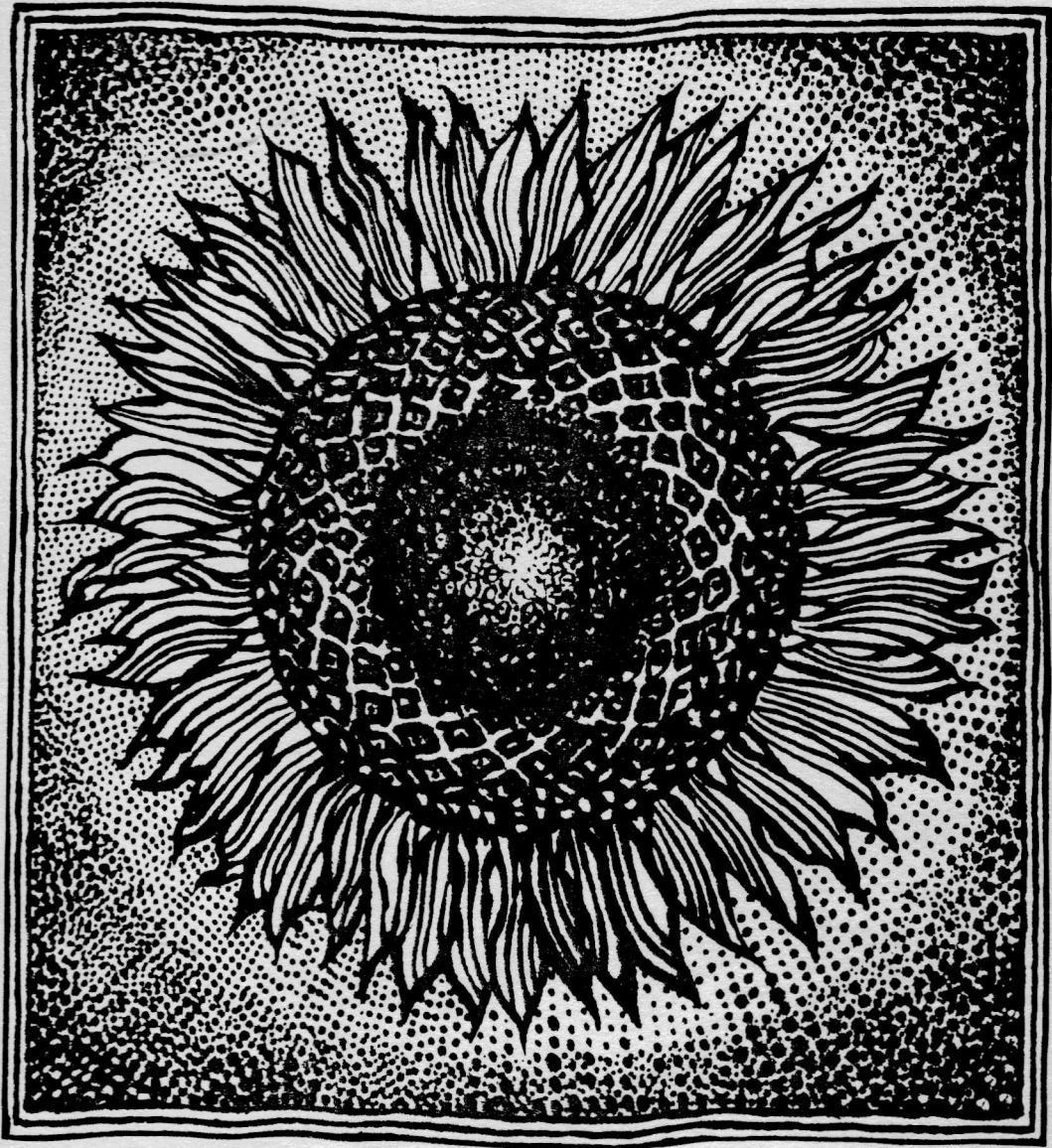
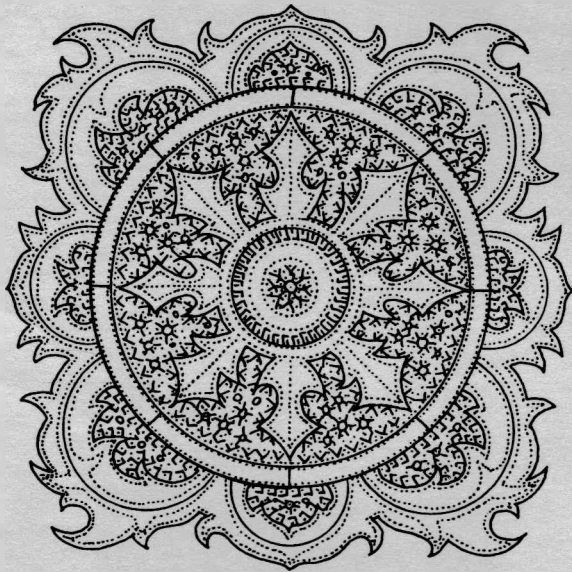


GURUKULAM

VOLUME VIII • 1992

SECOND-THIRD QUARTER





GURUKULAM

VOLUME VIII • 1992 SECOND-THIRD QUARTER

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Path to Everywhere

The one controller, the inner soul of all beings, whose one form becomes manifold, the wise perceive as existing in one's self; to them belongs eternal happiness and to no one else.

Constant among the inconstant, the consciousness of the conscious, the One among many, who fulfills desires, the wise perceive as existing in one's self; to them belongs eternal peace and to no one else.

"This is That," -- thus they recognize that indescribable supreme bliss. How shall I know That? Does it shine by itself or by reflection?

The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and stars, nor the lightning, much less the fire. When That shines, all else shines after That. All this is illuminated by That.

Its roots are above and its branches below -- this eternal Asvattha tree. That verily is the pure, That is the Absolute, That is called the immortal. On it rest all the worlds, and none can transcend it. This, verily, is That.

(Kāṭha Upaniṣad, V.12-VI.1)

For many years she wandered amidst the green foliage, sometimes delighting in the filtered light, sometimes forlornly lost in deep shadows. Seeking comfort and nourishment, she was drawn this way and that by a multitude of colors and fragrances. On her way, she was often scratched and pricked by thorns, but sweet scents drew her again and again towards honey-filled blossoms. Sometimes she busily pruned entangled vines which tripped and choked her or cleared away dead brush which inhibited the growth of tender new buds. Sometimes she watched patiently as delicate petals unfurled or sat peacefully absorbed in the sparkling wonder of a single drop of dew. At other times she was buffeted by fierce winds and pelting rain or struggled to climb to a vantage point from which she could see the far-off horizon.

As the years went by, she wondered more and more about the whole of which she was only a tiny part, hoping to catch a glimpse of that vast reality and a glimmer of the meaning of her place in it. She discovered that her questions were shared by many and that a courageous few had dedicated themselves to finding the answers. Those who sought faced a labyrinth of confusion, the challenges of unresolved contradictions, the loneliness of exploring uncharted territory. Those rare ones who found gained a happiness and peace which could never be diminished. She discovered that some of them had compassionately drawn maps and described passageways to guide the seekers who came after them. These guides often became misunderstood over time, either being dismissed as esoteric fantasies or glorified as sacred objects of worship. Both their protectors and their detractors obscured their real value and meaning. Still they were created and re-created as seers again and again attempted to guide seekers on their way from the many forms to the formless, from the known to the unknowable, from a multitude of names to the unnameable.

One day she saw a diagram of ten circles and many lines connecting them. She puzzled over it for a long time before she was able to find where she stood, at the bottom in the world of manifestation -- in the branches of an upside-down tree. Dizzied by the recognition that all that she took for granted was tipped topsyturvy by the map before her, she wanted to steady herself and regain her balance. The leaves and flowers around her fluttered in the wind, offering no stability. She moved upwards, seeking sturdier branches to cling to. She was encouraged by the map which showed her that the foundation of all that she knew indeed lay ahead. Continuing to climb, she came to a stable seat where she could rest and view the outlines of the vast tree which radiated in all directions. As she looked

from map to tree and back again, what had always been obscure gradually became vibrant. Inspired by the awesome majesty of creation and encouraged by its ever-renewing capacity for endurance, she was drawn to the very heart of the tree, in which all the extremities of justice and grace, severity and love were united. Enfolded in mercy, enraptured by beauty, she blissfully remained for a long time. However, unlike the static scheme which guided her, she was a part of a process of unfoldment, a process which involved all its parts in continuous change. The map led her to the roots of the tree -- the knowledge, consciousness and inner controller which are ever-guiding all.

Keter: Crown

Binah: Insight

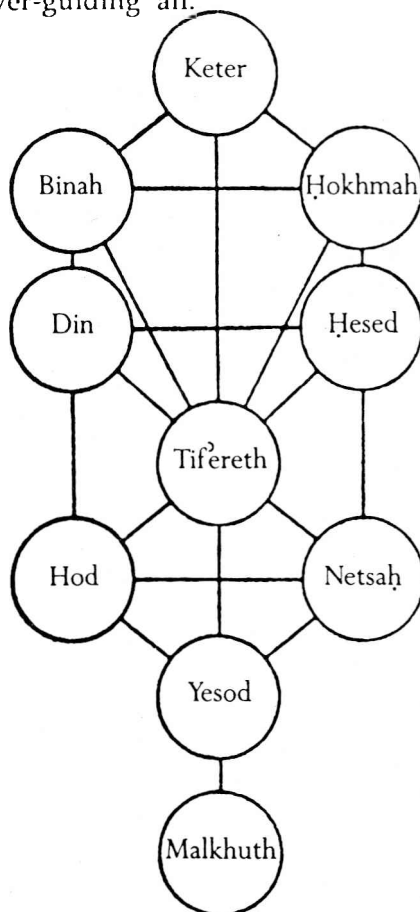
Din or Gevurah: Severity or Judgment

Tifereth: Beauty

Hod: Splendor or Majesty

Yesod: Foundation

Malkhuth: World of Manifestation



Nancy Yeilding

or Ratson: Will

Hokhmah: Wisdom

Hesed: Grace or Love

or Rahamim: Mercy

Netsah: Endurance

or Tsaddik: Righteous One

or Shekhinah: God's Royal Rule

The Sefirotic Tree of the Kabbalah

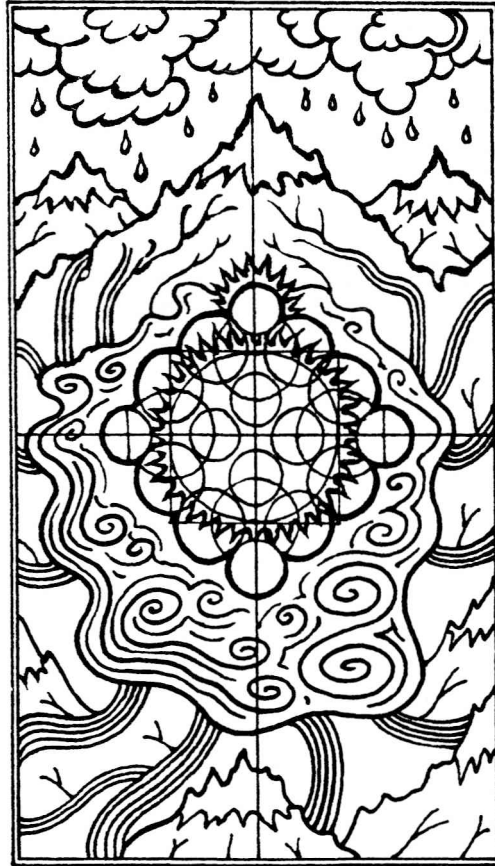
God's potencies grow into Creation like a tree, nourished by the waters of divine wisdom. . . [The Tree of the World's] root is located in the highest Sefirot; its trunk embraces the central and thereby conciliating forces; while the branches or limbs which grow out of it at various points encompass the contradictory forces of divine activity...The living forces of the Godhead pass into Creation through the medium of the last Sefirah, into which they flow as into the ocean.

On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead, Gershom Scholem, Schocken, New York, 1991, p. 42-4.

Svānubhavagīti Śatakam:
Experiential Aesthetics and
Imperial Transcendence

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Verse 65

Without top, bottom or middle,
many factors which have eluded comprehension,
you gather together and give unitive finality.
Each day you have been presenting this as a
homogeneous whole.

What did I do yesterday until I went to sleep? When I try to recall all whom I met and whatever I did, much seems to have slipped out of my memory. There were several yesterdays behind yesterday's yesterday. In my retrospective memory I can vaguely recall the past only from the second year after my birth. Only from what I have heard from other people do I know that I came from my mother's womb.

From what I read in histories and chronicles of the past, I am led to believe that there were several things happening in this world during the past millenia which I cannot clearly comprehend. With some so-called historical evidence the scientists conjecture that there was an evolutionary period of life even before the appearance of human beings on this planet.

Just as the past is conceived as a figment of my imagination, I also envision the vista of the future. Many explanations of the present use conceptualized ideations. Today I am living with the stored up memories which I carry in the folds of my brain.

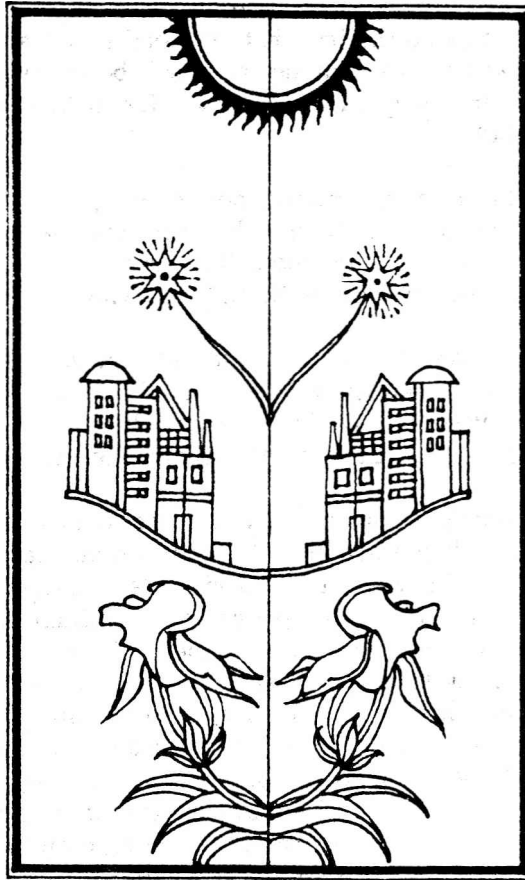
Of the five organs of sense, only the eye can reach a long distance. Touch can be impressed only by the direct contact of things which are in my environment. The ear has only a limited capacity to listen. Even more limited is the scope of the faculties of taste and smell. Although in principle the present covers all of the time and space in which we are placed, what we experience is only an infinitesimal fragment of it. A person who is stranded in mid-ocean, sitting on his raft and looking around, can see only a horizon caving in from all sides. He cannot see much. Our life in this universe is not very different.

Tomorrow is sitting under our feet. If there is a programmer of the universe, he/she also will not know what tomorrow will be like. The past, the present, and the future are only scantily known by us. Even if a person is enthusiastic to know everything thoroughly, at best he or she can only concentrate on one or two aspects of a couple of items. Nobody can ever exhaust all the studies that are beneficial to humanity. In such a context, most of which is hidden away as the unattainable world of the past, the inaccessible world of today and the unimaginable world of tomorrow, I am like an inadequate eye which is attracted to and distracted by thousands of objects. Even what little I know causes confusion to me.

Each day is pressurized with so many scheduled programs that it is physically impossible to give even a little time to whatever is going on in this world which is not on ones agenda. With a sense of obligation to meet demands, only the inevitable is done, often clumsily and inadequately. The right and wrong of whatever is done belongs to the relativistic order, and nothing can be adjudged as absolutely right or wrong.

