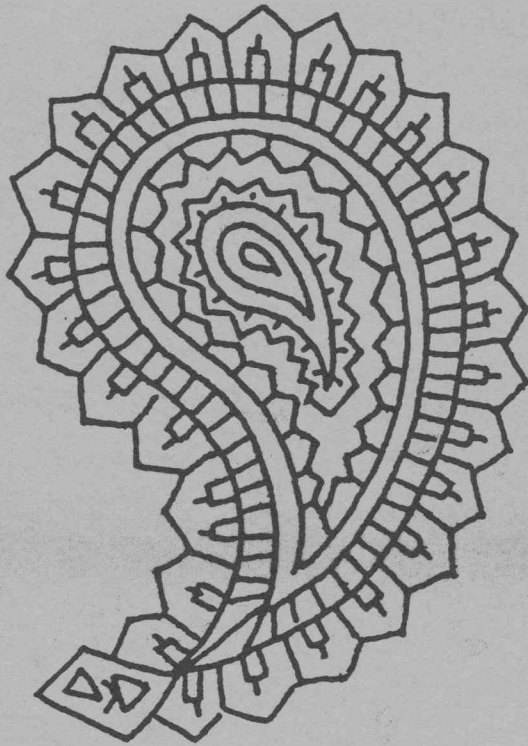


GURUKULAM

VOLUME IX • 1993

FIRST-SECOND QUARTER





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Leading to the *Upaniṣads*

We are often so busy that we become narrowly focused on the activities of our days. Too often we forget that our lives are but tiny fragments of a grand drama that has been unfolding from time immemorial. Immersing ourselves in the pleasures and concerns of the moment, we often ignore and even deny our relationship to the universal. And yet there is always the need to understand the context within which our daily lives unfold. Each of us searches for ways to connect with what is real and enduring, to know the timeless essence of what we are about. The writings of the ancient poets and seers of India are full of beauty and insights which help us to solve the riddles of our lives. But they are so voluminous that they can seem like a vast terrain through which it is difficult to find one's way. We are fortunate to have Upaniṣadic commentaries which place the ancient wisdom in a modern context, while at the same time, continuing the wisdom tradition which goes back to the dawn of India's culture.

In ancient India, over a period roughly estimated to stretch from 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C., the hearts of the people of that time lifted up hymns of praise to the divine which they conceived of in the form of deities like the goddesses of the dawn and water and the gods of sun, wind and fire. Sensitive to the beauties of nature and filled with a sense of awe, they gave voice to their praises and supplications in poetry which has a beauty and dynamism with a timeless appeal. Over time, these poems were written down and arranged according to meter, tone and topic. The earliest collected verses came to be called the *Ṛg Veda* (*ṛg* literally means hymn or praise and *veda* means knowledge. It was followed by *Sāma Veda*. *Sāma* means song and the *Sāma Veda* is the words of the *Ṛg Veda* set to music.

The *Yajur Veda* was written down later in history and includes some material from

the *Ṛg Veda*. A *yajus* is a prayer or formula and *Yajur Veda* is a literary rendition of formulas guiding the specific performance of different types of sacrifices. It was written at a time when the priestly class in society was promoting the sacred importance of their role in the correct performance of sacrifices as the vital core of the Vedic religion and the most valuable aspect of social life. The *Atharva Veda*, although often listed as the last *Veda*, or sometimes not even accorded the status of a *Veda*, actually has its roots in India's pre-historic contemplative Dravidian culture. As such, it provided a basis for the revaluation of religion and philosophy which flowered in the *Upaniṣads*. On one hand, it carried ritual to an absurd extreme with many charms and spells that were used to invoke blessings not only for every type of activity or endeavor in daily life, but also on each phase of the already very elaborate ritual sacrifices. Unlike the injunctions governing the exact performance of the rituals, however, the charms and spells were known and employed by people at all stratas of society. The *Atharva Veda* also includes passages which represent clear advancements in the development of the non-anthropomorphic concept of the Absolute (*brāhman*) which includes both being and non-being.

As time passed, religious observances became ever more complex. Each of the *Vedas* sprouted prose appendices which gave more detailed explanations of the Vedic rituals and their performance. These texts were known as *Brāhmaṇas*. Although much of their content is boring minutiae, they also include parts which illustrate the meaning of the ritual practices with myths and legends whose vitality has inspired writers and poets throughout the centuries. The foremost among the *Brāhmaṇas* is the *Śathapatha*, which means having a hundred paths or chapters. It was attached to the *Yajur Veda*.

Another group of texts called *Āraṇ-*

yakas were also appended to the *Vedas*. They de-emphasized the performance of the rituals and focused on the essential principals expressed by the different aspects of the rituals and ancient myths. As the centuries had passed, Indian society had become more complex and, largely at the prompting of the priestly group, more segmented. Divisions in society had hardened into castes with different social standing and functions. The priests were central in the courts of the many kingdoms and the rituals they performed were intrinsic to every aspect of life. The sense of sacredness with which life itself had been imbued in the times of the composition of the early Vedic hymns became restricted to the province of the rituals and those who performed them. The social ramifications of the caste system were often cruel and unjust, especially to those who ranked lowest in social respect and economic well-being. Many wisdom seekers and teachers decided to disengage themselves from society altogether and went to live in remote forest and wilderness areas. It is very likely that the move to revalue the religious practices of the time to a more universal perspective came from these forest dwellers, taking shape as the *Āraṇyakas*, books of the forest. *Āraṇya* means a forest, a wilderness or a foreign or distant land.

Collectively the *Upaniṣads* follow the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* both in historical time and in the progression of human philosophical understanding. The

teachings in the *Upaniṣads* return the sense of the sacred to all of life and declare the pursuit of wisdom to be a pathway open to all. *Upaniṣad* literally means to sit down near to another to learn truth, to listen to the word of wisdom. The books themselves are a means by which one can come close to a revealer of truth and see the intimate secrets of reality unveiled. But these wonderful treasures have been virtually inaccessible for centuries, obscured by language barriers - they were composed in the ancient and subtle language of Sanskrit - and the even more impenetrable wall of translations and commentaries afflicted by narrow religious ideologies and archaic philosophical hair-splitting. We are fortunate to have guides who can unlock their secrets, bringing the poetry, myths and symbols of the ancient texts alive, to help deepen our understanding of our own nature, human intercourse and the cosmos. Then the mythical symbols and mystical dialogues become vital aids in guiding both our everyday lives and our search for that wisdom which can carry us from untruth to truth, darkness to light and death to immortality.

*AUM, asato mā sat gamaya
tamaso mā jyotir gamaya
mr̥tyor mā amṛtam gamaya
AUM śantiḥ śantiḥ śantiḥ*

Nancy Yeilding

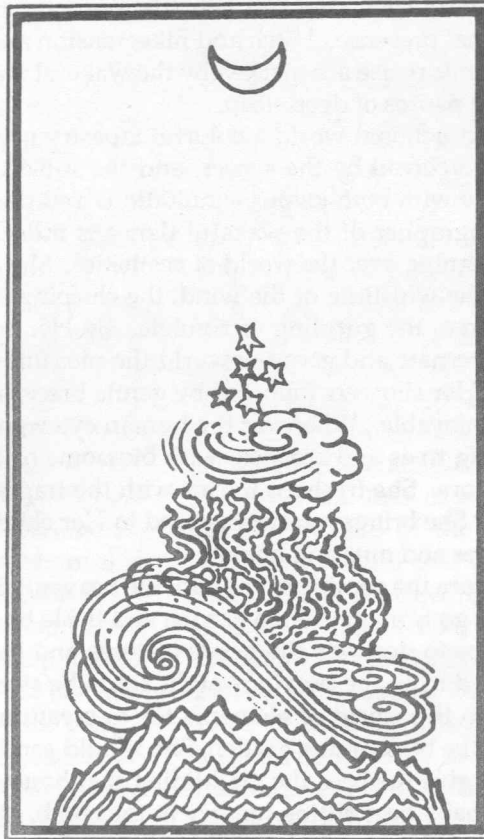


Svānubhavagīti Śatakam:

Experiential Aesthetics and Imperial Transcendence

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Verse 69

Hillocks and mountain peaks, all these
have become comrades with Your ascending feet.
Why is it that in Your ascension
You became overpowered by the golden creeper?

Verse 70

What brings You back again and again
into the stream of consciousness,
Oh Divinity of Consciousness?
For the ego that is burnt to ashes,
in its place You have bestowed the silvery crescent.

The Sanskrit synonym for person is *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* means "the dweller within the city." The city spoken of here is the psycho-somatic system with its triple states of consciousness. The three states, as we have seen already, are the wakeful, dream and deep-sleep. The wakeful is this empirical world of our transactions. In the wakeful every couple is always dancing a duet of male-female waltz, *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. Śiva dances the *tāṇḍava*, and his consort Śakti dances the *lāsya*. In the transactional world there is more of the female dance of graceful movement than there is of the frenzied dance of Śiva. The steps that go in curves, as in a figure of eight and other symbolic gestures are all flowing without break, such as in the flow of oil. An occasional frenzied dance of *tāṇḍava* may sometimes fill the air with such awe and fear that one may not see nature's beauty as an eternal presence. Hitch and hike, tension and release, quick motion and rhythmic pause are marked by the wakeful and the dream intercepted by silent pauses of deep sleep.

In the transactional world a colorful tapestry is woven with the objective forms perceived by the senses, and the subjective admiration that fills the inside with both joyous exultations and the heaving of pathos. The choreographer of the wakeful dance is indeed the Supreme Mother who is reigning over the world of aesthetics. She causes the rumbling of the sea, the whistling of the wind, the chirping of the birds, the laughter of children, the gurgling of rivulets. By Her appointment the sun and moon alternate and give the world the pleasures of warm days and cool nights. Her showers followed by gentle breezes make summer days especially enjoyable. Wherever the human eye wanders, She decorates the flowering trees and creepers with blossoms of the finest shape and attractive colors. She freshens the air with the fragrance of flowers, and like a mother She brings nourishing food to Her children in the form of fruits and berries and nuts and honey.

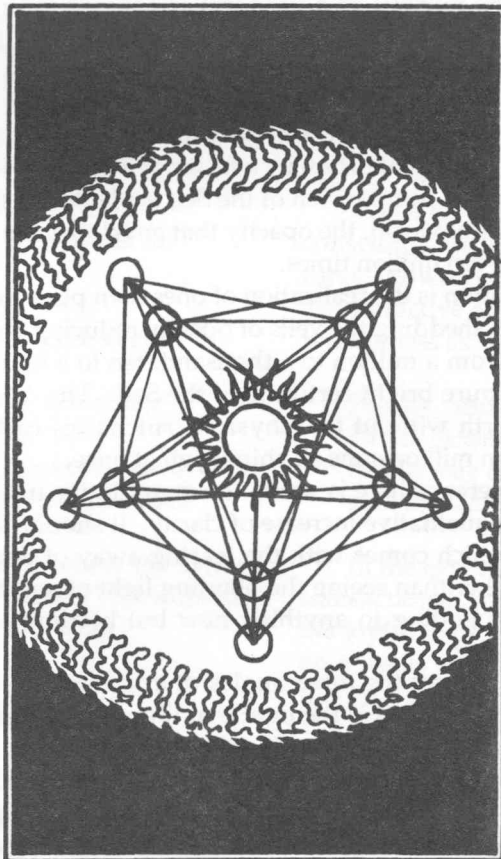
Much before the coming of the sun, the heavenly Mother releases all Her breezes to go from garden to garden and tickle buds to open. She gathers dew-drops to decorate the petals of roses and jasmines. All the flowers withered during the previous night are to be stealthily removed and disposed into the world of elements for re-creation. If the honeycomb is far from the blossoming garden, She should send fragrant winds as messengers to give the bees the glad tiding that honey and pollen are available for the baby bees sitting hungry in the comb. Along with such feeding tactics She also causes the pollination of flowers to ensure the propagation of species. All these several activities are done in silence. That is why Her dance is called *lāsya*, peaceful shining forth.

Her day's program is to be intercepted with Her mighty romances. In the course of one year She has to change the choreography to suit each season. If the dance in spring is with fabulous costumes of colorful flowers, in the winter all Her dancers are to be stripped to stand naked as

mere silhouettes against a grey sky. She may give a temporary attire to them with snow or icicles glittering in the sun. In autumn the dancers are like pregnant females. That is the time for the harvest festival.

Her dance is not merely entertainment. It is purposeful. When She draws the mantle of icy carpets over everything, She wants the world to go into a deep meditation. All future possibilities are to be silently lived in the deep sleep of hibernation. It is these motherly thoughtful arrangements of Sakti, described here as the golden creeper, which fill the Lord with loving compassion and comradeship. He has the patience to wait until Mother Nature has given the finishing touch to each item of creation. Then alone does He move in with the frenzied steps of all-devastating death. Even when He pulverizes the entire universe under His heavy steps, the seeds for another cycle of creation are never tampered with.

Each life form has its own ego to boast of. That is how Mother Nature nurtures individuality in each form of life. The lion roars in majesty. The tigress bares her teeth. The cock crows proudly. The peacock displays his vanity with his spread-out tail. And human beings challenge God with their own creation of cities and machines and roads and bridges. With the magical touch of Śiva, all are reduced into a vacant sky. He does not leave it empty. He gives it a touch of the sublime by impressing a silvery crescent which is not even the pride of the moon. Such is the dust of Śiva and Śakti



Like ten million suns rising at once,
obliterating the earth, water, and fire, etc.,
Your clear form should rise and shine forever.

According to Sāṃkhyan epistemology, the primary substance goes into the formation of the five pure monads which, in principle, are the bases of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling. These principles are To bring them into the physical world these monads are to be quintuplicated. In Sanskrit quintuplication is called *pancakāraṇa*. The five monads are: 1) space-like *ākāśa*, which is said to generate the primary vibrations of sound; 2) the air in which the contact between vibrations is significant; 3) fire, which gives rise to the visualization of form; 4) water, which suggests the experiencing of taste; and 5) earth, the characteristic of which is said to be smell. When half a monad of each one of these is combined with one-eighth of each of the other four elements, the physical monads or gross *tanmātras* come into being. In the psycho-physical organism there is a combination of five subtle monads and five physical monads. This is considered to be the first step in individuation.

The impressions of a previous life seeded in the nucleus of a new person acts as a catalyst to use these structured monads to snowball into a fetus. There the pure aspect of the spirit which is entering into a life-form is enveloped by the psycho-physical potentials which in their turn affect the purity of the first five subtle monads and five gross monads. So we may say the nucleus of a life-form is covered by a ten-fold veil of opacity. When the positions of these five pairs of monads are encased in the five-fold sheaths of the body with the devices of a sense organ for each, the opacity becomes a hundred-fold. When from the causal body the individuation passes into the subjective plane, the opacity again increases in geometric proportion by a factor of a million. From there when the psycho-somatic composition of the Self is planted in the physical reality of the empirical world, the opacity that envelops the original spirit is said to increase ten million times.

