

GURUKULAM

VOLUME XII • 1996

THIRD QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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Nature's Mystery

One evening I slipped out of the house, following the sound of the waves until I reached the beach where the world opened up. No longer hemmed in by houses, street lights and electric wires, the night sky spread out to infinity above the wide ocean. I walked along the shore, breathing in the fresh salt air, savoring my solitude, until I became aware of another woman, also walking along in silence. As she seemed wrapped in the same peace and wonder, her presence was not a disturbance but rather a deepening of the quiet. Her thoughts came to me so softly that I wasn't sure whether she was actually speaking them out loud:

*Underlying the beauty of the spectacle (of life in all its varied manifestations as it has appeared, evolved and sometimes died out) there is meaning and significance. It is the elusiveness of that meaning that haunts us, that sends us again and again into the natural world where the key to the riddle is hidden. **

I thought of how often, in our classes, friends had mentioned times when they had gone "into the natural world" as instances of spontaneous and effortless experiences of transcendence, when for a moment they "knew," with no gap between the knower and what was known. They described these moments as ones of complete fullness, but fleeting. For some, they come in the forest where sunlight filters through deep green shade, for others on the crests of mountains looking over ranges of snowy peaks, for others in meadows of wildflowers. That night, for my companion and I, it was at the edge of the sea. In her it elicited further questions:

Contemplating the teeming life of the shore, we have an uneasy sense of the communication of some universal truth that lies just beyond our grasp. What is the message signaled by the hordes of diatoms, flashing their microscopic lights in the night sea? . . . And

*what is the meaning of so tiny a being as the transparent wisp of protoplasm that is a sea lace, existing for some reason inscrutable to us – a reason that demands its presence by the trillion amid the rocks and weeds of the shore? The meaning haunts and ever eludes us, and in its very pursuit we approach the ultimate mystery of Life itself. **

**Rachel Carson, The Edge of the Sea*

The study of science started right there, human beings pondering the structure and nature of the world around them, seeking to unravel its secrets, sensing that what they perceived behaved according to some order or laws that they might ultimately hope to fathom. Those first inquiring minds have been followed by many generations of others who have sought far and wide, enjoying phenomenal success in understanding the natural world, in minute detail as well as comprehensively. In the process, a vast edifice of scientific inquiry, history, education and bureaucracy has been created. Humanity has gained deep insight into the laws governing the cosmos, from those which determine how a one-celled being replicates itself, to those pertaining to the functioning of the whole universe. Despite these gains in human knowledge, there are still boundaries where the biologists, chemists and physicists come to the brink of the unknown.

Religion has its roots in the same need to find meaning in the world and to understand the place of the human in the grand scheme. Ancient writings like the *Vedas* are representative of the religious wonderings of humanity around the globe – they are full of questions and imaginative answers about the origin and sustenance of the cosmos and life in it:

How does the wind not cease to blow?

How does the mind take no repose?

Why do the waters, seeking to reach truth, never at any time cease flowing?

*A mighty wonder in the midst of creation
moves, thanks to Fervor, on the waters' surface.
... Tell me of that Support – who may he be?
Atharva Veda X.7: 37-39*

*From blazing Ardor Cosmic Order came
and Truth; from thence was born
the obscure night;
from thence the Ocean with its billowing waves.
From Ocean with its waves was born the year
which marshals the succession
of nights and days,
controlling everything that blinks the eye.
Rg Veda X.190: 1-2*

From these earliest of writers through century after century to those of today, poets have found inspiration in nature, walking a country lane, lying under the starry sky, peering into the heart of a flower, anticipating the rosy hues of dawn. Over and over, generation after generation, in every culture, poets have encountered nature, often with the passion of lovers:

*We ran as if to meet the moon
That slowly dawned behind the trees. . . .
And in the hush we joined to make
We heard, we knew we heard the brook.
A note as from a single place,
A slender tinkling fall that made
Now drops that floated on the pool
Like pearls, and now a silver blade.*

Robert Frost, *Going For Water*

What is true for poets is true for artists as well. From the painters who decorated caves with images of the animals they valued to artists of today working in every imaginable media, nature has provided inspiration, whether as foil, backdrop, antagonist or protagonist. When we step outside, shedding the shelter and limitations of roofs and walls and all the gadgets of technology, to look and to listen, to touch and to smell, to sit and to walk, we join the scientist and the artist in confronting "the ultimate mystery of Life itself." Sometimes hidden meaning unfolds to us, sometimes we are baffled or stymied by nature. But we go back again and again to be nourished, not only by beauty and se-

renity, but also by the challenges and questions which lead us deeper towards our source.

The seers of the world have preceded us in this quest and left the record of their ponderings and conclusions to help us gain greater insight into the mystery. It is as though they are compassionately leading us by the hand to a viewpoint overlooking a vast panorama, and pointing in the direction we need to look. In his *Darsana Mālā*, Narayana Guru uses gentle words of poetry whose echoes go back as far as the *Vedas* yet speak clearly to us today:

*The one Self alone
burns as fire, blows as wind,
showers as rain, supports as earth,
and flows as river.*

The mystery which we encounter is that the multiplicity of forms and actions are inextricably knit together in a single whole, so that all are governed by precise laws. Although in our role as observers, we often divorce ourselves from what we observe, Guru reminds us that we are an integral part of the cosmos, governed by the same laws, that the consciousness we experience as our own personal self is not different from the consciousness pertaining to all the details of the nature and meaning of the cosmos:

*Going upward as prāṇa,
downward as apāna,
remaining actionless, the one alone
beats, murmurs and pulsates in the nerves.*

That which we are pondering is that which enables us to ponder. That is "the key to the riddle" which we feel so close to in nature. Guru wants us to know it is as familiar as the wind and the rain, as intimate as our own breath or thought. He wants us not only to be close to nature but to know we are not separate from it: "above everything else, today and tomorrow, the one alone exists."

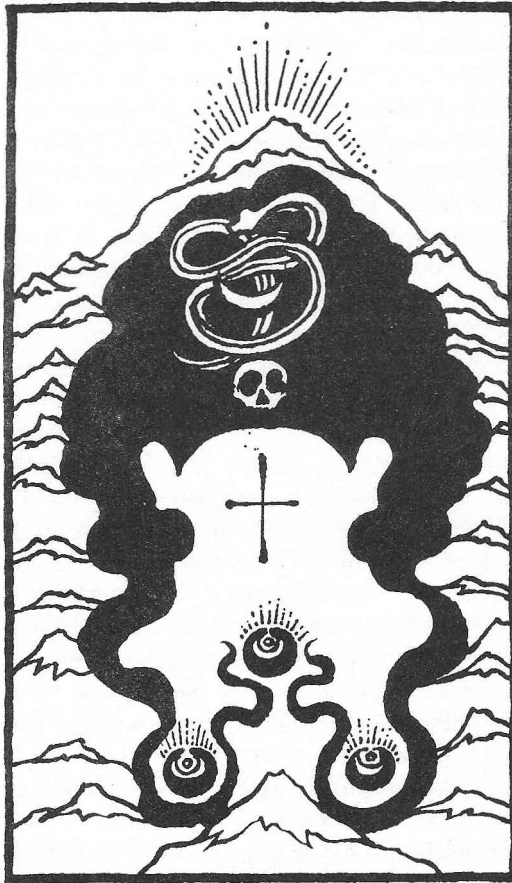
Nancy Yeilding

Svānubhavagīti Śatakam:

Experiential Aesthetics and Imperiential Transcendence

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



Verse 97

When the Beauty whose face resembles
a bunch of fully bloomed flowers
showed agitation on seeing, in Your brown-matted hair,
the anklet-wearing Ganga amidst the snake, bones and crescent,
You bowed down to Her and Consoled Her.
I pray, please show the same condescension to me also.

This verse is written like a symbolic picture in abstraction. As the main subject under description is Sadāśiva who is not to be depicted in anthropomorphic description, in this verse the Guru is very careful not to paint any realistic figure. He uses only certain suggestions to express that a triangular situation is implied which is transformed into a quaternium by the addition of himself. Only certain items which are usually associated with Śiva are indicated here to suggest the Lord, such as brown-matted hair, bone, snake and crescent.

Amidst these items the poet highlights an anklet which symbolizes the presence of Ganga. The direct reference to the heavenly river is to indicate water, the second symbol of Śiva's eight phenomenal forms. Earlier we have shown how in the *Kumārasambhava* Śiva is described as an eight-fold manifestation of earth, water, fire, air, space, sun, moon and the priest. The same ideogram is used here with only partial description. The advantage of that is there is no direct reference to a human figure as such.

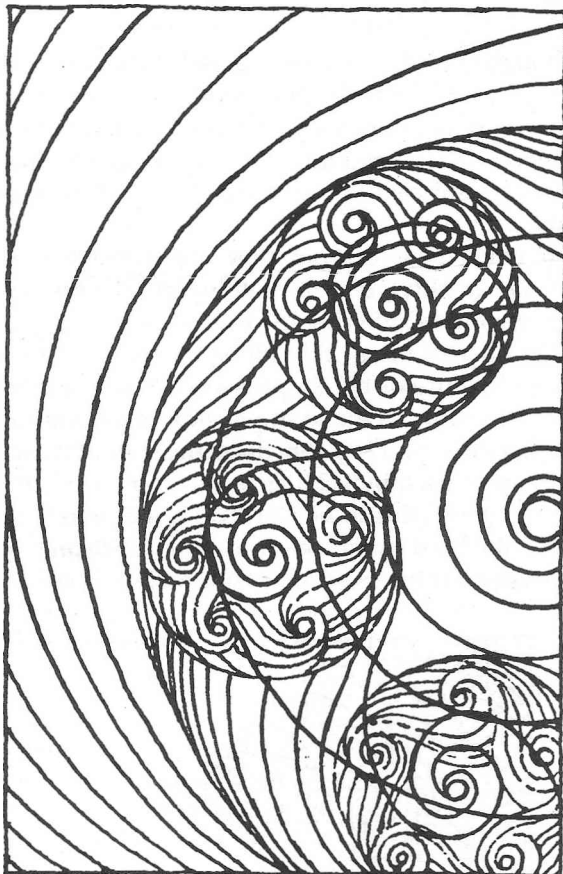
In folk psychology there is always rivalry between two women loved by the same man. Hinting at that, here it is said that there was agitation in the face that otherwise was as beautiful as a bunch of fully opened flowers. As in an abstract painting, this does not show the detailed face of a woman with all its features. Parvati is presented without openly mentioning her name or describing her features, while Ganga is mentioned only as a river. Femininity is brought in with the presence of an anklet amidst the conventional symbols of Śiva. A very difficult ensemble is attempted here by the poet which even a painter would find hard to present in abstraction. To the triangular configuration of Śiva, Ganga and Parvati, the poet now adds himself as the fourth.

The popular attitude is to assign superiority to the Lord and second place to his consort. The legend of Śiva bowing down at the feet of his consort is quoted here as a precedent of Śiva not conceding to the decorum of superior-inferior positions. Like Parvati and Ganga, the poet is also a lover of Śiva. It is only natural that his mind is also agitated upon seeing that his possible bipolarity with the Lord is already foiled because of the presence of two females who are vying with each other to get the Lord's attention. The poet suggests that he is also a jealous lover and is also entitled to get similar attention from the Lord. As there is already a precedent of Śiva bowing to another, there is no harm in Śiva giving similar attention to another devotee also. Both in the Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite philosophies the Supreme is considered to condescend to be the slave of the slave (*dasa dasa*).

There are many stories in the Śaivite lore that present Śiva as even giving manual service to arrogant people to save his devotees from torture. In South India there is a popular story of a farm hand, Nandanar, who was granted permission by his overseer to worship Śiva if he prepared a rice paddy field for cultivation overnight. Śiva himself came in the guise of a peasant with a plow and bullocks and prepared the field to the satisfaction of the tyrant so that Nandanar could attend the Śiva festival. Thus there is nothing unbecoming in expecting the Lord to show the devotee favor in a manner which suits the occasion.

In verse five we read that there is no difference between Śiva and his devotee. In the present verse the distinction of superior-inferior duality is given up. That is also perfect in a unitive vision of devotion. The

absolute freedom the poet shows is also an indication that he is a fully realized person. *Mokṣa* or realization in the Absolute is described in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* as fearlessness. In writing this verse the poet is afraid of neither social censure nor divine wrath.



Verse 98

Oh You Noumenon, truly transcendent, shining in the heavens,
in the present as it was in the past –
filled with compassion, You enter into the elements
such as earth, water and air.

You have shown Your absolute care to that priceless ruby
from which wafts the fragrance of continuity.

That has not in it any evil which will cause suffering to anyone.

This verse is replete with many metaphors that make sense only to those who are conversant with Śaivite lore. Two principles are to be seen here -- Śiva, the ever-transcendent, and Śakti, Śiva's phenomenal counterpart. According to Śaivite philosophy, all beings are the embodiments of Śiva. Without alienating Himself from the noumenon He alone resides in every living organism as its animating principle. He wraps around Himself the elements fashioned into a corporeal body. In the

world of manifestation he concedes to accept the hegemony of Śakti.

Śakti is reputed to have an undiminishing fragrance. Fragrance in Sanskrit is *vāsanā*. *Vāsanā* is the essence that goes from birth to birth in the process of transmigration such as we read in the present day genetic theory. That is given here as "the fragrance of continuity." Śiva is colorless, whereas Śakti is said to be of magenta color. That is why She is described as a ruby of priceless worth.

Although the role of Śiva is to dissolve the world, He condescends to allow His spouse to increase the world with its varieties of creations. The phenomenon depends entirely on the noumenon. The spirit and light of the noumenon is fashioned into the phenomenon. Thus Śiva lends his own being to be fashioned into all the creatures of the present, just as he allowed in the past also.

