

Personal Reflections

Doctor's Personal Stories About Master in Boston

Dr. M.W. Lewis

The stories which I am about to tell had a beginning one October afternoon, late in the afternoon, as I was leaving my office in Davis Square, Somerville, Massachusetts...

Walking diagonally across that square, a strange figure passed me. A fast moving figure, clothed in an orange coat, puttees, and yellow shoes, and with a large orange turban on his head. Of course, insofar as seeing such a figure on the streets of Somerville, I turned as he passed me, and watched him disappear across the square.

Little did I realize the part that that strange looking man was to play in my life, for it was none other than the Master, at that time, Swami Yogananda, from India, later, Paramhansa Yogananda.

Although I did not meet the Master until Christmas Eve of the same year, Mrs. Lewis shook hands with him about a month later from the time I saw him in Davis Square, at a meeting, a metaphysical meeting at which he was the guest speaker. She told me about meeting this strange person from India, and we discussed the pros and cons, but there the subject dropped.

A few days before Christmas Eve, a friend of mine, Mrs. Warren Hasey, who later received the title of Sister Yogmata from the Master, called me on the telephone and asked me, or suggested strongly, that I make an appointment to meet Swami Yogananda, who was staying in Boston at that time. I was not too much impressed, but she insisted, and as she and I had been together working in different metaphysical organizations, I at last agreed to call him on the phone and make an appointment. This I did. And on Christmas Eve I kept my first appointment with the Master in Unity House, Park Square, Boston, Massachusetts.

I had not been enthusiastic about meeting him for the simple reason that I was somewhat prejudiced, and also I had heard many stories about the fakirs of India and their strange customs and doings. And I personally did not want to be

fooled, or taken in, so to speak, by such people. However, as I have said, I did condescend to meet the Master at this time.

And so, I well remember, as I first came into the room. He looked at me with a little smile, and, of course, I looked at him with the same kind of a smile, as much to say that I was here, but I did not want to be fooled, or taken advantage of. And we exchanged a few greetings, and, and sat down and began to discuss various questions along religious lines. And finally, I said to him, I said, "Sir, I have searched in many places, scriptures, and I've asked many people about such passages as 'If thine eye be single, thy body will be filled with light,' and other similar questions of metaphysical nature." And I said, "I have been unable to receive any answer, and no one has been able to give me a satisfactory answer, or show me any such light." And the Master said to me at that time, quoting Jesus' words, "Can the blind lead the blind? They both fall into the ditch."

These words impressed me, because they were from our Bible, and it was a reasonable answer given to my question. I, being an American, of course, said right off, "Have you seen such things? Do you know the Single Eye?" And I remember Master said, "I think so." And I said, "Do you think I could see such things?" And he said, "I think so." Well I, of course, said, "Well, show me." And so he smiled, and he said, "All right, just in a little while." And so we talked on further in the same vein.

Then he procured a tiger skin, and laid it on the floor, and he sat down on one end, at the head. And he said to me, "Would you mind sitting down in front me?" He was sitting cross-legged, and, of course, I had never, to my knowledge, sat cross-legged under such circumstances. But I said, "Yes, certainly." So somehow I got down, cross-legged. But I can assure you that it was not the lotus posture.

And so, as we sat there in close proximity, the Master looked at me straight in the eye, and he said, "Doctor," he said, "Will you always love me as I love you?" Well I had never been talked to in such a manner before. And as I looked at him I saw something that I had never seen before in anyone. And so I quickly said, "Yes, I will." With that, I remember distinctly, the Master rubbed his hands together, and he said, "That's fine. I take charge of your life."

Well, just what that meant at the time, I didn't know, but at least I felt it was all right. So I acquiesced, and then we proceeded. As I sat in front of him, and he calmed my restless mind, and placed his forehead against my forehead. And he

told me to look, lift my eyes and look at the point between the eyebrows, which I did. And there in the Great Spiritual Light of the Spiritual Eye. The Master did not suggest anything that I see. He did not in any way influence me through suggestion. But what I saw came in natural way. I was fully conscious, fully awake, fully alert, and I saw the Spiritual Eye, because the Master stilled the waves of my mind, and allowed my own Intuition of the Soul to show me the door – the Spiritual Eye, the reflected light of the Medulla Center. As I looked further, and the Great Golden Light of the Spiritual Eye came with its inner dark center – representing, or manifesting the Christ Consciousness within me – and finally, a little silver star in the center, the epitome of Cosmic Consciousness.

Of course, I was naturally overwhelmed at having found someone who could show me the inner reality that is within each and every one of us. I had meditated as best I could, following various techniques. I perceived the Light around my head; on the right and on the left; but I could not focus it. It was vague. But when the Master focused my mind, and showed me where to look, and made it possible for me to see the Spiritual Eye. Then I realized that he was not an ordinary person, but a man far different from the ordinary run of men, who profess to know about such spiritual things.

