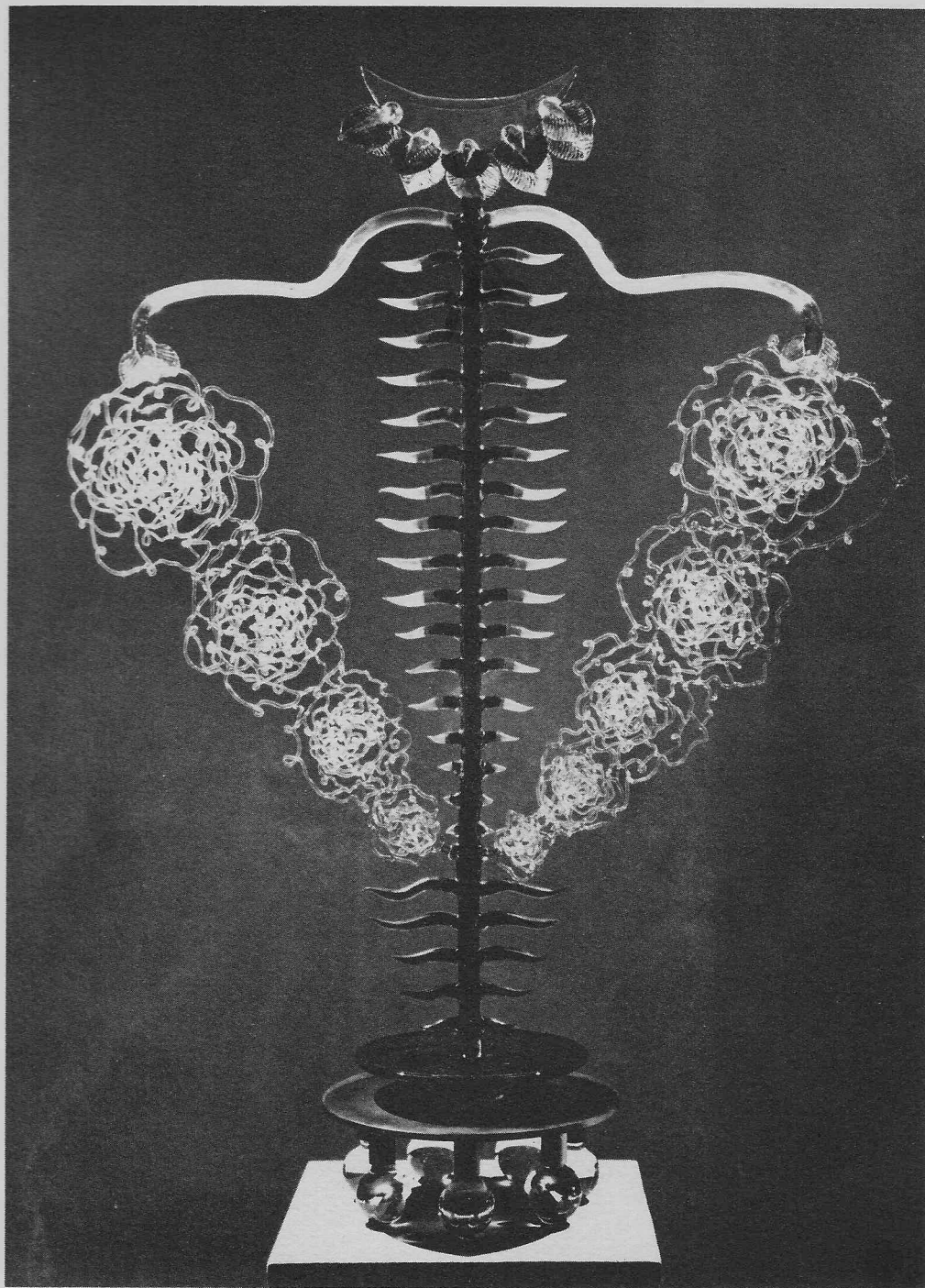
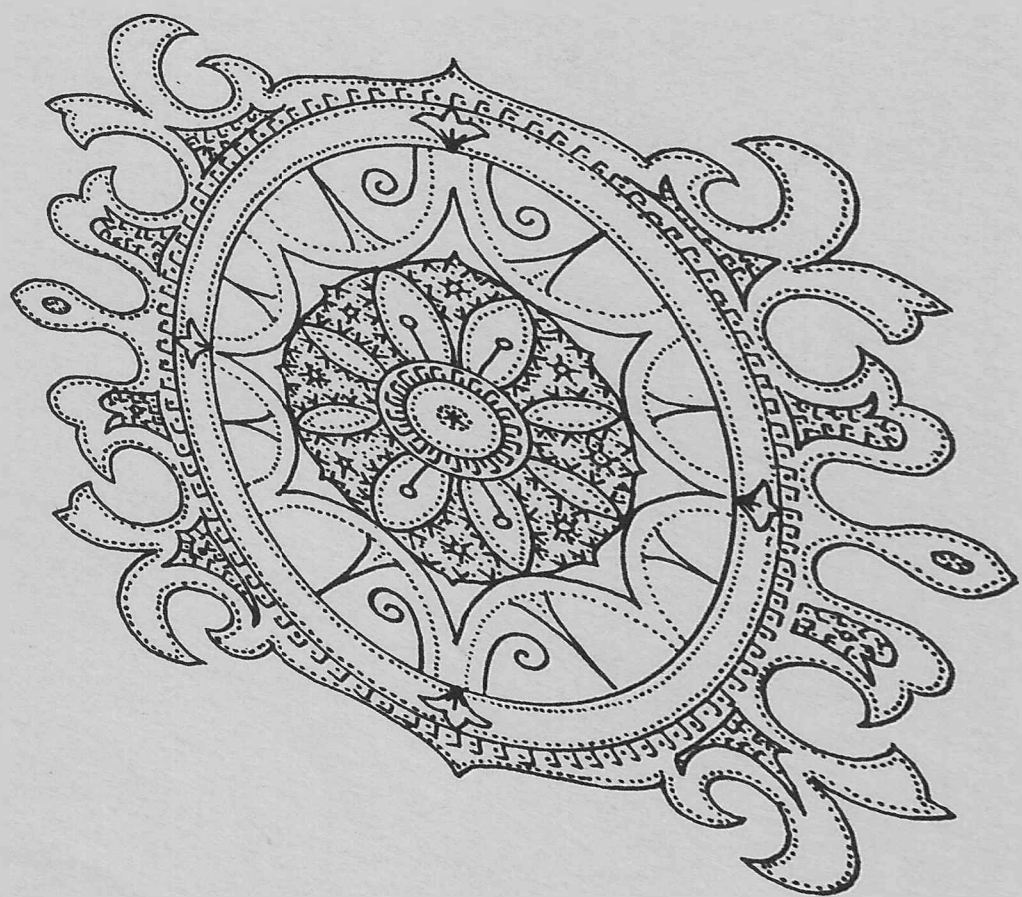


GURUKULAM

VOLUME X • 1994

THIRD-FOURTH QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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This and This and This and...

As I was walking along the lane covered by a tapestry of damp red and gold leaves, fresh air tingled in my lungs and these words started to sing in my mind:

*Afoot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me
leading wherever I choose.*

*Henceforth I ask not good-fortune,
I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more,
postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries,
querulous criticisms,
Strong and content I travel the open road.*

I mused on the buoyancy of spirit that comes simply from shedding the petty whimpers, complaints and procrastinations that pin us indoors. Walking freely outside is one of the most simple of acts, yet it can bring such joy. One foot before the other, arms swinging gently, breath moving naturally in and out, eyes taking in the colors of the sky, the play of light and shadow, the lilting movements of trees and grasses in the wind – awareness gains more clarity and breadth.

Ahead of me on the path I saw a man in blue cambric work clothes, a floppy straw hat on his head. He was singing as he walked –

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me
as good as belongs to you.*

*My respiration and inspiration,
the beating of my heart,
the passing of blood and air through my lungs,
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves,
and of the shore
and sound of the belch'd words of my voice
loos'd to the eddies of the wind.*

Even from a distance, I could feel a sparking energy coming from him. Though Walt Whitman died in 1892, I felt very much as though it was he ahead of me on the trail. That didn't seem so strange when I remembered that he had said:

*I bequeath myself to the dust
to grow from the grass I love,
If you want me again
look for me under your bootsoles.
You will hardly know
who I am or what I mean,
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.
Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
Missing me one place search another,
I stop somewhere waiting for you.*

After a while he turned and beckoned, chanting to me as I approached:

*Stop this day and night with me
and you shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of earth and sun . . .*

"Quite a promise," I thought, and wondered if he wanted to make me think and feel according to his vision. As if he could read my thoughts, he went on:

*You shall no longer take things
at second or third hand,
nor look through the eyes of the dead,
nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either,
nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides
and filter them from your self.*

Fascinated, I drew nearer to hear what he had to say. But he fell quiet, seemingly lost in his own thoughts as we walked along in a companionable silence. I glanced at his face a few times which seemed to age as he mused with lines of sadness around his eyes and mouth. I remembered that, despite the tremendous

influence his poetry exerted on the writers who followed him, he had had to endure scorn and worse for sharing his work and vision with the world. But he was still able to write near the end of his life:

[T]he best comfort of the whole business (after a small band of the dearest friends and upholders ever vouchsafed to man or cause. . .) is that, unstopp'd and unwarp'd by any influence outside the soul within me, I have had my say entirely my own way, and put it unerringly on record—the value thereof to be decided by time.

And generation after generation, readers of Whitman continue to thrill at the humanity, vastness, compassion, earthiness of his vision, the freedom of his language set on fire by the new possibilities for humanity in a new land with a democratic ideal which his soul resonated with.

His stance of optimism did not stem from ignorance of the darker aspects of life or the nation. Having worked as a printer, school teacher, newspaper editor, writer of popular fiction, storekeeper and building contractor, he saw much of life's rough edges. He knew well the crushing grind of heavy labor on children, women, and men. His own family was hit by the afflictions of insanity and alcoholism. His heart was pierced by the agony of the civil war that ripped the nation in two and brought grim suffering to the young soldiers he visited in Washington's war hospitals.

The poet's wide-open eyes took in all of life. He did not flinch in horror or turn away in disgust. He saw detail after detail of the vast complexity of life and he gave voice to what he saw, refusing to be inhibited by either poetic or social convention, creating a vision of inclusion, his rhythms and cadences matching the reaching of his soul to include all kinds of people, with an immense variety of yearnings, experiences and trades. His words and phrases tumbled over each other to catch up with the expansiveness of his heart as though he were glancing lovingly at person after person, one facet of the world after another, and clasping each to his bosom before

moving on.

He wanted to be the voice for and to America, for the possibilities of the land, the people, their industry, the democratic nation. He took his inspiration from his native soil - but his affirmation reached out to all of existence. His poetic voice and vision exemplified the Upaniṣadic dictum *prajñānam brahma* - all this knowledge is the Absolute. This and this and this and this - each is to be known as part of the All. In taking time to see, resonate with, describe and include the details of particular walks of life or areas of the country, he did not lose touch with the All:

While I cannot understand it or argue it out, I fully believe in a clue and purpose in Nature, entire and several; and that invisible spiritual results, just as real and definite as the visible eventuate all concrete life and all materialism through Time. My book ought to emanate buoyancy and gladness legitimately enough, for it was grown out of those elements, and has been the comfort of my life since it was originally commenced.

As I walked beside him, each of his steps had a spring to it, reminding me of the verve of the discipline of inclusion - instead of getting bogged down in the details of life, we can accept the challenge and find the fulfillment that comes from knowing and accepting each as part of the whole. Though he slowly faded from view, I could hear him singing:

*You road I enter upon and look around,
I believe you are not all that is here,
I believe that much unseen is also here.*

*You air that serves me with breath to speak!
You objects that call from diffusion
my meanings and give them shape!
You light that wraps me and all things
in delicate equable showers!
You paths worn in the irregular hollows
by the roadsides!
I believe you are latent with unseen existences,
you are so dear to me.*

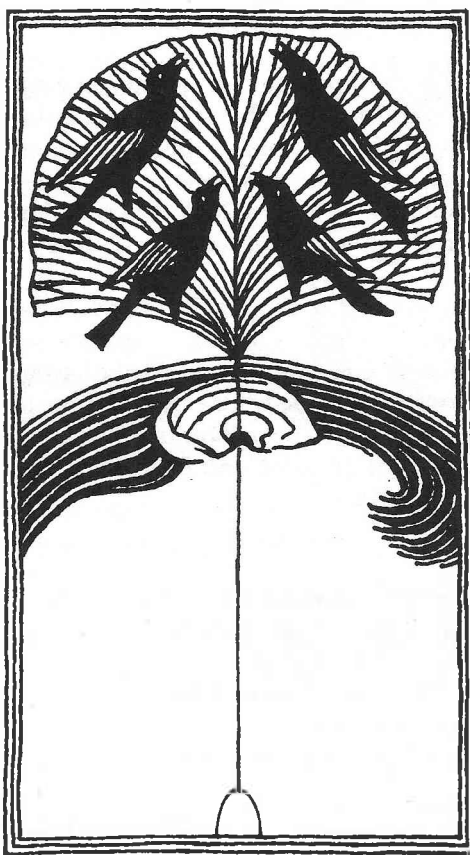
Nancy Yeilding

Svānubhavagīti Śatakam:

Experiential Aesthetics and
Imperiential Transcendence

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Verse 81

Guarding the ear and such organs from being scattered,
go into your reflective mood and watch
how the knots within are loosened;
and without getting into the qualitative
enumeration of discursive thinking,

watch the sport that is going on as a panorama
flowing from within and filling the outside.

The senses of perception are really innocent. They don't have any thought or desire by themselves. They go out chasing objects only if the mind commissions them to do so. The good God was careful to make easy devices for closing the eyes and mouth. Why did He or She forget to make a similar device for the ear? Does God commit mistakes? Is not God the One who sticks on to the right even when we go wrong? Leibnitz said that this is the best of all possible worlds. That must be true. Suppose we were to go to a hotel and sleep on the bed with eyes and mouth closed, with our limbs wrapped up in a blanket. If the hotel were to catch fire, we wouldn't hear the alarm signal if our ears were also plugged. The good God knows how careless we sometimes are. So He or She left one inlet always open.. The ear is an exception among the organs of sense. For the most part, the other four need to be focused on the stimuli that come from outside. The ear is not like that. It is as if sounds all around us are very eager to rush into the ears. We are compelled to hear what is disturbing as well as what is beneficial.