Even when people claim they are distressed in the world of *samsāra* (ocean of duality), there is nothing in the essence of the Divine Creatress that generates suffering for anyone. If suffering comes, it is only because of the alienation an individual brings upon himself or herself from the blissful nature of the Supreme to which all creatures truly belong. The five elements included in physical manifestation are *śakti tattvas*, principles of energy. They constitute the stuff of creation.

The soul of each individual has to come from the imperishable Śiva. For the imperishable to be clothed in the perishable seems rather ridiculous. But the Lord condescends to accept such an imprisonment out of His compassion for the creation in which His consort is ever engaged.



Verse 99

What greater misfortune can come to me,
destined to live in this world of distress
filled with grief and lamentation?
Oh King, adorned with the beautiful lunar crescent,
when you dance in frenzy, please
may your moon jar of ecstasy overflow
and drench the world with its sweet sheen.

The dance of Śiva is the dance of destruction. He is destroying a world steeped in distress. The principle implied is the negation of negation. The Indian concept of *samsāra*, the phenomenal world of pain-pleasure duality, is similar to the purgatory of Christian theologians. All the *karmas* accumulated through several circles of birth and death are ultimately to be burned away. After all, this sensuously pleasing world is only a passing show of nescience. Even without anybody's aid, it is fated to die out as a fire burns out. Ordinary death is only a pause, because it burns only the external. The seed of rebirth remains intact. Only in *nirvāṇa* is there final extinction.

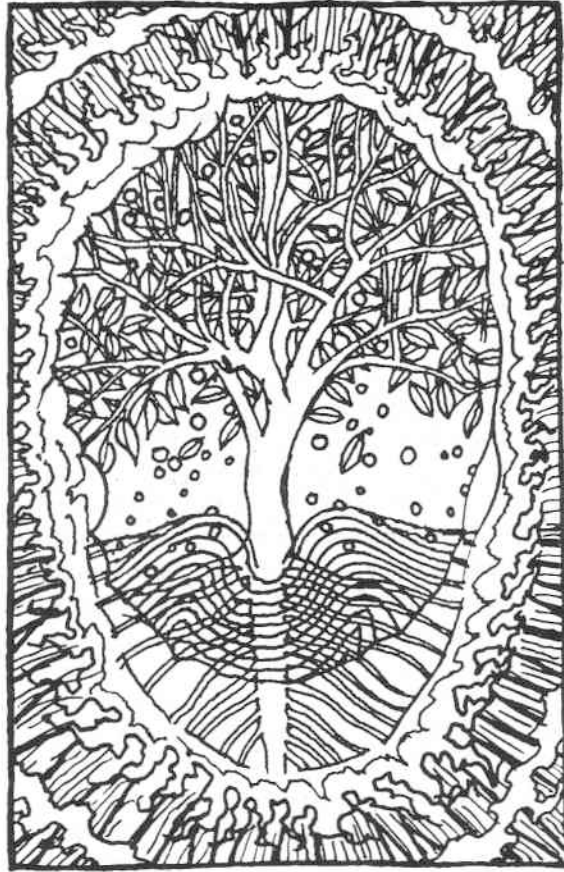
In the *Bhagavad Gītā* it is said that the fire of wisdom burns away all trace of *karma*. Wisdom comes in a sweep in the vision of the Supreme. The cosmic vision which Arjuna had was so very terrifying that he shook with fear and implored the Lord to withdraw the vision.

In the present case the vision comes in the form of Śiva's *tāṇḍava*. In *tāṇḍava* there is a stamping out of the created world, but it is an act of compassion. The configuration that should be frightening is given with a pleasing metaphor of the moon jar spewing out the sweet lunar sheen, which should give only ecstasy to the beholder.

A God-intoxicated person, like a lunatic, has no sense of decorum. The lunar crescent itself is called "the emblem of the lunatic." It is only appropriate that the king of dance appears in an absolutist frenzy to do away with the world where millions have been suffering through many cosmic cycles.

Verse 100

To the bottom the boar has gone,
and to your crown the swan also.
Neither has seen you closely nor distinctly.
You have taken me bodily with senses, mind and all
and swallowed me without any termination of Your dance.
Namaḥ Śivāya, my Lord, Prostrations, Prostrations.



In the opening verse of the *Saundaryā Laharī* of Śankara, Śiva's union with Śakti is spoken of as a condition for the creation of the worlds. In that, Śiva and Śakti are mentioned as counterparts of the Absolute. In the same verse there is reference to the Devi as a supreme principle worshipped by Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

The two references imply that there are two aspects of Śiva to look into. One is timeless and therefore beginningless and endless. The other carries out one of the specific roles of the Indian trinity. The timeless Śiva is *Sadā-Śiva*. Brahma, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are all operating within *Sadā-Śiva*.

To distinguish *Sadā-Śiva*, the All-Transcending, from His own **immanence**, we can think of His immanence as Brahma, the Creator **ever-engaged** in creation, and Viṣṇu, the sustainer **ever-sustaining** what is created. The double role of Śakti or Devi, creation and sustenance, is as though she is a combination of Brahma and Viṣṇu.

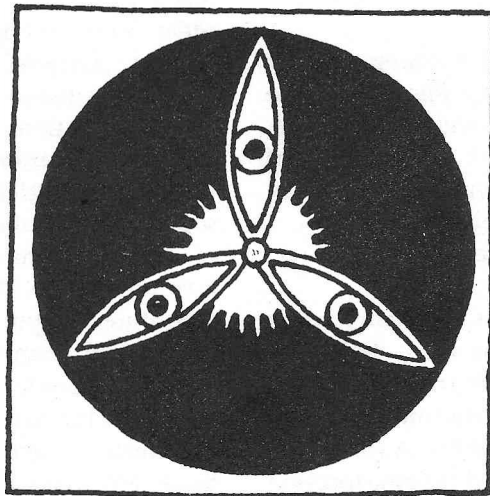
In this work, the mythological story of Brahma and Viṣṇu trying to know about the base and the top of Śiva has been referred to time and again. Now this collection of one hundred verses is closing with the same allusion. It can be better understood if Śiva is seen as a tree with its roots concealed under the earth and its top rising above the clouds, like the beanstalk in the fairy tale "Jack and the Beanstalk." The top of the tree is

always adding new sprouts, which grow into branches. A sprout comes as a vertical factor, but as it grows, it becomes horizontalized. The taproot also descends vertically. Smaller roots branch off horizontally from all sides, while the taproot goes deeper and deeper. Thus the taproot at the bottom and the sprout at the top mark two extreme points of an ascending and descending dialectics.

In the case of an ordinary tree, the taproot and growing top both truncate. But if the entire world principle is seen as a beginningless and endless silent One, continuously bringing forth all the phenomenal changes noticed here, it can only be compared to a Śiva without distinct bottom or top. Brahma is like the sprout, endlessly engaged in the task of creation. Viṣṇu is seen at the bottom. Like a burrowing boar, the root is going endlessly in search of sustenance.

We are not here for long enough to probe either into the beginning nor into the end. The world process can be equated with the dance of Śiva. It is as if, while we are gazing at this mysterious universe, we are swallowed by the Eternal Dancer. In the cosmic dance the entire macrocosm can be seen as one dance of immeasurable form dancing through eons, and within it one can also see the microcosm in which every particle is dancing. We belong both to the macrocosm and to the microcosm.

Narayana Guru closes this *One Hundred Verses on Experiential Aesthetics and Imperiential Transcendence* with his adoration to the Supreme Dancer, using the five-syllabled mantra with which Śiva is propitiated, *Namaḥ Śivāya*. ❖



Praśna Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

*AUM bhadram karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ,
bhadram paśyemākṣabhir yajatrāḥ
sthīrair angais tumbustuvamsas tanūbhiḥ
vyaśema devahitam yadāyuh.
AUM śantiḥ śantiḥ śantiḥ.*

AUM. May we, Oh gods, hear that which is auspicious with our ears. May we, who habitually offer oblations, see that which is auspicious with our eyes. May we, with strong bodies, live the life-span allotted to us by the gods, offering you praises.
AUM peace! peace! peace!

*Svasti na indra vṛdha-sravāḥ,
svasti naḥ pūṣa viśva-vedāḥ,
svastinastarkṣyo aviṣṭa-nemih
svasti no bṛhaspatir dadhātū.
AUM śantiḥ śantiḥ śantiḥ.*

May Indra, of matured learning, bestow well being on us. May Pūṣa (Sun), the knower of all, bestow well-being on us. May Tārṁṣya (Garuda), the annihilator of dangers, bestow well-being on us. May Bṛhaspati bestow well-being on us.
AUM! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Guru: In India, it is customary when one undertakes a serious work to invoke God or one's guru for its fruitful completion. This began in ancient times, with the gurukula system of education. A gurukulam was a school, often located in some forested area, where a teacher and students lived together. The students assembled in the classroom every morning after their daily ablutions. They made a prayer together in an effort to concentrate on the subject the Guru was about to teach. That prayer was

in the form of a śantiḥ pāṭhā (peace invocation). The lesson began when they had prepared themselves in this manner.

Seeker: Why is the word śantiḥ repeated three times in all the peace invocations?

Guru: The ṛṣis have classified three causes of suffering or lack of peace: self-created suffering (*ādhyatmika dukkha*), suffering caused by other beings (*ādhibhautika dukkha*) and suffering caused by fate or the will of God (*ādhidaivika dukkha*). We need relief from all three. That is why śantiḥ (peace) is repeated three times.

Seeker: I have seen that different Upaniṣads begin with different peace invocations. Why?

Guru: Generally, the Upaniṣads that relate to the same Veda have the same śantiḥ pāṭhā. Some belong purely to a Vedic background. They will be in the form of praising various gods and asking for favors. The peace invocations of the present Upaniṣad are a good example. There are others which begin with the essence of the philosophical vision of non-duality.

Seeker: I have heard that the Vedas give primacy to rituals and the Upaniṣads constitute the pure wisdom sifted out of Vedic ritual complexities. So I don't understand the relevance of adopting Vedic stanzas as invocations for the Upaniṣads.

Guru: A śantiḥ pāṭhā is not meant to teach any basic philosophical principle. This is usually done by the Upaniṣad itself. The Upaniṣads are derived from Vedic culture and therefore would lose their foundation if the Vedas were rejected. For this reason they are not altogether discarded. Adopting some of the Vedic stanzas as

peace invocations is not only philosophically meaningful but also adds poetical sweetness.

Seeker: This *Upaniṣad* is appended to the *Atharva Veda*. Why do verses of the *Rg Veda* serve as its *śantiḥ pāṭha*?

Guru: Historians think that the Vedic culture was brought to India by the Aryans from central Asia. The other three *Vedas* belong to that culture while the *Atharva Veda* came from the pre-Aryan culture of India. For this reason, it is not accepted by orthodox Hindus who prefer to adhere strictly to the *Vedas* of the Aryan culture.

Seeker: This peace invocation is in the form of a prayer for well-being and is addressed to a number of *devas*. To whom is the prayer made for hearing and seeing that which is auspicious?

Guru: There are countless phenomena in nature which are inexplicable. The ancients of India conceived of one absolute being controlling everything, but functioning in different ways within different phenomena. They imagined a presiding deity (*deva*) for each natural phenomena. The word *deva* literally means that which, in essence, is brightness. We know that knowledge is an experience of brightness. The poetically minded *ṛṣi* invokes such deities for that which is auspicious. Ultimately, it is a prayer made to the unknown reality which creates the experiences of hearing, seeing, etc., and the value-based directions given to one's own senses.

Seeker: The senses are merely capable of engaging their objects. How can they function with any value orientation?

Guru: It is one's identity as the possessor of the senses that has a value concept. When our value notion gives orientation to the functions of our senses so that they become helpful to the realization of the meaning of life we may consider that we have attained the blessing of the gods. However, when a sense organ is functioning in its natural way, the mind often gets overshadowed. We may become so intensely identified with a particular object that it clouds our Self-awareness. To counteract this, the attitude of being a dispassionate witness to the function of the

senses has to be cultivated. We will then be able to maintain a balanced state of mind even when the senses are engaged with their objects. Spirituality becomes stabilized only in those who attain a well-balanced mind. A witnessing mind also opens the path to the ultimate goal of spirituality. It is therefore to be considered a blessing bestowed on us by the gods.

Seeker: What are the prerequisites to receive the favors of the gods?

Guru: One should have the ability to discriminate between good and bad, the will to stand on the side of good and to employ self-restraint so as not to be tempted by the inauspicious. Only those who have such qualities will have a mind to make such a prayer. It is made by one who is longing for that wisdom which is his ultimate goal. Therefore the prayer for the auspicious also has implicit in it discriminations concerning the goal of life, the willingness to be firm and the self-restraint conducive to its attainment.

Seeker: The prayer is ardently made by seekers of wisdom. But they qualify themselves as those who habitually offer oblations, which is an aspect of rituals.

Guru: In ancient days, one prayerfully offered what was wrongly taken as one's own back to nature. The *ṛṣis* conceived of this as *yajña* or offering oblations. It was a central concept of the *Vedas*. Later, priests changed it into elaborate rituals. *Yajña* in its philosophical sense is described in detail in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Those who consider their life and all their activities as an offering are thus to be understood as those who are of the habit of offering oblations in the wisdom context.

Seeker: What is meant by the auspicious (*bhadram*) mentioned here?

Guru: *Bhadram* literally means that which makes us happy. It also implies goodness. The Vedic hymns and offerings are meant to ensure happiness by obtaining the blessings of the *devas*. The wise will have a sense of detachment and be capable of regarding pleasure and pain as well as good and evil as unavoidable in life. They will never be overcome by pleasure nor overwhelmed by pain. This detachment is

goodness and happiness (*bhadram*) of a different order. This is what is indicated by the wisdom of the *Upaniṣads*.