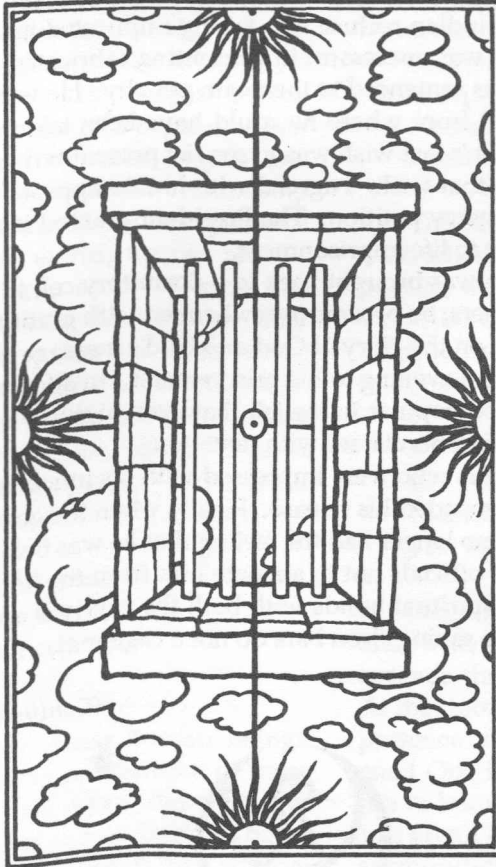
Realization is the realization of ones own pure spirit. That means going back and shedding the veils of opacity reducing ten million veils to a million and from a million to a thousand, ten to a hundred and finally coming to the pure bright certitude of the Self. The *caitanya* of the pure Self shining forth without the physical crutches of earth, water etc., is compared to ten million suns all shining all at once.

The reference here is not to the quantitative increase of physical light but to the qualitative increase of clarity. It should actually be put as the certitude which comes with the tearing away of ten million veils of obscuration rather than seeing the blinding light of ten million suns. Realization is not getting to anything new but becoming purified of the dross of ignorance.

When we say the three angles of a triangle equal one hundred and eighty degrees, what is the light that illuminates such a knowledge? It is certainly not physical light. If a person understands what that statement means, there is no trace of doubt in his or her mind. The reference here is to such certitude, with of course, some poetic exaggeration. There are similar suggestions in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gīta* which

make many people think that realization is like a physical event of seeing some light which is unimaginably bright. It is not the brightness of any light which obliterates the obscuration of the elements of which the physical body is constituted but the discrimination which enables one to subtract the physical matter upon which the spirit is projected.

The prayer here is to remain in pure spirit rather than getting confused with the physical elements and triple modalities of nature. It is one and the same energy that stimulates all the five senses. When the eye is stimulated, form arises; when the ear is stimulated, sound arises, etc. Each seems different, because the intervention of the senses pollutes the pure nature of the spirit. Similarly when the five organs of action engage in their functions, each function is so very different from that of the other four. Thus there are ten-fold distortions brought to the spirit simply because the spirit is imprisoned in the body. The prayer is to release the spirit from the ten million contaminations of the ten organs with which this body is equipped. The one energy of the spirit that is seeping through the five organs of perception and five organs of action is regressively brought back, through contemplation, to its original state. That is what the yogi is doing. When finally that goal is achieved, it is said to be like ten million suns rising all at once.



Verse 72

Please turn Your twin glances upon me.
This is my humble prayer.
I can win over the tyranny of the physical with that favor.
There is not even a little crevice in matter
for the spirit to reside.

When there is a crowd surrounding two lovers, they can communicate their finest thoughts of intimacy just by looking into each other's eyes. No words need to be articulated. No gesticulations need to be shown. No written letters need to be exchanged. The most intense care and concern for each other can be conveyed with one look. The look of a dog or that coming from the eyes of any such pet can be eloquent to any person who has intimate relationship with such an animal. In such cases it is the spirit that reciprocates with spirit.

Sometimes human beings are trapped by their enemies or through a chance accident are caught in situations where escape looks impossible. Iron bars and heavy padlocks with tight security bring frustration and a keen sense of helplessness to those who are caught and thrown into a prison cell. In such a situation, given the faintest idea that a helpful person is around, all that one would wish is to set ones eyes on that beneficent person and get their glance of recognition.

Once an Indian recluse was falsely implicated in a murder case. The prosecution was successful in presenting fabricated evidence. The innocent man was sentenced to the death penalty. He was thrown into a high-security cell from where he could have been taken to the gallows any day. That man's last wish was to see the present writer. The authorities granted him that wish. I agreed with him to approach the President of India with a mercy petition. The President granted it and commuted the death penalty to life imprisonment.

When he was brought back to a dormitory cell to serve his term with other prisoners, he became overwhelmed with gratitude to God. He decided to speak on the glory of God and God's message given in the *Gita* every morning and evening to his prison mates. In a few months his discourses became so popular in the jail that even highly placed police officials were attending his classes with devotion.

The officers who were impressed with his innocence and love for humanity recommended his release. Finally when the government granted his release he no longer had the feeling that he was behind prison bars. He entreated the officials not to alienate him from the home in which he had established spiritual bonds with both the captives and the captors. There is a famous saying "Iron bars do not a cage make, nor stone walls a prison."

(Continued in next issue.)



Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

V:1

The Self which is unborn (which has never been born) and of crooked functional faculty, has the citadel with eleven gates as its abode. With performances (obeying) him, one sorrows not. One who is liberated thus from (sorrows) is also liberated (from birth and death). This verily is That.

The last *valli* showed the paradoxes implied in the nondual truth and how they could be transcended in a dialectical way which cancels out the opposing counterparts. The senses turned outwards and the interior self were the counterparts in the first *mantra*. The desire for objective pleasures which leads to death and the desire for immortality were the counterparts in the next *mantra*. The remaining *mantras* explicated the attainment of the nondual truth by cancelling out the contradictions in pairs such as: sense-objects and the subjective enjoyer; states of consciousness and their witness; the individuated consciousness and the cosmic consciousness; temporal priority and posterity; and evident vitality and the secretly seated self; rising up and setting in; the here and the hereafter; the one and the many; smallness and vastness; and substance and attribute. All such pairs were taken into account for a methodic cancellation of duality. At the end of the *valli* it was shown how all the attributes and their substance merge into a

unity nondually, just like a drop of pure water falls into the ocean of pure water and becomes nondual. Conversely, the present *valli* shows us how the same unitive Self, taking the position of substance (*dharmin*), projects into being the appearance of the phenomenal becomings or the attributes. If the last *valli* adopted an ascending way of dialectical thinking, this *valli* adopts the descending way of the same thinking. The methodological difference between these two *vallis* is so subtle that it can be discerned only by those who are familiar with the dialectical way proper to nondual thinking. The words "This verily is That (*etad vai tat*)" repeated very often in these two *vallis* indicate a dialectical method adopted in transcending dualities.

In the present *mantra* the unborn Self is depicted as having the body as its abode. Specifically considered, each of us has a different body of one's own. But generically we could say that the entire universe is the body of the Self. Everyone makes efforts with the physical body as an instrument. The efforts vary from physical works to meditation on the Self. It is the same consciousness that functions in all these activities. Narayana Guru in his *Darśanamāla* says, "It is indeed the Self that through *māyā* does action assuming many forms."

By performing activities with this understanding one frees oneself from the tangles of action (*karma*) and thus becomes free from suffering. Śankara explains the word *anuṣṭhāya* in the Sanskrit text as meaning "by meditating with understanding." Meditation is not the only activity of

the Self. So the performance mentioned here is to be understood in its widest sense.

The Self is mentioned here as of uncrooked functional faculty (*avakra cetas*). Being dynamic in nature, the Self never remains static. It is always functional. We call these functions *karma* (actions). These actions are neither good nor bad by themselves. They are imagined to be crooked or straightforward when these actions are evaluated with the interests of the individuals or a group of individuals as the norm.

These individuals take upon themselves the responsibility of the actions and suffer the consequences. There is no goodness or badness in the spontaneous spurting of the dynamism of the Self. It is just like the sun whose rays fall everywhere and on everyone whether good or bad. Where we have our own particular interests, and when they are faced with obstructions, we feel that life is full of suffering. One who sees all actions only as the spontaneous spurting of the functional aspect of the Self crosses over all the sufferings. One who transcends suffering also crosses over death, the theme of this *Upaniṣad*.

It is customary in Indian literature to call the body a city with nine gates. Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two excretory holes and the mouth are the nine gates. If the navel and the sagittal suture (*vidṛti*) are included, the number of gates comes to eleven. A city should have its ruler. The Self is the ruler of this city.

V:2

That Absolute is the supreme Self abiding in the clear, the air in the atmosphere, the priest by the altar (or the fire in the hearth), the Soma juice (or the guest in the house), the one abiding in man, god, the sun, the sky, and also those born in water, those born on earth, those born of sacrifices, those born of mountains, the sacrifices and the largest.

Everything that is visible or conceivable, whether belonging to cause or effect, comes under the category of attributes and not of the substance which is always invisible and inconceivable. No attribute has existence apart from its substance. Here the substance to which the attributes belong, i.e., the visible and conceivable worlds, is the all-inclusive pure knowledge, the largest and most inconceivable truth or *brahman*. All the items enumerated here as belonging to the realm of *dharma* relate to the worlds here and the hereafter, or to the worlds of men and of gods. If the items are examined carefully we see that they include causes and effects, e.g., sacrifices (*ṛta*) and those born of sacrifices (*ṛtaja*).

It indicates that it is not the cause alone that is the truth. Truth is the largest One which includes causes and effects in it. This *mantra* visualizes the entire cosmic order ranging from the subtle to the gross, and touching the here and the hereafter, in the nondual Self. The next *mantra* visualizes the same Self in all the functional aspects of individuated being.

V:3

He who leads up the upward vital breath (prana) and who leads down the downward vital breath (apana), and to be contemplated as seated in the middle, him all the gods worship.

Our life endures through volitional activities as well as through unconscious functions. Volitional actions are decided and guided by our thinking, value notions and willpower. All these inner functions have as their substratum the ever-pulsating consciousness that is in each of us. Even when we are inactive externally, the heart beats inside and pushes blood to each and every cell of the body. Glands secrete fluids into the bodily systems and keep its homeostasis. The digestive system works unceasingly and keeps stable the temperature and energy of the body.

Though we are not aware of these functions going on in us, there is a knowledge in us which is aware of even the minutest detail of the structural coherence of the body, as well as of the mind and both taken as a unity. This knowledge and the knowledge which controls our volitional actions are not different. It is the same knowledge which functions in divergent ways. Indian thinkers consider these vital functions as compelled by five vital airs or *prāṇas*: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna* and *samāna*. Of these five the most important ones, which are opposite in nature, are only mentioned here. The vital function of consciousness in an individual is not in fact apart from the cosmic functions mentioned the last *mantra*. The same functional consciousness, which is psychic and cosmic at the same time, is the meaning content of *AUM* as mentioned at the beginning stage of Yama's teaching in this *Upa-niṣad*, in the second *valli*. When we think of the Self as the controller of all vital functions it is not to be taken as a kind of mechanical controlling device. The Self is not merely making the *prāṇas* function: it is the Self that manifests as the *prāṇas*, their functions, and as the bodily system where they function. This identity of the controller and the controlled cannot be understood as comparable to another. This is to be realized by incessant contemplative cogitation. So it is called here *vāmana* (that which is to be contemplated incessantly).

The Self is not seated at any part of the body. But as the central principle which maintains the body, we can metaphorically think of it as centrally situated. The Self is contemplatable not only to human beings but even to gods. It means that there is no god or man apart from the Self-Reality.

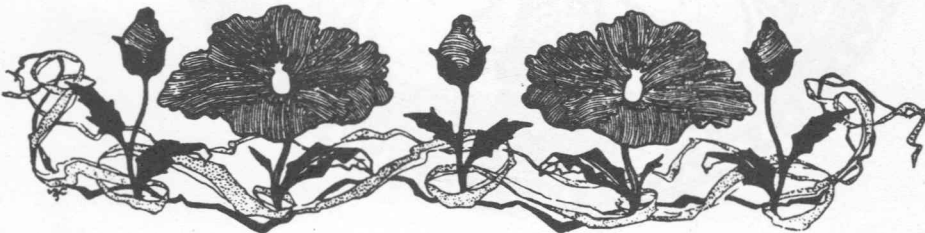
V:4

This embodied one that is situated in the body, when freed from the body and devoid of its bondage, what is there left over here? This verily is That.

Birth and death are normal only with the self possessing a body. The self as the possessor of the body is called *dehin* in Sanskrit. In the last *mantra* it was shown that the vital functions which keep the body and the possessor of the body enduring have their reality only in the Self. This *mantra* shows that the Self is the reality that remains after negating the possession of the body from the individual self. In other words, when one gets free of one's identity with the body, what remains as the I-consciousness is the Absolute designated by the mono-syllable *AUM*.

This *mantra* could also be taken to mean that, when the embodied self is released from the body at the time of death, what remains as left over is the Absolute Self. If we give primacy to the methodological relevancy of the leaving of the body, rather than to the event of actual death, this *mantra* would get a deeper philosophical meaning. Birth and death are only attributes the possessor of the body projects on itself. When these attributes are negated by the method known as *apavāda* in Vedānta text books, what remains attributeless is the Self.

(Continued in next issue.)



Who Am I?

*Who am I? I keep asking me.
I'm always changing, there's the rub.
I'm different when I am with you
And you, and you, and you, and you.
Or when I'm on my own at night
And dream my dreams or deeply sleep.*

*So many answers crowd my brain.
My parents' daughter, that I know
A carrier of Irish genes
I'm fashioned in a human form
Some million years have shaped this me.
How many bodies have I worn
And who this I that travels on?
Droplet of God in changing guise
That talks and feels and looks for Truth?*

*Sometimes a wife, a widow now
And old I'm told, I'm seventy.
What nonsense --I'm the food I eat
And when I'm silent, Infinite.*

*If I had wings I'd be a gull
And mapless fly to Africa.*

*My telepathic powers as cat
Would find me friends who'd love me well
I'm living breath - that's consciousness
So - you, my cat, the gulls, the trees.*

*My bones were rocks, tears, blood, the sea
My body's earth but yet there's more . . .
What's thinking this?
Whence come these words?
The hand that writes, the eyes that see?
My thoughts can make my muscles ache
Or flood each cell with blissful love.*

*Who am I? Just a cosmic blip?
Magnetic and electrical waves?
I'm nothing that's special, that's for sure
Yet can at times feel boundless, free
A product of galactic beams
That make my ego feel unreal.*

*Could be this year my shell will break
Revealing stark what lived inside.
Or leaving time and space behind
I'll wake in Universal Mind.*

Sheilah Johns

Beyond Name and Form

Fred Cantor

I remember as a small child. The world was vast and new, and largely undifferentiated. I could see and feel shapes and forms, of course, but they were all part of an amalgam, definitely not distinct entities. The world was made of plastic and could easily be shaped into almost anything by my imagination. The sounds I made were totally expressive of my feelings, yet the only language I spoke was the universal tongue of "baby talk." Each sound was pure and meaningful, but since it spoke to the undifferentiated instead of to the specific, it was unintelligible to others. Gradually, concepts of language came and the amalgam of consciousness became broken down into names and forms. First there was Mama and Daddy, then a whole trail of new words. I began to lose the sense of totality as I became more and more involved in naming my surrounding and building this wonderful new vocabulary through which I could communicate with the people around me.

I don't remember feeling any particular sense of regret while becoming verbal, but I do remember feeling a great loss after I learned to read. I used to love to look at illustrations and pictures because in my mind I could make up my own stories to go with them. But I was shocked when I discovered that after learning to read, I was never again able to look at the pictures without reading the words that went with them. Forever after, the stories that I heard were told to me by other people, and the universe condensed still further into Names and Forms.

