Kashi. It was the closest urban center that was hardest hit by AIDS. The River Fund had personal contacts with local activists, who were able to make necessary arrangements for the rounds.<sup>36</sup> Permission was required to receive access to patients in the facilities. The following paragraphs describe some of the facilities and their patients.

The West Palm Beach Home is a public residential care facility that had a Haney Wing for people living with AIDS. All were poor; many were African-Americans. The residents had nowhere else to live. They told volunteers their many heart-wrenching

stories. The caregivers on Rounds came to know everyone and all their stories. Over the years, several hundred people lived on death's door. Sundays, Rounds would bring "down home" Southern cooking for the residents.<sup>37</sup> Ma felt very much at home with these people, because of her deep friendship with four African Americans as a school-aged girl under the boardwalk near her home in Brooklyn, New York. They served as surrogate parents to her, and she learned how to live and survive on the streets from them.<sup>38</sup>

At the AIDS floor of St. Mary's Hospital and Emmaus House AIDS hospice, Rounds visited the patients, talked to them, and gave them hugs.<sup>39</sup> Patient turnover was typically high. Some died, while others moved home or to nursing facilities. Volunteers such as Tara Dickinson felt the patients blessed the visitors a hundred fold.<sup>40</sup> Other locations included the Maurwood House for pregnant mothers, and the Children's Place for abused and abandoned children. It had a cottage for babies born with addictions. The rounds group would bring these children toys and presents.<sup>41</sup> Rounds occasionally included the Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, in spite of the distance.<sup>42</sup> Additional destinations included Hope House, King David Convalescent Home, The Cottage, The Sibling Shelter, the Palm Beach County Home, and Integrated Health Services.<sup>43</sup>

One of the stops was Connor's Nursery. It took care of babies and children with AIDS. Ma wrote a poem, called "The Children at Connor's Nursery." In it, she celebrates the beautiful smiles of the children who live in the moment and do not question, "Why do I have AIDS?"<sup>44</sup> For adults, asking why becomes a hurdle that prevents experiencing the presence of life.<sup>45</sup>

Ma gained a reputation for the boldness and warmth of her care giving. Matousek explains her style: she “sweeps up and down the halls of the ward. Missing not a face or hand, remembering hundreds of names, making people laugh, even climbing into bed with AIDS patients.”<sup>46</sup> Ma married lovers who were dying of AIDS.<sup>47</sup> She did this because they wanted acknowledgment for their love before they died. This, of course, included same-sex unions.<sup>48</sup> She is proud to help people recognize and proclaim their love. She has the uncanny ability to see people as people and to respond to their immediate emotional needs.

Ma tells the story of a man named Sydney she met once on rounds. He was going blind, but Ma realized he was experiencing the light of God. The nurse told Ma the man is dying, adding, “He is getting his wish.” Ma replied to the nurse, “That was not his wish at all. When he was first diagnosed with AIDS, his wish was to live.”<sup>49</sup> Ma gave her heart to those who were living and dying, those whom others chose to ignore. Sydney she taught to play with God by meditating on the breath. She left him, realizing she will probably not see him again the following week.

The Rounds program is now called “Feed Every One.” The name comes from Ma’s guru Baba who taught his students to feed every one, in a holistic sense.<sup>50</sup> The program visits seniors, adults, and children affected by poverty and HIV/AIDS in local care facilities. It focuses its efforts on communities close to Kashi: the municipalities of Melbourne, Gifford, Vero Beach, and Ft. Pierce. The visits include a senior center with residents from the Kashi community: everyone, not just the people from Kashi, received a visit.<sup>51</sup> For several years, Feed Every One brought its relief services to on Indiantown,



FL, a remote, impoverished rural center, with support from the New York branch of the River Fund.<sup>52</sup> Until recently, it conducted monthly dinners for HIV+ families in Ft. Pierce, FL, the local AIDS epicenter. This was a joint venture with Project Response, a regional AIDS service organization.<sup>53</sup> Together with the local St. Sebastian Catholic parish, Feed Every One hosts holiday banquets for local senior citizens who would otherwise spend the days alone. The current activities are self-sustaining and inexpensive, relying on monetary and in-kind donations.<sup>54</sup>

The River Fund offers Rounds and Feed Every One as educational opportunities. Students from the Kashi-sponsored River School regularly participated in service learning opportunities via the Fund's programs.<sup>55</sup> Ma made sure her students learned to serve.<sup>56</sup> Outside groups, who came to the Ashram to participate in its educational and spiritual programs, also provided care through the Fund. Ananda Devi, who currently runs Feed Every One, describes how the teenagers from Youth in Action Core visited Project Response clients to clean their homes. The participants remember one incapacitated woman, who had food leftovers and cockroaches everywhere. They tried to show her how to keep the place clean, but realized her disability prevented her. This was their "greatest experience" because they discovered they could help change someone's life in simple ways.<sup>57</sup>

Ma's Ashrams and groups have similar programs around the country. New York has the "Moveable Feast" and "Street Relief" programs. They serve institutionalized individuals and the homeless.<sup>58</sup> Los Angeles runs "Under the Bridges and On the Streets," providing meals, supplies, and clothing to squatter settlements of homeless

people.<sup>59</sup> In the 1990s, the Chicago Satsang took Rounds to the AIDS hospice Bonaventure House and the recovery facility Genesis Houses.<sup>60</sup> Atlanta provides street relief, in addition to alternative health care modalities to people living with HIV/AIDS and other diseases.<sup>61</sup>

Rounds and Feed Every One directly respond to the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. The public is ignorant of HIV/AIDS. It fears causal infection and ostracizes infected individuals. In contrast, River Fund volunteers treat the patients not only with respect and dignity, but also with kindness and compassion.<sup>62</sup> The stereotypes have unfortunately found their expression in the religious community as well. Concerning American Christianity, Protestant theologian Donald Messer has documented the church-based prejudices against people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, he offers a reformed theological perspective that is based on the New Testament virtue of compassion. The work of the River Fund in the so-called "Florida Bible Belt" demonstrates Messner's alternative approach to the AIDS pandemic, but from a Hindu interfaith perspective.

The Rounds program, in particular, offers an example of lay chaplaincy in a hospital or other type of medical care facility. A small group of dedicated individuals provides compassionate care to patients. They offer personal friendship that the institution, by its very nature, cannot provide. Their presence and their ability to listen non-judgmentally offer a non-institutional, human dimension to patient care. It is a simple matter of visiting the sick. Congregations could use this model for forming pastoral care groups to visit local hospitals and other facilities. Arrangements with the

institution, the chaplaincy departments, and appropriate training would be prerequisites for this type of human care engagement.

### **The River House**

During 1994-2002, the major River Fund project was a de facto hospice called The River House, run primarily by Ma's students residing in the Kashi community. It provided not only the physical needs of food and shelter, but also cared for the holistic social, mental, and spiritual wants of the residents. It offered a home-like environment to people who did not "want to die alone or in a nursing home, and who wanted to spend their last days among friends."<sup>64</sup> Most of them had been homeless, or addicted, or both. Ma wanted it to be a place where "Every human being deserves a chance to be heard, to be loved, to be touched."<sup>65</sup> To meet this need, the House provided its residents with the resources and support to live full, rich lives. It was a place where all "are loved and accepted."<sup>66</sup> The basis for its model came from national research on healthcare for the chronically ill. It provided a "humanistic environment" to facilitate "holistic individual development and growth."<sup>67</sup> It offered community, love, acceptance, and embracement of the individual in the "Kashi family."<sup>68</sup>

Bruce Shiva Baba became the inspiration for the house. In the 1980s, he was a grass-roots, hands-on AIDS activist from West Palm Beach, FL.<sup>69</sup> In 1990, he came to Kashi Ashram to die (may he rest in peace).<sup>70</sup> He told Ma to keep doing the AIDS work.<sup>71</sup> Ma eulogized him as "another young child to come to Kashi to die."<sup>72</sup> As early as 1982, there were people dying of AIDS going to Ma's ashram, with Ma's encouragement.<sup>73</sup> Ma called her Ashram a "safe haven."<sup>74</sup>

The River House was a full time (24-hours a day, 7 days a week) residential facility for terminally ill patients, most of whom had AIDS. There was a staff person or volunteer on duty all day and all night. The terms “staff” and “volunteer” require explanation. Staff worked for the House full-time. The House also hired local professionals, because the Ashram did not have the personnel and expertise to staff the House day and night. Volunteers from the Ashram and local community supplemented the services the staff provided.

Officially, the River House provided transitional housing and social services for people discharged from hospitals and nursing homes. Local hospitals and the Department of Public Health referred people to the House since there was no place else to send them. The goal was for people to recuperate, regain their strength, and eventually move on to independent living. The county and state provided medical care for most residents via Medicaid and the Visiting Nurses program.<sup>75</sup> Some patients had to leave for a nursing home because they needed round-the-clock medical care. For all practical purposes, the House was an AIDS hospice with an 80% rate of death.<sup>76</sup> However, hospice is a legal term with specific licensing requirements that were beyond the resources of the River Fund. Ma often called the home a “respite.”<sup>77</sup> The House also provided individual and group therapy as well as recovery groups for the residents.<sup>78</sup> Professionals associated with Kashi donated these services.

The River House provided social services. Some residents did not have Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid.<sup>79</sup> The House assisted residents with applying for the various benefit programs that were available to them. The application

process is challenging and can be overwhelming for those unfamiliar with it. This was difficult, if not impossible, for incapacitated residents. Some residents had never applied for SSI or Medicaid and had no coverage, but had huge medical bills from their hospitalizations. Other residents grew up in a culture of disenfranchisement and could not cope with the application process: they felt they would not get anything for all their efforts. A few were not able to take responsibility for their lives, given their circumstances.<sup>80</sup>

The residents came from all walks of life and represented all sorts of people. During my visits, I learned that many were poor, had minimal educations, and worked manual labor jobs. About half were African-American, and about a tenth were women. Almost all were young, in the age range that should have been the proverbial prime of their lives. Information from 1997 provides a demographic sample of the River House. During the year, the House had 23 residents: 82% had AIDS; 57% white, 34% African American, 9% Hispanic; 70% men, 26% women, 4% transsexual; 22% moved on to independent living. Extrapolating from the data, 43% of the residents died while at the House (may they rest in peace).<sup>81</sup> Overall, the House had over 120 individuals who died in its care (may they rest in peace), out of about 150 total residents.<sup>82</sup>

The facility initially housed four individuals in semi-private rooms, and expanded to eight residents in 1996.<sup>83</sup> At the time, the goal was to build a 24-bed facility within 2 years. The plan did not materialize due to lack of funding. The reason for the expansion was critical need: in its first two years, the house served 23 residents, but had to reject 100 referrals due to lack of space.<sup>84</sup>

The River House made some remarkable accomplishments. Patients whose prognosis gave them only a few days to live actually lived well for months and even years.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, no one has documented this phenomenon systematically. In her article, Chandra Devi, one of the nurses who worked at the River House, attributes such success to the “unparalleled compassion” and “spiritual guidance” at the home.<sup>86</sup> Surgeon Bernie Siegel has documented the healing benefits of similar holistic approaches.<sup>87</sup> The River Fund believes the residents flourished because the House provided a caring, non-institutional, home-like environment. Each volunteer and staff person took a personal interest in each of the residents. Residents, in turn, developed a sense of well-being that improved their health and extended their lives. Hopefully the examples from the residents provided later in this chapter will illustrate what I would like to call “The River House phenomenon.”

Management of the River House was very complex. It combined executive tasks with patient work. The director filed regulatory paperwork, located and trained volunteers, hired and supervised staff, and managed residents. Depending on available funding, one-third to one-half of the care providers were professional staff, with the remainder being volunteers. The goal was to have one nurse on duty during the day and evening shifts. On the practical side, the director did everything with the volunteers and staff: cook meals, change beds and diapers, mop floors, shop for groceries, etc.<sup>88</sup>

Volunteers lacked patient care experience and required professional assistance when problems arose. Many came from the Ashram. The swamis and other monks, in particular, took the night shifts.<sup>89</sup> In 1997, the house had 95 volunteers in any given

month.<sup>90</sup> The person who had the night shift could not expect to sleep because something would happen. There were nightly emergencies, phone calls, and sometimes trips to the hospital. Volunteers were frequently up all night, and then had to go to work the next day. The last two years were easier at night because there were fewer emergencies. The decrease in emergencies reflects the medical improvements that improved patient lives in the second half of the 1990s.<sup>91</sup> The staff and Ashram had to provide a tremendous amount of support and energy for the volunteers.<sup>92</sup> One of the ancillary House goals sought to minimize burnout by sustaining its volunteers.<sup>93</sup>

River House residents were invited to Ashram events, and were free to choose whether they attended. These included darshan with Ma, and holiday bandharas (festival meals). A few decided to attend intensive retreats. Ma would give house residents spiritual names.<sup>94</sup> For her students, in comparison, it might take several years to receive a spiritual name. This approach did not proselytize, because it offered the freedom of choice to the individual. The House included small shrines in the style of various world religions, like Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It arranged for people to attend services at the church of their choosing. For example, the deacon brought residents to his church. The River Fund's goal was to help people in need, and not to convert them to a different religion.

