

Santosha Ma—Durga, the Woman Warrior of the Heart

Santosha Ma was glowing and happily celebrating that all of Her circle had officially become Her devotees the night before, (May 25, 2013). She was saying that Adi Da had wanted her to take on the role of the Guru earlier, but She felt compelled to complete the work with the feminine that only She could do. She reflected on how different the roles of women are now. Women are free to pursue their desires and careers; and relationships between men and women are more cooperative and collaborative especially in the raising of the family. She went on to say that the work she started (in 1986), was almost complete now.

It was the first time in years I had heard Her speak of this matter, but this morning for about ten minutes, She was celebrating, and acknowledged the changes that have occurred for women in the world since she began Her work in 1986 to open a spiritual path for women. It was touching to feel Her innocence and passion in those few minutes of Her celebration. She has privately, and with great passion served the women of the world, and She lives here as the Transcendental She Is.

As She reports in her book, *The Innocence of Her Form, The Divine Revelation of She Is*; “I had to bring alive the Feminine as She Is, the Transcendental Being, by my own life and realization of it. I had to show and be that sign of Transcendental One“(p. 86).

Durga: MaRa the Woman Warrior of the Heart:

The task to open a spiritual path for women that Beloved Santosha Ma took on when she first began teaching in 1986 was enormous. She wrote Her first book titled: *Woman Warrior and the Art of Seeing*. Her name at the time was MaRa (Ma – mother, Ra - sun, or the fertile oasis) Heart Warrior—the warrior for the Heart. She gave women the persona of the spiritual warrior as a role to encourage them to fight for their heart’s greatest desire to realize their true identity or natural Self.

August 1988, while She was traveling in India She discovered the statue and presence of the Ancient Warrior Goddess, Durga, at the tomb of Ramana Maharshi in his Ashram at Tiruvanamalai, India, *“As I studied the statue I felt a stirring recognition in me. I asked a male attendant to the shrine who this statue was. I was told she was Durga. I felt I was on the edge of an essential revelation and went to the ashram library to find any material on the goddess. What I discovered made my hair stand up and my heart leap! Durga was the warrior goddess! The woman warrior was the persona I had felt myself to be and which I had taught my students to help them break through the suppression of the male ego. Durga was birthed by the male gods. They gave their essence of strength, power, and fire to Her. She was created to slay the demons of the male ego, and She stood outside the structure, independent of the male gods’ hierarchy.”* Santosha Ma continues the story of this discovery and recognition of Herself as Durga in Her book, *The Innocence of Her Form, The Divine Revelation of She Is.* (p.82)

On the day of Her discovery of Durga, there was a rain storm with lightening that was 360 degrees like a great dome of lightening flashing over Tiruvannamalai, India at Ramana Maharshi’s ashram that felt like acknowledgement of this event. Later Santosha Ma said, *“This was an amazing discovery to me, and it clarified much for me about my spiritual work with women and the feminine.”* (p. 83)

Santosha Ma as MaRa begins Her teaching work:

I met Her at the first gathering She had with a small group, at a friend’s house in Pennsylvania where I lived at the time; and my heart took a great YAHOO! Here She was, a petite woman, 34 years old, sitting there, no fanfare, she was dressed in a hot pink and white striped jacket with jeans and high-top converse red sneakers.

She was open with a kind of confidence and innocence simply explaining that She was Enlightened, thanks to Her teachers, Adi Da Samraj and Rama. She explained that She is not separate from God. She said She was opening a spiritual path for women. I was overjoyed at the news, but it felt like a dangerous assignment to take on.

Although, I had just met Her I knew in my heart that this woman could do it if it was possible to do. I had never met anyone with such heart, focus, simple wisdom, and a power uncommonly clear and real. She later explained that love is power and love is what I felt in Her company.

I bought a copy of Her manuscript titled: *Woman Warrior and the Art of Seeing*. She invited us to read it, and get in touch with Her if we had any questions or need to talk with Her. I was happy and scared at the same time. Mostly, I left that night with my heart singing like the answer to lifetimes of prayers had appeared in my life. She was inviting all of us to a relationship with Her. Imagine that!!!

The mystery and the incredible challenge to open a spiritual path for women can only be expressed by the Master Herself. I will quote a few sections from Her book, *The Innocence of Her Form the Divine Revelation of She Is*, where she describes the sacrifice, strength, love and incredible compassion it required of Her to confront and forever change the darkness that as she said had almost consumed the feminine in this world.