Seeker: Why are only the eyes and ears mentioned in the peace invocation, when there are three other sense organs?

Guru: Man's principle contact with the world is through seeing and hearing. So these two senses are considered to represent all five. The attainment of wisdom culminates in the transformation of what is heard into what is visualized intuitively, such as when a disciple listens to the words of his guru (*śravaṇa*) and ponders on what is heard (*manana*), transforming it into a meditation which finally culminates in an inner vision called *darśana*. The most auspicious sight eyes can see is the vision of ultimate Reality.

Seeker: The next prayer is for living the assigned life-span with a strong body. We know the life span of everyone is impermanent. We can therefore understand why one prays to be able to spend one's life-time seeing and hearing auspicious things and praising God. Is there some other deeper significance in it?

Guru: Yes, one who knows ultimate reality is not different from the infinitude of that reality, which has no birth and no death. Not being different from that, he sees himself as birthless and deathless. The present prayer can also be understood as an invocation for the awakening of wisdom and a life in accordance with it.

Seeker: The second part of this *śantiḥ-pāṭha* is a prayer for *śvasti*. What is *śvasti*?

Guru: It is a word of blessing in Sanskrit. Usually it is uttered by gurus or elders of a family when they bless their disciples or younger members of the family. Literally it means a good or praiseworthy state of being: *śv* (good or praiseworthy) + *asti* (existence or state of being).

Seeker: Why is Indra qualified as 'of matured glory'?

Guru: The original Sanskrit word is *vr̥dha śraoāḥ*. *Vr̥dha* means that which is of a matured growth, and *śraoāḥ* means hearing or learning. Wisdom is traditionally imparted to a seeker by a guru and thus is made available to future generations. This

imparting of wisdom takes place through the spoken words heard by seekers from their masters. For this reason, learning in general is spoken of as hearing (*śravaṇa*) in India. Even learning by reading scriptures is considered *śravaṇa* or hearing. One who has attained maturity in such learning is called *vr̥dha śraoas*.

Seeker: The second prayer for well-being is addressed to *Pūṣa*. Who is he?

Guru: *Pūṣa* is another name for the Sun. Literally it means one who nourishes (*puṣati iti pūṣāī*). The wisdom which enriches human life is here called *Pūṣa*. As the one who sheds light in the entire cosmos, the sun is called *viśva vedas*. *Viśva* means the cosmos, *vedas* means one who knows.

Seeker: *Tārksya* or Garuda is next invoked for well-being. Garuda is *Viṣṇu*'s vehicle. Isn't it strange that *Viṣṇu*'s vehicle is invoked instead of *Viṣṇu* himself?

Guru: *Tārksya* is not to be understood here as the vehicle of *Viṣṇu* but as a symbol of resolution and prowess. He is capable of keeping all obstruction outside the periphery of normal activities.

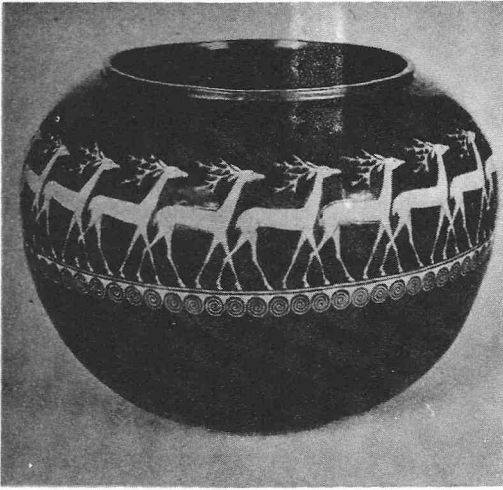
Seeker: *Bṛhaspati*, the guru of gods, is the last prayed to.

Guru: The word *Bṛhaspati* means the lord (*pati*) of that which is expansive (*br̥hat*) or the one Reality which transcends and controls all that is expansive. *Bṛhaspati* is thus another name for absolute Reality.

Seeker: I have heard that the *Upaniṣads* are composed in the form of dialogues. Did such dialogues actually take place or are they merely a literary device?

Guru: That is not known. What is important for us is not whether such a dialogue actually happened, but that the philosophical visions revealed through the dialogue become ours. Not all *Upaniṣads* are in the form of dialogues. Some are presented in a dramatic way. Some are in the form of questions and answers but the seer and disciple are not named. In some cases, the *Upaniṣad* constitutes the answer while the questions and questioner remain hidden. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* is in the form of answers given by the *Rṣi Pippalāda* to the questions asked by six seekers.

(Continued in next issue.)



Ode to These Hands

These cracked, parched hands
that dig into the earth,
burrowing into the flecked fragments
of glacier, mountain and riverbed,
searching through the coarse darkness,
releasing the scent of other lives:
the furry brown mole's twitching star nose,
set quivering by the endless pathways of desire;
or the single white root,
stretching down
through sediment and history
to the hidden wet rivers
of clay molded by these hands,
turning on the wheel
and the wet clay yields
to the knowledge in these hands
of how a pot, a curve
of burnished black
etched with pale geometries,
will become hard and useful,
sitting on a shelf
full of grain or water
or an endless emptiness
circled by these hands,
and how worlds are born
in the chapped lines
of patience and persistence.

Deborah Buchanan

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

॥॥:४
Sūtra ॥४:४

trayam ekatra samyamaḥ

trayam: the three (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*)

ekatra: as one, taken together

samyamaḥ: are *samyama*

The three (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*) taken together are *samyam*.

The title of this section is *Vibhūti Pāda*. In it, the term *vibhūti* is a technical name given in the science of harmonious union for any special affection generated in the consciousness of a person who is consistently retaining a certain impression in his or her awareness. All states of awareness manifest from the causal consciousness. What is called the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious all pertain to the individuated mind of the embodied being. When it is completely obscured by the causal status, it is called the unconscious in Western psychology. Even though it is called the unconscious, it is not the absence of consciousness that is meant, but the natural depth in the psyche of a person where all potential urges and drives are lying ready to operate and percolate into two states of awareness. From the depth the potential awareness changes into the preconscious, giving incentive for the mentation to channel energies into the

relevant sense organ or organs. It can be equated to a seed lying buried in the moist earth, becoming stirred within, and putting forward a sprout, thus breaking the shell which until then been safeguarding the sperm of the seed. Similarly, hidden drives, urges and motivations enter into the threshold of consciousness and the preconscious creates the semblance of an awareness which can reach out into attentive awareness (*jagrat*) by becoming fully modulated. Every manifestation of *vibhūti* involves the three states of consciousness, deep sleep, dream and wakeful awareness.

In the first part of the *Yoga Sūtras* we came to know the eight steps of discipline that are enjoined for the attainment of the union of the ponderable and the imponderable. The ponderable relates to sense data and the imponderable pertains to the spirit (*puruṣa*), which is of metaphysical significance. These eight steps are: 1) restraint (*yama*); 2) commitment to a behavioral pattern (*niyama*); 3) entering into a psychophysical state or condition which provides a comfortable and stable posture for directing one's attention to observe one's changing inner environment (*āsana*); 4) slowly and gradually translating the involuntary function of respiration into the conscious deliberation of an observing consciousness (*pranayama*); 5) consciously disciplining one's awareness to delimit the choices of interest within a frame of reference from which extraneous interests are dropped and a basic interest is again and again promoted (*pratyāhāra*; 6) conse-

quently there comes the stabilization of a well scrutinized and emphasized idea of direction (*dhāraṇā*); 7) expansion of the boundaries of awareness in which the conscious observer and his or her consciousness become mutually merged to give the effect of an unmodulated state of pure consciousness, a state of at-onement for beatitude (*dhyaṇa*); and 8) the equipoise of the state of aloneness (*samādhi*).

In all these what is consistently operating in consciousness is a disciplined modulation with a programmed direction. The modulation is directed in ways which raise consciousness from a specific mode of time, space and physical involvement to the final stage in which awareness returns to its source and merges with the spirit which originally initiates consciousness into an organism for the primary animation of every embodied being.

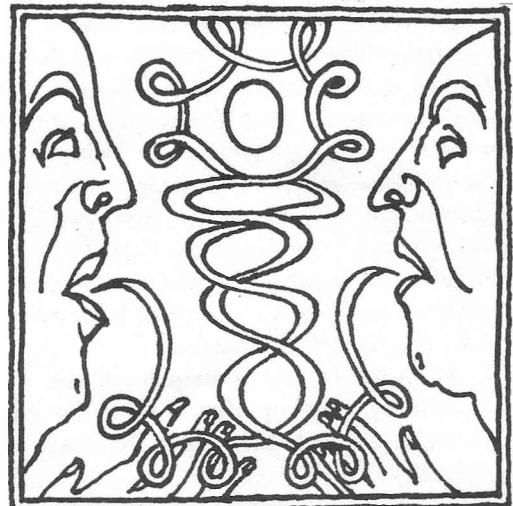
The essence of the self is called *puruṣa*. The body is the physiological scaffolding of the psychic interior operating mechanism called the *antakarāṇa*. Just as light is used as an operational device to animate pictures in a cinematographic machine, the light of the Self is the controlling force that activates the stimulation of all five senses as well as the motor functions connected with sensations. The mind or *manas* functions as a liaison between sense organs as well as between the sensory and motor systems.

The physical body encased in skin marks the separation of one individual from another. The four inner organs are the mind (*manas*), the faculty of memory and recalling (*citta*), the faculty of judgment (*buddhi*) and the ego, the affective core which is intimately connected with the biologic as well as psychologic individuation of experiencing pain and pleasure and all such dualities of life (*ahamkāra*). The instrument of the registry of stimulation and recall of memory is a repository of all the colorations and conditionings that happen to a person during his or her lifetime. Hence all conditional reactions throughout one's life stem from this faculty (*citta*). Its modulation is called *cittavṛtti*. *Citta* has a dual function. Sensations from

the external world which are carried to the inner organ are registered in the *citta* in terms of the information that is sought after by the questioning, doubting or emotionally activated mind. Then *citta* preserves the net outcome of the encounter between the sensory system and stimulus as data for future reference.

The impressions that come to our sense organs can act as preserved memory through a particular symbolic device, such as a spoken or written word or a physical form. A recorded memory can be kept alive for the rest of one's life. This memory tag is equated to the fragrance of chemically functioning materials and is called *vāsanā*. The mind then manipulates the new programs that are being conceived on the basis of the memory.

From the very beginning we have learned that the word is our handle to prod the mind. From early childhood memory has functioned as our compendium of information. As this storehouse of knowledge is the life vehicle for all thoughts and actions to be kept ever relevant in one's personal life, learning is given the foremost place in human life. The legibility, clarity and consistent interpretation of the symbols of language help a person to build up his or her character. Any dysfunction or malfunction can cause aberrations in one's personal behavior, mental as well as physical. The aberrations that come to the mind can result in confusions of values, a mixing up of morals and disorder at sev-



eral levels, emotional, rational and functional. One result of disorder can be seen when a person tends to become emotionally disturbed and consequently violent.

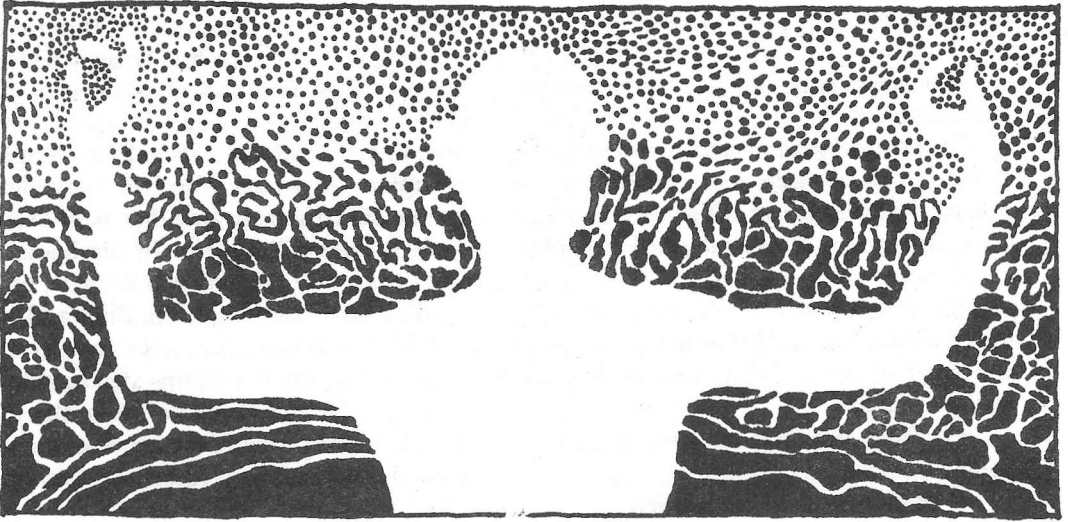
Therefore the very first preference in *yama* is given to *ahimsa*, the discipline of non-violence. *Ahimsa* is not merely to be understood as non-hurting. Its positive counterpart is being compassionate and helping others whenever someone is in need of help. Both compassion and the tendency to hurt come under affectivity of the organism. Affectivity can be of a physical, biological, psychological or sociological order. There is self hurting and hurting of others with whom a person comes into encounter. There can be benevolent affective encounters such as in love-making, parenting, companionship in team operation and nursing the weak and aged. In voluntary encounters, discriminative judgment connected with intelligence plays a large role. Such happenings mostly occur in the wakeful consciousness in which all senses are focused on the receptivity of incoming energy and directing of the output of energy for programmed action. The human body, senses, mind and functional devices are conceived both on the protective side and the destructive side of defense.

