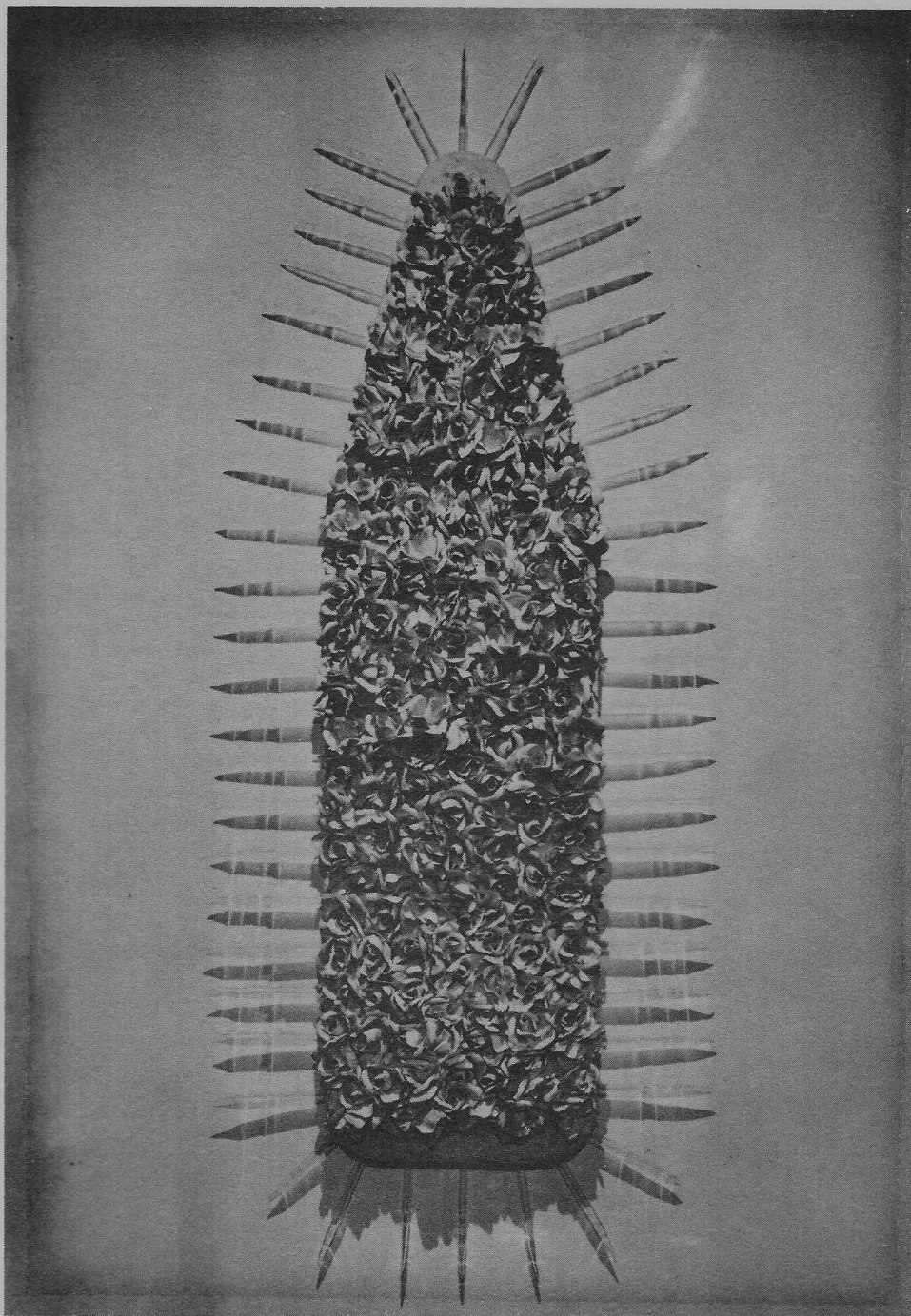
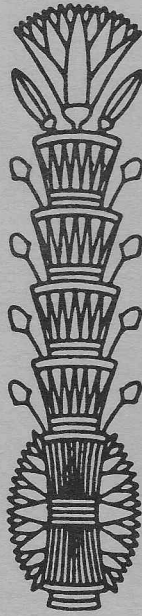


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XII • 1996

FOURTH QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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One Hundred Verses

One hundred years ago, a poet sitting in a simple palm-thatched building near the Indian Ocean picked up his pen and wrote one hundred four-line verses. As he wrote, it was as though he was sitting in the midst of a river rich with the nutrients of an ancient tradition, which, however, had become clogged with pollution. As he wrote, he filtered out the impurities, letting only pure clear thought flow through him on to the paper. As a young man, he had decided to dedicate himself to a careful and critical search for spiritual truth. Now, much later in life, he was writing to share with others the truth he had found and tested with his own life.

Around him, many people suffered the indignities of poverty and discrimination, as well as being prey to the many forms of ignorance that fill life with the pains of injustice, anger, hatred, self-doubt, disease, loss, hopelessness and disorientation. His love held them close as though they were all his own parents, brothers and sisters, children. As he wrote, he signed sadly now and again, his eyes filling with tears of compassion for their suffering. If someone came into the room, they were treated as a continuation rather than an interruption of his project. Agricultural laborers, coming from their work covered with sweat and dirt, were received gently and with dignity. Their hearts found solace in his quiet presence which accepted them as they were and courage in his love which pointed the way to more wholesome living.

Other times when he wrote, his eyes shone as though reflecting the most brilliant of lights. He might be visited by scholars dressed in pure white, the fine weave of their clothes matching their intricate cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities and philosophical discourse. They would come, proud of their abilities, and ready to display their learning, but find humility in the presence of his light. With loving calm and verses of his composition, he would

burst the bubbles of their self-complacency and clear the cobwebs from their minds, revealing to them the living essence of beauty and wisdom which lay buried beneath the elaborate edifice of the culture they paid homage to.

Young men fired with revolutionary zeal to rid society of its dark ignorance and injustice, used to fervent speeches and dramatic self-sacrifice, would come to stand quietly in his presence as he wrote. He would look lovingly into their eyes and softly chant words of sweet reason and ethical clarity from his poem to guide them. They would depart, their souls nourished and their efforts re-oriented to a process of change not based on the polarity of "us and them."

The verses he was writing spoke intimately to and of the lives of the people around him. They also placed the suffering of those lives in the context of a unitive understanding which his own experience showed had the power to clear away the darkness of ignorance. At times his soft chanting would fade into a silence so profound that those who came near would feel their troubles slipping away as they, too, became absorbed into a "peace that passeth all understanding."

Eighty years later, on the other side of the globe, a philosophy professor sat peacefully in the common room of a large Pacific Northwest home near the university where he taught. Every morning at 6:30 and evening at 7:00, the room would fill with people coming one by one and in pairs: university students, young couples just starting their lives together, others in the middle of their lives, doctors, lawyers, professors, builders, printers, designers, teachers, artists, musicians, actors, photographers. In the morning they would settle quietly onto sofas, chairs and pillows to listen to one verse each day written by that poet long ago and far away. First their dear teacher would chant it in a voice so musical that they could appreciate the poetry

even without knowing the language in which it was written. Then he shared his own meditative thoughts about the verse. All sense of strangeness was erased because his words spoke to the heart of the dilemmas they faced day by day: ego conflicts in relationships, anguish and anger at the cold shoulder turned by an affluent society to those less fortunate, struggles to earn a living decently, without having to sacrifice their creativity, confusion about how to raise children in a troubled world, the ever-present threat of nuclear disaster.

They were all seeking meaning in life which could brighten the past with understanding, the present with joy and the future with hope. And each day their teacher's words brought more light, sometimes like that of a spotlight which reached deep into their psyches, exposing prejudice and inertia, sometimes projecting a sound and sensible ethical approach to conflicts and misunderstandings, sometimes lifting their intellects to new planes of thought. Those who arrived each day, half-asleep, would leave awake, having been given the treasure of four lines of beauty and insight to ponder and apply to their lives. At the end of their day's work, they would return with the questions and insights they had gained by living that day in the light of the verse.

Day after day, for one hundred days,

their teacher revealed the meaning of the verses and they began to understand some of the mysteries of life and their place in it. Both during the one hundred days and in the years that followed, when the inevitable conflicts and crises of life arose, they slowly came to experience that they were stabilized by a firm foundation under their feet, from which compassion seeped into their hearts and understanding into their minds. Many of the verses became like old reliable friends, dear companions on the road of life, bringing solace and wisdom that could be shared to bring light to others in confusion and distress.

Who were these teachers of such loving compassion and deep insight into human nature and possibility? What were their words of wisdom with such transforming power? In Kerala, India, in 1897, Narayana Guru wrote *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction. And in Portland Oregon, in 1977, Guru Nitya shared his deepest understandings of those verses with those who were fortunate to know of and come to his daily meditations. They have now been transcribed and typed, enabling us to share their ever-relevant wisdom and inspiration with you, beginning in this issue.

Nancy Yeilding



The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

From the title itself of the opening chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras*, *Samādhi Pāda*, it is evident that the purpose is to arrive at the ultimate state of equipoise in which all problems of life are resolved. In the second *sūtra*, the methodology of arriving at *samādhi* is clearly stated as *cittavṛtti nirodha*: the restraint of mental modifications. *Rodha* is preventing or obstructing any possible motion or movement. By adding *ni* to *rodha*, it means total cessation. *Vṛtti* is modulation. The entire world can be expressed as countless simultaneous modulations in and through a million devices of the stuff of the world. But here *vṛtti* is conjoined with *citta*. *Citta* is a compulsive emergence of memories.

A simple pluck of the string of a veena or any string instrument or a tap on a tuning fork is followed by countless frequencies of vibrations that can go on like encircling waves for a long time. Such an occurrence in memory is called *kṣipta*. After the repetitive process of maintaining its vibratory nature for a certain quantum of time, deflection comes. That is called *vikṣipta*, a specific occurrence. When this is happening to the consciousness that is latent in a living organism, the specific power of recognition of the internal transformation becomes dull. That state is called *mudam*, a stupor-like lack of clarity. That prevents a new focusing of attention on a third item. That is called *nirodha*. But when *nirodha* prevents the admission of any new phenomenal attention, the spirit implied in the organism's biologic state brings in a clarity which can be one-

pointed, *ekāgram*. This general mechanism of consciousness – motion (*kṣipta*), distraction (*vikṣipta*), stupor (*mudam*), restraint (*nirodha*) and one-pointedness (*ekāgram*) – functions autonomously and cyclically.

Patāñjali wants us to know that this natural mechanism of consciousness is a rich phenomena that can be employed to arrive at a supernatural glimpse of the noumenon. Mentation is considered to be constituted of doubting and seeking the resolution of those doubts. From the day of our birth, all through our life, what we experience is the continuous stream of consciousness. We see many people struggling to get at least a moment of rest from the streaming in of doubts, memories, thoughts, feelings and disquiet caused by several apprehensions, fears, imaginations which can all be classified under two heads: pain and pleasure. Most people are convinced that the modulation of consciousness can never be stopped. But when this universally accepted master of Yoga pronouncedly asks for the termination of the modulation of consciousness, we are encouraged to think it is possible.

The title of the second chapter, *Sādhana Pāda*, refers to the scope and possibilities of the study of Yoga. What we always experience is our confrontation with necessity. Every time we are confronted with a need, the question arises in our mind, how the need can be fulfilled. We look for a potential to actualize. A possibility is suggested from inside. Then it is human nature to be hopeful and to look for probabilities. When we pass from a possibility

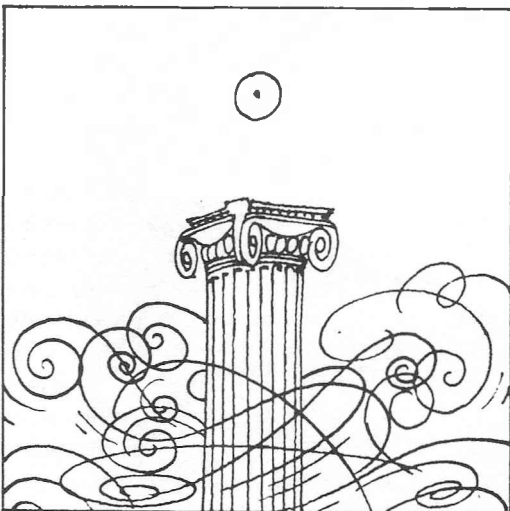
to a probability, the possibility gains more clarity. When several possibilities are hypothesized, we find that certain postulations are more relevant to the given frame of reference than the others. A postulation can be actualized only by testing the validity of a chosen probability. This is a process by which we decide what cause can yield what result. When we see the result manifesting, we move from a postulation to its actuality. Thus we find out for ourselves that actualization of an envisioned result action is the revelation of the solution to our problem.