Fortunately, as the nature of my sensibilities changed and became narrowed into a sense of myself as a distinct entity, the nature of the universe didn't change at all. The amalgam of consciousness out of

which our brains pick certain patterns remains as whole and complete as ever. The vast ocean that undulates into waves of individual awareness is always changing and yet always changeless. How can we tune in to this great energy and align ourselves with its tidal pulses? We want to swim with the flow, not against it. Are there ways we can accomplish this?

At birth, we are given our five senses of perception, and also a sense of conception that allows us to filter and arrange and store the information we perceive. Our senses are attuned to different ranges of vibration. We receive only a partial spectrum of the energy that is out there, whether in terms of light rays, sound waves, or "matter waves" which we feel as solid objects. Our senses seem to be limited, but are they really? Do we have other senses that might go deeper? Can we get a sense of the ocean's currents as well as a knowledge of the surface conditions? Can we go beyond our five senses and explore a broader field?

Let us take stock of things. We have sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. What else? A sense of time is inherent in us. We sense the rhythms of sunrise and sunset, of the changing seasons. We look at the stars in the night and have a sense of time. We watch the flowing of rivers and we have a sense of time. We look at our watches to get a sense of time, but unlike our natural time sense, the mechanical time cannot expand and contract, cannot contain magic. We have all experienced events when "time stood still," when a single moment seemed eternal, or when "time dragged on" and a single hour seemed like forever. Our sense of time is plastic, but we get our days so filled with schedules that we begin to forget this flexibility.

We also have emotional sensors. We can pick up vibrations from people and things around us. Some individuals have focused on developing certain aspects of so-called extra-sensory perception. It is not really "extra" sensory, it is simply a part of our sensory system that has been excluded by the mechanical point of view. We all have this sixth sense, whether we pay attention to it or not. In older cultures seers have devoted themselves to these skills with amazing results. It seems foolish to believe that the mechanistic mind does not still have these abilities. Likewise, even the most mechanistic mind has yet another sense, the sense of cosmic consciousness. We all know that we Are, and that we Are a part of Something. And, of course, we all have our dream sensory system and our sense of oblivion or nothingness that comes with deep sleep.

We have plenty of tools for our exploration. The way to put them into use is by attention. It has been said that our consciousness is like a flashlight beam that will illuminate whatever it is pointed at. I suspect there is a much larger grey area that may be dimly lit but is still explorable. In any case, it is the attention itself that is illuminating, and it is the attention that we can focus. Think of the air around us. It is filled with waves and rays bouncing around all over the place, but they don't interfere with each other. We can build an antenna and pick up the frequency of a radio station, but when we turn off the radio, that frequency is still present in the air. We also know that when the sun comes up, the stars do not cease to exist, but that the rays from the sun are so intense we cannot see the stars. In much the same way, focus of our attention on the mechanical world of Name and Form is so intense that it overpowers us.

To break away from the seductive world of Name and Form, we have to learn to turn our attention to other realms. If you sit in a room of people and there is a television on, their eyes will keep darting back to the screen, even if there is no sound on. If you turn the sound on, expanding the range of perception to include

audible as well as visual stimulus, the people will gradually become engrossed in the television and conversation and interaction will cease. The world of our senses is even more engrossing. The first thing is to find the controls for your own television set. Once you do, you can change the channels or even turn it off. And you will realize that it is you who is creating all the programming that is presented to you.

Wherever we find ourselves on the Ocean, that is the place to start. You don't have to swim anywhere to begin your explorations. Each of our sensory systems has an override switch. The sense of sight is the longest range of our five senses. It can be turned off simply by closing our eyes. When we sit with our eyes closed, our picture of the world changes and other senses come into play. The attention immediately focuses on the next broadest sense, hearing. If we are in the woods, we become acutely aware of the bird songs, the wind in the trees, the sound of rushing water in the stream. If we are in the city we hear the sirens and horns, the whooshing of the buses, maybe even the sound of heels on the pavement. But soon we will become engrossed in thought, and eventually the sounds of the world will be "tuned out." You have shut off the radio in your head.

What you are hearing when that radio goes off? You may hear your own body, the blood coursing through you and the rhythmic sound of your breathing. You may hear thoughts in your head, almost as though someone had spoken them, even though there is no speaker in the room. Now you must turn off the speaker. Focus on the thoughts themselves, not the words in which they are expressed. When you enter that realm of pure thought, then the world of Name and Form no longer holds sway.

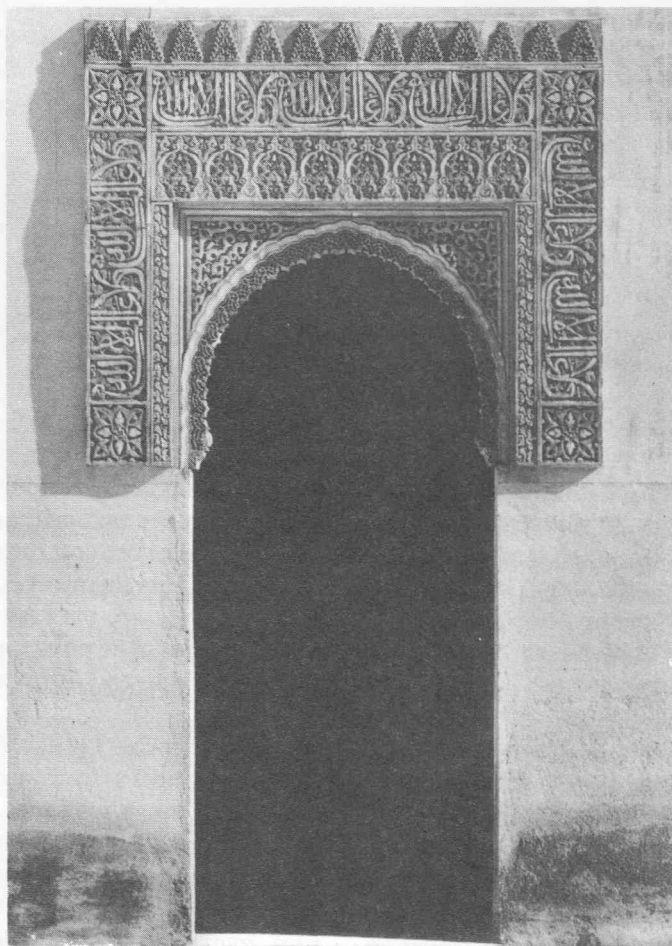
The other day I was walking the banks of a river, and I started noticing the rocks on which I was walking. They had all been rounded by being tossed around in the water. Each one was unique and individual. Each had its own shape, color, texture, even personality. Where had they

come from? I looked along the bank and saw the large boulders that had fallen from the hills above. They too were unique individuals, yet they had all once been part of the same mountain. At what point did the boulder change and become a rock? Did it feel this transition, this rite of passage? When did the rock become a pebble, when did the pebbles become gravel, and the gravel become sand? What kind of consciousness exists within the stone to know whether it is a mountain, a boulder, or a pebble? What kind of consciousness makes up the awareness of "beach"? Does each rock contain an awareness of "beachness" as well as of "stoneness"? Or is the awareness alive strictly in us, the observers?

Really looking at the objects behind the names and forms can help us break free. Everything in the universe contains the same undifferentiated consciousness at

its core, so all roads lead to the sameness of the ocean. Another technique that helps redirect our attention is to repeat a name over and over until it loses its meaning as a word. Some names and sounds are more powerful than others, and there are specific phrases or mantras that can overwhelm all names and forms, leading us to realize the Nameless and Formless. Speaking in tongues can also be freeing.

Personally, I like to sing nonsense songs. I just make up some word-like sounds that sound pretty (or angry, or sad, depending on my mood). I think one of the big secrets about consciousness is that it has a sense of playfulness and likes to have fun. A meditation doesn't have to be a somber, serious practice. The right attitude and focus can turn anything into a meditation - a chance to experience the omnipresence of the Reality that transcends Name and Form. ♦



The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra II:32

*śauca samtoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāya
īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ*

śauca: purity
samtoṣa: contentment
tapaḥ: austerity
svādhyāya: self-study
īśvara praṇidhānāni: continuous
contemplation on *īśvara*
niyamāḥ: constitute the observances

Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and continuous contemplation on *īśvara* constitute the observances.

The instrument of search and achievement of a yoga aspirant is composed of the four inner organs, the ten organs of perception and action and the physical body with a nature which is common with that of the external world. In the attempt to attain aloneness, the seeker is liable to be hampered by various obstacles. In the present *sūtra* we are given the *modus operandi* by which the search can be effectively made and the desired goal reached through a five-fold methodic exploitation of the body/mind complex in which the possibility inheres.

Śauca: Purity

Suppose we have before us a certain destination. Before commencing our jour-

ney, we naturally ask about the condition of the road - is it well maintained and clear? Are the weather conditions conducive to travel? If these factors look favorable, then we turn to the vehicle - is a reliable car available, does it have a good seating arrangement for all the travelers, are the parts well lubricated, are the tires in good condition, is there enough fuel, is there enough water in the radiator to cool the system, is the battery well charged? Then, even more importantly, the driver is to be considered - is he reliable, experienced, sober? Only when positive answers for all these and many more questions are arrived at do we begin our journey.

Similarly, at the commencement of the long journey to aloneness, the yogi wants to know how to maintain the body/mind system as a good vehicle to go from where one currently is to one's ultimate goal. The first requirement enumerated here is *śauca*, purity. There can be different models of seeking enlightenment. The principle of making ones start with a purificatory process is a traditional method. It proceeds from the environment to the instrument to the programming to the programmer.

The first concern is with environmental factors. If a person is expected to sit comfortably for a long time in one place to regulate the incoming and outgoing breath and ponder over a certain contemplative subject, that place should not be infested with disease-causing germs, the air should not be polluted, there should not be too

much humidity or dust in the atmosphere, there should not be distracting noises from sound pollution, and the peace of the place should not be marred by squabbles and fights of unruly people. To begin with, the environment should be conducive.

If the home environment is filled with filth and has various kinds of insects or reptiles in it, and one continuously wears the same soiled clothes because one has no clean clothes to change into, there is no physical purity. To begin the search, one needs purity of home and clothing. But even a person sitting in a very clean house wearing costly clothes may be unclean if his body is not clean and the dirt coming out of the body is not properly removed. To efficiently conduct a yoga search, ones body as well as ones clothing and environment need to be clean.

Physically, ones inner as well as outer cleanliness is important. Even if the body is clean, if one eats or drinks unwholesome things, ones blood can become contaminated. Consequently the brain will be affected. The body may not get sufficient rest because ones sleep is disturbed. All kinds of emotional disturbances can come from psycho-chemical pollutants. Thus it is an essential part of physical and mental hygiene to have only wholesome food and drink.

Even when a person is physically disciplined to have a clean life, if ones associates are not wise and sober people, they

can create many distractions that drag one away from ones motivation. Great care should be taken in what one feeds ones mind with. Purity of mind comes only when one listens to words of purity and engages in actions of purity. It is a vicious circle: if ones words and actions are evil, ones thoughts will be evil, and if ones thoughts are evil, ones words and actions will be evil. A high sense of spiritual purity is to be maintained to have a disposition pure enough to always inspire one to have a longing to attain the highest.

The old proverb says: "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Here one should know that being clean in environment, clothes, body, food habits, associations, actions, words, thoughts, and spirit are all inter-linked. *Sauca*, keeping oneself pure, is the first step in ones onward march to identity with the Absolute.

Samtosa: Contentment

The second item of discipline enjoined by *niyama* is that of normalizing ones subjective needs by which a natural equipoise can be maintained as a preliminary to the great pilgrimage one makes to *kaivalya*. The mind can be compared to a pool of water. The slightest disturbance can create ripples or waves on the surface. Dirt on the shores can easily pollute the water and make it murky or muddy. The mind can



also lose its tranquillity from external causes or the surfacing of certain needs and urges. For this reason, Vedantins recommend both *sama* and *dama* to maintain the tranquillity of the mind. Restraining provocations from outside is *dama*; not succumbing to disturbances coming from within is *sama*. *Samtoṣa* is a state of mind which comes only when *sama* and *dama* are properly exercised and the mind is freed of all its agitations.

There is a more positive aspect to *samtoṣa* than just being tranquil or contented. It is also being cheerful and creating around oneself an atmosphere which is pleasant to oneself and to others who join one in that environment. *Samtoṣa* requires moderation in accepting the pleasures of the world; it is not followed by the hangover or aftermath of hedonistic indulgence. Gentle sharing of loveful thoughts, showing one another the appreciation of the good values that are manifested in people's thoughts, words and behavior -- these do not bring any evil after-effects which cause one to regret or repent. Listening to gentle music, pondering over thoughtful poems, seeing performances that create only love for aesthetic values -- these can all be conducive to making one come to *samtoṣa*.

The natural fulfillment of a need makes one happy - this is *samtoṣa*. However, if a person is stung with greed, ones pursuit for acquisition will have results which will be far from making one truly happy. Although *samtoṣa* is a cheerful state, maintaining it is difficult. One has to cultivate a very high sensibility to preserve ones *samtoṣa* in the right spirit and enable it to be a harmonizing catalyst in maintaining equipoise in society. According to Indian literati, time spent profitably is that devoted to pursuits in science and poetics. They call the worthwhile use of ones time in exploring the realms of science and the humanities *vinoda*. *Vinoda* is not merely having fun for some time. It is the precipitating of interest in values which make a person rejoice both in heart and mind. This is the same as what is recommended in this *sūtra* as *samtoṣa*.

Tapas: Austerity

Tapas is the third item in the discipline of *niyama*. At the beginning of this section, we stated that *tapas*, *svādhyāya* and *īśvara praṇidhāna* constitute *kriyā yoga*. The word *tapas* means warming up or bringing to a white heat. Metals like gold are purified by being melted. If an alloy such as bronze is to be made, copper and tin are to be melted and blended. If rice is to be made edible, it is to be cooked in boiling water. Thus we are familiar with the application of heat for various constructive purposes. In the present case, warming or heating up is to be taken both physically and metaphorically.

Heat has two powers. One is of fission which separates two entities which otherwise seem to be inseparable. The other is fusion, the blending of two entities into one. In yoga, we want to apply the principles of both fission and fusion. As we are psycho-physical organisms with the inner organ, sensory and motor systems and a physical body in which all these faculties inhere, systematic heat is to be applied to all parts of the body/mind complex.

The first entry of the world into a person is through the faculty of hearing. Hearing has the immediate impact of placing a demand on the mind to create a concept to account for what is heard. When the intellect provides the mind with a conceptual counterpart for every sound it hears, *citta* (the memory faculty) holds on to it. A child picks up words and concepts during its first three years so diligently that it gets all the useful words of its mother tongue which are thereafter used all through life.

The words that enter our systems have conceptual connotations which can inspire us, elevate our minds, and be beneficial to all. In the same way, there are certain words with vulgar meanings which can demoralize us. It is not easy to root out a conceptual meaning from memory. So civilized societies are very careful to teach children words of the right kind. What is obscene is not allowed to be expressed in a cultured society. In Sanskrit, acceptable

words are called *sabhya*, which means "worthy of being uttered in a congregation." Obscene words are called *asabhya*, "not worthy of being uttered in a congregation."

The first austerity which is recommended is that of using words of an inspiring nature with the right intonation at the appropriate time. Part of that *tapasya* is holding one's tongue and keeping golden silence when one's vocal expression is not going to help another. Like the arms and legs of the body, the word is a useful limb of the person in you. Just as mothers hold the hands of their children to guide them, you can hold a person with words and lead him or her in the right path. We need good roads to travel safely; parents and teachers provide good paths by paving them with right words.