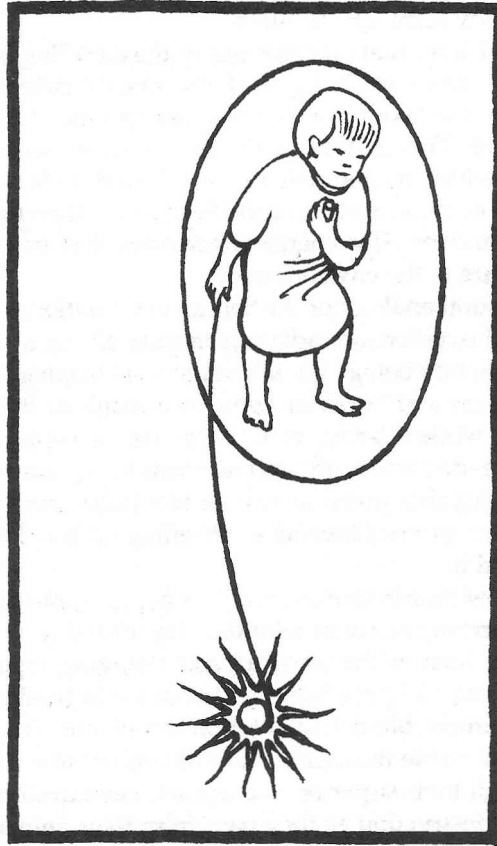
It is for the ear that people everywhere have made languages. We can catch more people's ears than their eyes. Spoken language, music and science all come to stay with us, using the ear as the royal path for their entry. Many names are available to refer to the same thing. Dog, mutt, pooch, puppy, mongrel – all these look different, but they refer to the same animal. In fact the world of names is at least twice as big as the world of forms.

Even if all the other senses are restrained, the ear alone is enough to shatter ones concentration. The sweet essence of the sky, *ākāśa*, is sound. The entire world is said to be a manifestation of sound. Many words can bring confusion. One word can be chosen to be the central focus of concentration such as *nāmaśivāya* or *AUM*. In *AUM* we go from sound 'A' to 'U' and from 'U' to 'M' and from 'M' to silence. That silence brings us to the Self-luminous:

The sky will glow as radiant sound –
on that day all visible configurations
will become extinct in that;
thereafter, the sound that completes
the three-petaled awareness
becomes silent and Self-luminous.

(*Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, Verse 52)

What else do you want, my mind? You also merge in that radiance within, and be Śiva's truth and beauty.



Verse 82

In the course of time, in the inner organ along with the senses,
what knowledge evolves to know itself,
that precious treasure is radiant within.
By its efficacy, this being becomes efficient
to manifest in the open.
Turning to that light within, exercising such talents
that are devoid of cunning, may we continue here in peace.

Spiritually we existed even before the present individuation came into being. The individuating self that snowballs each time into a person with a teleological goal orientation and its embryonic development into a future person with causal promptings, subtle coordinations and physical limbs is, as it were, a world arising out of the radiant nucleus of a self. At the embryonic level there is no awareness as to how the body materials are found and pieced together to evolve a fetus that can grow into a healthy child. Once the child comes into the open, the subtle body has a

regular recourse to the causal promptings which have in them, as Schrodinger says, the 10,000 footprints of the memories of previous lives lived in one body form after another.

Like the light that emerges out of the dark, heralding the coming of the sun, there arises the twilight of the infant's awareness in which instinctive behavior is taken over and molded into more definite purposive human behavior. This is done with the conscious backing of an intelligence which derives its mandate to seek, to find, to learn, and to operate from the secret communication of the Self rather than the randomness of the biological and physico-chemical activities that happen in the body with its exposure to the environment.

A common analogy of the Self and its relation with the body is a sun shining in the center and radiating its pure effulgence in all directions. In the case of earthly beings the alternation of sleeping and waking and consequent patterns of behavior come as a result of the earth revolving around the sun while rotating on its own axis. Accepting that analogy in the present case, day and night and alternations in consciousness are attributed to the psycho-physical system revolving around the nucleus of the Self which is praised here as a self-effulgent jewel that causes all to manifest around it.

The slow manifestation from the psycho-physical organism into a full person carrying out ones mission day after day, with programmed phases, is to be seen in the growing and changing organism, while the pure Self remains as a light and nourisher of the individual. In the case of all the lower animals, blind instinct replete with cunning enables them to find their thread of life through a maze of competition. Humans, on the other hand, with their superior intelligence, can curtail their instincts to kill and cause destruction as they pass from their animal nature to their divine ascendancy.

The cunning spoken of here also comes in verse eight of Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* which demonstrates how those who are led only by the hedonistic pleasures of the senses resort to various forms of cunning to achieve their conceited pleasures. There Guru also refers to a radiant inner awareness which should be brought forcefully to bear in order to thwart the cunning of the lower self. In the Guru's *Universal Prayer*, the knowledge that is guiding from within is also compared to a Supreme Navigator who is guiding all to cross over the phenomenal ocean of suffering.

Verse 83

Having received the Lord's Grace,
even when the longing eyes
that arouse the thirsting tongue to enjoy
are impelled to turn away,
it takes only half second for the sea of suffering
to inundate and submerge all in its irrepressible tide.
Oh Śiva, what delight can we take in that?



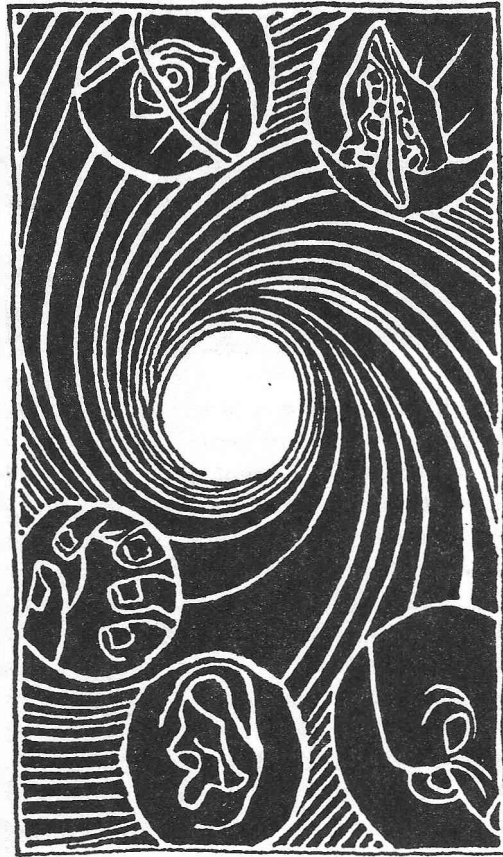
The lathering of desire is a frothing infatuation that is roused in a person at the sight of a symbol of sensuous pleasure. Infatuating desire has a previous conditioning as a latent catalyst. Only if the catalyst such as the lingering *vāsanā* is removed, does the hankering for gratification subside. An attachment to a lower form of enjoyment can be reduced only by filling the mind with a more powerful attraction to a higher value. The love for the Lord alone can successfully turn the mind away from indulgence in the ignoble pleasures of the senses. It is like fighting an addiction such as to narcotics or alcohol.

Having experienced some grace of God, one is tempted to believe that one has overcome his or her terrible longing, which is metaphorically compared here to the frothing of a high-tide in which every bubble in the froth is like an eye of longing. The dynamic of high-tide is the pressure created by countless millions of water molecules charged with the power of a wave which has submerged after its rising. When a high-flowing wave goes into a depression, it looks as if that wave is gone. It is only a false hope that one entertains, not knowing the vengeful nature of a repressed desire. It will come back, doubling its power to blast.

When one turns away from the common pleasures of the phenomenal world to an absorbing state of devotion, a feeling of security comes. Many at that stage show the enthusiasm of new converts as if they have found Kṛṣṇa-consciousness, Christ-consciousness or Buddha-consciousness. It is as if their previous conditioning (*vāsanā*) was cut off from signaling to them in their newly given environment.

Such a pious belief cannot be kept up for long. The relapse that comes from a repressed desire can be many times mightier than all the infatuation one has felt previously. A course of rationalization surges up, inundating all the good reasons with which one had given up a habit, and one becomes a miserable victim to all the evil habits which were thought to be eradicated from ones system.

Spiritual life is again and again beset with failures. Temptations of the phenomenal are as old as human culture. The return of an evil habit is much worse than its original occurrence. What appears to be a moment of grace does not assure any lasting peace. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* it is said that by not feeding a desire, it may become weak but will not be totally destroyed. Only by having a total vision of the Absolute will the craving be fully discarded. Here the poet asks, "How can one be happy and feel secure when the dynamic of conditioning is not fully eradicated?"



Verse 84

Oh, Śiva, Śiva, the senses are scattered all at once in all these.
Knowing what alone is desirable for me,
please grant that alone by Your grace.
Oh Abode of Compassion, I am no longer strong to fight
the evil that is bent upon scattering even You.

Life interests alternate centrifugally and centripetally. All the five senses are naturally attuned to move out of ones center and relate with objects. Sound can be heard from above and below and all directions on both sides, as well as in front and behind. There is something irresistible within a person which is curious to listen to whatever sound comes, irrespective of the merit or demerit of what is heard. The result is a centrifugal flowing out of the energy of the faculty of hearing to whatever produces sound. Thus a person becomes literally "eccentric," just by listening to sounds.

Next in the order of the senses is the faculty of touch. We are very sensitive to heat and cold. In cold countries not a single hole in the wall which allows a draft is tolerated. We are very conscious of temperature. No one likes the touch of the rough. Great attention is paid to make everything in the environment soft, such as mattresses and chairs, the surfaces of desks and tables, floors and walls. Millions of dollars are spent to make toilet paper soft. Even husbands and wives turn out to be soft objects to hug and cuddle.

Then comes the sense for visualization of forms. From the far-off star to the letters printed in the newspaper, billions of objects are always demanding the attention of the eye. It does not matter if the eye is simply looking at a thing. As soon as a thing is seen, the inner self is also transformed into the spirit of what is seen. The modern world has become so competitive that advertisers are trying to catch the eyes with all kinds of gimmicks. The old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind," becomes true of God also. Even scientists insist that they believe only what they see. This is just the opposite of the warning given in the *Qur'an* that if you have seen it, then it is not Allah.

When the palate begins to dictate its terms, a person degenerates into an errand boy, forever running around only to please his palate. All human enterprises center around this one need of finding bread and butter. The nose and tongue are comrades. What pleases one is recommended by the other.

Thus our worst enemies are camping within us with large stores of destructive weapons. The senses destroy through distraction. Repeated submission to the demands of the senses weakens ones power of restraint. Such a centrifugal life-style can be corrected with a unitive vision which operates centripetally. One should be able to wean off interest from the outgoing senses. It is as if the inner self was made a shrine for worshipping the Lord. God outside is of no use. Ones innermost core should have that power of centering all interests to serve in the purpose of the higher Self. Desires are many but the desirables are few. That few can be determined by the God within. Hence the supplication is to Siva to take over as the presiding deity of ones innermost self.

(Continued in next issue.)

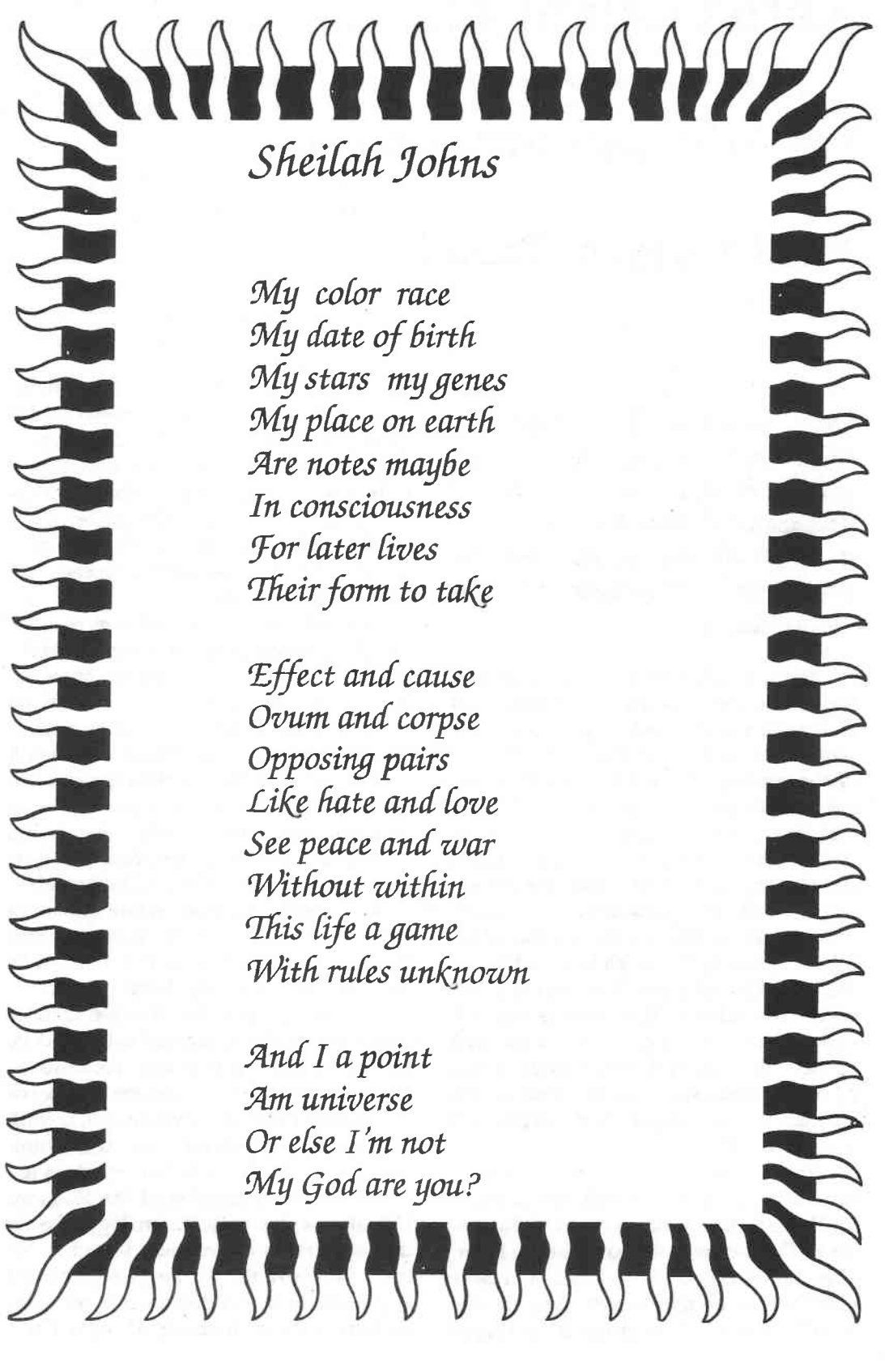


And What Is Man?

*I am the sun
That gives me life
I am the sea
That powers my blood
My bones the earth
The air my thoughts
The sky pervades
My every cell*

*Wind water fire
Wide space and rocks
These all are me
Yet where am I?
My thoughts are things
I make my world
This life a dream
In endless time*

*The past has gone
No future here
This NOW I know
can change my fate*



Sheilah Johns

*My color race
My date of birth
My stars my genes
My place on earth
Are notes maybe
In consciousness
For later lives
Their form to take*

*Effect and cause
Ovum and corpse
Opposing pairs
Like hate and love
See peace and war
Without within
This life a game
With rules unknown*

*And I a point
Am universe
Or else I'm not
My God are you?*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

VI: 1

This is the eternal fig tree with roots above and branches below. That indeed is brahman (the Absolute). That indeed is called the immortal. To it cling all the worlds. No one whatsoever transgresses it. This verily is That.