Oh Lord, in your transparency of vision, having within it no past, present or future, no top, bottom or middle, I am functioning like a blindfolded person who is instinctively carrying out duties as if everything is accomplished by conditioned reflex. Like a child who plays all day baking mud-cakes and feasting on fantasies and at the fall of night discards everything and crashes on his mother's lap, I forget everything in deep sleep. Even so I keep myself busy during a lifetime and then seek my peaceful siesta in the lap of your love.

You have no transactions, and therefore you are not concerned with all the activities that are going on in the physical aggregates that come to be and disappear in the time-space continuum. There is snow on the mountain. The rivers that flow into the ocean have no way to know how extended they become and how deep they go. The cyclic repetition of the rivers merging in the sea and their return to the mountain peak will go on forever. But you remain changeless as the ground and backdrop of everything.



Verse 66

"Reality is one." "No it is two." "I am the one."
With such thoughts let me not get confused.
It is not untrue that whatever is seen here
becomes ultimately one with you.

The confusion spoken of in this verse is very beautifully presented in Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* (verse 27):

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.

Timewise, life in this world has an absolutist flow in which a dandelion, summer clouds, royal dynasties, the fading star, everything small and big, participate in the same way. Everything is ushered into time and space to shimmer in its laudable excellence for a moment or for a long time, and then to move on and yield its place to the next following at its heels. Extinction is thus sure.

No one can decipher what preceded manifestation. There will not be anyone even to imagine what will be afterwards. Two other verses of Omar Khayyam poignantly refer to this unpalatable truth (verses 29 & 30):

Into this universe and *why* not knowing
Nor whence like water willy-nilly flowing:
And out of it as wind alone the waste
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

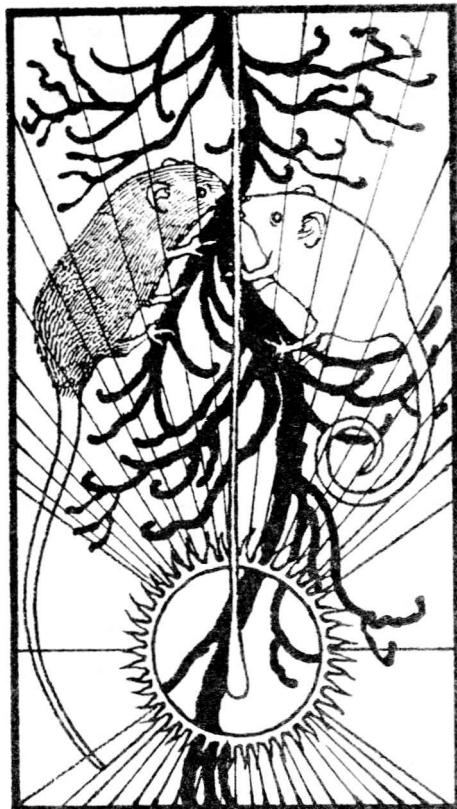
There was a Door to which I found no key.
There was a Veil past which I could not see
Some little talk awhile of me and thee
There seemed - and then no more of thee and me.

Until one gets transparency of vision, the tendency is to become pre-occupied with the details of the ephemeral. Each event in life is like a whirlpool in which the individual's identity is caught. Each person goes round and round experiencing the tedium of closing each gestalt which has opened, one after another. The horizontal fixations of life are like handcuffs and leg-chains. One does not see beyond the goal set for each day's work. If one moves with or as time, with such harmony that time never becomes extraneous, then alone does one begin to pace in unison with the eternal dance of Nataraja, the king of dances.

The one dimensional freedom of the running river is the simplest of all freedoms. In that the goal, the path and the striving have no separation. Paradoxes are not to be resolved. They are the passing wonders to be gazed at in amazement and in amusement.

Verse 67

Oh Beauty, alternately called day and night.
By lending me your own life
to animate this body,
you have forfeited all my personal rights.



The sun and the moon respectively represent alternating day and night. In the dawn when the sun comes, he goes around the world tickling all heliotropic beings to get up and engage in each one's respective duty with enthusiasm. From the busy bee to the businessman, when all are actively striving for their day's achievement, the heavenly energy that is lavishly pumped into each person is depleted. The sun changes gear and by evening all those who have been toiling during the day feel tired in their limbs and exhausted in their minds.

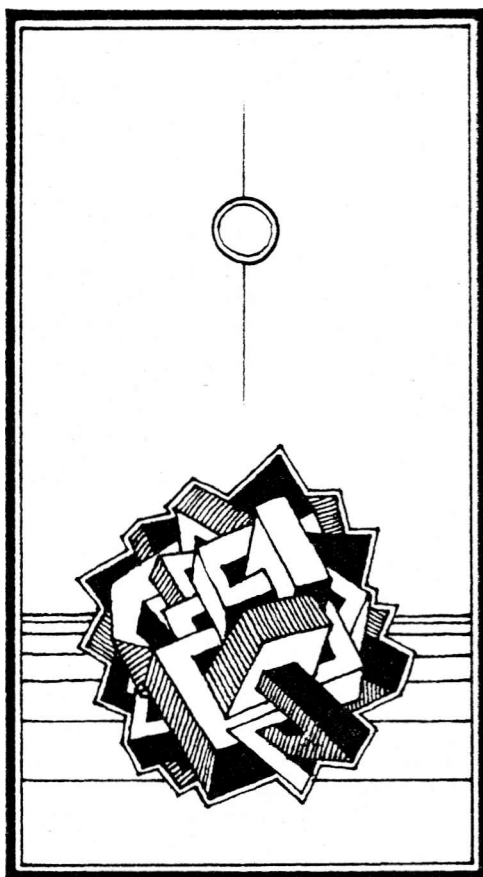
If the sun presides over man's intelligence, the moon is the chairperson of the mind. When the sun recedes, the day's work is over and the moon prepares men and women to shift their venue away from programs of actualization. Then all can bask in the moon-sheen and get into their favourite dreamworld as lovers, poets and fantasizers. Like the flickering candlelight of the poet's romantic night, the subdued energy of *taijasa* showers from nowhere all appropriate forms to be put together for the fabrication of any illusion that a dreamer wants to be united with. Also the energy that has been burned out during the second half of the day by the scorching sun is replenished by the night's *siesta*, so that by morning all can wake up strong in body and refreshed in mind. Thus while the ambivalent pairs which sun and moon hold out alternate, the life-span tapers towards its final blow-out.

There is an old parable given in folk-legends which humorously caricatures the comic situation of life. In the jungle of Confusion, there lived a fierce tiger called Infatuation. A man who was not very clever in distinguishing right values from wrong ones entered the jungle quite unaware of the presence of the dangerous tiger. The poor man was almost between the jaws of the tiger, and with no other thought than to

escape imminent death, he leaped into the abyss of a well called Uncertainty. While he was falling to the bottom, he was horrified to see the gaping mouth of the reconnoiterer of his *karma* eager to devour him.

He still had some luck left. He saw a root hanging on the side of the well. He caught hold of the root. While he was dangling like that, to his absolute horror, he found a white rat and a black rat coming alternately and gnawing at the root which he was gripping. From that a few drops of honey dripped onto the forehead of the man and slowly flowed down his face and came to his upper lip. The man instinctively opened his mouth and licked the honey. He said to himself "How sweet is this honey."

That joy of life, which can come even in the midst of tragedy, has in it the grace of the Supreme whose breath keeps every organism pulsating in its body. When that light is withdrawn, the dying person is not going into doom but finding his final absorption into the only reality on which is projected the variegation of the phenomenal world. Even when a person lives in a mortal body and oscillates between the two worlds of day and night, the true programmer of his or her being is the possessor of the universe which has given its own spirit to live as an imprisoned splendor in the mortal coil of a living organism. Jesus is said to have given his life-blood to save the world from its sins. Śiva, who is also called Mahesha, gives his entire life to live in the captivity of the body, so that these countless millions of beings may rejoice here and relish the bounty of creation.



Verse 68

Alas, you envelop my untrue inside and outside.
I have come to you seeking redress
from the feverishness of life.
Holding your hand, let me live in the arena of this world.

What is true life, and what is untrue life? Even the most erudite scholars cannot rightly discern this. If one can lend ones ears to the babble of words arising from ones neighbourhood and clearly understand sentimental chiches and unwholesome suggestions and get into malignant conversations, then one thinks that life is worthwhile. The more noisy the neighbourhood, the more life is considered potent. Many people cannot understand that love is more than treating their soul-mate as a pleasure- object. People are more clumsy when it comes to discerning tasteful colors and beautiful forms. The most grotesque of all tastes is of the glutton. If one understood what true happiness is, one wouldn't look for it in sensuous agitations.

Only when wisdom matures does one experience the falsity of the advertised values of consumer goods and turn away from the mundane in search of the Absolute. Looking for the Absloute is like trying to solve a Chinese jig-saw puzzle. The more you look, the more you get confused. Then all of a sudden the mystery of the puzzle reveals itself. Thereafter there is no puzzle, because only the right figure is seen. Similarly when disillusion in phenomenal attractions comes, then both inside and outside are clearly seen in the light of the Absolute.

When a person is physically ill and wriggles in pain, her prayer is to make her body strong and fresh to continue her pleasure-seeking life in the here and now. To the truly wise person the body is a disease of the soul. To be cured of the disease means loosening the grasp of the worthless and the transient and happily going the way where the spirit is led out of its imprisonment.

Thus the prayer given in this verse is not a conventional sophisticated supplication to continue ones hedonistic pursuit but rather a preparedness to accept radical conversion from ones infatuation with worldly pleasures, to stick on stubbornly to the eternal values with which the wise always rise above everything. The famous dialogue of Plato describing the last scene of Socrates before drinking hemlock (*The Phaedo*) will serve as a correct interpretation of this verse.

(Continued in next issue.)



Leela - Game of Creation

*I went out of my room
and was spilled into the road.
I lay stretched out before me on the highway.
From both sides my consciousness precipitated
and became houses and trees,
the blue sky and the far-off horizon.*

*I thought it was like Humpty-Dumpty
who had a great fall.
"Can I put myself together again?" -
I feared.
The moment the idea "I" occurred to me,
like bees that fly back to their hive,
the world gathered into my self
from every nerve and form
and - Lo! I was there again,
whole and total in myself.*

*Now, pulsating into an infinite world
and rolling back into my unified self
has become a regular leela
of the creator self and the created world.*

Guru Nitya



Kāṭha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

10

What is verily here that is there too. What is there that is verily here in turn. He attains death after death who sees as if there are many.

When people die we say they attain the heavenly abodes. It is the concepts of the here and the hereafter that are behind such notions. In the last *mantra* we saw that it is the same truth that is in what we call the here and the hereafter. For those who see the here and hereafter as different, death is a reality. If there is death, there is birth too. This cyclic process of birth and death (*samsāra*) will go on for ever. But the one who realizes that what we call the here and the hereafter are only entities superimposed on the one and only Truth, and that the 'I', the seeker, has no existence apart from it, he visualizes the immortal truth and experiences himself as the immortal truth. That means, he has already transcended death and attained immortality.

11

Mentally indeed this unity is to be reached. Here indeed there is no multitude at all. He goes from death to death who sees as if there is multitude here.

14

This *mantra* stresses that our goal is to be reached mentally. When we open our eyes what we see is not unity but multiplicity. The seeker is not to consider this multitude as the truth. All the Upaniṣads teach that the unitive truth inherent in multiplicity is to be visualized as not different from oneself. Yet even when one sees the unity of truth, the phenomenal multiplicity will continue to appear. Narayana Guru in his *Advaita Dipika* says: "Though the world disintegrates and loses its own existence in the state of wisdom-discrimination, it will continue to be perceived by the senses." Then how is this unitive truth to be realized? Narayana Guru says: "Everything exists, but the philosopher will apprehend all this as one." The unity is apprehended in and through the perceivable multiplicity like comprehending the unity of clay in the various forms of pot, pan, plate, etc. This inwardly turned intuitive perception is stressed in the present *mantra* by the words *manasaivedam aptavyam* (mentally indeed this is to be reached).

12

A Person of the measure of a thumb is seated centrally in one's own being. Ruler of what has been and what is to be, knowing Him no one wishes to save oneself from death. This, verily, is that.

Here the individuated self or the soul in every living being is designated by the word person (*puruṣa*). This person is taken to be seated in the center of one's being. This does not mean that the Upanisad claims the soul to be seated in the center of the body. It only means that the self is the central principle which regulates all the bodily and other functions of a being. This soul here is supposed to be the size of a thumb. In some other contexts it is supposed to be seated ten inches in front (*atyatiṣṭhad dasangulam*). Such imageries are not to be understood in the literal sense. Instead, they could be treated as helpful indications for contemplation. One can meditate on the self by closing the eyes and looking inwards to the region of the heart, or to the middle of the eye brows. It is easy for some to imagine the soul as the non-flickering flame of a lamp of the size of ones own thumb. There are others who meditate on the self with half-closed eyes concentrating their attention at the tip of the nose. For them it is easy to imagine it to be seated ten inches in front of them.

Whatever has been in this universe is already dead. What is to be is not yet born. These processes do not happen in a chaotic way, though they may be felt to be inconvenient to the desires and ways of planning of individuals. Everything that has been and that will be forms part of a cosmic system. A system is made a system by an awareness. It is not our personal awareness. We are aware only of certain elements of this cosmic awareness. We also cogitate as part of this total system. Then whose awareness is it? It is of the Ruler (*Īśa*) who is devoid of all adjuncts. Adjuncts like body, senses, etc. are subject to creation and destruction but the witnessing consciousness is not. It is the same witnessing consciousness that shines as if of the size of a thumb in an individual being. In short, the Ruler of the cosmic system and the individuated self are to be seen not as two entities but as the one and only Truth. Those who see like this do not see the end of life in what we call death, and do not desire to save them-

selves from the jaw of death. To them life is beginningless and endless. Births and deaths are only like waves emerging over the surface of the ocean and reemerging into it. One who understands truth like this intuitively sees the Absolute Truth in ones own self-being.

13

A Person of the measure of a thumb, like a flame without smoke Lord of what has been and what is to be He alone exists today and tomorrow too. This, indeed, is that.

In addition to what was stated in the last *mantra*, this one likens the Self to a smokeless flame and states that that is the only truth existing today and tomorrow. Smoke is an impurity that goes with fire and hides its brightness. The brightness is hidden according to the intensity of the smoke. So too, the Self, of the content of pure awareness, is covered by the impurities of the duality of subject and object, and their changes have six stages according to Indian thinkers. These six stages are *asti* (existence), *janam* (birth), *vṛddhi* (growth), *pariṇāma* (evolution), *apākṣaya* (decaying), and *vināśa* (destruction). We attribute these changes to the Self, which is only veiled by these attributes, and take life to be full of suffering while the Self exists, today and tomorrow, pure and free of all the attributes.

It is the above mentioned six stages of change which happen not only to the knowing individual but to everything that seems to exist in this cosmic system that causes time consciousness. This time consciousness also happens in the pure awareness which has no limit. When we realize this truth in our actual life we have transcended death.

14

*just as the water rained
upon unreachable
ravines runs scattered
in the mountains, so
too he who sees
attributed qualities
existing differently by
themselves, go after them
and attain them.*

Phenomenal change with the above-mentioned six states happens only in the domain of attributed qualities (*dharma*). Only these qualities inherent in an object are perceived by us when we think that the object is perceived. Therefore we mistake these attributed qualities to be the truth. We don't remember that the qualities can exist only on a substance (*dharmin*) and that the qualities can never exist by themselves, independent of the substance. This is because the attributeless substance is always invisible. Narayana Guru makes this very clear in his *Ātmopadeśa Śataka* when he says,

*It is not the substance but
the qualities that we know.
Because the qualified
always remain invisible
As such, earth and such do not exist,
what exists is but one awareness
of the form of brightness.*

So long as we are not aware of the substance we think that attributes exist by themselves. Once the substance is understood we become convinced that it is the substance that always exists and the attributes have existence only in the substance. The six changes that end in death happen only in the realm of attributes. Those who are under the impression that attributes are real by themselves go after them and have to suffer the miseries of the wordly change, including that of

death. This state of trials and tribulations is compared here to that of the water rained in a ravine which flows scattered. There is no chance of making the flow directed to a single aim. Attributes are also similar in aimlessness and those who go after them will have to suffer the shortcomings of aimlessness. The only way to overcome this predicament is to be convinced of the unity of the substance. This is made explicit in the next *mantra*.