A discriminative maneuvering is usually taken up in the agency of affective knowledge as well as motivated behavior. Even though the *Yoga Sūtras* were written a few centuries before or after Christ, the insight of the rishi in all such behavioral patterns, subjective as well as objective, still has not been fully analyzed and critically examined. Fortunately, new developments in the biological and biochemical studies, especially of pathologic physiology and clinical psychology, now provide us with many explanations that are very useful to reinterpret the affective psychology that we have to look into to understand the science of yoga.

We read in *The Human Brain and Its Universe* by Hartwig Kuhlenbeck the following passages to introduce the study of affectivity:

Taking into account the positive, indifferent and negative aspects, one can use different terms for the different sorts or 'qualities' of the 'modality', called affectivity. Body sensations are correlated with the affective tones pleasant and unpleasant, agreeable and disagreeable, as well as indifferent and painful, which latter is purely negative, being related to unpleasant and disagreeable sensations. In a similar simplified way, 'classical' psychology formulated the notion of the so-called P-U (Pleasant-Unpleasant) variable. As regards ethics we have laudable and blamable, and in aesthetics we use the terms beautiful and ugly. Activities or goals may be desirable or undesirable. Generalized terms, of higher degree of abstraction, and applicable to various sorts or various scales of affectivity qualities related to objects or events are good and bad, useful and useless, as well as right and wrong. These two latter terms are frequently used to characterize decisions, which, not being 'logical', cannot be, in the strict sense, called 'true' or 'false'.

Complex, multifactorial aspects of affectivity are anger, anxiety, fear, terror, like, dislike, desire, hope, friendship, love etc. The nervous system, which evolved as a communication and control system of metazoan organisms, become a mechanism characterized by the transmission of signals, encoding information, that is to say, variety. In addition, however, it developed, even when apparently at rest, an 'intrinsic' or 'spontaneous' activity processing information and initiating significant behavioral manifestations not directly 'triggered' by concomitant input from external events. Such behavior is then, in the aspect under consideration, apparently unrelated to specific environmental states. Such initiated and intrinsic neural activities can be presumed to represent an important component of exploratory behavior, which may be correlated with affective tones such as fear, anxiety, hope, wonder, and curiosity. This latter may lead to the 'intrinsic activity' of cogitation about the problems of life, resulting in philosophy and religion. Among the multifactorial motives determining philosophical thought, 'wonder' about world and life may be a predominant one, while 'anxiety' and 'fear' play perhaps the significant role with regard to the religion. (p. 361).



According to the *Samkhya* philosophy, affectivity is connected with the modalities of nature recognized as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is generally described as a pure, clear prevalence of spirit that regulates the mind in its discriminative power. *Rajas* is a translucent agitated emotional state and *tamas* is of obscuring opacity. The common cause of all bondage is the pleasure principle in affectivity. As the mind works in a contradictory manner according to the pain-pleasure signals that it gets, the thwarting of pleasure can bring a spectrum of rage from simple depression to the criminal programming of mind towards retaliation. The behavioral pattern which implies masochism, sadism and planned hurting tendencies is difficult to understand and even more difficult to correct. Further, most social groups have developed a sophistication which bypasses many ethical considerations wherever it is necessary for society to condone publicly approved destruction of life for what is considered the welfare of the society. Using pesticides and insecticides, the killing of fast-proliferating animals and even the sanctioning of abortion by modern society are all against the ideal of *ahimsa* propagated by the yoga philosophy of India.

A method suggested in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* to modify *vāsanā* is to entertain positive thoughts and attitudes that can wear away negative tendencies and potentials, and to cultivate benign

thoughts and sublime value appreciation. This will be afterwards adequately described when we take up the subject of nurturing helpful impressions to promote *dharma*.

In the *Sādhana Pāda* we discussed the obstacles in the path of yoga discipline, *kleśas*. From the very start of life, our conceptual beliefs are built upon unexamined and vague hearsay, false conjectures and the propaganda literature of people with vested interests. Because of having lived in family and community circles of undisciplined people, our minds cling on to several prejudices. That state is generally called *avidyā*, being steeped in wrong prejudices and inadequate methods of right reasoning.

Avidyā generates wrong passions and uncritical fascination for sheer appearances. In one's encounter with shallow and transient value, attachment to the unsubstantiated comes as a compulsion, and it is followed by repulsive neurosis (*rāga* and *dveṣa*). False infatuation (*abhiniveśa*) can cause physical and mental torture which can disable a mind from taking up the challenges of life in a healthy manner. Several pleasure-giving incentives can lead to pain that cannot be easily alleviated. A disturbed mind can lead to several disorders such as those given in the *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* (Vol. 1, Fifth Edition, edited by Harold I. Kaplan and Benjamin J. Sadock, published by Williams

& Wilkins):

The causes of disturbances are characterized under:

(1) *Physical manifestations of psychiatric disorder such as sleep disturbances, appetite and weight disturbances, disturbance in sexual drive, the impact of general physical appearances.*

(2) *Disturbances in thinking comes, if from childhood a person does not get the ways and order of correct reasoning method and ability to reason.*

(3) *Flow and form of thoughts afflicted with :*

a. *Psycho-motor retardation*

b. *Thought blocks such as a sudden loss of an idea as if it dropped out of consciousness*

c. *Extreme talkativeness*

d. *Pressure of speech*

e. *Flight of ideas*

f. *Multiple digression in thought and speech*

g. *Loose association.*

Most of these anomalies can be corrected with cultivated silence. Disturbances in judgment and disorders of consciousness are also to be included in *kleśas*, especially suggestibility, dissociative phenomena, depersonalization or derealization. Memory disorders can involve disorders of orientation, disturbances in registration and recall. Yoga is a far cry to those afflicted by mood disturbances, depression and anxiety. To observe *yama*, one has to establish oneself in *ahimsa* - observing compassion in love and serenity, *satya* - holding fast to the pure and clear notion of one's true Self with wholeheartedness and not deviating from its integrity, *brahmacarya* - walking always in the path of uprightness and never considering anything outside oneself to be the source of the truest joy and *aparigraha* - consistently and continuously giving up the attitude of ownership of any object of pleasure or having one's tamed passion. These five states of integrity are called self-restraint or *yama*.

Holding oneself in a state of restraint should be based on a clear knowledge of

one's perfection. There is nothing really existing outside oneself to be aspired for or needed to make oneself perfect or complete. In both Yoga and Vedanta, ethical morality is not established on religious scruples. A person who has very clearly enunciated the restraint that is spoken of here is Henry Bergson. In his book, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he describes two kinds of morality and two kinds of religion. He says that in open morality, a person remains steadfast to the principle of truth because he or she finds that it is not possible for a person of integrated character to resort to falsehood. Here a person is honest to himself or herself and not because honesty is required by the law of the country or the mandate of any religion. A truthful person is fearless. It is not fear of punishment that deters him from doing wrong. Such a person simply cannot concede to evil. Such a person is a law unto himself or herself, living in his or her own opinion and not in the opinions of others. Such a person's love, honesty, compassion, generosity and peaceful nature are characteristically his or her own. He or she does not look for any reward for honesty or absolute dedication to truth.

Closed morality is when a person holds back from untruth or dishonesty, because of the fear of the punishments with which religion and government threaten their votaries. Jesus Christ refers to people physically restraining but mentally becoming infatuated. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* also we read that a truly honest person does not have a separate outside distinguished from his inside. Such a person is meritorious both within and without. In the second chapter of the *Holy Qur'an* also, the hypocrite is condemned in strong language. To maintain a cloak of virtue in public, the average man is tempted to be dishonest and hypocritical. With regard to *ahimsa* a person may not literally hurt anyone physically, but he may cause the misery of someone else because of his cunning ways. That is why we hold dear the examples of teachers like Lord Buddha or Jesus Christ. They have rightly interpreted *ahimsa* in their personal lives and have

stood firm with the heart that dictates the law for the person in this world. In our own days, Mahatma Gandhi has equated *ahimsa* with *satya*. You can be truly non-hurting only when you realize your Self and fully dedicate yourself to the truth of your Self. This principle is derived from the famous *mantras* of the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*:

The one who continually sees
all beings in the *ātman* (Self) alone,
like that, in all manifested factors
the Self also,
never becomes repulsed.

In whom all beings
are known as the Self alone,
what delusion is there
or what sorrow
to one who beholds this unity?

Every religion has a central axiomatic principle on which the morality of that religion is established. In the *Upaniṣads* the

axiomatic teaching is given as the unity of the one Self which is in the heart of all. It is this realization that leads a person both to *ahimsa* and *satya*. To such a person there is no private world. When he looks inward he sees the entire infinitude of consciousness, which he sees as his truth, the only Absolute. He does not see another there. When he looks outward, from the blade of grass under his feet to the far off invisible galaxies also, they are all one. So there is nothing to be privately desired or grabbed by him. The truth itself stabilizes him in his belongingness with all. It is this vision of oneness that cancels out all pairs of dualities in a realized person's life. The basic nature of life is the knowledge of a single existence and that existence is, not for even a second, different from the total value or *ānanda* of life. Thus the *yogi* is of open morality and his religion is a dynamic religion and not a static, structured one.

(Continued in next issue.)





Owed to the Miners

*In a far away, far away,
far away land,
in small dusty houses
lives a musty old band*

*of tricky persnickety
odd looking clans
who gather together
to chip rocks to sand.*

*The rocks are old scriptures
with geodes inside,
where carefully hidden
life's essence resides.*

*And who, but these miners,
this ragtagged crew,
could distill for the world
such hypnotic brew?*

*From morning to evening,
in sleep and in nap,*



Peggy Grace Sava

*the wheels keep on churning
out mind-blowing yap!*

*And the dust from these crystals,
so potent and rare,
could cure arthritis
or regrow lost hair.*

*Or certainly alter
one's vision at large.
And believe it or not. . .
they don't even charge!*

*This rock crew of miners
chip chip up in Ooty
revealing life's scriptures
as their sacred duty.*

*Bravo, musty fellows!
Our hats off to you,
for the world is sipping
your transcendent brew.*

Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

There is a great mystery in the alchemy which can transform the life of one person into a powerful instrument of change. No less mysterious is the principle which orchestrated that change with a harmony that swelled in rising waves from an ever-peaceful center. The Guru walked and lived simply among the people as Jesus did. Like Jesus, he attracted many listeners to his gentle words, followers to his simple path and disciples to his teaching. Numerous anecdotes of the Guru's life have been preserved and are retold again and again. They give us vital glimpses into the mystery of principle becoming practice, undistorted by personal preference or particular affiliations. Many of these stories are to be found in the pages of *The Word of the Guru* and other biographies of Narayana Guru. Many more are inextricably woven into the daily life of family and society, treasured memories passed on by those who were present to their friends and families until they have become widespread cherished possessions.

Through these anecdotes we are given new insights into how Narayana Guru applied the wisdom teachings found in his compositions to the issues and encounters of daily life. In his composition, *Thought and Inertia*, he contrasts the light of consciousness with the darkness of ignorance and inertia. He sadly acknowledges the pervasiveness of inertia. At the same time, he describes the experience of awakening to full consciousness as the rising of ten million suns all at once. In many of the anecdotes from the Guru's life we see how his own awakening gave him an acumen of seeing through appearances to understand human behavior at a very practical level. Knowing inertia to be part of the cosmic picture, he sees, comments and acts with

compassion and humor rather than condemnation. One who has known the power of inertia, yet has seen it finally disappear in pure consciousness, gains a discrimination undiluted by parochial loyalties or customs.

A social welfare organization, Sahodharan Sankham, prided itself on benefiting society with its good works. Watching the preparations being made for a large convention of the organization, Guru asked a bystander, "Is there any use for all this?" The man kept silent. Then Guru said: "Many will join together, raise their hands and pass motions. But if they hear the train whistle while serious discussions and speeches are going on, they will take their bags and run to the station."

A Brahmin scholar came to Guru to show off his punditry. He asked Guru many scholastic questions. Narayana Guru asked that he be given a rupee. The scholar readily went away, contented, since it was the money and recognition he sought and not answers to his questions.

A man came to Guru and said, "The Indians are three hundred million and the British are only half a million. If we all get together and spit on them, we can drown them." In the face of this bravado, the Guru gently reminded his listeners of the less courageous tendencies of human nature: "But when the Indian sees the British, the spittle dries up in his mouth."

While Guru was resting at Chengannur, a fat, toothless priest came in a frenzied trance, wanting to impress people with his psychic powers. Sensing that Guru was not impressed, he turned angrily to

him, brandishing a hatchet, and asked, "Do you know who I am?" Guru said, "You seem to be a fat bully." The irate priest cried; "Are you making fun of me? Do you want to see a miracle?" Smiling, Narayana Guru said, "Yes, some teeth in your mouth." Everyone laughed and the priest could not continue his pretentious mood.

One of Guru's disciples went to Burma. When he returned Guru asked: "Are there idols (vigraha) in Buddhist temples?" The disciple replied: "There are more idols in a Buddhist temple than in a Hindu temple." Guru said, "It is like cropping hair. The more you crop, the more it grows. As Buddha denied idol worship it must have come with a vengeance to him."

When Narayana Guru was at Aruvipuram, one of his followers suggested: "In North Indian ashrams, the Guru and disciples take their meals together. It would be good if we do so also." Guru then ate with the disciples and others. The next day at lunch time, Guru was meditating. Everyone else ate. Then Guru came and said, "Let us take food." They replied, "We searched for you. When we couldn't find you, we went ahead and ate." Guru said "Don't test the Guru only. You should also test the disciple."

Guru asked a priest of a Hindu temple in Sri Lanka: "Is it not *śaiva*?" (Are you not a vegetarian?")

Priest: Mostly *śaiva*.

Guru: So, sometimes you will eat.

Priest: Not a necessity. If given, I will eat.

Guru: Not to eat, the tongue won't allow. Is it not so? (With a laugh.)

Priest: If given, I will eat.

Guru: Will you eat a stone if given? (Laughing.)