Using words to teach, direct, conduct, inspire, console and encourage another is a positive value of the *tapas* of speech. Even when a person is far-off you can stretch your spirit to that person by writing appropriate words. All expressions of love which are physically possible can be given to another with words in a very intimate and intense way. That is also *tapas* of the word.

The world comes to us in the form of heat and cold. The faculty of touch is not confined to any part of one's body. We can touch and feel the world with the skin in which our bodies are wrapped. In area, no sense organ is greater than the faculty of touch. We cannot live in icy cold or in burning flames. There is a proportionate blending of heat and cold which pleases us but the entire world does not always remain at that ideal temperature. So we have to acclimatize and be somewhat indifferent to heat and cold. A yogi is therefore expected to show sameness to heat and cold, of course, only to the extent that it is not detrimental to the yogi's body.

The heat and cold we experience can be physical and mental. Relationships between people can be cold or warm. Just as it is necessary to protect ourselves from extreme heat and cold, it is also necessary to avoid getting into bizarre attitudes of ha-

tred or sentimental attachment. Moderating between extremes in attitude is also a *tapasya* pertaining to sensation.

Most people live, even amidst beauty, without having a sensibility to discern the beautiful. Wordsworth complained that we waste our time getting and spending and do not have the sensibility to stand and stare at a beautiful daffodil or violet. To discern the beautiful, to create and protect it with the intention of sharing it with others is another *tapasya* with which we can train our eyes.

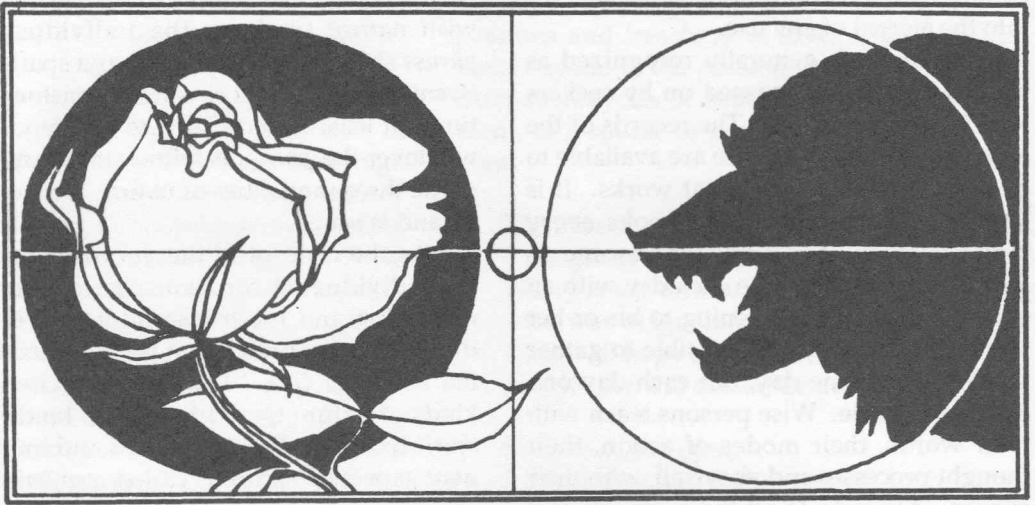
It is so intriguing that in our mouths we have a tongue which can relish a variety of tastes ranging from bitterness to sweetness and that the tastes are kept in fruits and various other kinds of foods that nature provides us with. Most of our tastes are cultivated. Human health is intrinsically connected with what one eats and drinks. Yet most people have cultivated wrong tastes and harmful addictions which not only bring physical disease but also mental aberrations. Addiction to alcohol and drugs is not rare. Restraining the palate and guiding it to partake only of things which are beneficial to the body/mind complex is another *tapasya*.

We also have the capacity to smell which may seem to relate only to temporary experiences but this is not so. We bring with us the fragrances (*vāsanās*) of the many lives we have lived before. To rid ourselves of our *vāsanās* or residual memories, is another important item to deal with. Life is rectified and saved when we can discern what memories we should cherish and what we should not carry with us.

Just as we restrain our sense organs to make our lives wholesome, we can also keep our organs of action engaged only in pursuits which are beneficial to the world. Then we can say we are doing proper *tapasya*. Thus *tapas* is a very important discipline.

Svādhyāya: Self-study

Fourth in the series of *niyama* is *svādhyāya*. In wakeful consciousness, per-



ceptual mentation is happening with the oscillation of awareness between the central focus of ones subjective consciousness and any object of interest outside ones being. I-consciousness does not have a mathematical location. Although it has no substance as such, from childhood we are so reared that we associate all ideas with thing-ness so even I-consciousness is projected on certain intimate aspects which are focused in the consciousness called "I." The identification of the area which is recognized as belonging to oneself is "mine." All of empirical experience is therefore dichotomized into "mine" and "not mine." As the return path to aloneness does not warrant anyone carrying with them anything not their own, only that which a person recognizes as his or her own has relevance in the present study.

When one enters into the discipline of preparing oneself to achieve aloneness, the most appropriate questions to ask are "Who am I?" and "What is truly mine?" When people came to Ramana Maharshi and asked him for instruction, he always had one question to ask them, "Who wants instruction? What is it in you that says, 'I am' and 'Who am I?'" Whatever your question, need or problem, as a preliminary to knowing what is yours, you ask, "Who am I?"

The *Brahmavidyā Pañcakam* of Narayana Guru gives the two classic questions which a disciple is expected to ask his or

her guru: "Who am I?" (*ko'ham*) and "Whence this world?" (*kudojagad*). You have only to know who you are, what you are not and how you are connected with what you are not. In his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, Śankara enters into the mainstream of *brahmavidyā* by raising the question. "What is this thing called 'I am'?" and "What is it that is termed 'you are'?" In Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras* we have now also come to this study of oneself.

Svādhyāya is studying "What am I?" and "What is mine?" "Who am I?" is not a question that can be answered with an answer that will remain intact for the rest of ones life. We live in a world of transient names and forms. What we know at this moment disappears in the next. Suppose in this moment one recognizes oneself as the perceiver of a beautiful rose laden with dew drops. In the next moment that image doesn't remain. One then may be recognizing oneself as one confronted by a furious cobra or a charging wild animal which wants to pierce one with its sharp teeth. The answer to "Who am I?" in one situation doesn't hold good in another situation. As relativistic conditions continuously change and move, one needs to know what the condition of the next moment will be. That is why it is said that a single answer does not solve the problem of *saṃsāra*. The vision of the Absolute is not static so that one can hold on to it. Only when the vision of the Absolute is

continuous and contiguous is the merger into the eternal of any use.

Svādhyāya is generally recognized as the study of words passed on by seekers who have gone before. The records of the experiences of wise people are available to us as compendiums of great works. It is worthwhile to study those books every day. Further, it is very wholesome to spend at least some time each day with an enlightened person, listening to his or her word directly. It is not possible to gather wisdom all in one day, but each day one can learn a little. Wise persons teach with their words, their modes of action, their thought processes and above all, with their silence. Attuning to all these aspects will bring conviction.

When what one experiences, what one hears from great people and what is recorded in the scriptures from time immemorial all come in one line, then one can be sure that one's *svādhyāya* has been profitable. Such is the royal path in which one is confirmed that whatever one has been doing as *sādhana* (practice) is ultimately successful.

Īśvara Praṇidhāna: Continuous Contemplation on *Īśvara*

In *kriyā yoga*, which is re-emphasized here in the five-fold discipline of *niyama*, *īśvara praṇidhāna* is contemplation on the nature of *īśvara* with a view to keeping oneself in absolute union with the pure and transcendent ways of *īśvara*. In the *Yoga Śāstra*, *īśvara* is not presented as the God of the Semitic religions nor as similar to the deities of the *Śiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* religions. *Īśvara* is defined as a special spirit unaffected by any evil. The role of *īśvara* is that of the supreme teacher. In one sense the *īśvara* of Yoga is identical with the *īśvara* of Vedānta - they are both designated by *praṇava*, AUM.

Praṇidhāna is an act of dedication by which the aspirant does not consider himself to have any foundation other than *īśvara*. We can put it another way - although each individual is said to have a

puruṣa of his own which is in conjunction with nature (*prakṛti*), the individuated *puruṣa* should be looked upon as a spark of *īśvara* which undergoes certain transformations, at least superficially, to accommodate whatever the *puruṣa* is witnessing because of the three modalities of nature, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

As the concept of the *puruṣa* as both the individuated consciousness of the finite being and the transcendent spirit is difficult to comprehend, it is simplified by the *Bhagavad Gīta*. The *Gīta* projects two kinds of nature (*prakṛti*) and two kinds of spirit (*puruṣa*). The manifested and immanent aspect of nature is called *aparāprakṛti* and the unmanifested and transcendent aspect is called *parāprakṛti*. Similarly, the numinous principle which is in active participation with the wakeful, dream and deep sleep experiences of the individual is called *kṣara puruṣa*, the transient spirit, and the pure, transcendent principle of the numenon is called *akṣara puruṣa*.

To tide over the implied duality of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, Vedāntins offer a third concept called *puruṣottama*, the superior person or transcendent spirit. The *kṣara puruṣa* or transient individuation is treated as a reflected person whose reality is derived from the unaffected and transcendent numenon. To work out the scheme, Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to raise the lower self by the higher self. The lower self can be contaminated by nature and is equivalent to the reflected or image-like *puruṣa*. The self that can restore or raise the lower self is the same as *īśvara*, the unaffected numenon.

Even when a snake is seen in a rope, the ground of that illusion is the only reality that is. Similarly, when an individuated aspirant sees no other ground to his or her being than *īśvara*, the supreme spirit, he or she is having *īśvara praṇidhāna*. The aspirant is expected to cultivate a transparency of vision that can cut across the illusions created by the nature modalities so that they are not taken for reality. One continuously forgoes all the ramifications of what is perceptually presented in the phenomenal world and adheres only to the

truth represented by the true spirit, *īśvara*.

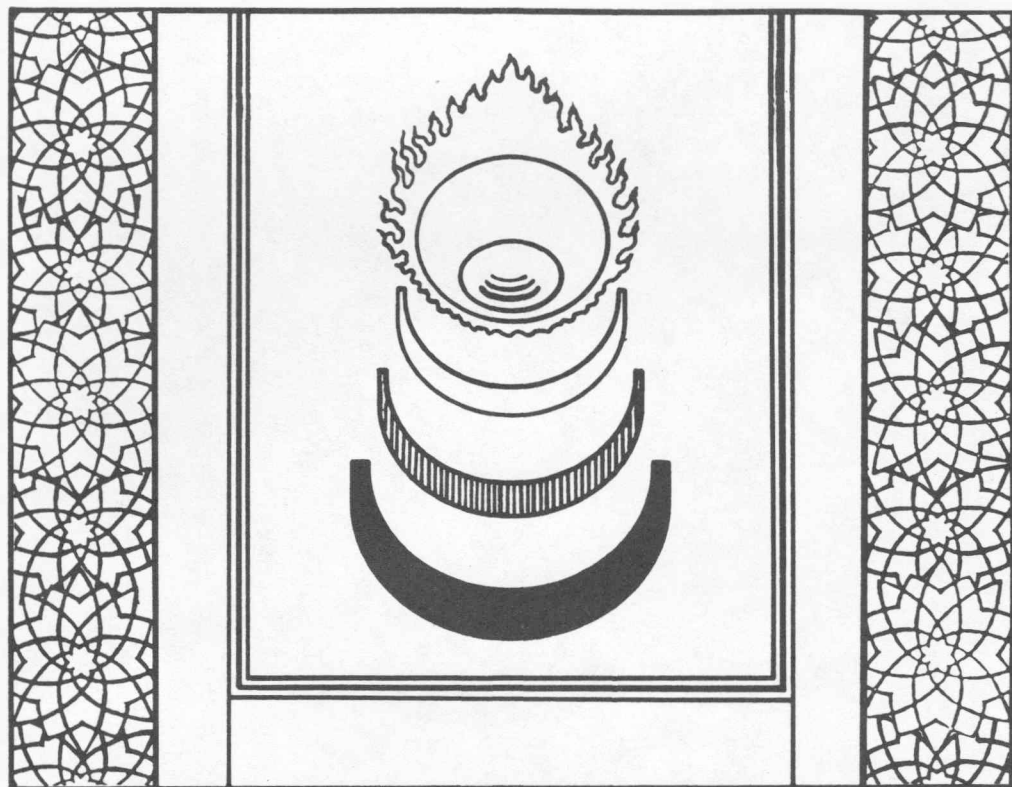
As a person has to keep vigil over the three states of consciousness which cyclically present as waking, dream and deep sleep, *īśvara* is to be seen as the their ground, known as the fourth (*turīya*). Usually there is a compulsiveness to validate the objectivized world of the wakeful as a reality "out there." That validity is shattered when its place is taken by a dream but the consciousness of the individual has no power to recognize a dream as a dream when it is going on. It lacks the critical acumen to compare and contrast what was originally validated by wakeful experience and what is given in the dream. This incapacity to recognize the true nature of a presented state becomes much worse when one is pushed to the unconscious depth of deep sleep.

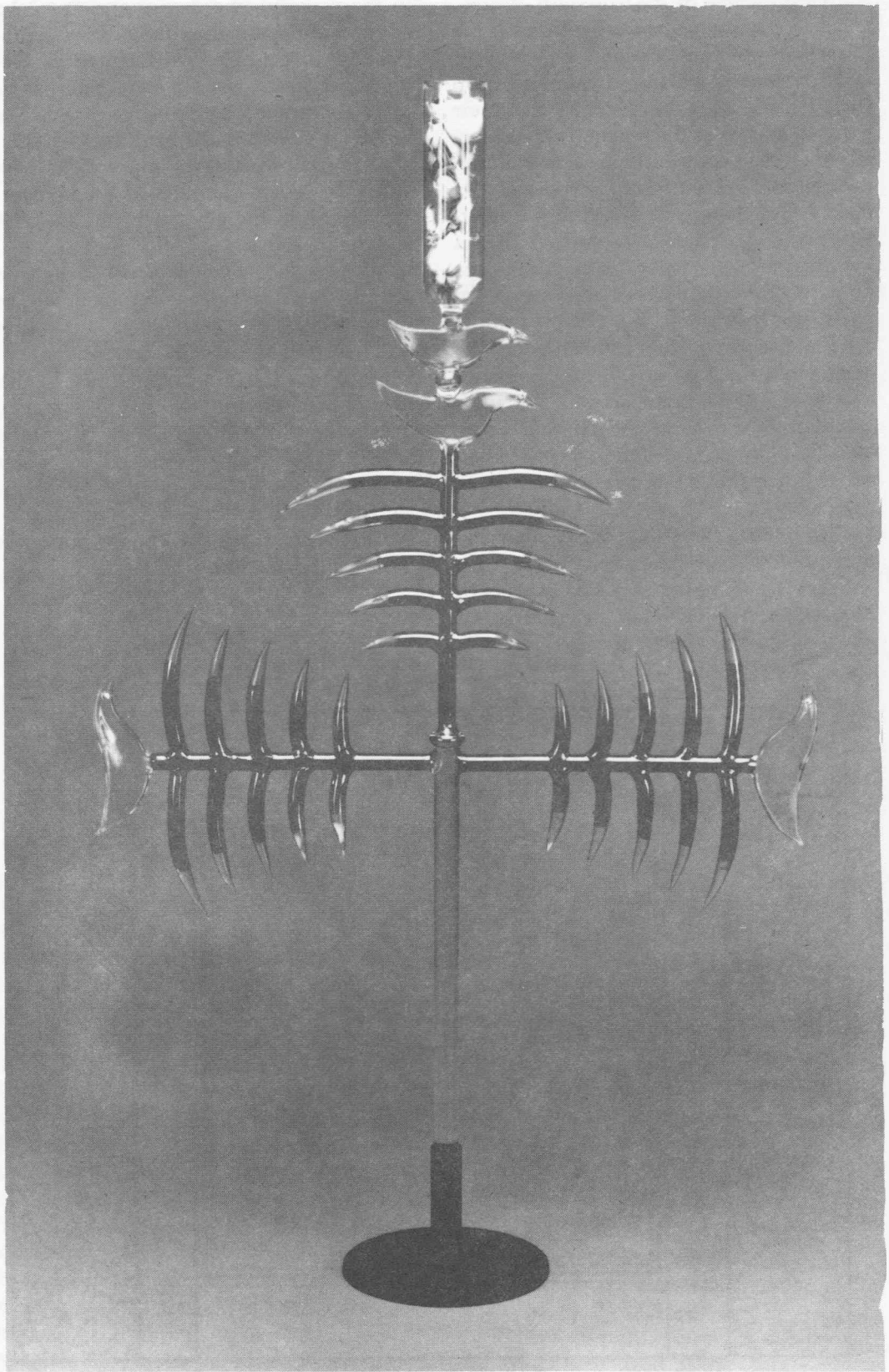
Only when these trappings of individuated consciousness are torn away does one see the changing states as aspects of phenomena. When that discriminative power is achieved one will continue to see,

in the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep, the formless and the timeless without any subject-object differentiation. Until one comes to such a state, one has to meditate on the true nature of *īśvara*. The reality of *īśvara* effaces from the individual's mind all the wrong impressions with which he or she identifies as the knower, the actor and the enjoyer of the wakeful and dream states.