15

*As pure water poured
into pure water becomes
the very same, so too
becomes the self of the
silent recluse of
understanding,
O Gautama.*

The last mantra showed how those who see attributes as truths existing differently by themselves will have to face life as flowing in scattered ways, just like the water rained in ravines. Here in this *mantra* the silent recluse who becomes silent because of his inexpressible wisdom, sees the realm of attributes where there is room for birth and death as not different from the substance which is the Absolute Self. Stated in another way, we could say that attributes are only horizontal manifestations of becoming of one and the same substance, the vertical unitive principle that exists in and through the aspects of becoming. The silent recluse mentioned here is the one who sees these two aspects unitively. Drops of pure water poured into the expanse of pure water become one with it. The non-dual and intuitive experience mentioned here is also of such a nature. All the attributes of the aspects of becoming merge in the Self-substance. In this unitive awareness of the wise one there is no question of birth or death. What exists is the Self alone.

(Continued in next issue.)

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sutra II:29

yama niyama āsana prāṇāyāma
pratyāhāra dhāraṇā dhyāna
samādhayo'ṣṭāvaṅgāni

yama: self-restraints

niyama: observances, injunctions

āsana: posture

prāṇāyāma: regulation of breath

pratyāhāra: abstraction

dhāraṇā: retention of an idea

dhyāna: contemplation

samādhayaḥ: absorption

aṣṭau angāni: eight constituent parts

Self-restraints, observances, posture, regulation of breath, abstraction, retention of an idea, contemplation and absorption are the eight constituent parts (of Yoga).

There are two opposite kinds of propensities which actualize with different modes. They may be termed as propensities with horizontal tendencies and those with vertical tendencies. Although their functions are opposite and distinct, they are also complementary forces, reciprocating with each other, which can be harmonized for the individual's advantage. The horizontal forces are such that in the here and now action incentives gather momentum and exaggerated importance is given to one's performance. Gratifying desires becomes more and more

emphasized and the individual forgets to restrain. The vertical propensity takes into account the past, the present and the future and is always value-oriented with a long-term consideration.

As most of one's energies are lying dormant in the unconscious, a conscious effort is to be made to cultivate values of perennial or long-term significance. As the restraint and performances are complementary with each other, *yama* and *niyama* can be taken as counterparts of one yogic discipline.

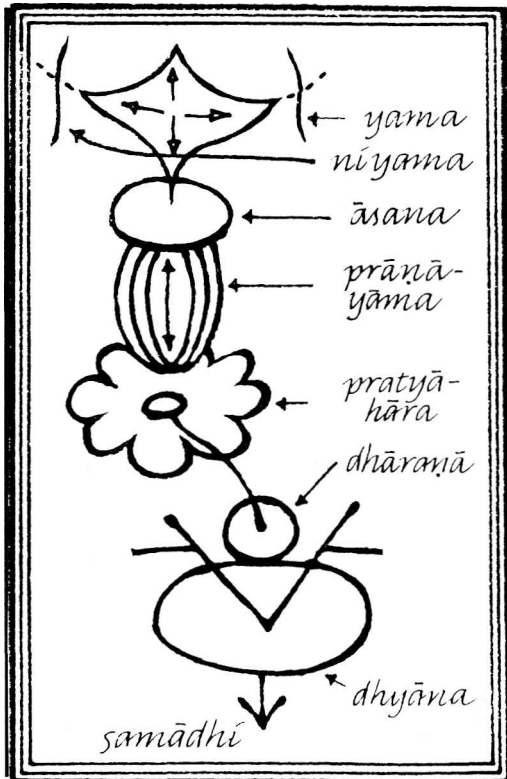
When the yogi aspirant has the intention of undertaking a thorough-going self-discipline, he or she is recommended to choose one interest rather than pursuing many interests. When full attention is given to that chosen interest, body, mind and ego are all interlinked in one line. That means the aspirant has placed himself or herself in a set which can be physiological and psychological. To indicate this the word posture is given. That does not necessarily mean sitting with a certain physical posture. When a cat is preparing to pounce upon a rat, it puts itself into a posture which is more an attitude than a special contortion of its body. Similarly, posture (*āsana*) is to be understood as posing oneself in the most congenial manner to be able to give full attention.

The body/mind complex is an aggregate of inertial substances and animating spirit. There are energies to be released

and energies to be restored. When outgoing energy and its restoration are brought into a single discipline, that is regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*).

Nature has its own program of proliferation and abundance. Even to produce one seed, countless grains of pollen dust are put on the stamens of a flower. Similarly, our minds bristle with desires. When the most appropriate is singled out and the others are discouraged from occupying the central focus of consciousness, one gets into a position which is conducive to programming a future possibility in a systematic manner. This singling out of one interest and warding off of distractions is abstraction (*pratyāhāra*).

When one has a steady state of mind one can choose a value to nurture as the central piece of ones psyche. It will retain the quality of ones life. Hence, it is called *dhāraṇā*, sustaining a certain idea or principle for a considerable length of time. For that, the fluctuating interests of the mind are to be brought back to the same challenge again and again. That kind of repetitive practice is *samyam*.



When a chosen value of life is fully identified with and that prevents other mental modifications from coming, *dhāraṇā* changes into a contemplative state. Then it is called *dhyāna*. Once the mind has attained the tranquillity of a non-modulating state, the intellect is no longer deputed to act upon the bid of the ego to examine the external world. Instead it becomes fully established in the blissful state of the Self. That is indicated here as *samādhi*.

In the coming sutras, these eight limbs of Yoga will be separately treated in more detail, to enable us to both understand and practice the eight-fold discipline of Yoga.

Sutra II:30

*ahiṃsā satyāsteya brahmacaryā
aparigrahā yamāḥ*

ahiṃsā: non-violence
satya: truthfulness
asteya: non-misappropriateness
brahmacarya: adhering to
uprightness in life
aparigrahā: non-acquisitiveness
yamāḥ: are the self-restraints

The self-restraints are non-violence, truthfulness, non-misappropriateness, adhering to uprightness in life, and non-acquisitiveness.

Ahimsa: Non-violence

The first-born in this world was hunger. The hunger of an organism is to be appeased with another organism. Thus the very first need is to eat which simultaneously necessitates the killing of another. Life is nourished by life. The imperativeness of killing precedes eating. If eating and killing are not acceptable, dying is inevitable. This is the greatest enigma of life. Should I not kill but simply die? Or shall I kill so that I may live? It is inevitable that the taking of one life is necessary to save another life.

Such being the basic law of life, how can the very first restraint of non-killing be actualized?

In smaller animals there is no morality attached to killing or eating. Whatever is inevitable is done. Only human beings have attached moral significance to the food they eat. The first consideration is reverence to life. Am I displacing someone else to perpetuate my existence? To exist means to exist in the body which is composed of the five elements and operated upon by the three modalities of nature. Yoga is a program to disassociate the spirit from the clutches of nature. That being the ultimate goal, the very first suggestion is to overlook the need to live in the body. What is ultimate cannot be immediately implemented. Hence a series of disciplines are given to guide one to the acceptance of the ultimate.

The instinct to kill and eat is very deep. However, to have love and preserve those whom you love is an equally deep instinct. There are a few kinds of animals which, immediately after begetting their children, kill and eat their progeny. But most living beings refuse to eat their own young ones even when they are starving. Many animals refuse to eat their own kind. Thus, most beings manifest the general principle of selective killing. That principle operates when people refuse to kill and eat the animals which live with them as pets, even when other animals are not available, when they choose not to eat animals but to exist on the abundant offerings of plants, and when they choose to eat more prolific species instead of sparse ones. A widening circle of empathy brings more and more discrimination in the selection of foods. That means love and caring for other living beings is placed higher in the hierarchy of values than the satiation of hunger.

The aspirant yogi wishes to preserve other beings as much as possible while finding a solution to his or her own hunger. As the yogi also wants to sustain life until realization comes, he or she should regulate the need to eat in such a way

that the least violence is given to the organic system of the world. At the same time, to compensate for what little necessary destructiveness one engages in, one gives one's own life for the preservation and propagation of other forms of life. It is thus in a very wide yet restricted sense that the ideal of non-violence is to be looked upon.

Satyam: Truthfulness

In life there are certain things which are experienced by all sentient beings as irrefutable. The irrefutability of a thing is felt by all concerned as an imperative-ness that cannot be explained away. Hence all people agree it has an existential status. This is very pronounced when the existence is gross or concrete. Suppose a bus, traveling through a gorge between two cliffs, comes to a landslide which has left a huge boulder blocking the road.

The passengers may have all sorts of differences in their religious faiths, political ideologies, personal prejudices, and so on. But they will all agree to one thing -- they cannot continue their journey until the road is cleared. This is an irrefutable fact which does not depend on anyone's opinion. Such an encounter is an existential encounter.

Truth is not always presented as an irrefutable existential factor. There are subtle situations where the pros and cons of everything involved or implied cannot be easily traced. Then it is possible to hoodwink another or tell blatant lies, pretending one is more in the know than others. This is a clear case of deception. Untruth is passed on for truth in many situations which are elusive and subtle.

In such a case, if a person dares to make a pronouncement, he or she should take the responsibility to go into all available data and, through the application of verifiable methods, arrive at truth with the conviction that what he or she is going to say is nothing but truth. It is that kind of truth spoken of here -- where, by speaking truth, you are directing a fellow being in the right path and,

by withholding that truth, you are allowing a fellow being to be duped.

The Sanskrit word for truth, *satyam*, has three syllables: *sa*, *ta*, and *yam*. In the *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* it is said that *sa* and *yam* stand for absolute truth but between them comes the evil influence of *tamas* (blinding darkness). Thus, pure truth never manifests in total clarity to a human mind. Suppose we say that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. There is a logical compulsion to believe the truth of it. But suppose the two points are as far apart as two stars at two extremes of the galaxy. If a line is drawn from one to the other, it can never be a straight line because space itself has curvature. So even a mathematical truth can become falsified. This is the *ta* of which the rishi of the *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* is speaking. To compensate for this, the yogi is not expected to learn the intricacies of physics and mathematical logic. He is simply advised not to distort the truth for convenience. Throughout the religious world of belief and dogma, uncouth lies are precipitated and perpetuated by people for vested interests. Hence this warning that, even unintentionally, out of sheer ignorance, one may lead another to wrong consequences by distorting truth. The yogi makes every effort not to be a howler telling untruth or a simpleton believing in something because somebody said it or it is written somewhere.

In the last days of Lord Buddha, he told his disciples: "Do not believe in a statement because it came from an ancient tradition. Do not believe because many believe. Do not believe because it is said by someone far more aged than you. Do not believe because somebody is threatening to kill you unless you believe. Diligently inquire, deeply ponder, and, if after careful examination, you are convinced of the irrefutability of the truth before you, accept it and stand by it." This is probably what Patañjali also means - that you should adhere to truth at all costs.

Asteya: Non-misappropriativeness

The discipline of *asteya* is to be understood by taking full cognizance of the disciplines of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and truthfulness (*satyam*). *Ahimsa* is not doing violence to the harmonious setting of the world order. *Satya*, appreciating the existential verity of everything in its natural setting, is complementary to the appreciation of innate harmony.

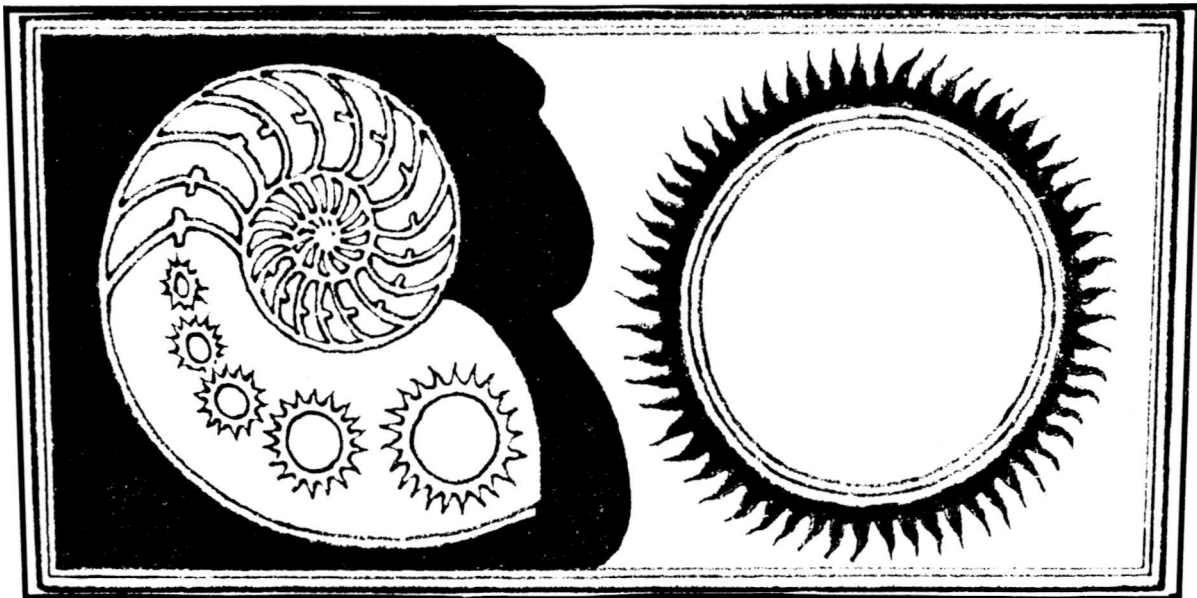
In *steya* (mis-appropriativeness) two grave epistemological violations are made in ones understanding of the whole truth to which one belongs. If the entire universe is an expression of the Supreme Self, the Absolute, nothing belongs to any private person because persons also belong to the Absolute. Also, to think that one is void of any value that belongs to oneself is a blindness of truth from which one suffers. It is only when a value manifestation is considered as belonging to another and not to oneself does one feel envious of another's possession and want to grab it from them. If one does not separate oneself from the totality of being, then there is no room to feel that one is an unfortunate wretch who lacks something which is cherished.

A holistic vision makes a double correction so that one neither feels alienated from a wealth of values which one sees manifested elsewhere nor feels the internal hankering to possess what is wrongly identified as an external factor.

Brahmacarya: Adhering to Uprightness in Life

In India a person's life span is described as having four complementary aspects of his or her pursuit for the actualization of the higher values of life. The intrinsic values of life are such that they cannot be completely distinguished or separated from each other. The four stages of life are said to be: studentship, the married life of a householder, weaning away from household obligations and, ultimately, living as a renunciate.

The first stage of life is designated as



brahmacarya. That is a time when a person is to be fully instructed in the normative notion of life. The norms are spiritual, moral, social, obligatory and transcendent. *Dharma* is the main ideal stressed during the period of self-discipline and instruction in the science of life. *Dharma* is that which sustains life and all its potentials in the here and now. Hence it is specific. As years pass, the horizon of value interests expands from the here and now consideration to the eternal. The expansion intends to bring within it the good of all.

When a person is born he is said to be of very little knowledge, *kincitjñātva*. The path to perfection is to become conversant with the omniscient (*sarva jñātva*), the omnipresent and the omnipotent. Movement from the small world of little knowledge to the infinite world of omniscience is a logarithmic spiral in which the microcosm and the macrocosm become harmonized. The unbroken growth of persistently relating the individual to the Absolute is indicated by the word *brahmacarya*. Many have missed this point.