A new bill was brought before the legislative council to regularize the inheritance of the *Ilava* community. There were three main methods, each with its supporters, one where sons and daughters inherited their father's property, one where

a person's inheritance went to his to nephews and nieces and a third where half went to the person's sons and daughters, and a half to his nephews and nieces. Some leaders of the community came to Guru to find out his preference. Guru asked, "If we express our opinion will you all abide by it?" They all agreed. Then he said with a faint smile, "Our preference is to give the inheritance to the neighbor." They were all shocked and one by one they silently receded.

Guru was once asked to give definite instructions for the disposal of dead bodies. The questioner wanted to know whether a body should be buried or burned. Guru replied: "Desiccate it, extract the fat, and use the rest as manure." The questioner cried out, "Oh, horrid!" Guru said, "No, it won't hurt."

A common belief at the time was that a mischievous spirit (Kutticathan) would come and cause disruptions like those attributed to poltergeists such as strange noises or objects being thrown or moved. One day while the Guru was at Śivagiri, some people came to complain about Kutticathan's misdeeds at their house. At first Guru said that he had no acquaintance with Kutticathan. When they persisted, he wrote the following note and gave it to them to deliver:

Dear Sri Kutticathan,

Kindly put an end to your misdeeds at the house of the bearer of this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Narayana Guru

A man who had studied Sanskrit in Benares, the traditional home of such studies, heard of a great man at Śivagiri Mutt and decided to visit there. He was from the orthodox section of the Hindu community and considered himself to be of the highest rank. He went to see Guru, expecting a traditional sannyāsin in robes, beard, etc. He was told that Guru was sitting alone in a small hut. As he approached the hut, he noticed a great sense of peace,

and the serenity of the place. He saw a man whose head and face were clean-shaven. He was clad in pure white cloth. From the radiance of his face, he immediately knew this was Narayana Guru. For a moment, he hesitated to prostrate before the Guru and touch his feet (the traditional mode of showing reverence) because of his caste prejudice. When he looked at Guru, all such fears left him and he prostrated with full devotion. Guru then asked him to sit but he preferred to stand in deference to the Guru's presence which he felt to be divine. Guru asked if he had a question. He said "Yes." He had planned to confront Guru to see how much Guru knew. He had undergone a psychic change and didn't want confrontation, but he continued to ask a question of logic. Kumaran Asan was called since he had just returned from studying logic in Calcutta. He recited the appropriate verses of the Nyāya and Vai-

sesika Sūtras (works of Indian philosophy and logic). Those verses were already familiar to the visitor. He respectfully said, "Gurudeva, I didn't come to learn from a scholar what I already know. I came as a disciple to learn from your mouth." There was a silence and Guru smiled. Then he gave a simple answer which came as a great revelation to the visitor. He felt wonderstruck. Guru had given no argument, no textual dissertation, but tackled the whole problem with a simple example which satisfied all his questions. Then the visitor felt mischievous. Seeing that the Guru's understanding covered the correlation of Vedanta and logic, he wondered if Guru was also familiar with poetry and dramatic works and conventions. He asked about a certain verse from a drama. He thought Guru might be offended, but with the same serenity and willingness, Guru gave the rules of poetry and the subtle



points of the work. With further question, the visitor became convinced that the theories of astrology were at Guru's fingertips. He had no more questions. He prostrated before Guru and said "Please accept me. You are my Guru." He was very touched by the perfection attained by Guru in so many fields and his selfless behavior.

However, he had trouble with social barriers. When lunch was served later that day, he excused himself, knowing that Guru had brought boys into the ashram whom society considered untouchables and that they had cooked the meal. He asked Guru to excuse him to go out to eat and that he would return afterwards. Guru said, "You can eat here," but he still had hesitation. The disciples and followers present became very angry, saying, "How can you come here and accept Narayana Guru as your Guru and still hang on to your caste prejudices?" Guru said, "He is already punishing himself. You don't have to punish him further," and asked that a fresh coconut and banana be brought for the visitor to eat. At age 90 this man still revered Narayana Guru as his Guru and told this story with great emotion.

Narayana Guru summarized his philosophy in five verses of beautiful poetry called *Brahmavidyā Pañcakam*, *The Science of the Absolute*. In them, he gave a clear and concise portrayal of the preparations and guidelines for an earnest seeker of wisdom and the essential questions to be asked of preceptor, a knower of the Absolute. The answers are given in straightforward language, using examples which explicate the great dictums of the Upanisads, the time-honored answers to the riddles of life which have shone as beacons of truth through the ages: *tat tvam asi*, "That Thou Art;" *aham brahma asmi*, "I am That Absolute;" *ayam ātma brahma*, "This Self is the Absolute."

Such philosophy in the form of poetry can open the doors of the mind and heart so the sweet winds of freedom can enter, bringing with them hints of the unfettered, limitless expanses which lie beyond. For one possessed of such a universal vision

there is only one reality, only one identity which gives reality to all the seemingly separate identities. With such an understanding, there is nothing and no one to fear or exclude and occasions to find correlations, connections and correspondences are limitless.

A boy of eight was brought to Guru at Śivagiri. His parents said that he always complained of terrible stomach pain and nausea and couldn't eat. Guru said, "If he isn't hungry, why make any trouble? If he is hungry, he will eat." Then he said, "Let him be here." After a week Guru asked that a food parcel enough for two be made. Rice, chutney and yogurt were packed in a banana leaf. Guru asked the boy to carry it and follow him. Together they walked to Trivandrum (about 30 miles). The boy felt very tired. Guru said, "Let us bathe in the river." After they bathed Guru asked the boy to bring the food parcel. When he put it down on a rock, a couple of grains of rice fell out. Guru gently picked them up, washed them, and added them to the rest of the rice. The boy experienced that as a great lesson – even though there was a whole package the Guru would carefully clean and restore those two grains of rice. Then Guru ate one morsel of the food. He asked the boy, "You are afraid? You have fear?" The boy replied, "Yes, Guru. I have been told I will die at age thirteen." Guru asked, "Do you trust me?" The boy, "Yes, Guru." Guru then asserted, "You will never die." Then the boy felt very hungry. Guru said, "Eat this," giving him all the food that had been prepared for them both. The boy felt a terrible hunger and ate the whole thing, not leaving a single grain.

When this boy retold his story at age 76, he said he later wondered why Guru said that he would not die instead of saying that he would live a long time. Then he went to live and study with Guru for a long time where he learned: "...what true being is: I am the immortal *ātman*, with no end."

After visiting with Guru, a man was leaving late at night. When Guru asked him if he was afraid he replied, "Yes, Swa-

miji." Guru then said, "Fear comes from thinking there is an 'other'. That means you are not alone. So, you can go with the other that you are afraid of. Then you won't have to be afraid."

A man was traveling with Guru on foot. When night fell, they were deep in the jungle. At first the man was afraid, but finally fell asleep by Guru's side. Then he was awakened by a terrible "Roar!" He was terrified. Unable to see Guru anywhere, he was shaking with fear. Then Guru appeared. He said, "You are terrified."

Man: Yes, Guru.

Guru: What happened?

Man: A big roar.

Guru: Were you hurt?

Man: No, Guru.

Guru: Are you still whole?

Man: Yes, Guru.

Guru: Nothing more will happen to you. Then he lost his fear for the rest of his life.

Nataraja Guru started an organization, the Sri Narayana Advaita Bhakta Sabha (the Sri Narayana Non-dual Devotional Assembly), in Madras. Chintadripet, the area where he was working, was the dirtiest, most depressed slum of the city where the poorest wretches (treated as outcasts by the rest of society) tried to live. They were not paid for the heavy and onerous labor they performed for the rest of society. Narayana Guru visited Madras and was staying with a family there. Some members of the Advaita Sabha went to see him and told him they had no place to house the Sabha. Then someone said that a certain honorary magistrate owned some nearby property that was lying vacant. The Sabha members expressed their fear of approaching him to ask him for the land. Seeing their hesitation Narayana Guru said: "Why are you afraid? Are you doing anything wrong? Only if you do something wrong should you be afraid of going to him." One of them said, "We are only doing good things but our doubt is whether he will give it." Then Guru said, "Never doubt like that. You should only say, "We will get it.

Do not raise any doubt in your own mind. If you are determined you will get it."

At Śivagiri, there was a small shrine where a golden javelin (symbol of the god, Subrahmanya) had been worshipped. A zealous devotee of the Guru removed the javelin and placed a pair of the Guru's sandals there instead. This upset the people who had been worshipping there. The devotee was brought to Guru, who asked him why he had removed the javelin?

Devotee: We have taken a vow not to worship anything but the person of your Holiness.

Guru: What about the sandals?

Devotee: The sandals are looked upon as your Holiness.

Guru: If the sandals can be me, why not the javelin?

Narayana Guru once asked the young Nataraja Guru (then called Thampi) if he wanted to know Vedanta (one of the six systems of Indian philosophy).

Thampi: Yes.

Guru: Can you think of water?

Thampi: Yes.

Guru: Can you imagine ripples in the water?

Thampi: Yes.

Guru: Do you know that the ripples and the water are the same?

Thampi: Yes.

Guru: That is all. There is nothing more to know.

Thampi: If it is so simple, why do people spend so much time studying Vedanta?

Guru: Because people forget that the wave is water.

Thampi: Why do we forget?

Guru: Because of *māyā*.

Thampi: How do we get rid of *māyā*?

Guru: By knowing that water and wave are not two.

Thampi: What is the use of knowing that they are both the same?

Guru: So that you will not put such questions.

(Continued in next issue.)

What Makes a Belief Valid?

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Unifier of Religions

Like St. Francis of Assisi who broke away from the classical Christian traditions to be closer to cherished human values in his heart, Sri Ramakrishna of India boldly broke away all walls of distinction, especially those raised sky-high by prejudice between Muslims and Hindus. Even within Hinduism, where no two schools or disciplines agree with each other, the Master brought a great unity. We read the following account in *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master, Volume 1*:

Although his (Sri Ramakrishna's) body was badly ill, it is staggering to think how extraordinarily calm and blissful his mind was, freed as it was from body-consciousness. At the slightest suggestion, his mind would free itself from body-consciousness, and simultaneously from the hold of the disease and all other objects and experiences of the world, and get absorbed in the subtle plane of Nirvikalpa, which no modification of changeful spheres can disturb. No sooner did he hear the words Brahman, Atman or Isoara, than he merged in its content, forgetting all other things and his own separate existence for some time. Therefore, it is clear, that in spite of that severe pain in his body owing to the fury of the disease, he actually felt very little of it. But that pain due to the disease, we heard from the Master himself, brought down his mind at times from high planes of spiritual experience and made it conscious of his body. The Master said it was during this period, that the foremost of the Paramahansas, the followers of the Vedanta, used to come to him. His room was then always reverberating with the sounds of their discussions on Vedantic dictums like Neti Neti (not this, not this), Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute), Ayam-atma-

Brahma (this Self is verily Brahman) and so on. When, during the discussions of those high Vedantic teachings, they could not arrive at the right conclusion of any question, the Master had to become the umpire and decide it. 21

Sri Ramakrishna and the Monistic Philosophy

This was a time when Sri Ramakrishna was breaking away from his Kali worship to understand the secrets of Vedanta. The path he had chosen was to look for *nirguna brahma*, Non-dual Being.

Now it came to him as an immediate awareness of the existence of this idea or expression of will in the cosmic mind of the omnipresent Brahman. For his mind was then for the most part in complete oneness with the Absolute Non-dual, and whenever for brief periods he felt a hazy sense of distinction from the Absolute, he was poised in an awareness of being a part of the all-pervading Brahman with attributes (Savishesha-Brahman), which is the same as the Mother of the universe. (III.3) On account of this realization, the future purpose of his life stood completely revealed to him. 22

To get on to the new path, Sri Ramakrishna had to break away from all his familiar preconditioned moods and memories. Only by cultivating a non-dual mood would the old memories become less effective.

In other words, with the fullest development of this remembrance, his memory reaches such a mature state that the entire history of his transmigration – how, where, and how many times he had had to be encased in bodies and what actions, good or evil, he had performed – is revealed with great vividness. The experience drives home to his mind the lesson



of the transitoriness of everything and the utter futility of the involvement in the repetitive cycle of births and deaths and the pursuit of worldly enjoyments attainable through it. The intense detachment which then arises in the aspirant's heart frees him from all desires whatsoever. ²³

Even though Sri Ramakrishna continued to think of an over-all Lord as the Absolute he was very eager to surrender all his fetishes, and enthusiastic to master the new religious spirit.

If one studies the Master's life related to this period in the light of the scriptural sayings quoted above, the 'how' and the 'why' of most of the extraordinary realizations, if not all of them, stand fully revealed. One can understand how as a result of his wholehearted offering of himself at the lotus feet of the Lord, he could attain perfect desirelessness and how in so short a time he could ascend and firmly establish himself in the Nirvikalpa plane of Jatismaratwa, as a result of which he had the immediate knowledge that the One, who had manifested Himself as Rama and Krishna in

past ages and did good to humanity, had again assumed a body and manifested Himself in the present age as "Ramakrishna." ²⁴

As Ramakrishna had previously been worshipping God as the Mother he had no trouble looking upon the Virgin Mary as the Mother also, and accepting Catholicism as a great way of life.

Having thus had the direct experience of Non-duality, the Master's mind was filled with unbounded catholicity. He had now an extraordinary sympathy for all the religious communities which taught that the aim of human life was the realization of God. But he did not realize at first that this catholicity and universal sympathy were his discoveries. ²⁵

Almost immediately after Sri Ramakrishna's vision of the Madonna and Child Govinda Ray, a scholar in Persian and Arabic and a great follower of Islam, came to his temple at Dakshineswara, where everyone was welcome, whether Hindu sannyasin or Muslim fakir.