The last Valli ended with an epistemological problem raised by Nachiketas and a very short answer to the question. How should one understand the Truth which is of the content of supreme happiness but cannot be indicated in any way? This was the question. Instead of giving a direct answer, Yama answered it as if in a reverted manner. How could the knowledge of *brahman*, which cannot be indicated, shine in consciousness just like other items of knowledge which have indicative marks? This question was answered by saying that all that shines shines only because of the shining of the truth and that all here is illumined with specific forms by His brightness. This last Valli of the Upaniṣad tries to explain this cryptic and reverted answer.

Truth is only one. But we don't see it in its entirety. It has a visible and unimaginable aspect as well as an invisible aspect. The former is the basis for the latter. That can be looked at is called *loka* in Sanskrit, which became a synonym for the world. That which is visible is also capa-

ble of being indicated. If we imagine the absolute truth as a tree, its roots hidden under the earth are the invisible aspect and the branches with leaves, flowers and fruits belong to the visible aspect. Just as the hidden roots and the visible parts above are the two sides of the same tree, the invisible and the visible aspects belong to the same truth.

It is as the basic foundation of truth that the invisible aspect is compared to the root of the fig tree. The nature of root is of growing down to the earth and making the tree fixed. But here the basic truth is also the highest value. It is as the highest of all values that the Absolute has an actual value in life. It is the hope for the attainment of the highest value that makes life livable. So the life tree could be imagined to be rooted above. The branches, leaves, flowers and fruits stemming out of this root aspect, which represent the changeful aspect of the world, have to be imagined to be growing down.

In short, when the absolute truth is conceived as the living truth, it could be compared to a fig tree with roots above and branches below. Here the analogy of the fig tree helps us to visualize the truth as a whole, while being able to discriminate the visible and invisible aspects of it.

The fifteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* also begins with the analogy of a fig tree with roots above and branches below. But there the fig tree is represented as the one to be cut down using the ax of detachment with firmness of mind. Then

only one would be able to attain the ultimate goal. But here the same fig tree is imagined to represent the Absolute - the eternal and the pure.

So it is doubtless that the analogy of the fig tree with roots above and branches below is adopted in the *Gītā* and the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* in two different epistemological contexts. In the *Gītā*, the branches growing down represent the hedonistic Vedic values. In order to go beyond the hedonistic Vedism and to attain the goal of non-duality propounded by Vedānta, one has to cut down all the hedonistic interest mercilessly with the sword of detachment. But here in order to realize the non-dual truth, it is shown how one has to visualize the knowing Self and the visible world as belonging and being the same truth. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* this analogy is used to stress the importance of turning our interest from the realm of the ordinary world of enjoyment to the realm of supreme self happiness. The analogy there could be considered to have an axiological relevancy.

VI: 2

And besides, the whole world, whatever there is as changing, comes out of and lives and moves in that life-principle (prāṇa). The cause of great fear, the upraised thunder-bolt – they who know That, become immortal.

The discussion on the issue, how the supreme truth which cannot be indicated could be understood through indications, is continued here. The aim of Vedānta is not to have a definite and clear concept of the ultimate truth. The termination of all sufferings which cause fear in life and the realization of eternal peace, of fearlessness, is the aim of a Vedāntin. Thus one of the peculiarities of Vedāntic thinking is that of shifting the stress from the object of inquiry to the goal aimed at by the subject.

In this sense we could say that Vedānta is rather pragmatic. The ultimate goal is nothing but the revelation that it is the same absolute truth that makes all beings pulsate as living beings, while being at the same time the being that pulsated and the action of pulsation, and that remains as the content of the knowing self, the action of knowing and all its life pulsations as well as in the experiencing of sufferings and pleasures of life.

Here the changeful world is not merely negated by saying that it is an illusion. Instead, everything changeful is accepted as having come out of the same life-principle which lives and moves in it. That because of which one lives and moves is called *prāṇa* (*ana prāṇane*). Here the Absolute itself is termed as *prāṇa*, as the one life principle which animates all beings, though the term is usually meant to have the limited sense of the vital energy in an individual being. Just as the vital life principle in an organism controls the life and movement of it, in the cosmological context the Absolute as the life principle lives, moves and controls the entire cosmic system.

There is fear in life when there is conflict between the volition of one being and that of another. When there is such a conflict the volition of the independent being would appear to be an upright thunder bolt falling on the dependent one. This is real only when the independent being (the Absolute) and the dependent being (the world) are understood as two.

But when the dependent being becomes aware of the truth that its being and even its volition are only in the existence (*sat*) of the Absolute, the independent truth would never appear to be a controlling and frightening entity, but only the being of the self where no indication is needed for understanding. It would no longer be something which requires an indication to be understood. There remains no more fear, so fearlessness (*abhayam*) itself is considered as the Absolute by Vedāntins.

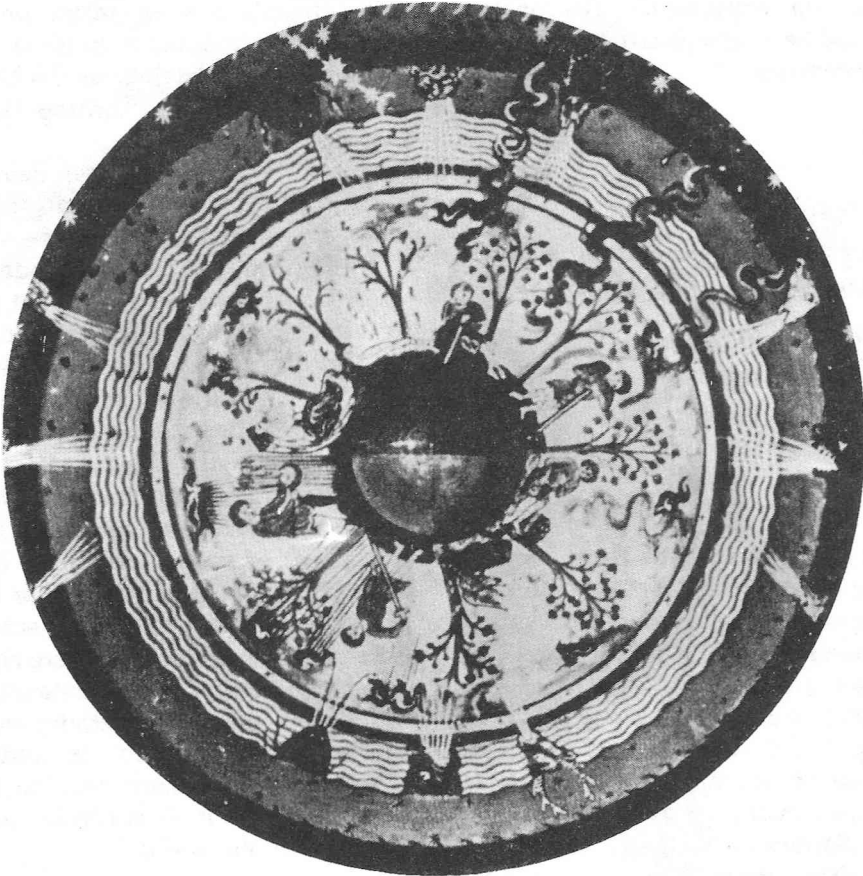
VI: 3

For fear of It fire doth burn. For fear of It the sun gives forth heat. For fear of It Indra and Vāyu and Death as the fifth, do speed along.

The Absolute that cannot be indicated was represented in the last mantra as frightening as an upraised thunderbolt. The entire cosmic system can be taken as the inherent surging up of the Absolute. It has a system of its own. Even the most minute part of Nature lives and moves only as part of this total system. Systematization is a characteristic of knowledge. When the upsurging of the Absolute existence manifests as a cosmic system, that systematization can be taken only as the manifestation of the subsisting knowledge in the Absolute. Nothing happens in

this universe outside this systematization. Five items of such worldly phenomena are mentioned here, merely as examples. We know that phenomena happen here only as part of the cosmic system and as such they are not afraid of anything. Man is the only living being who acts according to his own will and then becomes frightened of his acts being against the will of Nature. It is by attributing this human nature to Fire, Sun, Wind, Indra, Death, etc. that they are stated to be engaged in their natural function for fear of the Absolute. This is only a poetic way of expression which is resorted to in some other Upaniṣads. What is to be understood here is that everything happening in this universe is subject to a cosmic system which is incomprehensible to the human intellect.

(Continued in next issue.)



The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra II:42

samtośād anuttamaḥ sukha lābhaḥ

samtośād: from contentment

anuttamaḥ: unsurpassed, unexcelled

sukha: happiness

lābhaḥ: comes from

Unsurpassed happiness comes from contentment.

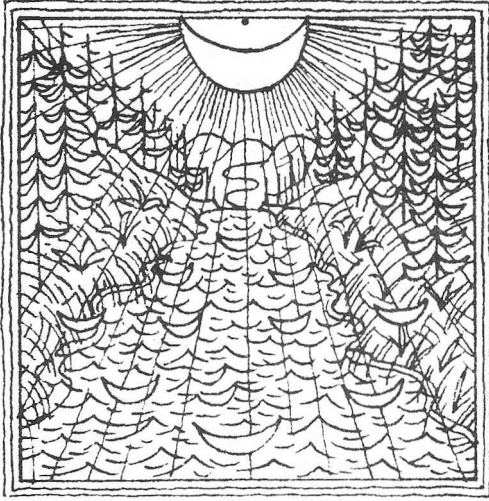
From the time of birth to the ultimate termination of the psychophysical organism, life is both polarized and torn between two values which are like two sides of the same coin. They are necessity and freedom. If necessity can be marked at the negative pole of a vertical parameter, freedom comes on the plus side at the omega point. Necessity binds one to the body and the physical basis of life whereas freedom allows one to soar very high into the sublime. Life is a perpetual theme of ascending and descending dialectics.

In the explanation of the previous *sūtra* we spoke of the pure state of the Self (*pratyak ātmā*) and how it reflects in the mirror of nature and makes us identify ourselves with an image or shadow cast by the light of the Self. The mirror on which this image falls can be likened to a magic mirror where, instead of a single replica being shown, there can be a proliferation of images, each of which looks different with a uniqueness that holds good only for a very

short time. It is as if the *jīva* in us is exposed to a kaleidoscopic dance of dark and bright images which can confuse the cognizing principle in the individual.

The magic mirror can be compared to a fast-running mountain river making a frothy cascade on which the moon is shining. Although there is only a single moon in the sky, it looks as if the one moon has become fragmented into a million moons, all appearing and disappearing in the ripples of water. In each of the countless bubbles of the froth a different moon is seen. Like that, our stream of consciousness; although it is one and the same, not only in an individual but in all, is seen as many because of the mirroring capacity of the psychosomatic system. The identification of the cognizing agent is rapidly shifted from one format to another and one value infatuation to another.

The more necessities we feel, the greater the fragmentation of life. Unfortunately, the greedy among us take full advantage of this weakness and an enormous system has been built up all around the world to exaggerate our needs. As we grow from childhood to adolescence and adolescence to youth, the spectrum of necessity multiplies by millions. Our individuated selves become like unsatiated gaping mouths wanting to devour more and more. Want is called *kāma*, desire. Where there is desire there is a programming of action. A program of action necessarily brings in the need to expend more



and more energy. Thus life becomes a burning conflagration of desires. Every desire that is fulfilled is only a stepping stone to another desire, so each fulfillment seems meager, a trifle. In Sanskrit it is called *tvuca*.

The world of necessity holds before us the need to nourish and sustain ones body, to tickle the senses, to over-awe the mind. These all belong to the negative pole of the vertical parameter. There is a noble desire which transcends all these – the desire to free oneself from the dictates of the transient, to gain absolute freedom. This is the desire for emancipation or realization. Emancipation comes with the recognition of the homogeneity of the worthwhileness of every passing moment. It is a peak experience, not a transitory peak but a continuous one in which the fluctuating differences in the environmental factors that envelop each situation are glorified for whatever merit is outstanding in that given situation.

For example, if a person with the prowess, physical stamina and dynamism to be a fast runner is engaged in a marathon or an Olympic race, the individual can rejoice that he or she has been given such facilities. If the same person happens to lose their vigor and be confined to a wheelchair, unable to move except in a small room, one can accept that position as one of great advantages that one does not have to leave one's place any time and, instead of using physical limbs, can explore

the furthest regions where thoughts can go. That person continues to be happy by changing the format of his or her value vision.

If one sits tongue-tied while another excels as a great musician, the silent person can be happy that his brother can bring such joy to thousands of people with his music. He can be relieved that he doesn't have to exert himself in trials and tribulations to train his voice and can appreciate hearing the beautiful music. Nothing prevents anyone from making every passing moment the highest and the grandest. This requires the sensibility to appreciate a higher value and a realistic attitude of knowing exactly where one stands and how, from that vantage point, one can have the clearest vision of the most magnificent gift of life. Then one is always happy.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* gives two classical analogies of a yogi who is in a state of contentment. In a room where there is no wind, the steady flame of a lamp is burning with a pearl-like brilliance – even so is the mind of a yogi which is always shining forth and is not swayed by the horizontal winds of necessity. Another example is that of a tortoise which, on finding the environment conducive, puts forth its head, legs and tail and, when the environment is not conducive, withholds them. A yogi of contentment enjoys what comes naturally and does not stretch forth his or her hand in need for whatever is not given. Such a person is truly free.

Sūtra II:43

kāyendriya siddhir aśuddhi kṣayāt tapasaḥ

kāya: the body

indriya: sense organs

siddhiḥ: perfection

aśuddhi: impurity

kṣayāt: on (gradual) destruction

tapasaḥ: from austerities

Perfection of the sense organs and the body after destruction of impurity by austerities.

The individual is an individual because he or she has a body. The body is maintained by the nourishment given to it. It has a structure which enables it to function as an excellent instrument for the individual to seek and find perfection. For the performance of anything there has to be a performer and a well-designed device which is maintained in excellent condition. The *jīva* or individual person is the performer; the body/mind complex is the instrumental device. Maintaining it in perfect condition is the duty of the performer.

The human body is not built with heavy metals like steel, copper or gold. But it is capable of maintaining its functional excellence for a long time without much wear and tear if proper attention is given to it. Three main components of this physical system are: energy precipitating and controlling of the vital system, plasticity maintained through lubrication and adhesiveness, and thermal stabilization of the organism to keep the body functioning normally irrespective of external temperature. These three principles are known to traditional Indian physicians as *vāta*, *kapha* and *pitta*. When these three principles are in harmonious reciprocation, bodily function goes on unhampered. When they are in disarray, diseases come. As these three principles of physical organization are asymmetric in their functioning, they are called the three evils. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the psychic counterparts of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*, are also asymmetric. When these six elements function harmoniously, we are healthy. When they are confused, we become unhealthy in both body and mind. It is very difficult to maintain perfect health because the malfunction of any of the six can throw the other five into disarray as well.