As *brahmacarya* is intended to provide an aspirant a fully enlightened path that will ever lead a person from finitude to infinitude, *brahmacarya* is identical with the prayer given in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*: "Lead me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light and from death to immortality."

From the first cognizance of the inflow of stimuli through the five senses to the final merger in the all-transcending imperiential unity of the Absolute, *brahmacarya* is the only path that one has to tread. Any deviation is *vyabhicarya*.

The restraints given by Patañjali include *brahmacarya* to caution the aspirant that there are false paths and temptations from which one should recoil. If one truly understands what *brahmacarya* is, one has already attained the highest mark of discrimination which justly qualifies one to be an enlightened person. With that wisdom-insight, one confers on oneself rishi-hood, Buddha-hood, Christ-hood and the peace of Islam.

Aparigrahā: Non-acquisitiveness

As *brahmacarya* is a life-long discipline to transcend the compulsiveness of ego, with the intention of ultimately identifying oneself with the Absolute, non-acquisitiveness is its natural corollary. Although the literal meaning given to *aparigrahā* (non-grabbing) has reference to the brute form of robbery, when one understands its full import, one will see it as the most graceful behavior of a lover of humanity.

The beautiful attitude that is implied in the teaching of *aparigrahā* is given in the story, Mokusen's Hand, told by Paul Repts in his *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*:

Mokusen Hiki was living in a temple in the province of Tamba. One of his adherents complained of the stinginess of his wife.

Mokusen visited the adherent's wife and showed his clenched fist before her face.

"What do you mean by that?" asked the surprised woman.

"Suppose my fist were always like that. What would you call it?" he asked.

"Deformed," replied the woman.

Then he opened his hand flat in her face and asked, "Suppose it were always like that. What then?"

"Another kind of deformity," said the wife.

"If you understand that much," finished Mokusen, "you are a good wife." Then he left.

After his visit, this wife helped her husband to distribute as well as to save.

The same teaching comes in the Bhagavad Gita in verse 22 of Chapter Four: "Satisfied with chance gains, unaffected by conflicting pairs of interests, non-competitive, remaining the same in gain or no gain, he remains unbound in spite of having been active."

There is a universal benevolence which can be noticed in nature. Even a seed sprouting in the crevice of a rock gets enough water to moisten its roots. Such is the bounty of nature that whatever is due to each being is apportioned. One who identifies oneself with the self of all and sees oneself as indivisible from the Absolute enjoys the sharing of his or her bounty even when it is as small as the proverbial coin which an old woman gave to Jesus. When one understands that there is no need for any anxiety, many negative feelings will go away. One will see only friendship and charity coming from everyone and will feel like reciprocating the graceful behavior of all. This is *aparigrahā*.

Sutra II:31

*jāti deśa kāla samaya
anavacchinnāḥ sārva bhaumā
mahāvratam*

jāti: class

deśa: place

kāla: time

samaya: occasion

anavacchinnāḥ: not conditioned by, not limited by

sarva bhaumāḥ: extending or applying to all stages

mahāvratam: the great vow

These (the five restraints), not conditioned by class, place, time or occasion and extending to all stages, constitute the great vow.

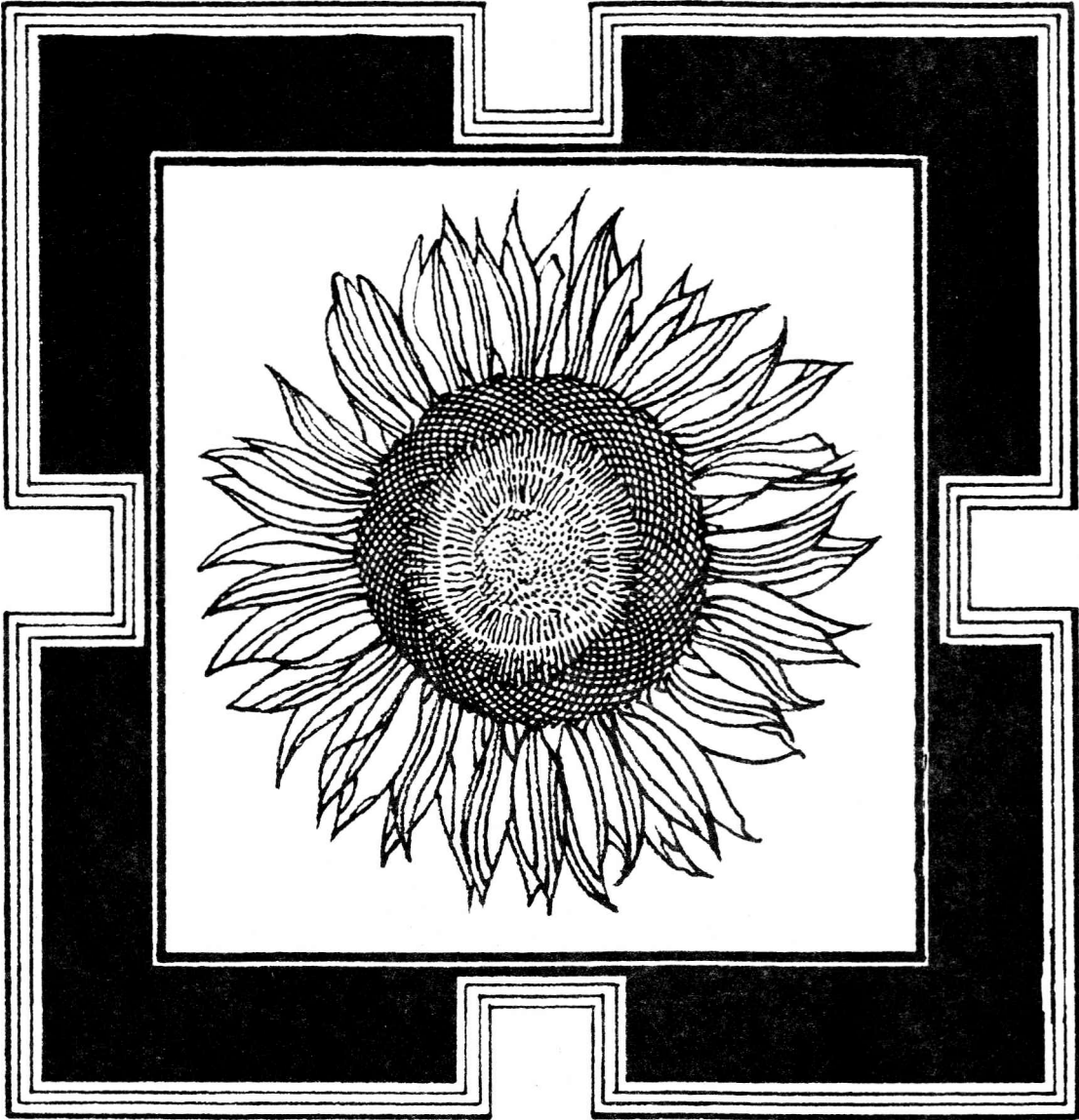
A yogi has to be a law unto himself or herself. A life without adherence to law and discipline can be very chaotic. In the *Manu Smṛti* and other books of injunctions, we see models of individuals and societies who framed laws to discipline themselves. For instance, in the *Manu Smṛti* we read that a virtuous and wise person will take the vow not to spit in an open place. This may seem to be a very trifling thing, but in a country like India, even in the time of Manu, people might have been untidy and unhygienic in their personal behavior. So he thought he should caution people to set laws for themselves which he called *vṛata*.

Most of the injunctions given in the *Smṛtis* have relevance only with regard to certain classes of people at certain times, places and occasions. But here Patanjali says that the five disciplines of restraint (*yama*) should be observed by all aspirant yogis as a great pledge or vow (*mahāvṛata*) all through their lives. That is why we said *brahmacarya* is not only for the period of studentship. It is to be continued until one's death. A person may make a rule for himself that he will not take tea or coffee. That is not a great vow. Certain people consider their vows to be very superior such as

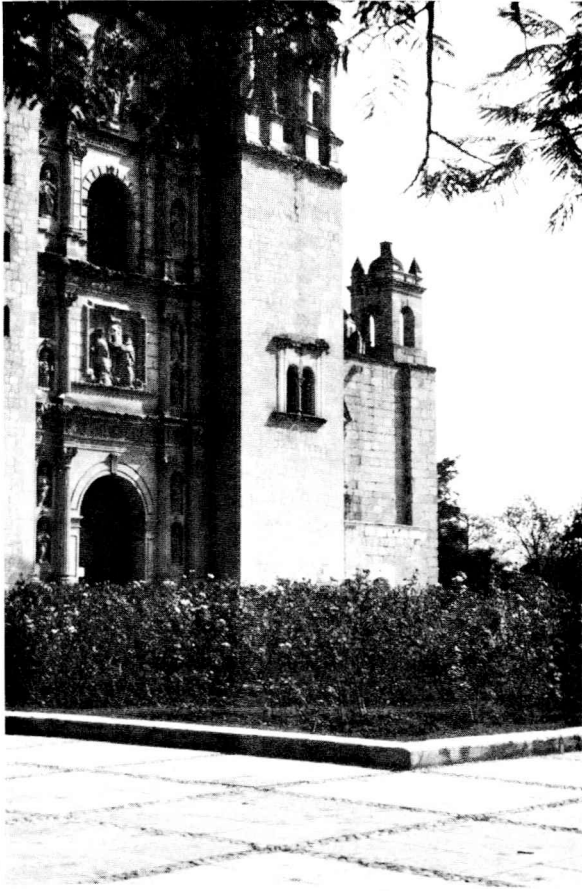
Jews and Muslims who take the vow not to eat pork. These are only conventional adherences to custom. But the resolves never to hurt another person, never to fashion or falsify truth, never to misap-

propriate, never to deviate from the path of righteousness and never to violate the rightful provisions that naturally belong to others are great vows.

(Continued in next issue.)



Oaxaca



The mountains of the Sierra Madre del Sur rise inland from the far southwestern coast of Mexico. At 5,000 feet, as these mountains slope to a valley, the city of Oaxaca de Juarez sits on an open plateau. The remote valley and its ring of mountains isolate and protect Oaxaca. The traveler - coming either by twisting bus lanes or by a rapid air ascent and descent - feels nourished by Oaxaca's constant spring-like weather. The hot tropical sun is diffused and made translucent by the high altitudes. Cacti, broadleaf trees and wildflowers cover the golden serene hills.

Deborah Buchanan

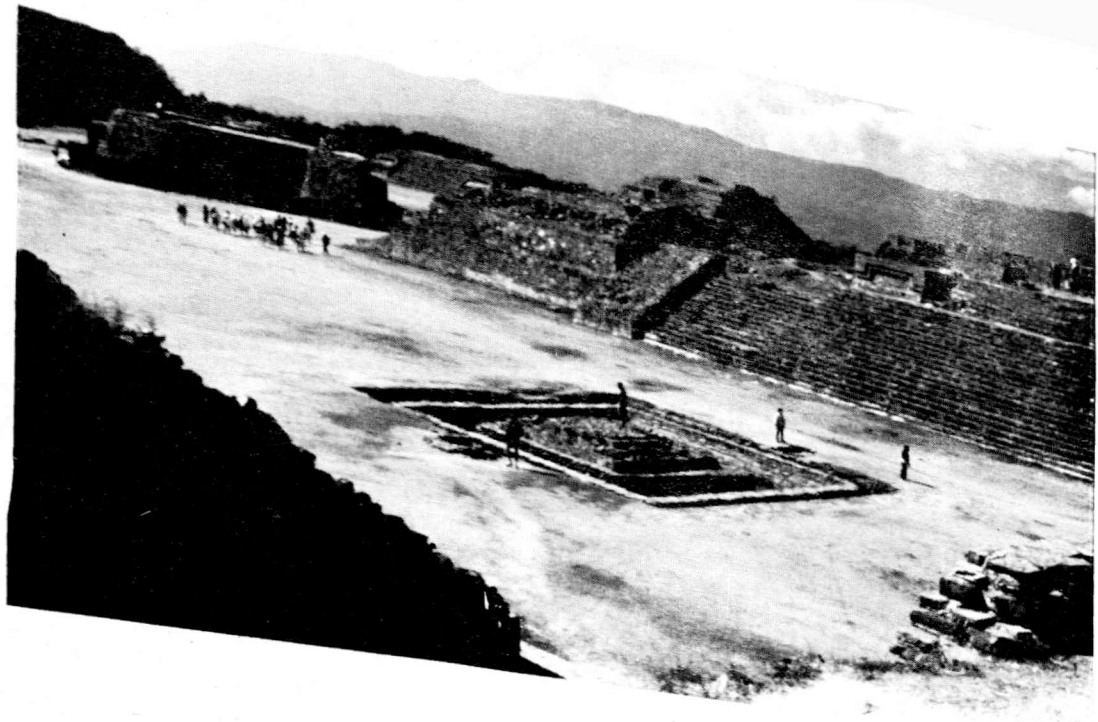


Four hundred years ago the Spanish *conquistadores* founded Oaxaca first as a military outpost, then as a center of colonial administration. Hernando Cortez, conqueror of the Aztecs in 1521, settled here, beginning a vast and still uncompleted mansion. Many of the original churches from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are active and standing, and Colonial homes, courtyards and parks throughout the city are in use and in good condition. UNESCO, in fact, has designated Oaxaca, with its architectural treasures, as a world heritage site.



One of the most important areas of the city is its central market. Vibrant and vital, it accommodates traditional crafts, everyday items, food stalls and small factories for locally grown chocolate. Each Saturday an influx of Indians from the surrounding villages comes to market with wares, making Oaxaca the most authentic market in Mexico.

Ten kilometers outside the city is a vast and complex archeological site, Mt. Alban. Over many centuries this site has served as a religious and residential center for native



cultures, mainly Miztecs and Zapotecs. A large central plaza, connected by underground tunnels to the surrounding pyramids, dominates the area. Adjoining it are a ceremonial ball court, an astronomical tower, and an avenue of carved stone figures. Scattered over the hill on which Mt. Alban sits are scores of buildings, some excavated, others just discovered. The jade jewelry and the statues originally found in the tombs are in a museum in Oaxaca and the Anthropological Museum in Mexico City. But the space itself, open on all sides, set off by snow-capped mountains, remains majestic and awe inspiring.

Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

Ripples Moving Out From The Center

A small organization grew along with the numbers of people coming to the temple and forest hermitage at Aruvipuram. As Narayana Guru resumed his habit of wandering throughout southern India (in areas presently known as Kerala and Tamilnadu), returning to Aruvipuram only occasionally, the temple organization took charge of maintaining smooth operations there. In 1893 a sannyasi from south Travancore offered some nearby property to the Guru if some attached debts were cleared. Subscriptions were collected and the debts paid. At the time of the registration of the property, a P. Parameśwaran became manager of the temple properties. 47

P. Parameśwaran was one of the sons of P.T. Palpu who were all active in furthering the political and social welfare of the community with which they identified themselves. The father, P.T. Palpu, had learned English and challenged the caste discrimination which prevented even the few wealthy and educated Ezhavas from entering government service. His eldest son, P. Velayudhan, was the first Ezhava admitted to the Maharaja's College and High School in Trivandrum (1874). After his graduation his application to work for the government was rejected. He applied and was accepted into the British service in the Madras Presidency where such discrimination was less rampant. A third brother, P. Palpu, also was allowed to attend the Maharaja's High School and eventually scraped and borrowed his way through Madras Medical College. After he re-

ceived his medical degree in 1889, he applied to the Travancore Medical Department and was rejected. In 1891 he entered the Medical Service of Mysore State.

Although encumbered by his duties in Mysore and by the difficulties created by his distance from Travancore, he attempted to point out to the government the inequity of their policies which allowed no educational or governmental possibilities for Ezhavas. He often submitted petitions and attempted to organize the Ezhavas, with scant success. 48

P. Palpu had the opportunity to meet with Swami Vivekananda when the latter was the guest of the Mysore government in the early 1890's. Aghast at the particularly corrupt and insidious practices of caste discrimination in Travancore, Swami Vivekananda is reported to have referred to it as a lunatic asylum of caste. He encouraged Palpu in his efforts.

