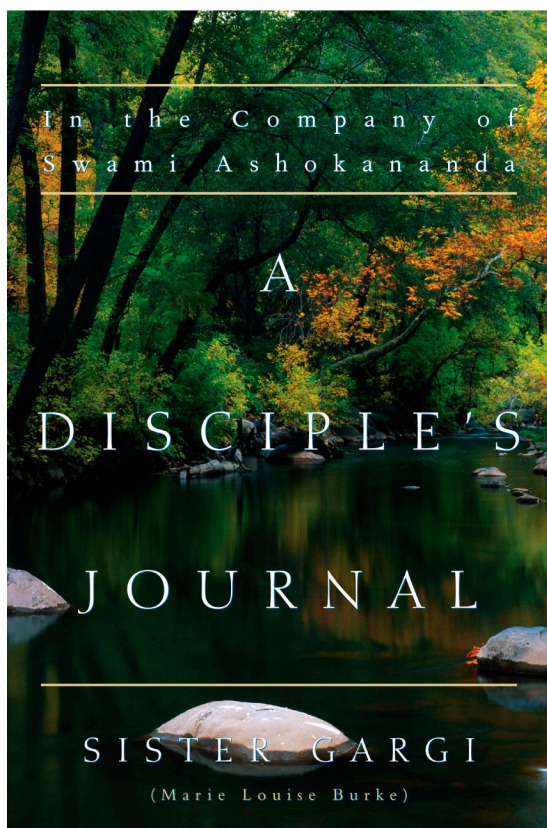




A DISCIPLE'S JOURNAL

In the Company of Swami Ashokananda
BY SISTER GARGI (MARIE LOUISE BURKE)



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How a young author in San Francisco, then Marie Louise Burke, became a leading literary figure and an honored monastic in the Hindu tradition of Vedanta.

“Sister Gargi, now in her nineties, has inspired thousands with her writings.”
—*Light of Consciousness*

“In the summer of 1949, Swami Ashokananda had said he would be my teacher,” Sister Gargi begins the first chapter of *A Disciple's Journal*. “Although I didn't know exactly what that meant, I didn't care. I was overjoyed.” She not only became his disciple but also transformed her entire life into one of constant spiritual practice under the Swami's daily direction.

It wasn't easy. This book reveals the stark reality of what it means to devote one's life to an established Eastern tradition under the eagle eye of an authentic spiritual guide. Sister Gargi gives the reader intimate glimpses of its ups and downs in the verbatim conversations with Swami Ashokananda that she recorded in her journal, and in the clear prose that connects her journal entries to the circumstances of her daily life.

The author never spares herself as she falls into one pitfall after another on her spiritual path; but thanks to her rigorous self-assessment and the piercing insights of her teacher, the reader can witness the process of spiritual transformation that gradually creates self-confidence and awakens true understanding.

A Disciple's Journal is a personal memoir full of no-nonsense lessons from a woman who, after more than fifty years of spiritual practice, is uncommonly wise. Sister Gargi's élan is a lesson in itself, for she faces every predicament with a buoyant attitude that makes spiritual life (and reading this engaging book) great fun.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Marie Louise Burke became Sister Gargi in 1974 when she took her first vows in India from the Ramakrishna Order. She was honored with the monastic name of Gargi after the renowned Vedic scholar in recognition of her brilliant accomplishments as a researcher and a writer—and later, in 1983, with the first Vivekananda Award given by the Ramakrishna Mission.

She is the well-known author of the monumental six-volume classic *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*, as well as other works. The *New Discoveries* books have become indispensable sourcebooks in India and in Vedanta circles worldwide, and the knowledge they have

given of Swami Vivekananda's personality has changed the lives of many readers.

Ms. Burke met Swami Ashokananda in 1948 when he was in charge of the Vedanta Society of Northern California in San Francisco—with which she became closely associated and where she still lives. *A Heart Poured Out*, Sister Gargi's biography of Swami Ashokananda (1893–1969), was published in March 2003 to critical and popular acclaim. In *A Disciple's Journal*, Sister Gargi reveals for the first time her personal story of struggle and joy in the company of her illustrious spiritual teacher.