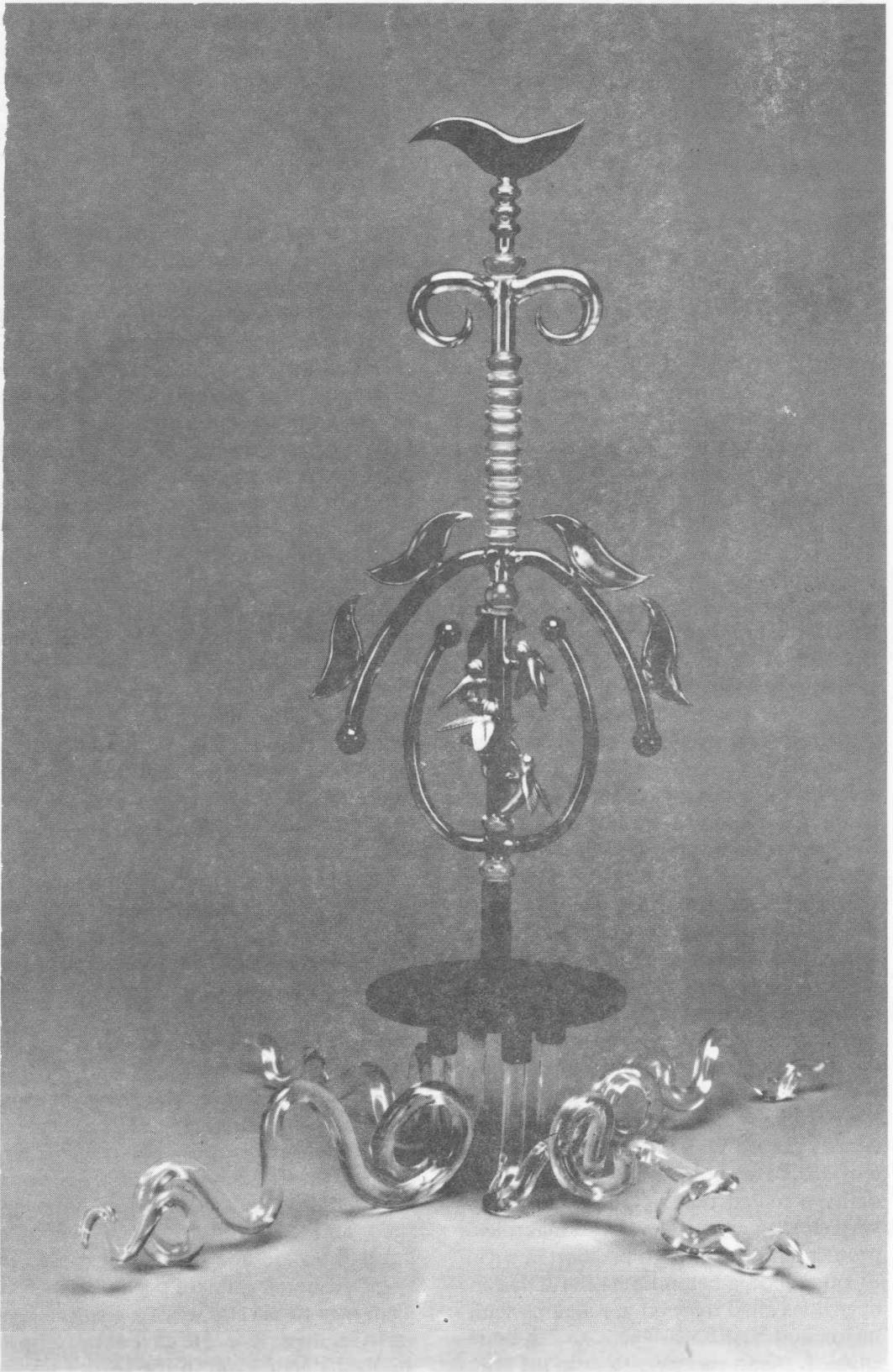
Tapas and *svādhyāya* will bear fruit only if they are fully complemented by *īśvara praṇidhāna*. There is a finality achieved only through the continuous contemplation of the pure being, *īśvara*, as ones own higher self and, for that reason also, ones truer self. Although at the beginning of this section *īśvara praṇidhāna* was given as permissive and not mandatory, when we consider the value of the model presented by *īśvara* we can see how important *īśvara praṇidhāna* is in *kriyā yoga*.

(Continued in next issue.)





Retablo de los Angeles



Arpa de Pajaros II

Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

Kumaran Asan

In addition to his work with the S.N.D.P. Yogam, Kumaran Asan (1873-1924) entered the field of politics as a representative to the Sri Mulam popular Assembly. As the oppressed peoples of Travancore grew in their sense of self-worth, they began to assert their rights and, as they joined together, they created a force which the government could no longer ignore. The government, especially under Maharaja Sri Mulam Thirunal, responded by establishing new schools open to all and by instituting the Popular Assembly (in 1904) and a Legislative Council where the voice of the people could be heard and perhaps have an impact on government policy.⁵⁶ However, as they were first constituted, these bodies had no representatives from a number of large sections of society. Kumaran Asan lobbied extensively for adequate representation and was first chosen to be admitted to the Assembly (in 1905) and later included in the Legislative Council (in 1920). He was an active and vocal member of both bodies, again and again drawing the Government's attention to the discrimination practised by government departments and educational institutions and pleading for the redress of such inequities. He also protested the restrictions on use of roads and temple access and of the repugnant signboards posted which reinforced such exclusions. He spoke gently and was cordially received but the government was very slow to give up its traditional role of protecting those of high position in society, often hiding behind the excuse that the objections cited referred to religious sentiments and traditions which had to be respected. Asan was persistent in his argu-

ments before the Assembly and Council and vociferous in presenting the case in articles and editorials in *Vivekodayam* (Rising Sun), journal of the S.N.D.P. Yogam. His efforts, combined with those of others such as T.K. Madhavan, did create new educational and political opportunities. However, they were primarily directed for the benefit of the Ezhavas. Though he always encouraged government sympathy for and action in favor of other oppressed groups, he primarily represented the Ezhavas in both political bodies and spoke on their behalf.

To his work with the S.N.D.P. Yogam and in the Assembly and Council he brought a vision in which religious, social and political concerns were unified, thus naturally breaking down the barriers which for centuries had supported oppression of the spirit, mind and body. In that he reflected the teaching of Narayana Guru. At the same time, his almost exclusive representation of the cause of the Ezhava community in the political bodies and his participation in the S.N.D.P. Yogam's major affiliation with that community played a significant role in the scenario which resulted in constricting the popular understanding of Narayana Guru and his teachings to a narrow and distorted view.

However, neither the harm nor the good accruing from his social/political action represent his most potent contribution. It is in his poetry that his voice achieved a perennial dimension. Encouraged and cultured by the Guru, and through his aid and blessings exposed to an international realm of poetic expression, Asan rose to the stature of a creative genius in his own right. He gave expression to the ideals actualized in the Guru's life in

beautiful and dynamic poetry. In doing so he revitalized Malayalam literature and issued in a new wave of creative efforts.

The prejudice that pervaded other aspects of society, reserving positions of privilege to those considered to be of high caste, also infected the realm of literature. The moral and ethical corruption of the society was reflected in the "literature" of the time which devoted itself to imitating classical forms and primarily concerned itself with erotic concupiscence. The backdrop for this 18th and 19th century degradation of Malayalam literature was the Sanskrit literary tradition which preserved the highest philosophical works such as the *Bhagavad Gīta*, the *Upaniṣads* and Buddhist teachings, as well as the drama and poetry of such masters as Jayadeva and Kalidasa. Sanskrit literary conventions, which had been highly formalized, greatly affected Malayalam since Malayalam had incorporated the bulk of Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary. Malayalam also was influenced by another ancient but still living Dravidian language, Tamil, richly endowed with a legacy of philosophical and devotional literature. Kumaran Asan was educated in Sanskrit and English with the guidance of the Guru and thus exposed to the ancient traditions as well as modern ones in both English and Indian poetry and philosophy. He was thus well prepared to open the doors wide to usher in a new era of Malayalam literature along with V.C. Balakrishna Paniker, Vallathol Narayana Menon, Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer and others. With the publication of *The Fallen Flower (Veena Povunnu)* in 1907, that era began. In that work, Asan presented a flower, once blooming, now faded and fallen, as a symbol of the frailty and ever-changing nature of all existence. Evidently influenced by English Romantic Poetry, this theme was a unique departure from both Hindu mythology and erotic verse. At the same time, Asan continued to observe Sanskrit meters and revived Dravidian ones.

In *Fallen Flower* Asan beautifully portrays the precious values and glory of life and the sorrow that comes as they inevita-

bly fade, especially in relation to the joys, passions and treachery of love. Then he looks beyond to the possibility of freedom from such cycles of action and entanglement, to a source of peace which can endure:

The bliss of peace is but
the gift of the Word,
Worry is self-torture,
the way of ignorance;
Resign all hope to the sacred Word
And let the will of God be done.

Turn back, my eyes,
this flower will wither fast
And mingle soon with
dry forgotten dust;
Beware! this is the lot of all;
how can tears help?
This earthly life, alas, is but a dream.

57

In his longer narrative poems, *The Meditations of Sita* (1919), *Nalini* (1911), *Leela* (1913), *Durvastha* (1922), *Chandala Bhikshuki* (1922) and *Karuna (Compassion)* (1923), Kumaran Asan's vision reached its full height of expression. They represent a well-orchestrated blend of his aspirations for the active brotherhood of all humanity, the transcendence of passion in the evocation of profound compassion, and release from the world of *samsāra* (misery) through the merging of one's individual self in the Absolute. For Asan these aspirations were exemplified by Narayana Guru as his living teacher and by the Buddha as an ever-glowing lamp of guidance.

In *Durvastha (The Tragic Plight)*, a young Nambudiri Brahmin woman, fleeing from the holocaust of the Moplah Revolution in Malabar, takes refuge in the hut of a Pulaya and ends up proposing that they share their lives.

Nalini recounts the accidental encounter of two childhood friends, Nalini and Divakaran, in the forest. Their conversation reveals that her love for him sent her wandering, grief-stricken, in the forest when he renounced the world. A yogini had saved her from suicide and she is now

living an ascetic life with her. But when she sees Divakaran, she is once again filled with love for him and pleads with him to accept her. He approves of her love but asks her not to waste it on evanescent objects. Filled with the brilliance of spiritual illumination she gives up her life:

The maiden of sweet smiles
Wept, not knowing that she wept.
Her tears fell like rain
from a dying cloud.
Drenched was his bosom
With her streaming tears
But he, firm of heart, felt no thrill.

Then rose from her lips
"OM" the holy word,
the mystic essence of the Vedas
An effulgence like a lightning
Flashed up and faded in the sky.

Tired, she closed her eyes,
Her breath was stilled,
She fell on his shoulder
Like a flag clinging to its mast
When the wind drops.

* * *
"How strange is this!
What can its reason be,
What its meaning?
Who can understand
the ways of *karma*?
The maiden has made my bosom
Her couch of death.

Like a fly
Casting off its body in an oil lamp
She has left her body
On my heart that she loved,
While her soul has reached
The Light absolute. 58

Chandala Bhikshuki (The Outcaste Nun) is based on a Buddhist legend about a Chandala woman who falls in love with Buddha's disciple Ananda and follows him to the Buddha's hermitage. When she comes into the presence of the Buddha she is filled with an overwhelming joy and is guided by him to sublimate her love in a universal compassion:

O lovely lotus bud,
The morning star had wrought
A ruby-splendoured crest
In the dew-drop on your head.
It can never hold its own
In the radiance of this sun.
The pearly drop will vanish soon
And in your heart of hearts
Will founts of nectar spring
And as the daylight spreads
You will bloom into spotless grace. 59

When he admits her into the order of nuns, a protest arises because she is an "out-caste." Buddha's response condemns the social institutions of caste and emphasizes the bliss of spiritual union which goes beyond all such artificial divisions.

Philosophically profound, these poems are also dynamic works of the imagination, presented in exquisitely crafted language. Although Kumaran Asan wrote in Malayalam, his poems are being translated into English. Even though he was responding to the particular configuration of Travancore society in his life-time, these translations convey a timeless beauty and wisdom.

Parampara: Nataraja Guru

When their second son was born to Dr. Palpu and his wife in 1895, they dedicated him to Narayana Guru. The Guru named him Nataraja. In his autobiography, Nataraja Guru speaks of his childhood encounters with Narayana Guru as having the wonder of finding a wild deer in your own living room or suddenly seeing the Himalayas out your window. The Guru guided even the early educational experiences of young Natarajan with questions so penetrating and far-reaching that they could be answered only with the intensity of study and life-long dedication which they called forth from Nataraja Guru. In the preface to his *Integrated Science of the Absolute*, Nataraja Guru describes one such incident:

When I was still a teenager more than 55 years ago, preparing to pass the high school ex-

Nataraja Guru in Geneva -1929



amination which included some elementary science lessons, there was an elderly guest who was staying in my father's house. He looked like a simple Indian villager without even a shirt on, yet he also seemed to command great respect from my father who was an England trained medical officer working under the government of Mysore in Bangalore, South India.

This enigmatic person one day decided to ask me a question. He prefaced the question with the following description of a mischievous spirit or imp known to the villagers of what was then Travancore State (South India) as a kutti-cathan. (The word cathan may perhaps be derived from the word "shasta" which is one of the names for the Buddha, while kutti means small.) Such a spirit is not unknown in

the West. He goes under the name of Puck in Shakespeare, and the well known poltergeist is connected with him. I was then told by this old gentleman:

"Stones will fall from the roof; you can pick them up or put them under the coconut tree in your garden. They will remain there for any length of time. If you search for any stones of the kind missing in the surrounding area you will not find any. The falling stones can land near persons to frighten them."