The following voices of former River House residents personalize this retrospective. Former House executive director Sati Mayee Sun related the exemplary story of Bobby Hanumanji. He was a "great, tall guy." He was uneducated, but brilliant. He had spent 20 to 25 years of his life on drugs and alcohol. Not a day went by without

drugs or alcohol for him. He visited the House with his mother one year before moving in: she wanted him to live here, for his sake. He “freaked out” and refused to move in. Within a few days, his mother died (may she rest in peace). He got sick and came back a year later because he had no other options. Ivana Trump Mazzuchelli’s fundraiser for the House excited him. Seeing her on her yacht in West Palm Beach, FL became the most exciting day of his life. He died at the young age of 40 at the House (may he rest in peace). His sister, cousin, and uncle also died at the House (may they rest in peace).<sup>95</sup> His situation shows how AIDS affected the entire community.

A second beautiful resident was LeRoy. Sati Mayee says he was indescribable. He was “mean” when he moved in, but soon revealed he was hysterically funny. He was able to recapture his innate humor and goodness at the River House. For example, he was black as night, but he would try to get a tan. Gradually he let go of his nastiness and his homophobia. He eventually said he was gay and that everyone was gay. Shortly before dying, he said he wanted to dance with Ma at a New Year’s Eve party, and Ma danced with him. He impersonated Michael Jackson.<sup>96</sup>

Another resident was Shambo Shankara, a 44 year old, divorced, white male with children. He wrote poetry and described his life in a River Fund newsletter. He was a recovering addict who spent his teen and adult years on drugs, except for the time at the House. He used to live in a nursing home, where he felt forgotten. At the House, he felt at home and regained his dignity. The staff and volunteers made him feel like a “good person who made some bad decisions.” He experienced physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Instead of waiting for death, he was able to enjoy life. He considered being clean



and sober a miracle. He would participate in Fund outreach programs.<sup>97</sup> Like Shambo, most of the residents were clean and sober for the first time and only time in their lives.<sup>98</sup>

Several former residents are still alive. I was able to interview one of them. Ma named him Jaya Das (see figure 9).<sup>99</sup> He is 41-year old, African American, single father of a teenage son. He was born and raised in a predominantly African American urban center in rural Florida. He became a drug addict and sero-converted in 1987.<sup>100</sup> Swami Dhumavati believes Jaya Das was not able to handle life on his own, resulting in his drug addiction and HIV infection.<sup>101</sup> To support his drug habit, he committed several unarmed burglaries, thefts, and robberies, and consequently served three prison sentences.<sup>102</sup> He entered a residential drug rehabilitation program in 1999, but had to leave it when the other participants and staff discovered his HIV status and ostracized him. He has experienced HIV-related and racial discrimination multiple times in his life, including from medical providers.<sup>103</sup> He lived at the River House and in the extended Kashi community from 1998 to 2001. In 2001, he began serving 14 years in minimum security for a previous drug-related offense.<sup>104</sup> His mother is currently raising his son, whose mother recently died of AIDS (may she rest in peace). He is successfully taking college courses with the aim of becoming a drug and addiction councilor. He is in good health.

The River House did help Jaya Das get his life together. He describes it as a “harmonious and wholesome environment,” where the residents “[help] and [support] each other.” The staff and volunteers obviously cared about him. He describes the meals as “sumptuous.” The “ease and comfort” of the “good company” enabled him to let his guard down unconsciously. He no longer felt under attack, needing to protect himself.<sup>105</sup>

With his basic needs met for the first time in his life, he began the psychological work of self-actualization. He also realized that Ma is his guru. The highlight of his life became going on Rounds with Ma, where he experienced the “boomerang” effect of giving “love, compassion, and understanding.” He realized that “getting outside himself” eased his life.<sup>106</sup> Many House residents found purpose in life by participating as care givers in River Fund service efforts.<sup>107</sup>

The River House was not an ideal setting for everyone. It had simple rules that some could not follow: no drugs, no alcohol, and no sexual activity with other residents.<sup>108</sup> Some residents caused problems. They were not cooperative and could not stay because they were not used to living in a structured environment. They had come in from life on the street or from the unpredictability of addiction.<sup>109</sup>

The River Fund secured funding for the River House. Fundraising required several staff people with volunteer support. The “bottom line” was not the prime concern for the River House, but the services it provided.<sup>110</sup> The Fund acknowledged that “military and business models of rational strategic planning” do not fit a social service program of a spiritual community.<sup>111</sup> This project did not collect financial data, except as incidental information. For example in the 1996-97 fiscal year, House expenses amounted to nearly \$120,000.<sup>112</sup> This accounted for nearly half of the Fund budget. Resident contributions covered 20% of the cost.<sup>113</sup> They paid the food and housing allotment of their SSI income for room and board, as is customary in similar institutions.<sup>114</sup> This amounted to \$60 per day for a maximum of 80% of their income.<sup>115</sup> The House did not turn anyone away for lack of funds. Donations came from multiple

sources. Direct mail campaigns, mentioned earlier, continued. High-profile gala fundraisers with such celebrities as singer K.D. Lang, singer Arlo Guthrie, entrepreneur Tim Gannon (Outback Steak House), philanthropist Ivana Trump Mazzuchelli, philanthropist John Eberhardt, artist Della Rounick, and movie star Tommy Lee Jones became the new form of fundraising.<sup>116</sup> The Fund also held charity auctions, including on-line bidding.

Three primary issues led to the closure of the River House. First, donations disappeared immediately after 9/11. The withdrawal of charitable donations is a well-known national trend. The House finances were always tight, and the house could not survive financially without donor underwriting. The donations drop led to a financial crisis for the House. To accommodate the budget shortfall, volunteers ran the House without paid professional staff in its last year, in spite of the challenges and problems.<sup>117</sup> The second issue was the changing nature of AIDS. By 2001, the new AIDS drug regimens had curtailed the rapid progression of AIDS to death.<sup>118</sup> The River Fund had detected the change with the House population as early as 1997.<sup>119</sup> This meant fewer residents had longer stays at the House. Patients were regaining their lives. Long-term housing in independent living facilities became the new AIDS care need nationwide. With its small facility and shared bedrooms, the House was not equipped to provide long-term care. Moreover, care now meant multiple diagnoses, not just HIV/AIDS, requiring additional expertise.<sup>120</sup> The Fund did not have the money or resources for restructuring the house. The third reason was licensing, itself a costly process. The House had no license. Governmental funding was not available without a license.<sup>121</sup> During the height

of the crisis, this did not matter. Once the crisis subsided, this became a liability as well as a malpractice concern.

The River House was an exemplary accomplishment for an organization the size of Kashi Ashram. With 80-150 residents and about as many participants from the local community, Kashi essentially constitutes a mid-size congregation. This is a relatively small group of people with limited resources, but it ran a respite home for the chronically ill. Granted, the Ashram had the benefit of a dedicated monastic constituency, but these people still worked normal full time jobs to support themselves and their religious community. Many also had to care for their families, children, and parents.<sup>122</sup> In this respect, Kashi is quite similar to many congregations. The dedication, religious commitment, and service orientation of the Kashi community made the House a vibrant possibility that helped the lives of several hundred people.

#### **Since 11 September 2001**

After 9/11, the River Fund consolidated its operations while maintaining Ma's vision for it as service organization focused on HIV/AIDS. That year, the Fund managed 12 programs in the areas of hands-on care, education, and social action.<sup>123</sup> The Fund has defined two core efforts: Feed Every One, described above, and the Uganda orphanage, described below. It also maintains several smaller programs. No major new projects will be added until a good financial situation is established.<sup>124</sup> Administratively, the Fund seeks grants and donations to underwrite its programs. Locally, the Fund focuses on joint projects with other AIDS service organizations, many of which have also consolidated efforts. It has added several international dimensions to its work. One noteworthy

limited-term venture was the South Africa project. The current projects include the following: the Uganda Orphanage, the Indian orphanage, Mary's House, and cooperative ventures with Friends Together.

#### South Africa

One important program began shortly before 9/11 and ended soon afterwards. From 1999-2001, the River Fund supported the New Rest Project, in Guguletu Township, outside of Cape Town, South Africa. The prenatal HIV transmission rate is a staggering 30% in South Africa. The Fund worked with the University of Cape Town, the local government, and a local grassroots movement, headed by Dr. John Abbott. It contributed financial assistance and infrastructure needs towards the accomplishment of three intended goals: a children's nursery, a crafts market, and a medical clinic.<sup>125</sup>

#### Uganda

Since 1998, the River Fund has provided funding and some staffing for the Uganda Martyrs Orphans' Project, established in Tororo, in 1992. It is now known as Ma's Orphans Providence Center.<sup>126</sup> It meets the needs of AIDS orphans, i.e., children whose parents have died of HIV/AIDS and, previously, civil war. There are grandparents and grand children, but not the generation in between.<sup>127</sup> The orphanage is home and school for 900.<sup>128</sup>

Nationally, Ugandan orphans number 2.4 million, representing 10% of the population.<sup>129</sup> The country had ghost towns filled with orphaned children living in the streets.<sup>130</sup> Overall, 7% of the population is infected with HIV, but only a third receives medical treatment.<sup>131</sup> This rate is far lower than the overall Sub-Saharan rate. It has

declined from about 20% during the 1980s, unfortunately due to deaths (may they rest in peace).<sup>132</sup> The UN rates Uganda's medical care for AIDS as second best in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>133</sup> Uganda is one of three African countries that has curtailed the spread of HIV, at least in certain regions.<sup>134</sup> AIDS prevention faces difficult challenges in Uganda: AIDS stigma causes people to avoid getting medical care; men resist using condoms; people think sex with a virgin will cure them of AIDS; the culture does not believe in natural death, attributing AIDS and other terminal disease to malicious spells,<sup>135</sup> and men typically have multiple sexual partners, their wife at home and a mistress or prostitutes at the remote places where they work.<sup>136</sup>

To avoid institutionalizing children, the Orphanage tries to place them with relatives and support the families. The children receive food, schooling, and medical care at the orphanage, where some also live.<sup>137</sup> The director Rev. Centurio Olaboro, a Roman Catholic priest, has gained international recognition for his leadership and fundraising from Rotary International. According to the current River Fund director Jaya Canterbury-Conts, Rotary endorsement certifies unquestionably ethical business practices. The Fund secures North American private donations and corporate sponsorships for the Orphanage. It began with \$6,000 annual pledges, and currently raises \$30,000-\$50,000. The major contributor is the MAC Cosmetics' AIDS fund.<sup>138</sup> This is important, because there are hoax organizations collecting donations for African AIDS relief in the United States that simply pocket the money.<sup>139</sup> When Fr. Centurio visited the United States, the Fund organized a preaching tour for him at local African American churches.<sup>140</sup> This served

two purposes: to inform the local community about the situation in Africa first hand, and to collect donations and pledges.

### India

A new, developing project since late 2004 is the “Little H.E.A.R.T.’s” Orphanage in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India. 30% of the population is HIV+. The orphanage had closed down due to a lack of funding, but the River Fund worked with the director, Mr. Prasanna Kumar, to reopen it. It can house up to twenty-five children, and plans are underway for a second floor with room for 25 more children.<sup>141</sup>

### Florida

The River Fund recruits volunteers and assists Mary’s House, named after Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is a residence for children with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases near Kashi Ashram. Two of Ma’s students, Harry and Anna, both medical professionals, founded it in 1990. They are licensed foster parents for children with medical needs.<sup>142</sup> They care for and raise the children, including driving long distances for specialized medical services. Some local doctors have refused to treat the children because of their illnesses.<sup>143</sup> Volunteers support the work with baby-sitting, feeding, bathing, bedtime and playtime.<sup>144</sup> In some years, the Fund received grants for food at Mary’s House. The Ashram kitchen cooked the meals for the children.<sup>145</sup>

The River Fund supports programs undertaken jointly with the Friends Together AIDS service organization, run by Cathy Robinson. The organization co-sponsors about 4 to 5 family HIV camps in the Midwest, called Camp Heartland. The Fund finances local children to attend the camp, for example 50 in 2004. It also provides camping

supplies for them, like clothing and gear. These children might have only two changes of clothing because their families suffer from the economic injustice of poverty. Some people from Kashi volunteer.<sup>146</sup> The project also conducts AIDS Education and prevention programs in the Kashi area.<sup>147</sup> In 1998, it held presentations at 80 schools and 25 churches.<sup>148</sup>

The River Fund explains it has scaled back its operations to focus on select projects. In reality, it is deeply involved in various worthy AIDS service ventures. The constrained financial situation forces the Fund to maintain a pragmatic focus on cost-effectiveness, although it would like to expand its services. The Fund finds ways to find a balance between a compassionate heart, a rational head, and a small wallet. It supports people in need, but makes careful decisions about the viability and cost of projects. It currently serves as a model of a mid-size congregation, Kashi Ashram that has established and runs a major community service project. It allocates human and capital resources to support it, with an eye on efficiency. Many churches support local relief agencies with financial contributions and volunteers through multi-church cooperative efforts. In contrast, the Fund is a self-supporting agency that is an extension of a single congregation. The Fund currently is Kashi's sole service organization.