This *sūtra* enjoins us with the responsibility to give attention to the body/mind organization so that the whole complex can always work efficiently. For this purpose, the great *Āyurvedic* treatise of Vāgbhata, Suśruta and Caraka, *The Science of Life*, begins with an introductory chapter on preventive medicine. It gives full sug-

gestions on how to maintain the body/mind in good health by programming each day (*dinācārya*: *dinā*-day, *cārya*-conducting). They give warnings about the bodily changes which come according to seasonal changes. Instructions are given on what is to be avoided and what is to be accepted so that one will fit into each particular season. Detailed instructions are also given both for diagnosis and prognosis of the imbalances that can come from *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* and *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. All food items are classified so that nutritional food of the right kind can be programmed for a balanced diet. In India the main divisions are of *sita* and *uṣṇa*. *Sita* is tending to become cold; *uṣṇa* is tending to become hot. In China the divisions are *yin* and *yang*. This particular section of *The Science of Life*, called *āyuskamiyam*, if conscientiously adhered to, can be the discipline to maintain the firmness, agility, vigor and the form as well as internal good shape of all the constituent parts and the body in general.

Maintaining the body to be clean and pure is a major aspect of the discipline. It has a counterpart which relates mainly to our dispositions. The emotional propensities of a person are very value oriented. All five senses are attuned to values which can be of a lower nature such as animal instincts or they can be of the cultivated value vision of a noble person. Aesthetic qualities which do not lead to transcendence are of a vulgar nature. There should always be an ennobling and elevating aspiration guiding us to the higher, more sublime aspects of life. That will give our minds an efficiency which is maintained by purity.

We have seen how both the body and mind can be prevented from being soiled and how the impurities that have seeped in can be eradicated. This is the discipline of *tapas* which, in the course of time, will give us the perfection that we seek.

Sūtra II:44

svādhyāyād iṣṭa devatā samprayogaḥ

svādhyāyāt: from self-study
iṣṭa devatā: the desired deity, the deity one
loves intensely
samprayogaḥ: union with, communion

By self-study, union with the desired deity.

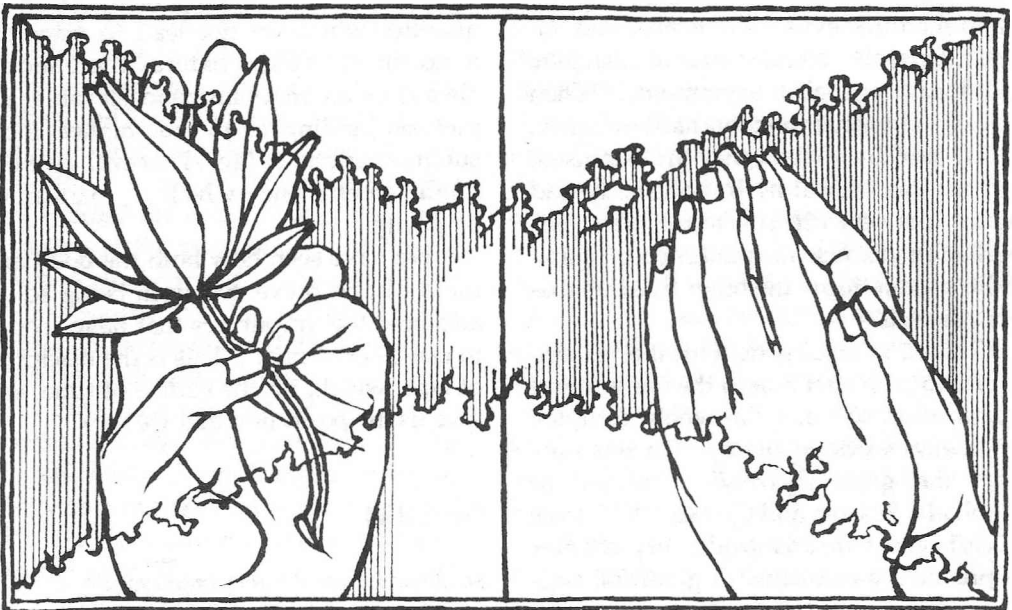
We see two paths being adopted by people who are aiming at perfection. One is the path of worship (*upāsana*) and the other is the path of contemplation (*dhyāna*). In this sutra the difference between the two is effaced. A thorough examination of the idea of worship and the idea of contemplation will lead to the conclusion that they are complementary.

Upāsana is ritualistic, stemming from an attitude of duality in which the worshipper and worshipped are distinct entities. The worshipper looks upon himself as a creature and the deity he worships as the creator. He is finite, imperfect and helpless, turning to the infinite, omniscient and almighty. Very often, the deity is personalized and worship is given just as a slave gives worship to his lord. The worshipper conceives of four stages in the path of devotion: first, gaining a physical comprehension of the form of the deity (*salokya*); then advancing and placing one-

self closer (*samīpya*); the seeing in oneself many qualities of one's deity and identifying the sameness (*sarūpya*); and finally, merging with the deity (*sayujya*).

The way of the contemplative is different from that of the worshipper. The contemplative throws away all crutches and looks for the validity of the Absolute by systematically refuting everything which is of a relativistic order. One adopts the method of a deeper familiarization with one's Self. All dualities of existence and non-existence, knowledge and non-knowledge, pain and pleasure are discarded until one comes to pure transcendence. Thus, self-study, which is a critical examination of the body concept and the mind concept, ultimately leads to a dismissal of all conceptual picturization. That leads one to what the Buddhists call no-mindedness or thatness. As no value is dearer than the value of Self-realization, the contemplative also arrives at the realization of the adorable Absolute.

The way of the worshipper is that of the religious pilgrim to truth and the way of the contemplative is that of the uncompromising path of the philosopher. Both ultimately arrive at the Adorable in which both the worshipper and the contemplative vanish.



samādhi siddhir īśvara praṇidhānāt

samādhi: absorption

siddhiḥ: accomplishment

īśvara praṇidhānāt: comes from resignation to *īśvara*, comes from continuous contemplation on *īśvara*

Accomplishment of absorption comes from resignation to *īśvara*.

In the previous *sūtra* there was a reference to the deity whom one loves intensely. The reference to a deity in Yoga is to be understood in the light of the Sāmkhyan epistemology to which the discipline of Yoga adheres. *īśvara* is the crowning interest of all ones dispositions. As an individual, each person has a unique way of formulating ideas, moving in a certain stream of consciousness and engaging in a series of actions. The prime mover in all the causal, subtle and gross applications of the self, the mind and the body is *īśvara*.

The *īśvara* referred to here is not like the Allah of Islam or the Yahweh of the Jewish and Christian notions. In Yoga, God is not a unitary principle. It is a superior person, over-ruling and supervising the entire life of an individual. It has more resemblance to an over-soul than to a theistic god-head. The *iṣṭa devatā* spoken of in the previous *sūtra* and the *īśvara* spoken of here both have reference to the ruling passion of ones life. Each person has their own *svadharma* to live. *Svadharma* is based on whatever disposition is most natural to a person. Ones disposition comes from the crowning interest of ones life. That is *īśvara*. For the musician, it is music; for the creative artist, it is aesthetic creation. For a social worker, the welfare of her fellow humans is what inspires her all the time. For a philosopher, envisioning truth is the supreme interest. Thus the interest that governs life each day leads one in a certain path.

In an earlier definition of *īśvara*, that principle was described both as *praṇava*, AUM, and as *paramācarya* (supreme teach-

er). Sitting, walking, lying down, speaking, acting, reacting – all these come under the term *carya*. One who manifests as the goal, provides a path and illuminates that path is called *acarya*. Jesus said, "I am the goal, the way and the light." For Christians, Jesus is the *paramācarya* and *acarya* is understood in a theistic and personalized manner. But in Yoga it is not necessary to think of a personal God. For example, all the dictates and implications of pure music can be the *acarya* for a musician. If the individual is not obsessed with an egoistic pride of being the performer, then the most natural thing is to resign oneself to the ruling passion within and to the environmental factors that are always coming into resonance with ones *svadharma*. That naturally brings a great inner harmony and one does not again and again stumble on the contradictions of life.

A fast-running river which has a wide space in which to flow and a bottom which is flat and even will appear as if it is not flowing at all. One whose life is well harmonized with ones supreme interest conducts himself or herself as if lost in it, having a natural absorption known as *sahaja samādhi*. One does not become any less than oneself by effacing ones ego and allowing oneself to be prevailed upon by the dictates of the Supreme that governs one from within. Such a yogi has attained *samādhi* by resigning to the will of *īśvara*.

(Continued in next issue.)



Education

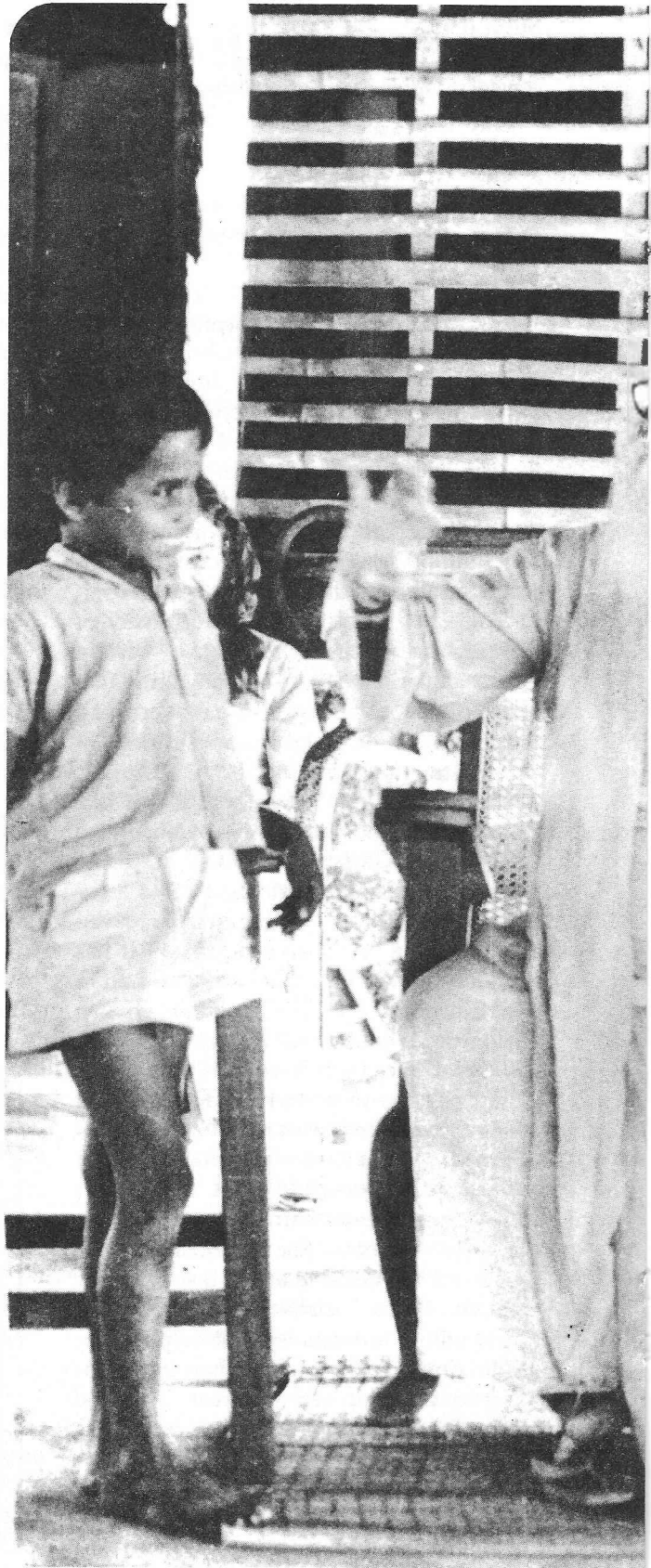
Education should be understood in terms of changing man for the better. Such change must manifest in behavior, whether in the individual or in the general pattern we call civilization. To accomplish this end, the *innate* and *overt* aspects of the personality have to be adjusted and balanced; the subjective and the objective have to be justly and truly comprehended.

Reasoning based on formal logical methods leads to sterile speculations about the meaning of Truth or Existence. The content of truth has to represent some human value falling within the range of normal human life. Unitive values in life emerge when opposites in consciousness are canceled out or merged into the sameness of the vertical principle which is universal in its content.

As pure time does not depend on night or day but can still be a living experience as Time, so there is a way of arriving at natural, normal, just, good, true or beautiful values in life through a dialectical approach to reality. A program in education may be credited to be well-founded to the extent that unitive values in life are met by unitive interests progressively or harmoniously as life unfolds through all its stages.

The dialectical way in education may be said to correspond to the way of the Yogi as known in Indian contemplative life. The Bhagavad Gita, which is a textbook of unitive human values, puts dialectical wisdom above wisdom plain and simple, the latter being devoid of a human import. Educational theory has therefore to be conceived in terms of producing a man who is filled with one hundred percent humanity.

Society is not so simple as it used to be, and the range of professions with their precise requirements, involving being "laid off" or retrenched at short



Nataraja Guru

notice, is ever-staring in the face of young job-hunters, who have to go from one bureau of employment to another in mad competitive haste, which is enough to stifle all quieter, contemplative attitudes in them. Rules and paper formalities are on the increase.

Education as a preparation for life is fraught more and more with uncertainties. If wisdom of a higher order is to help us even here, let us listen again to the voice of contemplation, though it is a voice lost in the wilderness, and still "small" in character. The noisy world cannot be tranquil enough to listen to it, but it is yet there for us to hearken unto.

Wisdom is the foster-mother who consoles Boethius desponding in prison. This foster-mother called contemplative wisdom is still waiting for humanity to look up to her face, to hear the words of consolation. She can still speak to humanity if it would only listen. In the interests of the world's proletariat, the commercial class, the daring conqueror of space and the seeker after contemplative quiet, there are still legitimate opportunities for life expression. For each one of them there is a pattern of behavior that would fit, if only contemplation could be brought to bear on the chaotic world situation.

In our days contemplation itself has to be revalued and restated more unitively. Wisdom, which is the highest human value, need not support mere quietism, nor should it be expected to counter the menace of the atom bomb by a frontal attack. The truth that shall make us free is lodged in the human heart, and sound education has to bring it into open life expression. This calls for a supreme white heat of whole-hearted earnestness within each, which should be reflected with similar intensity in the soul of humanity.



Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

Vaikom Satyāgraha

By the early 1920's Narayana Guru's effect on Travancore and Malabar (the modern state of Kerala) society had become very widespread. His wanderings had brought thousands of people into personal contact with him, a connection which engendered hope, a sense of self-worth and courage to seek release from all forms of oppression. His example encouraged others also to strive for purity, intellectual brightness and compassion. He also inspired many to become dynamic leaders who spread his teachings and spoke out against the societal practices and prejudices which condemned the majority of people to the status of second-class citizens at best and ill-treated slaves at worst. Reforms affecting all aspects of life had thus spread throughout Kerala.

At the same time, the world beyond the boundaries of Kerala began to exert its influence. As trade expanded, British pressure on the government led it to institute land reforms and curtail its own corruption. Roads were built and Christian mission schools provided wider educational opportunities. Thus, education and economic prosperity had begun to reach previously deprived members of society, emboldening them to seek societal recognition of their changed status.