“A small group of women formed and studied with me. Often after a brief meditation period with them, we considered ‘everything.’ Eventually, the consideration began to pattern themselves around how to assert their feelings in order to be able to practice what they loved. They firmly believed in—and resented at the same time—the societal myth that their fulfillment came about in identifying themselves in a feminine role, particularly as wife and mother. They studied all their roles hoping to penetrate the myths. They were frightened of themselves. They felt guilty, selfish and stupid if they had strong interests or ambitions outside the societal roles that were given to them to secure happiness. Happiness and love were not identified as a free, radical, open heart. Rather happiness and love were defined as accepting and adhering to normal, conventional roles that gave them identity and gave the body security. As they explored their own identities, they began to understand their resentment and anger that always lay right under the polite smiling faces that women wear. Some of my students recognized their anger was due to the suppression of the true feminine and that the conditioning they had received was unnatural to them, inhibited their creative force and controlled and manipulated their yielding,

nurturing force. Most were terrified to openly assert desires and ambitions which were apart from the desires of the men in their lives.” (p.69)

“Through this time of consideration, of penetrating myths of identity, I examined and felt not just my students’ personal inhibitions, but I also saw how the fearful inhibitions were demonstrated in the lives of all women. My teaching work gave me a vehicle to study more extensively the suppression and suffering of women throughout the world. What I learned, saw, felt, and absorbed was horrifying and the cruelest blow was that it was considered the norm. Genocide of unwanted female fetuses and babies was common in the world. Genital mutilation, and in some cases complete removal of a woman’s reproductive organs as a form of sexual control was practiced in all countries of the world. Denial of human life—condemned to sexual control and slavery, to have no say or vote in their society, to be worked as slaves, and battered and raped by men—this was the norm for most women in the world. I lived in this rage and meditated it as my daily meal and service.”

“During the time when my friends told their stories and expressed their fears, I felt the collective cry of all the women in the world for their suffering to be seen and heard. Most people can’t take in what kind of world this is for women. It’s too horrifying a picture. Only a strong heart can feel this. It is also true that there was no true, natural masculinity being expressed and lived. The sexes lived in fear, control, and manipulation of each other.” (p.70)

“During my intensive study, research, and meditation of women’s actual status and plight, more and more women told their stories of abuse in the media. Much of their plight was extreme in that it involved physical torture and loss of life. I saw hatred of the feminine. This unconscious ignorance was prevalent and enacted in sad dramas of control throughout the world. I saw that religious and even spiritual communities fared no better and also unconsciously played out the usual role of suppressing the female. I felt and saw this whole drama of suppression as the denial of the Divine—as the denial of the One Who is Living us. People believed there was nothing to yield to, that there was no attracting power beyond the security of their own bodily lives. To give love or be called into love beyond mundane, bodily fulfillment was considered to be a foolish ideal or dream or even insanity.” (p.71)

“Women’s true sensitivity of yielding to the attracting power of the Divine had been denied and subjugated to women’s over-concern for identity and accomplishment in the physical world. Women, unable to practice and identify the attracting force of the Divine through the natural subtle doorways (the heart) was reduced to being neurotic, overly emotional, weak, and unable to discipline themselves and their intimates. The shakti (the feminine force of the Divine), the infusion of the Divine Being, did not occur naturally in people, even in spiritual communities where people practiced for years to receive spiritual transmission and blessing. The spiritual process is a feminine-based process of yielding, of being attracted beyond one’s self identity of giving up one’s self to the Divine. (p.72)

Santosha Ma, as MaRa Heart Warrior worked twenty four hours a day to guide the women she met to freedom. She is a Master Dreamer so Her work never stopped. She lives and demonstrates Her Enlightenment in every breath. She is a wild card alive and lifting us up to the light and showing us that radical freedom is possible. It was shocking to see that none of the conventional ideas of what it is to be a woman or a separate identity stuck to Her. She stated that She is Free and in Her Enlightenment She is one with God, and She is not separate from anyone or anything. That is all I ever see Her live and give to everyone.

She met with us weekly which She assigned to a specific night in order to end the bargaining that ensued when she asked when we could meet the next week. She gave the *Woman Warrior* as a persona, as a new role to help us fight to get free of the numb, intense dream of the programming that we were invested in. She played the spiritual mother, the sister, friend and lover at different times, always dancing in the Light of Her beautiful love and attracting our hearts to the Freedom She is. As She said, “This early time with women had very little direct use of me as Guru. Rather, I was their friend and helped them learn how to humanize their lives” (p.69)

She began the weekly meeting with a short meditation. We loved the meditations with Her because she washed us off, lifted us out of our confusion, depression, and numbness, and held us above the beliefs we worshipped unconsciously. She glowed with beauty and love. She nourished, healed us, and She opened a way for us so that we could consider our experiences as women with Her.