After thus giving me a full account of the kutti-cathan I was asked the following question:

"Have you any such thing in your science?"

This question from a simple man of an

earlier generation left a strange and deep impression on me. The science I was taught at school limited itself to questions like how a candle is burned, etc. The decades that followed have changed a simple character of science into what is now a vast body of knowledge ever encroaching into the domains of religion and philosophy. The answer which I could not give when I was a schoolboy, I feel I am more prepared to attempt now. It had never lost the poignancy and significant potency that it suggested to my mind at the time it was asked. 60

Natarajan went on to graduate in Geology and teaching and earned a Master's degree in Zoology at Madras University. Throughout those years he spent whatever time was possible with Narayana Guru and his education in both Western and Eastern disciplines was guided by the Guru. When he finished his Master's degree, Narayana Guru welcomed him to join him as a member of the ashram which had grown up at Sivagiri. He taught English at the Advaita Ashrama in Alway and returned to Sivagiri as Headmaster of the school there. Through his *Autobiography of an Absolutist* (Gurukula Publishing House, 1989) and *The Word of the Guru* (East-West University, 1990), we are given precious glimpses into the dynamics of the guru-disciple relationship specifically as the bipolarity between Narayana Guru and Thampi (as he affectionately called Natarajan) and generally as the time-honored mode of passing on true wisdom.

Disappointed in the S.N.D.P. Yogam's narrow affiliation to the Ezhava cause, Natarajan wished to found Narayana Gurukula in the tradition of the ancient forest hermitages where students came to live with, serve and learn from the Guru. It was founded in 1923 with Narayana Guru's blessings. But Narayana Guru asked Thampi, "Do you see anyone in Travancore who can transcend caste?" Natarajan answered, "No." Then Narayana Guru said, "So you should go away from Travancore to start the Gurukula." Later, during his travels in the Nilgiris mountains of Tamilnadu (then Madras State) in 1926 he

glanced up at a beautiful hillside and said to his followers, "That is a good place for Thampi's Gurukula." And it was there, at Fernhill, near Ootacamund, that Nataraja Guru came to found the first Gurukula some years later.

Before that, Narayana Guru wished him to complete his education and personally financed his studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. There the Guru's ideas found new application in Natarajan's thesis for his doctorate in educational psychology, "The Place of the Personal Factor in the Educative Process."

Dr. Natarajan went on to teach physics at the International School of Fellowship in Geneva where he was much loved by students and faculty alike. In honor of the Guru's 73rd birthday, he organized a gathering of friends of different nations and religions in Geneva in September of 1928. He also wrote a series of articles called *The Way of the Guru* to be published by *The Sufi Quarterly* of Geneva. Thus, for the first time the Guru's Word came to be heard in the West. 61

The potent effect of that Word registered immediately and was noted by such writers and scholars as Somerset Maugham, Sir Francis Younghusband and Romain Rolland, who wrote:

Such was the religion of the great Guru Shri Narayana, whose beneficent spiritual activity was exercised for more than forty years in the State of Travancore over some million faithful souls (he has just died in 1928). His doctrine was impregnated with the monist metaphysics of Shankara, but tended to practical action showing very marked differences from Bengal mysticism; whose Bhakti effusions filled him with mistrust. He preached, if one may say so, a Jnana of action, a great intellectual religion, having a very lively sense of the people and their social needs. It has greatly contributed to the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Southern India and its activities have in a measure been allied to those of Gandhi." 62

The gathering of earnest souls, seeking to enhance the good of all and the common good through study and application

of the Guru's life and philosophy, and the profound contemplative study of the Guru's life and texts characterized the rest of Nataraja Guru's wholly dedicated life. He went on to establish not only the Narayana Gurukula at Fernhill, but also a dozen more Gurukulas in South India in addition to centers in Singapore, Belgium and the United States. Although the setting up and maintaining of the Gurukulas required great sacrifices and full-time labor, Nataraja Guru continued a life-long program of study, translation, commentary, and teaching. The final section of his *The Word of the Guru* includes the translation and commentary of seven of Narayana Guru's compositions. In 1969, after many years of intense meditation on *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, he published a translation and commentary, not being satisfied with his earlier translations of lesser philosophical maturity. His translation and commentary of the *Bhagavad Gīta* woke the world of Gīta scholarship from a centuries-old slumber with its originality and profound scholarship.

Nataraja Guru came to be recognized as a guru in his own right, emerging from the alchemy of the Guru-disciple relationship as a potent continuator of the guru principle which Narayana Guru represented. It was not until after his death in 1973 that publication was begun of his magnum opus, *An Integrated Science of the Absolute* (Volume I, 1977, Volume II, 1979, Volume III, 1982). Based on Narayana Guru's *Darśana Mālā* (Garland of Visions), this work represents over forty years of work dedicated to the development of a scientific approach which can link the most modern of scientific and philosophical thought with the time honored contemplative traditions of both Eastern and Western disciplines in a series of holistic visions. In the context of the application of one's entire life those visions can culminate as they did for Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru, in the merging of one's being in the all-filling peace of *nirvana*, the highest goal of human life. Also in 1977, *An Anthology of the Poems of Narayana Guru* was published, presenting English translations by Nataraja Guru



Nataraja Guru - 1966

of nineteen of Narayana Guru's compositions.

The work of translating and commenting, as well as that of administering the Gurukulas, is being carried on by another living representative of the eternal guru principle, Nataraja Guru's foremost disciple and successor, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati, who has also written profound commentaries on *Darśana Mālā*, *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, and *The Bhagavad Gīta*. He has also published numerous books of poetry, philosophy and psychology in both Malayalam and English.

(Continued in next issue.)

NOTES

56. T.K. Ravindran, *Asan and Social Revolution*, Kerala Historical Society, 1972, p. 73.
57. *Selected Poems of Kumaran Asan*, trans. G. Kumara Pillai, University of Kerala, 1975, p. 7.
58. *Ibid.*, trans. B. Hṛdayakumari, p. 89-90.
59. *Ibid.*, trans. G. Kumara Pillai, p. 19.
60. Nataraja Guru, *An Integrated Science of the Absolute*, East-West University of Brahmavidya, 1977, p. xi.
61. Nataraja Guru, *Life and Teachings of Narayana Guru*, East-West University, Fernhill, 1990, p. xv.
62. Romain Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, Librairie Stock, Paris, 1930, p. 160.

The Allegories and Symbolism in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Kosala, Ayodhya and Manu

The country given as the geographical location where the story of Rāma took place was Kosala. The capital of Kosala was Ayodhya. Ayodhya has two opposite references. One is a place where conflict or war never occurs. The other is a place always full of the turmoil of disturbing conflicts. Thus it makes a perfect yin-yang combination which is very symbolic or representative of *samsāra*. *Samsāra* is the life on earth in which pain and pleasure, attraction and repulsion, love and hate, virtues and vices are the dual functions of the phenomenal world. Thus Ayodhya is an appropriate place to present the story of Śri Rāma.

The origin of the royal family of Daśaratha, the father of Rāma, can be traced from Lord Viṣṇu to Vivasvan to Vaivasvatu Manu. The dynasty is known as Surya Vamsa, one of the two main dynasties of India. The other is Candra Vamsa. *Surya* is the sun and *candra* is the moon.

Psychologically, *surya* stands for our reasoning power (*buddhi*) and *candra* represents the mind which is the home of all subjective imagery. *Buddhi* being our precise intellectual faculty, what we expect from the dynasty of the sun is the streaming forth of wisdom which is mainly of a rational kind.

This view is supported by the bringing in of Vivasvan which is another name for the sun. The sun represents the day. In the daytime, human beings are in their wakeful state. Then we are said to be in the *jāgrat*, wakeful consciousness. In the *jāgrat*, all embodied beings are presented

with specific illuminations of the forms of people and things with specific body images. In the light of day, with our wakeful consciousness, we distinguish one person from another and one thing from another. In such a field of consciousness, transaction between people is inevitable. Where there is transaction, normative notions of good behavior are expected. Good behavior implies lawful action. Law is determined in terms of criteria of imperative values. Manu, the son of Visvasvan, is credited with the founding of the eternal law (*sanātana dharma*) for all humanity. At least for five thousand years, the law of Manu was lived and respected in India as the infallible norm of good behavior. Ayodhya is said to have been founded by Manu. Hence it is only appropriate that a living model of a virtuous life was presented in the person of Śri Rāma as the king of Ayodhya and therefore of Kosala and Bharatavarṣa.

In India, interpersonal and intrapersonal behavior of universal accord is generally called *mariyada*, good conduct. *Mariyada* has two aspects. One is its acceptance of the truthful foundation of life on universal goodness. The other aspect is the diplomatic expression of sweet reasonableness. However, there has to be a lurking paradox in the very heart of goodness or truth. Hence, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, truth is said to have on one side the existential basis of the real and on the other the practicality of the actual. They are represented by the alphabet characters *sa* and *yam*. In between them comes *ta* which stands for the mysterious falsehood. Thus, the very word *satyam* in-

dicates that in the world of our daily life there cannot be absolute truth.

Between the noumenal and the phenomenal we are again and again confronted by the paradox of opposites. In the very lineage of Manu comes Śrī Rāma who is at once god and man. Śrī Rāma was to present to posterity several ideals which are even today considered very precious by humanity. He upheld the model of loving only one wife. Another great example he gave to the world was his reverence for democracy and listening to the lone voice of the humblest and poorest of the society. Another of his ideals was not to destroy but only to transform the demonic into the divine. He also upheld the ideal of being the best possible friend. Another ideal which he cherished was the solidarity of fraternity. In spite of all these examples, for which he is honored and revered, for each of these, he brought upon himself very painful tortures. He believed in self-discipline and in the disciplining of others. He was a promoter of all virtues that are said to ensue from the nature modality of sattva. He lived as *śudha sattva* and tried to inculcate that value in his brothers and even his enemies.

Aśvamedha Yaga and Putrakameṣṭhi

Daśaratha, the king of Ayodhya (Kosala) had a great grief. Even though he had three wives, no child had been born to him. Man's fulfillment on earth comes only with the continuation of his good work taken up by his progeny. Daśaratha was the king of an illustrious dynasty and the thought of that lineage truncating with him was unbearable for him. So he called his spiritual preceptors, Vaśiṣṭha and Vamadeva and several other saints, with the intention of procuring from them blessings and guidance for conducting a horse sacrifice, *aśvamedha*. *Aśva* represents the deep psychological urge to go into action. The ten fingers of our two hands are like ten horses, each wanting to go into action. The two hands, the two feet, the organ of speech, the genitals and the excretory organs are always looking for the least sign

from the five organs of perception to program one action or another. Every act is to be rated as *kusala* (good) or *akusala* (non-meritorious). An act becomes meritorious when it promotes the good of all. When an action is self-centered and brings only the conceited pleasure of a person, it is non-meritorious. Meritorious action is *punya* and non-meritorious action is *papa*.

When a person is assigned the highest of responsibility and he or she is handicapped from performing it, then it is suspected that the dark shadow of some sinful act of the past is intervening in such a person's path of action. Daśaratha, being a man of great prowess, indefatigable courage and immense physical strength, he was engaged in several actions in his youth about which he had no occasion to discriminate whether or not they were meritorious. When he was assailed with the sorrow of having no children he suspected that he had a sinful past. A remedy suggested by the ritualistic section of the Vedas for absolving ones sinful acts was to perform a horse sacrifice in which the horse symbolizes ones own action potential. Even outside India, the power to act is measured in terms of horsepower.

In the ritualistic aspect of the horse sacrifice, a horse is sent into the world without a rider, free to wander according to its caprice. The horse symbolizes the ego of the man who wants to correct his behavioral past. The horse can go into any country and provoke bloody conflicts with any person who captures it. War is an act of sacrifice and purification for a *kṣatriya*. If the horse passes through a country without being challenged, that means the king of that country becomes a friend or supporter.

One act of Daśaratha's had been really sinful. As it was too painful for him even to recall, it had been pushed deep into his unconscious where it became an inhibitory force which probably prevented him from having children. In his youthful days, he had been walking on the shores of the Sarayu River on a dark night. Then he heard a sound which he interpreted as an elephant drinking water. He wanted to con-



vince himself of his prowess to send an arrow to his target guided only by sound. So he sent an arrow into the dark jungle. It was responded to by the loud shriek of a dying man. Daśārtha rushed to the spot and found his arrow had struck into the heart of a young hermit who had come to the river to fetch water for his blind and old parents. For Daśārtha, there had been no need for him to shoot the arrow except for the fulfillment of his vanity. He killed a young man in the pious act of fetching water for his invalid parents. When Daśārtha took the dead body of the young

man to the old ascetics, the bereaved father cursed him also to die without having his sons around. Psychologically, the very idea of a son must have become a deep concern for him. Hence, he had a sexual block against producing a progeny. As the incident had been pushed beyond the threshold of the unconscious, Daśārtha was not aware of his sin, but when he suggested a horse sacrifice for the expiation of his unknown sins, the rishis readily agreed to it.

The young ascetic who had been killed by Daśārtha was Śravaṇa. It is significant

that the first discipline in spiritual pursuit is also called *śravana*. *Śravana* who filled his pot with the water of Sarayu was heard by Daśaratha. That act was also *śravana*. Daśaratha aimed at that sound and muffled the voice of Śravana. That was as good as committing the great sin of denying *śravana*. Thus there are a number of implications connected with that incident.

The sacrifice was to be done by the most sinless among the seers. The choice was R̥ṣyaśṛṅga, the son of Vibhāndaka. R̥ṣyaśṛṅga was born of an innocent female mendicant. Although he was from the seed of Vibhāndaka, he had the innocent mind of a deer. Until he became an adult, he never heard the voice of anyone except the saintly teachings of his father. It was this innocent saint who was to perform the *yaga*. When he was invited to the court of Daśaratha and a sacrificial hall was erected, R̥ṣyaśṛṅga pondered on it and discovered that he could not perform a *yaga* from *Yajur Veda* supported by *R̥g* and *Sāma*, but he remembered a special *yaga* supported by *Atharva Veda*. All the main wisdom *Upaniṣads* belong to *Atharva Veda* which is separate from the three honored *Vedas* of the Aryans. The stress in the *Upaniṣads* belonging to the *Atharva Veda* is on sacrifice, renunciation, and *sam̐yasa*. *Sam̐yasa* is suggestive of giving up action and turning to the wisdom of Self-realization. As one goes further in the text of the *Rāmāyana*, one will see the special importance of R̥ṣyaśṛṅga turning to the *Atharva Veda* and suggesting the performance of *putrakameṣṭhi*, desiring for progeny of best virtues. This brings us to one of the great topics presented in the epic of *Rāmāyana*, the incarnation of Viṣṇu. The complementary aspect of the same theory can be seen in the *Māhābhārata* as the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.

The Theory of *Avatāra*

Religions can mainly be divided into two, hierophantic religions and hypostatic religions. Human beings live as part of nature and, as such, always have interaction with their environment. Man tries to un-

derstand everything as an extension of himself. He is impressed with his own reality as a structural being. He watches his own body structure and understands the function of every limb of it. Apart from the physical body and its structure, he also understands the animation of his being coming from a hidden source. When he sees the rest of the world functioning, he identifies it as a number of animated beings all having a directing principle of the same order as that which individuates him and makes him function. He contrasts the visible body with the invisible spirit that animates it. Just as he interacts and communicates with his domestic animals and pets, he relies on a mysterious understanding he has with even the machinery he uses. Thus he has the idea of a collective spirit of which his spirit is a luminous part.