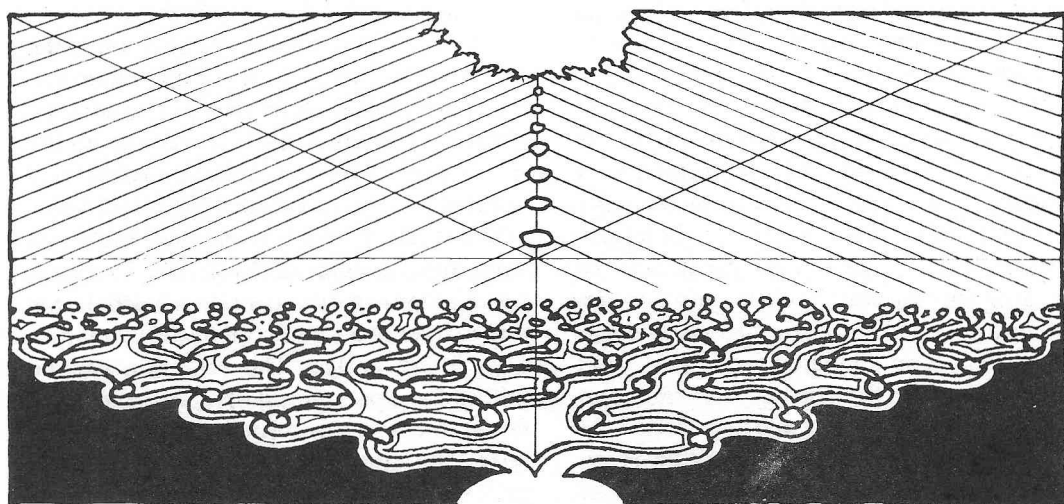
The person who is bent on actualizing the realization of the potential envisaged in a certain probability is called a *sādhaka*. The postulation is called *sādhanam*. The actual performance or the exerting of one's energy in a methodical way to bring the actual from the potential is *sādhana*. In the case of the Yoga aspirant, the *sādhanam* being sought is *samādhi*. One sound which is predominant in all these terms is *dha*. It has dynamic affinity with the sound *dhi*, which means the discerning intelligence in all experiences of certitude. Three of the functions of consciousness – the interrogative (*manas*), recall and remembrance (*citta*), the sense of agency known as ego (*ahamkāra*) – are all psychic forces which pull the faculty of judgment in different directions. What is central is the discerning intellect (*dhi*) which should stand upright without being swayed by doubt and

apprehension. One should not become confused by a plethora of memories and disturbing thoughts and emotions. To be free of *manas*, *citta*, and *ahamkāra* the intellect has to be upright like a pillar (*adhana*). When a steady state of consciousness is maintained by the intellect, the pull from all sides is met equally. That position is called *sama dhana*. When *samādhāna* or equipoise gives a contiguous neutral position to intelligence and does not yield to any emotionally tainted memory, the state that is stabilized is called *samādhi*.

Thus both the *Samādhi Pāda* and the *Sādhana Pāda* point us towards the cessation of the modulation of consciousness. The state of being which is free of becoming is aloneness, *kaivalya*. *Kevala* means in itself and to be alone. Patāñjali wants to take us to the ultimate goal of aloneness, so the final chapter is *Kaivalya Pāda*. In the process of going from the tumult of crowded worldliness to the state of aloneness, one passes through several kinds of affectivity. The special kinds of modulations that automatically arise in the consciousness of the seeker are called *vibhūtis*. Each type of affectivity is a distraction from one's ultimate goal. So a yogic aspirant needs to know about the various psychological, moral and spiritual affections which can arise and how they can be resolved. To guide the yogi to reach pure aloneness without being affected by many predictable distractions of allurements, this chapter, *Vibhūti Pāda*, is included before *Kaivalya Pāda*. However many people have misunderstood the purpose of this section, seeing it as a study of supernatural powers to be actualized. Induced hallucinations have been called *vibhūtis* by pseudo-yogis, and the subject has been lost in crowd consciousness. Many aspirants have thus unfortunately experienced hazardous results. Hence we are sounding a note of caution to the student not to attempt *Vibhūti Pāda* by taking its *sūtras* or prior commentaries literally. We should keep our peace and patience to arrive at a precise and useful knowledge of *Vibhūti Pāda*.

The emergence of anything from the unknown to the known is *bhūti*. When





such an emergence can be closely observed and its qualities can be described to others, it is a specific emergence, *vibhūti*. In this section of the *Yoga Sūtras* there is a graded study of *vibhūtis*, the emergence of specific qualities from the maturing consciousness of a yogi. As we read, we should keep in mind that Patāñjali must have used several norms of great importance in the study of human psychology for his classification and categorization of *vibhūtis*. So we cannot read through the *Vibhūti Pāda* like a short story or a novel or even a treatise of scientific importance. Here the emergence is not of an object out of a previously known object. It is a new dimension of the subject being revealed to the subject itself. As a result of the discipline which a Yoga-aspirant performs, he or she may develop certain hitherto unknown experiences.

The ultimate aim of Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras* is to take a yogic aspirant to the aloneness of the *puruṣa* which is otherwise known as *kaivalya*. *Kaivalya* comes from *kevalam* means 'pure' as well as 'original'. The *Samkhya* epistemology which forms the basis for the Yoga philosophy, begins with the binary principles of the spirit (*puruṣa*) and nature which provides the material basis for spirit to express its luminosity (*prakṛti*). The spirit and the nature modalities of the elemental world are contradistinctive.

Between appearance and reality there is an enigmatic or paradoxical middle

ground. We cannot conceive of appearance without an experiencer to whom a certain phenomenon occurs. We can view the ground from a physical point of view or from a metaphysical point of view. When we try to examine the phenomena of the world, we have to make many reductions and abstractions to delimit the field of cognition. Spatially we limit the field to that which we can measure in terms of physical dimensions such as length, breadth, height and weight. We detach ourselves from the bodies in question and limit ourselves to certain qualities which can be rationally conceived and formulated. The result is that we come to a notion of measurement which is far different from the original stuff which we were assessing. Instead of arriving at reality we only arrive at approximate measures of quantifiable entities. Hence the physical view of things alienates the subjective agent of knowledge from what is being assessed in terms of objectivity. There, the aloneness we arrive at is the aloneness of a fictitious notion generated in the world of fluctuating energies. To hold on to this is even worse than being deluded by appearance. In a world where both the subjective cognition and the objective matter to be cognized are in a state of flux, what good is it to concentrate?

There is another way of making an assessment of reality. That is to seek from within the truth of the perceiving stuff

which is derived from the subject. If we go into cerebration about the physical nature of appearances, we will not arrive at any better angle of vision than of the physicist or physiologist. In the pure idea which is made to bear upon the methodology of practical reasoning, we will stumble on the aesthetic idea fixation of psychological apperception. That is a solipsistic way of begging the question. If all sensory elements are removed from pure knowledge, the subject is so alienated from itself that there cannot be the tribasic occurrence of the knower, known and the knowledge. In this enigmatic coming together of the spirit and matter we have to locate the basis of the retention that can be attributed both to the subject as well as the object.

The impossibility of discerning it made philosophers like Nagarjuna speak of nothingness (*śūnyatā*). Patāñjali presents it as *kevalam*. *Kevala* is the unconditioned indescribable unity of all the complexes spoken of as the indistinguishable union of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. The *Upaniṣads* describe it as that from which both word and mind recoil. Sri Ramakrishna speaks of it as the fate of a salt doll that goes into the ocean to assess its nature. Thus the starting point of *Vibhūti Pāda* is unknowable. This paradox cannot be solved by any rational method. In the fourth verse of his *Ātmopadeśa Śataka* Narayana Guru gives an integrated vision of the Vedantic and the Yogic position:

Knowledge, the objectivization
of the value of the known
and one's personal knowledge
are nothing other than *mahas*;
merging into that infinite supreme
knowledge, become that alone.

This is the closest understanding we can gain of *dhāraṇā*: to return to the very foundation of oneself and to remain in it in a state of beatitude. Before we go into this subtle aspect which is limited to the intuitional insight of a very few yogis, we should make ourselves familiar with the norms of concentration as understood in the day to day conjectures of an ordinary

person.

From the simple law of pulsation to the cosmic law of an expanding and contracting universe, all laws have a functional similarity, whether the law belongs to the microcosm or the macrocosm. This law is evident in our experiencing of *dhāraṇā*. *Dhāraṇā* is derived from the fact that something is held and retained in a purposive manner by a container such as the outer cover of a single cell or the insulation of a living body. The retention can be within the spatial limit of an outer skin, so far as mass is concerned, or of the time span, the duration from the organism's primal organization to its ultimate disintegration. Spatial retentions and temporal retentions are all *dhāraṇās*.

There is another way to understand *dhāraṇā*. From the very start, human beings have a purposive consciousness wanting to direct their lives, consciously as well as unconsciously, to arrive at a steady situation in which inner calm can be maintained for short durations or even longer durations. Thus the *dhāraṇā* that is seeded in consciousness is a program for the whole life. However, to bring consciousness to its aloneness or an absolute steady state is totally opposed to nature. Nature is a continuously proliferating phenomenon. This world in Sanskrit is called *jagat*, a cosmic flux which does not permit any reversibility or any holiday. In this continuous automation of motion, the consciousness implied in it needs to be taught or organized to keep to a certain rhythm in which the motion is annealed by the rhythmic pattern in which the motion occurs.

A confused mind is like the flooding turmoil of a river with many rapids. By plunging into the middle of it, no one can set any harmony in it. Each individual needs to chart a course whereby the navigation of life can be made a smooth sailing. The challenge is to live through the misery and joy of life in which one is exposed to a million encounters, continuously recognizing the imagery and returning again and again to the essential. Patāñjali responds to that challenge by showing us how to become one with the essence. Be-

tween a hearty laughter and a heart-rending primal cry, there is a meeting point which cannot be adequately expressed in words. If we do not get to its essence, every hour can be an hour of turbulence, uneasiness and anguish. Yet an unexplainable order of beauty and goodness enter into the mainstream of life. From the first formation of cause, a future harmony is to be envisaged. This is where our parents, society, governments, all fail. Effects cannot be corrected without conceiving a cause that will harmoniously elaborate itself, with bright reasoning prevailing between a volatile will and a frenzied action program.

Patāñjali forewarns us that only with a continuous and consistent vision of the purpose of life maintained for a long time, with several inner corrections carried out from day to day, sometimes from moment to moment, can the inner and outer match

in their beauty, meaning and goodness. We should begin from the least lumination of consciousness and go through its evolution in life up to this day; then we will have a transparency of vision of ourselves through time and space, and through all interactions that we had to come through. Even in repairing a machine - a watch, an automobile or an airplane - one needs hours of concentration to understand all the correlations that go into the smooth functioning of the machine. Compared to that, the human system is far more elaborate. But we can direct the little spark of consciousness in us to go on a meaningful reconnoitering. Then the inside design of the entire structure will reveal to us the functional purpose for which every bit of us is put together. Then alone does *dhāraṇā* become an accomplished reality.

(Continued in next issue.)



Praśna Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

Question One

Mantra 1

Sukeśa, son of Bhuradvāja, Satyakāma, son of Śibi, Gārgya, grandson of Sūrya, Dausalya, son of Aśvala, Bhārgava of the Vidarbha country, Kabandhi, son of Katyā, these, indeed, considering Brahman as the supreme Good, intent on Brahman, seeking the highest Brahman (Brahmanparan), approached the revered Pipalāda, sacrificial fuel in hands, thinking he would explain everything to them.

Seeker: The *upaniṣad* apparently begins with a narration of the ancestry of the six seekers. What is the relevancy of this narration in the context of wisdom teaching?

Guru: To a certain extent, personal characteristics and natural dispositions are hereditary. It does not mean that an individual will not or can not acquire new propensities of his own. The ancestry of the seekers mentioned here shows that their ancestors were seekers of wisdom and therefore the possibility of having a natural inclination for wisdom is more in them.

Seeker: Why are they characterized as *brahmaparaṇ*?

Guru: One who considers knowing the ultimate Reality of *Brahma* as the highest value in life is called *brahmaparaṇ*. Whatever be the day-to-day affairs one is engaged in, one's interest will always be in knowing the Reality and in living accordingly. Such a one will be able to transform all other interests and related activities as conducive to the prime interest of attaining *Brahma*.

Seeker: There are many who really

want to know the meaning of life. Yet they find themselves unable to find time for that. Could they be considered as *brahmaparas*?

Guru: No, though they know what they really need, they don't have the willfulness to pursue it firmly. Do you know why they are in such a predicament?

Seeker: Worldly interests draw them away from what they really want. They are not strong enough in their minds to pursue it.

Guru: It is thus clear that an ability to think properly and to have proper value notions will not be enough. Firmness on our part to adhere to it is also necessary. This firmness is called *dhṛti* in the *Bhagavad Gīta* (XVII 33-35). According to the *Gīta*, it can be either pure (*satvikas*), affective passionate (*rājasa*) or dark (*tāmasa*) in nature. It is not an easy thing to have such a firmness in life. Sometimes one will have a drastic and uncompromising attitude towards oneself. Such a firmness is indicated here by calling the seekers *brahma-nistaṇ* (those who are intent on *Brahman*). One's conviction concerning the ultimate goal and one's firmness to abide by it support mutually rendering each other fruitful.