At one of the early meetings She asked us how many women had had sex when they did not want to have sex. Easy question, but we all sat there looking at Her, then She raised Her hand, and all the hands went up in the room. She created a safe place for us to relax our guard long enough to laugh with Her, tell stories of our sex lives, and consider with Her what was really going on. She allowed and encouraged us to feel the anger that was seething in our beings. She helped us admit to the anger and hurt we felt as a result of the expectations of women as sex objects.

There was a time when I thought she was truly angry at men, but then She showed me that she was reflecting back our anger, and at the same time she was consuming it for us, to give us some space to own the feelings we worked to deny. Her love was unstoppable. She poured it on and served our hearts to feel Her beautiful presence. At the same time She was challenging every belief we held as women about our lives. It was stunning, scary, and completely attracting.

Some of the younger women complained about being hooted and whistled at and how they hated to be treated like sexual objects. Santosha Ma taught us how to use clothing to express our natural self instead of playing the role as a sexual object, we all hated.

She was an impeccable example of how she used clothing to express Her natural self, and it wasn't long before whatever she was wearing became popular in society. The vest was an example, she went to the men's section to find vests initially, and within two seasons they began showing them in the women's section. She encouraged us to stop wearing makeup and let our hair and bodies be natural.

She asked us to identify what we loved to do, music, writing, dancing, etc and encouraged us to follow our heart's attraction, and that would lead us to a deeper love of the Divine. She would surprise us at times, and show up at our homes and invite us to go for a walk with Her. We jumped at the chance, and off we went, on an adventure of love and freedom with Her.

Every weekend She invited us to an outing in nature and She taught us how to relate to the natural elements; all the while teaching us almost nonstop about our lives and how we were

suppressing what was natural to us. She was changing our patterns, and we were attracted beyond explanation to Her Bright Heart.

We had no idea the enormous price she was paying to do this work. She made it look so simple, but in September of 1986 she did not come to the meeting. Instead she sent word with another woman that She was sick and struggling with Her health. She asked us to take some actions and destroy carefully over a weeks time a medicine wheel that one of the women had placed on the land that She said was an open portal for negative forces that were affecting Her.

Later She revealed that Her body showed signs of collapsing under the strain, She could hardly breathe and Master Rama assisted Her internally and held Her to life.

She often talked about the women of the world and their suffering. We were shocked to hear Her stories of violence, rape and killing of women and how women in the world were experiencing female genital mutilation (FGM). She told us that that FGM is going on worldwide including the United States.

She is utterly fearless and wise in Her life of Freedom. We relied on Her for the courage and freedom to act, discover and investigate more about our true nature.

She taught us about the “gut feeling.” That expression was being used then, but in a way that expressed the gut feeling as an experience that was individualized as separate ones.

Her teaching was all together different and radical. Instead she explained that the gut feeling was the same for everyone in any given situation. It was difficult to grasp that in any given situation everyone has the same gut feeling.

A situation presented itself to demonstrate this point. We were camping out with Her at a private camp. At our arrival the owner welcomed us with a sense of duty to his wife, who could not be there, but we felt unwelcome.

She grasped the opportunity, and called each one of us, in turn, to Her, to tell Her, what our gut feeling was. We all felt we were not welcome, and did not want to stay and suffer the situation.

Point made. We all had the same gut feeling because there is only One Truth. This was so clear now. Then She helped us pack up, leave, and find a State Park to camp in. She felt no allegiance to follow the original plan, rather she was Free, and insisted that we take action and act on the gut feeling.

When She moved to San Francisco, CA in August 1988, She gathered one last group of women to teach the Woman Warrior of the Heart class. They had similar ideas, and limitations as women. They too felt the glow of Her beauty and freedom, and step by step She lead them to consider the Truth that She is.

Santosha Ma taught by creating experiences for us to investigate, see the female programming and feel how we were controlled by beliefs that simply were not true. For women who were mothers she asked us if the role of motherhood was fulfilling us, and satisfying our greatest desire as the myth projects. After some investigation we came to a shared feeling that being a mother is challenging, and requires an ongoing sacrifice. We all said we loved our children, but we felt disappointed in the role because the myth had led us to believe it would be the greatest fulfillment of our life.

It was not true for one single woman. We all expressed that we felt a deep yearning for something more, and we believed that we were just not doing it right or we would in fact experience the fulfillment promised. She assured us that it is a myth that cannot deliver the promised fulfillment because it does not exist.

Along side this discovery She also revealed to us that we believed our children belonged to us and they were under our control. I remember when She told me that I did not own my children that they belonged to the Divine. It felt true. I was relieved in the moment, but later she would continue to work with all of us to show us just how true this is.