He also impressed Palpu with the need for a revival as well as a reform of Hinduism. He counseled that as a good way to counter the discrimination of those who considered themselves of higher caste and to check the rising incidence of conversion to Christianity and Moham-medism (which for the oppressed groups had become a way out and up socially and economically). Swami Vivekananda thus prepared Palpu to be on the lookout for a leader, a teacher whose spiritual roots were sunk deep in the ageless fount of wisdom, unpolluted by the encrustations of centuries, whose example could inspire a new sense of self-worth in a down-trodden people. 49 So when P. Palpu heard of Narayana Guru, he was eager to join him and offer his services.

At about the same time (1892-93) Narayana Guru was also joined by a



young man, Kumaran Asan. He had first met the Guru some years earlier when the Guru had visited his father, Narayanan. He had received his early education from a traditional teacher of the village and had later studied Sanskrit as well. He also worked for two years as a bookkeeper at a school conducted by Manampur Govindan Asan. 50 He began to teach younger students, thereby gaining the appellation "Asan" (teacher). During this time he began to write poetry. When he first met the Guru, Narayana Guru encouraged him to use his creativity in directions other than the vulgar erotic conventions of the day.

That first meeting with Narayana Guru had a profound effect on Kumaran Asan. Four or five years later, at about age 19 (1892), he went to live and study with Narayana Guru at Aruvipuram. After Kumaran had been there for two years Narayana Guru wanted to arrange for his higher education. Kumaran Asan went with the Guru to see Dr. Palpu in Bangalore and entered the Sanskrit College there. Later, with financial assistance

from Dr. Palpu, he studied with a private tutor in Madras and at the Sanskrit College of Calcutta. During those years (1895-1899) his literary horizons widened dramatically. He was exposed to the cultural renaissance taking place in Bengal, led by Rabindranath Tagore and Swami Vivekananda. He also became familiar with English literature as well as that of Tamil and Kanada.

When he returned to the Guru in 1899, he assumed the responsibility of secretary-treasurer for the Aruvipuram Ashram which was reorganized as the Aruvipuram Temple Yogam. Narayana Guru continued his traveling and Kumaran Asan often accompanied him, endeavouring to raise money for the Yogam. 51

Because of his constant travels, usually on foot, thousands of people were able to relate to the Guru personally. Through that relationship they started to regard themselves with a sense of self-worth which had been robbed from them by the oppression under which they lived. They sought to emulate the Guru by giving up unclean practices and living more harmoniously with each other. By 1901 the Guru's impact on the society was such that the State Census Manual of Travancore recorded him as a Guru and acknowledged his influence on the sharp drop in crime statistics.

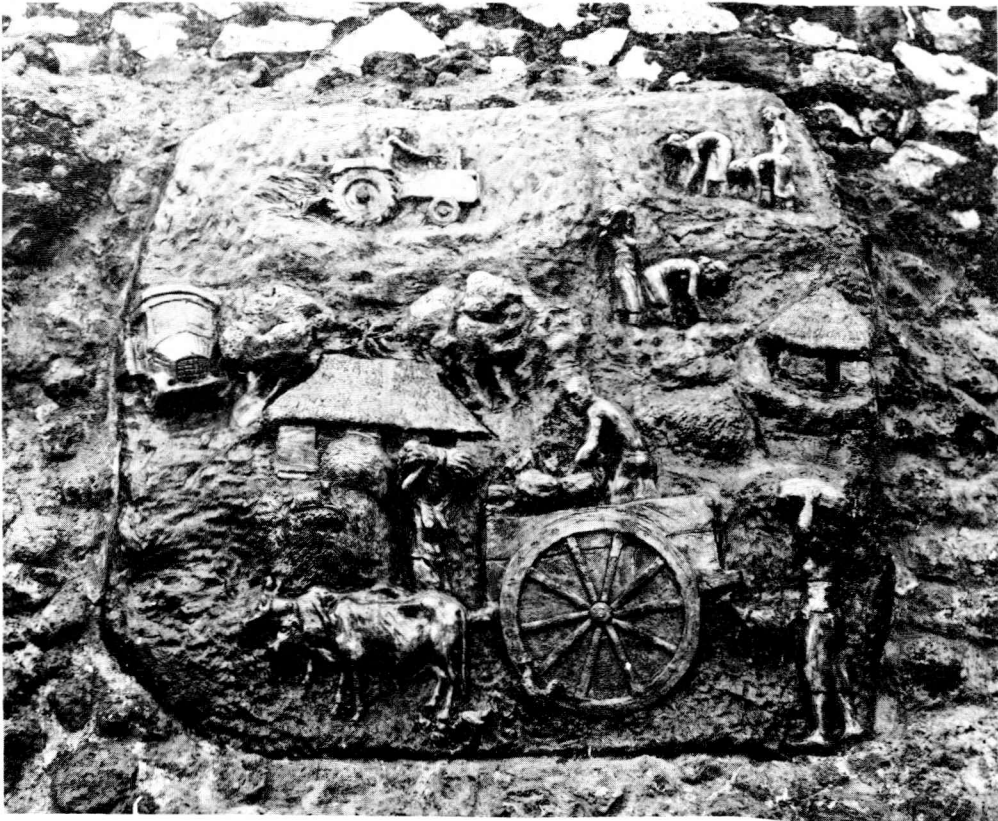
Through the combined influence of Dr. Palpu and Kumaran Asan, the Aruvipuram Temple Yogam grew into a new organization which was founded in 1903. They named the organization Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam--"The Organization to Propagate the Ideals of Sri Narayana Guru." The S.N.D.P. Yogam set out to provide educational opportunities to the masses who for centuries had been denied most possibilities of advancement socially, religiously, and economically. They also sponsored projects leading to economic self-sufficiency and discouraged certain meaningless or demeaning social customs which had proliferated in elaborate and expensive rituals. For all these efforts, Narayana Guru was the inspiration and to them all he gave

his blessing.

However, when Kumaran Asan read out the proposed by-laws to the Guru, he objected to a statement indicating that the S.N.D.P. Yogam sought primarily to aid the Ezhava community and closely related "caste" groups. He protested, saying that the Yogam should serve the whole human community. Kumaran Asan explained that the Dewan (government minister) had advised such wording to aid in official acceptance of the organization. Narayana Guru replied, "You are calling us 'Guru' and you are giving advice to us. So we should call you 'Asan' (teacher)." 52 He then gave his consent for the organization to continue.

Prior to the founding of the S.N.D.P. Yogam, economic improvement had come to many Ezhavas through expanding trade based on the coconut trees which they had traditionally owned, cultivated and processed into a variety of products. Those who had risen in wealth sought a corresponding rise in their sta-

tion in society. The S.N.D.P. Yogam became an instrument to further this cause, agitating for the removal of caste restrictions in education, government employment, dress and travel. As the Yogam became increasingly affiliated with the cause of attaining these goals especially for Ezhavas, the distance between the organization and Narayana Guru grew. At the same time the Yogam skillfully used the uniting force of his impact on people all over Travancore in their efforts to organize Ezhavas into a powerful political force. His name became the banner under which many successful campaigns were carried out against the entrenched theocracy which attempted to reserve all opportunity and privilege for those who had established themselves at the top. The Guru continued to try to guide the Yogam to a universal compassion and participated at times in its functions such as the very successful industrial and agricultural exhibition in Quilon at the end of 1904. But he walked on, refusing to be bound by



the narrowness of his followers' understanding. Periodically he found it necessary to issue such statements as the following letter written in 1916:

It is quite some years since we (Narayana Guru) have given up distinguishing caste and religion, but some people who have identified themselves with a certain section of the community still consider us (the Guru) as belonging to their tribe and act accordingly. Because of that, there is great misunderstanding about our actual attitude and identity.

We do not belong to any particular caste or religion. We have also made it clear that our followers will be chosen from only those who have given up all such false identities. This is how we constituted the disciples of the Advaita Āśrama and in future also this principle will be considered fundamental and binding. This announcement is made for the notice of the public. 53

The Guru's example of quiet dignity and dynamic compassion and his inspiring love of truth and beauty called forth the aspirations, talents and dedication of many young men. Foremost among those who stepped forward as leaders of the S.N.D.P. Yogam and various agitations for social reform were T.K. Madhavan, K. Ayyapan and Kumaran Asan.

T. K. Madhavan

T.K. Madhavan (1885-1930) thrived on political action. In him the Guru's universal compassion and vision became transformed into a vital organizing force. With Guru's guidance, he was responsible for much of the interface between the Indian National Congress, spearhead of the all-India nationalist movement, and the up-rising peoples of Kerala, especially in the S.N.D.P.Y. In 1921 he obtained an interview with M.K. Gandhi at Tinnevely to plead the cause of the Ezhavas and others suffering under caste discrimination. Gandhi gave his blessing to an

agitation for temple entry and advised civil disobedience as the course to be followed, while yet retaining his belief in the caste system. Because of the relative failure of the Congress' program of non-cooperation with the British and the continued agitation of T.K. Madhavan and others, the Congress Party leadership came to realize that the nationalist movement could not succeed without a broader base of support. In fact, in Kerala most of those who were regarded as "lower" or "out-castes" supported the British because the British influence had brought with it less discrimination and more opportunities in education and employment. Through the efforts of Madhavan and others, the 1923 meeting of the Indian National Congress at Kakinada passed a resolution committing it to the eradication of untouchability.

Under T.K. Madhavan's leadership the S.N.D.P. Yogam became increasingly more militant. He was quick to take the opportunity to gain Congress support for action in Kerala when their programs elsewhere seemed to be lagging. It was through T.K. Madhavan that Gandhi himself became involved in the instigation of a *satyāgraha* (peaceful civil disobedience) in the Travancore town of Vayalpur in 1924. The goal was to overturn the regulations forbidding entry into temples and even passage on the roads near them to all but those considered "high-caste" groups. Along with Gandhi's support came the dedicated involvement of many young men of the so-called "higher castes." A united front of all segments of society willing to protest and face arrest was formed. Narayana Guru had long advised that people of all groups should walk freely everywhere and enter any temple, which would have put an end to such restrictions through massive non-observance. The *satyāgraha*, however, was limited to the specific goal of free passage on the roads in order to maintain its acceptability as a cause to be embraced by those who were not considered "out-castes." Many earnest young souls sat, fasted, sang and were arrested. Al-

though they were repeatedly beaten and showered with burning lime by *goondas* (thugs) hired by the threatened theocrats, the confrontation dragged on for over a year. It finally ended with a compromise which opened the roads to all but retained prohibitions against temple entry.

It was not until 1936 that the aspirations of the *satyāgrahis* found their fulfillment in the Temple Entry Proclamation which finally made the temples accessible to all. Throughout the *satyāgraha* and other agitations, T.K. Madhavan found a never-ceasing source of inspiration, guidance and support in Narayana Guru. For him, the Guru was the shining image of all that he valued and aspired for. However we cannot say that the disciple presented an adequate reflection of the Guru. The relationship of a disciple to Guru is one of the particular coming into relation with the universal.

Through that alchemy the particular becomes universalized. But unless and until the disciple transcends all individual preference and prejudicial loyalty, achieving an unbounded love for all beings and a perspective which can include all points of view, he or she presents only a partial or clouded reflection of that brilliant light. It is only with such an understanding that we can adequately

evaluate the contribution of T.K. Madhavan and other followers of Narayana Guru. T.K. Madhavan's capabilities as an organizer enabled him to have a profound effect throughout Kerala. As those talents included a use of revolutionary rhetoric to arouse fervent response, devissive argument and fighting often accompanied his efforts, sometimes increasing the suffering of the common people. As they were put at the service of an organization affiliated to one part of the community (and which catered especially to the interests of the wealthy members) some of the gains achieved were consolidated at the expense of continuing the oppression of others. This of course worked contrary to the Guru's vision of humanity as one family and his compassion so freely given to all, regardless of religion, social status, or wealth.

Sahodharan Ayyappan

K. Ayyappan (1889-1968) was one of nine children of a poor Ayurvedic doctor. He had come to Guru as a teenager, burning with the clear light of reason and the desire to clear away the chains of superstition and prejudice which bound his brothers and sisters. He was upset by the Guru's disciples who used his name to



achieve their emancipation while participating in the oppression of others. As a gesture against such hypocrisy, he organized inter-dining between those considered Ezhavas and those considered Pulayas (thought lesser because of their past slavery and harsher present circumstances of life). This was in 1917, just after he finished his B.A. The response of the Ezhava families was vicious at first: he and his comrades were excommunicated, biting ants and burning oil were thrown on them, the barber and person responsible for burial rites were forbidden to go to the family of any participant who refused to undergo a purification ceremony, and women from those families who had been given in marriage were sent back. He was called Pulayan Ayyapan and reviled by many. He went to the Guru at Alwaye. Guru counseled him to have patience in his dealings with others, saying "*Christu vine pole cemikua*" (Like Christ bear everything). Then Guru gave him this message in writing to bolster his efforts: "All men belong to the same caste. Therefore, it is permitted that people belonging to different castes may dine together."

Heartened, K. Ayyappan went on to spread the Guru's teachings throughout Kerala. At first, he and his fellows would just stand on the roadside and speak, following the practice of Christian missionaries. Later they gained enough support to organize large meetings and to found the social welfare organization, Sahōdharan Sangham (Association of Brothers). Twelve years after his excommunication he was being honored and praised by the very people who had done it. 54 His work helped bring about many reforms in Travancore society and in the establishment of organizations such as the Sri Narayana Sevika Samājan, an orphanage and women's shelter started by his wife, Parvati Ayyappan. He came to be known as Sahōdharan (brother) and was one of the first leaders to interpret the peoples' problems in terms of class struggle, in addition to the constrictions of religion and caste.

A free thinker who did not believe in God, Sahōdharan Ayyapan found most religious superstitions of the time very repugnant. He understood Narayana Guru's slogan: "Man is of one caste, one religion, and one god," as "No caste, no religion, no god." When other disciples protested Sahōdharan's principle of "no god" Narayana Guru only smiled silently. 55 Sahōdharan Ayyapan's adherence to rationalism had an open nature which fostered his capacity to understand and actualize the Guru's Word. One of his favorite memories of the Guru was a two day boat trip that provided the occasion for Narayana Guru to make exception to his usual silence and explain to Ayyapan in detail his composition, *One Hundred Verses of Self Instruction (Ātmopadeśa Śatakam)*. In all his activities the Guru was his central reference point. Through his sharing of that light, he encouraged many other young people to question, resist and ultimately change the fabric of Kerala society. To the extent to which he strayed from that source, he fostered paths which ultimately lead to frustration and even despair, the inevitable result of any program or mode of thought which emphasizes an "other" to be feared, vanquished or even "done good to."

(Continued in next issue.)

NOTES

47. Robin Jeffrey, *The Decline of Nayar Dominance*, Vikas, Delhi, 1976, p.209.
48. Ibid, p.208.
49. P.K. Balakrishnan, *Śree Narayana Guru Samahara Grantham*.
50. A.N. Nambiar, *The Growth of a Poet*, Birth Centenary Volume.
51. Jeffrey, Ibid., p.210.
52. Narayana Guru called him Asan for the rest of his life.
53. *Malayalam Manorama*, Sept. 6, 1979.
54. Details about Sahodharan Ayyappan's relationship with Narayana Guru from an interview with Parvati Ayyappan.
55. As related to M.K. Sanu by K. Ayyappan.