We talked for a few minutes, and then he once more pressed his forehead against my forehead, and 'twas then that I saw the Great Light of the Thousand-rayed Lotus – most exquisite thing that can be seen, with its many, many rays – silver leaves. And at the bottom of the Thousand-rayed Lotus I could see outlined in denser Light, the walls of the large arteries at the base of the brain. And lo and behold, as I watched, little sparks of Light inside the arteries were bobbing along, striking the walls as they passed before my vision. These were the blood corpuscles – each with its little spark of Spiritual, or astral Light manifesting – as it carried out its duty in God's Play of Life.

Of course, seeing these wonderful things, I was most grateful for having met such a man of realization. And I remember the Master said, he said, "If you will allow me to discipline you, and follow regularly the path I lay down, these things will be with you always." I have endeavored to do that, and I can testify that the words of the Master came true.

One thing he did ask me though. He said, "Promise me one thing – that you will not avoid me." Of course, I was only too glad to promise that, after seeing the wonderful things that I did, and having the realizations. Little did I realize how difficult it would be not to avoid him in the difficult middle ground of discipline.

But I kept my promise and did not avoid him. And thus was able to be saved from much suffering, and much delusion.

When our Spiritual feast was over, time slipped away, and it was in the early hours of Christmas day when I left the Master. It had been my custom, always, to be at home Christmas Eve, and decorate the tree, and be with Mrs. Lewis and the children. But in this case, somehow, those things were secondary compared to the Spiritual food that I attained from that Christmas Eve.

And so when I did come home, having expected to be only perhaps an hour or two with the Master, Mrs. Lewis was waiting for me with the famous rolling pin. But all the way home the Great Spiritual Light was before me. And when I came into the house and met her, I remember, decidedly, how cross she was. And she had reason to be so, but seeing my face, evidently, the effect of the Spiritual Baptism, which the Master gave me, seeing that, she was unable to cause me any distress.

I remember it took about a month [of] careful intrigue under the Master's direction to bring about a meeting between them, which was done in the house of Sister Yogmata. After that meeting, which required only a few moments, the wonderful relationship between them was re-established, and her loyalty and devotion has been unwavering ever since.

In the Spring of 1921, around April, we all decided that we would take a few days and travel up the North Shore, as it is called, of Massachusetts, to the summer home of Sister Yogmata, and there spend a few days. Those of you who know New England, realize that in April the North Shore is very cold and very disagreeable. But we went there, and although it was a summer house, we thought we could keep warm, and build a fire. And so off we started.

We arrived there, and then as evening came, the fires were lighted. I remember the Master said that he saw us rubbing our hands together and saying, "Oof, oof, oof," and he wondered just what that was. But he said, "I found out all right, that night," because we went to bed, and he had lots of blankets. Luckily he got in with frozen shoes and all. But during the night, in the intense cold and dampness, it was evident that he had been pulling the blankets up around his head and neck, and it was quite a sight in the morning to see the feet sticking out below the blankets. And I remember he said then that, "Now," he says, "I realized what you meant by going like "woof, woof, woof."

The next day was a clear sunny day. But, as I have said, at that time of year it is still cold and penetrating. There is a nice breakwater which runs out just from the beach in front of the cottage in which we stayed. And as we were walking up and down the beach, the Master and I discussing spiritual things and talking of God, he suddenly spied this breakwater made of huge granite blocks. And he said, "Let us meditate, Doctor. This is a wonderful place by the ocean."

So we went out on the breakwater, and sat down, and started to meditate, meditate. The tide was out, and we were safe, perched up on the rocks. But that was my first experience on any such meditation, especially under those conditions. Well, for the first hour I don't believe there were any rocks could be any harder than those rocks. But somehow I hung on, saying that "If he can do it, if the Master can sit there, I can sit there, and will sit there, even if it kills me."

So after, as I have said, about an hour, my body, of course, became numb. And by the Grace of God, the Master's help, I was able to stay there. And do you know that we stayed there for five hours. And suddenly I was awakened by the Master saying, "Doctor, Doctor, Doctor, let's go. Let's get out of here." The waves were coming up – breaking around those big stones. And so we took ourselves from that precarious position. But although it was quite an ordeal, it was a great blessing, because by that effort that I made, thereafter meditation was not a hardship. But my efforts were made much easier by the endurance of that discipline. And so, I will always remember the five hours on that breakwater off of Plum Island, Massachusetts.

A short time after the Master's arrival in Boston, he began to give Sunday lectures in a little hall near Copley Square known as Faelton Hall. After his Sunday lectures, I would go to his room. There he would cook little dishes for me, and we would discuss God, and the great ones, and such things. And then, usually, he would come out to the house, and stay during the week, until his lecture on Thursday night – his Thursday night class.

