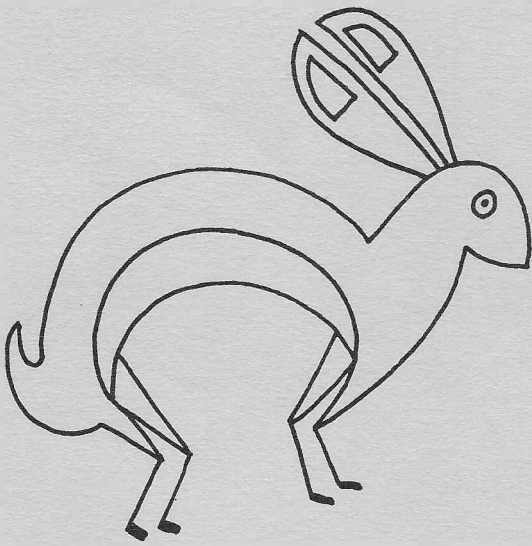


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XIII • 1997

FIRST-SECOND QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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W.W.W.



A friend came to see me the other day, just before starting a long journey. He told me about the ordeal he had recently undergone to get a passport and visas in order to be able to travel to other countries. Not having been off the continent before, he had been taken aback by having to struggle with the constrictions of regulations which govern the movement of human beings on earth. He had felt nervous, almost fearful, when he encountered the bureaucratic formalities of the governments from whom he had to request permission to visit, even though he had loving friends at his destinations who were eager to see him. He was wondering aloud about the function of passports and visas and all the regulations which had almost spoiled his trip.

After we shared a cup of tea made with leaves from India, sugar from Hawaii and milk from a local dairy, he started telling me about his new computer and access to the internet. His enthusiasm and vital energy returned as he told me about his adventures in the vast new world he had been exploring. In a few hours time, he had looked at photographs of land in a nearby county, learned a new song, participated in a discussion about a topic which fascinated him with people on three different continents, all of whom he had never known before, checked his plane reservations, gotten a weather report and a listing of special events in the first city he was traveling to and learned of the arrival of a friend's baby in another of his destinations.

He had done all this without the aid or interference of leaders or experts, laws or agencies, and without having to spend money. His eyes glowed as he extolled the wonders of the cutting edge of technology and described the freedom of connection with people and knowledge around the globe.

As he talked, his experiences evoked two similar, but very different images of the earth. One was of a globe, with the land masses marked in many colors, divided by thick black lines showing the boundaries between the numerous nation-states of the world. The other was the luminous photographs of the earth taken from space, showing deep blue oceans and lakes, green, brown and icy-white land masses, swirling clouds of moisture, and not one black line of division. When my friend decided to travel outside the country, he personally encountered those black lines, the effect of which he usually felt only distantly when the evening newscasters described the latest conflicts in Eastern Europe, Africa or the Middle East. He felt them as boundaries restricting his movement and dividing people. But when he sat in front of his computer and connected to the world wide web, they evaporated, no longer able to impinge on his ability to move about or connect.

This most modern of human abilities is enabling us to approach the vision of earth held by humans at the dawn of history. The ancient peoples of earth, though far

more restricted in their ability to travel than modern people with our cars, trains, ships, boats, airplanes and even space-ships, had a wide sense of the world that was their home. The words of the *Atharva Veda*, some of the most ancient of recorded human utterances, convey a concept of earth as vast, encompassing myriads of creatures, plants and geographical formations. At the same time, they knew earth to be a single entity, and revered her as a benevolent being, supporting and sustaining life:

May she, the Earth, the ruling Mistress of what has been and what will come to be, for us spread wide a limitless domain.

Untrammelled in the midst of men, the Earth, adorned with heights and gentle slopes and plains, bears plants and herbs of various healing powers.

On whom are ocean, river, and all waters, on whom have sprung up food and ploughman's crops, on whom moves all that breathes and stirs abroad – Earth, may she grant to us the long first draught!

To Earth belong the four directions of space.

Bearer of all things, hoard of treasures rare, sustaining mother, Earth the golden-breasted who bears the Sacred Universal Fire...

Earth, who of yore was Water in the oceans, discerned by the Sages' secret powers, whose immortal heart, enwrapped in Truth, abides aloft in the highest firmament, may she procure for us splendor and power, according to her highest royal state!

All creatures, born from you, move round upon you. You carry all that has two legs, three, or four. To you, O Earth, belong the five human races, those mortals upon whom the rising sun sheds the immortal splendor of his rays.

Earth is composed of rock, of stone, of dust; Earth is compactly held, consolidated. I venerate this mighty Earth, the golden-breasted.

Her upon whom the trees, lords of the forest, stand firm, unshakable, in every place, this long-enduring Earth we now invoke, the giver of all manner of delights.