As all sentient beings are looked upon as part of a whole, man everywhere has a built-in religion which is basically born of his fear, admiration, trust and habitual expectations. This religion is both of the here and now as well as being considered as a natural manifestation (*svayambhu*). In that natural set-up, there are entities that generate great awe and fear such as the ocean, the mountain, torrential rain, lightning accompanied by thunder claps, crops growing in abundance, the periodical arrival of the Spring season, hot sun in which everything dries up. All these phenomena make people adore nature and also fear it.

In this very natural growth of reverence, two main symbolizations came. One was connected with the mountain. Even in our own days, if we go to the Himalaya regions, the Alps or the Rockies and look at mountain peaks and glaciers, we are struck with a sense of wonder. The immaculate beauty of a mountain peak can stir in us a state of spiritual ecstasy. Indians personified the mountain and its spirit is looked upon as seated like a yogi in the heights of the Kailasa. As the mountains are very peaceful, serene and silent, the mountain deity was named Śiva. Anthropomorphism that sees human form in everything is part of human nature. It was most natural for the personified daughter

of the mountain, Parvati, to be selected as an appropriate consort for the mountain spirit (*parvata* = mountain). People like to move about so for their god the devotees gave a vehicle, the mountain bull, Nandi. In nature we find the polarization of two opposites. Hence, Śiva, the peaceful serenity of being, is polarized with the powerful manifestation of becoming. Parvati is thus identified with Śakti. To suit her indomitable courage and strength, the lion is made her vehicle.

The river Ganges evolves from the melting snow peak of the Himalayas. Hence, Ganga is personified as a female sitting in the matted hair of Śiva. For his ornaments he is given snakes of exquisite charm. The most beautiful sight in the Himalayas is seeing the moon crowning the snowy peak. Hence, the crescent moon is placed on the matted hair of Śiva. Śiva being a primordial man of the forest, he is clad in the skin of an elephant or a tiger. This is how the image of a mountain god arose in the collective unconscious of the Indian people and has become an archetypal model for postulating godhead. As Śiva is mainly looked upon as a sign, a mark, a linga, a language created by falling snow, he is described as the self-born, *svayambhu*.

India has at its North the snowy mountains, Hima. Its southern stretch is surrounded by oceans, Dakṣiṇa Udhati (*dakṣiṇa* - southern + *udhati* - ocean). Putting together the northern and southern boundaries (*hin* + *dha* + *u*), the country is called Hindu, the land of the Hima and Dakṣiṇa Udhati. Thus the name Hindu is not a religious appellation but a geographic nomenclature. Both the eastern and western shores of India are away from mountains and India has a seashore running into several thousand miles on both sides. What is most impressive to the people by the sea is the sun rising from the ocean in the East and setting in the ocean in the West. Morning and evening are a feast for their eyes. Therefore, their first veneration was given to the dawn, Uṣas, followed by their veneration for dusk, Sandhya. As morning and evening mark

the conjunction of the day and the night, they gave the name Sandhya both to the morning and the evening - Uṣa Sandhya and Sayam Sandhya. The first beam of the sun and the last ray of the sun are of the magenta color. In magenta the two extreme aspects of the spectrum, red and violet, mingle. That color is looked upon with veneration and called Aruna. Thus the chariot of the sun is said to be driven by Aruna, the magenta-colored divinity.

Relating the sun with the ocean brought the idea of the Supreme Lord having his abode in the ocean. As he is said to be dwelling in the water (*naram*), he is called Nārāyana. If the godhead is of the ocean, his consort should come from the beauty of the water plant, lotus. She is named Lakṣmi. A water snake is conceived as a couch for him to recline on in the water. If the Lord is omnipresent, the snake must be also, so both their names, Viṣṇu and Vasuki, imply omnipresence.

So from the mountain and from the ocean two formidable archetypes of god were derived. Although these ideas were natural and hierophantic, new cultural contacts and migrations brought established forms of religion to the shores of India as India became a great attraction for the rest of the world, both East and West. The new religions were mainly prophetic and hypostatic in character. They thought of God as a deified or eulogized principle which is held high. The three main hypostatic religions which came to India, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all came from the Middle East. When Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism interacted with prophetic religions, Vaiṣṇavism became very much aligned to the mode of hypostatic religion.

God was separated from the mind and life of man on earth. Thus Viṣṇu is looked upon as the only God, the most high, who is maintaining the integrity of the world through his overlordship. Hence it is believed that whenever there is a decline of righteousness on earth he will descend from his celestial regions as an *avatar*. The word *avatar* means descending. In the Semitic religions also, God is in the most high. He sends his messengers and proph-

ets to the world to correct the degeneration of righteousness. This idea became a special feature of Vaiṣṇavism. Hence it is believed that Viṣṇu incarnates. To incarnate means to become flesh and blood. When God incarnates, the hypostatic principle of divinity becomes flesh. Three kinds of *avatāra*-s are postulated: *amsa* - part; *aveśa* - infusion; and *avatāra* - direct descendents. In *Rāmāyana* we come across Rāma, Bhārata, Lakṣmana and Satrugna who are said to be the partial manifestation of Viṣṇu, hence, *amsāvatāra*.

When a special being is infused with the function of divinity, that is called *aveśa*. The direct intervention *avatāra* is said to be, in principle, manifesting on all three occasions. The *avatāra*-s of Viṣṇu are the fish, the turtle, the boar, the dwarf Vama-na, the man-lion Narasimha, Paraśurāma, Śri Rāma, Balabhadra, Śri Kṛṣṇa and Kalki. These concepts are very much like Darwin's postulation of biologic evolution. Life coming in the water in the form of

protoplasm which is magnified as the fish incarnation, then the amphibian turtle, then the brute boar, the mowgli- the unrefined man, then the man who believes in his physical might, the sophisticated man of ethics, the cultivator, the full man and the being who is turning into devolution, who destroys everything evolved in the cycle.

This *avatāra* theory was later discarded by the Vedantins and their main text, the *Bhagavad Gīta*. Instead of a hypostatic God, an all-embracing spirit is presented in the *Upaniṣads*, especially in the *Bṛhadāranyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, the *via negativa* is accepted (*niṣprapancavada*) in which the philosopher argues *neti, neti*, not this, not this. On the other hand, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, everything is affirmed as the eternal being: this is and this is - *tat tvam asi*, "that you are." Such is the philosophical background of the conclusive teaching of Vedanta. ❖



To A Far-Away Friend

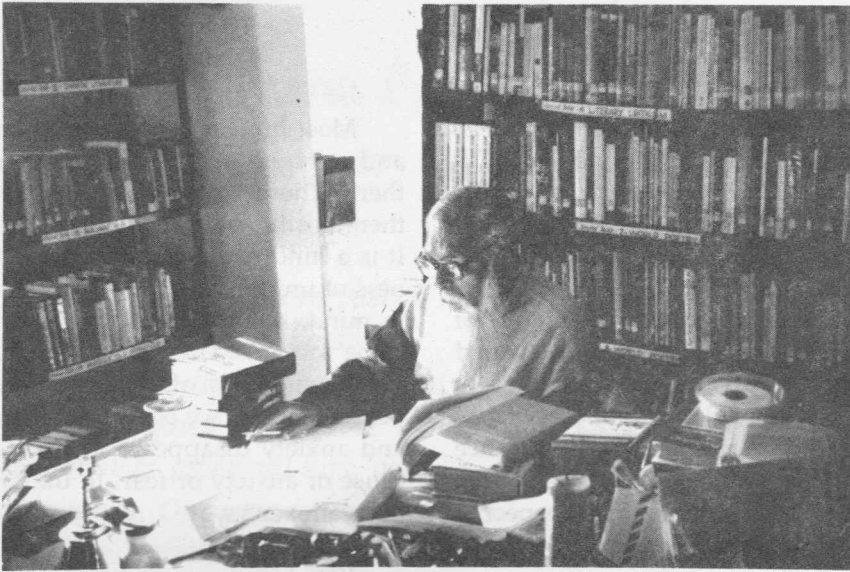
*Night after night
I come to my study
With dreams that sit
cozy in my eyes.
I open the window
and let the Day in.
Little birdy sings a song
and chrysanthemums whisper
"Good morning"*

*God, in his infinite love
presents me with a sun
each morning.
Lovelier than a golden disc,
my solar angel sits with me
all day long.*

*Caressing my mind he lends
his colour to dye my thoughts.
With nimble fingers
I knit colourful tapestries
that are hung around to display
the rainbow of my soul.*

*Days are short,
nights are fleeting.
When my candle extinguishes,
there will soon be another.
Such is the bounty
and the joy of God.
He never leaves his work
barren and frozen.*

Guru Nitya



*I wish the strokes of my pen
could change into flowers,
crawl into your soul
and become mulberry moths
to nestle in the warmth
of you loving care.*

*Where words slip into
unreasoned silence,
they freeze into translucent pearls
and dream of re-visiting the world
as crazy butterflies
that flutter in the arbour
of a poets imagination.*

Prapanca-śuddhi Daśakam and Tirukural

Omana Powran

Editor's Note: Tiruvalluvar was a seer of South India who lived around 500 B.C. - 500 A.D. His *Tirukural*, written originally in Tamil, has long been one of the most beloved and widely read books of South India. Of him, Nataraja Guru wrote: "The key to the time-honoured spirituality of South India is to be sought in the Sacred *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar. The ancient sage, mystic, moral and spiritual philosopher, as well as gifted genius in poetry, at once shrewdly poky and also dialectically true to the Word, commanded great respect at the hands of Guru Narayana."

In his *Ten Verses on Phenomenal Clarification (Prapanca-Śuddhi-Daśakam)* Narayana Guru reveals the experiences of all-filled celestial glory of indescribable splendor that throws light on the one reality which is at the core of everything. Restraining ourselves from the temptations of an attractive world and its misguiding threats, we should turn to the true identity of the Self and it will lead to a clear vision of unitive understanding. Here Narayana Guru also speaks of the experiences of one's own unity with the Supreme Self, getting free from the intricacies of interests in the trivialities of the sensory world. In this discourse, Guru describes different stages of contemplation. It starts from vague fear and anxiety and may soar high to final salvation:

*The gang of fears that running come
On seeing light shall quickly sneak away,
Even like the lowering dark that came
Becomes once again,
open light's honey-water.*

(Verses of *Prapanca-śuddhi Daśakam* have been translated by Nataraja Guru.)

Most human beings are discontented and a vague fear and anxiety dominate them. These worries and anxieties make them hostile, unconcerned and irreverent. It is a hindrance to experiencing blessedness of unitive comprehension. Frustrated in mind, 'the gang of fears that running come' are considered as danger. But after a careful analysis of the situation with a peaceful mind, we come to the true things and anxiety disappears. Ignorance is the cause of anxiety or fear. In the *Tirukkural* Tiruvalluvar says

*With keener anguish foolish men
their own hearts wring
Than aught that even malice
of their foes can bring.*

The dark shadow of anxiety and fear should be uprooted and in that place gentle breezes of peace and happiness should flourish. Then only can we seek the eternal light, which is the basis of life, and kindle the light of divine wisdom. Those seekers of light and noble characters and, in the words of Tiruvalluvar,

*The man endowed with greatness true,
Rare deeds in perfect wise will do.*

It is truly pathetic and dreadful to see life as a dark shadow. In this context Tiruvalluvar says,

*To him who knows not how
to smile in kindly mirth,
Darkness in daytime broods
o'er all the vast and mighty earth.*

Forgetting the true identity of the Self, there are many who allow their mind to confine itself to a life with fleeting mo-

ments of joy. They lose the capacity to understand the light which shines within us. Those who gain the capacity to get out of this lamentable fate will turn away from the several entanglements in the world to the changeless unity of the transcendent Being. In the *Kural* it is said,

*Who thoroughly rids his life
of passion-prompted deed,
Deeds of unfolding worth shall do,
which, as he plans, succeed.*

Narayana Guru continues:

*Water, fire and such, within as without
Filling, what radiant shines, its falsehood
Once out, certitude comes inside
Like holding in the palm
a gooseberry fruit.*

The above verse presents a statement that is seemingly contradictory. Here the basic or ultimate constituents and conceptual entities are taken together. When the mind is engaged in activities, its performance is through the five organs of perception. All the five sense organs and mind always try to establish a relationship with the external world. In our experience with the external world, we can see the presence of an inner sense of value and closely connected with this value an outer world. This inner value and outer space are related to one and the same parameter. Those who come to this unitive thinking realize certainty or truth, "like holding in the palm a goose-berry fruit." Tiruvalluvar sees the truth in the following manner.

*Every lamp is not a lamp
in wise men's sight,
That's the lamp with truth's
pure radiance bright.*

Unfortunately, most human beings cannot enjoy the sweet fragrance of inner awareness. Like the waves deposit fresh foam upon the sand as new bubbles, burst and disappear, human minds may go from one fantasy to another. We realize our folly only after we experience the entanglements

in the world. In this connection Tiruvalluvar expresses his view as:

*Who cling to things that cling
and eager clasp,
Griefs cling to them
with unreleasing grasp.*

Each individual item of interest and mind's unnecessary fuss and fume to actualize these interests are only phenomenal. If one is capable to search beyond all these fantasies, he can attain that highest truth. Here Tiruvalluvar correctly puts it,

*Whatever thing, of whatever kind it be,
'Tis wisdom's part in each
the very thing to see.*

Narayana Guru's third verse is:

*Fruit from one such, verily it is
We see this golden glory
spreading all round
As before the dawning
of the lustrous moon
We see the tender
moonbeam-radiant space.*

The basic truth of life itself contains a contradiction. In every turning point of our life, we may experience this contradiction. All living beings continue their physical growth-to approach death. In the *Kural* it is observed,

*As 'day' it vaunts itself;
well understood, tis knife,
That daily cuts away a portion
from thy life.*

When moon beams radiate gentle light and when fall on the dew drops, they spread the splendor of the silver moon. At that moment, we know that there is the presence of moon behind. When an Awakened One is glowing with her/his splendor of knowledge, that height of sublimity will give a honey-sucking experience to the surrounding living beings. It will remove all sense of fear and misery as Tiruvalluvar says,

*Wisdom embraces frank the world
To no caprice exposed.*

Narayana Guru's fourth verse:

*Space, when such before my vision comes
Gulping all within it; as pure space
Uniting with the sky and all the five
Such sport it is that makes
the divine-dance.*

Sky is one among the five elements. Unlike the other elements, sky envelops everything. Whatever is here manifested enters the mysterious depth of consciousness, and all living beings experience this world of phenomena as a grand drama. These types of wonderful experiences are there in case of other senses also. Here Tiruvalluvar has pointed out,

*Taste, light, touch, sound, and smell:
who knows the way
Of all the five, The world
submissive owns his sway.¹*

In order to perceive the items of the tangible world outside, those objects should become a part of our knowledge. The Self is pure knowledge. One's personal knowledge is based on memories of pain and pleasure in the past. Coloring the mind with this past experience and memories, see this variegated world of multitudinous things. Because of these, one's personal knowledge is super-imposed knowledge. The true basis of this super imposed knowledge is here referred as "Pure Space." When Narayana Guru describes the divine dance as such a sport uniting with the sky and all the five, Tiruvalluvar says,

*Long live they blest, who've stood
in path from falsehood freed;
His, who quenched lusts that from
the sense-gates five proceed.*

In Narayana Guru's fifth verse, we see the middle state of the Absolute Self which is the harmonized blending of relativistic

world of phenomenality and its Absolute counterpart. The light of wisdom radiates joy, peace and happiness. The removal of the veil of darkness will eradicate nescience and fabricated snares. When the eye of wisdom is opened, we see that God is shining as this universe. It will be an experience of unbroken bliss of beatitude:

*Dance when such appears from here,
To a middle state one attains,
Once established in such a middle state
There is here for him
enduring days of happiness.*

The single scale of gradation to measure all value appreciation is *ānanda* which is also the Supreme Self. Attainment of the middle state is the same as that of going beyond all limitations, such as time and space, cause and effect. In spite of all the dramatic and momentary changes in the transactional world, we can also experience the serene unchanging light of the eternal truth. All such experiences, starting from sensory agitations and vague fears reaching to a state of pure ecstasy, are beautiful visions. According to Tiruvalluvar this sensory perception is desire:

*When dies away desire, that woe of woes,
Ev'n here the soul
unceasing rapture knows.*

Those who see the phenomenal existence and transcendent Absolute operate like the two sides of the same coin, wiping away all dark memories and bringing peace and happiness. In the *Kural* Tiruvalluvar expresses his view as,

*The true 'support' who knows-rejects
supports he sought before-
Sorrow that clings and all destroys s
hall cling to him no more.*

In Narayana Guru's sixth verse the seer is immersed in pure ecstasy resulting from the purification of the impurities caused by the world of phenomena.