San Rock Painting

Deborah Buchanan

Mountains interrupt the stark deserts and expansive forests of the African continent, from the northern Sahara to the velt of the southern cape. In all these mountain ranges lie both caves and exposed cliffs decorated with paintings, which are a vivid heritage from pre-historic cultures that inhabited these areas thousands of years ago. The dating of these rock murals varies widely, both in the ascertained ages and in the accuracy of the dating. Some areas can be dated fairly precisely - through radiocarbon dating, through the presence of now-extinct animals in the paintings, and through the dating of artifacts in adjacent living areas. The oldest rock art in Africa is the Apollo II cave in Namibia, dated to 26,000 B.C.

The Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa are a range in the southeast, rising up from the inland coastal area into the middle and high velt and are a basaltic escarpment overlaying sandstone. Where the sandstone is exposed and weathered, it forms overhanging cliffs and caves. It is in these secluded areas that the San people have left an astonishing and intriguing body of work, in the caves' rock paintings.

The paintings of South Africa are unique in that they can be positively attributed to a known people. These people are the San of the Khoisan racial-cultural grouping. Previously they were called either the Bushman (for the San) and the Hottentots (for the Khoi), Bushman being a derogatory term for where these tribes lived and Hottentot being a reference in Dutch to language characteristics. These two groups are related though it appears, both archeologically and in the oral tradition, that the San were the original inhabitants of the

southern area of the continent. Their Late Stone Age culture of hunter-gatherer was still flourishing when the first European ships landed at the Cape in 1652. Rock painting, as an integral part of their culture, was still being practiced at this time. Numerous cave paintings can be traced to the known historical period, approximately 1700 - 1890 A.D. Others can be dated or at least inferred back from these. R. Willcox's dating evidence goes back 1500 years for many still visible paintings, but what we see is a remnant and continuation of a tradition that goes back at least another 2000 years. The earliest dating for the South African rock paintings is to the beginning of the Late Stone Age, 11,250 B.C.

The San are a unique people in Africa, related only, so far as is known, to the Ituri of the West African rain forest. They are slight in build, short (four to five feet tall), with particular and outstanding physical characteristics (fatty deposits on the thighs and buttocks, a sway back), a light, apricot colored skin, and Mongoloid facial features. They were hunter-gatherers who roamed all of the velt areas of southern Africa before being pushed by European encroachment into first the mountains, and then the deserts, where a small remnant now lives in the Kalahari.

The extinct sub-group of the Xam are the people who lived in the southeastern area and painted in the Drakensberg Range. Five specific rock paintings illustrate this art form and hint at the variety found in the paintings. As well they show the artistic and cultural depth portrayed in San rock art.

The last (and only historical) period of San painting is the easiest to decipher. In many of these paintings actual

events are portrayed. There are scenes of Europeans, in wide brim hats, with guns, but most especially we see the stock raids on cattle and horses. It was these raids that were the lightning rod for the European-San conflict. As the Dutch and English settlers appropriated San hunting areas for their farms, the San took to raiding livestock, with the expected aggressive reaction by the Europeans.

In Site M-9 we see a commando scene from East Griqualand where irate farmers fire on San who have run off with their cattle and horses. The animals and riders are grouped together on a flat surface. There is no pictorial perspective, with figures mostly in side view or profile. Some riders are painted in proportion to their mounts; other humans, especially the San being chased, are drawn large and out of proportion to the animals. The colors used are those found throughout San rock painting - black, brown, a red-orange, and white. Here both the style and the colors are indicative of what has been classified by most researchers as the fourth or last stage of development in these paintings. It is a stage of artistic retrenchment, almost regression, from the complex and highly sophisticated third stage. Animals are no longer shown in a variety of positions and approaches and the use of delicate figure modelling with shaded polychrome is usually absent. The subjects portrayed are often ones of conflict with the white settlers, rather than the more abstract and spiritual themes of earlier paintings.

Still, the animal silhouettes of monochrome, and some bichrome, are painted with a sensitive naturalism, the horses expressing verve and speed. There are no individual distinctions in the human figures. The natural portrayal of animals and the schematized, stylized portrayal of humans is a recurrent pattern in these San rock paintings. With human figures it is the activity that is dramatized, and here the escaping San poignantly express pain and fear.

The next examples are from the Eland Cave and from Site B-12. The

eland is a large and beautiful antelope and many groupings are shown in the caves. In fact, they are the animal most often portrayed by San painters. They are painted lovingly, with sensitivity, and naturalistically (but with the characteristically stylization of an elongated neck). Elands are also shown in the greatest variety of positions - frontwise, backwards, turning, as well as in silhouette - and they are most often painted in a subtly shaded polychrome. Both bulls, cows and calves are depicted.

Our knowledge of the painting mechanics comes to us from scattered source: some from early informants (a San guide, Qing, to J. Orpen and some San convicts to Bleek and Stow); and two relatively recent accounts where men who were part San and knew of the old tradition demonstrated rock painting to white researchers. In each case, the colors were mixed with juice or oil (either plant or animal) before or after applying them to the rock surface. The tools used were feathers, brushes of wildebeest hair, and bone scapula. In the late period of European raids on the San, some painters' materials were seen by the whites. The colors were from ochreous earths and mineral oxides, sometimes blacks were from carbon, and these were mixed with plant juices, animal fats or blood. One of the last great painters of the Xam San was found dead (shot by a white farmer) with a painting belt on which hung ten horn tips, each filled with a different colored powder for paint mixing.

There are three major ways in which the rock paintings are made available to a wider audience. Either a free-hand copy is done (this was common in the early days); a tracing over the actual painting is done, using paint on a clear polyurethane sheet; or photography, both black and white and color. The first copies made by Europeans of San rock art were done, but not published, in 1770 by Gordon and Schumacher. Copies were not generally available until 1837 when James Alexander made oil paintings of this rock art. In 1853 engravings by Thom-

as Bain were also done and published.

The earliest Europeans to view these paintings and their copies focused on the eland as quarry and on the role of the San as hunter. So to many future generations, these scenes of elands were hunting scenes. However, recent studies of the paintings and explorations of other sites - and a study of their relation to San mythology - shows the eland friezes in a different light completely.

Actual hunting scenes are very scarce; and there is only one that shows a man dressed in animal disguise and hunting a herd—though this is a famous scene reproduced early on to show the sympathetic magic intended by the painters. Interestingly enough, the most widespread, hunted animal for the San in this area was not the eland but the black wildebeest, of whom there is not one painting in all of the caves or shelters.

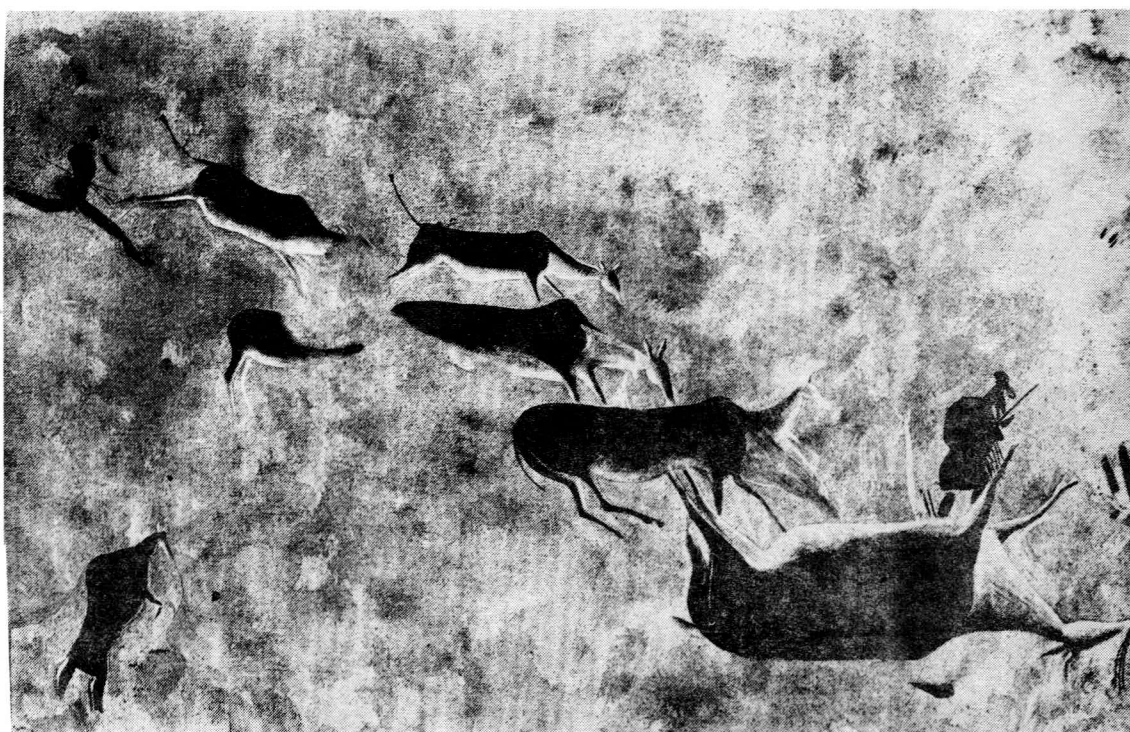
The eland was central to the San not because it was a food source, though it certainly was that at times. More importantly it functioned as a crucial hub of values and beliefs, particularly concerning rain rituals. There are many complex, interrelated portrayals of the eland relating to rain. These paintings' importance is supplemented by the Xam San mythology recorded by Bleek and Stow in the 1870s, and the myths related by the Ko and Kung San of the Kalahari to present-day researchers. From all these sources comes the story of the eland as the favorite being of Kaggan, the San Creator. From this relationship the eland derives great supernatural power called *n/um*. It is this power that the San seek to supplicate and harness so that rain can come to the parched velt. An early interpretation of this rain-giving property of the eland was that the rain caused grass to grow for the hunted herds. But detailed analyses by Patricia Vinnicombe have shown that the rain is desired most because it causes the wild plants to sprout; it is these plants that form the foundation of San diet.

But rain and the eland and their portrayal in rock paintings go beyond the

relationship to diet and physical sustenance. In the example from Site K-1, you can see the largest eland being dragged around as a rain animal—ostensibly to cause rain to fall wherever the body is pulled. Though some writers take this image quite literally (feeling that an actual eland's body was dragged across the ground), there are other writers who feel that the eland's body is a symbol for the darkened rain clouds of the sky. However, other writers think that the metaphor of the eland was used as an even more subtle symbol and this symbolism is interwoven with the trance dances of the San. Coming from the nose of the prostrate eland at K-1 there are streams of blood, which is indicative of the trances gone into by the San in their rituals and dances associated both with rain and with healing.

In the San trance dances the women sit around a fire at dark singing and clapping while the men are in an outer circle around them, also singing and dancing with rattles on their legs. If the dance leads into trance, some men will fall to the ground with contorted movements and nose bleeds and will be attended to by some of the women. It is in this trance that the men are able to access the *n/um* of the universe to bring it back to others for healing. The eland may bring rain but it also harnesses the *n/um* that brings the cooling showers of healing to a tribe.

The South African David Lewis Williams has in the past decade made an in-depth study of the early ethnology of the Xam San and of the contemporary accounts of the Kalahari San practices. In these studies he has discovered essential relationships between being a rain animal, a rain healer (also called medicine man or sorcerer), being underwater, being in trance, and being dead (or called dead). It is through the eland that people can access *n/um* or supernatural power for healing and maintenance of the cosmic order. This is portrayed as dying, going underwater, or becoming an eland (the images of men with antelope heads). All of these overlapping images, often



Eland Cave, Site K-1

opaque to the modern mind, are shown in the rock paintings of elands in the Drakensberg caves. They are also shown in certain paintings of trance dances. This correlation of ethnology and mythology with the images of the rock murals provides contemporary art critics a crucial tool: they are now able to approach the San paintings from within the same framework in which they were made.

Dance and songs and the often resulting trance were used by the San to appease, to propitiate, and to praise the forces that permeated their lives. These methods of healing sought social and psychological harmony. In the San Kalahari tribes of today, dances and the accompanying trances can be found performed just as they are depicted in the many rock paintings at Drakensberg and described by our few nineteenth century accounts.

The painting from Site X-9 shows a variety of figures in headdress and carrying knobby sticks. Their bodies are

marked with scarification (both for ornament and for healing) and they are all dancing and doing acrobatics. One seems to be miming a baboon. There are numerous special figures in this painting associated with these ritual scenes: men with antelope heads and feet, skeleton people, elongated figures, and winged beings. Some of these are thought to be representative of spirits or of people in trance.

An aesthetic and critical note that should be made is that most San rock paintings are of unified pictorial groupings where the individual is a part but not the entire story. Rather than individual portraits, what is shown is a gestalt, a unity, and a cosmos.

The last illustration of rock painting is from Fulton's Rock and has been identified by David Lewis Williams as a depiction of a female puberty-initiation rite, similar to one still performed by the Kung in the Kalahari and recorded by June Taylor in 1980. It shows a figure in seclusion in a hut surrounded by dancing



Site X-9

and clapping figures. A description of the present-day ceremony by Taylor in her book *Testament to the Bushman* shows this to be a ritual of both healing and of harnessing *n/um*.

It is revealing to make a study of the evolution of European understanding of the San rock paintings. There has been a progression from the first encounters when the Europeans considered the San merely a bush animal, a nuisance to farming and livestock, to be shot like a coyote.

With such an attitude, it is not surprising that the Europeans saw little of complexity, symbolism or mythology in the rock paintings they found. To them the scenes were crudely depicted stories of animals and the hunt. Later, as a more artistically educated audience saw the paintings and as western artistic concepts changed, the San rock paintings became more appreciated; they were understood as an imaginative, clever artifact that evidenced great skill but was certainly not a talisman to a culture of any symbolic depth.

With her monumental work *People of the Eland* (published in 1976) Patricia Vinnicombe made a significant beginning in reorienting the way Europeans view San art. She saw it as a crucial and fundamental expression of the universal order that the San saw in the world and as a depiction, an enactment, of the ritual behavior necessary to keep that order in harmony. Through her work anthropologists and art historians began to see the selective and symbolic nature of the cave paintings. It was not a record of daily life, not even a record of ritualistic life, but the painting itself, like dance, was the San participation in and expression of the delicate balance of powers in the universe.

To dance, to paint, to heal: all these were aspects of the activities necessary to keep the world functioning in dynamic interrelationship. In the examples I have chosen, we can see how selective the paintings are. There are no backgrounds, no naturalistic references, no secondary

objects included. The paintings depict particular and essential elements of the spiritual world of the San. Though many animal paintings are of specific species and are naturalistically rendered, there are as many figures, human and animal, that are not actual. Theriophantic figures abound. Color is used symbolically, and certain colors are reserved for specific figures. For example, the elands are almost always white and red since they were made that way by Kaggan feeding them from special red and white honey.

In *Testament to the Bushmen*, Laurens van der Post says the way of access to San mythology and painting is through dreams. With this avenue he opens up an aspect of San rock painting that is just now being appreciated by the modern viewer: the existence in San life of varied states of awareness that are moved through with great ease and acceptance, states of awareness not normally acknowledged by modern man. Modern consciousness, which is usually derivative of European rational thought, is logical, linear and predominately ordered by transactional events in a world of cause and effect. In San rock painting and in San mythology, we are presented with a world that is circular, both simple and convoluted, where humans and animals live under the sway of trans-physical forces that can be propitiated, where all beings can and should participate in the maintenance of a cosmic order through organized group ritual. It is also a world where our ordinary ideas of time and space are not inviolate, and where the power of dream and mystery are given acknowledgement.

