

**Esha Ray Chaudhuri**, Ph.D., was introduced to Swami Aseshananda by the revered monk of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Ranganathananda, whom she had known from her childhood days in New Delhi, India. A disciple of Swami Aseshananda since 1979, Esha lives with her family in Calgary, Canada.

*Written submission*

### **Tell Mother, Talk to Mother**

In July 1979, right after my initiation on the day of *Guru Purnima*\*\* and in response to my request for some key principles of spiritual guidance, Swami Aseshananda meditatively advised of the significance of three plain phrases:

- Tell Mother
- Talk to Holy Mother
- Pray for Mother's grace

In 1982, at a moment of crisis, feeling totally lost, I phoned Swamiji for some kind guidance. He mentioned, once again, just the same three simple phrases:

- Tell Mother
- Talk to Holy Mother
- Pray for Mother's grace

On a beautiful *Guru Purnima* day (in the early '90s), I had the opportunity to visit Portland; there I requested and received the privilege to prepare a festive meal for Swamiji and all the devotees. It included typical Bengali celebratory dishes like *bandhakopir dalna* (cabbage with ginger and spices), *cholar daal* (chick pea soup with asfodita, cloves, and cardamom), and *sandesh* (sweet cottage cheese squares with pistachio). Swamiji was very happy and enjoyed the meal, explaining to everyone the cultural practices related to the dishes (especially the *sandesh*) and how he remembered enjoying these in Kolkata! Not being considered a good cook and yet being able to have prepared the dishes to offer to Swamiji and everyone at the Society, I was delighted and absolutely certain it was indeed through Holy Mother's grace that this wonderful joyous celebration was made possible!

Incidentally, meditating and reflecting on the word "grace" has indeed been an invaluable inheritance (in my mind) that I received from Swami Aseshanandaji!

Later the same day, during the evening session of talks and discussion, I once again requested advice on how to confidently encounter the seemingly invincible challenges of life. Swamiji looked at me directly, his face radiant with a compassionate smile, and uttered in that indelible voice, the same three majestic phrases:

- Tell Mother
- Talk to Mother
- Pray for Mother's grace

Yesterday, local devotees of the Calgary Vedanta Society celebrated the Holy Mother's 165<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary with the unique presence of three wonderful Vedanta gurus, revered Swami Girishananda from Belur Math, Swami Amarananda of Vedanta Society of Switzerland, and Swami Kripamayanda of Toronto Vedanta Society. Being miraculously able to attend the wonderful ceremony on a chilly, snowy (and slippery!) morning with friends kindly offering—on their own—rides to and from the event (as I am unable right now to drive owing to some injuries), I feel almost certain that it is with the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi's infinite grace that I was able to participate in the celebration, to listen to the talks of and receive blessings of the great teachers, but most importantly, to find these invaluable memories appearing in my thoughts today, thus fulfilling my prayers to Mother to have the privilege and honor of sharing some of my timeless reminiscences of Swami Aseshananda.

\*The traditional celebration in India of a day dedicated to all gurus—historically credited to birthday of the renowned sage Vyasa, also considered as an “adi guru” or the “Original Teacher.”

The submission is framed within my memories of the organic brilliance of Swamiji's unique personality—lucid and luminous, simple and at the same time so profound!

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