Happiness indeed is all this here

*Which remembering
ever more beauty fills;
Mark, for the denizens
of the earth hereunder
From within this makes a projected cage.*

The Absolute Self and the power that gives liveliness to this world are the same. Here Tiruvalluvar also points out, "The 'Primal Deity' is first through all the world's domains." The phenomenality is experienced as a super-imposition on the Absolute reality. As Tiruvalluvar says,

*Of things devoid of truth
as real things men deem;
Cause of degraded birth
the fond delusive dream.*

In order to see the divine dance in each flower, flower bud and honey-fruit, simply open the eyes. For a seer who knows the intimate inner truth, in the peace of his heart he recognizes the all embracing Absolute shining. In his life journey, he sees every grain of sand as a pearl. To that blessed one the world becomes a flood of delight. In this connection, it is pointed out in *Kural*,

*The destitute might
with ascetics merit share,
If fate to visit with pre-destined ills
would spare.*

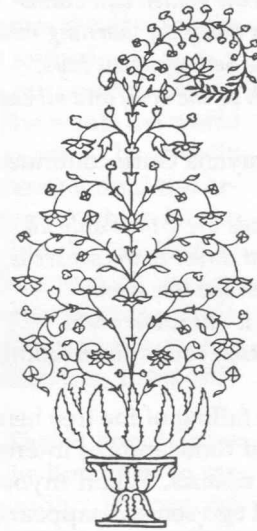
Narayana Guru's seventh verse:

*Cage, such as the body and all else
Like cotton by Wisdom's fire
Or mist particles by sweet sunbeams,
Ever in danger(of effacement) stands.*

The body is the cage where the Self is supposed to be confined. Tiruvalluvar considers this body and soul as,

*The soul in fragile shed
as lodger can't repose
Is it because no home's
conclusive rest it knows?*

When cotton catches fire, it disap-



pears. Morning mist disappears when the rising sun radiates its golden rays. When pure happiness of Self spreads its fragrance in the firmament of consciousness, the pleasure-seeking senses turn inward and close the outward looking doors of senses. In the *Kural* it is pointed out,

*Perception of the five must all expire,
Relinquished in its order each desire.*

When the respondent sun of the inner consciousness spreads its light, the pictures shown by the external sun will be less attractive and colorless. In the *Kural* it is described as:

*His feet, 'who o'er
the full blown flower hath past,' who gain
In bliss long time
shall dwell above this earthly plain.*

In the experience of eternal reality, the transactional appendages disappear and the joyful experiences of a sensualist will be a great punishment to a yogi. About this yogi and sensualist, Tiruvalluvar says,

*Who thoroughly renounce
on highest height are set:
The rest, bewildered,
lie entangled in the net.*

*Like the golden sun beams
wipe away the morning mist, i
n the Self-effulgent rays,
Such as the body and all else will vanish.*

Narayana Guru continues:

*Stands there then only all other than
What direct to the senses is given,
When the tree trunk
that is cut underneath
Of itself comes down falling.*

The falling of the tree here refers to the falling of thousands of interests lying hidden as *vāsanās*. When myopia caused by polluted ego sense disappears, enlightened vision of universal oneness and goodness should prevail and the vital urges weaken. Here Tiruvalluvar observes,

*When folly, cause of births, departs;
and soul can view
The length of things, man's dignity-
it's wisdom true.*

If such an absolutist vision happens, only such values as hope, freedom or supreme happiness continue their existence. Attracted by the joy and wonder of the true light of one Self, if one enters the portals of the Self, that blessed person knows that *ānanda* is his very nature and there is nothing to seek outside. In the *Kural* it is described as,

*Desires decrease as purity men know;
That too, from yearning search
for truth will grow.*

Narayana Guru's ninth verse:

*Falling, all here vainly spreads
As pure radiant space alone
Into such ocean's immensity,
it is not he
Who falls, such is pure Aloneness.*

Discriminating the Self from the non-Self, experiencing the aloneness and luminosity of the Self is liberation (*mokṣa*). It is also called pure aloneness (*kaivalya*). The

Supreme Light of the truth is here referred as 'oceans immensity'. Uprooted aggregates of interests and personal ego fall into this ocean of immensity. Tiruvalluvar says,

*When that which clings falls off,
severed is being's tie,
All else will then be seen as instability.*

About this personal ego, Tiruvalluvar observes,

*Who kills conceit that utters I and mine,
Shall enter realms
above the powers divine.*

Even if I-ness and this-ness are burned out, the pure light of the Self radiates its light. According to Tiruvalluvar,

*When doubts disperse,
and mists of error roll
Away, nearer is heav'n than earth
to sage's soul.*

Narayana Guru concludes:

*Aloneness, when its ocean as a whole
Clarity gains, such is one way;
Even from the day vitality ceased
Dross banished, was then
the path Supreme.*

In its long journey, life attains its perfection and that state of perfection is glorified as *kaivalya*. Like an ocean absolutely placid, or like the ocean without waves in its surface and depth, individual life is immersed in Absolute reality. With that merging, impurity caused by the world phenomena disappears. From two sides we attain that Supreme eternity. On the one side, the Self soars high to that ocean of aloneness. On the other side, when all the *vāsanās* vanish, light of the Self gets more and more resplendence. Here Tiruvalluvar expresses his idea as,

*Darkness departs, and rapture
springs to men who see
The mystic vision pure,
from all delusion free. ♦*

Book Review

Deborah Buchanan

Shadows in Dream-Time, written by Indu Mallah and published by East-West Press in New Delhi, has the tenor of an autobiographical vignette. It is not just because the book is written in the first-person narrative, but because of the immediacy and intimacy of the story's emotions. The plot itself is simple: a middle class Indian woman's husband dies unexpectedly at an early age, leaving her to cope with a new and difficult life. We live the story from within the protagonist, Swapna, who shares with us the pain of her loss and of the accompanying dislocations. The couple had lived in company housing; and when the husband dies Swapna must leave and return to her father and step-mother's home where old misunderstandings and problems resurface. The home that Swapna had owned with her husband is occupied by tenants who refuse to leave.

And there are two teen-age children who need both money and guidance. These basic facts we learn secondhand as the story progresses, for this book is aptly titled *Shadows in Dream-Time* and what we are told, what we experience with painful immediacy, are Swapna's disillusionments, her suspicions, her shadowy emotions that come and go unbridled and dreamlike.

Swapna's suffering is real, though, and as readers we are touched by the poignancy of her condition. She has lost her husband and with him her reasons for being. Society now sees her as a second-hand person, relegated first to her parent's home like a child, and then to a working woman's hostel, a middle-aged misfit among young girls. Nowhere is she allowed to truly grieve. Only a stilted social mannerism is accepted, and without a genuine grief no new beginning is possible. Friends and family alike are insensitive to Swapna's loneliness and with no under-

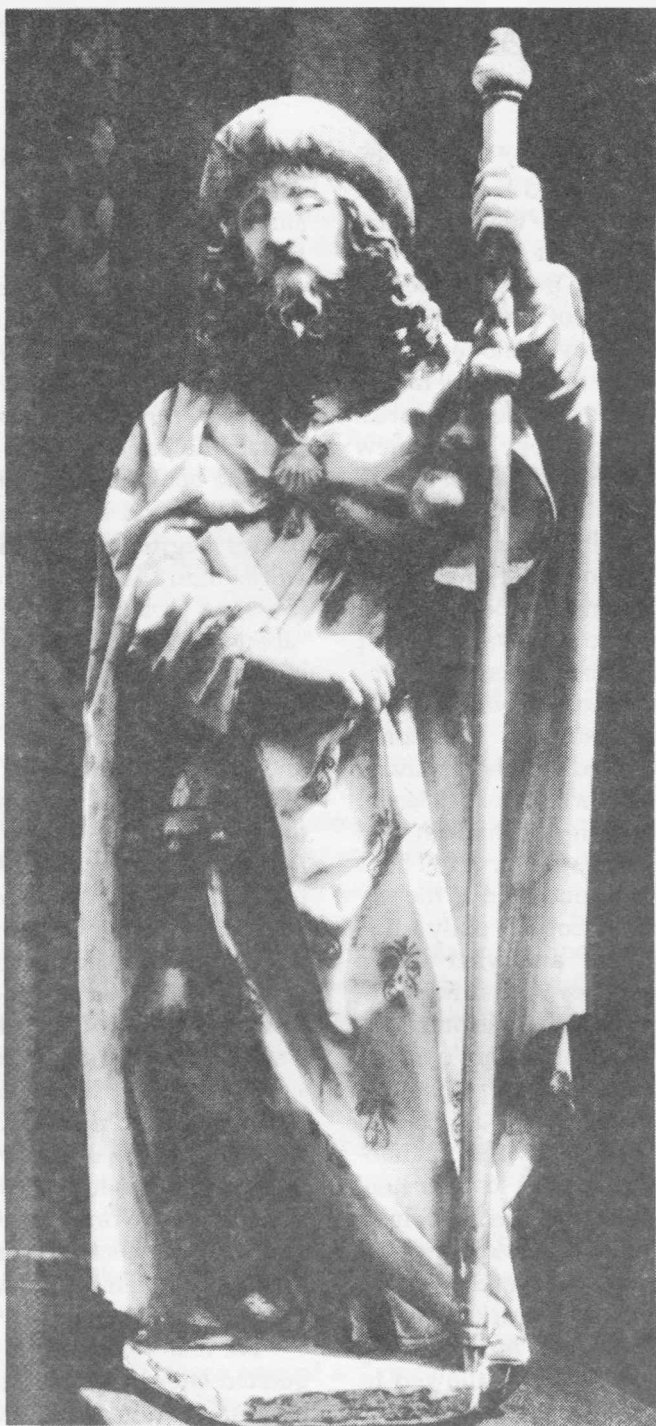
standing her grief becomes a greater and ever-widening isolation. Some of this results from people's galling insensitivity to the problems of a widow, while other difficulties arise from the extremely sheltered life that Swapna lived with her husband. Social strictures and lack of human companionship leave Swapna to her life in the shadows, a reflected, insubstantial emotional whorl of doubt and regret.

The book itself is caught in this emotional tide and as the story unfolds the reader begins to feel dizzy. Even the words Indu Mallah uses reflect desolation. Swapna sees herself as "overwhelmed," "abandoned," "banished," and her diary entries convey a crushing sense of defeat. Swapna's loss is one she cannot comprehend. The emotional air is stifling, close, and painful to inhale. Throughout the book there is only one voice that we hear, that of Swapna's. It is only through her that we know anyone in the book. And as the emotional tilt of the book rises we begin to feel caught, caught with Swapna in an isolation that she refuses to let go of.

With the loss of a beloved, and the concurrent loss of the ordinary life that was built around that relationship, a person experiences disorientation and a lack of connection to reality. Other people are still part of the everyday world. But to the person who has lost a loved one, connections to that world have been shattered and the unspoken assumptions behind them shaken. This is the earthquake that is swallowing Swapna.

For many people this disorientation is quieted later by a rebuilding of new relations and assumptions and a new world is rebuilt around the loss. But the deeply disturbing effects of these losses can really only be tempered by a grounding in a reality that is not based on social assumptions

Deborah



and ordinary transactions. Yet in *Shadows in Dream-Time*, there is never any sense of a sustaining reality beyond the normal world. There is the miasma of anguish which comes from the loss of one's personal social world, but what Swapna needs is a connection to an abiding and nourishing spiritual vision. Nowhere in Indu Mallah's book is such a connection even alluded to. A sense of acceptance (not resignation) and a sense of perseverance (not martyrdom) never flickers through Swapna's thoughts. A reality that encompasses the fluctuations of pain and loss does not exist for her. When the world of her husband is gone, Swapna's entire world itself vanishes.

The only movement Swapna had previously made beyond herself was to Amar her husband. But that move was compromised because Amar functioned in many ways to tell Swapna who she was, to give her her identity. To the lonely, shy, emotionally insecure child, he gave affection and, most importantly, validity. It was Amar who gave her her sense of self. And when he died, who was she? And if she had no self, how could she reach out to others? This lack is nowhere more apparent than in Swapna's relations to her two children, her daughter Maya and her son Madhu. They appear in the book only as their own problems begin to interfere with their mother's life. The inability of all the family members to talk, to share their loss, is strikingly obvious but it is particularly apparent between mother and children. Swapna is so lost in her own misery that she thinks little of her children's emotional needs. She cannot be there for them since she has lost the only self she knows, her

role of wife to Amar.

This sense of self and a grounding in a non-social reality are interconnected aspects of a stability that eludes Swapna. Towards the end of the book it appears that she is regaining a certain cohesion and happiness in her life. She has a new job and a new friendship with a fellow worker. But then, in a shadowy, dreamlike manner it all seems to fall apart. We are never able to tell exactly what happens. Is Swapna betrayed by her friend? Are social mores sabotaging her happiness? Are her own personal demons rising up to haunt her and distort any chances at renewal? All these possibilities tremble through the "facts" as they weave about in Swapna's thoughts. Her universe has become an insubstantial, floating, mesmerizing world of memory and longing, which culminates in a bizarrely effective reunion of the bereaved and the missing beloved.

Near the end, Indu Mallah includes a quote from French which translates as, "You become crazy because of that which you love." That Swapna has become crazy is heartbreakingly obvious. But it is the smallness of what she has loved that has driven her there, not the love itself. Her love, her world, was one person. When he dies she loses not only him but her own sense of being and ability to love others. In excruciating detail, Indu Mallah describes the unbinding of that lack of love. As readers we cry with her, but unlike Swapna we are left to feel that this loss of love was not necessary. Narayana Guru wrote that "To love is to live." And to continue living after personal loss we must nurture and expand our love to include all of our world. ❖



The War of Society

We, the lonesome winds
who see the world's pain,
Can see the little love-scorned boy
who finds solace in the rain.

How he keeps his head above
the vortex in which he lives
is a question for us all to ponder,
as he gives, and gives, and gives.

Society, in it's element,
loves to hurt and take.
Our goal as enlightened beings,
is to stop this trend, to break.

We leave you with a final thought,
as we drift forever more:
YOU can be the cause for change,
YOU can stop the war.

Kavi Chaitanya Grace-Luke

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