Seeker: Why did the seekers need the help of a guru?

Guru: Though they knew that life had a meaning and a final goal to be attained, they were not fully aware of its nature. Where should one go or whom should one approach when one is yearning for a solution to such burning problems of life?

Seeker: To one who knows Reality and who no longer has any such problems of life.

Guru: Such a master is not easy to find. Hence the seeker will have to go in search of him. This is also indicated in this first mantra of the *upaniṣad* by the words 'seeking the highest *Brahman*' (*param brahmān-veṣamanan*). Finally they find the Guru Pippalāda. Wisdom finds expression where the seeker and the knower of *Brahman* come together; each *upaniṣad* is a specific instance of such expressed form of wisdom.

Seeker: The seekers go to Pippalāda for the first time. They think he will explain everything for them. How can they have such expectations at the very beginning?

Guru: A real disciple or seeker cannot see a real guru as a stranger.

Seeker: Why is it?

Guru: Is it not the intense desire for wisdom that brought the disciple to the august presence of a guru?

Seeker: Yes.

Guru: A guru will always be waiting for such a seeker to come to him. When a seeker approaches him, the inner urge in him for imparting his wisdom to a real seeker meets with the burning desire for wisdom in the seeker. It is in such a context, intimacy between a guru and a disciple attains its maturity and perfection. A seeker who is in such a situation will immediately feel that he (or she) will get what he (or she) is in search of from that master.

Seeker: Why did they carry sacrificial fuel in their hands when they approached the master.

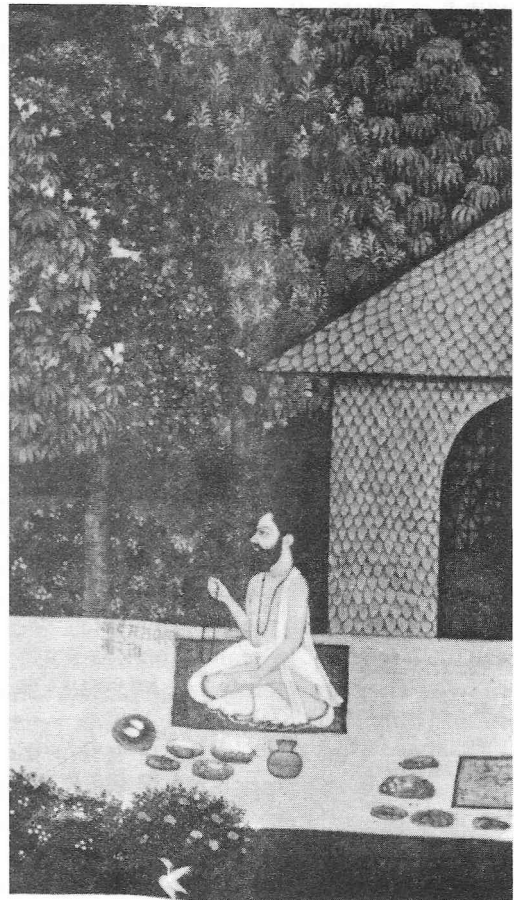
Guru: It is a traditional custom in India that a wisdom seeker should approach a guru with a bundle of firewood. A guru usually lives in his hermitage or *asrama* where a fire sacrifice is held daily. The inmates of such a hermitage, in principle, treat their own life as a sort of offering. The newcomer who approaches with a small bundle of firewood indicates by it that he is willing to treat himself as fuel to be offered in the wisdom sacrifice. It also shows that he is willing to live in the hermitage with all humility, participating in all the routine activities with full dedication.

Seeker: Who is Pippalāda?

Guru: Pippalāda was a direct disciple of Vyasa. *Pippala* is a delicious berry and *ad* means to eat. In this case, the berry that Pippalāda relishes is not any sensuous fruit, but the fruit of wisdom.

Seeker: Six seekers go to Pippalāda and ask six questions one by one. Are these questions to be considered as random or are they sequential?

Guru: At first glance, it might not seem that they are sequential. However, you will see, when the answers to the six questions are correlated, that together the science of the Absolute or the wisdom of *Brahman* (*Brahmavidya*) is presented with a structural coherence. The six disciples thus are not merely six individuals but they represent six stages in a methodic presentation of *Brahmavidya*. The six questions are also to be treated as six stages of the one and only problem. It is with this understanding that we should enter the real teaching of this *upaniṣad*.



Mantra 2

To them that seer said: "Live with me another year with austerity (*tāpas*), *brahmacarya* and faith (*śraddha*). Then ask me questions according to your desire and if I know, I shall indeed tell you everything."

Seeker: I am puzzled. When the seekers came to him, Pippalāda didn't ask them about themselves or why they had come before saying they could stay for a year.

Guru: It wasn't necessary for him to ask them questions. From the bundle of wood, their intention of coming to be students was clear. A master might be able to see at first glance the intention of a seeker. But he will make sure that the seeker is fully competent for wisdom before the actual teaching takes place. Imparting of the secrets of wisdom to a seeker who is not fully competent will not be fruitful. Sometimes it even turns out to be dangerous. So they were asked not just to live one year with him, but to live with austerity (*tāpas*), *brahmacarya* and faith (*śraddha*).

Seeker: What is to be understood by *tāpas*, *brahmacarya* and *śraddha*?

Guru: The word *tāpas* literally means heating up. The practice of *tāpas* is a sort of self-heating process in order to see for oneself what is real in oneself. *Tāpas* is practised not only by an individual seeker, but it is said to be the self-heating undergone by the Supreme Reality that resulted in the creation of the world, as depicted in many of the major *upaniṣads*. This Reality, called *Brahman*, had the primal desire, "Let me become many." It underwent a self-heating process and the world emerged from it as if by the hatching of an egg. Thus man's emergence is a result of the *tāpas* of *Brahman*. In the reverse process, man's *tāpas* enables him to realize *Brahman* as the substance in him. In reality these two are not two. They are merely two facets of the one and only *tāpas*.

Seeker: That must be the reason why *brahmacarya* is also appended to the practice of *tāpas*.

Guru: It could also be understood in that sense because the word *brahmacarya*

means 'to walk on the path of *Brahman*'.

Seeker: *Brahmacarya* is usually understood as the observance of celibacy in life. How is it connected with the *brahmacarya* related here?

Guru: One who is aware that there is one underlying Reality in everything considers *knowing* that Reality as that which makes life meaningful. This knowledge is of the highest value and therefore all other interests in life become less important. Their life can be considered as 'on the path of *Brahman*' and they are to be properly called *brahmacarins*.

It is a way of life absolutely free, where one cares for no opinions of the world. In such a way of life, some find that the responsibilities that go with married life a kind of hindrance. For this reason, they prefer to be single. It could also be that they ignore the natural course of having a family life in the intensity of their interest in the Supreme happiness of knowing *Brahman*. As this became common among seekers of wisdom it became a fixed idea of the Indian mind that *brahmacarya* means leading a celibate life. In fact, one does not become a real *brahmacarin* just because one is celibate, and being married does not bar one from being a *brahmacarin*.

It is not clear whether these six seekers were married or not. The marital status of Pippalāda is also not known. We do not know whether there were female members in the hermitage either. Therefore the *brahmacarya* mentioned here should be of a different order from the celibate life. They are there in search of the wisdom of *Brahman*. If they are serious in their quest for wisdom, they will be willing to dedicate themselves for that goal and their life as a whole will attain the status of *brahmacarya*. The rishi was simply testing the intensity of their quest for wisdom.

Seeker: How is this *brahmacarya* related to *śraddha* which you translated as faith?

Guru: Full faith in the words of wisdom of a Guru and in the recorded words of prior masters is known as *śraddha*. That is why it was rendered as faith here. This is one of the prerequisites of a disciple for gaining wisdom from a guru.

Seeker: Does it mean that one has to blindly believe in what a guru says?

Guru: Hinduism as a religion does not ask its followers to believe in anything dogmatically. It is a religion that is not based on any dogma. If at all there is anything parallel to it in Hindu philosophy, it is *śraddha*. But what one faithfully hears from a guru is not something to be believed blindly throughout one's life. A seeker goes to a guru in search of wisdom and he will have the conviction that the guru knows the Reality that he is in search of.

A guru imparts his wisdom in the form of words. The essence of this teaching is that the Reality one searches for has to be realized by oneself as the substance that underlies one's own existence. What is really meant by this instruction often does not become clear to the seeker instantly. He (or she) will have to cogitate on it perhaps for a long time before the essence of the teaching becomes transparent. The seeker could arrive at this final conviction only because of the faith he placed in the word of the guru in the beginning. This belief is what is known as *śraddha*. *Śraddha* thus serves as a firm spring board for plunging into a methodic self-enquiry, culminating in Self-realization.

Seeker: The importance of *śraddha* and its role in helping one attain wisdom is now clear to me. How long has one to live a fully dedicated life with *brahmacarya*, *tāpas* and *śraddha*? Here the recommended period is one year. Is it enough for all?

Guru: The disciple has to cogitate and meditate on what was heard from the guru for the final attainment. These latter stages also need the continuance of the same dedicated life. Once the final goal is attained, one will never have the mind to give up such a life. It becomes natural to him. In short, this way of life is not meant for practising for a fixed duration. It will be continued throughout one's life.

Seeker: Why does the guru say, "I shall tell you all if I know." There is a hint of uncertainty in the words 'if I know'. At the same time the 'I shall tell you all' shows a certainty.

Guru: No seer will claim to be a seer.

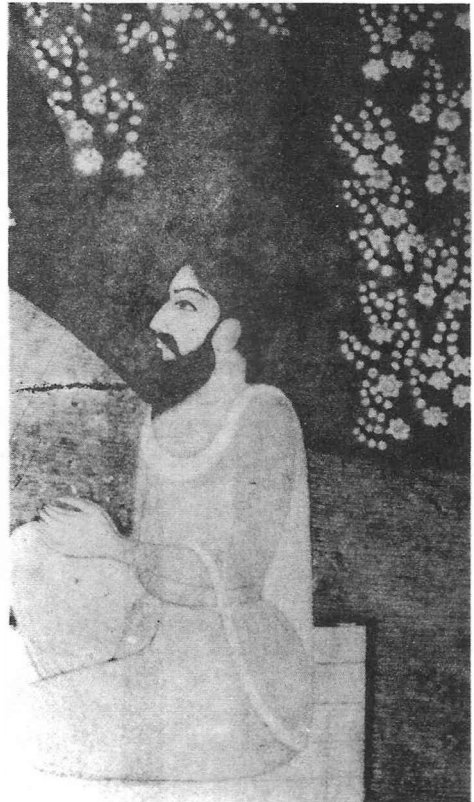
Wisdom makes one humble. The *Kena Upaniṣad* says that the real wisdom to be imparted by a guru is a secret that is not known to the one who claims to know it and is known to the one who knows that he does not know it. Wisdom is not something that can be contained in words as their meaning content. On the other hand it is an inner awareness of the Reality that makes words capable of conveying meanings. Such a wisdom, in its finality, cannot be imparted through words. That is why sometimes it is said that wisdom-teaching attains its finality in silence.

Whether a particular disciple is to be taught through words or through silence at a given time is decided by a guru in accordance with the maturity attained by the disciple. All this is implied in the words of Pippalāda.

Seeker: At the end of the year, who asked the first question? And what did he ask?

Guru: That is what we will see in the next mantra.

(Continued in next issue.)