In the years 1917-1925, the issue of temple entry came to the forefront in Kerala as a symbol of these restless yearnings for freedom and equality. The rules restricting access to the temples mirrored the other injustices stemming from the allocation of societal status and privilege along caste lines. Although taxes to support the temples were collected from everyone, temples were closed to the groups

considered to be outcastes. T. K. Madhavan and other followers of Narayana Guru worked hard to organize support throughout the state. They also influenced both the Indian National Congress Party and the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee (in 1923 and 1924 respectively) to adopt resolutions committing themselves to address untouchability more forcefully. The resolutions came as the party began to recognize the political expediency of supporting causes which would broaden the base of support for the nationalist movement. At the same time, temple entry began to attract young middle class followers of Gandhi, giving them a clear focus for their energy. As temple entry became more and more of a political rallying point, political maneuvering played a larger and larger role.

The large temple at Vaikom was chosen as the site for the struggle. The leaders decided to press only for opening the roads near the temple to general use and not for temple entry. The four roads leading to the temple all bore signboards restricting the entry of the members of Hindu society considered untouchable. Although such restrictions were imposed in the name of the sacredness of the temple, passage of non-Hindus was not forbidden. *Satyāgraha* was the method chosen to bring about the removal of the restrictions. One of the participants, Sadhu M. P. Nair, wrote a journal of his reflections on the *satyāgraha*:

An action dedicated to the welfare of mankind is bound to be sacrificial. Sacrifice is called yajña in Sanskrit. Austerity and penance are part of such a sacrifice. Only a person with pure intention and a disciplined mind can properly conduct a sacrificial action for the

well-being of people. Satyāgraha is conceived to be a means both for the purification of the individual and the social set-up to which he or she belongs. The main features of such a purificatory program were fasting, restraint from evils (such as lying, stealing, misappropriation of goods, indulgence in alcohol, committing adultery) and observing right ethical conduct (such as cleanliness, cheerfulness in behavior, self-study, service given to deserving people and living a chaste life). Accepting painful conditions of life without complaint or sense of retaliation is an important feature of satyāgraha. Practicing meditation, making self-inquiry and cultivating fearlessness are other aspects.

As India was in a state of slavery under foreign rule, it was thought necessary for more and more people to be brought under such purification methods so that the citizens of India would become deserving of political freedom. To popularize this view, a committee was formed with the name Untouchability Eradication Committee, in January 1924, and it was decided to explain this program at all important centers of Kerala. Resolutions were passed by this committee to present two separate memorandums signed by a hundred thou-

sand Hindus, one to the Maharaja of Travancore and the other to the Maharaja of Cochin, requesting these rulers to declare untouchability to be unlawful and to open the temples.

It was also meant to make an appeal to the ruling chiefs of state to make public schools open to all people. This kind of social awakening of the Hindu community was appreciated both by the Muslims and the Christians. Some Christians openly joined the fight against caste discrimination. Interdining which was tabooed until the time of the satyāgraha, became an effective means of social integration.⁷⁶

At the Velur Mutt, a center of Narayana Guru's which he put at the disposal of the satyāgraha committee, a camp was set-up for the volunteers who gathered from all over South India to take part in the demonstrations. Sadhu M. P. Nair described it as follows:

At the gate of the Mutt flew the flag of the Indian National Congress. There stood two volunteer guards who recorded the names and addresses of all visitors. All passage into and out of the camp was controlled with permits. Apart from the volunteers' publicity office,



there were also places for the spinning of yarn from raw cotton. There was a library, dining hall and dispensary. The internal world of the ashram looked like a world of its own, occupied by people of great restraint. All seemed to be totally dedicated to the actualization of the highest ideals of fraternity, liberty and equality. The working of the ashram was directed from Mahatma Gandhi's headquarters as Sabarmati in Gujarat State. The morning prayer was for half a hour. It was followed by yoga exercises. After that, groups of volunteers were sent to the four gates of the temple to offer satyāgraha in shifts from six to ten a.m., ten to two p.m. and two to six p.m. The three groups of volunteers were called the A, B and C batches. Each batch had its own satyāgraha inspector. The rank and file of the volunteers came from the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam. In off-hours, the volunteers were expected to do carding of cotton, spinning, hand-loom weaving and environmental cleaning. Each person was required to spin a certain amount of cotton yarn. Between duties they were free to read books or meditate. Hindi and English lessons were also given to volunteers. In the evening there was one hour of prayer and the day's satyāgraha was reviewed and discussed until nine p.m. It was binding on all volunteers to work for the eradication of untouchability, the emotional integration of communities and the popularization of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth.

Another important program that was included was the eradication of alcoholism and the inculcation of reverence for ethical values. Every week some time was taken to teach the geography and history of India along with political philosophy with the intention of creating political conscience. The publicity office closely watched the events of each day and a true picture of the satyāgraha from day to day was honestly recorded, cyclostyled and given to newspapers. The satyāgraha was supported by donations and the sales of the hand-woven cloth called khadi.

For some time a free kitchen was run by Sikh volunteers who came from Punjab. This participation from North India connected the most southern and the most northern states of India in the significant role of a new revolution taking place. ⁷⁷

Narayana Guru visited the camp and gave his encouragement. Consistent with his teaching, "Do not ask, say or think caste," he observed no caste restrictions and fostered non-recognition of such things as signboards and regulations forbidding access on the basis of caste. His founding of Aruvippuram temple, a simple, pure and compassionate act, was at the same time a gesture which turned around centuries-old prohibitions based on caste restrictions. That act and the spirit in which it was carried out, replicated time and again in his life, was his followers' best guide to how to conduct themselves in relation to all such restrictions. If they had all freely walked anywhere and entered temples, themselves purified of caste distinctions, such universal non-recognition would have made the continuance of caste restrictions impossible. When they instead became caught up in the heat of political fervor (and largely avoided confronting their own prejudices), the Guru continued to affirm the principle underlying their goal without taking direct part in the course they were pursuing.

The original idea of freely entering temples transformed into carefully orchestrated demonstrations:

The first demonstration took place on April 1, 1924. There was a large crowd present before the Mutt where the camp was. A message from Mahatma Gandhi was read to the volunteers. There was a large contingent of police waiting at a distance, very apprehensive of the intentions of the satyāgrahis. The first batch of volunteers walked toward the temple. The first three represented three different communities: Kunjappi (Pulaya), Bahulayan (Elava) and K.M. Govinda Panikker (Nair). After bathing, these three people, clad in white clothes, their heads smeared with sandal paste, offered themselves like sacrificial lambs, to be dealt with in whichever manner the arrogant perpetrators of caste chose. They were garlanded by K.P. Kesava Menon and Krishnaswamy Iyer.

Although the situation was very tense, there was absolute silence when these three



Neyyar River at Aruvippuram

volunteers approached the road block. The police questioned them about their caste and informed them that low-caste people were not permitted to walk that way. But the volunteers made it clear that as human beings they had a natural right to walk on public roads. When the police obstructed them, they sat down. For an hour, the police stood there and the volunteers sat. They were arrested and taken to jail. The next day, April 2, the public and the volunteers faced the second day with more enthusiasm. That day also was without incident except for the arrested volunteers.⁷⁸

After only three days, a letter from Gandhi to one of the leaders, Kesava Menon, was published in the nation-wide Hindu Newspaper (April 4, 1924), requesting him to call off the *satyāgraha*. Gandhi wrote:

Mssrs. Shivarama Iyer and Vanchasvara Iyer came to see me and discuss Vaikom satyāgraha. According to them, the road to the temple is not a public road...[it] is said to be constructed on land belonging to brahmins. Therefore they think that they have a sovereign claim to that land and road. I pleaded with them that if they have allowed even one non-

*brahmin to use the road, it can be used by low-caste Hindus also. They also agreed to it. They think it will take some time to change the attitude of brahmins. I am informed that Malavyaji⁷⁹ will be visiting Vaikom in a couple of months. If the representatives of the untouchables and the temple authorities can agree to the arbitration of Pundit Malavya, it is worthwhile suspending the *satyāgraha* until then. This intention can be publicized and the *satyāgraha* suspended. I am giving this advice with the belief that these Iyer brothers were telling me the truth about the situation there. According to them, their community is equally interested in eradicating inequality. If, as they claim, their intention is pure and sincere, we should also show our willingness to cooperate. Only, we should be careful not to compromise our ideals.*

Sincerely, M.K. Gandhi⁸⁰

Kesava Menon came to know about this letter from the paper so he wrote the following reply:

*Dear Mahatmaji, I read about a letter from you published in the Hindu, directing us to suspend the *satyāgraha*. I did not receive the letter. Perhaps it is on its way. It is not*

necessary to wait for the letter for me to inform you of the real state of affairs. I do not know Mssrs. Shivarama Iyer and Vanchasoara Iyer [but] neither Vaikom temple nor the road belong to any particular person or community. The temple is in full possession of the government. It is administered by the government. The road is maintained by the treasury of the public tax. The road is not only used by brahmins and non-brahmins, but also by Mohammedans and Christians. The restriction is only to Elava, Pulaya and other [so-called] untouchables. Like brahmins and other caste Hindus, backward classes also have a full right to use the road. Such being the truthful situation, I am confident you will agree to continue the satyāgraha. . . You seem to believe that these brahmins are the owners of the temple and that they would listen to Malavyaji. But in all truth, the temple belongs to the government. If you think the government will pay heed to the counseling of Malavyaji we shall certainly agree to your advice. Until then, it is imperative to continue the satyāgraha. . . We will begin the satyāgraha again from tomorrow (7th). In a few hours I'll be arrested. Mr. Joseph is here. If I am arrested the fight will continue under his leadership. He will inform you of the consequent details.

Your, Kesava Menon 81

Gandhi responded to Kesava Menon's

letter by giving his permission for the struggle to continue until victory, specifically stating that they should win over the enemy through love. Reaction of the Hindu theocracy was vicious. That *satyāgraha* camp received a threatening letter signed by ten brahmins stating that any fresh batch of *satyāgrahis* approaching the temple would be murdered.⁸² But the volunteers continued and arrests continued.

After ten days of the *satyāgraha*, the government, realizing that arrests were having no other effect than fanning the flames of resistance, barricaded the roads. In response, the *satyāgrahis* posted themselves at the barricades, sitting or standing long hours exposed to sun and rain, fasting, singing and praying. Word spread all over India about events there. Delegations marched throughout Kerala gathering support for the *satyāgrahis* and the Congress Party.

NOTES

76. *Vaikom Satyāgraha*, recorded by Sadhu M. P. Nair, a worker for the eradication of untouchability in Kerala, self-published in 1924, p. 36-39.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 1-8.

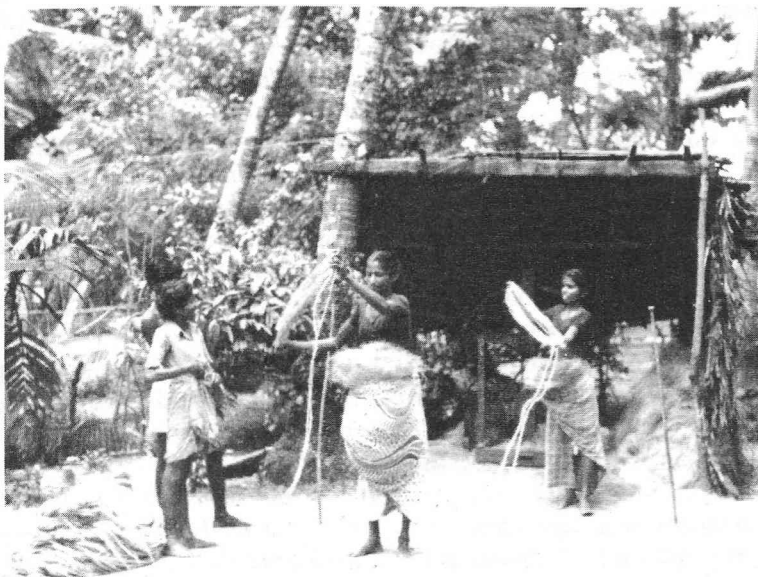
78. *Ibid.*, p. 61-62.

79. Madana Mohana Malavya, one of the founders of the Benares Hindu University, was well-known as an orthodox Hindu.

80. Sadhu M.P. Nair, p. 64-66.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 66-68.

82. *Ibid.*, p. 68.



Coir Makers at Vaikom

The Four Goals of Life

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Kāma

This is the third in the series of the goals of life. Normally *kāma* is described as desire. The word *māyā* means 'that which is not'. We can give a similar meaning to *kāma* - what is not, that is the basis of desire. Thus there is an intrinsic connection between *māyā* and *kāma*.

When we discussed *dharma* and *artha*, we were speaking of the most hidden, dormant powers in us and how our latent potentials are continuously active. After the manifestation of an organism, it develops its own functional parts as instrumentation to carry out the basic intention of the organism, the living process, so to say. When the intention of a living organism arises from its faculty of consciousness to an action program, several parts of the body are commissioned to relate with other parts. A coordination is established for an action program. Energy is conducted into the various parts that are asked to function. The great psychologist, Carl Jung, asked a question: "When we are not active, where does the energy for action lie dormant in us?" He was not successful in locating the area in which energy can remain like liquid gas in a barrel. But he thought that physical energy can remain in a dormant state and slowly be brought to a form of momentum. Energy has these two aspects - the inertial and the dynamic.

That which engineers the transformation of a potential energy into active energy in an emotional consciousness is usually called desire. *Kāma* is the organized, complex vitalized energy of the whole organism in which every function is total and holistic. It lies in the areas of the unconscious, pre-conscious and conscious. For the return of energy *kāma* has to go

through the memory registration of all experiences. It has a creative phase. Then there is an epitomization of the creation made which goes into the seed state or state of hibernation from which it can be brought back any time the memory tag is pulled. Desire is the consequent effectual development of *dharma* and *artha*.