The Master was attracted towards the devout Govinda, and happening to converse with him, was charmed with Govinda's sincere faith and his love for God. Thus was the Master's mind now attracted towards the Islamic religion. "This also," thought he, "is a path to the realization of God. The sportive Mother, the source of infinite Lila, has been blessing many people with the attainment of Her lotus feet through this path also. I must see how people taking refuge in Her are led along this path to the fulfillment of their spiritual aspiration. I shall be initiated by Govinda and shall engage myself in the practice of that spiritual mood."

Thought was immediately followed by action. The Master expressed his desire to Govinda, and became initiated. He engaged himself in practicing Islam according to its prescribed rules. The Master said, "I then repeated the holy syllable 'Allah' with great devotion, wore the cloth like the Muslims, said Namaz thrice daily, and felt disinclined even to see Hindu deities, not to speak of saluting them, inasmuch as the Hindu mode of thought vanished altogether from my mind. I spent three

days in that mood, and had the full realization of the result of the practices according to that faith." At the time of practicing Islam, the Master at first had the vision of an effulgent, impressive personage with a long beard; afterwards he attained the knowledge of the all-pervading Brahman with attributes, and then merged finally in the attributeless Brahman, the Absolute. 26

As in Islam, Allah is incomparable and the name "Allah" itself means "that which is not, that is Allah," it was easy for Sri Ramakrishna to go into a state of pure consciousness which Vedantins call *nirvikalpa*. As the result of his being established in the plane of *nirvikalpa* consciousness, the memory of Non-duality would be suddenly awakened in him, and his mind would merge in the Absolute even at the slightest suggestion received from sights and persons coming strictly within the bounds of the plane of duality. We saw how that state was brought on him by the association of ideas, even without his desiring it. It is, therefore, superfluous to add that he could attain at any moment to that plane by a mere wish.

Such was the heroic story of Sri Ramakrishna going beyond the walls of religions and becoming fully devoted to God, irrespective of the theology given by various religious sects. He knocked off many idols of prejudice which have been the cause of the shedding of innocent blood all over the world.

After Sri Ramakrishna, Narayana Guru Spoke of Only One Religion

The entire wisdom teaching of Vedanta is epitomized by Narayana Guru in his *Twenty One Aphorisms on Vedanta (Vedanta Sutra)*. They are presented here with brief elucidations:

1. *Thereafter, the desire to know the Self, ātman.*

The Sanskrit term *atha* indicates that something precedes it. What precedes the desire to know *ātman* is acquiring the ability to discern the transient from the eternal, and giving up unworthy fascination for the

fanciful. If such disciplines are acquired, one will develop outward selective appreciation, inward control, steadfastness in carrying out one's chosen mission of life and forbearance to withstand all negative apprehensions that come in one's way. After becoming disciplined, one is competent to desire the knowledge of the Self.

2. *That, this Absolute, the same am I.*

For that reason, the Absolute is both inclusive of the cause and its chain of effects. As the percipient of all, and the coordinator of all relevancy, I reflect in me the same Absolute.

3. *What is its mark?*

From the void of the incomprehensible, how is it distinguished? What is its mark of determination? How can it be judged in its ultimate comprehension? This can be answered as that which exists by itself and shines forth revealing its substance, and is ever on its way to expand its perfection as value par excellence.

4. *And how is it quantitatively enumerated?*

If functionally it has variables, how many are such forms? In its most general being it is the Absolute, Functionally becoming into individual percipients, it has several continuing manifestations of the relative. It signifies unity in the diversity of its variables and the variables of the modalities suggest ontological, experiential, and teleological purposiveness.

5. *It is self-radiant.*

It is the universal ground and presentative of all figures against their own ground. The implied law of the existence of all and everywhere becoming evident as the integral reason of Being in all its sustenance and ever formulating values and its various coordinations, which are observable in all distinctions and relationships.

6. *By that is everything revealed and illuminated in each one's respective radiance.*

The Absolute is not a monotonous lump or inert block. It is both the genus of all genera and the specifics that can form

the universal ground even of the imaginary and the hallucinative.

7. *That this is both the real and the unreal.*

That which is constant, consistent and never-changing is called the Real. And that which is projected as appearances which are transient in nature is called the unreal. Both are attributed to *ātman*.

8. *Again and again it alternates between the substance and the possibility of varying presentables from the calculables to the perceptual including the imaginaries.*

There cannot be any superimposition or creative modifications, poetic or pathologic, without a peg on which to hang all interpretations, both precious and puerile.

9. *The primeval ground is the backdrop on which all variables including negation, contradiction, contraries and the subalterns are projected.*

The substance is ever unitive. It is one in its physicality, in its correlative, functional law of chemistry and in the individuated design and teleological evolution of the one life principle (biologic unity). In the logic of mathematical correlativeness, which can reveal or imply in the science of comprehension or even in the ludicrous fantasies of the psyche (the psychological unity). The only ground on which man has emerged is as a subspecies *sub specie aeternitatis* of the homo sapiens.

10. *Primevally also it was of real existence. This manifested world, for its material cause, there is no other source.*

It is the one homogenous Real that is immanent in this world of functional verity that accounts for all relation-relata complex, which seemingly makes subject-object polemics and bipolar counterparts.

11. *The relation-relata polarization of an affective nature is the causal affinity that is being established between couples.*

What is experienced as most real is the couple in all living species, falling in love, mating and begetting offspring. The reality of this world is mostly attributed to this

process. There is an acceptance that this aspect of the world, however phenomenal it can look, has a continuing validity. Vedanta does not ignore this fact, often described as transactional verity, *vyavahāra*.

12. *Thus the ontological truth is to be understood by relating it to conditional truth and unconditional ignorance.*

True knowledge is the unmodified and unconditioned identity with the self-effulgent state of the unbroken radiance of the Self. So long as the body identity persists and mind functions in a subject-object context, transactional life persists. Over and above that, between relative truth and relative untruth, our imagination can assume the streaming of consciousness in all inter-relationships of individuals.

13. *The realization of non-duality does not cease to be even when afflicted with the relation-relata of the phenomenal.*

The ground of even phenomenal projection is only one – the reality of the eternal being. The phenomenal besmears the clarity of the noumenon when consciousness is confined in the complexity of the unreal; characterized by form, name, desire, action, and the commingling of *dharma* and *adharma*. Even in such cases wisdom can prevail unaffected in the wise.

14. *Brahman alone is the Self.*

15. *That is This.*

16. *Brahman alone is imperientially held in the "I" consciousness also.*

The Absolute alone is, even when the Self is projected on it. Consequently, there comes the fluctuation of identity of transcending the immanence and also becoming identified with the immanent. When an individuated consciousness is free of a previously manifested erroneous thinking such as attributing the relative to the Absolute, a semblance of the error may persist. For instance, even after knowing there is no silver in mother of pearl, the physical eye may continue to see silveriness. That does not affect the judgment of the wise.

Thus, the wise man sees the transcendence of the Absolute in and through the projection of a hallucinative effect.

17. *The false vision of the feared sins of cumulative effects and the apprehension of futuristic peril of possible sins are equally untrue.*

Unfounded fear in relativists is of two kinds. One arises from the fear that one might have done many sins by one's ignorance, and that they are all hanging on in oneself to be punished subsequently. That is called *sancita karma*, the cumulative burden of sins. The other fear is futuristic apprehension. One feels helpless that one may unwittingly be led into erroneous paths and may accumulate fresh sins. In fact, most religions dwell on these two erroneous visions to make the faithful succumb to the dogmas precipitated by established religions. Both these instances are of a sociologically-manifested, irrational fear. They have actually no basis.

18. *For that reason, what configuration is being assumed by mentation should be critically examined.*

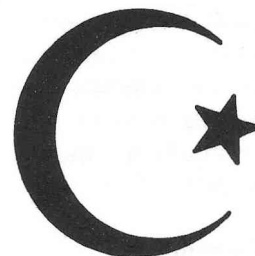
In social life, there are parental attitudes to correct the young using the aide of threat. On the part of the threatened juniors, they give exaggerated submission to the weight of what is being preached to them as fateful predeterminations. The problem of faith comes on such occasions and the victims cannot shake off their fear, believing that they might be looked upon as rebels or heretics.

19. *Apart from that, because of the mixing up of the real and the unreal and consequential mixing of the confusion of cause and effect, the ego sense manifests and makes projections such as "I am" and "mine." Really no such factors exist apart from the Self.*

In the relativistic aspect of phenomenal life, very often, the unreal is taken for the real, and a mistake is made in logic of assuming a cause where there is no cause existing, and then looking upon it as a threatening apprehension. On such occasions, the Self itself becomes unwittingly

identified with the ego and one's self-consciousness becomes an island of fear which can prompt a person to be on his defense. Such occasions are fearsome, and the ego is also identified with everything to which the ego attaches a sense of possessiveness. In such situations, one constantly dwells on thoughts like "I am" and "mine." Actually, these are only figments of our imagination. They have no reality whatsoever, apart from the truth of the Self that is temporarily forgotten.

20. *In like manner (as in the previous aphorism) and for the same reasons, there is the occurrence of the clubbing of subjective perception and the objective presence of the perceived. A special situation arises. Two counterparts are bracketed in one and the same time factor. One is the time that is subjectively lived in the perceiver and the other is the phenomenon of time that seems to be sequentially moving with external events such as the presence of the perceived undergoing transposition in space, etc.. As the Self in itself has no room to offer the duality of like and dislike all such surmises are unwarranted. Spatially there arises the extension of what is being experienced with the space sense of the subject, and it is reflected in the activity of the space where external concomitance of the factors of gestaltation are occurring simultaneously. Both the time and space enigmas are only assumed counterparts. From such a situation arises the idea of the small and the big. The comparison is impossible when nothing exists factually. The imagination can go wild and astray. The imaginary occurrence of fictitious time/space and spatio-temporal imagination has nothing substantial to support such postulations. Really, the Self alone is and nothing else is.*



What is mentioned above are five separate contingencies to be carefully looked into:

1). The act of perception by the perceiver, and the experiencing of knowing the perceived, are seemingly dual because of the limitation of the mechanism of perception which cannot be attempted without separating the subject and object as entirely different entities.

2). The basic ground of Self is a continuous awareness of the state of having no pain. The knower changes into the known. That causes another duality of believing in the experiencing individual as an entity and what is enjoyed as an objective factor outside.

3). In subject-object relationships, a prime factor that enters is the relative notion of space which is supported by the notion of direction. A spatially encompassed factor is naturally looked upon as narrow or wide, small or large. This is contrary to the very reality of the Self, because the Self has no extension or intention.

4). Physical dimensions are only two objects of the empirical field and pure awareness. There are no limits or separate, correlating factors.

5). The unreal cannot be discerned because it gives no room for the judging intellect to comprehend it.

21. *For all these reasons given above, and by its own substantiality, the Self alone is.*

What is given above as the *Vedanta Sutrūm*, the *Aphorisms of Vedānta*, is an optimization of the main teachings of the chief *Upaniṣads*. This philosophical vision is simple and a right contemplation of it will surely give absolute certitude of the one Truth which persists beyond time and space. It will also give one a vivid knowledge of what is seemingly functional at the ontological and empirical level. Its ultimate teaching is to be fearless, and not depend on anything other than the certitude of the Self. 27

General Conclusion

In this paper, searching for the validity

of faith, we have covered many areas dealing with the norms of certitude in science as well as in religion. We have looked at the attitudes of theistic religious people, people who live with the conviction of their philosophy, and also their attitudes towards higher values. We have given due attention to every shade of value with a deep concern for logical certitude maintained by the sciences of all times. This leads us to the conclusion that human beings are both universal, and individuated, maintaining a uniqueness which makes each person an entity in himself/herself. As we have one and the same life, with one and the same bio-chemical content, and the same conformity to biologic laws, there cannot be any fundamental variance in the love for Truth. At the same time, it is evident that a person can live honestly only his or her convictions. The uniqueness of the individual puts a stamp of personal philosophy or personal religion on each person. Even a person who thinks he has no religion, no philosophy and no special way of life, has, even without his knowledge, a conformity to one religion that is shared not only by human beings, but also by every sentient being.

We conclude this essay with a quote from Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (Verse 49) in which he alludes to the one religion of all:

*Every living being at every time,
makes effort in every way
Aiming at Self-happiness;
therefore in this world
Know faith as one; understanding thus,
Shunning evil,
let the inner Self merge into calmness.*

NOTES

21. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master, Volume 1*, Sri Ramakrishna Matt, Madras, 1952, p.294.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 295.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 297.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 299-300.

27. Sri Narayana Guru, *Vedānta Sutrūm*, Pratibha Printers, Tiruvanatanapuram, 1989.

Hearing the Music of Life

Fred Gregory Cantor

Music is the poetry of the beating heart. It is the rhythm of the breath, the pulse of your blood in your veins. Music is life, and life is music. Every cell of your being is vibrating with a musical energy. All the sounds of your cells combine into one great song, the song that is your life. When the music of your being is harmonious, when your cycles are syncopated and your soul is grooving, then you are healthy and feeling good. When the music is discordant, you feel out-of-sorts, you become cranky and you will eventually manifest illness in your physical body or unhealthy states in your mental being.

In a similar way, your song blends with the songs of those around you, your fellow beings (human and otherwise). When these songs are united around a common theme or common values, they can create societies of great beauty, strength, and creativity. When they are sublimated by fear and repression, they create societies that are ugly, warlike, and destructive.

How can we learn to hear the cosmic tunes that provide us with structure and harmony in our lives? People have been interested in this question for a long time. We must attune ourselves to the music of the spheres, the cosmic sound of creativity that orders the universe and all the galaxies. At the same time we should be listening to the inner voice that can be heard only in the stillness of our hearts, when we can quiet the incessant talk that our minds generate.