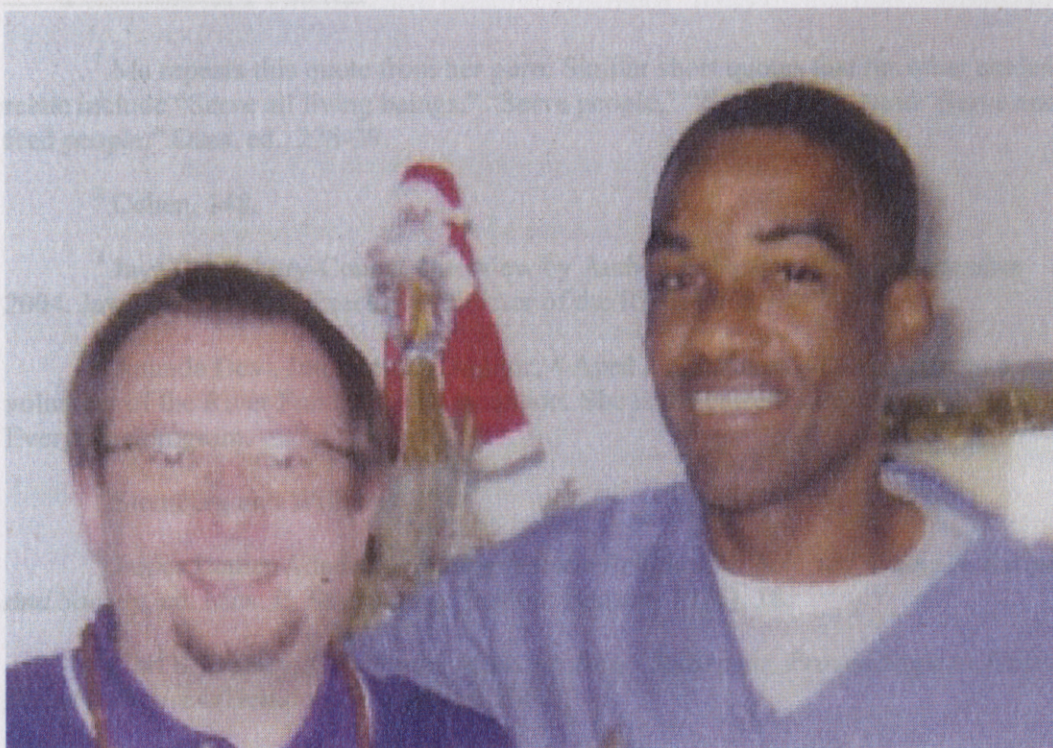
A comparison may clarify the level of commitment from Kashi Ashram to the River Fund. In metropolitan Chicago, the AIDS Pastoral Care Network (APCN) provides religious and spiritual services for the HIV/AIDS community. The UUA Central Midwest District, a multi-state body, and several other regional denominational associations



cosponsor it. Access Health Care, a not-for-profit agency providing health care to the poor and uninsured, underwrites it. With its broad base of support, APCN provides services that are roughly comparable to the River Fund. The differences between the two are the variety and level of support sources.

The accomplishments of the River Fund are remarkable since they are the product of a medium-sized religious congregation with limited resources. It runs a lay chaplaincy program, humanitarian aid to the poor, shut-ins, and homeless, and underwrites an orphanage in Uganda. It ran a hospice. It does not proselytize at all, encouraging people to follow their own religious tradition, if they wish. The philosophy of the project is remarkably simple and inter-faith: to serve those in need. None of this would be possible without the dedication of the religious community and the charisma of its spiritual teacher, Ma.

**Photo**



9 The author with former River House resident Jaya Das in December 2004.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae."

<sup>150</sup> Devi.

<sup>151</sup> Rukmini Jaya, Interview by Author, 22 March 2006.

<sup>152</sup> Devi.

<sup>153</sup> Rukmini Jaya.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Satce Mayee Sun, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 24 December 2004.

<sup>156</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," (1992).

<sup>157</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," (1994).

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma repeats this quote from her guru. Similar short quotes that his other students relate include "Serve all living beings," "Serve people," "Feed people," and "Serve and feed people." Dass, ed., 238-39.

<sup>2</sup> Cohen, 148.

<sup>3</sup> Jaya Canterbury-Counts, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 27 December 2004. Jaya is the current Executive Director of the River Fund.

<sup>4</sup> Ananda Devi, Interview by Author, 4 April 2006. Ananda Devi has been a volunteer of the River Fund since its inception. She is the current director of the Feed Every One program.

<sup>5</sup> Sternberg and Williams, 127.

<sup>6</sup> James Luther Adams, *On Being Human Religiously: Selected Essays in Religion and Society*, ed. Max. L. Stackhouse (Boston: Beacon, 1976), 18.

<sup>7</sup> Carl S. Dudley, *Community Ministry: New Challenges, Proven Steps to Faith-Based Initiatives* (Herndon, VA: Alban, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> James W. Ellor, F. Ellen Netting, and Jane M. Thibault, *Religious and Spiritual Aspects of Human Service Practice* (Columbia: U South Carolina P, 1999), 150-51.

<sup>9</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "Curriculum Vitae."

<sup>10</sup> Devi,

<sup>11</sup> Rukmini Jaya, Interview by Author, 22 March 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Devi,

<sup>13</sup> Rukmini Jaya,

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Satee Mayee Sun, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 24 December 2004.

<sup>16</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," (1992).

<sup>17</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," (1994).

<sup>18</sup> "New Rest, South Africa: Medical Donations Needed [Brochure]," ([Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund, 2000?), [2].

<sup>19</sup> Devi,

<sup>20</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *She Who Rides the Lion*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Tara Dickinson, "Interview," (Kashi Ashram, Sebastian, FL, 26-27 December 2004). Tara was the Assistant to the Executive Director of the River Fund in 1990-95.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Monette, 84.

<sup>24</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996*, (Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 1996), 9.

<sup>25</sup> Dickinson.

<sup>26</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, "How the AIDS Pandemic Changed My Life," 62.

<sup>27</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview, Interview, Sebastian, FL 24 December 2004. Swami Dhumavati has been a student of Ma since 1990. She used to live in New Mexico and accompany Ma on her trips to Los Angeles. In 1992, she moved to Kashi Ashram.

<sup>28</sup> *Kashi Rainbow Testimonials*, [internet] (Kashi Ashram, 2004, accessed 25 December 2004); available from <http://www.kashi.org/involved/rainbow/testimonials.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne],

<sup>30</sup> Monette, 84.

<sup>31</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne],

<sup>32</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," 2.

<sup>33</sup> Dickinson.

<sup>34</sup> Devi,

<sup>35</sup> Dickinson.

<sup>36</sup> Tara Dickinson, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 15 March 2006.

- <sup>37</sup> Dickinson, "Interview."
- <sup>38</sup> Narayanan, 152.
- <sup>39</sup> Dickinson, "Interview."
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Devi,
- <sup>43</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996*, 8, "River Fund Newsletter,"  
1.
- <sup>44</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Bones and Ash*, 87.
- <sup>45</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996*, 8, "River Fund Newsletter,"  
1.
- <sup>46</sup> Matousek, 92.
- <sup>47</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 27.
- <sup>48</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne],
- <sup>49</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 20.
- <sup>50</sup> Caplan, 110.
- <sup>51</sup> Devi,
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid, Sati Mayee [Sun], "Ma Jaya Extends "Feed Everyone" Outreach Program to Indiantown, Florida," (Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [1999?]).
- <sup>53</sup> Devi, , *Heart to Heart: A Newsletter for Friends of the River Fund*, (Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, 2005/2006), [3].
- <sup>54</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview."
- <sup>55</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Death and Awareness*.
- <sup>56</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Sharing the Heart: A Guide for Caregiving* (Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video).

<sup>57</sup> Devi,

<sup>58</sup> Kashi Foundation Gift for the Millennium: The Arms of the Mother: Embracing the World through Hands of Service in the 21st Century, Fundraising Appeal, Sebastian, FL [1999?].

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," 2.

<sup>61</sup> Kashi Foundation Gift for the Millennium: The Arms of the Mother: Embracing the World through Hands of Service in the 21st Century,

<sup>62</sup> Tara Dickinson, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 26-27 December 2004.

<sup>63</sup> Messer, 19.

<sup>64</sup> *A Benefit for the River House Building Fund Campaign*, (Sebastian, FL: River House, 1996), 6.

<sup>65</sup> Shakti Das, "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development," (Robert R. Brodie & Assoc, 1997), 2.

<sup>66</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], "[Presentation Paper ?]," (Kashi Ashram, Sebastian, FL, 10 November 1999).

<sup>67</sup> Shakti Das, 6.

<sup>68</sup> Shakti Das, "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development," (Robert R. Brodie & Assoc., 1997), 4.

<sup>69</sup> Rukmini Jaya, Interview, Interview, 22 March 2006, Satee Mayee Sun, "Interview," (Kashi Ashram, Sebastian, FL, 24 December 2004). Sati Mayee is a nurse. During 1997-2000, she ran the River House at Kashi Ashram. Rukmini Jaya is a nurse, volunteering her professional services to the River Fund.

<sup>70</sup> Rukmini Jaya, Interview

<sup>71</sup> Sun, "Interview."

<sup>72</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *I, the Mother*, 27.

<sup>73</sup> Drucker, 188, Shakti Das, "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development," 2-3.

<sup>74</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan

<sup>75</sup> Medicaid is a state-administered federal program that provides insurance coverage to disabled, low-income individuals. The Visiting Nurses program sends nurses to patients' homes for simple and routine medical procedures. It alleviates frequent patient trips to medical facilities.

<sup>76</sup> Sun, "Interview.", Satee Mayee Sun, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 20 March 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Sun, "Interview."

<sup>78</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," [5].

<sup>79</sup> SSI is a state-administered federal program that provides financial assistance to obtain food, clothing, and shelter for disabled individuals without an income.

<sup>80</sup> Sun, "Interview."

<sup>81</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996*, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Sun, Interview by Author, Sun, E-Mail to Author

<sup>83</sup> "The River Fund [Brochure]," ([1996?]).

<sup>84</sup> *A Benefit for the River House Building Fund Campaign*, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], "[Presentation Paper ?]."

<sup>86</sup> Chandra Devi Phyllis Kantor, "Fearless Compassion: Dispelling HIV Myths Allows for Loving Care," *Hinduism Today*, February 1999, 13.

<sup>87</sup> Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., *Love, Medicine & Miracles: Lessons Learned About Self-Healing from a Surgeon's Experience with Exceptional Patients* (New York: Perennial, 1986).

<sup>88</sup> Sun, "Interview."

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> *A Benefit for the River House Building Fund Campaign*, 5.

<sup>91</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>93</sup> Shakti Das, "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development," 6.
- <sup>94</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview
- <sup>95</sup> Sun, "Interview."
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>97</sup> "The River Fund [Newsletter]," [4].
- <sup>98</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview
- <sup>99</sup> For the purposes of confidentiality, I am not revealing his legal name. Ma has named several people Jaya Das.
- <sup>100</sup> Jaya Das, Letter to Author, Indiantown, FL, 19 January 2005.
- <sup>101</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview
- <sup>102</sup> *Corrections Offender Network: Inmate Population Information Detail*, [internet] (2004, accessed 12 October 2004); available from <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/activeinmates>.
- <sup>103</sup> Jaya Das,
- <sup>104</sup> *Corrections Offender Network*.
- <sup>105</sup> Jaya Das,
- <sup>106</sup> Jaya Das, Letter to Author, South Bay, FL, 20 March 2006.
- <sup>107</sup> Devi,
- <sup>108</sup> Swami Dhumavati [Horne], Interview
- <sup>109</sup> Sun, "Interview."
- <sup>110</sup> Shakti Das, "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development," 4.
- <sup>111</sup> Stan Andrews and Shakti Das, River Fund Housing Project Seminar, Memo, Sebastian, FL 1997.
- <sup>112</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996*, 15.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., 7.