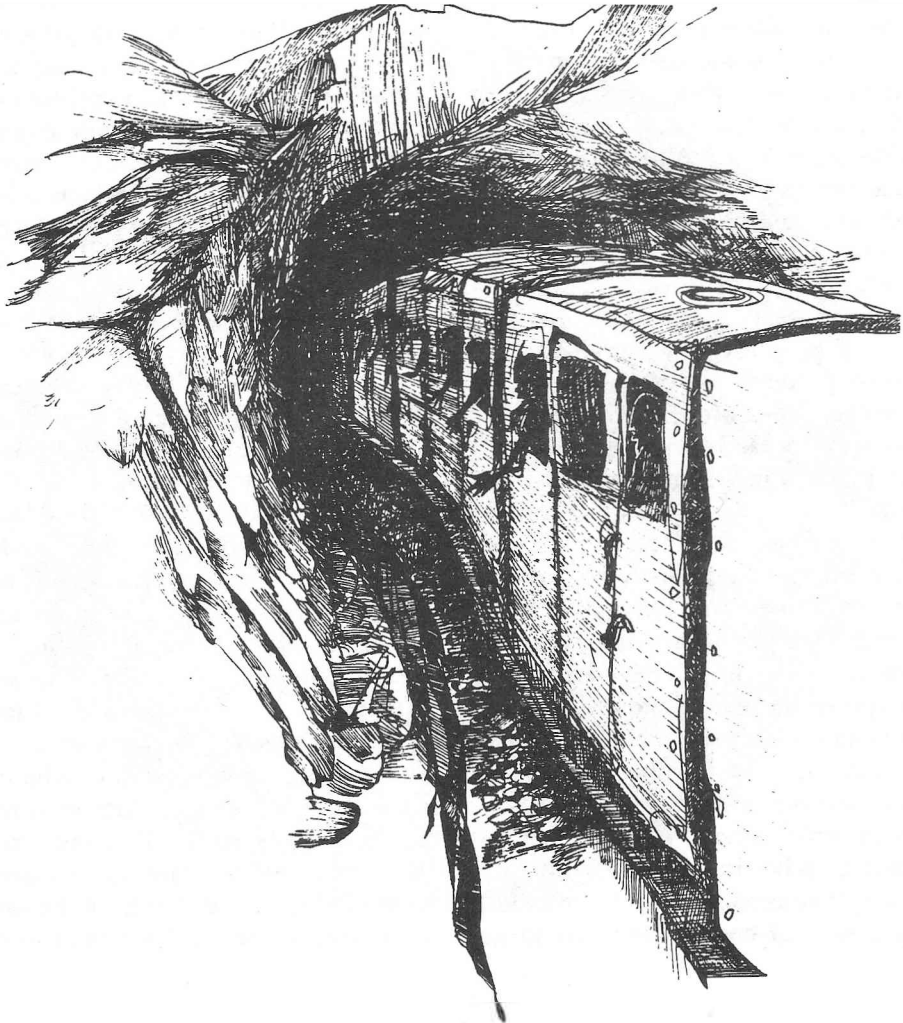
Although *dharma* and *artha* are not consciously felt by a living being, the functional aspect of *kāma* or desire opens up at the very first moment of a child's birth and expresses itself through the primal scream. The primal scream is a call for food, call for breath, call for attention. If you look at these three aspects, the pangs of hunger can be expressed only if breathing is possible. Nourishment has to come from outside, but the instrument to call for it is a scream which uses one's own vital energy. In response, the mother picks up the child, tenderly caresses it and puts the nipple of her breast in the child's mouth to feed it. Śankara describes the three pleasures that come from the mother as wine, milk and honey: the erotic wine of her genital organs, the sweet, wholesome milk that comes from her breasts; and the honey-like words that comes from her mouth. All three are connected with the aesthetic of life. Nature fashions us out of a sexual need, a sexual pleasure and also a sexual consumption. For a person growing out of such a situation to be averse to sex and turn away from the pleasures of touch is almost impossible. All our normal, natural and primal attractions are where the pleasures of touch are. Although the five senses act differently, it is one and the same skin that becomes the sensitive area of the eye to receive light, of the eardrum to receive sound, of the tongue to receive

taste, of the nose to receive smell as well as being all over the body to receive touch. Actually, the pleasures of the body happen outside the body, on its surface. But inside, there is a spirit which reconstructs the pleasures received at the skin level and adds many subjective details through the purport of words with which the mind functions. Thoughts, speech, written words – all these come from a restructuring of the experiences which come from our environment plus the hereditary influences and values which a child brings into this world.

When you go into a big steel factory, several furnaces are fed with coal. Once they are ignited they are kept burning continuously, and iron is put into the furnaces and processed into steel. Similarly, the two great furnaces of the body, the heart and the lungs, are working twenty four hours. All the other faculties aid these two

furnaces sometimes slowing down, and sometimes becoming very active. There is a sleeping time, an eating time, a time to play, and there is also an intellectualizing time. They bring physical nourishment to the system, give rest to our tired limbs, increase the brightness of the mental sphere and help us get into a relaxed mode of entertainment. These are all given to us to keep our system going on with proper functions.

When a fly wheel is set off in a factory, it puts a number of wheels into action. Belts, cranks and chains connect the wheels. According to the production that is required, these parts are designed and coordinated. Similarly, according to the fulfillment that we look for in life, all the intermediary functions are planned and the parts are specially commissioned from moment to moment, to aid the general production. In each factory, the system



will be different. Similarly, though we human beings look alike, our systems are in accordance with the production we want to make in our life. Our production can be that of physical devices; it can be devices for aesthetic fulfillment, it can also be devices for mental enjoyment or cultural purposes. So nobody can be asked to desire only certain things and not to desire others.

One's heredity, upbringing, relationships with other people, environmental requirements, and a hundred thousand factors are there from which one can choose one's career and fulfill one's *dharma*, thus giving it an excellent meaning (*artha*). Behind every *kāma* is an enormous call of that which stems from the potentials of *dharma*. It is all not done in the wakeful or conscious hour. Certain processing needs to be taken to an area where there is enough silence. After a heavy meal, when all the digestive juices have flowed into the stomach and small intestines, a lull comes to the body. That is not the time for one to do any hard thinking. The blood used by the brain is taken to the digestive system. Also the blood from the extremes of the hands and legs is all now channeled towards the digestive system. Then one can feel like sleeping. Rest is required because the body has taken in gross materials like rice, wheat, or fish which are being changed into proteins, amino acids, carbohydrates or sugar. The processing is done in the unconscious, not through one's reason. Reason is to be suspended for the time being.

Thus life has to pass through a figure of eight motion. For some time, it has to be in the area of the unconscious. Then it is taken to an area where nature does everything. One such is digestion. Another is pregnancy. Till a child is in its full form, most things are manipulated by nature. In these two areas, the unconscious state of mind and the purely conditioned operation which is below the horizontality of life, we belong to the pre-manifested spirit and the pre-manifested matter. It is from that you emerge into the higher aspect. This is just like the earth: we stand

on the earth, yet we do not know what is below it. Or, if we look at a tree, all we know is that the tree has roots and the roots are going through the darkness of the earth, seeking its water veins. They seek the nourishment of minerals and many other things. But we see only the aspect of the tree which is above the earth. There it has a trunk, branches, leaves and flowers which are illuminated by the luminaries of the sky. Half of this world is exposed to light and the other half is in darkness.

As most of our desires stem from the unconscious, it is hard for us to know what they are, where they come from, and why they are there. Unlike *dharma* and *artha*, *kāma* does not deal with a small individual only. It has to adjust that individual into the matrix of society where there are hundreds and millions of other organisms, not only of human origin, but also of vegetable origin and animal origin. So *kāma* has an inner evolution which has come from the very beginning of the world.

For choosing *kāmas* or desires, humanity has evolved a normative notion to give indications about what a desire is and where it will take you. Some desires are called desirable and others are called undesirable. Once you have a desire and all your instrumentation is geared to its fulfillment or achievement, you get into moods (*rasas*). The most exciting mood is erotics - *śṛṅgāra*. It is just like the spring season coming into your soul. But it can bring its opposite, frigidity. Then you have no interest in anything. You don't want to see anyone, you don't want to get up from your bed, you don't want to eat, and none of the pleasures of life mean anything to you. The *rasas* or moods run in a polarized manner. Desire is determined by the prevalent mood of the hour or of the moment.

Desire can be so negative that, after desiring something strongly, a person goes into depression which no psychiatrist can pull him out of. All mental diseases have something to do with *kāma*. For this reason, in *Āyurveda*, the Indian school of

medicine, passion itself is called the commencement of disease. Passion is called *raga*. 'Ra' means great joy, 'ga' means resistance. When there is irresistible joy and you go mad, it is *unmatha*. 'Un' means rising up. 'Matha' means madness. Madness rises up along with your passion. When it is subdued and disciplined and you have a clear comprehension of where the world is, where you stand and what relationships are, you have a clear vision of life. Then the mood is called *śanta*, peace. When you are thwarted in the achievement of a desire, you may become ferocious, destructive. That is the state of *krodha*, great anger. When you identify with a great cause, your anger becomes righteous anger. Then it is a state of chivalry or *vīrya*.

There are said to be nine major moods and forty-eight minor moods. When all these moods kaleidoscopically change in you, how can you understand another? In each change of interest, mood and resolution, there is a functional *kāma*, a functional desire. This makes life so chaotic. A person has to pull himself/herself out of all that to live a life of peace and joy, love and beatitude. That is the most normatively oriented goal of life, which is called *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* comes if one successfully veers or steers through *kāma*.

Mokṣa

It is next to impossible to conceive timeless time and spaceless space, yet time is born when the mind conceives space, and space is born when consciousness throbs or expands. Timeless time is called pure duration, spaceless space is location. A similar enigma occurs in the transparency of light. It is like a loop that emerges from the bodiless Absolute to constrict consciousness into an embodied self. Phenomenality brings along with it a host of illusory challenges to consciousness, ranging from the effacing of truth to the projection of multitudinous variety.

When circumlimited consciousness gains a location in space and a temporary

elaboration with a beginning, expansion and contraction and a variety of functions, the individual comes to be. However untrue the individual is, it has definite laws to sustain itself with an assumed form and a given name. This is the beginning of the phenomenal sorrow or distress which is amply compensated for with an equally illusory sense of truth and festivals of joy, enacted in the theaters of imagination. Once it begins, it starts proliferating like a snowball. It goes in several directions, elaborating its mission of making every phenomenal event a describable episode.

When the sea becomes stormy, and throws herself into energy waves which leap into the dark clouds, no one imagine that the waves will become sober again and the sea will be consoled to give up her pretense of a typhoon. Such is the story of a human being who wants to return from the omega point of individual evolution to the most primeval stir that came in the heart of cosmic silence.

The sky is the infinitude of possibility. When an occasion arises to limit a part of the sky, such as when one's says, "the space in my house, the space in my heart, the space in a pot, the space in which I am living," these spaces are not alike, yet they are all spaces. This is the attempt to wall in that which cannot be walled in or walled out. There is no agent to make such circumlimitations within the infinite. Once a horizon is marked, there is an inside and an outside. The general nature of infinitude is then epitomized within the horizon of a finite being which has the qualities of existence, subsistence and value affection. This process is known as the physical embodiment, the spiritual individuation and the self that is functional within the psychophysical mesh as an imprisoned splendor. This happens when a virus comes into existence, a bacteria manifests, an egg is formed, a seed with its millions of potentials becomes a reality, when an ovum is filled with a sperm.

This pattern of the infinite alienating the finite from it, and then mirroring itself in a speck of the finite, is the occurrence of life. It is a pathetic condition because a

part of the infinitude loses its identity with the all and becomes a speck, a spark, a molecular entity. In spite of it being pathologically cursed, it is blessed also, because a vast range of the potential can be experienced as actualized within the horizon of it's being and it can interject into it's being the unending world, which lies stretched out in all directions. Such is the state of the bound. Its bondage is felt throughout its existence in the time-space continuum. It is always in tension and feels bound or imprisoned. At times, the feeling of bondage is intense. Those moments are painful. In the next moment there comes a little relief. That is a moment of pleasure and joy, relaxation and peace. Like light and darkness, day and night, the alternation of pain and pleasure makes the individual long for freedom for one moment and, in the next, desire to remain here, enjoying the pleasures of the world. Thus inconsistency in ones search and probe comes. Experiential aesthetics and imperiential transcendence - this is our story. *Mokṣa* or *mukti* is suggested as a remedy to this bondage.

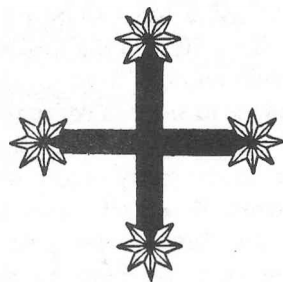
In the individuation of a person, there is an interlocking of the spark of the noumenon in a speck of the phenomenon. The noumenon is essentially transcendent. The phenomenal has within it an inverse gradation from the grossest to the most subtle, culminating in the causal. The principle of the interrelationship is based on dialectical polarity, with agreements and differences, ranging from the most contradictory to the most harmoniously reciprocal. When the scheme of correlation between the noumenal and the phenomenal is in the process of completion, it represents the vertical intersecting the horizontal at several psycho-spiritual levels. Every bit of the inside mechanism is controlled by opposing dynamics such as of arrest and release, inertia and kinetics, heat and cold, acid and alkaline, pain and pleasure, acceptance and rejection, analysis and synthesis, centrifugal and centripetal, flow and resistance, consolidation and disintegration.

In spite of the uniqueness and separa-

tion of each entity, there is a general love of biological standardization or normalization prevailing in the many that constitute a genus or a species. Biologic laws have their basis in physical mechanisms. Between physical laws which are restrictive and biologic needs which seek liberation, the complexity of the psyche arises. It oscillates between the thick darkness of oppression and the feather-light exuberance of euphoria. The most binding laws of the individuated system are irrevocable. Hence, when we look at an organism from the angle of biologic necessity, any call for freedom will be a voyage in the wilderness. At the same time, there is a universal benevolence couched in the indetermination of chance that can give specific opportunities for opposites to cancel each other, and seemingly contradictory laws transform into reciprocally supporting laws of creative expansion.

We have seen that a person is a self-evolved system. Every system is purposively conceived. The purpose of processing anything is to make it more and more perfect. The norms of perfection are based on basic values in life: good, real, useful, beautiful. Only if something is real, can we fashion the next degree of reality from it. Only if a thing is real and purposeful, can it be used for good. Then we love it. Love means we see beauty in it.

We think of God as the most real, the most purposive, the most excellent, the most beautiful. We improve ourselves every day by going closer and closer to such a model which we hold before us. If a system is scientifically conceived, it is



based on a value system. So we have a system science which references a value science. Between the system and the value is production science, transforming something to produce a desired end. To coordinate all these, one should have a managerial vision. Now, how many kinds of mistakes can there be? One can mistake the unreal for the real; one can mistake the valueless for the valuable.

Now comes a major question 'What is your concept of use?' You produce rice to eat and nourish yourself. When you produce a pot to cook the rice, you cannot eat the pot, but it is necessary for cooking. There are intrinsic values and accessory values. One is derived from the other. When you go to the market you find one pot which is very good for cooking. Another pot is so beautifully made, with artistic designs, that you can present it on your dining table. It has utility combined with beauty, ornamentation. Then you find one rare piece which you do not want to put to any use. You just want to keep it on your table, because it's a beautiful work of art. That is for a pure appreciation of beauty. So in the world of values, there is value of utility in everything that is produced.

Our life is also like that. On one side we have to make our bodies strong, and on the other, we have to establish a power of reasoning which is always correct in its comprehension, apprehension and expectation. Life is not just to eat and sleep and beget children. There is a time for playing games, for amusement. Amusement can be made sublime by going into the world of the finest shades of color and light, the world of art, the world of music, the world of literature and the world of theatricals. All these have to be on the ornamental side of life. On the utility side, you should have enough food to eat, a comfortable place to sleep, a companion to live with and offspring for the continuation of life. Your immortality is assured by your own children. When all these sciences are brought into the central point of your heart, you pervade them all as a single person, as a single agent - an agent of

knowing, an agent of doing, an agent of feeling and an agent of satisfaction. That is called your persona. In every person, there is a persona. You cannot say whether it's hands, legs or nose, physicality or spirit. When the persona is symmetrical, it is in absolute resonance with itself. Each part is in harmony with every other part, and then you have achieved a good life in this world. But good life is not just for one day. As you grow, your goodness should also grow. As you grow physically old, your beauty should also grow. That does not mean physical beauty. When physical beauty is transferred to the mind, it becomes love. When that is transferred to a central core, love changes to truth. When it is further taken to the spirit, truth becomes goodness.