With the visible San rock murals being only a modern echo of thousands of years of painting, there is compelling evidence to say that San art is not an example of an African aesthetic but that rock painting is itself the foundation of African art, that its values find themselves echoed throughout the continent: in Yoruba sculpture, in the West African masquerades, in raffia textile symbolism, and in metal weights illustrating verbal pro-

verbs. In African expression, art is a function of social and cosmic harmony, it is a voice of unity, a ritual open to all of the tribe's participation, and a celebration of the beauty and joy in life. These are the values modeled on the sunburnt faces of the Drakensberg caves. San art is also a reminder that not all great art comes from settled, material-based cultures. Those peoples in Africa who have wandered without temple or royal compound, who were without written literature, have still left a potent legacy of imagination and vision. ♦

FOOTNOTES

1. Willcox, *Rock Art of South Africa*, pg. 51
2. Tanaka, *The San Hunter-Gathers*, preface xiii
3. Willcox, *Rock Art of Africa*, pg. 189
4. Willcox, *Rock Art of South Africa*, pg. 11-13
5. Willcox, *Ibid.*, pg. 17
6. Vinnicombe, *People of the Eland*, pg. 139-140
7. Willcox, *Ibid.*, pg. 39
8. Vinnicombe, *Ibid.*, pg. 151
9. Vinnicombe, *Ibid.*, pg. 210
10. Taylor, *Testament to the Bushman*, pg. 93-95
11. Taylor, *Ibid.*, pg. 35
12. Taylor, *Ibid.*, pg. 39
13. Taylor, *Ibid.*, pg. 93-94
14. Taylor, *Ibid.*, pg. 90
15. Vinnicombe, *Ibid.*, pg. 304
16. Vinnicombe, *Ibid.*, pg. 162
17. Taylor, *Ibid.*, pg. 125

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The Allegories and Symbolism in Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

The Vedic Connotation of *Rāmāyaṇa*

The main pursuit of Indian seers and their followers is the word that reveals. What reveals truth is called *veda*. *Vedana* is sensation. Therefore, every item of awareness is *samvedanam*. *Vid* means "to know." *Veda* is "to make known." In the phenomenal world everything reveals its *svarupa* (*sva* - of oneself + *rupa* - form). The grass reveals itself to be grass, the sun reveals itself to be the sun, the world reveals itself to be the world. Hence we can say the world is *veda*. Even when the form is concealed, the name pertaining to a form can reveal the thing to which the name is assigned. Hence, the written word is also *veda*. As the name reveals both the name and the form the word of revelation became more properly known as the Veda.

To speak a word a sound is to be produced. The sonal image of that sound is called *vak*. When a sound which is fixed to have a certain meaning is produced, it has a certain impact on the listener. That impact is the meaning, *artha*. *Vak* and *artha* together reveal the purport. What is revealed is in praise of the innate truth of the object of revelation, *ṛk*. When a thing is praised with its meaning, it is natural to show ones appreciation of it by giving a musical tonality to the word. The musical flourish is called *sāma*. To make any sound musical, one has to manipulate it with ones vital breath, *prāṇa*. The word and the vital breath thus go hand in hand like a couple. Indian rishis therefore think of *śabda* and *artha* like husband and wife, each enhancing the significance of the

other and each making the role of the other fulfilled. Hence, Kalidasa, in one of his invocations, describes Śiva and Parvati as the inseparable pair of *vak* (word) and *artha* (meaning). All these connotations are in the simple word, *veda*. There is a similar revelation of sound in the title of Valmiki's book, *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The Sanskrit sound *ra* stands for an ecstatic sense of happiness which is said to be the true nature of the Self. *M* at the close of a word is a psychological device to bring a pronunciation to its terminus so that one can go into a contemplative absorption in the meaning of the term. Thus *rām* becomes a magical formula to meditate on the happiness of oneself. When it is repeated it becomes *rāma rāma*. In Sanskrit most of the root sounds can also indicate their opposite. The opposite of *rām* is *rāvaṇa*, which means excessive unhappiness. Nothing can manifest without casting its shadow, so where there is *rāma* there is also *rāvaṇa*. If you find yourself, you rejoice in yourself and become *ātmarāma*. if you forget yourself you cry in pain and misery and become identified with *rāvaṇa*. *Āyana* means to dwell in; to dwell in *rāma* is *rāmāyaṇa*.

A situation that creates happiness is called *rāmāyaṇa*. But human beings are mostly separated from the reality of their Self so they are said to be in a state of forgetfulness, *anabhijñāta*. The word of God or the word of the Guru is to remind you of your true nature. Thus *Rāmāyaṇa* is to restore you to a recognition of your true nature. Even Sri Rāma has recurring experiences of forgetting that he

is divine. In the forgetfulness of his true nature, he indulges in various kinds of *karma*-s which show his *anabhijñāta*. The cause of forgetfulness is *māyā*. In his supreme nature he is *puruṣottama*. But in his phenomenal relationship with the world, he becomes the consort of Prakṛti born of the dust of this earth, Sita. When his course of *karma* comes to a close, Sita returns to earth. Between her emergence and reemergence a lot of *samsāra* (misery) comes to Rāma. Just as nature has innumerable powers to embellish its own attraction as well as a negative power of repulsion, Sita stands on the positive side for everything beautiful, graceful and loving, and the highest of virtues, yet at her heels follows the shadow of negativity, bringing delusion, anger, sense of loss, revenge and the terror of war. Thus *Rāmāyaṇa* has also within it *Sitāyana* and *Rāvāṇāyana*.

The Allegoric Aspect of *Rāmāyaṇa*

In one and the same forest on the banks of the river Tamasa, there lived two people belonging to the hunter's clan. One was a hunter who had disciplined himself by discovering *rām*, the divine joy of himself, through a long period of penance. He became known as Valmiki. The other was an ordinary hunter with the crude mind of an ignorant person who made his living by the simple act of hunting animals for prey. One day, far removed from the dusty ways of the earthlings, an egret couple (*krauncha*) rejoiced in each other in an ecstatic state of love and playfully flew in the vast sky which canopied the tall trees of the forest. When Valmiki came out of his hermitage, he saw the couple sharing their love with various antics that are natural to winged beings. At that time, the other hunter also saw the egrets, but for him they were only food to appease his hunger. He sent an arrow to one of them and it immediately fell to the ground, splattering blood like a rain of horror from the sky. The female egret was stricken with sorrow, crying aloud and fluttering around her dying partner.

Seeing this, Valmiki said in remorse: "Oh you unlucky person. By separating these lovers at a time when they were so close together in their hearts, you have destroyed your own chance of ever finding your path to the worlds of eternal grace." After his spontaneous exclamation in verse, it came as a revelation to Valmiki that what he had spoken was a *veda*. What was revealed to him was the secret of writing a verse (*sloka*). Like *ṛk*, *sloka* also means praise. Then Valmiki found a definition of *sloka* - in a *sloka*, the timing of each word is metrical; it has rhythm. It produces in you the joy of listening to a *vina*, a lyre. What comes from the lyre is the lyric. The first verse of *Rāmāyaṇa* is lyrical.

The Allegoric Parallels Between the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Episode of Valmiki Composing the Epic

The hero and heroine of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* are Rāma and Sita who loved each other intimately. On three occasions, when they were in the very climax of their love-life, quite unexpectedly, fate interfered, just like the thoughtless hunter shooting an arrow at the male egret. The first incident occurred when Rāma was to be coronated as the king of Ayodhya and Sita was to be his queen. Then a wretched old woman called Manthara appeared on the scene and filled his stepmother Kaikeyi's mind with the poison of jealousy which resulted in Rāma being deprived of his crown and throne. Symbolically, it was as good as killing Rāma and Sita was put to great distress. Although Sita loved Rāma he behaved as if his stepmother Kaikeyi and his father Daśaratha were more real to him than anyone else.

Again, after the banishment of Rāma and Sita to the forest, when the couple, with the help of Lakshmana, were living an extremely beautiful life in their hermitage, another uncouth person entered into their life. This time it was the demon king Rāvaṇa who made a magical device of sending a golden deer to separate Rāma from his beloved Sita. The ar-



row shot at Sita was of delusion (*moham*).

A third occasion of a similar interference came when Rāma and Sita had been reunited and had returned to Ayōdhya to rule their country. This time, the arrow came from an irresponsible washerman who accused Rāma of having presented an unethical example by receiving Sita back into his fold after she had been defiled, according to the washerman, by living in the captivity of Rāvaṇa. That made Rāma as heartless as a dead person to throw away his pregnant wife in the forest, without even caring to give her any person to protect her. On all three occasions, like the female *krauncha*, the love-lost egret, Sita was exposed to the greatest torture of being denied the consoling presence of one who cared for her.

All of the great classics of India begin with such an indication which gives the wise reader a key to unfold their secrets. One example is Kalidasa's *Śakuntala* which he very thoughtfully titled *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*. In that, in the opening scene, we see King Duśyanta chasing a deer which is running for its life. While running forward, she withdraws her back towards the front and turns her head towards the back, looking again and again at the arrow set on the bowstring by the king. In her fright, the grass which she had been chewing drops from her mouth. In this allegory we see Śakuntala as the deer and Duśyanta as a ruthless lover following her, blinded with lust. When Śakuntala meets Duśyanta she forgets that she is the darling daughter of Kaṇva. That is her first forgetfulness. Later, in-

fatuated with love for Duśyanta, she sits daydreaming when Durvāsa of quick temper comes to the ashrama. Then she forgets her duty to receive a visiting saint. Seeing her indifference, Durvāsa curses her that the very man she is thinking of will forget her in her time of need. The third occasion was her forgetfulness of the ring Duśyanta had given her, not noticing that it slipped away and fell in the river. Duśyanta also forgets that Śakuntala is his dear wife whom he has married and made pregnant when she is presented before him in his court. Only after reading the first four scenes of Śakuntala do we come to know why it is titled *Abhijñānaśakuntalam*. The anecdote given at the beginning of each classic needs to be studied with penetrating insight for one to be fully benefited by such a book.

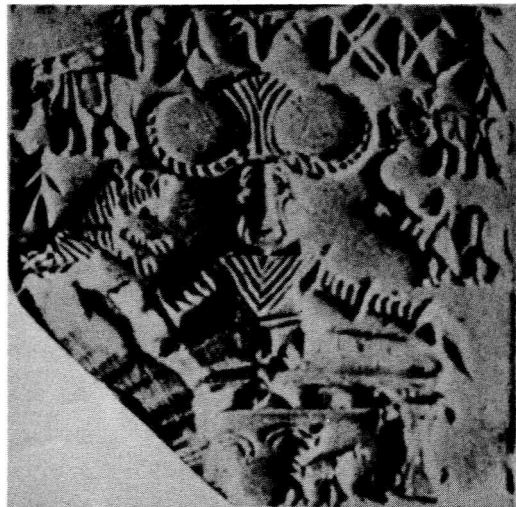
The Political Significance of *Ramāyaṇa*

According to the pre-history of India, it was more a state of mind and a geographic area of great culture and civilization. We get the historical findings of that culture from the Indus Valley. In the findings from Mohenjodaro and Harappa, presently in Pakistan, and Lothal in Gujrat, ceramic pieces were found with certain figures of which one was later deciphered as Paṣupati. The pre-historic people of India were a contemplative people who believed more in their innermost spirit than in external exploits. Paṣupati Śiva is shown as a yogi seated in a lotus pose with his right hand showing the gesture of a wisdom teacher. On his head are shown horns like those of an antelope. At his feet are shown domestic animals sharing a peaceful co-existence with wild animals. On each side of him are human beings and figures of animals like fish. Above his head are flying birds. A living being is called a *paṣu*. He is depicted as the Lord of all beings; hence the name Paṣupati. The epigram is suggestive of the great magnetic power of a yogi who unites all forms of life around him with his irresistible love and absolutely peaceful nature. Accord-

ing to historians, such was ancient India.

It is believed that into this world came a more active people on horseback. Prior to the advent of horses in India, Paṣupati Śiva was associated with the big bull of the forest, Nandi. Into the world of cows and bulls the Āryan invaders came from central Asia with their horse-drawn chariots. Thus, Daśaratha, a man of ten chariots, symbolizes the new immigrant chiefs. His son Rāma is called Āryaputra. In Indian history, feuds developed between the old inhabitants who had adopted Śiva as their God and the new immigrants who prized their Veda above everything else, worshipped the sun and believed in all the flourishing values of the Indo-Gangetic plain. The newcomers came without their own women so it was necessary for them to take women from their country of domicile. The original Indians were farmers, caring for their cattle. The newcomers made offerings of burnt sacrifices to their gods which were opposed by the original inhabitants.

Thus we find two versions of history in India, one supporting the newcomers and the other defending the ancient people. The feud came to be between Āryan and non-Āryan and later, between the opposing camps of the Śiva followers and the Viṣṇu followers. Then two great wise men of India produced two fantastic epics for the integration of the people, the *Rā-*



māyana and the *Māhābhārata*. The author of the *Rāmāyana* was from a clan of hunters, today called *girijans*. The author of the *Māhābhārata* was Vyāsa, the son of Satyavadi, a fisherwoman. The first iconographic symbol of union was effected by Vyāsa by making Ganeṣa his scribe to write the *Māhābhārata* on the walls of the Meru mountain. The very symbol of Ganeṣa is awe-inspiring. He is the son of God and yet he is willing to serve as a scribe of a man of low birth. Another name of Vyāsa is Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyāsa. India was called Jvambudvipu, the island of the fig tree. *Dvaipāyana* means an inhabitant of the island, meaning a native person. *Kṛṣṇa* means black. Thus Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana means the black or dark colored native. Vyāsa means a compiler. The three Vedas, Ṛk, Sāma And Yajus, are attributed to the Aryans. Originally they were disorganized. Vyāsa was the first to classify the mantras and to decide which ones could be rendered musically to become Sā-

ma and which should be placed in Yajus to be used for rituals. This great service of systematizing the Vedas earned him the title of Vyāsa, the compiler. Thus Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa means the dark native of India, the classifier of the Vedas.

In his great epic, the *Māhābhārata*, this master-writer presented for the first time how time and space can be so conceived that the beginning can also be made the end. The *Māhābhārata* begins with the story of a dog and ends with the story of a dog. After reading the whole text you will notice that the first dog mentioned is the last one and the last one mentioned is the first one. So the loop made by Vyāsa has no parallel in any creative writing.

Similar secret displays of great philosophical insight can also be found in the *Rāmāyana*. To unite the people of India, Rāma, the son of Āryas, is married to the *bhumiputri*, the daughter of earth. Rāma himself is presented as an incarnation



of Viṣṇu. He marries Sita, Janaka's daughter, by breaking the arrow of Śiva, although Janaka was a great lover and follower of Śiva. Then he kills the greatest devotee of Śiva, Rāvana, by obtaining from Śiva his own *paśupatam*, after installing a temple to Śiva and calling that god Ramēśvara (Rāma's Īśvara).

Spiritually, the loop which Valmiki invented even excels Vyāsa's. In Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma, the rejoicer, never kills anyone; instead, he promotes them all to the supreme joy of the Self. Thus Rāvaṇa gets *rāma sāyujya* and not death. Nothing great is ever spurned in Rāmāyaṇa; everything is affirmed by Rāma. Thus, when Rāvaṇa is about to die, physically, Rāma sends his own brother to him to receive all the strategies of political science.