<sup>114</sup> "The River House: Introduction [Flyer for Perspective Residents]," (Sebastian, FL: The River House, [1996?]).

<sup>115</sup> "River House Admissions Agreement," (Sebastian, FL: The River House, [n.d.]).

<sup>116</sup> Dickinson, "Interview.", "The River Fund [Benefit Brochure]," (1997), "The River Fund [Benefit Brochure]."

<sup>117</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview."

<sup>118</sup> In 1999, the US Center for Disease Control reported that the rate for AIDS deaths decreased by nearly half in 1997, due to the drug combinations known as HAART. L. Highleyman, "U.S. AIDS Death Rate Decreases by Nearly Half," (NCBI: PubMed, 1999).

<sup>119</sup> *The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996, 6.*

<sup>120</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview."

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ma allows her monks to marry and gives them a several month long honeymoon from celibacy after marriage. Others move to the Ashram with their families to become monks.

<sup>123</sup> "The River Fund Programs [Flyer]," ([Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund, 2000).

<sup>124</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview."

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, *The River Fund*, [internet] (River Fund, 2004, accessed 28 December 2004); available from <http://www.riverfund.org>, "River Fund's New Rest Settlement Project Guguletu Township," (Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [1999]), "River Fund Visits New Rest Settlement," (Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, 2000).

<sup>126</sup> "Orphanage in Uganda Named after Ma Jaya [Press Release]," (Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [n.d.]).

<sup>127</sup> Dubitsky, 14.

<sup>128</sup> *The River Fund.*

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Alice Sigfrids, "HIV/AIDS: Southern Africa Region", paper presented at the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education 13th Annual Conference, Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI, 22 April 2006.

<sup>131</sup> UNAIDS and WHO, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 25, 27.

<sup>132</sup> Sigfrids,

<sup>133</sup> UNAIDS and WHO, *AIDS Epidemic Update*, 27.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 26.

<sup>135</sup> Sigfrids,

<sup>136</sup> Eric Giordano, "HIV/AIDS: Southern Africa, China, and the Netherlands", paper presented at the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education 13th Annual Conference, Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI, 22 April 2006.

<sup>137</sup> Rev. Fr. Centurio Olaboro, *Uganda Martyrs Orphan's Project* (Tororo, Uganda: Uganda Martyrs Orphan's Project), DVD.

<sup>138</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview.", *The River Fund*.

<sup>139</sup> Sigfrids,

<sup>140</sup> Centurio Olaboro, Interview by Author, Chicago, IL, 21 June 2005.

<sup>141</sup> *Heart to Heart: A Newsletter for Friends of the River Fund*, *The River Fund*.

<sup>142</sup> Ambika, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 3 March 2006.

<sup>143</sup> "The River Fund [Newsletter]," 5.

<sup>144</sup> "River Fund Newsletter," 3.

<sup>145</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview.", *The River Fund*.

<sup>146</sup> Canterbury-Counts, "Interview."

<sup>147</sup> "The River Fund [Newsletter]," [6].

<sup>148</sup> "Kashi Church Foundation: South Africa Project [Brochure]," (Sebastian, FL: Kashi, 1999), [3].

<sup>149</sup> The author's personal photo was used with Jaya Das' permission.



## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Become everything.

Ma, *Nine Meditations*<sup>1</sup>

This doctor of ministry project studied the contemporary spiritual teaching and praxis of Ma and her River Fund service organization. She is a religious leader who has been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS care and activism since the start of the pandemic. Her primary teaching is seva (service) and her spiritual practices lead to seva. Her methods include verbal, visual, and kinesthetic styles that, in turn, reflect the different psychological characteristics and learning styles of her students. She advocates HIV/AIDS pastoral care for seva. She established the River Fund for this purpose. The chaplaincy work of the Fund provides an American, Hindu-based, interfaith, religious model of AIDS care. For a period, it ran a home-like residential facility called the River House. It essentially provided hospice care to people living with AIDS.

Chapter 2 introduced Ma and her HIV/AIDS activism. Ma is relatively unique in her Hindu context, being one of only a very small handful of women gurus. Teaching seva instead of other forms of Hindu practice also makes her extraordinary. As a mystic, she transcends religious categories, reflecting Hindu sensibilities. Her religious engagement encourages the religious leaders of the world to provide HIV/AIDS care out of a sense of religiously-inspired compassion. The Parliament of the World's Religions,

of which she is a trustee, has been the primary vehicle for her religious activism. Through it, Ma has addressed HIV/AIDS issues with the leaders of the world's religions.

Chapter 3 presented Ma's verbal teaching on HIV and AIDS. She emphasizes serving people in need or seva as the essential spiritual practice that all religions teach. Seva is selfless and altruistic service to humanity. Her approach reflects the traditional Hindu religious path of action called Karma Yoga. Very few teachers emphasize this path. Ma's teaching responds to the Hindu law of causation known as karma by offering seva as liberation from the habitual behavior inherent in karma. In seva, selflessness replaces egotism. Seva also constitutes divine worship. In a related vein, Ma responds to theodicy with seva. For her, there are no reasonable answers to the dilemma of theodicy. "So what" was the reply she learned in India: do not waste time on mind games when people suffer. The real response is to assist people who are in trouble. Ma's approach to HIV/AIDS care is pragmatic: it provides comfort to the sick and dying. During the first two decades of the pandemic when people were readily dying in the United States, Ma offered a variety of techniques to prepare individuals for death. Corresponding to Hinduism, the teachings focused on accepting death as a fact without fear. However, she also emphasized, "You're not dead, until you're dead," i.e., not to surrender ahead of time. For all its foibles, life is worth living. For coping with the horrific nature of HIV/AIDS, Ma teaches the chidakash. It accesses a human level of divine consciousness.

Chapter 4 focused on Ma's art relevant to HIV/AIDS. Of her various series, Ma paints scenes of the Ganga River and image of Hindu goddesses to inspire people in expressive and emotional fashion. This creative approach avoids verbiage and eschews

rationality. It connects to individuals intuitively, awakening the non-intellectual aspects of their ontology. Her paintings correspond to the intents of Hindu iconographic tradition that unites individuals mystically, spirit to spirit. Her style and materials, however, follow the western artistic tradition. Creating art (for Ma) and viewing art (for her students) are profound spiritual practices that cannot readily find verbal expression. Five series of Ma's paintings offer resources for living with HIV/AIDS. They depict a divine reality that immanently protects and comforts the world with grace. The art serves as a reminder that humans have a divine power within them that provides strength and relieves suffering. Ma personalizes her art, offering individual spiritual guidance to her students (and others) through it.

Chapter 5 summarized Ma's bodily-kinesthetic teaching. Physical exercise is one component of AIDS care as well as a spiritual practice. Ma offers three physical techniques coming from Hinduism and other eastern religions as a basis for developing individual spiritual praxis. They are body-based spiritual practices that are integral to Hinduism, but do not have western equivalents. The techniques are breathing with awareness, meditating on the breath and the chakras, and practicing Kali Natha Yoga, a devotional form of yoga that Ma created. Of all the practices, Ma repeatedly reiterates the breath: it centers the individual. Her Yoga develops physical concentration with a religious sensibility. Anyone in any state of health can practice it, gaining benefit. The key is the intention of visualizing the devotional postures while completing the movements to the best of one's physical ability. Derivative benefits of these exercises are self-mastery and coping skills.

Chapter 6 documented the River Fund. Seva is a physical spiritual exercise that reaches out to people in need. The Fund makes Ma's teaching about seva a worldly reality. During the 1980s, Ma and her students participated in a variety of individual efforts that included caring for people living with HIV/AIDS. In the 1990s, that engagement crystallized in the River Fund organization. It coordinated efforts, administered services, secured financing, and organized volunteers to provide a plethora of HIV/AIDS relief services in Florida, and trips to Los Angeles, and San Francisco for chaplaincy. Outside North America, the Fund has positively affected programs in South Africa, India, and Uganda, as well as stimulated the theological discussion of AIDS in those countries. In the 2000s, the Fund has focused on a combination of local and international efforts that meet the constraints of a post-9/11 environment.

During 1994-2002, the River Fund's major effort had been the River House residence for people with AIDS and other terminal diseases. The loving, compassionate, and caring environment it provided often helped residents regain their health. They experienced a quality of life that had been absent before. Due to the holistic approach, residents with short prognoses prolonged their lives beyond medical expectations. The social, spiritual, and psychological care of the residents contributed to their health and well-being, in addition to the physical-medical treatment they received.

### **The Praxis of Ministry**

How can Ma's teaching and the River Fund benefit other ministerial endeavors? Ma contributes a positive theological voice to the religious discussion of HIV/AIDS care. She echoes the stance of Liberal Religion that professes the inherent worth and dignity of

every person, by helping people live their lives commensurate with that worth and dignity. She also echoes the liberal Christian traditions of HIV/AIDS care that take the imperatives of the Beatitudes, especially “caring for the sick,” to heart, as per the interpretation by Blumenfeld and Alexander.<sup>2</sup> Early in the pandemic, the authors provided brief examples of liberal religious responses to HIV/AIDS with guidelines for congregations to implement their own programs. Some of those projects from the 1980s grew out of congregations. The Fund serves as an example of such a project that has grown to include both local and international commitments; the present project documents it in detail. This section will review Ma’s verbal, artistic, and physical teaching as well as the human care service work of the Fund in terms of examples that others may follow.

Ma’s teaching responds to growing calls for a “new AIDS theology” that many churches have either ignored or condemned, per Messner’s study.<sup>3</sup> Reflecting the Hindu tradition, Ma offers seva as a core religious and spiritual practice. Theistically, seva serves the world as it maintains a consciousness of divine worship. When people come to Ma seeking God or enlightenment, she tells them to serve someone. Non-theistically, it addresses the needs of an imperfect world. Seva requires action, not belief, thereby welcoming the contribution of agnostics and atheists, not to mention adherents of any religion. They find agreement in their ministerial praxis. Regardless of faith, seva is selfless; it does not expect anything in return. It is not self-righteous. It is the right thing to do. It responds to pain and suffering. It serves others, and Ma’s version emphasizes the



individual connection between the volunteer and the person being served. It provides a presence to people in need with help and care.

Ma's interpretation of seva reflects the prophetic principles that James Luther Adams described in his "Prophethood of all Believers." Her point of view transcends the habits that blind humans to the problems and needs of the world. Her sensibility commands an urgency to respond to what Adams described as evil and injustice with a restoration of human dignity. Ma's Hindu notion of seva corresponds to the commitment of Liberal Religion to social justice and human dignity.

The inherently holistic nature of Ma's charismatic approach offers spiritual options to western forms of religion, specifically Liberal Religion. The triad of reason, tradition, and personal experience validate reality for Liberal Religion. In particular, Ma provides viable alternatives to the rational emphasis by shifting the focus to personal experience. Ultimately, action and behavior matter, not thought or belief. Ma offers resources from the tradition of Hinduism, interpreted for a Western audience. In the spirit of its Transcendentalist heritage, Liberal Religion should entertain the Eastern possibilities that Ma teaches. In the last decades, it has experimented with forms of yoga and meditation, but it should reframe yoga as a physical-spiritual practice and pursue a more conscious emphasis on meditation. Such eastern practices enhance the living tradition.

Ma's verbal teaching reflects the landscape of religious symbolism. Instead of the rational and philosophical precision contained in many theologies, Ma offers a creative openness that corresponds to the ineffability of ultimate reality. Words describe the flux

of life and meaning only imperfectly; the expressiveness of metaphor conveys notions that words cannot grasp firmly. Ma commonly relies on metaphor in her teaching. The Unitarian Universalist movement includes metaphor in its religious exploration. Creative, artistic, and metaphoric modes of thought deserve deep, serious exploration in religious endeavors and spiritual development. They provide a rich well-spring of inspiration that leads to personal growth.

Ma offers modes of interaction and thinking that evoke the creative side of human nature. Her approach provides an important counterbalance to traditional western discourse. Her teaching includes art that reflects the Hindu iconic tradition. Art confronts the organized, logical expectations of reason with form, color, texture, symbols, and possibilities. It addresses human feeling and inspiration. It opens and releases the forces present in the right side of the brain. Her art challenges individuals in ways that resist rationalization and verbalization. It awakens human faculties of perception that normally remain dormant. It teaches non-verbally, and it serves as a vehicle for meditation.