Your whole life is a life-long program which is hampered day and night by your environment, and hereditary factors. Suppose that at the age of twenty you go to a psychiatrist and find that you have schizophrenia. When did it start? At the time when your father and mother were lying together and making love, the chromosomes that came from them made a binding with a defect. And it waits, lying dormant in you, till you are twenty. Then it comes out. Do you have any control over it? Has the doctor any control over it? Is there any medicine on the market to restructure your chromosomes? There is an impossibility about it. In any case, whatever ailment affects you or distorts your persona, you need freedom from it. Freedom is sometimes gained by giving up this body and getting another. But suicide is not the way, because you do not know whether the next body you get will be better than the present, or worse. So you have to work out the path of your life with proper adherence to actual things, truth of being, goodness in life and beauty in your vision. The way to release yourself from all these anomalies is called *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is a science by itself.

Mokṣa is marked by the termination of any urge or impulse that disturbs the tranquillity of consciousness. It culminates in the state where nothing is desired or want-

ing in the self. A number of factors disturb the self's tranquillity. They are *nāma* (name), *vāk* (word), *manas* (mind), *sankalpa* (imagination), *citta* (memory), *dhyāna* (absorption), *vijñāna* (specific knowledge), *bala* (sense of vigor, which is spiritually, mentally and physically felt), *anna* (food that is daily consumed), *ap* (water, atmosphere and moisture that is required to maintain the function of the body), *tejas* (heat or thermal aspects of the external environment and internal metabolism), *ākāśa* (the enveloping space), *smara* (recall of memory), *aśa* (the chain of desires) and *prāṇa* (the inevitable contingency to breath). Although these are termed as *tattva*, they do not refer to the Absolute, (*brahman*).

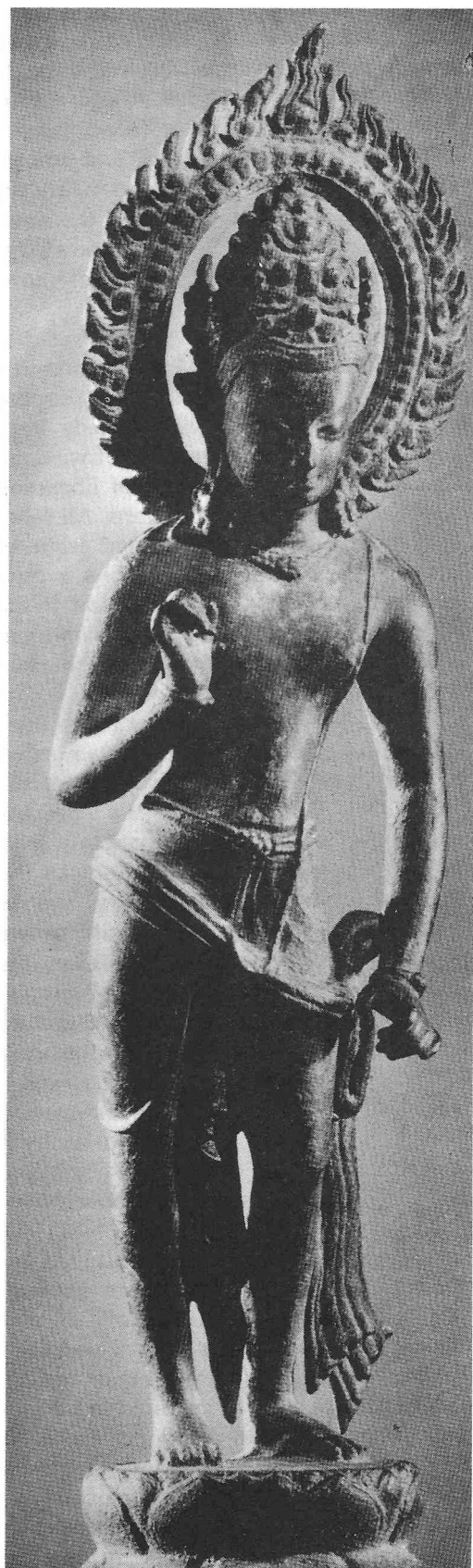
Until realization becomes a fully manifested identity of the self with the Absolute, consciousness will have to undergo many encounters with every item that is mentioned above. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* all these items are called *alpa* or *tuccha*. From that the *jīva* has to enter into the infinite and indescribable. That does not come from reading books, doing exercises or undergoing any discipline that implies in it the exterior of the doer. It is only arrived at by concentrating on the pure state of the Self and consistently preventing the arousal of any passion with regard to the items listed above.

In Indian philosophy and mysticism, there are many triads to be reconciled with. A few of these are to be clearly understood because one has to relate with each of these in one's daily life of thoughts, experiences and activities. One such is the three constituent factors of the Self: *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. Another is *satyam jñānam anantam*: the infinitude of the knowledge concerning truth which stands for the Absolute. Another set of three which is important in our experiential context is the gross, the subtle and the causal. In correspondence with them we have the three states of the wakeful, dream, and dreamless sleep. At the experiential level are the three nature modalities: *sattva* (pure and clean), *rajas* (passionate), and *tamas* (inertial and depressive). There are

three spatial divisions: outer space, the atmosphere and the terrestrial; and three divisions of time: past present and future. There are three states of consciousness: the conscious, subconscious and unconscious. The three factors of action are the actor, the actor's motivation and the result of action. Three aspects of the knowledge situation are the knower, the act of knowing and the known.

Those who are intensely motivated to obtain liberation should have a thorough insight into the meaning and the purpose for which the above given triads have been conceived by the masters of wisdom. On the whole, the concept of liberation signifies the goal of all religions. All religions think of a pure and sacred origin of the Self. In the Semitic religions a pure and perfect God is the origin of life. In the several schools of the Indian subcontinent *brahman*, which stands for the beginningless and endless unerring truth, is the source of all body manifestations. In Buddhism, pure awareness, uncontaminated by any trace of ego, is the origin of the Self. In all these religions, the pure becomes the impure. In Christianity it is considered as the 'Fall', in Islam as the tragedy of becoming deceptive; and in Hinduism, it is losing the clarity of the true nature of the Self. In Buddhism it is identifying with the aggregate of impressions born of socio-physical conditioning and habit formation. Whatever be their differences in explaining the Self, all religions seek to reverse the transformation that came to the original. In Christianity it is salvation. For the Hindus it is liberation. For the Buddhist it is the cessation of cyclic birth and death.

Three ideal states are conceived by those who seek freedom from psycho-physical bondage. The first is of a normal person, living his or her allotted period of time on earth, carrying out his or her assigned duties, with a rich mind in harmony with oneself, with the world, and with God. This is the ideal of most people on earth. The second ideal is of a person who can penetrate into the various aspects of the inner consciousness and go into the



uncharted areas of the spirit. Such a person makes continuous progress in the adventures of the soul, so to say and can lead all those who trust him/her to the mysterious planes of moral adventures and spiritual fulfillment. The third ideal is to leave behind all trappings of the phenomenal world and its allures so that one can go beyond everything realistic into the freedom of transcendence. The last form of liberation or emancipation is considered the highest by the knower of *brahmavidyā*, the science of the Absolute. In Buddhism these three states are considered as those of an *arhat*, a *bodhisattva* and a *buddha*. The Hindus speak of them as a *sadhu*, a *mahātma* and a *jīvan mukta*.

Each person can aspire according to one's knowledge and work out one's fate or destiny in accordance with his physical, psychic, moral and spiritual ability. There is no outer compulsion inflicted on anyone to attain these ideal states. If one prefers to go from the first stage to the second, and the second to the third by working out one's perfection through several lives that is considered to be the state of graded release or gradual emancipation.

If it so happens that one finds oneself endowed with all the details of the true nature of one's own self, one is welcome to renounce one's station in life with all its duties and plunge straight away into the program of obtaining release. If a person's spiritual absorption goes beyond the sensory and mental transactions, and if it transcends the duality of subject object relationship and enters into an absorption from which one does not return to psycho-physical consciousness, that absorption is called *nirvikalpa samādhi*. After attaining such a state, if no residual seed of desire is left in the psyche, one is fully liberated. That state is called *nirbīja samādhi*. There is no difference between the fully released person free of all personal taints (*mul'ta puruṣa*) and the Absolute. Such is *mokṣa*.

Thus *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* lead a person from one stage of perfection to another. Ultimately that course leads to total perfection and emancipation, *pūrṇa mukti*. ♦

Karnatic Music Research Report

Manu Narayanan

In the month of May a music seminar is conducted at the Fernhill Gurukula. For the purpose of participating in this event and with the aim of joining the Gurukula, I came to Ooty. Guru Nitya is a septuagenarian maintaining his youth. His versatile knowledge is not limited only to the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and modern sciences, but also embraces the fields of music, astrology, literature, etc. In music he has done much research. Let me make this report under his light.

We had five concerts of Karnatic music, performed live at the Gurukula, and then some videos were shown of famous Western musicians. Among the video cassettes shown were Ludwig Van Beethoven's Fourth and Seventh Symphonies, a piano solo by Vladamir Horowitz in Moscow, the musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, by Norman Jewison and the *Mahābhārata* by Peter Brook.

The Fourth Symphony composed by Beethoven attracted my attention as a subject for comparative music study. The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam was conducted by Carlos Cleiber. One thing I felt was that the love in *Śankarabhārana*, the valor in the *Rāga Natta*, the compassion inherent in the *Rāga Sahnana*, the romantic atmosphere in *Hindola* – all these were present in the symphon but according to Western culture. The *adagio* movement is more similar to the scale *Śankarabhārana*, the 29th *Rāga* of Venkatamakhi's *Melahartha* chart. The *allegro vivace* was like a beautiful sculpture out of different *Murchanas* of a *Rāga*. The *allegro ma non troppo* created for me an image of a large ship floating in a turbulent ocean. For *poco sostenito vivace* the impression

made was that of nothing but the *nada prapancami*; in it was combined the dialectics of eternal peace and the turbulence of an agitated mind. The music seemed to be a wonderful picture being painted by the conductor. The conductor Mr. Carlos Kleiber's actions were found to have a similarity with *tantra vidyā*. It is good to notice how the music conductor has conceived the whole composition of such a great musician as Beethoven.

I believe the purpose of music is to eliminate our little ego and to identify ourselves with the macrocosm, at least for the time of listening. Music has a quality of transcendence in it: the transcending of time and space. While listening, you forget where you are, who you are, and you forget your past and future. Everything merges into music. From the listener's point of view, the listener, the act of listening and the music are not different at that time. From the point of view of the singer, the singer, the act of singing and the song become one, losing their individualities. This is the greatness of music.

I was really quite surprised to discover the universality of music when I requested some of the inmates of the Narayana Gurukula to listen to certain *rāgas* that I played on my violin. The specialty of my listeners was that they were neither students of music nor musicians. So I was fortunate to get listeners who had no prejudices about what I was playing, I did not give them any information beforehand about the *rāgas* I played.

On a midnight, one of my well-wishers and friends accepted the invitation to listen to some of my late night *rāgas*. It was a starlit night. She gave me

this letter later: "I am essentially a lay person when it comes to music. Although I have been drawn to it, like probably every person, my intrinsic inertia, depressions, etc., have prevented my full immersion into the world of harmony and melody. It is like walking through a garden being aware that beauty abounds, but being unable to move towards it. Now it seems that things are changing. Your music is changing me, changing my appreciation of it. Calling me from my darkness with glimpses of what is possible, not intellectually for that is secondary, but spiritually. It calls me to come and lose myself. To leave behind what I have been running from. Although as yet I cannot tell *pañcama* from *śadja* or even recall the specific name or melody of what you play, my heart, mind, and spirit all feel a familiarity which brings peace. It is like coming home at last. It is like being understood. I always wanted to fly with the birds free from the bounds of earth, to soar high and melt into the sun. Often I sit at Guru's window and watch as they effortlessly glide through the valley. When you are playing you are really flying. It is as if each time you are climbing higher and higher. There is a joy in that, the joy of feeling another spirit soaring to its own destiny."

After a rainy evening when the day was merging into night, I asked another friend to listen meditatively to what I played and comment something about his "imperience" (imperience is a word Guru Nitya has formulated as a converse of experience, because "ex" refers to something outside of us). I played quite elaborately the *Rāga Todi*. I was more than surprised to listen to his explanation of his "imperience." He said it took him into depths of sadness from missing someone very dear to him and then his mood fluctuated into the beautiful memories of the presence of that person. Towards the middle of the *Rāga* elaboration I did "*śruti bheda*m" by avoiding the notes *śadja* and *pañcama*. *Todi* is a major scale endowed with excellent grace, for which no parallel can be seen in any of Western classical music.

Such is the melody and *bhāva* of this *Rāga*. Doing "*śruti bheda*" using the notes *ṛsabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *dhaivata* and *niṣāda* of *Todi* will create the *Rāga Mohanan*. Deep sadness is supposed to be the emotion created by *Todi*. *Mohana* is a joyous *Rāga*, still it was played on the basis of the *Rāga Todi*. So the emotion formed in my listener's heart was very relevant and showed his sincerity and standard of listening.

Another respected friend of mine agreed to listen to my violin on a beautiful evening. I selected the popular and simple *Rāga Mohana* for him. *Mohana* is a *Rāga* universally liked by all. It does not have much complexity in it and has a quality to immediately attract a listener. The emotion inherent in it is joy. My friend's explanation was capable of convincing me of the commonality present in *Rāgas*. He said that this *Rāga* created very clear visual images in him of a wonderful spring season. He was able to see a vast variety of colorful flowers blooming, birds chirping, butterflies fluttering, beautiful hills and valleys, and a softly shining sun spread out everywhere.

Sound is said to be divided into the *ahata* and the *anāhata*. The *ahata* is the external sound and the *anāhata* is the sound within us. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* it is asked of the reader to meditate upon the *anāhata* as *brahman*. Guru Nitya in his commentary on the first mantra in the ninth *brāhmaṇa* of the fifth chapter of this *Upaniṣad*, explains the *anāhata* as the sound which you can hear if you close your ears by putting two fingers in them, closing your eyes, holding your breath, and listening. It is at first like the sound of a blazing fire. Then you come to hear the constant playing of a *tambura* by a *gandharva* behind your earlobes. It is like the drone of a bee. In silent moments, if you give ears, you will definitely come to hear this sound of the *anāhata*.

Thanks to my dear friends and Guru Nitya for helping me in my study project. ♦

Book Review

Deborah Buchanan

Within the historical panorama of Bharata, or Greater India, numerous philosophical and religious traditions have flourished, and over the centuries many of these strands have intermingled, creating a dense and rich cultural horizon. Emerging from this background is the *Saundaryalaharī*. A Sanskrit poem of one hundred verses, it is a work both vital and enigmatic. The *Saundaryalaharī* is claimed as an essential text by the Tantric Śrīvidyā schools, a heterodox form of Hindu worship centered on the Devī, or goddess. At the same time, it is also considered to be one of the final works of the ninth century philosopher Śankarācārya, staunchest proponent of *advaita vedānta*, or non-dual monism. The position that the *Saundaryalaharī* occupies between these two often contradictory traditions highlights essential characteristics of the history of Indian philosophy and of the poem itself.

