

# DYING WITH BHAGWAN

## a remembrance

by Ma Yoga Sudha

Bhagwan said to me before I left Poona three years ago, on my way to help my father die, "Those that are near me, I want them to be hopeless." I have wanted to share what happened, but at the time it didn't feel right. Now it is time.

I did not understand then how I could use this key—drop hope—but so often Bhagwan had said things to me which did not show their relevance until later.

So I was to help my father, Premurti, to die, and I felt bombarded by a thousand subtle nuances of feeling—from excitement to fear to negative expectation to utter stupidity. The most clear was the obvious conflict between the new glimpses of myself that I had found through meditation and Bhagwan, and some raw fears about death—which I experienced as a black blank of nothingness, a feeling of cold and images of the ocean at night. Helping him to die and afraid to die myself. . .

I went to my father finally feeling, "Yes, you are going to die"—a kind of compromise between these two aspects in myself. I was confronted with the attitudes of the whole society in a microcosm—the family, the doctors, my mother, my father—and the way they mirrored me. He did not know, at least not consciously, that a cancer was eating away at his body. I felt this

wasn't good, but I did not know how to deal with it sensitively and tactfully. And I knew that if I tried there would be a double message. I let it ride for a few days.

The family, the doctors, even the hospital receptionist, were all pretending: never say die. We were all making it difficult to experience ourselves, or to allow Premurti to experience the fact of his death. In a word, 'hope' was everywhere.

And I was in such a muddle. I felt almost guilty, as if my accepting his death was a way of *wishing* him to die, or that I was on some sort of spiritual ego-trip. The burden of so much negative conditioning about death! I was glad however, for yet another chance to experience more. I so much wanted to be open to this 'happening' within the gestalt of Bhagwan and discipleship. Being a sannyasin himself, Premurti was having to struggle with his own fear, and at the same time slowly accept the facts as they were.

In speaking to Priya, my mother, hearing her hopes, I began to understand that the hopelessness that Bhagwan spoke about was not a giving up in defeat, but a letting-go, an openness, dropping all pre-conceived ideas and attitudes about death and dying. Simply being there. *Simply*.

And the great paradox was that for

everyone concerned, hope was a bummer, equal to a closing down, filling up the simply open space with, "No! Not thine, but *my* will be done."

I remember the agony in knowing what was happening to him and looking into his eyes, knowing how desperately he wanted to deceive himself. I wanted to scream, "Daddy, you're dying! If you can accept it maybe you won't suffer so much, maybe it won't hurt you so much." I ached at seeing the bewilderment, the fear, the *hope* in his face.

I kept feeling Bhagwan near, feeling that I was about to discover what of Bhagwan was really me.

I told my mother to be in the moment with Daddy, to love him *now*, but not to hope. She said that when she was able to do it, she could love him more, give him more, allow him more, be there more. And they could laugh! One afternoon I spied on them from the door—they were like two children, with no tomorrows. They were having a honeymoon. I was so happy: so it is true! But then naturally she would lapse into remorse and hope, and wordlessly would communicate this attitude. Suddenly they would both become sad and unable to enjoy their last few days together.

I remember standing at his bedside, watching, seeing the feelings and the