Translation by Raimundo Panikkar

These vibrant poetic imaginings from

humanity's very distant past express the new consciousness of the earth evoked in people around the globe by the photographs which wordlessly emphasize that she is a single, pulsating entity. Gazing at that image, human beings experience a re-awakening of their identity as integral parts of the living earth, an identity shared with all the other parts.

But awareness of that identity is continuously obscured by the divisiveness symbolized by the black lines. Leaders of nation-states, to build and enhance their own power, foster a sense of difference, scarcity and competition between people on one side of a black line and those on the other.

The world wide web is a product of the same technology which has so often been at the service of the forces which divide human beings and pit them against each other. Commercial interests have been quick to try to exploit its potential uses. Yet it is also a setting where our universal sense of belongingness to each other and to the earth which is our home has spontaneously flowered and continues to be nurtured.

In part that is because of the unrestricted nature of the connections it makes possible. The descriptions of the indwelling reality of all in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* could as well be descriptions of my friend's experience of the web: "This envelops all. Unmoving, it is swifter than the mind. This is never attained by the senses. It has gone beyond. Remaining steadfast, it transcends all. It moves and it does not move. It is far and it is near. It is inside all these and it is outside all these. It is all pervading, transparent, bodiless."

It is rare in our materialistic world that so much enthusiasm is expressed so widely for something which cannot be manipulated or possessed. But the spaceless and timeless freedom of communication over the web is re-awakening humanity's capacity to experience its essential oneness with all.

Nancy Yeilding

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:5

tajjayāt prajñālokaḥ

tat jayāt: by mastering it
prajñā: the higher consciousness
ālokaḥ: of the light of the Self comes

By mastering it the higher consciousness of the light of the Self comes.

Sūtra III:6

tasya bhūmiṣu vinigogaḥ

tasya: its
vinigogaḥ: application
bhūmiṣu: in stages

Its application in stages.

We learned in *sūtra* 4 that *samyam* is constituted of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. Rather than seeing them as three separate disciplines, we should understand that, taken together as *samyam*, they are a process for evolving one's realization. In day to day life our consciousness is governed by syntactics, logistics and pragmatics. Outside of our senses is a variegated world of many forms, colors, sounds, names and events which combine in them time, space and mass. Consequently the five senses of perception are like windows admitting innumerable stimuli to fill us with varieties of suggestions.

The interaction between an external stimulus and an internal interest can pro-

duce within our consciousness several shades of emotion. The word emotion means that which moves and motivates. Motivation, in its well developed form, is desire-filled. If the information tag is one of pleasure, we will be motivated by the possibility of relating with an object of interest. If the stimulation comes from an image which carries a painful information tag from a previous experience, fear may color our perception instead of desire. If the fear generated by a stimulus is of a pathological nature, one may develop the repetitive vision of painful incidents. All these are the experiences of common folks. But a yogi aspirant throws out of his or her mind all past memories and does not cling to the ideas which are associated with the sensory perception. To achieve this kind of clear and clean consciousness, one has to forestall the automatic projection of previous memories as well as associated ideas.

In the *Yoga Śāstra*, the Yoga preceptor instructs us to ponder on a single benevolent idea that can act for a long time, filling one's entire consciousness. It is as if one closes all the doors of perception and keeps oneself ready to be opened only to one's own higher Self. Although although the Self has its own luminosity, it is enmeshed in the psychosomatic matrix of one's physical body. Therefore it is not very easy to stop the influence of bodily pains and pleasures from percolating into one's relativistic consciousness which is often called mind. That is why as a preparatory discipline one is asked to leave the company of others and find a place which is physically

clean, where there is a harmony of the five elements with which one's world is constituted. The environment should be such that the earth where one chooses to make one's habitation should not have any smell. Even inhaling the smoke of an incense stick is a way of polluting one's earthly substance. The atmosphere should not have so much or so little moisture in it that it affects the respiratory system. The temperature of the place chosen for *sādhana* should not be too cold or too hot. Although lovers of nature think of sitting by a running brook to experience higher consciousness, one should avoid hearing the gurgling sounds of a river or the rumbling of waves. Wild animals, reptiles, rodents and biting and crawling insects should not be in a yogi's vicinity, so that he or she is not again and again tormented by anxiety. In addition to not having anyone in the immediate vicinity who could cause distraction during one's practice, the yogi needs to avoid associations with wrong people and listening to their profitless talk at other times in the course of the day. Such experiences can follow a person as memories which distract from the chosen *dhāraṇā*, even when one sits in a quiet and peaceful place. Only after the clearance of the debris of one's past, can one prepare oneself to attune to one's higher Self. There is only one self which is the Self of all, but there can be a hallucinatory function of the factual mind by which, instead of seeing the self, one may generate a continuously chattering consciousness. This is very important to know and abolish. In all classical texts of Yoga, such as *Yoga Vāsīṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Patañjala Yoga Sūtras* and even in *Hathayoga*, a preparation to be alone is recommended even for beginners.