Liberal Religion and Protestantism have traditionally emphasized—if not overemphasized—the mental and verbal, in particular with theology and prayer. Such an approach tends to limit creative forms of expression. It avoids religious art in church, preferring symbols instead. Its theology and preaching have tendencies that deconstruct it into a rational discourse, devoid of the original beauty and soulfulness. The focus on verbal, rational modes of thought and communication essentially address but one aspect of human ontology. Holistically, the intellectual is one dimension of personhood, alongside the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and social. Unitarian

Universalism needs to explore the other aspects of the human being, especially the ones that stimulate the passive and active creativity of individuals. Ma provides examples of this engagement from the Hindu tradition.

First, passive creativity is the reflective or contemplative response to a creative work. People can have spiritual experiences while viewing and/or hearing painting, sculpture, dance, song, music, etc. This often happens outside the church. The Unitarian Universalist movement should bring such creativity into the church. Choir music and congregational singing have an inherent presence. What about other creative forms, such as art that Ma uses to teach? In terms of art, Liberal Religion has its origins in the aniconic Protestant tradition that stands in sharp contrast to the lush iconography of Ma's Hinduism (or the iconic tradition within Christianity, specifically Orthodoxy and Catholicism). It needs to explore the richness of religious art, just as it is currently reevaluating the liturgical practices that Unitarian and Universalist forbearers gave up centuries ago. Many churches contain symbols of the worlds' religions, but symbols are not art. They do not carry the depth of exploration, creativity, and meaning that religious art offers. Finding common ground regarding religious art will be no small challenge.

Second, active creativity means people creating their own works of art in any medium. Churches need to offer their congregants opportunities for artistic exploration within a spiritual framework. Spiritual intention is the key for pursuing artistic creativity as a means of personal exploration and growth. This approach contrasts secular studio or performance classes that teach style and technique. The creative impulse fuels spiritual discovery.

The physical engages the body in spiritual activity. Ma bases all spiritual practice on the physical: following the breath, scanning the body, and sculpting the body in physical prayer. Such exercises awaken body sensations adults have learned to ignore. Ma's approach accurately reflects the Hindu tradition that uses the body as a tool for spiritual progress. Whereas Adams insisted on the necessity of form for achieving the goals of social justice, Ma begins with physical experience for engaging the spiritual. Instead of ignoring, minimizing, or denying the body as in many Western approaches, Hinduism embraces the body as one aspect of human ontology as a spiritual tool.

The Western tradition does not have a sensibility of physical spiritual practice. Therefore, this core idea of Hinduism does not translate well into the framework of Liberal Religion. Unitarian Universalist churches have experimented with meditation and yoga as spiritual tools in the last decades. Individual personal experience validates their religious usefulness. This pragmatic approach serves as a point of agreement between the two traditions. The Unitarian Universalist Buddhist network has made great strides in disseminating the practices and postures of meditation. Eastern meditation differs from similar Western contemplative approaches in that it focuses on a simple object of meditation, such as the breath, or on pure awareness, as in clearing the mind. The challenge to ignore and empty the mind seemingly contradicts the rational emphasis of Liberal Religion. The third leg of the Liberal Religious triad, personal experience, accounts for this shift.

In terms of calisthenic practices, churches sometimes offer yoga, often as community classes. They can offer the same classes for religious and spiritual

exploration, as some churches already do: the intention of the practice focuses on exploring the body and experiencing its sensations. It is a very pragmatic endeavor. It requires the participants to become acquainted with their own bodies in the present moment, to the exclusion of any concerns or thoughts they may have. Participants learn intense physical attention. The challenge will be developing a whole-body, holistic spirituality within the Unitarian Universalism.

The presence found in yoga extends to silence. Silence is a basic form of Ma's teaching. Following the breath and meditating on it can result in the practitioner experiencing a profound silence. Using words, art, the body, and silence to teach, Ma consciously excludes the mind with all its racing thoughts from the realm of spiritual practice. In Hinduism, the metaphor for this is the monkey mind, constantly jumping from one thought to another. This contrasts western approaches that focus on the mind and thoughts. Ma often teaches with paradoxes to stop the mind, as in Zen koans. Her approach accesses a human reality that is beyond thought.

The human care response to HIV/AIDS is an issue of religious importance. Liberal Religion shares the social justice and human dignity concerns of the River Fund. Congregations can benefit from the example of the Fund. It responds to the needs of impoverished people living with HIV/AIDS by assisting not only with food and clothing, but also with compassionate comfort. It used to provide shelter as well, as long as it was able to do so. Although greatly beneficial, material care is not enough. The kindness of human camaraderie matters deeply to people in need. People need comfort as well as care. The Fund focuses on individuals, while providing them with the supplies they need.

The work of justice needs to touch people. For example, congregations could distribute collected goods directly to recipients, instead of through an agency. This is what the Fund does. Such activities provide the opportunity of a personal connection. The volunteers gain a new perspective by meeting people and serving them in person. The abstracts of social justice and human dignity become concrete social service and pastoral care. This should enable transformative experiences for the participants.

The River Fund provides an example of how one congregation created and sustains a single, complex project in community ministry with a specific focus. It thrives because the Kashi Ashram congregation developed a service project, responding to the needs in its extended community. It provides volunteer chaplaincy and social services, mostly staffed by volunteers from the congregation. It has attracted volunteers that have subsequently joined the congregation. Its distinctive emphasis is the personal nature of the hands-on work. Using the example of the Fund, any congregation can adopt or create a similar project as its own community ministry. Most congregations do support various local ministries in diverse ways, but few have adopted one as their primary mission. What possibilities would emerge from such intensity of commitment? Unitarian Universalist congregations already have valuable organizational and social action expertise to contribute to such a community ministry.

Ma and the River Fund serve as model examples of a charismatic teacher and human care service organization committed to HIV/AIDS. They take the religious teaching about embodying the love of God in the world to heart. God cries for the

suffering that humanity is causing itself. People have created the situation; people have the answer to it. The answer begins with prayer, i.e., spiritual exercise. The answer continues when prayer ends: people need to open the hands they have clasped in prayer and offer them in service to the world as the hands of God.

Om, shanti, shanti, shanti. Peace, peace, peace.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, *Nine Meditations*, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Blumenfeld and Alexander, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Messer, 18.

<sup>4</sup> This is the tradition Hindu closure to an act of reverence. It invokes a blessing of peace.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions Program*. Chicago: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993.
- 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions*. Cape Town: 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999.
- Adams, James Luther. *On Being Human Religiously: Selected Essays in Religion and Society*, ed. Max. L. Stackhouse. Boston: Beacon, 1976.
- Adams, Laurie Schneider. *Looking at Art*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
- AIDS National Interfaith Network, and Public Media Center. *Religion in the Age of AIDS: Strategy and Theology from the AIDS & Religion in America Convocation*. Washington, DC: AIDS National Interfaith Network, 1999.
- Ambika, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 3 March 2006.
- "American Jewish Woman Given Mata Maha Mandaleshwar Title." *India Abroad (New York Edition)*, 10 February 2006, C1.
- Andrews, Stan, and Shakti Das, River Fund Housing Project Seminar, Memo, Sebastian, FL 1997.
- Annual Report: AIDS Treatment Access-Cuba*. Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 2000.
- "Atlanta AIDS Assembly: Have Religions Failed to Serve Sufferers." *Hinduism Today*, February 1999.
- Bae, James C. "Introduction: The Spirit of Art." In *In a World of Gods and Goddesses: The Mystic Art of Indra Sharma*, 10-14. San Rafael, CA: Mandala, 2001.
- Bass, Dorothy C., ed. *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Beech, Linda C. M. "Eastern and Western Attitudes in the Management of Death and the Shanti Project as an Experimental Synthesis." California Institute of Integral Studies, 1981.
- A Benefit for the River House Building Fund Campaign*. Sebastian, FL: River House, 1996.
- The Bhagavadgita: With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes*. ed. S[arvepalli] Radhakrishnan. New Delhi: Indus, 1994.



- Bigetti, Mario, and Salvatore Conti, eds. *Ma Jaya: Antica Madre, Oceano Di Latte*. Roma: A.C.O.R., 1993.
- Blumenfeld, Warren J., and Scott W. Alexander. *AIDS and Your Religious Community: A Hands-on Guide for Local Programs*. Boston: UUA, 1991.
- Bolen, Jean Shinoda. *Close to the Bone: Life-Threatening Illness and the Search for Meaning*. New York: Touchstone, 1996.
- Borysenko, Joan. *Fire in the Soul: A New Psychology of Spiritual Optimism*. New York: Warner, 1993.
- Boynton, Robert S. "Mixed Blessings." *Mirabella*, March 1994, 106, 108, 110.
- Bransford, John D., Ann L. Brown, Rodney R. Cocking, M. Suzanne Donovan, James W. Pellegrino, Committee on Development in the Science of Learning, Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice, and Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education National Research Council, eds. *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, DC: National Academy P, 2000.
- Bridges, Hal. *American Mysticism: From William James to Zen*. New York: Harper, 1970.
- Cadwell, Steven A., Robert A. Burnham, and Marshall Forstein. *Therapists on the Front Line: Psychotherapy with Gay Men in the Age of AIDS*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric P, 1994.
- A Call to Our Guiding Institutions*. Cape Town: Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999.
- Callen, Michael. *Surviving AIDS*. New York: Harper, 1990.
- Canterbury-Counts, Jaya, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 27 December 2004.
- Caplan, Mariana. *Halfway up the Mountain: The Error of Premature Claims to Enlightenment*. Prescott, AZ: Hohm P, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Do You Need a Guru?: Understanding the Student-Teacher Relationship in an Era of False Prophets*. London: Thorsons, 2002.
- Carmody, Denise Lardner, and John Tully Carmody. *Mysticism: East and West*. New York: Oxford, 1996.

- Cc Listing by Region* [internet]. San Francisco: United Religions Initiative, 2004, accessed 15 November 2005; Available from [http://www.uri.org/CC\\_Listing\\_by\\_Region.html](http://www.uri.org/CC_Listing_by_Region.html).
- Chaudhuri, Nirad C. *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1979.
- Chennakesavan, Sarasvati. *A Critical Study of Hinduism*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1998.
- Clinical Issues*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1984.
- Cohen, Andrew. "Don't Ask Why--Just Do Something!: An Interview with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati." *What is Enlightenment?* 2001, 67, 76-81, 148.
- Collett, Merrill. *At Home with Dying: A Zen Hospice Approach*. Boston: Shambhala, 1999.
- Conti, Salavatore [sic.]. "Ma Jaya: Creation Series." 2. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- Conti, Salvatore. "Ma Jaya: The River Series." [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *The Dance of Siva: Essays on Indian Art and Culture*. New York: Dover, 1985.
- Cooper, John W., Judy E. Pickens, and Malcolm H. McKay, eds. *The AIDS Ministry Handbook: A Resource Guide for Faith Communities and AIDS Ministries*. Washington: AIDS National Interfaith Network, 1997.
- Corrections Offender Network: Inmate Population Information Detail* [internet]. 2004, accessed 12 October 2004; Available from <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/activeinmates>.
- Council of Religious AIDS Networks. *Interfaith AIDS Worship Planning Resources*. East Lansing, MI: Council of Religious AIDS Networks, [n.d.].
- Cox, Billy. "Charges Break Heart of Group's Spiritual Leader." *Florida Today*, 3 February 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ex-Members Rip Enclave: Divisive Words Crack Harmonious Facade at Religious Ashram near Sebastian." *Florida Today*, 3 February 2002.
- "Cuba AIDS Project [Flyer]." Sebastian, FL: River Fund, [2000?].