And during those times, many nights were spent in discussion and listening to his wonderful stories. And that was always in his life, which later came out in his Autobiography [of a Yogi]. I remember one evening, one Sunday evening, I had gone to his room, and he was preparing food, when the telephone rang. And I answered it, and Mrs. Lewis had called me to tell me that my little daughter had just had a convulsion – another convulsion. I had schooled her in necessary things to do under those cases. But she called me, and the Master sensed something was wrong, because I remember he said, "What is it, Doctor?"

What is it, Doctor?" Well, after talking with Mrs. Lewis, I hung up, and told him that my daughter had had another convulsion.

I remember how his face changed, and he just stepped in behind a little screen, which separated his cooking department, so to speak, from the rest of the room. It was only a few moments before he came out, his face wreathed in smiles, and he said, "Don't worry, Doctor, she'll be all right, and she never will have another." And I remember how, that night, after we finished our meal, and talked a little bit, we went to my home, and the Master sat by my daughter's crib, all night. And, of course, she has never had anything happen like that since.

And so it is those things, and many other things of which I will tell you, that makes me realize how blessed we were to have the Master's presence with us in our own home.

As I have said, many nights were spent in listening to his wonderful words and his experiences, and romping about the house as brothers, keeping Mrs. Lewis in a state of turmoil, which seemed to be just what we wanted. But in spite of all those things, that wonderful reverence, respect, and devotion was never tainted in the least bit. And the Master was our Master, in spite of close relationships.

I remember one occasion that I slept with the Master. He asked me to sleep with him. Well I thought that was all right. Later, I remember, he told me that was one of the greatest honors that a disciple can have, to sleep with his Master.

And so, days passed. Then the hot weather began to come. And many hours on the hot days were spent discussing God and the great ones. And I remember sipping the wonderful lemonade which the Master, which he alone can make in just the right way. The limeade, and those days of being with him, enjoying great quantities of his limeade, certainly will never be forgotten.

In telling you this story about the Master, I do not want to give the impression that he was used – he and his spiritual powers were used to collect bad debts. But, nevertheless, this is the way it happened.

Shortly before I met the Master, just a few months before, I became acquainted with a gentleman, and through him had some business dealings in stocks and so forth. Although he did not cheat me deliberately perhaps, but he did use the fact that I had taken him into the family, and he had gotten into my good graces. He

used that to sell me such securities that were not of the highest type. So, after awhile the friendship terminated, and he still owed me some money.

Just about then the Master came along, and in discussing certain things, he being new in this county and from a foreign land, and I said to him one time, I said, "How do I know but perhaps you are like a certain gentleman who came not long ago. I befriended him, and he took advantage of that friendship. How do I know that perhaps you may be in the same category?"

Well, he said, "Of course we have to be careful of those things, but with a truly religious man that is not possible." And then I told him about this gentleman and some of the activities that went on between us. And finally, he said, "Well," he said, "I will tell you that he was not good for you." And then he, he told me out of a clear sky, he said – and he named the gentlemen, we'll call him Mr. Black – "Mr. Black is now in Lowell, Massachusetts, and if you send Mildred up there, she will be able to get the money he owes you."

And so I did send Mrs. Lewis up the very next day. And she found the gentleman in Lowell. The Master had given the address, and she returned with the money, just as he had said would happen. And, of course, even when things are taken in the Light of Divine Consciousness, even such things are taken care of through God's wonderful protection through the guru.

The next incident that I want to relate to you is perhaps one of the most astonishing happenings in my relationship with the Master. I thoroughly believe that it was through his intervention that I am here at this time telling these stories.

It happened on a hot Sunday afternoon in July, 1921. We had gone to my father's summer place on Plymouth Bay, in fact in Duxbury, Massachusetts, and had gone out in a small boat, three of us – my father, my brother, and myself. We were about two miles offshore when it was quite evident that a very severe squall was about to break. The sky had a very foreboding look, and huge thunder heads had risen in the Northwest. And, and then the darkness began to settle in that region. The wind had died down, and seeing our predicament, we started to row back toward the shore. The boat was not too large a boat so that two, one at with each oar, could make some headway. And so we rowed like mad in the direction of home.

We were unable to reach the shore, being about a half mile offshore, when that terrific squall broke. Luckily we had a huge anchor, which was thrown over with a great rope, but in spite of that, unless there had been some intervention, I know that we would not have survived such wind, and rain, and hail, and thunder, and lightening. I remember as I peeked out under the canvas which we were holding over the cockpit, that I wondered just what it would be like when the end came.

And then I remembered the family – the children came into my consciousness – the thought of leaving them. And then came the thought of the Master. And we had just started on such a wonderful spiritual relationship, and now that had to end. And I remember there was a decided pang in my heart as those things came into my consciousness. And then I remembered the words of the Master. He had said, not too long before that, he said, "Remember Doctor, when you are in the Om vibration, when your consciousness is centered in the Christ Center in the forehead, and you merge in that Om vibration, no, nothing can harm you."