In ancient India the rishis who were investigating creation found that it was based on sound. The Absolute, *Brahman*, has no attributes. It cannot be perceived. Nor can it be conceived. In fact we can't really talk about it at all. The first attribute that the Absolute obtained was sound or

vibration. This is referred to as *Nada-Brahma*. In the beginning was the word. The word, of course, is sound combined with intelligence - music.

It has taken a long time, but the best minds of contemporary Western science have come around to pretty much the same view. While the Newtonian view of the universe persisted, we believed that matter and energy were separate entities, that their interactions could be predicted, and that matter was based on particles, the smallest of which was the atom. With the advent of quantum mechanics and the evolution of quantum physics we now know that this view is not accurate. Many physicists now believe that creation originated with a "Big Bang". Not a big flash, but a big bang, an explosion of sound that created all of the matter and energy in the universe. Some have developed a remarkable theory involving a massless energy packet called a twistor which by its vibrations created time and space in multiple dimensions. In other words, *Nada-Brahma* is the primal attribute of being in modern physics as well as in ancient wisdom.

How does this cosmic energy, this primordial sound, manifest in us? Can we use this energy to promote our physical and mental wellness? For most human societies that we know of, the answer is yes. In shamanic cultures, healing is done not just with herbs and potions, but with rattles and whistles, bells and drums. The body is put back in rhythm. This approach was also used in ancient India. Music was not only for entertainment or for religious use - it was a tool in the medicine bag of the *Āyurvedic* physicians.

One such physician was named Sarn-gadeva. In addition to being a doctor, he was also an accountant and a musician. An

odd combination in today's society, perhaps, but not so unlikely if you think about it. Sarngadeva lived in the twelfth century and was the author of a treatise titled *Sangīta Ratnākara* which presents the structure of Indian classical music.

In order for us to understand the nature of music, Sarngadeva finds it necessary to elucidate the genesis of sound in the body. This involves the *prāṇā*, or vital breath, flowing through the energy centers of the body. These *cakras* are familiar to those who have studied yoga or Vedanta. Traditionally there are six *cakras* named. In the *Sangīta Ratnākara*, we are given ten *cakras*, which can be thought of as cycles as well as centers of energy.

Each cycle is represented by a lotus, each lotus having a different complement of petals. At the apex of this system is the thousand-petaled lotus. Within this system are contained all of the colors and emotions that make up our physical and emotional being. Each *cakra* has its own rhythms, its own raga or melody.

Western science has touched the surface of this area lightly, but has not yet explored any of the depths. It is acknowledged that music can reduce heart rate and relieve stress. We know from "scientific" studies that certain types of music will stimulate growth in plants and even in animals. Perhaps one day modern technology will provide us with the kind of detailed information that the wise people of ancient times possessed.

In the meantime, we are free to make our own inquiries and come to our own conclusions. I can feel the energy of certain notes, certain music, as it flows through me. It will stimulate a particular area, and relax another. When you sit in a concert hall and listen to a full symphony orchestra, you feel the music in your whole body. You don't just hear it with your ears. It is a complete experience. Sometimes even the hairs on your arms will stand up from the effects of a piece of music.

You also hear music in your emotional or thought body. When you close your eyes in a concert you find yourself being carried away. Visions form of places you

have never been and you find yourself almost in a dream world. Some of us get so carried away by this that we may actually seem to have fallen asleep during the most rousing parts. The ancients knew about these powers, and created music specifically to produce "altered" states of consciousness.

Music as we know it is derived from the human voice. The range and dynamics of modern instruments are extensions of the human voice. In India, most instruments were originally created to mimic the characteristics of the voice. Unlike Western music, there is no fixed pitch for most traditional Indian instruments. In the West, each note has a fixed value. 'A', for example, represents a vibration of 440 cycles per second. If an instrument is tuned to 420 cycles or 460 cycles, it is out of tune, and will be discordant with all other instruments that are "in tune." In India, the pitch of the instrument is concordant with the player's voice or inner sound, and pitch is merely a relative thing.

Both Indian and Western music have a common basis in the octave. In the West, the octave is represented as do - re - mi - fa - so - la - ti - do. On the piano this would be represented by the white keys, and the spaces between notes are called whole steps. The spaces between the white keys and the black keys are called half steps. These intervals are fixed, and it is not possible to play in between them, at least on the piano. While it is possible to use quarter tones, it is very unusual in Western music.

In Indian music, the notes are referred to as *sa - ri - ga - ma - pa - dha - ni - sa*. Each note is characterized by an animal. *Sa* is derived from the sound of the peacock; *ri* from the bull; *ga* from the goat; *ma* from the crane; *pa* from the cuckoo; *dha* from the horse; *ni* from the elephant. Each of these sounds is derived from *śruti*, which is often translated as microtone. While Western music is broken into whole and half steps, in the music of India there are 22 *śrutis* which divide the seven *svaras* (notes).

The word *śruti* is derived from the root *śru*, which means to hear. It signifies the

smallest difference in pitch that the ear can distinguish. It also means truth. In addition to representing pitch, or placement on the scale, *śruti* also means sound that is free from resonance. *Śruti* is devoid of any color. It is through the combining of *śrutis* that tone is produced, and by these combinations the different notes and their characteristic resonances are formed. There are three categories of notes: those with an interval of four *śruti*, those with three, and those with two. There are three notes in group one, two in group two, and two in group three, giving a total of twenty two. This is the basis on which the science of *raga* is built.

When a newborn baby comes out of the womb, the first thing for it to do is cry. Each cry is a unique tone. It announces its part in the symphony of life by immediately generating its own special sound. Sound is power, and the life of the newborn begins generating power right away. Later on, the sounds will come to have specific meanings and language will be formed. Sound becomes speech, and yet remains essentially musical.

How can we discover our inner sound? Where is that unique pitch to be found? Fortunately, it is very close at hand. When we visit the doctor, often he will say "Stick out your tongue and say 'aah'." He wants to see the throat and the tongue, but a good doctor will also be able to tell a lot about his patient's health from the strength of the sound that is made. When you open your mouth and make the sound "aah" you are expressing your natural note. You can only make this sound with your mouth open. If you try to close down your mouth, or to muffle your tone, you won't be able to make the "aah" sound.

As you begin to close down your mouth, the sound shifts on your palate. The "aah" changes to "uee" and moves back in the mouth. Eventually as the mouth closes further, the lips begin to touch and the sound changes again. The "uee" sound becomes "mmm" and is moved to the back of the mouth, into the throat. In this way the word AUM is formed from the natural process of opening and closing your



mouth. It is the strongest of all words, and has the power of mantra. If you wish to discover your inner voice, your inner note, just sit still in a quiet place and say AUM over and over.

In order to manifest the word AUM, we must use three distinct sounds together. Similarly, for consciousness to manifest itself in physical form, three different attributes are required. In India these are called *gunas*. The three *gunas* are *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*. In the West they are thought of as the three modes of consciousness. It is the varied predominance of the three *gunas* that creates the world of names and forms.

Sarngadeva describes the *gunas* as two extremes and a center.

<i>tamas</i>	<i>sattva</i>	<i>rajas</i>
	ī	
inertia	purity	activity

Sattva is described as having the attributes of faith, single-minded devotion to virtue, forbearance, truthfulness, spiritual knowledge, and doing good deeds regardless of the consequences. *Rajas* has the

attributes of feeling much pain and misery, roving spirit, vanity, lying, pride, craving, anger, and arrogance. *Tamas* is identified with sleep, laziness, inattention, anguish, deception, despondency, stupidity, inaction, and lethargy. We can see in our own lives that these three modes of being alternate in predominance in our minds.

In Western thought we might think of the modes as wakefulness, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. These three modes are often associated with the three brains we possess, i.e. the medulla, cerebral cortex, and frontal lobes. This is a simplification, but we Westerners like our metaphysics simple.

The great Sufi musician Hazrat Inayat Khan refers to the *gunas* as rhythms. He calls *tamas* the rhythm of earthly reason. *Rajas* refers to the reason hidden behind earthly reason, and he says "the one who begins to see or live in the rhythm of *sattva* begins to see the cause of every reason." We can easily see these different rhythms in the different sounds and music around us once we recognize what we are listening to. As we attune ourselves more to the rhythms of *sattva*, we become more aligned with the pulse of the Absolute.

Western science has also discovered a phenomenon called entrainment. People who associate closely at work or school or in a family or community group will find that their rhythms mesh over time. The most obvious example is when a group of women working together find that their menstrual cycles will begin to coincide. This was known to the ancient sages, and also to the practitioners of shamanic healing. It is also a fact that has not been lost on the advertisers and promoters of our present day societies.

It is not accidental that we are being constantly bombarded with sounds and vibrations that are specifically designed to stimulate our *tamasic* cravings and desires. The people who are spending millions of dollars designing commercials are very well aware of the power music has to stimulate our minds, and they do not hesitate to use it for their advantage. That is why so many stores have paid consultants

to create "background" music that will make you spend more money in their stores. As you become a K-Mart shopper, the music entrains you with all the other K-Mart shoppers.

These promoters count on the fact that most people are not "conscious" of the sounds around them. Consequently, it is easy to defeat them simply by being aware of what is going into your ears in a conscious manner. It is also possible to use sound to actively de-program yourself. There are sounds that will stimulate your *sattvic* mode instead of simply increasing your desire for things. Surrounding yourself with these types of vibrations can counter the subtle effects of other sounds. If you throw a stone into a pond, it will create a ring of ripples. If another stone is tossed, it creates another set of ripples. Where these sets interact, they will cancel each other out. In acoustic science these are called null spots. It really doesn't matter how large the stone was that you threw in the pond, or how much force it is thrown with. A small ripple can cancel out a large one. So even a single note played or sung with high intent can counter the ripples of *tamas*. This is an important key for those who are interested in elevating their consciousness and breaking free from the bonds of consumerism and the desire for things.

The music of the *jīva* or individuated self is made manifest by the operation of *prāṇā* (vital breath) through the physical and psychic body. *Prāṇā* implies more than simply the air moving in and out of our lungs. It is the vital force that activates all the other elements that make up our being. We can go for a certain period of time without food or without water, but if we are deprived of breath, we will certainly perish very quickly. This vital force channels itself through the various energy centers or cycles within the body. These cycles are known as *cakras*. Understanding these centers gives us great insight into the operation of our mind and body, and can be invaluable in tuning our spirit. That is why Sarngadeva goes into this matter at length, even though we may ask what rel-

evance the *cakras* have to music.

The foundation of our individuated being is the *ādhāra cakra*. It is the basement, so to speak, on which the edifice of our self is built. This *cakra* is located between the anus and the genitals, and is represented as a four petaled lotus. The petals are supreme bliss (*iśana*), spontaneous happiness (*agnēya*), heroic joy (*naivṛta*), and divine unity (*vayavya*). So we can see that the basis of our existence is positive and joyful and connected directly to the Absolute. At the center of this foundational cycle lies the creative power of the Absolute (*brahmaśakti*). This creative force is known as *kuṇḍalīnī*, which means literally coiled up, curved like a snake. The kundalini is the residual power left over from the production of the body. Through *kuṇḍalīnī* yoga this residual power can be released and used for further creativity. When we are feeling spontaneous joy and oneness with the Creator, our energy is focused in the *ādhāra cakra*.

The second *cakra* is called *svādīṣṭhāna*. It is located at the root of the genitals and is represented by a six-petaled lotus. This cycle is the center of the illusive power of *maya*, the everyday world that we take as "reality". This is the world of self-centered activity and worldliness. It is the abode of the five enemies of wisdom - *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), and *ahamkāra* (ego). Meditation on this lotus has the power to free us from these enemies instantly. The *svādīṣṭhāna* is also the seat of passion. When kundalini is released from this cycle and pushed up to the next higher one, control over sexual power is gained. So when we are feeling swept up in desire or lust, our energy is swirling around the *svādīṣṭhāna*.

Located around the navel, the next center or cycle is called *maṇipūra*. This *cakra* is represented as a ten-petaled lotus. The name derives from the word *maṇi*, which refers to a shining gem. Meditation on the ten petals of this lotus results in dreamless sleep, craving, jealousy, fault-finding nature, bashfulness, fear, hatred, stupidity, impropriety and dejection. Not a very nice place to hang out, but it seems

we all tend to spend a lot of time there.

It is from the power of these three *cakras* that the gross or physical body is evolved. During the waking state attention is usually centered in one of these three basic cycles. The higher centers are concerned with mental development, which is considered the subtle body. Our thoughts and feelings and processes of ideation are not tangible things like our arms and legs, yet they possess as much if not more reality, and are as much a part of who we are as our physical form.

The *anāhata cakra* is the basic cycle of the unmanifest part of our self. This center is represented as a twelve-petaled lotus - freedom from fickleness; clear thinking (deliberation); repentance; hope; light; worry; desire to avoid evil; equanimity; vanity; mental instability; discernment; will or ego. In this *cakra* is manifested *śabda-brahma* - the Absolute manifested as the inarticulate word. It is the seat of embodied consciousness, and is considered to contain the pulse of life. *Anāhatanada* or unmanifest sound is associated with this *cakra*, and it is said that meditation on this center gives mastery over speech and the power to create and destroy. That is why the *anāhata cakra* is the seat of Śiva for the Hindus.

Located at the base of the throat, the *viśuddhi cakra* is the cycle of purity, and is the abode of the goddess of learning. In the previous *cakra* the ego-soul has discovered the *ātman*, the boundless being within. It becomes "purified" and is given the power to perceive the three phases of time, past, present and future. This *cakra* is the gateway to final emancipation from all the limits of consciousness.