This Prayer

*Sitting on the hard tamped sand,
swept clean of leaves each morning,
we hear the rustle of the mango
tree's dark glossy leaves,
caught in a faint whispering of
sea currents from the red-cliffed beach.*

*We hear the chanting of school lessons
sung in unison, students calling back
to their teacher in disciplined rhythm,
then the wild cries of running loose
in the courtyard, playing ball or
some boys scrambling up the tree
to harvest small green buds
for fiery pickles and chutneys.*

*In the road we hear the crowded din
of buses, the frantic honking of cars,
and in the open spaces the creak of
a bullock cart's wooden wheels and
the cow horn's dangling bell tones –
they sway through the melting wet heat
that holds us quiet under the protective
arch of the mango tree. We are
listening to an old Upanisadic story,
hearing the flow of the well's deep river
underneath the sand, each sound
the soft drone of supplication.*

Deborah Buchanan

Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

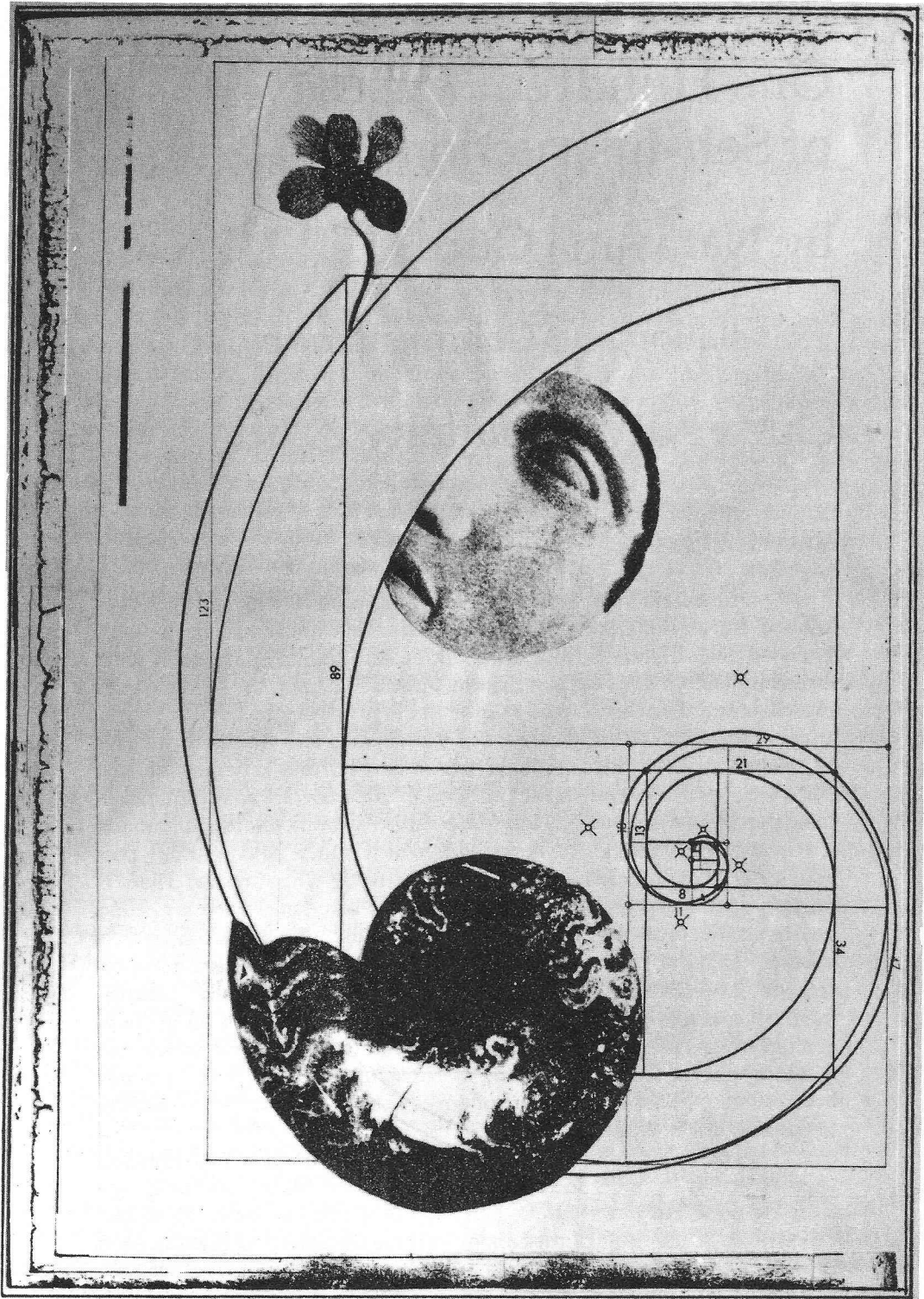
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Introduction

Truth is so very simple that we don't need to make any effort to know it, but an undetectable ignorance conceals what should be obvious. Then we take a lifetime beating about the bush to arrive once again at what is already known to us. When the lost truth is regained, the search comes to a close and there is no need to utter another word.

Between the effortlessness of the obvious and the silent wonder of regaining the forgotten truth, there are many hurdles to be cleared. The truth we speak of is neither fact nor fiction. It is not the object of immediate perception nor mediate inference. Either you unconditionally know it or you do not. This is the knowledge which cannot be taught but, paradoxically, it dawns upon you on listening to one who knows. There is no assurance that you will know because you listen and there is also no assurance that you will know if you do not listen. What one listens to is a word symbol of That which cannot be adequately symbolized or represented. To rectify the defect of symbols, a series of mutually complementary symbols can be presented by the knower. One or all of these analogies may prepare the listener to have a state of mind which can suddenly get the jolt of confronting the Absolute. There is no guarantee, but it is the compassionate nature of gurus to offer any number of chances to those who are willing to listen.

In the *Ātmopadeśa Śataka*, the polarizing of the Self and the non-Self is presented with one hundred variations. In the Malayalam language there are no words more simple than what the Guru has used. Thus, one cannot escape the fault of meddling with the obvious and making each verse a conglomeration of confusion by commenting on it. Yet we take that risk with the hope that our reader will ultimately leave us and take refuge in the compassion of the Guru to develop a proper attitude to help him or her see, in the Guru's wisdom-gesture and imprinted in his every word, the forgotten truth which everyone is seeking all the time.



Verse 1

*arivilumēriyariññitunnavaṇ ta-
nnuruvilumottu purattumujjvalikkum
karuvinu kaṇṇukal aṅcumullatakki-
tterutere vīnuvaṇaṅṅiyōtītēṇam*

Permeating the knowledge which shines
at once within and without the knower
is the *karu*; to that, with the five senses withheld,
prostrate again and again with devotion and chant.

The first verse begins with *arivilumēriyariññitunnavaṇ*, one who transcends empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge is knowing something through personal experience or direct perception. First meditate on this. Watch your awareness pass through you as a stream of consciousness. Identify your status as the knower. For instance, when you say "I know; I am the knower," have a conscious awareness of yourself as the knower of both the 'I' in you as well as the object of your awareness.

As you read, notice how your consciousness penetrates into the meaning of what is written here. It is as if you are entering a room and becoming acquainted with whatever is in it. Similarly, you enter into the word content and become familiar with the concept it presents. When you look at an object you are not only seeing a form; you are also entering into the essence of it and knowing it as transformed states of your own consciousness.

In English, the word 'experience' implies an interaction between the knower and what is known. In Sanskrit the word for experience, *anubhava*, means becoming likewise. It is not an interaction between the subject and object, but a transformation of the subject. You as the knower are transforming your consciousness of the moment into what is known. In the present context, experience should be understood as a subjective transformation. It is "in-formation" in the true sense of the word.

There is a state of knowing in which you become oblivious of your personal involvement as the knower. When you are fully engaged in an experience you are not simultaneously thinking of yourself. Ideas such as "I am knowing, I am enjoying," etc. only come when you ruminate on your mental states or communicate them to someone else. Otherwise there is just knowing by itself. It is the structure of the language into which we put our thoughts that creates differences between thoughts and things. For example, if you see a bird in a tree you don't think it is happening inside your head as an occurrence of knowledge, you see it as a bird "out there." Then the known itself is both the knowing and the knower. It is as if the knower is interjected into the known. You don't have to struggle in order to bring what is known into you, or to fuse the knower into the known. It all happens spontaneously and instantly.

In this verse Narayana Guru refers to the dichotomy between the world outside and the world inside. The best way to understand your inside world is to close your eyes and restrain your other senses. When your senses are not put into operation you experience only the subtle

sensations of passing ideas, inner urges and conscious volition which constitute your inner world.

Closely watch your consciousness and examine what takes place when you say "I am the knower," "This is knowledge," and "This is known." What do you experience that is called the knower within you? Where is the separate thing called knowledge? The object of knowledge may be seen as everything other than the subject. Although these are seemingly separate entities, in terms of consciousness there is no differentiation. On all such occasions, what you experience is a single consciousness undergoing different modulations. Here knower, known and knowledge refer only to aspects of your personal and private experience. They take place within your own awareness as mere transformations.

The key word in this verse is *karu*, which is both definable and undefinable. It is ultimately to be understood as the Absolute, the primeval cause, the universal Self, and the "nature that is naturing." The literal meaning of the word *karu* is 'mold'. The blacksmith uses a mold into which he pours molten metal to form a cast of an image or vessel. In a bird's egg there is a kind of mold contained in its genetic code. Out of this mold comes the fledgling bird, which eventually transforms into an adult. Human beings also come from a mold that has in it the blueprint of the chromosomes. Any effect has a mold – its cause. The mold of an actualization is its potential. The mold of knowledge is consciousness. The mold of articulated thought is language. Words are the mold of meanings. The mold of material things is energy. The mold of energy is the law that controls and directs it. Thus everything in this world, ranging from the most subtle to the most gross, has its own corresponding mold. The generalization of all of these is called *karu*.

In another sense, that which gives truth and meaning to consciousness and fills it with content is *karu*. When it is understood as that which manifests, or as the "nature that natures," it has the status of immanence. As references to the mold cannot always be confined to its specific aspects, it is also to be understood as the transcendent. It is immanent in universal consciousness and it transcends individual comprehension.

The Guru wants us to understand *karu* in both these senses at the same time, without shifting the emphasis from one to the other. If we can do this, the earth we see here is really earth, water is water, man is man, and tears and smiles are tears and smiles. This is what Guru describes as that which shines brilliantly outside. All these external facts belong to the universal concrete. Just as the Himalayas, the Alps and the Rockies have been "out there" for millions of years, physical, chemical and biological transformations have been going on for billions of years with unbroken continuity. The traditions and social customs of comparatively later periods are also part of the same external reality. When the classical scientists termed matter as everything external, it was meant more or less in a metaphorical sense. The word 'matter' is derived from the Latin word *mater*, which means 'the mother'. The mother is another form of *karu*. She gives birth to new possibilities.

At this stage we can ask, "What is it that makes a mold a mold, a *karu* a *karu*?" In the order and meaning of things we see a correspondence that tallies with the operation of our reason. We can understand a mold or a cast only in terms of the meaning it presents to our reason. When we

reduce the visible in terms of the calculable, we can see a meticulous adherence of reason to a mathematically precise harmony. We are compelled to think that there is something similar to reason operating in whatever we understand as the mold. Later in these verses we will come across a definition of the Self as the knowledge that knows, even when there is nothing else to illuminate it other than itself. In that sense we can say the *karu* is the Self.



In Narayana Guru's *Guhāṣṭaka*, he defines *karu* as 1) *satyam anādhāram jagat ādhāram*, the truth that has no other foundation while itself being the foundation of the entire world; 2) *jñātur jñāna nirantara loka guṇātītam*, that which is modulating as the attributes of the flux of becoming, both as the known and the knower, and at the same time transcending all modalities; 3) *nanāyonimayonīm*, the womb of all while having no womb for itself; and 4) *kālākālamakālam*, the pure duration that is generating the flux of time.

The philosophy of Spinoza is very close to what is contained in the first verse of *Ātmōpadeśa Satakam*. What Narayana Guru calls *karu* appears in the philosophy of Spinoza as substance. The substance of Spinoza is self-founded and self-established; it includes within it all matrices of causes and effects. Spinoza gives two attributes to substance: extension and cogitation. In Vedanta, extension is called *vyāpti*. Spinoza's concept of extension appears in the Guru's verse as 'outside', and his idea of cogitation is akin to 'knowledge' as it is used here. The phrase "at once brilliantly shining," comes in Spinoza's philosophy as *omnia*. Furthermore, what Narayana Guru terms as *arivulumēri* is the same as Spinoza's *intellectus infinitus*; *uruvilum* is the same as *motus et quies*; *puṛattu* corresponds to *res particulares*; *ottu* is the equivalent of *facis totius universi*.

The unitive vision expressed in this verse is becoming more and more recognized by modern day scientists. It is very similar to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory given by Heisenberg and Niels Bohr. As a starting point they divide the physical world into an observed system, which is identical with Guru's term *puṛattu*, outside; and the observing system, which combines in it what Guru terms *arivulumēri*, permeating knowledge, and *uruvil*, within. Even David Bohm, one of the main opponents of the Copenhagen interpretation, expresses a position which comes very close to the world vision presented in this verse by Narayana Guru:

One is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts....We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various

systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole. 1

You are obstructed from knowing this continuous process because of the intervention of the constant awareness "I am, I am, I am." You have to tame and humble this aggressive 'I'. Think of the 'I' as of no worth other than that of an excellent tool. It has no power of its own to create anything. It is only a speck of total consciousness that becomes ego-identified. Let that I-consciousness prostrate before this one supreme cosmic consciousness which is becoming everything. That will help bring about the normalization of your perspective.

Narayana Guru tells us: *uruvilumottu purattumujjvalikkum*, "the supreme knowledge is shining at once as the inner world and the outer world with great splendence." It is blazing as this universe, as the Self, as knowledge, as emotions, as value-appreciations. We are to turn with reverence to that universal yolk, to that cosmic egg of consubstantiation.

If you want to meditate on this verse, focus its light on whatever happens during the course of the day. Repeat the verse in your mind. Feel the great wonder of your own consciousness that is continuously modulating as the world outside and the idea inside. Do this while you are looking at things, talking to another person, and doing your daily routines. When you sense that wonder, it will spontaneously produce in you a great reverence for the universal within you. This will naturally make you grateful that you can think, see, feel, know and do, and thus participate in the cosmic manifestation of the Absolute. Is it not wonderful that the manifestation outside can reciprocate your innermost dreams and desires?