- Cultural Issues Addressing Racism and Increasing Cultural Awareness*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.
- Dallapiccola, Anna L. *Dictionary of Hindu Lore and Legend*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
- Daniélou, Alain. *The Myths and Gods of India: The Classic Work on Hindu Polytheism from the Princeton Bollingen Series*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, 1991.
- Dass, Ram, ed. *Miracle of Love: Stories About Neem Karoli Baba*. Santa Fe, NM: Hanuman Foundation, 1995.
- Declaration toward a Global Ethic*. Chicago: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993.
- Dehejia, Vidya. *Indian Art Art & Ideas*. London: Phaidon, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Encountering Devi." In *Devi the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art*, ed. Vidya Dehejia, 12-35. Washington, DC: Sackler Gallery, 1999.
- Deikman, Arthur J. *The Observing Self: Mysticism and Psychotherapy*. Boston: Beacon, 1982.
- Desai, Prakash N. *Health and Medicine in the Hindu Tradition Health/Medicine and the Faith Traditions*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
- Devi, Ananda, Interview by Author, 4 April 2006.
- Diaz, Laurent A Park, Cheryl H. Keen, James P. Keen, and Sharon Daloz Parks. *Common Fire: Leading Lives of Commitment in a Complex World*. Boston: Beacon P, 1996.
- Dickinson, Tara, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 26-27 December 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 15 March 2006.
- Doniger O'Flaherty, Wendy, ed. *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*. Berkley: U California P, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*. Berkley: U California P, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism*, Textual Sources for the Study of Religion. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1988.
- Doniger, Wendy. *Hindu Myths*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1994.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Implied Spider: Politics & Theology in Myth*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hinduism: A Chronicle*, University of Chicago course, Chicago, IL 2004.
- Doniger, Wendy, and Sudhir Kakar, eds. *Kamasutra: A New, Complete English Translation of the Sanskrit Text*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002.
- Dossey, M.D., Larry *Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*. New York: Harper, 1993.
- Drucker, Malka. "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati." In *White Fire: A Portrait of Spiritual Leaders in America*, ed. Malka Drucker, 186-195. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2003.
- Dubitsky, Sorah. "Service: The Heart of Life: An Interview with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati." *Miracle Journeys Magazine*, January/February 2004, 14-15.
- Duca, Suzanne. "Ma Jaya." *Visions*, Summer 1994, 39-41.
- Dudley, Carl S. *Community Ministry: New Challenges, Proven Steps to Faith-Based Initiatives* Herndon, VA: Alban, 2002.
- Eck, Diana. *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3 ed. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.
- "Eclipse: The Shanti Project Newsletter." San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1980-.
- Elgoad, Heather. *Hinduism and the Religious Arts*. London: Cassell, 1999.
- Eliade, Mircea. *The Two and the One*. New York: Harper, 1962.
- Elkins, David N. *Beyond Religion: A Personal Program for Building a Spiritual Life Outside the Walls of Traditional Religion*. Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1998.
- Ellor, James W., F. Ellen Netting, and Jane M. Thibault. *Religious and Spiritual Aspects of Human Service Practice*. Columbia: U South Carolina P, 1999.
- Ellwood, Robert S. *Mysticism and Religion*. 2 ed. New York: Seven Bridges, 1999.
- Emerson, Dorothy May, ed. *Edge of the Wave: The Great Goddess: Fact, Hypothesis, or Feminist Myth?* Chicago: Collegium, 1993.
- Farley, Wendy. *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1990.
- Feuerstein, Georg. *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy, and Practice*. Prescott, AZ: Hohm P, 1998.

- Flood, Gavin. *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, Blackwell Companions to Religion. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
- "Food and Medicine Are Not Weapons [Brochure]." Santa Fe, NM: AIDS Treatment Access Cuba, [2001?].
- Foreman, Robert K. C., ed. *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Fortunate, John E. *AIDS: The Spiritual Dilemma*. San Francisco: Harper, 1987.
- Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper, 1995.
- Frank, Arthur W. *At the Will of the Body: Reflections on Illness*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991.
- Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston: Beacon P, 1959.
- Franklin, R. L. "Postconstructivist Approaches to Mysticism." In *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*, ed. Robert K. C. Franklin, 231-245. New York: Oxford, 1998.
- Froman, Paul Kent. *Pathways to Wellness: Strategies for Self-Empowerment in the Age of AIDS*. New York: Plume, 1990.
- Fuller, C. J. *The Camphor Flame: Popular Hinduism and Society in India*. Rev. and exp. ed. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
- Fuller, Robert C. *Spiritual, but Not Religions: Understanding Unchurched America*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Garfield, Charles. *Facing Death: The Shanti Project*. Cassette. New York: Psychology Today, 1977.
- Garfield, Charles A., Cindy Spring, and Doris Ober. *Sometimes My Heart Goes Numb: Love and Caregiving in a Time of AIDS*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
- Geary, James. *Facing Death and Dying*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1984.
- Geary, James, and Stephen Mehalko. *AIDS a Medical Overview*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1984.

- Giordano, Eric, "HIV/AIDS: Southern Africa, China, and the Netherlands", paper presented at the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education 13th Annual Conference, Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI, 22 April 2006.
- Gold, Daniel. *Comprehending the Guru: Toward a Grammar of Religious Perception*. Vol. 57 American Academy of Religion Academy Series, ed. Carl A. Raschke. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988.
- Goldsmith, Malcolm. *Knowing Me, Knowing God: Exploring Your Spirituality with Meyers-Briggs*. Nashville: Abington P, 1997.
- The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. New York: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center, 1942.
- Gottlieb, Roger S. *A Spirituality of Resistance: Finding a Peaceful Heart and Protecting the Earth*. New York: Crossroad, 1999.
- Griffin, David Ray, ed. *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*. Edited by David Ray Griffin, SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought. Albany: SUNY, 1988.
- Griffin, Jean Latz. "AIDS Care Called Spiritual Duty: Religious Groups Doing More to Help HIV Patients." *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1993, 1, 6.
- Griffiths, Bede. *River of Compassion: A Christian Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*. Warwick, NY: Amity, 1987.
- Grimes, John. *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy: Sanskrit Terms Defined in English*. Albany, NY: SUNY, 1989.
- Grof, Stanislav, and Christine Grof. *Beyond Death: The Gates of Consciousness*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980.
- Guha-Thakurta, Tapati. "Clothing the Goddess: The Modern Contest over Representations of Devi." In *Devi the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art*, ed. Vidya Dehejia, 156-179. Washington, DC: Sackler Gallery, 1999.
- Guru Rinpoche. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo*. Translated by Francesca Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa. Boston: Shambhala, 1987.
- Hamilton, Sue. *Indian Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Harding, Elizabeth U. *Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar*. York Beach, ME: Nicolas-Hays, 1993.

- Hardy, Friedhelm. *The Religious Culture of India: Power, Love and Wisdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- Hardy, Richard P. *Loving Men: Gay Partners, Spirituality, and AIDS*. New York: Continuum, 1998.
- Hardy, Robin, and David Groff. *The Crisis of Desire: AIDS and the Fate of Gay Brotherhood*. Boston: Houghton, 1999.
- Hay, Louise L. *The AIDS Book: Creating a Positive Approach*. Santa Monica: Hay House, 1988.
- Hayward, John F. *Through the Rose Window: Art, Myth and the Religious Imagination*, ed. Kenneth A. Olliff. Boston: Skinner House, 2002.
- Heart to Heart: A Newsletter for Friends of the River Fund*. Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, 2005/2006.
- Hershey, Ann. *Friends, Family and Lovers*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.
- Higgins, Gina O'Connell. *Resilient Adults: Overcoming a Cruel Past*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Highleyman, L. "U.S. AIDS Death Rate Decreases by Nearly Half." NCBI: PubMed, 1999.
- Hitchens, Neal. *Voices That Care: Stories and Encouragements for People with AIDS/HIV and Those Who Love Them*. New York: Fireside, 1992.
- HIV/AIDS Care Team Training Manual*. Wilton Manors, FL: Catholic Charities-Broward County, [c. 1995].
- Hixon, Lex. *Mother of the Universe: Visions of the Goddess and Tantric Hymns of Enlightenment*. Wheaton, IL. Quest, 1994.
- Holck, Frederick H., ed. *Death and Eastern Thought: Understanding Death in Eastern Religions and Philosophies*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1974.
- Holland, Joe. "A Postmodern Vision of Spirituality and Society." In *Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*, ed. David Ray Griffin, 41-61. Albany: SUNY, 1998.
- Holloran, James. *Levels of Active Listening*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1980.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Volunteer Counselors Training Patient Advocacy*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.

- Holloran, James, and Linda Maxey. *Introduction to Grief*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1984.
- Hopkins, Thomas J. *The Hindu Religious Tradition The Religious Life of Man*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1971.
- Horgan, John. *Rational Mysticism: Dispatches from the Border between Science and Spirituality*. Boston: Houghton, 2003.
- How to Avoid Burnout*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.
- How to Facilitate a Support Group*. Video. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.
- Hudson, Frederic M. *The Adult Years: Mastering the Art of Self-Renewal*. Rev. ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.
- [Hutner], Swami Krishnapriya, and Jaya Devi Bhagavati, eds. *Kali Natha Yoga as Taught by Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: The Ancient Art of Balancing Power and Love through the Practice of Yoga, Meditation and Breath*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2006.
- Huyler, Stephen P. *Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1999.
- Inden, Ronald B. *Imagining India*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000.
- International Journal of Practical Theology* [internet]. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002, accessed 29 June 2005; Available from [http://www.degruyter.de/rs/261\\_5246\\_ENU\\_h.htm](http://www.degruyter.de/rs/261_5246_ENU_h.htm).
- Jansen, Eva Rudy. *The Book of Hindu Imagery: Gods, Manifestations, and Their Meaning*. Havelte, Netherlands: Binkey Kok, 2001.
- Jaya Das, Letter to Author. Indiantown, FL, 19 January 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Letter to Author, South Bay, FL, 20 March 2006.
- Jayanta, and Babaji, Experience Kali Natha Yoga Workshop, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005.
- Jenkins, Gary Joseph. *Motivation, Stress, and Coping among Volunteer Grief Counselors*. San Francisco: San Francisco State University, 1978.
- Jergen, BVM, Carol Frances. *Restoring Our Friendship with God: The Mystery of Redemption from Suffering and Sin* Zacchaeus Studies: Theology. Wilmington, DE: Michaelk Glazier, 1989.



- Johnsen, Linda. *Daughters of the Goddess: Women Saints of India*. St. Paul, MN: Yes International P, 1994.
- Johnson, William R., and Cynthia A. Bouman. *Affirming Persons-Saving Lives: AIDS Awareness and Prevention Education*. Cleveland: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1993.
- Jones, C[leve], and [Ma Jaya Sati] Bhagavati. *Voices into the Millennium: The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt*. CD. Berkley, CA: Conference Recording Services, 1999.
- Kabat-Zinn, Jon. *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*: Delta, 1990.
- Kali Natha Yoga* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram Foundation, 2004, accessed 29 April 2005; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/kaliyoga.htm>.
- Kantor, Chandra Devi Phyllis. "Fearless Compassion: Dispelling HIV Myths Allows for Loving Care." *Hinduism Today*, February 1999, 13.
- Kashi Ashram: Interfaith Spiritual Community* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2006, accessed 15 January 2006; Available from [www.kashi.org](http://www.kashi.org).
- "Kashi Church Foundation: South Africa Project [Brochure]." Sebastian, FL: Kashi, 1999.
- Kashi Foundation Gift for the Millennium: The Arms of the Mother: Embracing the World through Hands of Service in the 21st Century, Fundraising Appeal, Sebastian, FL [1999?].
- Kashi Rainbow* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2005, accessed 15 November 2005; Available from [http://www.kashi.org/involved/kashi\\_rainbow.shtml](http://www.kashi.org/involved/kashi_rainbow.shtml).
- Kashi Rainbow Testimonials* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2004, accessed 25 December 2004; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/involved/rainbow/testimonials.htm>.
- Katz, Steven T., ed. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Kidd, Sue Monk. *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions*. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.
- Kinsley, David. *Health, Healing, and Religion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 1996.

- Kinsley, David R. *Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hindu Goddesses: Visions of the Divine Feminine in the Hindu Religious Tradition*. Berkeley: U California P, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Sword and the Flute: Kali and Krishna, Dark Vision of the Terrible and the Sublime in Hindu Mythology*. Berkeley: U California P, 2000.
- Kisken, Tom. "Kashi Devotees Feed Inner-City Homeless, Dispute Claims They're in Cult [Sic]." *Ventura County Star*, 12 July 2003, 1.
- Kleinmaier, Carol, and Clark Henley. *Psychosocial Aspects of AIDS*. VHS. 1988.
- Klostermaier, Klaus K. *A Survey of Hinduism*. 2 ed. Albany, NY: SUNY P, 1994.
- Knipe, David M. *Hinduism: Experiments in the Sacred*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1991.
- Knott, Kim. *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Knox, Harry, and Sharon Groves. *World Religions and the Struggle for Equality* [internet]. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign, 2006, accessed 14 March 2006; Available from <http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Religion4&CONTENTID=30939&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm>.
- Kornfeld, Margaret. *Cultivating Wholeness: A Guide to Care and Counseling in Faith Communities*. New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Kraus, Krandall, and Paul Borja. *It's Never About What It's About: What We Learned About Living While Waiting to Die*. Los Angeles: Alyson, 2000.
- Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth. *AIDS: The Ultimate Challenge*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, and Their Own Families*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Kushner, Harold S. *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. New York: Avon, 1989.
- Lapierre, Dominique. *City of Joy*. Translated by Kathryn Spink. Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1985.
- Laxman Das. *Yoga & World Peace* [internet]. West Hollywood, CA: Los Angeles Kashi Ashram, 2003, accessed 11 March 2005; Available from <http://www.kashila.org/YogaA.htm>.

