



The Story Of Adwaitha Hermitage

The Rev. David R. Graham
Adwaitha Hermitage
1992 and 2001

Adwaitha Hermitage is a Residence of *Sanathana Dharma*.

The evolution of Adwaitha Hermitage has sprung from a Franciscan logos or germ. It began in the Spring of 1968 with the thought of a family that would live monastically using elements of Columban, Benedictine, Franciscan, and Jesuit pieties. From the first, Adwaitha Hermitage had a practical purpose: to be a refuge for those who are not trying to beat the world at its own game.

The idea became an ideal, which was called a Franciscan family monasticism. This ideal was announced, finally, in 1969, at the home of The Rev. George A. Graham, a Baptist clergyman living then on the north side of Chicago.

The location of this announcement is significant. Chicago was imprinted with Adwaitha philosophy and attitude early in this century by Swami Vivekananda, the great disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Vivekananda represented Saivite religion. Christianity and Judaism are distillations, separately, of Saivite religion. This is why the Swami found welcome on these shores. He was visiting kith and kin, calling to remembrance and asserting in a leonine tone the glory of their ancestor, the Indian way of life, which is called *Sanathana Dharma*.

The first experiment, in 1970, was in tandem with a foreign idea and failed. The second experiment, in 1972, was in tandem with another foreign idea and it, too, failed. But in the meantime (March 1972), the intent was given impetus by a question addressed to me by [Swami Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba](#): "What are your plans?" I said, "I want to found a place where people can come and rest." He smiled broadly and nodded His Head.

The Hermitage was founded on December 20, 1975 at The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Hemet, California, but it was not yet named. During 1977 and 1978, it was regarded as a "Jesuit" facility and then as a "Benedictine" one. The mission was felt to be the preservation

of the truth and practice of Western Spiritual Culture during a period of the decline of the same.

Also during these years, it was seen that the classical ideal and tactic of cloistering has to be provided families laboring in the regular economy. In other words, the ideal of celibacy was to be applied in married life in its inner sense and not just in single life in its outer sense. This involved a categorical rejection of the customary Latin prejudice which elevates outer, cloistered celibacy (recluse) over the regular married estate (Sanskrit, *grahastha*) which, as commonly believed, can be neither inner-directed nor celibate. Hindus have the same prejudice and it is equally wrong among them as among Christians. The four estates of man -- Student, Householder, Recluse, Mendicant -- are of equal value for spiritual endeavor.

Since the base of all these estates, the one which supports the other three, namely, Householder, is debased and devalued today -- even by so-called religious leaders -- it was felt that here is where effort must be placed, here is where the example must be set, here is where the treasuring must occur. A combination of Benedictine (cloistered), Franciscan (in the regular economy) and Jesuit (military regularity both cloistered and in the regular economy) pieties along with the stipulation of inner celibacy in the married estate was indicated.

The aspect of cloister is not difficult to envision but it requires a drastic overhaul of habits in the direction of proscriptions. The primary proscription is of socializing. The second proscription is of the influences in and on the living area.

The aspect of being in the regular economy hinges on three considerations: first, what can one do to earn a living that is pleasant for one to do; second, what of this type is of genuine benefit to the fellow beings; and third, what of these types will provide income sufficient for living without struggle (Sanskrit, *a-srama*). This aspect of being in the regular economy requires one proscription of what is now regarded as "the regular economy," namely, of borrowing -- the modern, sanitized term is credit.

The aspect of military regularity applies to all aspects of living, both private and otherwise. Every function that can be regularized should be so that the person is free to concentrate the heart, the intellect, the mind and the body on activities that serve humanity and benefit all creatures. This military aspect also requires the habitual practice of the paramount military virtue, which is obedience. Implicit obedience to rightful authority is the haven of safety, both in this world and the next. It is the quality that protects the hermits in what would otherwise be an hostile environment.

The aspect of celibacy is not usually thought of in connection with the married estate, but, its proper place is in this area. Celibacy is the inner quality of faithfulness to the consort. This quality has to be reflected in all activities at all times. Really, there is no husband or wife or spouse or partner in a Hermitage. The word Consort is proper. Traditionally, the man is referred to by his name and the woman is referred to by her name and as the Consort. We do not bring the Hermitage down to the level of marriage. We bring marriage up to the level of an Hermitage. This is the

occupation. The Hermitage has to get its respect in the world by being an example of this Holy Ideal.

In 1982, it was recognized that our task is to establish the philosophy of Non-Dualism in this country and to make it flourish. The first part of this task -- the establishing -- was declared accomplished in 1985. The second part -- the making it flourish -- is on-going. From 1996, our task was to reestablish the philosophy of Non-Dualism (Adwaita) in the orbit of the Latin Church and Culture and to make it flourish. This mission is accomplished as of December 2000. Our mission from 2001 is quiet support of the Constitution and national security of the United States.

In 1984, the hermitage was named as Adwaita Hermitage. All the elements understood during the first years of evolution were realized as present in Adwaita Hermitage. It was also realized at this time that the Head of it is Adwaita Hermitage.

The primary means of establishing the philosophy of Non-Dualism in this country and making it flourish was and is felt to be establishing the family on the proper basis (an Hermitage) and the conduct of the family along proper lines (*Dharma*). Both the basis and the lines of conduct are understood to originate in Vedic Culture, Indian Spirituality, as illustrated by [Ramakatha Rasavahini](#) (The Rama Story) by [Swami Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba](#).

Adwaita Hermitage is a refuge from the machinations of the world for those who are no longer trying to beat the world at its own game.

The center-piece or essence of philosophy may be expressed in several ways. The way that has consistently appealed to me over the years is this: All time-fields are concurrent.

The main contribution we have to make for the welfare of all people is the conduct of this family along the pattern of Vedic or Indian Culture. Vedic Culture underlies Western society, starting with Western languages, all of which, including English, are derived from Sanskrit.

The Christian religion, also, is of Vedic origin. Abraham was a Persian and Persia is a Vedic Culture. Moses was an Egyptian and Egypt/Greece is a Vedic Culture. Jesus spent the majority of His years in India, both before and after His Resurrection. Semitic monasticism, which is the context of the Hebrew prophets, is also of Vedic origin and parallels Greek monasticism of Vedic origin, of which the Pythagoreans were a late flowering. The Three Wise Men were Tibetans -- Vedic.

The correction of Western society now arises in the conformation to Vedic Culture, to Indian Spirituality. We are harbingers of this fact. In future years, India will be acknowledged as the leader and core of world civilization. This fact was intuited 200 years ago by the great German Scholars who opened Vedic study to Western man during the second half of this Millennium.

Gradually through the years, we have organized our manner of living and our quarters, whatever they are, as an artists' studio. Through many ups and downs, this direction has been constantly held to.

Adwaita Hermitage represents the Hieronymic clan of the Bharadwaja lineage of Saivite religion. It is related to Jesus the Christ, to Baha'u'llah ("Baphomet" as reported by the Vatican, misleadingly, of tortured Knights Templar), to Lao Tzu, to Lama Anagarika Govinda and, preeminently, to [Swami Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba](#).

Adwaita means Not Two.

The picture at the top of this page represents the Child Krishna as The Butter Thief, the Stealer of Hearts. I am uncertain regarding its origin, but it appears to be in the style sponsored by the Hare Krishna Movement founded by Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. If a reader supplies a certain attribution, I will post it in this space.