In the process of our sophistication we have lost our natural innocence, our capacity to stand in awe and wonder. We have to cultivate that sense of wonder once again. It is a wonder that this body that was lying like a log of wood on a bed a few hours ago is now sitting here and reasoning. It is a wonder that it can witness a multidimensional universe which was not present during that sleep. The subtle depths from which the contents of dreams themselves come are a wonder. It is a wonder that I can talk to you and you can listen to and understand me.

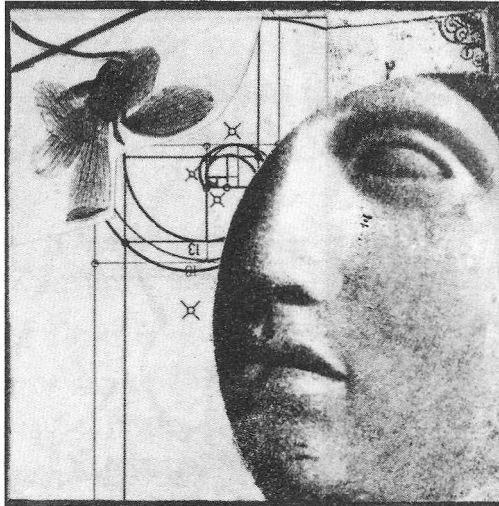
You have done away with all your sense of wonder through acts of analysis and labeling. After having filled the pigeonholes of your mind with hoarded labels, you think you have become wise. But these labels are blocks which only increase your blindness. You have become devoid of the sense of the numinous. If you say "God" and there is no feeling in you, if you say "Absolute" and you don't become overwhelmed, be sure you have no idea of God or the Absolute. You need to rehabilitate your numinous essence.

For a baby every moment is a wonder. Out of their wonder-filled minds, small children can create so much beauty. It is yet a wonder, a joy, that we can see and touch each other. The thrill of that wonder is the adoration I am speaking of. You have to cultivate an attitude of devotion to that known and unknown Magician who makes all this possible. Śankara says that of all the things which can bring emancipation to a person, there is nothing like devotion. It is the supreme way to liberation. Devotion is

wholeheartedness; it is absolute love.

See this wonder that is being manifested around you and within you moment after moment without turning away from any of your normal duties. Through the whole day – while you eat, walk, work, go to sleep – ponder over this wonder with devotion. If you make notes of what you see and feel, and then read them in the evening, you will be surprised to discover how many treasures you have admired in a single day. With this verse you are entering into an intense spiritual discipline.

(Continued in next issue.)



Notes

1. D. Bohm and B. Hiley, "On the Intuitive Understanding of Nonlocality as Implied by Quantum Theory," *Foundations of Physics*, Vol.5 (1975), pp.96,102.



Brahma

*If the red slayer thinks he slays
Or if the slain thinks he is slain
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass and turn again.*

*Far or forgot to me is near
Shadow and sunlight are the same
The vanished gods to me appear
And one to me are shame and fame.*

*They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings:
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.*

*The strong gods pine for my abode
And pine in vain the secret seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good,
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Supreme Being

*In the heart of all beings I dwell
The Pervader and Sustainer of Life.
If you think you can kill or be killed
You're deluded, you know me not well.*

*I'm beyond the vast cycles of Time
Above opposites I stand alone.
Light and shade, what is past and to come,
Less to Me than the words in this rhyme.*

*As the stillness in movement I lie
The Eternal in all things that pass
Yet I'm doer and that which is done
And your wings if from Me you would fly.*

*I'm beyond all the gods in your mind
And your notions of life in some heav'n.
By your love you will know what I am
And dissolving in Oneness Me find.*

Sheilah Johns

Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

Universal Prayer: *Daiva Daśakam* (1914)

From the most high, O Divine, protect us here, do not leave us. You are the navigator of this ocean of ephemeral becoming, and (to us) Your name is a mighty steamship.

Counting one by one, when everything perceivable is done with, then the seeing is steadied; even so, let the inner Self attain its rest in You.

Ever having given us food and clothes and providing for all such needs, making us rejoice in our contentment You are our only Lord.

As ocean, wave, wind and depth let us within see the scheme of us, nescience, Your glory and You.

You are the act of creation, the creator and the myriad variety of what is created; Oh God, are You not the very stuff of which everything is created?

Are You not māyā, the wielder of māyā, and also the rejoicer in māyā? Are You not the True One who, having removed māyā, grants the Supreme Union?

You are existence; knowledge and the endeared value; You Yourself are the present; the past and the future; when considered, You are none other than the articulated Word also.

That state which fills inside as well as outside, brimfully with Your glory, we adore that, Blessed God of Goodness, hail, victory to You.

Victory be to You God of gods, ever intent on saving those in need. Victory be to You, blissful intelligence through and through. Hail, Oh! Ocean of Mercy.

In the deep ocean of Your glory, Immersed, let us all become, there to dwell, dwell everlastingly in felicity supreme!

Translated by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

This beautiful song was originally written by Narayana Guru to hearten and guide the boys and young men who came

to live with him. The sincere devotion, wholesome vision, and inherent compassion give it a widespread appeal to people of all walks of life. At the same time the philosophical exposition of unitive understanding can stand up to the most rigorous scrutiny, confirming the possibility of a stance which does not exclude any religious or philosophical orientation. In writing it, Guru responded to the human need to relate to the unknown, unfettered by ritual or by parochial loyalties and beliefs.

His words evoke a vision in which all existence, knowledge and value, every facet of the process of creation, the stuff of creation, past, present, future, the articulated word, and even the illusions of the world game (as well as the grace that removes those illusions) merge into one fullness of overbrimming love and light. From that arises unbounded confidence in Benevolence as well as standing firm on the basis of spiritual non-differentiation of oneself from others, without abandoning one's critical acumen.

Once the Guru was approached by some Christian missionaries who wanted to convert him to Christianity. At this time, Guru was around sixty and the missionaries around forty. They asked him to accept Jesus and be saved. He replied that he had been saved much before they had been born. They were confused at this and said: "But you are a Hindu Guru."

Guru: Did Jesus Christ come only for a few people?

Missionaries: No, he came for all humanity.

Guru: I also am among them.

Missionaries: No, you haven't been baptized.

Guru: What about the people who

came before Christ? They weren't baptized.

Missionaries: That is all right. But those who have come after Christ need to be baptized to be saved.

Guru: Look at their wonderful faith. I want to learn the Bible.

He asked them to send someone to teach him the Bible. K.M. John came to teach Guru. Guru asked John a question about Jesus' teaching and then gave an answer to it that was so profound that John decided to stay with him for life. They kept reading the Bible but with Guru as the teacher and John as the student.

In connection with the inauguration of a temple (in 1916), Guru said: "I don't have any connections with a particular religion. Nor have I established one. If I have installed images of deities in some temples it is due to the desire of some persons. If Christians and Muslims ask for the same I will gladly do it. I have left both caste and religion."

A group from Ernakulam wanted Narayana Guru to found a temple there. When the Catholic Church opposed it, M.C. Joseph, a rationalist, decided to join the group going to seek Guru's blessings. He expected to find a man with matted hair and a trident, with all the trappings of

a religious sadhu. Instead he found a shaven-headed man dressed simply in two pieces of white cloth. Guru asked the delegation: "Are there other places of worship in the area?" They said that there were three Christian churches. Guru asked, "If there is already a place of worship, why not join in there? Is not one place of worship the same as another?" When the delegation insisted on having a temple, Guru asked that the architecture not clash with that of the churches. M.C. Joseph found Guru to be a great rationalist.

Critique of Caste: *Jati Mīmāṃsa* (1914)

Man's humanity marks out the human kind Even as bovinity proclaims a cow. Brahminhood and such are not thus wise; None do see this truth, alas!

One of kind, one of faith, and one in God is man; Of one womb, of one form; difference herein none. Within a species is it not, that offspring truly breed? The community of man thus viewed, to a single caste belongs.

Of the human species is even a Brahmin born, as is the Pariah too, Where is difference then in caste as between man and man?

In bygone days of a Pariah woman the great sage Parasara was born,

As even of Vedic-aphorism fame of a virgin of the fisher-folk.

Translated by Nataraja Guru



This work contains the most famous utterance of Narayana Guru: "one in kind, one in faith, and one in God is man." It is a beautiful summary of his philosophy and way of life. The five short verses of *The Critique of Caste* are a concise and telling argument which eliminates any basis for caste or other kinds of discrimination. Here biology, religious tradition, ethics and sociology are all brought to bear, resulting in an understanding which exposes the ridiculous and heinous nature of such bigotry which divides human from human.

Once Guru was traveling by train. A prince and a brahmin were in the same compartment and were impressed by his conversation. Feeling great respect for him they asked, "May we know your name Swamiji?" He replied, "Narayanan." The brahmin went on to ask, "May I know your caste?" Guru asked: "Don't you know it by sight?" The brahmin said "No." Then Guru asked, "If you don't know by seeing, how will you know by hearing?"

Prior to Narayana Guru's temple installations, the temples were closed to all but the higher castes of society. The Nambudri Brahmins considered themselves above the Nairs who considered themselves above the Elavas who considered themselves above the Pulāyas and tribal peoples. In addition, each group had many subgroups all arranged in rigid hierarchies. Financial tributes and taxes were exacted from the less fortunate to support the temples that they were not allowed to enter and to provide daily feasts and luxuries for the upper strata. Narayana Guru's example and the organizing activities of his followers not only made new temples open to all but also reformed the practices at all temples after some time. The first reforms brought many new privileges and a new sense of self worth to the Elavas. As is so often true, they in turn began to take on the role of oppressors. Narayana Guru's message often has had more difficulty in being heard by them (except when it was to their benefit) than being heard by those

who originally considered themselves the privileged.

Followers of Narayana Guru who still considered themselves to be a caste called Elava had worked to establish a temple at Tellicherry. On one of Narayana Guru's visits, he invited members of a group they considered to be outcasts (Pulāya) to come to the temple. The Elava group came to the Guru, saying, "Oh, that is too painful for us. Don't call them to come now." Guru asked, "When?" They replied, "Let one year (*varṣam*) pass." The Guru then asked "You will accept them after one *varṣam*?" They agreed. (*varṣam* means a rainfall as well as a year.) There was a big rainfall, and Guru came and asked, "Now will you accept? *Varṣam* is over." Thus the change took place.

Similar restrictions against those considered to be outcasts were being enforced at Kidanganparambu Temple in Cochin by those who considered themselves Elavas. One enthusiastic and dedicated young follower of the Guru, Sahodharan Ayyapan, who became the fighting force behind many reforms, organized a group of young people to have a public feeding. Only one Pulāya could be found. All the young men sat down and ate with him (thereby breaking one of the major "caste" restrictions). When their families found out, they were beaten up and told to drink *pañcagavyam* (a mixture of cow dung and urine, ghee and milk) to "purify" themselves. Those who refused left their homes and joined Sahodharan. The bad feelings erupted in a fist fight between them and the orthodox elements of society. The police had to be called in to quiet things down and an injunction was declared against the annual celebration of the temple which was soon to take place. One night the news spread that Narayana Guru was coming to the temple. He had asked that there be no lights. In the darkness the crowd gathered peacefully, waiting for the Guru. No one could see who else was there because of the dark. A chair covered with a white cloth had been set out for Guru.

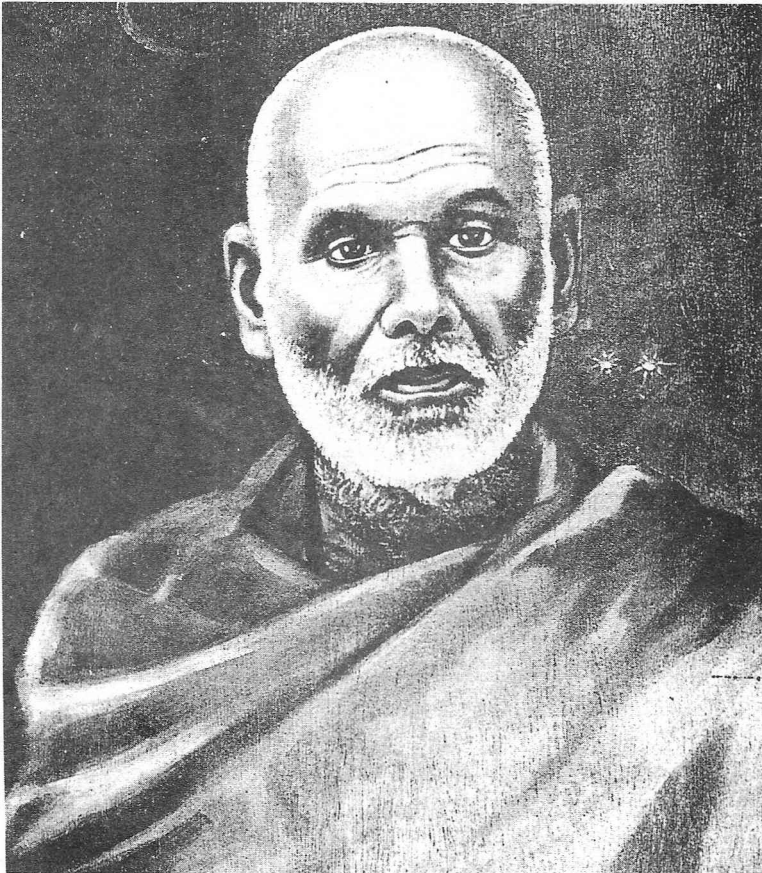
Guru came in quietly and sat down. They could tell he was there only by a faint shadow on the white cloth. The sea of people was absolutely silent.