And so I lifted my eyes and looked there where he had told me, and behold a Great Light, a Great Light, shape of a large Spiritual Eye came – right in the midst of that star – and with it there descended upon me such a consciousness of peace and security that I knew nothing could touch me. In due time the storm broke, and a large motorboat had put out to rescue us and tow us ashore. There was great rejoicing. The whole colony had gathered together on the shore fearing that, that we would be lost. And there was great rejoicing and reunion.

The rest of the day was spent at the, my father's home. And late that night I arrived back in my own home in Somerville, Massachusetts. And just as I entered the door, the telephone rang. I answered it, and the Master's voice said to me, "Well, Doctor, you came near getting wet today, didn't you?" Of course, I didn't grasp the, or realize, just what he meant by those words until the second time he said it. Then I realized that he must have known something of what had happened, although he never said another word about it.

It was not until several years later, when I happened to be talking with Sister Yogamata – who, by the way, was the first Sister created in America in Boston – I was talking with her, and she told me that at that precise time, about 3:15 on that Sunday afternoon, several years before, the Master was and she was seated in the parlor. He was reading Emerson's essay on the sea, when she said, suddenly he threw down the book, and jumped to his feet, and began pacing the floor saying, "Sister, the Doctor's in trouble, serious trouble, serious trouble I tell you."

Well, when I found out that, at the first opportunity I proceeded to pin the Master down, so to speak, and I at last gained an admission that he had seen just what was happening. And this story shows that a true Master, as Paramhansa Yogananda, is without doubt, one with God's Omniscience. And as His Omniscience knows all things, sees all things, so one who is one with that Omniscience can likewise be cognizant of all things that are happening.

After a stay of three years in Boston, Master started on his trip to spread Self-Realization; first in New York, and then other places. And in January, the same year in which he left for New York, I remember I was discussing with him my spiritual progress. And as was my custom, I always asked him how I was getting along, so to speak, and for suggestions. He said, "You are doing all right, but watch your health next summer." And that was all I could extract from him.

As time went on I forgot his warnings, being taken up with a busy practice. But when summer came I soon remembered, because I was taken with a very depressing, serious condition of the body, which caused me great pain, and made the practice of my profession very difficult. Somehow I kept going. But this one particular day when it reached its height – I was at my summer place in Duxbury, same place which you heard the story of the storm. And this particular Wednesday, I remember, I was suffering quite severely. So much so that, we had a most beautiful dog at that time, and I remember distinctly how the dog climbed up on the sofa beside me, and lapped my head, and seemed to be trying to comfort me as best she could. Somehow I got through the afternoon, and went upstairs to bed.

In the middle of the night, or early morning, there was quite a commotion out in the driveway, and I heard someone calling, "Doctor, Doctor, Doctor Lewis, Doctor." Well, in due time we went downstairs and found that the Master had come up from New York. He had somehow been able to procure a good automobile and a driver, and he had one or two people, and he had come up all the way from New York, and arrived just in my greatest need, in that early hour of the morning.

I remember that after greetings he came inside, and I remember how anxiously I awaited the time when I could tell him just how miserably I was feeling. Now he didn't say, seem to pay much attention, until finally he did take me aside. We went upstairs, and talked about my condition. I told him how really badly I was

feeling. He didn't say much. He smiled a little bit, he said, "You'll be all right." He said, "You just do what I tell you, and God will take care of you."

I remember he gave me a very peculiar, drastic remedy. It is not possible to tell it at this time. But I will say that, if I ever find any devotee who needs it, I will without any hesitation give it to him. And so I started in with the remedy, and my improvement took place right off. And I steadily improved, until finally that malady left me, and has never returned.

I remember when the Master wrote me from New York again, and discussing it, he said the condition was really serious, and, of course, it needed a very drastic, serious remedy, and a unique remedy to take care of the situation. And once more the story shows that to the humble devotee, who is really 100 percent in tune with the Master, the Master never forgets him, for God has ordained that the guru will stay with the humble devotee until finally he takes him back home.

A few years later, the Master returned to Boston to visit us, and I was supposed to meet him at the Back Bay Station at such a time. I was delayed by parking, just a few minutes, and he in the meantime had gone to the telephone booth and was trying to find, to call me on the telephone. And just about that time, I entered the waiting room of the station, which was crowded with people, and suddenly I heard this voice calling, "Doctor, Doctor, Doctor Lewis." And in just a few moments I saw the Master coming in the direction, from the direction of the telephone booths, through the crowd to find me. I later found out that he said he was trying to call me when suddenly he saw my face, and so he just, not all in conventions, to hang the telephone up. He just dropped it, or left it in mid air, and started calling my name, and came out, and found me.