The *lalana cakra* is one of those given by Sarngadeva that is not found in standard works. It is located at the back of the neck, and is related to the tongue. The petals of this lotus are arrogance, haughtiness, affection, sorrow (misery caused by known factors), agony (misery caused by unknown factors), greed, disenchantment, emotional excitement, and life's basic urges (hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, decay, and death). It is also said to be the seat of

devotion, satisfaction, and cleverness.

The *ājñā cakra* is the cycle of supreme command, and is located between the eyebrows. It has three petals which symbolize the three *gunas*. Concentration here gives command of body and mind. It is the seat of mind, consciousness, intellect, ego, and will. A successful yogi at the time of death establishes his vital breath here and abides in the timeless being after death.

Another of the centers given by Sarngadeva that is not found in most texts is called the *manas cakra*. It is the cycle of the mind, and is represented by a six-petaled lotus. It is concerned with both the conscious and the subconscious mind. The petals represent dreams, palatal enjoyment (taste), olfactory sense, perception of form, touch, and sound. Included here are the five senses plus ideation.

The *soma cakra* is the cycle of the moon. It has sixteen petals which correspond to the sixteen phases of the moon, and is also not found in standard works. It is considered above and beyond *manas*. The petals represent grace, forgiveness, straightforwardness, forbearance, detachment, patience, cheerfulness, mirth, horripilation, *dhyanasru* (tears caused by concentration of the mind with the eyes open), stability, profundity, endeavor, purity of heart, generosity, and one-pointedness. *Soma* refers to the moon, which symbolizes a feeling of cooling, when the fire of craving is extinguished by rising above the *ājñā* and *manas cakra*s (above the world of opposites, relative perceptions, and desire).

At the apex of our being is the *śaśarāpatra cakra* - the thousand petaled lotus, also called the wheel with a thousand spokes. This center is not physical or psychological. It leads beyond time, space, and causation. The thousand petals are symbolic of infinity. This *cakra* is located at the *brahma randra*, the cerebral aperture.

At the time of birth, the embodied soul or *jīva* is focused on one of the petals of these cycles or *cakra*s. According to the point of attention, it gains certain predispositions of character. Sarngadeva informs us that the *jīva* focused on the 1st, 8th, 11th and 12th petals of the *anāhata cakra* becomes

musically proficient, while focus on the 4th, 6th, and 10th petals destroys one's capacity for music.

The *jīva* is like a tightrope dancer. *Prāṇā* (the vital breath) is the rope, ascending to the *brahma randra* and descending to the base (*mulādhāra cakra*). By the practice of *kundalini yoga* the mind is trained to focus on a particular *cakra* and thereby master a particular level of consciousness. This is a very delicate practice, like tightrope dancing, and requires a perfect balance between opposites.

Contemplation through one-pointed attention is beyond most people, so the sages use music to express *nada*. Music is a universal language capable of being used for aesthetic experience and spiritual awakening. Even though all human endeavor may result in the awakening of the unmanifest *nada* within (*anāhata*), it can best be achieved by music which caters to the individual, the social, and the spiritual good of humanity at both material and spiritual levels.

The sages discovered a technique of attaining liberation (*moṣha*) by meditation on the unmanifest sound which is heard inside the head. This sound is produced without any content of matter; it is natural and spontaneous, which is why it is called *anāhata*, meaning unstruck. Even this sound is uninteresting to most people because it has no emotional color. Music becomes useful so that people can cultivate both ends of life - experience of the world, and salvation from its limits.

Having this knowledge can give us a new perspective on our demeanor and that of others. If we encounter someone who is aggressive and rude, instead of making a judgment about that person and saying "oh, so-and-so is really a jerk", we may find ourselves thinking "oh, so-and-so is really feeling the influence of *tamas* today". Since we are familiar with our own *tamasic* feelings, we might be a little more sympathetic towards that person. If we are well enough informed, we might be able to see that the person's energy is caught up in the fourth petal of the *maṇipūra cakra*. We may even be able to use our energy to help release

that person from this cycle, or to increase the energy they are putting into it if we too are feeling in a negative mode. It is always up to us as individuals to choose whether to respond or react to a given circumstance. If our energy is focused in the higher *chakras*, we will respond. If it is focused in the lower centers, we will tend to react.

Once I attended a training seminar where this was being discussed, and someone asked "what is the difference between responding and reacting?" The answer was given in the form of a story about a person who was ill. This person went to see the doctor, and the doctor prescribed some medicine. After taking the medicine for some time, the patient returned to see the doctor. The doctor performed some tests, and came back with the results. The doctor said "I have good news for you. Your body is responding to the medication." It would have been quite a different story if the doctor had said "I'm sorry. Your body is reacting to the medication." When you are confronted with negative energy and you react to it, you are adding your own negative energy to the situation and things will get worse. When you respond to negative energy with your own positive energy, you have the power to make the situation better. The choice is always yours.

The energy released in music is generally responsive. Of course, music like

heavy metal or gangsta rap is reactive for the most part, but even music like this can produce positive effects by giving an outlet to feelings of rage and frustration that often come from injustice and powerlessness. We should never be frightened of music, but rather we should listen to it and try to discover where it is being produced. Then we can use this knowledge to move the energy to another cycle, or to shift the focus from one petal of the lotus to another.

Music is communication. It is communication between ourselves and others and also within our self. The key is to take the time to sit still and listen to the music within you. Whether you think you are "musical" or not, there is music at the very core of your being, and if you turn off the radio playing in your mind you will be able to hear it. Once you can hear it, you will be able to focus on it and use the music to channel your energy through the various cycles we have described. The most beautiful sound in the Universe is the inner music you possess. It is produced effortlessly within you, like the music of a stream or the wind in the trees. Once you learn to hear it, you will find that peace and harmony seem to manifest in your life. When you cannot hear it, take the time to examine where the noise is coming from that is masking it, because it is ever-present and will never abandon you. ❖



Guru's Walks

Deborah Buchanan

A small group of us were walking with Guru this morning on the curving road that leads into the fields behind the Gurukula on the way to Lovedale Station. We were in an area beyond the village houses that was marked "Protected by the Forestry Department," walking under a canopy of eucalyptus mixed with local trees and bushes. From a turn in the road we looked back at the Gurukula on the opposite hill. It was an island of trees amidst the groomed tea fields and the plowed and planted village fields. Everywhere the trees had been cut for more planting room or for use as fuel, or most likely, a combination of the two. Guru was pleased with the sight of "his" trees. How wild and verdant the Gurukula's five acres looked, not quite so sculpted by the intentions of man.

Walking around the bend in the road we came upon an old, Nilgiris-style farmhouse with out-buildings, kitchen garden and surrounding fields. Near one side of the property were two blue head-stones, large but not ornate, marking two grave sites under the shade of a grove of old and large oak-like trees. "These are my two old friends," said Guru. "For many years I used to come by here on my walks and the couple of this house would come out to the road when they saw me and invite me in for tea, and we would visit. Now they have died and we no longer have tea together but I say hello whenever I go by." It was a lovely, quiet valley where these old people now lay.

Afterwards we all walked on in silence for quite a ways, sheltered by the trees and freshened by a mountain breeze. Closer in to the railroad tracks and the bridge, human activity increased. There were town buses now coming out to these villages, motor bikes roared by, and, of course, many bicycles and pedestrians. A group of

women were at the stream below us, washing clothes on the rocks, and a wandering herd of wild horses skirted out of our way. Just across the road, the local Church school was letting out for recess. Students in blue uniforms and red sweaters came running and screaming into the courtyard to play between classes. Guru said, "Many of those village children are at the school on Gurukula money. The Church charges the parents for the schooling and they come to me, an old "Hindu holy man," to help them make their payments." He shook his head at the incongruity of the relationship.

Then Guru turned to me and asked, "Do you believe in Louis Pasteur?" I thought this must be a trick question but could not decipher its intent. While I was pondering, Guru added, "If you don't believe in Pasteur's germ theory, we could stop in at the tea shop here for a drink and a snack. But if you do believe in it, then we should go home to the Gurukula for some tea." Ah! I thought, a visit to the tea shop. I'd spent many mornings and afternoons in the local chai shop--no haven of sanitation--fighting off the gray chill of Ooty's weather. But on my last visit I had been very sick and was more wary of tempting those intestinal parasites. While I hesitated, Guru said, "All right, let's go home."

Back at the Gurukula, as we walked by the stairs that led down to the kitchen, Guru pointed out a new bush growing along the pathway. He said to Scott, "I had this bush planted here because it is a kind that is very dear to me. When I was a boy and my younger sister drowned, I was so sad and lonely. I would come out of my home and sit under a bush just like this and cry and 'talk' to my sister. This bush consoled me then, and it makes me happy to see it here now at the Gurukula."



Both Guru and Mr. Ponnampalam were bundling up for our morning walk. The air was chilly and wet. Mr. Ponnampalam especially, used to Singapore's damp tropical heat, wrapped scarves and sweaters around his thin frame. He was older and more frail than Guru, who waited like a younger brother for him and who, when they walked, often lent him an arm for support. Wrapped in ski parkas, dhotis and wool socks, they led our small group down the path at a slow and deliberate pace. As we walked Mr. Ponnampalam talked of his many encounters with Nataraja Guru at the Singapore Gurukula and then in India. The stories still held the bite of Nataraja Guru's uncompromising posture and words.

At the end of our walk, as we were turning back up the hill, Guru began to talk to a few of us--Andy, Suellen, Scott, and myself--about the various differences between himself, Nataraja Guru and Narayana Guru, particularly in their relationships to women. Narayana Guru, he said, was a very traditional *sannyasi* in his outlook on women: he was afraid of them. He wouldn't let them touch his feet, and when one would prostrate to him, he would almost climb up his chair to keep from being touched. Nataraja Guru, on the other hand, would vacillate. Sometimes he was very traditional, aloof, even afraid as Narayana Guru had been. Then, at other times, he could be adoring. His years in Paris and Geneva had taught him friendliness with women, but that was an overlay on his strict orthodox upbringing.

"And then me!" Guru laughed as he recalled his first encounter with western women. He was in Australia in 1970 staying at Professor Iyengar's house. One evening an Australian woman came in and prostrated at his feet. Afterwards she stood up and said, "That is the Indian way

of greeting. Now here is the Australian way," at which she gave him a big hug and a kiss on the cheek! That was shocking enough, Guru said, but the real teacher in changing his attitudes towards women was Celia Novy's oldest daughter Camille, who was then fifteen years old. When Guru went over to Celia's house for the first time, Camille was sitting at the dining room table doing homework, her feet up on the table along with her books. "Hi, Nitya," she called out while chewing gum. To a formal, proper Indian, let alone a *sannyasi*, this was stunning behavior. Guru said that up until then, no one, not even Nataraja Guru had ever called him Nitya and at that moment all of his swami-hood, all of his role and its behaviors and expectations dropped right onto the floor. And that was the beginning of his person-hood. He said he still considers Camille one of his gurus. There have been many accusations towards Guru of favoritism to women, charges of excessive friendliness. But what he had learned, he reiterated, beginning with Camille, was an equality of relationship to women, as friends and as students.

We proceeded from that topic to a discussion of Joseph Campbell and his several books on world mythology. Andy mentioned that he felt Campbell mixed *Brahmavidyā* and Romanticism to the detriment of both. Guru said, "Yes, that was true of Campbell but has been, as well, a common problem among poets in India. Like Kalidasa, who in *Sakuntala* put *Brahmavidyā* right in the middle of Romanticism." It often happened, Guru said, without the author's clear understanding of the requirements or structuring of *Brahmavidyā*. I asked if they, *Brahmavidyā* and Romanticism, were antagonistic to one another and Guru replied, "No, but they definitely have their own philosophical requirements and directions which do not always overlap."

Then we were back at the Gurukula gate and Guru turned to talk to Thampan who was waiting with work and questions for him. The rest of us slowly dispersed for another cup of chai.

(Continued in next issue.)

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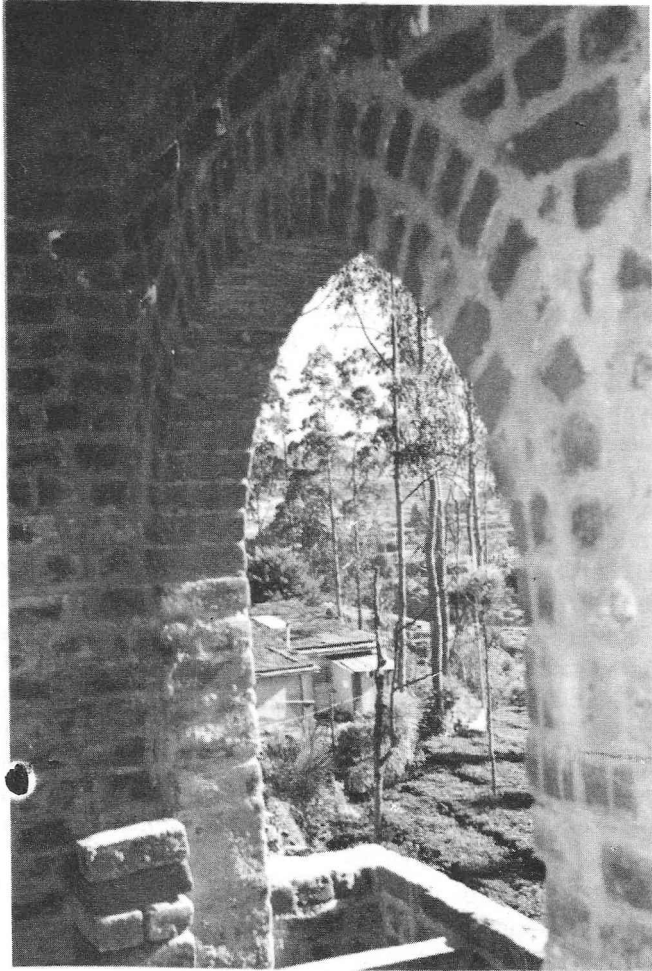
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