Guru asked, "When did Vallipasherry come?" Out of the dark Vallipasherry said, "This humble came this afternoon." Then Guru asked after the health of Muloon, the uncle of one of the young men who had been at the feeding (Guru Nitya's father). The young man replied, "He is all right now." Guru asked him, "You are studying here now?" He answered, "Yes." Guru then asked him, "What was the trouble here?" and the young man told the story. Guru said, "Ask all the people of both sections to come before me tomorrow morning." They all came the next day. He asked the old people their grievance. They said, "You gave us a temple and a good life. We want to protect the traditions. The youngsters are ignorant of the tradition. They are dis-

rupting everything." Guru asked, "What did they do?" They answered, "They had a public feeding with a Pulāya." Then the youngsters had their turn. They said, "You taught us that man is of one caste, one religion, one God. We want to live that in our lives. We don't want that to be just an empty slogan."

Guru said, "I don't see anything wrong here." He turned to the old people and asked, "Can't you agree?" "Never," they replied. The young people also said, "Never." Then Guru said, "You both agreed that you don't agree." Everyone laughed. "One agreement can lead to another." He said, "The young people cooked last time. Now the old people can make *paysam* (a sweet, festive pudding) for young and old to eat together." In that gesture the incidents were ameliorated and the temple was open to all.

(Continued in next issue.)





Nataraja Guru

Science seeks certitude.
Incertitude brings doubt,
fear, confusion and even war.
Spell out truth with
clarity, sweet reason
and compassion.

A Comprehensive Theory of Mind

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

The first reference to the Self and its individuation comes in the *Byhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* as a desire to know. To know is imperative wherever a living being encounters necessity. The most fundamental necessity of a living organism is to find the means for self-preservation. The Self in a living organism is established on the building blocks of protein, which is made up of amino acids. These are to be derived from the existential world which is both inside and outside an organism. The negative counterpart of nourishment (food) is hunger. One of the basic laws of biology is for life to seek its nourishment from its own stored up energy. It is a little more than cannibalism where one eats oneself to appease one's hunger. In the *Byhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* the rishi conceived of hunger as a prerequisite for the manifestation of life. He personified hunger as death. Death seeks a way to promote itself. Death thrives on life, and so the most necessary contingency for death to persist is the manifestation of life. Hence the rishi metaphorically gave a voice to death to aspire for a being with consciousness. It is differently understood as *ātman*, the breathing organism, the Self, that which brews consciousness and the processing of consciousness through a series of interrogations which are relevant to the problems posed by the appetite in an organism.

The hierarchy of questions which have come in the stream of consciousness from the wake of manifestation till this day is epitomized in the word 'mind'. Mind is thus a source of apprehension arising out of the fear of fatality. Its complementary aspect is the registry and recording of all happenings in the history of life from mo-

ment to moment. Out of the events in the process of creation, the necessity arose for the centripetal converging of needs to a perpetuating center of consciousness. This is called *cit* in the *Upaniṣads*. The concept of self-evolving consciousness (*cit*) was preceded by the possibility of existence (*sat*). They consequently gave rise to a time-space continuum (*anantam*) substantiated by the psycho-physical material of a biophysical and biochemical body foundation which is like the materialization of the purposiveness that all living beings carry in their unconscious. This registry of the past can be looked into in the present as a directory to solve problems as they arise. Thus the foundation of everything is given in the *Upaniṣads* as the non-terminating substantiating consciousness of existence, called *sat*, *cit*, *anantam*. Afterwards a psychological descriptive connotation was given to *anantam* as *ānandam*, the pleasure principle of life.

In spite of its beginning at the dawn of manifestation, the mind is basically a negative factor which is associated with the pause that shuts down consciousness again and again to focus itself on the logical processing of an answer to a question. But mind as such has no answer for any question. Answers to questions come at the wake of the problem itself. The major function of problem-solving is done by an autonomous device within the organism which in most vertebrates is located in the tail. The autonomic has to complement the voluntary function of consciousness. This center of consciousness is an associated group of receptors and affectors now believed to be in the brain.

To answer a question or solve a prob-

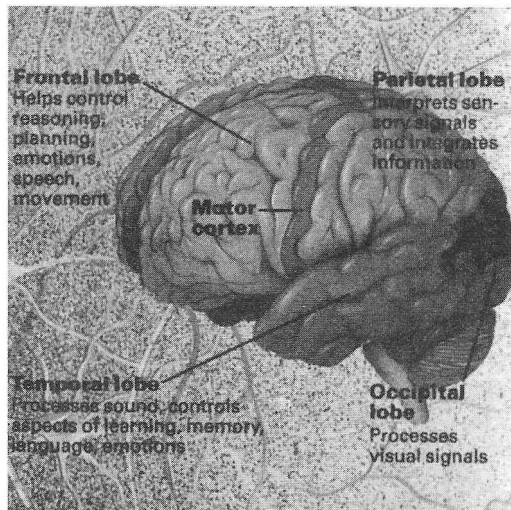
lem, the mind has to work in coordination with three other factors. One is the memory chronicle of the living organism. The mind induces the scanning of memory in which consciousness has to move up and down both retrospectively and prospectively. The second is the intellect which functions as the judge of the most appropriate memory to which the question should be directed. The third factor is the ego which functions as a monitor. Both in the East and in the West the term 'mind' is used as a blanket indicator for all four of these inner psychic organs: the interrogating mind (*manas*), the scanning device of recall and remembrance (*cittam*), the function of judging relevancy known as the intellect (*buddhi*), and the ego which registers the oscillation of consciousness between the positive and negative.

Some of the devices which have been developed by imitating human body mechanisms are very exemplary for us to know the hidden parts of our own consciousness. Take for example the rear-view mirror in a modern automobile which helps the driver to see whatever scenario is behind the car. Fast-moving cars approaching from behind can be seen reflected in the mirror while one is driving forward. Similarly many functions which our inner psyche or consciousness cannot access through the sensory system are made available to us when the source of our own consciousness itself acts like a mirroring agent. In Vedanta, *ābhāsa caitanya* means this consciousness that is distorted purposefully to facilitate awareness when data is not directly available. We do not actually see any object, hear any sound, nor have any means to reckon with time. All these are generated and facilitated by an artificial consciousness within our consciousness. There is an instant deciphering of all the ciphers put into it by the knowing Self, *cīdābhāsa*.

As a result, we are all living in our own separate worlds. That is why Leibnitz equated each Self to a monad that reflects all other monads, *monadus monadum*. Our communication with each other is also a very indirect process in which we use many

ingenious symbolic creations. The voice which has a distributive spectrum of tones and tonal distinctiveness is used to make sound symbols of a given language. We glibly refer to this complicated arrangement of consciousness with the term mind (*manas*) which does not specify anything of pragmatic importance in interpreting symbols of sound, symbols of light and color or light and shade, and pressure of touch, as well as taste and smell. These are all dangerous areas which supply us with millions of mistaken identities which make it difficult for two people to understand each other clearly. There is always a possibility of even misunderstanding totally. Although the basic issuing center of consciousness is in the individuated Self, we are victimized by biological, electromagnetic devices, which have a complete sway over our thoughts and language. Hence we should take time to readjust our entire system to a fully normalized and naturalized version of life in order to understand the meaning of anything, however trifling or august it may be.

One of the major observable marks of life is the action of a living being and its reactions to its environment, both internal and external. The external environment is the objective world which is encountered with the sense organs. The action-reaction complex in the external world commences with the receiving of stimuli from the external world which signal the presence of



objects. The affective impact of knowledge from outside is called experience. 'Ex' indicates the externality of the knowledge that is derived from objects outside. Although stimuli in the form of the inward flow of energy (electrical, electromagnetic, thermodynamic, etc.) are comprehended, the source from which the energies come continues to remain outside the body. For instance, the sun is the source of solar energy. It is experienced as the solar light that triggers the afferent gateway of stimulation, especially in the organ of visual perception. Along with that, heat is experienced by the skin that envelops the body. There is a corresponding internal process beginning with the stimulation of the optic nerves and the tactual faculty. The effect of that is the arousal of a certain awareness which spreads in two opposite directions. One is the awareness of the objects illuminated by sunlight, which includes the localization of the source of light. The other is an internal computation happening in the faculty of perception where knowledge is modulated into several patterns in accordance with appearance and other accompanying qualities which are biologically, physiologically, bio-chemically and psycho-somatically discerned.

This discernment brings a secondary modality of awareness which is mainly responsible for naming all items of perceptual awareness. This is a field where the significance of form is very relevant. The Indian philosophical systems of *Nyāya* (generic knowledge) and *Vaiśeṣika* (specific knowledge) take the entire ensemble or gestalt as a single piece called *padārtha*. The closest English translation of *padārtha* is 'thingness'. *Pada* means a word; *artha* means significance. We know the world only through word-significance and hence the world of experience is called the phenomenal. In *Roget's Thesaurus* words are classified under six headings:

1. Abstract relations
2. Space
3. Matter
4. Intellect
5. Volition
6. Affections

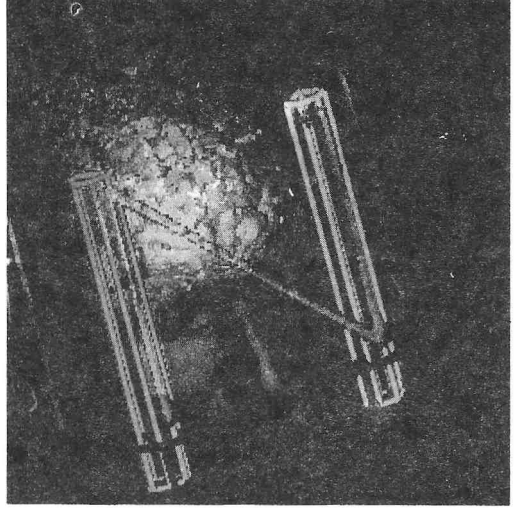
The study of experience undertaken by *Vaiśeṣika* gives us the categorization and classification of what constitutes the subject-object relationship. The first division of experience is in terms of substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), class concept (*sāmānya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*), and inherence (*samavāya*). *Dravya* is the analyzable composition of a thing which can be taken as a primary base for experiencing an object. We are not speaking here of the process of analysis which is conducted in a chemist's laboratory, but how the objective perception can be subdivided into qualities called *guṇa* by the mind itself. 'Mind' here means the prejudicial surmise one makes based on the first appearance of a thing. Only after that do we judiciously reexamine a thing and categorize it based on its qualities. We begin with a genus to which many species belong. The generic vision is called *sāmānya*. Then we look into the collective whole to find out what particulars (*viśeṣa*) are inherent in it. Only by noticing the specific qualitative difference of a substance do we understand how each quality inseparably inheres within it. This is called *samavāya*.

After making this general purview the inquiring consciousness (*manas*), using the discerning power of intellect (*buddhi*), goes into the details of the substance (*dravya*). The basic constituents are earth, water, fire, air, ether (*ākāśa*), time, space, the Self and mind. In all objects that are experienced, there will be a mark of these nine aspects. Earth indicates the particle aspect that builds up the gross world; water indicates the viscous relationship between particles which give flexibility to matter; fire indicates a thermal dynamics which can be seen in each particle giving it the behavioral properties of both composition as well as dispersal; air indicates the main aspect of the animating principle which goes into the organization of the organism. Every object has its own unique placement. Hence, *ākāśa* indicates the principle of donating an existential frame of reference for each object. The Sanskrit definition is *avākāśa dātṛ ākāśa*: *avākāśa* is the claim to be; *dātṛ* is one that gives. For that we have to

think of the convergence of several directions from all possible angles. The principle of unity of the nine principles is the Self, *ātman* and its secondary reflection is mind.

The features of quality (*guṇa*) are color, which also includes the transparent as the subtlest form of the monochrome, taste, odor, touch, number, measure, separations, contact, disjoining and belonging to a higher genus or species. After enumerating the varieties of the *guṇas* we come to the cause and effect world where action and reaction are relevant. All actions imply movement. There is an upward movement (*udgamana*), downward movement (*adhogamana*), contraction (*ākuñcana*), expansion (*prasāraṇa*) and linear movement (*āgamana* and *pratyāgamana*).