From the prehistoric Indus Valley culture of Mohenjodaro through its conquest by the Aryans, the incursions of Central Asian nomads, Arab traders, and finally to Mogul conquest and European colonization, Indian cultural development has relied upon recurring revaluations of earlier thought in the light of challenging new interactions. Each era has remolded its philosophical inheritance to its own necessities. When Śankara was wandering throughout India as a mendicant teacher and writing his vast, erudite commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the major factors on the cultural field were:

- a degenerate Hinduism that was both exaggerated and divided;
- the proliferation of heterodox practices under the umbrella of this degeneration;
- a strong challenge to Hinduism by an intellectually spare, reform-minded

Buddhism;

- and the expansion of South Indian kingdoms and culture into Southeast Asia, coupled with the cosmopolitan urbanity of the Malabar Coast (home to Śankara) where Christian, Chinese and Indian traditions converged along trade routes.

Upon this multivalent stage, Śankara began his *bhāṣyas*, or commentaries. In these and in his famous debates with Buddhist philosophers, Śankara resurrected and reinvigorated the essential philosophical insights of the early Upaniṣadic *ṛṣis*. The Upaniṣads present an uncompromising vision of unified Beingness which is seamless, without division in time or space, and which sustains all the variegated individualities that we relate to in our transactional lives. It is this world view that Śankara restated in a form unembellished by religious dogma.

Numerous Tantric schools flourished at this time and they practiced a spirituality which consciously contradicted all the strictures of a classist, authoritarian brahmanism. Debate and rebuttal had been Śankara's procedure with both a distorted Hinduism and its rival Buddhism. With Tantra the revaluation was more subtle. A deep veneration for the primal energy of manifestation, *śakti*, often personified as the goddess or Devī, is the potent nucleus of Tantra that Śankara extricated from its ritualistic encrustations. In his two final works, the *Saundaryalaharī* and the *Śivānandalaharī*, Śankara used Tantra's intense and intimate identification with feminine nature to poetically sculpt his presentation of essential Upaniṣadic truth. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, he draws on the deepest of Indian traditions, its Dravidian contemplative culture (often thought to be the prehistoric source of Tantric practice), to restate in a refined

poetic manner the same sparse insights of his *advaita* commentaries. By drawing in and sublimating the devotional and heterodox currents of his time, Śankara enriches the strict purity of his philosophy.

The *Saundaryalaharī* is divided into two, sometimes three, distinct sections. The first forty-one verses are the *Ānandalaharī*, often separately published, as is done here, and considered the most important section of the book. The second section consists of verses forty-two through one hundred; verses ninety-two through one hundred are sometimes grouped as a third section. Together they all comprise the *Saundaryalaharī*. *Laharī* which translates as intoxication or "an overwhelming subjective or objective experience of an item of intelligence or of beauty upsurging in the mind of man" (Nataraja Guru). That factor of intoxication or flooding of consciousness is present throughout all sections of the book. In the first forty-one verses, *ānanda* is used in the sense of delight or bliss and refers to that experience of value which is subjectively appreciated. *Saundarya* refers to beauty, to an aesthetic value appreciation which is objective. Taken together, *ānanda* (delight) and *saundarya* (beauty) constitute an overwhelming, intoxicating experience which is both subjective and objective, inward and outward, one that permeates consciousness and allows a person to participate in the continuous pulsation of the neutral Absolute into a magnetic, compelling manifestation of Beauty.

In the last 1200 years, there have been innumerable publications of the *Saundaryalaharī* in India, some with commentaries, some with accompanying paintings of the goddess, many with a variety of *mantras* or *yantras* for each of the verses. It has continued to be used as a devotional text, its verses chanted and meditated upon. However, until 1958 when the Harvard Oriental Series edition by Professor Norman Brown was published, there had been only two publications of the *Saundaryalaharī* in any European language. Brown's translation and comments are

well grounded in an honest, thoughtful appreciation of the work. They falter, however, on his too cautious, academic literalism, and very little of the *Saundaryalaharī*'s poetic or mystical tenor is allowed to come forth.

In 1988 an English translation and commentary by Nataraja Guru was published by East-West University in India. Nataraja Guru brought to bear on his study of the *Saundaryalaharī* a philosophical vision steeped in the multiple cross-currents that were formed by the intersection of Indian tradition and the disciplines of modern Western science. The son of a prominent social reformer of South India, Nataraja Guru received his first degrees in zoology and geology. He went on to a D.Litt. in educational philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, later teaching at a Quaker school in Geneva, Switzerland. This varied background nurtured in him an ability to analyze beneath surface appearance to structural foundations and to look for interdisciplinary coherence.

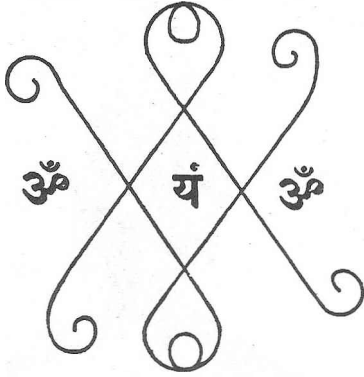
Controversy has long surrounded the authorship of the *Saundaryalaharī* with many scholars feeling that it is wrongly attributed to Śankara. Nataraja Guru, however, saw it as another expression, in different form and language, of Śankara's non-dual vision. Śankara's earlier *bhāṣyas* were written in what Nataraja Guru calls meta-language, which is a language about language and which utilizes abstract signs. It is algebraic, highly rational and conceptual, and is a language that discusses structure and assigns relationship. According to Nataraja Guru, the *Saundaryalaharī* was written in proto-language, that earliest and persisting sub-stratum of communication that relies on image and visual reverberation rather than on intellectual discourse. Proto-language, geometric in orientation, is that archaic seedbed which is home to poetry, music, and the variety of symbolic art forms. In meta-language we are speaking rationally about a conceptual formation. In proto-language we experience an image in the immediate present and through many levels of perception. Much of ancient poetry, including

that of Sanskrit, was composed to operate on simultaneous levels. Each phrase was intended to reverberate with many different meanings—linguistic, historic, aesthetic, spiritual—as well as to function at the level of pure sound configuration. Nataraja Guru understood that Śankara was using the prehistoric but potent symbols of Tantra and Devī worship to present *advaita vedānta* non-verbally. A written work can be considered non-verbal when words are used as allusive images that resonate in our universal consciousness and awaken in us sympathetic states of being and understanding. In Nataraja Guru's study of the *Saundaryalaharī* he emphasized the nature of the different languages used by Śankara and the position of proto-language in revealing the nature of Absolute Reality to man.

Nataraja Guru's student and successor is the present commentator on the *Ānandalaharī*, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati. Guru Nitya was raised in a traditional matriarchal compound in South India and comes from a family of scholars and poets. His studies in philosophy were conducted along two complementary tracks, as a university student in Kerala and Madras and as a mendicant throughout all of India. As a wandering student he lived with the Dutch scholar of comparative religions, Dr. Mees, the mystic Ramana Maharshi, and at the camp of Mahatma Gandhi. Supplementing Guru Nitya's work in philosophy were graduate studies in psychology at the University of Bombay. After his period of studies, he spent eighteen months in solitary retreat, delving deeply into his own physical and spiritual nature. The rigors of this isolation laid a foundation of contemplative discipline and mystic intuition that adds a significant dimension to his work on the *Saundaryalaharī*.

To this commentary, Guru Nitya brings a strong background in the schools of Indian philosophy, a comprehensive psychological knowledge and an acute insight into the nature of aesthetics. The *Saundaryalaharī*'s often arcane symbols are clarified by his understanding of the





book's inner structure and its mythological references. Verse seventeen is an appropriate example. At first reading it seems to be merely an intricate listing, somewhat devotional, of various goddesses. Guru Nitya, however, illuminates the basic psychological states that the goddesses are indicating and the characteristics and relationships of speech that they represent.

It is significant that Śankara wrote the *Saundaryalaharī* as a poem to be sung in praise of the divine Śakti. When chanted, words move beyond their solely rational import and they become carriers of Beauty. In this way, language moves beyond syntax. *Nāda* or sound is, in fact, one of the central concepts of the *Saundaryalaharī*. As *avyākta* (the unmanifest) unfolds outward and becomes modulated, its first tremor is that of sound. Before we touch or see, we hear. The reality of the One is first made tangible to us as sound, and sound is the basis of manifested consciousness. The meaning of the neutral Absolute bursts as a value into our awareness, a process called *sphoṭa* in Sanskrit. As such, sound has a transforming effect and in the *Saundaryalaharī* many verses concentrate on its nature and function.

Each verse, as well, has its own particular *mantra*, or sound syllable, which when concentrated upon in a proper state of attention can help to align the meditator's consciousness, to direct it to an awareness of unlimited Being. Guru Nitya has stripped away the popular mis-

conceptions surrounding these sound units and presents them, as intended, as aural tools for focusing one's consciousness. In the great proliferation of *śakti*, the *līla* of creation, we first hear; then we see the world's shimmering beauty. What was vast, indiscernible and beyond comprehension—the mystery of all beginnings—now becomes sound and sight interweaving into innumerable configurations. Along with each *mantra*, there are corresponding *yantras* or geometric forms whose visual patterns also work to discipline the individual's consciousness. Guru Nitya, in many of his verse commentaries, clarifies the relationships between *mantra*, *yantra* and their activating dynamics, *tantra*, and he highlights their essential nature as methods of transformation.

Implicit in a discussion of Tantra is an understanding of *yoga*, which is the dialectical pairing of polarities in such a manner that they can, through practice and concentration, be united into a meaningful whole. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, there are two essential and recurring polarities:

- *Śiva* and *Śakti*: the masculine ground of being from which feminine becoming arises and to which she gives power and meaning;

- the goddess and the devotee, where the goddess is that great universal circumference which the devotee relates to as an individual point and into which he eventually merges.

The splendid and alluring *Śakti* emerges from the mute and ash-covered *Śiva*. As the dancing goddess, *Śakti* rains down art, music, mystical vision and, in fact, the essence of our very life upon us. This poetic allegory is descriptive of both cosmic functions and psychological processes. In the imagery of the goddess which Śankara employs in the *Saundaryalaharī*, her body is used in the manner of traditional Indian aesthetics: as a canvas upon which to paint spiritual insights. It is through the palpability of her body that the devotee begins to apprehend what is non-manifested. And it is through her beauty—its sound, sight, touch and smell—that the source of all creation is seen and

eventually merged with.

As Guru Nitya writes in his book *Love and Devotion*: "The archetypal mother image in the *Saundaryalaharī* is used as an edifice on which to sculpt the intricacies of man-woman dialectics, the virtues and paradoxes of the female psyche, and the semantic possibilities and even impossibilities that highlight shades of bliss ranging from simple sensuality to the all-consuming conflagration of Beauty that is interchangeable with terms like Love, Total Awareness, Wonder and Absolute Transcendence."

The particular iconographies of the goddess in the *Saundaryalaharī* (or in Tantric art as a whole) are intended to be used as supports for meditation, as a way to approach the one unmanifested Reality. When the devotee finally realizes that he is That, that the cosmic and psychological aspects are but conjoined counterparts, the iconographic tools disappear, as does the individual. This understanding of Tantric practice has often been a stumbling block as students become enamored of the images that are there only as a pathway.

Erotics is an inescapable topic in a work related to Tantra and Tantra has often been perceived as a yoga of sex, where sexual intercourse is the ultimate method for realizing reality and power. This is too narrow an understanding of the erotics which suffuse the *Saundaryalaharī*. In the *Saundaryalaharī* the erotic pull is that of the god Eros. It is an erotic mysticism, spoken of by both Plotinus and St. Augustine in the Western tradition, and which is the attraction of the individual toward God or the Good. The act of sex is the final, extroverted manifestation of eros in the physical realm, one way of actualizing the erotic sensation but not its source. In both the Christian Catholic Church and in Hindu *Vaiṣṇavism*, the individual aspirant, whether male or female, is likened to the lover of God, either the bride of Christ or Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa's cowherd. Sensual imagery and male-female attractions are forms used to describe the relationship between the individual person and the all-

encompassing divine reality. Similar literary and philosophical methods can be seen in St. John of the Cross' *Dark Night of the Soul* and Jayadeva's *Gītā Govindam*. This relationship can be put in a more secular language: conscient and articulating spirit is in constant dialectical interplay with taming and transforming matter, as is beautifully elaborated by Sri Aurobindo in his poem *Savitri*. This is not to say there is no sex in erotics, but we need to rephrase our language and understanding: sex is not the ultimate union but is rather the functional dynamics of the word of God and the Word that is God.

In India at the end of the dry season, the whole landscape is parched. The cracked earth and the shriveled plants long for water. Slowly in the darkening east, the monsoon clouds gather. As they coalesce, a charge fills the air and everything is electrified. At the moment of nearly insupportable suspense, the rains break free and wash over the world. This intense polarization, waiting and yearning, culmination, release and fulfillment are the erotic passions that pulse through the *Saundaryalaharī*. It is the song of desire and union between the Devī and her silent husband, Śiva, and one that finds resonance within our own hearts as the waves of beauty billow up from their dance. ♦

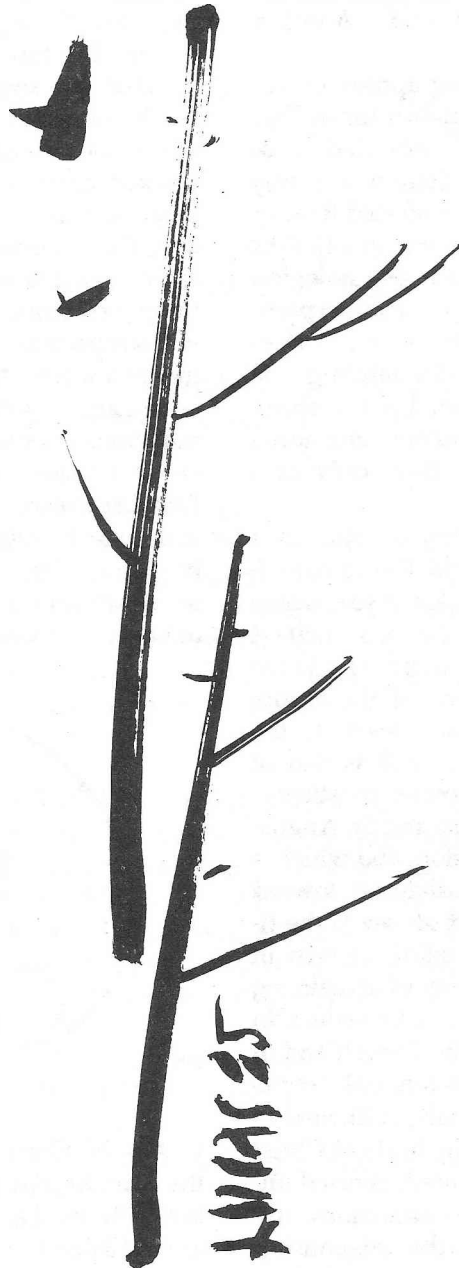


Copies of Guru Nitya's commentary on the *Saundaryalaharī* (published in November 1994 by East-West University Press) are available in both India and the United States.

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