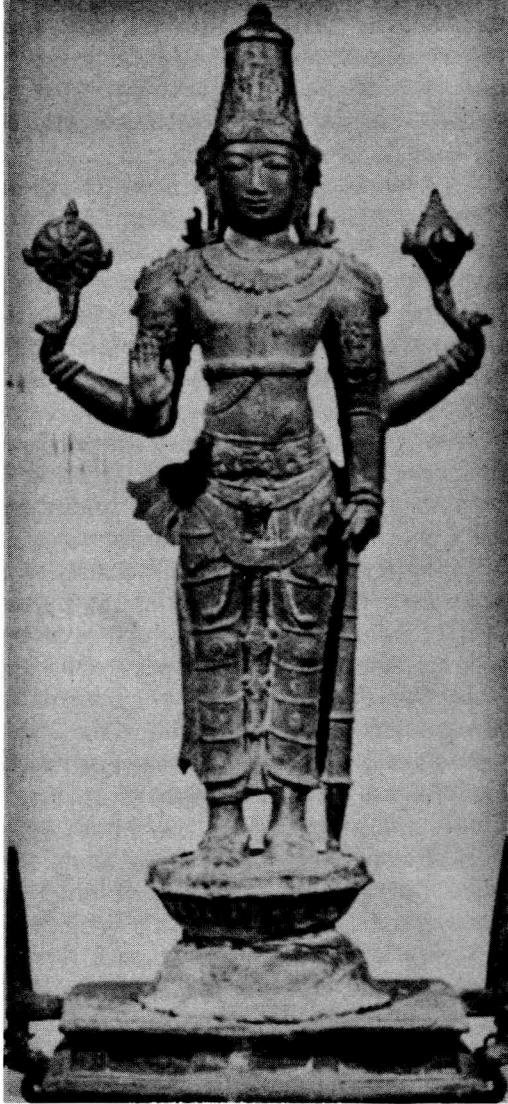
Sita is symbolically presented as coming out of the furrow made by the plow. Ultimately she disappears into the same good earth. Her father is Janaka, the greatest of royal rishis who excelled the best seers of India. He ruled over the people of Videha. *Videha* means the disembodied, which means he ruled over the spirit and not people with physical bodies. Thus in Rāmāyaṇa and *Māhābhārata* we get the complete story of Valmiki and Vyāsa creating an integrated India in which the so-called feuds between Āryan and non-Āryan, Śaivism and Vaiṣnavism are resolved. And through Vedānta, the last of the six Darśanas, written by Vyāsa, all philosophical systems are unified.

Brahma, Visnu and Mahesvara

Indian seers have a philosophical concept of the Supreme or the ultimate meaning of everything (*paramārtha*) which envelops everything. It is called *brahman*. To arrive at it the starting point is the immediate experience of life which is felt intimately in one's breathing. This is called *ātman*. *Ātman* is that which breathes. It is also that which moves and that which eats. These triple functions are seen in individuation. The most interesting study of the Indian seer

commences with an inquiry into his own Self and goes to the ultimate range to which cosmic forces expand. Philosophically the underlying reality is looked upon firstly as an irrefutable verity of existence which in Sanskrit is called *sat*. Secondly, the truth of existence is substantiated by the knowledge in which it is clearly revealed, *cit*. Whatever is revealed to be true is of intrinsic value and serves as a normative notion to measure anything of meaning or value. This is called *ānanda*. Thus, philosophically, all that is, is *satcidānanda*.

As most people cannot lift their minds to high philosophical abstractions, the rishis have given this a theological coloration and speak of the three gods of the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Mahēśvara. The primal function of creativity stretches from the past to the present as a series of sequential events of an existential factor coming into being and slowly transforming to bring it to a logical conclusion. The impelling force that makes conceivable forms exist is attributed to the creative function of a godhead. He is venerated as the father of all creatures, Brahma, which is to be distinguished from the impersonal *brahman*. The operative energy of Brahma is always accomplished through the individuation of beings. This is very much like the unconscious depth of an inner light (*taijasa*) projecting itself both as a subjective percipient and as the many objects of dreams the substance of which is none other than the dreamer's subjective self which is elaborated to such variation that the dreamer is baffled by the objects formulated out of his or her own consciousness. Thus, Brahma stands for the innumerable potentials which go into the actualization of the manifoldness of this world. As Brahma also generates nature, both in its physicality and variation of animated vitality, it is identical with *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is defined as *prakarśena karotiti prakṛti* - a repetitive elaboration of forms, designs and the complex of cause and effect relationship. As each item comes as if programed or as-



assigned according to a certain relative order, it is called *niyati*. As each item is expressive of a logical conclusion or definitive judgement, Brahma is also called *vidhi*. As the scope of creation is directed to the four quarters - subjective idealism, objective transactionalism, the hidden potentials of the unknown and the depth of the unconscious - Brahma is called *catur mugha*.

As creative function is subjected to reasoning which has affinity to rational objectivity, creation has a linguistic significance. Language is possible with words only. Hence, semantic consciousness of idea transforming into word (*vak*) is attributed to the deity Vagesvari. She is also called Sarada, because of the illuminative function of word; Saraswati, which indicates the streaming forth of consciousness; Vani, because she is familiar as the word; and Kaladevi, because she is the initiator of creative art. This secondary aspect of creation is generated by Brahma. Hence, Sarada or Saraswati is looked upon as the daughter of Brahma. As the creator has to use the implied principles of language for creation, Saraswati is also considered to be the consort of Brahma. As the puritanic minds of Indian people detect a sense of incest in this, Brahma is not worshipped. But it only means that nature is not moral or immoral but amoral.

The second deity is Visnu, the sustainer of the integral constituents of a thing that makes it what it is. That which is sustained by itself is called *tanmatra*, the basic monad of everything. A thing is sustained by its functional potential. Function is assured only with the structural efficacy of relationship. Everything in this world can be classified into individual units, each having a precise structure of its own which enables it to function in a recurring manner, always showing the unmistakable characteristic of acting and reacting in a predictable way. When such a status quo is maintained, it is called *sthiti*. The god of maintenance is Visnu.

The retention of structural and func-

tional potentials is in the form of the wide varieties of memories that can be kept hidden and recalled in the present. Hence Visnu is memory, the memory that is dormant in the past which can be recalled in the present. It can also be the memory of a final cause which can impell the present to fashion and evolve everything to its finality. Thus what is theologically venerated as Visnu is philosophically seen as the eternal ground both of the form and function of everything.

As memory is intrinsically connected with properties of all sorts, Visnu is described as the aggregate of all commendable values, *samastha kalyana guni*. As his attributes are the most adorable, his consort is called Laksmi or Sri which means bounty of grace. A memory is lived at its best in the manifestation of an adorable value. It can also be seen as the clustering of millions of values. In the singularity of one essence, Tulasi is considered the essential characteristic of Visnu because in the *tulasi* plant the root, stem, leaves, flowers and seeds all have the same smell and color which promotes the singularity of essence, *ekarasa*. In the plurality, Tulasi is substituted with Sri which stands for beauty, generosity, grace, love, compassion, kindness, peace, serenity and a thousand other qualities.

Although creation is not happening in the past, and the active manifestation can happen only in the present, it is as if the future is entering into the present and being turned out into an active past. Thus no division can be made in the creative function such as past, present and future. A tree which is cut down seems dead for a time but again brings forth foliage of the

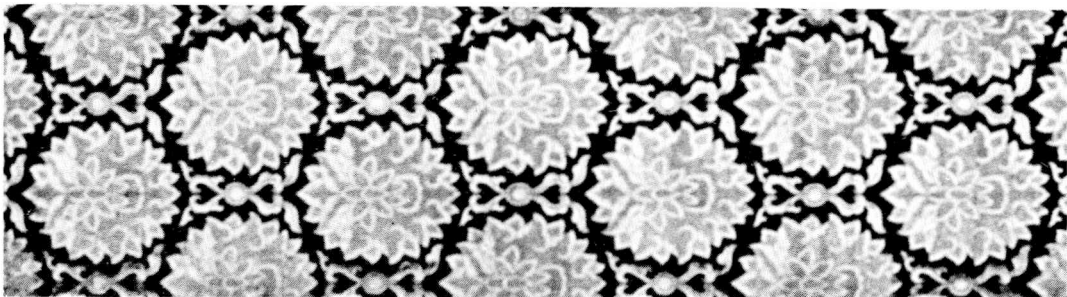
same form and properties as it had previously. Thus there is no ultimate death in the continuity of life. Visnu is thus adored as the protector of the past, present and the future. He is said to be in a state of half-dream, sleeping on a coiled serpent. Brahma is metaphorically postulated as coming from the lotus blossom projected from the navel of Visnu.

The serpent represents life and enjoyment. Hence the snake is called *bhogi*, the enjoyer. The male penis resembles the snake. Erotic enjoyment is also *bhoga*.

Thus the snake is the symbol of creative energy. The serpent Vasuki on which Visnu rests is floating in the ocean of milk. Here the milk is a sophisticated reference to the seminal fluid out of which life comes. The genital stands as a symbol in religion both for life and death. It is also an organ of excretion. The dominant vital breath in it is *apana*.

The third godhead is Mahesvara. *Isvara* means the innate controller of everything. The world order and its manifestation is to be punctuated again and again. The present is easily transferred into the past and kept hidden from easy recall. The future is used as a hide-out so that living beings may not become threatened with the negative potentials which are about to make life insecure. Thus dissolution has its appropriate place in the scheme of things. That is marked by Mahesvara as Siva. Thus the philosophical existence, subsistence and value are made into three overlapping principles, Brahma, Visnu, and Mahesvara. This is a secret which every reader of *Ramayana* should keep in mind throughout his or her study.

(Continued in next issue.)



Especially For Children



The Wolf

Emily Teitsworth

Silently moving through shadows,
Chasing a bird in a youngster's playfulness,
yet aged, all-knowing and calm.

King of the forest, Majestic and Omnipotent,
although a mere shadow of what he once was.

Living in secret, but always moving, restless.
Closing in on a kill, expertly wielding sharp claws,
merciless and determined.

A family within the forest, straying. wandering,
cubs tumbling, teasing one another,
almost saying, "Come and get me!"

The Wolf will wait if needed . . . forever.

The Potter

Kavi Chaitanya Grace Luke

On his artwork mound,
the soft, flowing organism
so astutely found
the rhythm of the wheel,
round and round,
round and round and round,
it goes, his head, his shoulders,
his knees, his toes,
round and round the potter
spins.

All give way to the trance he's in.

My head, so soft -
don't crush it so
oh dear, oh dear,
how fast I go.
Stop, kind sir,
I'm feeling quite sick.

Please go by the course
that I must pick
and so he continues on his
task so sublime,
until his wife, Esmerelda,
announces the time.

Two Poems

Harmony Teitsworth

*Winter on snow
I am sledding on a snow bank
Hi, I'm a hand
I'm a snow bank on a button
on a fridgerator
I'm a shoe on a carrot
tape on paper, tape on paper
paper on tape
a king and a queen and a cat
and a daughter and a brother
queen in a castle
with a king in the castle
the brother and sister.*



*The Queen sat in an apple tree eating apple tons.
The Queen and the King and the sister and the brother
with the cat they played and played.
And they loved it up there.
Forever and ever they stayed up there.*

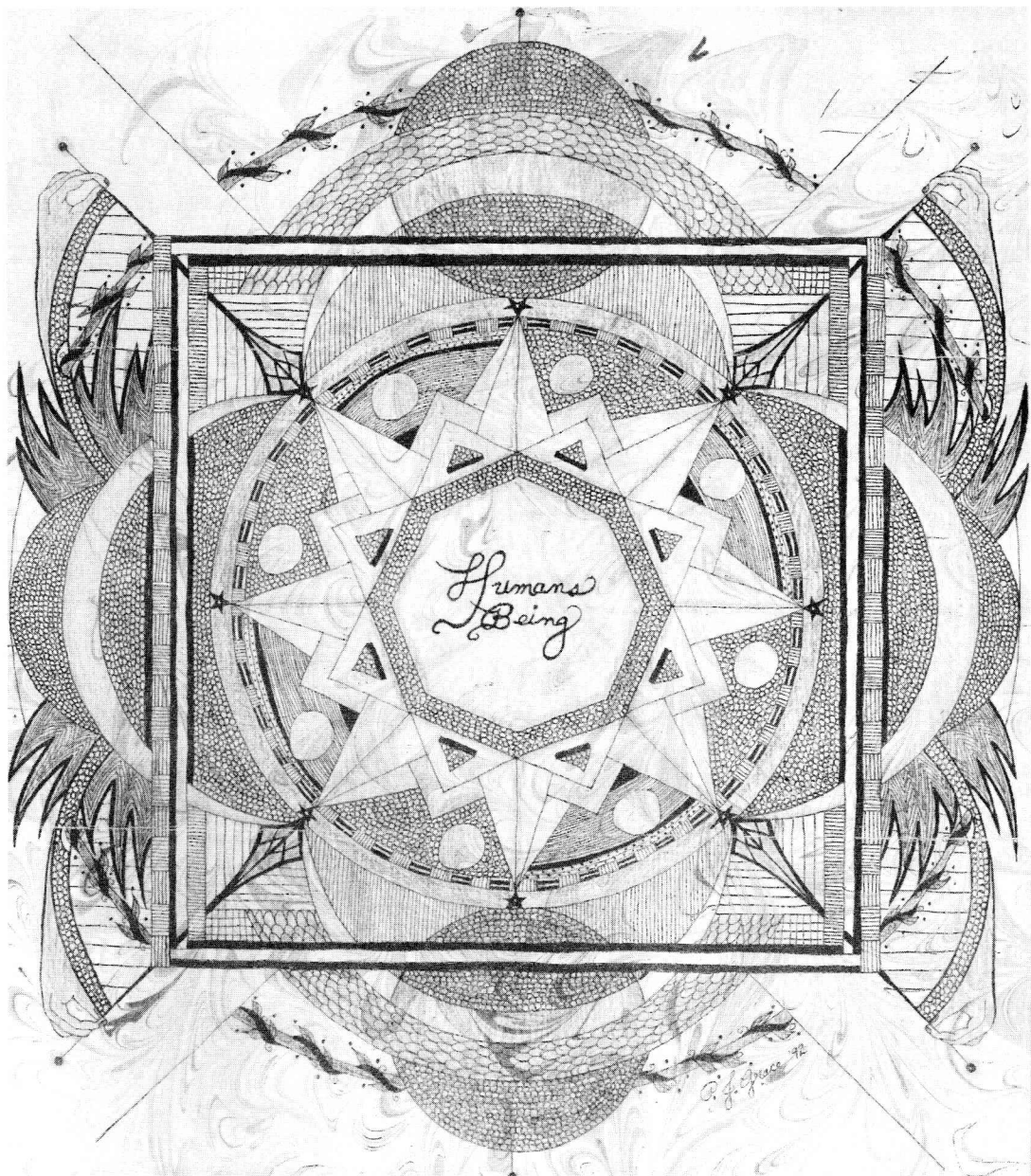


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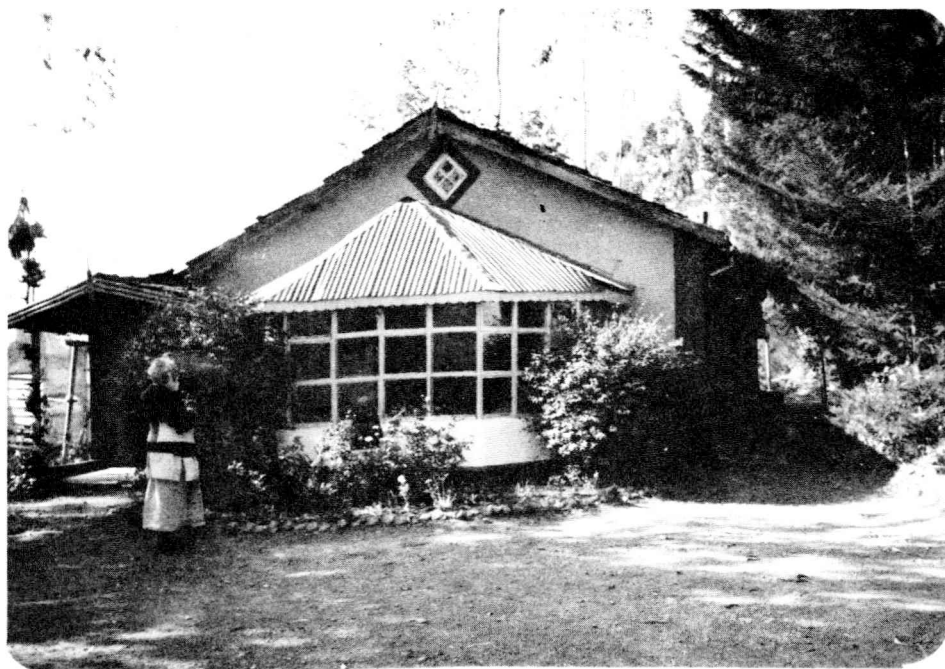
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