So many of the teachings and demonstrations she gave us felt like ground breaking experiences then, like women could shave their heads, wear Mohawks, wear clothing that was attractive to them and express their innocence and heart impulses creatively instead of fulfilling the standard

sexual role as women. And, that women could work and follow their heart's desires and still participate in a family and life cooperatively or live as an independent woman.

In 1986 the idea that a woman could run for the President of the United States, and actually be a front running candidate seemed so far fetched and outside the realm of happening, or that women could serve on the supreme court, be Prime Ministers and Presidents in world nations just didn't seem plausible, because women were so suppressed, repressed and controlled.

Today, some thirty years later the culture naturally incorporated the freedom she fearlessly addressed in 1986. There were no freedom marches that some of us envisioned. No, Her work was of a different manner. She personally took actions to live and demonstrate a new relationship to the body and spirit as a woman. She didn't wear makeup, or shave her body. She wears creatively attractive clothing that express Her natural beauty. She lives Free as HerSelf.

She once said Her work is done on the causal planes where the seed connections are made. And, it appears that She had to incarnate as a born personality, suffer two rapes, take on all the roles of a female life, and then with great passion and love transcend the ego, and all cultural programming, and stand FREE. It is a great mystery that continues to attract me to Her Bright Shining Heart of Love.

Thus, over the years, the changes that She proposed just mysteriously appear and move forward in the cultures world wide—the work of the Master!! Women of the world are standing up with great courage and establishing themselves as the greatest untapped resource in the world in every area of the culture.

Only the Divine could possible take on such suppression, repression, and devastation that She took on, and initiate wave after wave of positive changes for women world wide. It seems clear that She succeeded at Her work in spite of our slow progress, or the dark age that she incarnated into, or that there is still incredible violence worldwide toward women and female infants. Or even the wonder that She stands independent as one who is Free as Already Happy Heart, and no force stopped Her. Jaya Santosha Ma—Durga the Warrior Goddess.

The clearest summary to this story can only be taken from Her book, *The Innocence of Her Form, The Divine Revelation of She Is*: “I felt my task was an impossible one, but I had to give all to it. The true spiritualizing aspect of the Feminine has been denied, suppressed, and almost destroyed. I knew it was Adi Da’s intent to keep it alive, to allow its creative spiritualizing work, its earthiness, and its light form and heart to be seen and loved. He had demonstrated that love for me and I felt I had to demonstrate and be that love for all women and for the Feminine. I had to bring alive the Feminine as She Is, the transcendental Being, by my own life and realization of it. That is why I had to stand apart (seemingly) from Him. I had to show and be that sign, the revelation of She Is as Transcendental One. I had to absorb and heal—using the siddhis available through this body-mind—the hatred and denial of the Feminine as spiritualizing force and reality. At times the anguish, sorrow, rage, and fear of this absorption in service to women caused the body to collapse in toxicity. The unconscious insanity of it was a wound I lived with. I had to walk into it and heal by loving, telling and seeing the truth in all possible best and worst circumstances. My difficult life had equipped me with the stamina to do it. I knew I was not alone in this work and, like in my sadhana years, forces and beings aided me. And Adi Da was always by my side as mySelf, the Heart” (p. 86-87). As She said on May 26, 2013, that work is almost complete now. Jaya Santosha Ma!!

Epilogue:

Recently, I did a report for Santosha Ma on *The Changes for Women Worldwide since 1986*. The roles of men and women have changed as Santosha Ma pointed out May 26, 2013.

Though change is still in the air, there's no doubt that men and women's roles have become less strictly defined, and many families have made the male and female roles more egalitarian when it comes to jobs, housework and childcare. Women today are a necessary and permanent part of the labor force, and their income has become critical to even a minimal maintenance of living standards for working-class households.

A remarkable event occurred in 1994 at an International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) where the women of the world rose in one voice and demanded to be recognized and counted for population purposes, and demanded health care services for women and children to stop the needless deaths at childbirth of women and infants as a global goal for the conference. This was an unprecedented response that seemed to arise spontaneously as the women of the world gather in Cairo, Egypt—a Divine intervention by the Master.

The representatives said that perhaps the greatest contribution and achievement of Cairo ICPD is recognition that enhancing political, economic and education opportunities for women will endure stable population growth.

The United Nations has since established many commissions, programs and organizations to address the violence, rape, genocide of women and infants, health care to rural areas of the world, and opened opportunities for women to be educated and be able to advance in responsible roles in the world. As well there are many organizations who have appeared to address the great need to end the violence, rape, killing and genocide of women and infants in the world including the US.

In the last ten to twenty years women are finding their voices and standing up with unusual courage, creating programs and businesses to move forward, and claim their rightful place in the world. Jaya Santosha Ma!!