- \_\_\_\_\_, Interview with Author, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005.
- Leeming, David. *A Dictionary of Asian Mythology*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.
- Lidell, Lucy. *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga*. New York: Fireside, 1983.
- Lippe, Loinette. "Ma Jaya from the Holy Land of Brooklyn." *Shambala Sun: Creating Enlightened Society*, March 1995, 8-10.
- Lopez, Jr., Donald S., ed. *Religions of India in Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religions. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995.
- Louise, Radha, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 26 March 2005.
- Lucas, Ian. *Growing up Positive: Stories from a Generation of Young People Affected by AIDS*. London: Cassell, 1995.
- Lunney, Dan, James Hicks, and Marilyn Rauch, eds. *Communities of Care: AIDS Care Team Manual*. Chicago: AIDS Pastoral Care Network, 1998.
- Ma Jaya* [internet]. 2006, accessed 18 February 2006; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/majaya>.
- Ma Jaya [Sati Bhagavati]. *A Message from Ma Jaya About Babies with AIDS for Those Attending The "Dessine-Moi Un Mouyton" Benefit Show in Paris*. [Sebastian, FL]: [River Fund], 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Ancient Mother." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: Kashi Foundation, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Linga Ma." [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Mother Ganga Series." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Skull Series." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Soul Cross." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sun Goddess Series." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Vanishing Mother Series." ed. Salvatore Conti. [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n.d.].

Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, Letter to David Ramage, Daniel Gomez-Ibanez and Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 3 September 1993.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Answers to Questions About Death #1." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Answers to Questions About Death #2." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bow to the Silence: Meditations and Talks*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Breathe and Dance with the Gods*. Sebastian, FL: Ganga Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "For Caregivers: Answers and Questions #1." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Grief." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *I, the Mother. A Selection from a Work in Progress*. Roseland, FL: Ganga Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Kindness." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Meditations and Talks*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nine Meditations*. Sebastian, FL: Ganga P, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *On Death and Dying: Excerpts from I, the Mother*. Sebastian, FL: Ganga Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The River*. Roseland, FL: Ganga P, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The River*, print, 21" x 28", 1994, Kashi Church Foundation, Sebastian, FL.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Spiritual Life: Answers and Questions #1." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Spiritual Life: Answers and Questions #2." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Time." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bones and Ash*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dance in the Fire: Meditations and Talks*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Living with Death*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video, 1996.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Living with Illness, Dying without Fear*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sharing the Heart: A Guide for Caregiving*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications Video, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Swim in the Ganga: Meditations and Talks*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *She Who Rides the Lion Rides My Beating Heart*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Death and Awareness*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Kali Who Swallows the Universe." *Parabola: Myth, Tradition, and the Search for Meaning*, Summer 1998, 18-21.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Chakra Balancing Meditation*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. An Open Appeal to People of Faith About the AIDS Pandemic, Sebastian, FL 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Daily Prayer: June 6, 2000* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2000, accessed 8 June 2000; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shakti Sanchara River Painting: My Rudra*, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 14", 2000, Rudra Dundzila collection, Chicago, IL.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Art of Mysticism 1: Meditation*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Art of Mysticism 2: Questions and Answers*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Spirit of Interfaith: An Interview with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *What Is Enlightenment?* Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tantra: The Lost Art*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Daily Prayer: January 10, 2003* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2003, accessed 12 January 2003; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *No Boundaries: Darshan with Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati*. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Foundation, 2003.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Daily Prayer: May 12, 2004* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2004, accessed 14 May 2004; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/prayer.shtml>.
- \_\_\_\_\_, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 28 February 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 28 February 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "How the AIDS Pandemic Changed My Life." In *Awakening the Spirit, Inspiring the Soul: 30 Stories of Interspiritual Discovery in the Community of Faiths*, ed. Wayne Teasdale and Martha Howard, 62-65. Woodstock, VT: Sky Light Paths, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_, GLBT Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 26 February 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Global Live Audio Darshan, Sebastian, FL, 8 January 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The World Needs Mothering." In *A Chorus of Wisdom: Notes on Spiritual Living From...* ed. Sorah Dubitsky, 145-49. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Curriculum Vitae." [n. d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Facing the Millennium*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Kali Tantra." 2003. Sebastian, FL, [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Living with AIDS Now*. Sebastian, FL: Jaya Communications, [n.d.].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How God Found Me: The Autobiography of an American Guru*. Roseville, CA: Prima, [scheduled for 2003].
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Ancient Mother*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48" ca. 1994-95, Kashi Sacred Art, Sebastian, FL.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Linga Ma*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48", ca. 1995-96, Kashi Sacred Art, Sebastian, FL.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Painted Kali Reading, #722*, acrylic on canvas, 18" x 14", ca. 2000, Rudra Dundzila collection, Chicago, IL.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *4x4 River Painting: The River Fund*, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 48" ca. 2000-1, The River Fund, Sebastian, FL.
- Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, [Dhumavati], [Swami Krishnapriya], and [Jaya Devi Bhagavati]. *Awakening the Transformative Power of Shakti*. Berkley, CA: Conference Recording Service, 2004.

- Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, and Cleve Jones. *Statement of Conscience Regarding the HIV/AIDS Pandemic* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, 1999, accessed 1 June 2003; Available from <http://www.riverfund.org/soc/facts.htm>.
- [Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati]. "Kashi Lineage Series." [Sebastian, FL]: [Kashi Sacred Art], [n. d.].
- [Ma Jaya Sati] Bhagavati, Kaur, Devi, Malka Drucker, and et al. *Embracing the Feminine in Spirituality*. CD. Berkeley, CA: Conference Recording Service, 2004.
- [Ma Jaya Sati] Bhagavati, Morrissey, Kaur, Saraswati, and et al. *Women and Spirituality*. CD. Berkeley, CA: Conference Recording Service, 1999.
- "Ma Jaya: Plate Collections [Kali Dancing Cover]." Sebastian, FL: Kashi, [n. d.].
- "Ma Jaya: Plate Collections [the Tree Goddess Cover]." Sebastian, FL: Kashi, [n. d.].
- Mancilla, Michael, and Lisa Troshinsky. *Love in the Time of HIV: The Gay Man's Guide to Sex, Dating, and Relationships*. New York: Guilford, 2003.
- Many Threads, One Weave 2003 Update*. San Francisco: National Catholic AIDS Network & Catholic Charities USA, 2003.
- Many Threads, One Weave: A Resource Program to Assist Parish Communities in Responding to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic*. San Francisco: National Catholic AIDS Network & Catholic Charities USA, 1999.
- Marriott, McKim, ed. *India through Hindu Categories*. New Delhi: Sage, 1990.
- Martin, Judy. "Faith & Healing: Activists and Clergy Try to Get the World's Religions on the Same Page About Fighting AIDS." *A & U: America's AIDS Magazine*, October 2004, 24-25, 36.
- Matousek, Mark. "The Agony and the Ecstasy: An Interview with Ma Jaya Bhagavati." *Yoga Journal*, March/April 1996, 90-97, 148-149.
- Mauk, Kristen L., and Nola K. Schmidt. *Spiritual Care in Nursing Practice*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 2004.
- McCormack, Corey, John Canalli, and Michael Tinker. *Heroism-- a Community Responds*. VHS. [New York, N.Y.]: Cinema Guild, 1987.
- McDermott, Rachel Fell. *Mother of My Heart, Daughter of My Dreams: Kali and Uma in the Devotional Poetry of Bengal*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kali and Uma from Bengal*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001.
- McDermott, Rachel Fell, and Jeffrey J. Kripal, eds. *Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West*. Berkley: U California P, 2003.
- McLean, Malcolm. *Devoted to the Goddess: The Life and Work of Ramprasad* SUNY Series in Hindu Studies. Albany: SUNY, 1998.
- Means, J. Jeffrey. *Trauma & Evil: Healing the Wounded Soul*. Minneapolis: Fortress P, 2000.
- Melton, George R., and Wil Garcia. *Beyond AIDS: A Journey into Healing*. Beverly Hills: Brotherhood, 1988.
- Melwani, Lavina. "Kashi, USA: Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati Tenders Compassion and Dignity to Victims of AIDS." *Little India*, November 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Selfless Life of Serving Shiva in All: Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati, AIDS Angel of Kashi." *Hinduism Today*, February 1999, 37-38.
- Messer, Donald E. *Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence: Christian Churches and the Global AIDS Crisis*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- Michaels, Alex. *Hinduism: Past and Present*. Translated by Barbara Harshav. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
- Michell, George. *Hindu Art and Architecture* World of Art. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000.
- Miller, Sukie, and Suzanne Lipsett. *After Death: How People around the World Map the Journey after Life*. New York: Touchstone, 1997.
- Minor, Robert N. *Radhakrishnan: A Religious Biography* Albany: SUNY, 1997.
- Mirkin, Kathy. "Healing & Religion." *Conscious Choice: Resources For Responsible Decision Making*, November/December 1993.
- Mitchell, Kenneth R., and Herbert Anderson. *All Our Losses, All Our Grievs: Resources for Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Westminster P, 1983.
- Monette, Paul. *Last Watch of the Night: Essays Too Personal and Otherwise*. New York: Harcourt, 1994.
- Monroe, Kristen R. *The Heart of Altruism: Perceptions of a Common Humanity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996.



- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice During the Holocaust*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
- Morris, Danny E. *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*. Bethesda, MD: Alban, 1997.
- Naranjo, Claudio, and Robert E. Ornstein. *On the Psychology of Meditation*. New York: Viking, 1971.
- Narayanan, Vasudha. "Gurus and Goddesses, Deities and Devotees." In *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States*, ed. Karen Pechilis, 149-78. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Network, AIDS National Interfaith. *Interfaith AIDS Worship Planning Resources*. Washington, D.C.: AIDS National Interfaith Network, [n.d.].
- "New Rest, South Africa: Medical Donations Needed [Brochure]." [Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund, 2000?
- O'Murchu, Diarmuid. *Poverty, Celibacy, and Obedience: A Radical Option for Life*. New York: Crossroad, 1999.
- Olaboro, Centurio. *Uganda Martyrs Orphan's Project*. DVD. Tororo, Uganda: Uganda Martyrs Orphan's Project, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Interview by Author, Chicago, IL, 21 June 2005.
- "The Original Kali Mother." [Sebastian, FL]: Ma Jaya's Sacred Art, [n. d.].
- "Orphanage in Uganda Named after Ma Jaya [Press Release]." Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [n.d.].
- Orteza, Arsenio. "Arlo and Ma." *The Christian Century* (1993): 492-493.
- Osis, Karlis, and Erlendur Haraldsson. *At the Hour of Death: What They Saw*. New York: Avon, 1977.
- Ostaseski, Frank. *Being a Compassionate Companion : Teachings, Stories and Practical Wisdom for Those Accompanying Someone Who Is Dying*. CD. San Francisco, CA: Institute on Dying (Zen Hospice Project), 2000.
- Overberg, Kenneth R., SJ ed. *AIDS, Ethics & Religion: Embracing a World of Suffering*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994.
- Palmer, Parker. *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

- Pande, Ravi Prakash. *Divine Reality: Shri Baba Neeb Karori Ji Maharaj*. Kainchi, India: Shri Kainchi Hanuman Mandir and Ashram, 2003.
- Parker, Swami Himalaya, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 13 April 2005.
- Parrinder, Geoffrey. *Mysticism in the World's Religions*. Oxford: One World, 1996.
- Patanjali. *How to Know God: The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*. Translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood. Hollywood: Vedanta P, 1981.
- Pauw, Amy Plantinga. "Dying Well." In *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass, 163-77. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Pechilis, Karen. *The Graceful Guru: Hindu Female Gurus in India and the United States*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Perelli, Robert J. *Ministry to Persons with AIDS: A Family Systems Approach* Guides to Pastoral Care. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991.
- Peskind, Steve. *Heart Lessons from an Epidemic: Buddhist Practice and Living with HIV*. Berkeley: Parallax, [expected 2004].
- The Principal Upanisads: Edited with Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*. ed. S[arvepalli] Radhakrishnan. New Delhi: Indus, 1994.
- Program Book: Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*. Barcelona: 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions, 2004.
- Radhakrishnan, S[arvepalli]. *Indian Religions*. New Delhi: Orient, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. Delhi, India: Oxford UP, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Hindu View of Life*. New Delhi: Indus, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Indian Philosophy*. 2 vols. Rev. ed. New Delhi: Oxford, 1999.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, and Charles Moore, eds. *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Reed, Paul. *Serenity: Support and Guidance for People with HIV, Their Families, Friends, and Caregivers*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: Celestial, 1990.
- Reynolds, Bobby. *Those People*. Videocassette. Alexandria, Va.: PBS Video, 1986.
- The River Fund* [internet]. Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 2004, accessed 28 December 2004; Available from <http://www.riverfund.org>.