We think of the external world mainly as a theme for relating the Self with *dravya* (substance), *guṇa* (quality), and *karma* (action). Hence the main divisions we have to keep in mind are between the eternally existent, the eternally non-existent and the relative phases which are graded between existence and nonexistence. The primary or basic existence (*dravya*) is eternal, not indicating destruction or fundamental non-existence. The qualities (*guṇa*), however, are destroyed both by the cause and the effect. As for the third aspect, *karma* is destroyed by *karma*. In *dravya* (substance) we see an inherent relationship between *karma* and *guṇa*. Inherent relationship is called *samavāyī sambandha*. *Karma* is devoid of *guṇa* and cannot remain at one time in more than one object. It inheres in *dravya* alone and is an independent cause of contact or disjoining. *Dravya* is the material cause (*samavāyī*) of the derivative which we have enumerated as *dravya*, *guṇa* and *karma*. *Karma* is the general cause of contact, attraction, disjoining repulsion and inertia in motion. In Sanskrit the inertia in motion is called *vega*. One should have a comprehensive knowledge of all the things, events and relationships that are enumerated above to have an idea of the centrifugal and centripetal oscillations of the life principle within and without the organism.



So far, we have been speaking only of experience which is located in the external environment to which each individual person belongs. There is also an internal environment. The body is completely insulated by the sensitive organ of the skin which also functions as the border or frontier separating the external environment and the internal environment. The central focus of consciousness within the individual is basically the Self-luminous primary principle. What is termed as *ātman* in Vedānta is generally accepted by all the six systems of Indian philosophy. Of all the books dealing with the science of the Self (*ātmaśāstra*) the most honored texts are the ten *Upaniṣads* of which the largest and most authoritative are the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*. Two other books which elucidate *ātmaśāstra* are the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the compendium of Vedāntic formulae known as the *Brahma Sūtras*. These three texts constitute the authoritative systems of Vedānta and are called the *prasthānatrayī*, or the three *prasthānas*. From them the following definition of the Self is derived: the Self is that which animates an organism; the most fundamental mark of the Self is that it knows and also it has the ability to make known; it is by nature a growing principle (proliferative), the Self moves, the Self seeks and participates in nourishment; the main function of the Self is maintaining the respiration by breathing in and breathing

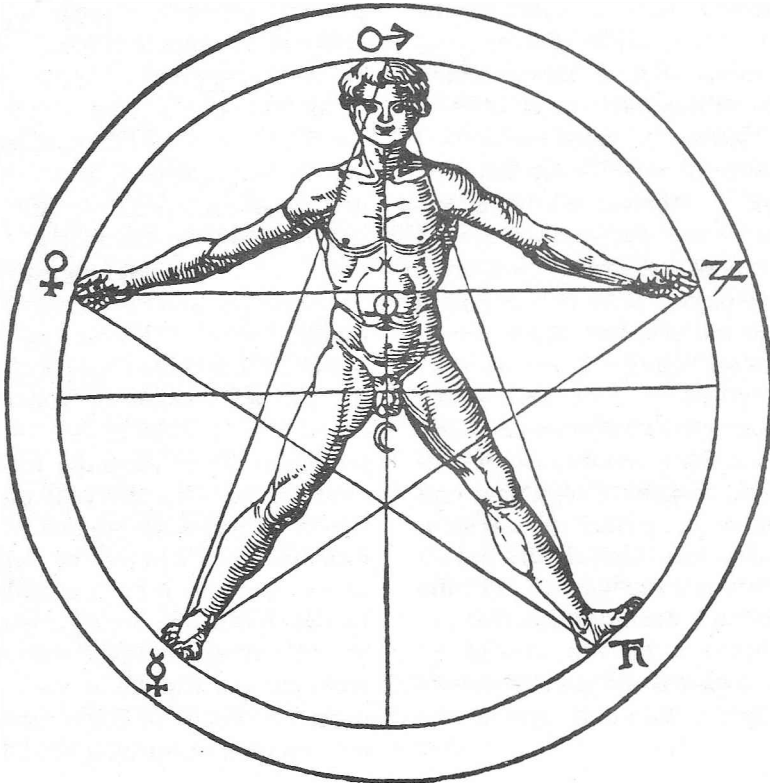
out. The mode of incoming and outgoing vital energy can be different according to the contour, morphology and inner structuring of each organism.

Thus we get a general indication that an organism lives in the internal environment and external environment with a shared unity. The most peripheral of the mental faculties is *manas*, the reconnoitering principle of consciousness which keeps constant vigil over both the inner environment and the outer environment. The most important aspect of the individual Self (*jīva*), is its ability to register events in the internal as well as external environment. For this, the four-fold psychic organs are used both in a unified manner and in an individuated manner. Knowing is at several levels of awareness, ranging from beyond the autonomous such as with pure consciousness and spirit to the autonomous aspect of all the biologic, physiologic, bio-chemical, and bio-physical changes that occur in the body such as in metabolism. In all this, the inner faculty (*antaryāmi*) is functioning. Its most externalizing mirroring awareness is of the ego or

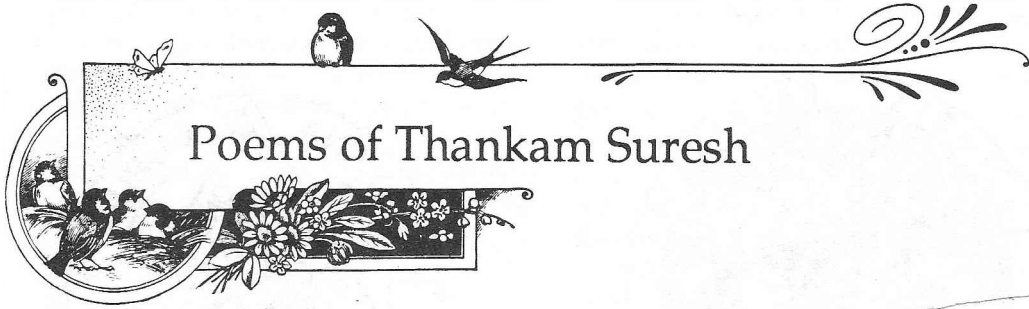
I-consciousness (*ahamkāra*). The intelligence or reasoning faculty (*buddhi*) is like a minister to the ego. With the agency of knowing and willing, there is the implanting of modalities for memories (*citta vṛtti*). Modalities are all in a graded manner inlaid in the language in which knowledge is facilitated by the individual. Thus there is a one-to-one correspondence between the world of things and the world of ideas.

To recapitulate we may say that *manas* or mind coins or fabricates questions with which all aspects of the external environment and internal environment are questioned systematically. For this questioning a stable ground is maintained by *citta* in which word indications are used to call back memories. Both the function of mind and the image recording of *citta* are prejudicial. Whatever has been stored and designed with the help of sound and word is subjected to the scrutinizing function of reasoning (*buddhi vṛtti*). The ego has to preside as the agent which supervises thinking, feeling and willing. This is the main design of the individuated person.

(Continued in next issue.)



Especially for Children



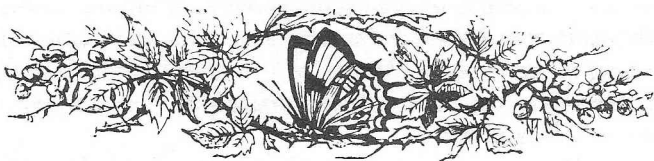
Poems of Thankam Suresh

My Garden

I have a lovely garden
Which is like in Sweden
It is very beautiful
Flowers are very colorful
There are trees in it
There are fruits which are like gems
Birds and butterflies come to this garden
Which is like in Sweden.

Butterfly

How wonderful is the butterfly
It is also called flutterby
It has a short life span
Children will catch it and put it in a pan
I like the butterfly
Because it flutters and passes by.



East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



The East-West University held a seminar at its Western Headquarters, Island Gurukula Aranya, Bainbridge Island, Washington, August 23rd and 24th. The opening session, "Response to Nature with Drawing," was held on a stretch of beach along Hood Canal, with the majestic Olympic Mountains in the background. Suellen Johnson Larkin encouraged the emergence of the artist in us all with the following exercises, which you can try for yourself.

ENLARGED FORM

Find an object (shell, stone, seaweed, leaf, seed, berry, etc.) or part of an object (tree bark, etc.). Draw it from 3-5 different viewpoints. You might draw it briefly at this point - kind of sketching with a quick line. Try looking for the most amazing view that has an unusual, surprising or beautiful quality. Once you find it, draw it again, larger than life within a rectangular frame. When you do this, it will become somewhat abstract and you might begin to see it take on different meanings. This is somewhat like the experience of finding animals in cloud shapes. You might even find when your drawing is done that you like it better upside down!

IN DETAIL

Find an object or small group of objects that have wonderful details in them.

*Look for: beautiful shapes and lines (edges)
texture - quality of surface - fuzzy, scratchy etc.*

Try to isolate the most wonderful view. This will be a line (contour) drawing. In drawing contours, it is good to feel that your eye and hand are one . . . and as your eye slowly sees the details of the plant or rock you are drawing, your hand that is drawing touches the paper as though it is touching the same object. Move slowly, as if you were a small ladybug crawling across the surface, drawing a line. You can touch any surface of the object, trying different pressures of touch-making different values of line.

Don't worry about getting proportion and placement "correct!" You are seeing and touching nature - look ninety-nine percent of the time at what you are drawing - five percent at

your page. This will help you find a kind of truth in your response. If you look more at your page, you will be making up what you see/saw.

BIG VIEW - SIMPLIFIED

Walk around until you find a place where you feel at peace and have a seat. Just sit there for a while and maybe rotate a few times and get comfortable. As this happens, you're probably looking around a lot at the views you have from your perch. There will be all kinds of different sensations – sound, smell, wind, colors, dark spaces, light – contemplate all of these for some time. At some point, just start doodling with the line and colors. You can move back and forth from drawing something you see to something you remember. Try making areas of the page into experiments of mixing color to create the 'feeling' of the light on the trees or rocks. Move freely around the page experimenting with your response to the place where you are.

Our second session was on "Exploring Electronic Media," led by Robert Lucas and Andy Larkin. We participated in a non-verbal exploration of video, with mirrors, feedback and distortion, giving us new perspectives on our taken-for-granted understanding of "factual reality."



Then Deborah Buchanan led a session on "Response to Nature Through Poetry," beginning with some general thoughts about poetry:

Poetry is the merging of meaning and music, sense and sound.

Pattern and rhythm, the music of words are important qualities of any poem – there is an underlying pulse that carries the words forward and binds them together.

As part of this: breath is the instrument of marking, of elongation and of emphasis – to say a poem out loud is an important and necessary factor.

In some ways, poetry is incantation – it is repetition, ritual and magic – it evokes responses beyond surface intellect.

Compared to prose: poetry is leaner, more stripped down, a reduction to essential meanings, which become allusive, symbols and signposts for the reader who then makes his own connections and understandings – and, in fact, poetry is the composite meaning intended by the author and understood by the reader.

Poetry relies on metaphor: the carrying over of meaning, a merging and amalgam of ideas. Different metaphors/strands of meaning are interwoven in a poem to give depth and additional reverberation to each one.

In "seeing" our world with poetry, even when we write a realistic, naturalistic description, it is a selection, an emphasizing, an extraction beyond simple reproduction – it can never be simply photographic.

*Think of different senses –
how you describe them, their perceptions, in words;
Then focus on one sense at a time in describing a particular scene.*

Think of the easy, quick-to-the-surface words that describe that way or pattern of perception, then go to something more subtle, more allusive. –Make note of that word "pattern" because the way we sense things is usually in a pattern, a learned and repeated pattern of seeing and interpreting the world.

*One of the things poetry does is shake up those patterns, loosen the set way we perceive and respond, it gets us to see and understand in new, more enlightening, enriching patterns.
Donald Hall: we must use our everyday words in new ways to say something different, more profound.*

Also: Synesthesia (Baudelaire) The mixing up of the sense responses – we feel a color, hear a form, etc.

Response to Nature–can also be understood as the response to the dharma of a scene, to the nature of a place or situation, its underlying, more intrinsic nature, to an inner cohesion or relationship. Different layers of description, can all be put into/included in a poem to add a more multi-textured meaning to the work.

That was followed by exercises designed to help us release our poetic voice. Deborah asked us to think of ourselves as a certain being or person (someone besides ourself, or ourself at a different age, or in a particular situation), and then continue the following statements:

PERSONA

The sky that day was like

If there was music that day it was

I heard

I could smell

I looked at the back of my hand

Once I had this dream

Now I feel

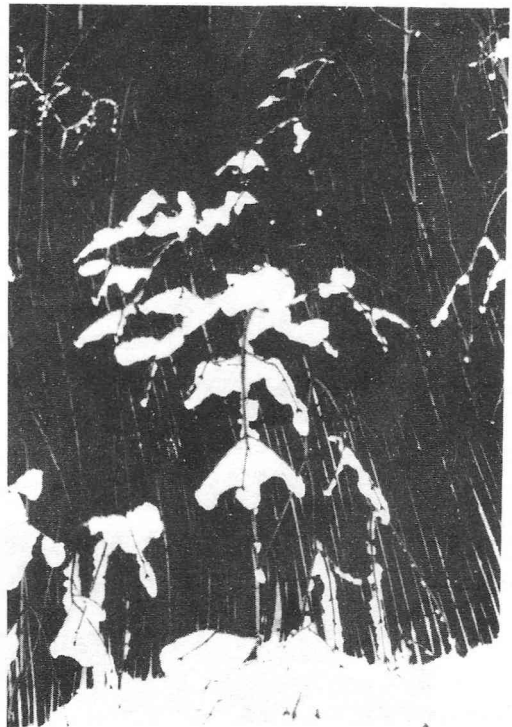
I can see before me

This is what I wanted to tell you

Then Deborah shared with us another way to loosen our pens:

WRITE YOUR SELF-PORTRAIT AS...

1. *Planet or heavenly body*
2. *Flower-Weed*
Flower-Exotic
3. *Item from Supermarket*
4. *A Basket of Something*
5. *An Article of Clothing*
6. *!*
7. *A musical instrument*
8. *A song*
9. *A few words of that song*
10. *A Movie or T.V. Character*



11. *City or town anywhere in the world that you wish was you*
12. *City or town that is actually you*
13. *Something about that place*
14. *I'm most like...(a family member)*

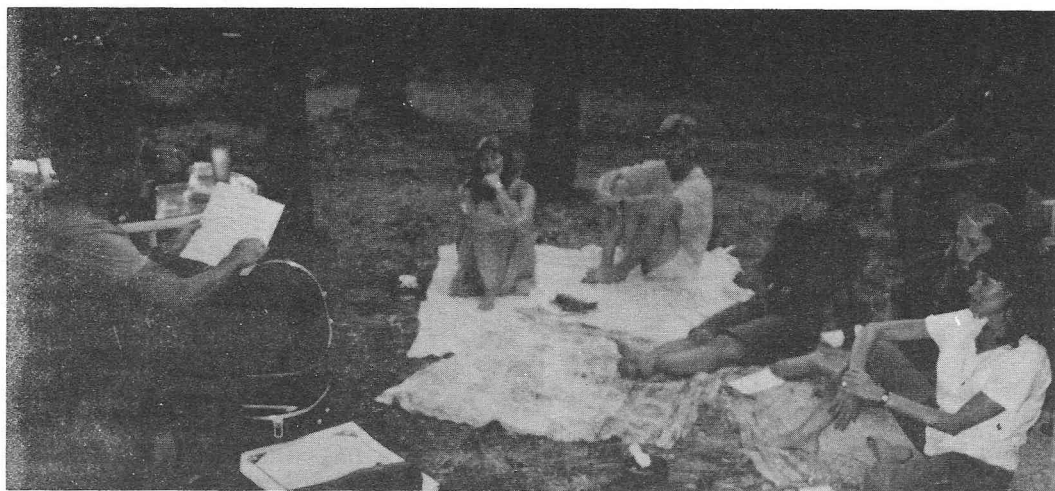
I'm most like . . . Choose one and tell something about it:

15. *A sky animal*
16. *An earth animal*
17. *A water animal*

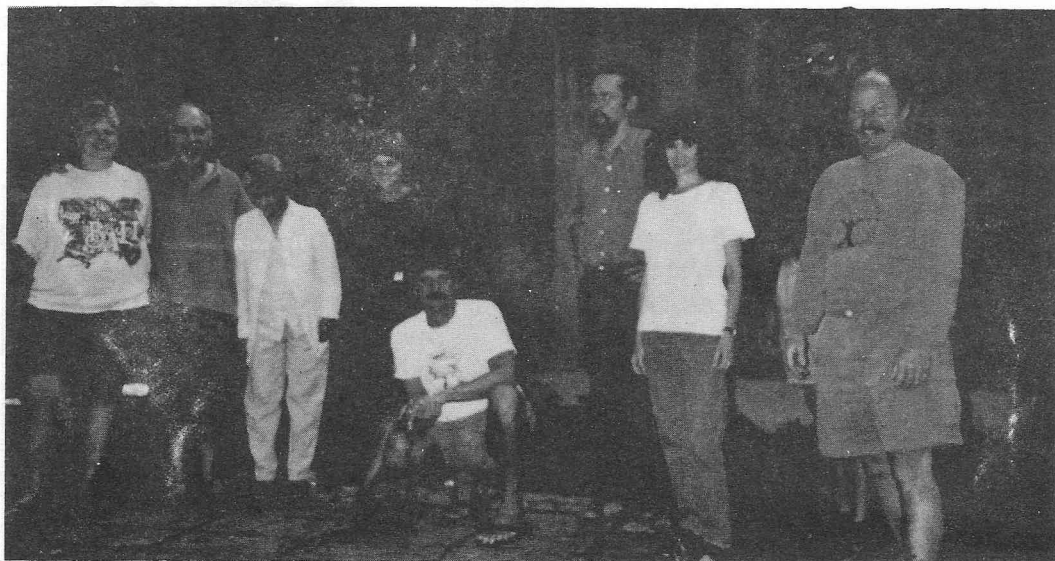
In the second session on "Exploring Electronic Media," Andy Larkin used a slide show to place the latest in modern art in the context of human creative expression from Etruscan art to the present. He enabled us to encounter the central question of what art is, then opened up visions of computer-generated images and virtual realities.

Fred Cantor closed the seminar with a session on "The Music of Life," in which he reminded us that, whether viewed from a physical perspective or a metaphysical perspective, the universe is vibration, which we are a part of in our very essence. We usually think of music as something we appreciate and enjoy (or dislike), in accordance with our personal and cultural tastes, which emphasizes our differences and separateness. At the same time, however, we are an integral part of the music of the spheres. The more this knowledge becomes a part of us, the more we will experience harmony in our selves and with others.





*Seminar
Scenes*



Fiber Art Depiction of



Fiber artist Jason Devinney and Peter Moras lead sewing of weaving to cedar-bough circle representing the four directions of the earth.

Raising the seal to the west side of the Press Building.



East-West University Seal

*Details:
sun,
forest
and
mountain.*

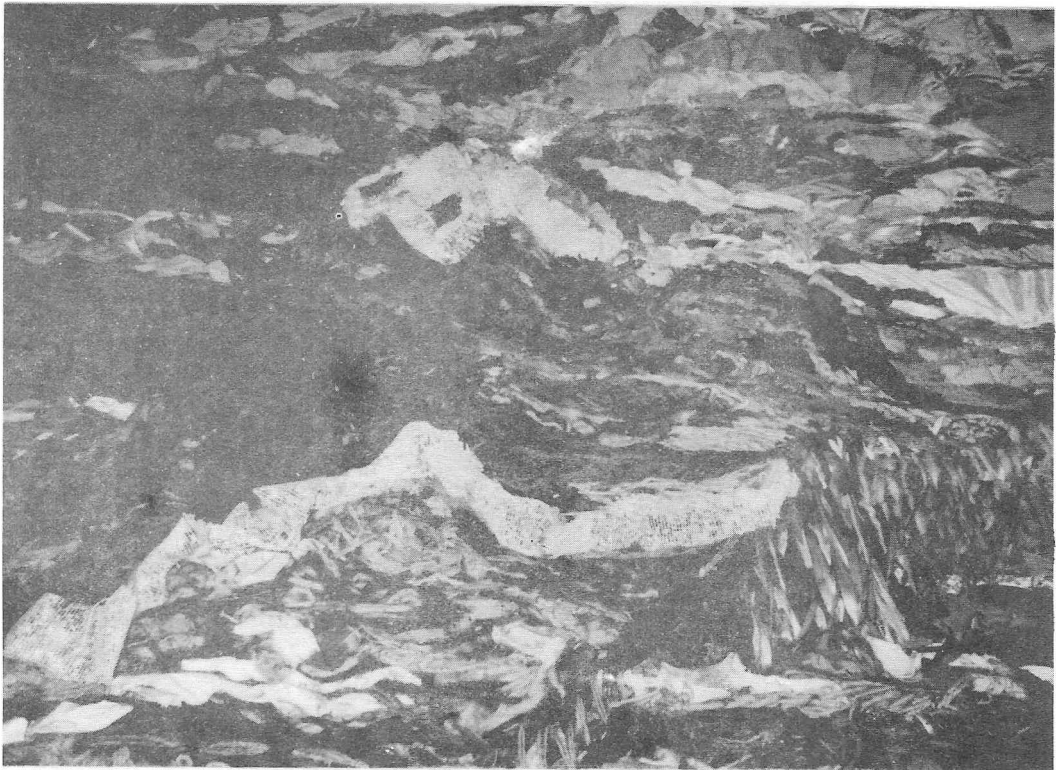
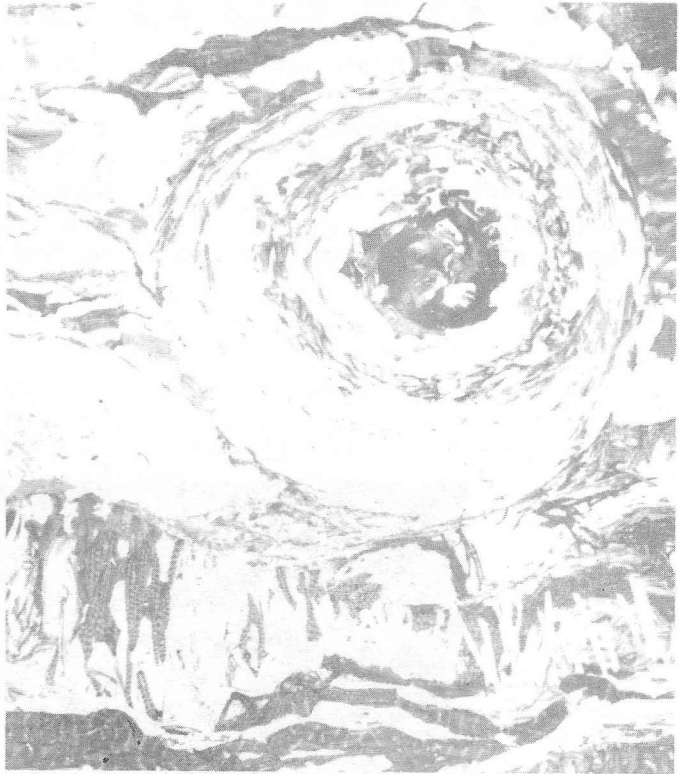


Photo and Illustration Credits

Inside Front Cover: Egyptian symbol for the Earth

4: Drawing by Suellen Larkin

5-9: Graphics by Andy Larkin

11: Ashram by the Saraswati River, Baroda, 1800

13: Sage in a Landscape, Garhwal, c. 1785

15-21: Graphics by Andy Larkin

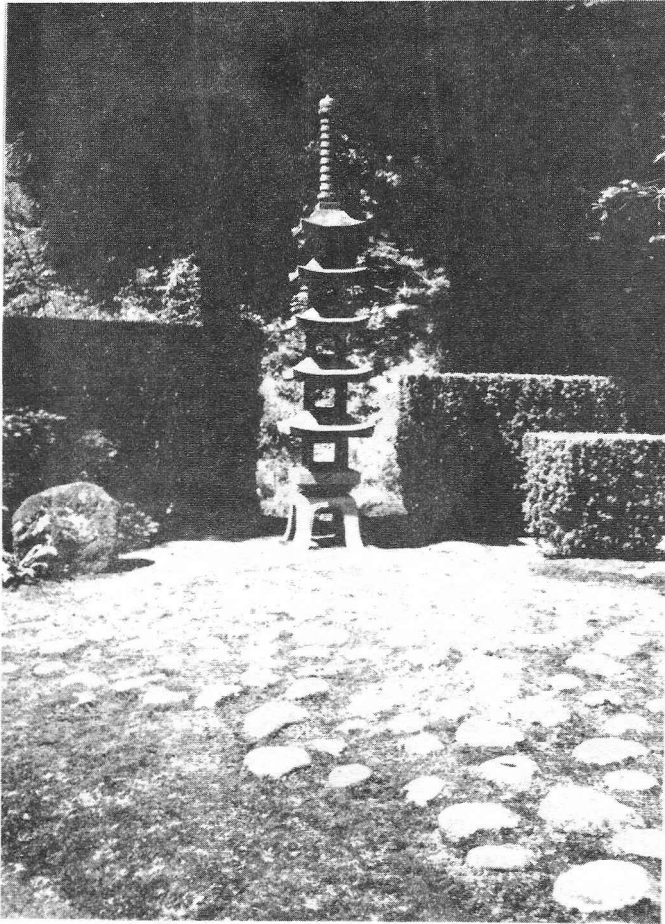
25: Fishermen at Tellicherry

27: Narayana Guru

34: Symbolic Representation of Man as Microcosmos, Agrippa

37-40: Photos by Deborah Buchanan

44: Portland Japanese Garden



East-West University and Narayana Gurukula Publications

By Nataraja Guru

An Integrated Science of the Absolute (Volumes I, II, III)
Autobiography of an Absolutist
The *Bhagavad Gita*
The Life and Teachings of Narayana Guru
Wisdom: The Absolute is Adorable
Saundārya Laharī
The Search for a Norm in Western Thought
Vedanta Revalued and Restated
The Philosophy of a Guru
Towards a One World Economics
World Education Manifesto
Memorandum on World Government
Anthology of the Poems of Narayana Guru
Dialectical Methodology

By Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

The Saundaryalaharī of Śankarācārya
The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Three Volumes
The Psychology of *Darśana Mālā*
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