- "River Fund's New Rest Settlement Project Guguletu Township." Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [1999].
- "The River Fund [Benefit Brochure]." 1997.
- "The River Fund [Benefit Brochure]." 1998.
- "The River Fund [Brochure]." 1992.
- "The River Fund [Brochure]." 1994.
- "The River Fund [Brochure]." [1996?].
- "The River Fund [Newsletter]." 1999.
- The River Fund Annual Report: Fiscal Year 1996.* Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 1997.
- "River Fund Newsletter." 1. Roseland, FL: River Fund, 1993.
- "River Fund Newsletter." Sebastian, FL: River Fund, 1995.
- "The River Fund Programs [Flyer]." [Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund, 2000.
- "River Fund Visits New Rest Settlement." Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, 2000.
- "River House Admissions Agreement." 4. Sebastian, FL: The River House, [n. d.].
- "The River House: Introduction [Flyer for Perspective Residents]." Sebastian, FL: The River House, [1996?].
- Robinson, Peter Tufts. *Four Spiritualities: Expressions of Self, Expressions of Spirit: A Psychology of Contemporary Spiritual Choice.* Palo Alto: Davies-Black, 1996.
- [Rosenkranz], Brahma Das [Richard]. "The 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions [Press Release]." Chicago, IL: Parliament of the World's Religions, 1999.
- Rukmini Jaya, Interview by Author, 22 March 2006.
- Russell, Letty M., ed. *The Church with AIDS: Renewal in the Midst of Crisis.* Louisville: Westminster, 1990.
- The Sacred in Art [Exhibit Catalog].* Chicago: 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993.
- Sanford, John A. *Healing Body and Soul: The Meaning of Illness in the New Testament and Psychotherapy.* Leominster, England: Gracewing, 1992.

- Santorelli, Saki. *Heal Thy Self: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine*: Random, 1999.
- Sanyas [internet]. Kashi Ashram, 2006, accessed 1 February 2006; Available from <http://www.kashi.org/teaching/sanyas.shtml>.
- Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. *Dancing with Śiva: Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism*. Kappa, HI: Himalayan Academy, 1997.
- Schmidt, Stephen A. *Living with Chronic Illness: The Challenge of Adjustment*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989.
- Sen, Ramprasad. *Grace and Mercy in Her Wild Hair: Selected Poems to the Mother Goddess*. Translated by Leonard Nathan and Clinton Seely. Prescott, AZ: Holm, 1999.
- Severson, Lucky. "Altruism." *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, 24 March 2006.
- Shakti Das. "The Future 40-Bed Respite's Funding-Proposal Development." Robert R. Brodie & Assoc., 1997.
- "Shakti Sanchara River Painting [Brochure]." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Sacred Art, 2000?
- Shanti Project Collection 3*. CD. [San Francisco?]: Badman Recording, 2004.
- "Shanti Project: File of Leaflets, Clippings and Pamphlets." Portfolio: Michigan State University Library Special Collections American Radicalism Vertical File, 1980.
- Sharma, Anjali. "Guru Ma: An Icon for Human Rights?" *News India-Times*, 20 October 2000, 40.
- Sharma, Arvind. *The Philosophy of Religion and Advaita Vedanta: A Comparative Study in Religion and Reason*. University Park: Pennsylvania S UP, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Hinduism for Our Times*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Classical Hindu Thought: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Shea, John. *Spirituality and Health Care: Researching toward a Holistic Future*. Chicago: Park Ridge Center, 2000.
- Shealy, C. Norman, and Caroline M. Myss. *AIDS: Passageway to Transformation*. Walpole, NH: Stillpoint, 1987.
- Siegel, Bernie S., M.D. *Love, Medicine & Miracles: Lessons Learned About Self-Healing from a Surgeon's Experience with Exceptional Patients*. New York: Perennial, 1986.

- Sigfrids, Alice, "HIV/AIDS: Southern Africa Region", paper presented at the Midwest Institute for International/Intercultural Education 13th Annual Conference, Schoolcraft College, Livonia, MI, 22 April 2006.
- Smart, Ninian. "The Purification of Consciousness and the Negative Path." In *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, ed. Steven T. Katz, 117-29. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983.
- Smith, Brain K. "Hinduism." In *Evil and Suffering*, ed. Jacob Neusner. Cleveland: Pilgrim P, 1998.
- Smith, David. *Hinduism and Modernity Religion in the Modern World*. Malden, Ma: Blackwell, 2003.
- Smith, Raymond A., ed. *Encyclopedia of AIDS: A Social, Political, Cultural, and Scientific Record of the HIV Epidemic*. New York: Penguin, 2001.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors*. New York: Picador, 1989.
- South, Ken, Ware, Michael DiVito, Ma [Jaya Sati] Bhagavati, Centurio [Olaboro], and et al. *Exploring the Face of AIDS*. Berkeley, CA: Conference Recording Service, 2004.
- Spencer, Sydney. *Mysticism in the World's Religions*. South Brunswick, NY: Barnes, 1963.
- Spiegelman, J. Marvin, and Arwind U. Vasavada. *Hinduism and Jungian Psychology*. Phoenix, AZ: Falcon P, 1987.
- Staal, Frits. *Exploring Mysticism: A Methodological Essay*. Berkeley: U California P, 1975.
- Sternberg, Robert J., and Wendy M. Williams. *Educational Psychology*. Boston: Allyn, 2002.
- Stone, Karen. *Image and Spirit: Finding Meaning in Visual Art*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2003.
- "The Story of Rudraksha Beads." [Sebastian, FL]: [Ma's India], [n. d.].
- "The Strangers among Us." *People*, 19 April 1993, 34-40.
- The Strength of Community*. "Sebastian, FL": Kashi Foundation, 2002.
- Stroller, Nancy E. *Lessons from the Damned: Queers, Whores, and Junkies Respond to AIDS*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Sulmasy, Daniel P. *The Healer's Calling: A Spirituality for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals*. New York: Paulist P, 1997.

Sun, Satee Mayee, Interview by Author, Sebastian, FL, 24 December 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_, E-Mail to Author, Sebastian, FL, 20 March 2006.

[Sun], Sati Mayee. "Ma Jaya Extends "Feed Everyone" Outreach Program to Indiantown, Florida." Sebastian, FL: The River Fund, [1999?].

Swami Bhagavati Das, Interview by Author, 27 December 2004.

Swami Budhananda. *Ramprasad: The Melodious Mystic*. New Delhi: Ramakrishna Mission, 1982.

Swami Dhumavati [Horne]. "[Presentation Paper]." Kashi Ashram, Sebastian, FL, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_, Interview by Author, 24 December 2004.

Swami Himalaya [Parker], Experience Kali Natha Yoga with Swami Himalaya of Kashi Ashram, workshop, Ann Arbor, MI, 23 April 2005.

Swami Muktananda. *Meditate*, ed. Sally Kempton. Albany: SUNY, 1980.

Swami Nityananda. *The Sky of the Heart: Jewels of Wisdom from Nityananda*. Translated by M. U. Hatengdi, ed. Swami Chetanananda. Portland, OR: Rudra P, 1996.

Swami Ramayana Baba, Interview by Author, 4 April 2006.

Swami Ramayana Baba, ed. "Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati: Retrospective Portfolio, 1985-2001 (Abridged)." 39, [n. d.].

Swami Varadananda, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga, Lecture, Chicago, IL, 23 January 2005.

Swami Vivekananda. *Vivekananda: The Yogas and Other Works*, ed. Swami Nikhilananda. New York: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom*, ed. Swami Chetanananda. St. Louis: Vedanta Society, 1986.

"The Tantric Mother Within: Men's Intensive [Brochure]." Sebastian, FL: Kashi Ashram, 2000.

Teasdale, Wayne. *The Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions*. Novato, CA: New World Library, 1999.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Monk in the World: Cultivating a Spiritual Life*. Novato, CA: New World, 2002.
- Teichler, Paula A. *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.
- Tilleraas, Perry. *The Color of Light: Daily Mediations for All of Us Living with AIDS*. Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Circle of Hope: Our Stories of AIDS, Addiction & Recovery*. San Francisco: Harper, 1990.
- Treichler, Paula A. *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic*. Durham: Duke UP, 1999.
- UNAIDS. *2004 Global Report on the AIDS Epidemic: Executive Summary*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 2005.
- UNAIDS, and WHO. *AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2005*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS, 2005.
- "Unite in the Fight: U.S. Tour of the South African AIDS Memorial Quilt." [Sebastian, FL]: The River Fund and Ma Jaya River School, 2000.
- Vanita, Ruth. *Hinduism* [internet]. Washington, DC: Human Rights Campaign, 2004, accessed 15 January 2006; Available from <http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Religion4&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=28081>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Love's Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. ed. *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Vanita, Ruth, and Saleem Kidwai, eds. *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*. Delhi: Macmillan India, 2000.
- Vasavada, Arwind [U.]. *Hinduism*. Cassette. Evanston, IL: C. G. Jung Institute of Chicago, 2004.
- Vasavada, Arwind U. "The Philosophy of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan." Benares Hindu University, 1944.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Da. Si. Ji. Yunga Ka Visleshanatmaka Manovijñana, Eka Sankshipta Paricaya*. Varanasi: Caukhamba Vidyabhavana, 1963.

- Vennard, Jane E. *A Praying Congregation: The Art of Teaching Spiritual Practice*. Herndon, VA: Alban, 2005.
- Viorst, Judith. *Necessary Losses: The Loves, Illusions, Dependencies, and Impossible Expectations That All of Us Have to Give up in Order to Grow*. New York: Fireside, 1986.
- Walsh, Roger. *Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind*. New York: Wiley, 1999.
- Waltz, Sandra J. "A Descriptive Study and Evaluation Model of Shanti Project, Berkeley, California." California State University, 1979.
- White, David Gordon. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Kiss of the Yogini: "Tantric Sex" In Its South Asian Contexts*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Tantra in Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religion. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000.
- Whitehead, James D., and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *A Sense of Sexuality: Christian Love and Intimacy*. New York: Crossroad, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shadows of the Heart: A Spirituality of the Painful Emotions*. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wisdom of the Body: Making Sense of Our Sexuality*. New York: Crossroad, 2001.
- Whitfield, Fredricka. *Weekend House Call: Yoga and Your Health* [internet]. Atlanta: CNN, 2003, accessed 22 March 2006; Available from <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0307/06/sm.22.html>.
- Who Is Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati?* "Sebastian, FL": Kashi Foundation, 2000.
- Winston, Gail. *Depression in Ourselves Our Clients in Service Training*. VHS. San Francisco: Shanti Project, 1989.
- Winter-Green, Krysten. *HIV/AIDS: Confrontations with Being (Including Insights from Paul Tillich and C. G. Jung)*. Bristol, IN: Wyndham, 1995.
- Yingling, Thomas E., ed. *AIDS and the National Body*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1997.



"Yoga of Humanity: Kali Natha Yoga." *Florida Fitness: Magazine for Your Mind and Body*[2004?], 14-15.

Zimmer, Heinrich. *Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984.

Zylstra, Mignon M., and David Biebel. *When AIDS Comes Home: Answers to the Most Commonly Asked Questions: What to Say, What to Do, and How to Live with AIDS*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996.

MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

5701 South Woodlawn

Chicago, Illinois 60637

In presenting this Doctor of ministry project as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School, I agree that the Library of Meadville Lombard Theological School shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing material of this type. I agree that permission to copy from this Doctor of Ministry project may be granted by the professors under whose guidance it was written, or in their absence, by the Academic Dean when such copying is solely for scholarly purposes and does not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from, or publication of this Doctor of Ministry project which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

UR Dandila

(Signature)

19 May 2006

(Date)

LIBRARY

MEADVILLE LOMBARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

5701 South Woodlawn

Chicago, Illinois, 60637

Regulations Governing the Use of Manuscript Doctor of Ministry Projects

Typescript copies of Doctor of Ministry Projects deposited in the Wiggins Library are available for examination, but are to be used only with due regard to the priority rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but extended passages or the whole may not be published without securing previous written permission of the author. When permission has been granted, proper credit must appear in the published work.

This Doctor of Ministry project has been used in accordance with the above regulations by the persons listed below. The borrowing library is obligated to secure the signature of each user.

Name and address of user \_\_\_\_\_

Borrowing Library \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_