As the Self is one for the animate world and inanimate world, the aspirant should take a single idea prompted by great masters like Lord Buddha or Jesus Christ or the Prophet, or great physicians like Caraka or Suśruta or poets like Vālmiki or Vyāsa. This does not mean one needs to read voluminous books. If we open our eyes and look outward we will find patches of light and shadow everywhere. Light is different

from darkness. But if we close our eyes, all forms automatically disappear and we find another light filling our consciousness, where the light and consciousness are not separate. Then there is no objectivization yet the totality of our consciousness can be seen without any frontier.

One can remain in that consciousness and insert into it one single *dhāraṇā*, a key impression. One can begin with generating the *dhāraṇā* of love. For days together, that single notion should be allowed to haunt one's consciousness and fill it with several anecdotes and episodes of being in love with every form, every color, every object or every event that presents itself. One should slowly make one's consciousness as gentle as possible so it can spread out in all directions, above as well as below. Then one is ready to be flooded with the love consciousness of the self. Whatever form presents itself it should be treated as a love form. But love has no form. So the formality that is presented should be dismissed as of no significance. Then one can allow oneself to be absorbed into the all-pervading light of the focal point of consciousness and sit quiet for as long a time as possible. It does not matter even if one is knocked out of consciousness and falls into sleep. As far as possible even in that state, one should not allow wakeful consciousness to leave. Even the dream (*svapna*) and deep sleep (*suṣupti*) can be established in unitary consciousness.

The success of a Yoga aspirant comes when he or she gets a firm footing, *ḍṛḍha-bhūmi*. When the intensity of attention (*śraddha*) in its overt and final manifestation gets the quality of compactness, then it is called *ḍṛḍam*. When a farmer prepares a field for sowing seeds, he is preparing a *bhūmika* to be enriched by what he wants to plant there. There is a reciprocity between the earth of the field that is husbanded by the farmer and the roots of the plants which are penetrating through the sod to establish themselves as part and parcel of the chosen *bhūmika*.

There are three *bhūmikās* for the Yoga aspirant. The first is *yama* and *niyama*. The second *bhūmika* is where the yogi obtains a



full fledged discipline to prepare himself or herself to enter the sacred ground of fulfillment. *Āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra* involve the psychosomatic system which the aspirant is attuning in order to become a worthy candidate to seek *kai-valya*. The third *bhūmika* is that of a seeker developing into a seer. Whatever has been accumulated with the mentation and the emotional affinity of the reasoning system is like the cud of a cow, which is re-ingested to discard the non-essential. There is an intense scrutiny in the light of *prajñā*, which includes both the actual and the potential. The actual belongs to the cognitive part of the self and the potential to the future possibilities of intuitive expression as sublimity. These are represented by the two halves of compound word *jñā*. *Ja* represents the biological aspect which is conducive to generate; *ñā* represents the potent or latent aspect which has to thrive in the self-luminous quality of the self (*jyotis*). Thus there is a slow transference of the subtle body into the causal body where *dhāraṇā* is growing into *dhyāna*.

The supportive dynamic is *dhar*. The generic aspect of it is *dharma*. The acceptance of *dharma* to be the essence of the yogi's careful culturing is *dharan*. When we imbibe this essential dynamics for the pursuit of our goal in the core of our Self, it is recognized as an ever-numinous seed of progression. Then it becomes a bonafide

dhāraṇā. Once the *dhāraṇā* is implicitly and explicitly working out every moment of the Yoga aspirant's life, the yogi is ready for the furtherance of the pursuit through a continuous intensification of *samyama*.

The yogi has before him/her a variety of choices for *samyama*, as yogis are in all the important religious disciplines of the world, for example, the eternal bride of Christ among the Christian mystics, the *sthitaprajñā* in Vedanta, the seeker of *satori* in Zen Buddhism, the Sufi seeking inseparability with Allah as the beloved, and the *Savitri* mystic giving adoration to the triple aspects of truth, peace and beauty (*satyam śivam sundaram*). Narayana Guru gave the formula of grace, love, and compassion.

Whatever the discipline, the one who does *samyam* is the *dhyāni*. For one who is in continuous contemplation (*dhyānam*), contemplation can develop into at-onement or beatitude. In both, the essential character of meditation is giving up the ego to efface the difference between 'I' and 'the other'. All the attitudes that are developed in the contemplative come together in the reality of the being. At-one-ment is a continuous re-application of the formulated consciousness to return to the potential. There is something to be burnt away every second, there is also something to imbibed every second. It is like a cyclic fountain. We find this as an active process in our respiration. In respiration there is again and again a replenishing of the breath with

fresh oxygen and again and again an expunging of the soiled part of breath. The difference between the period of *dhāraṇā* and the period of *dhyāna* becomes effaced.

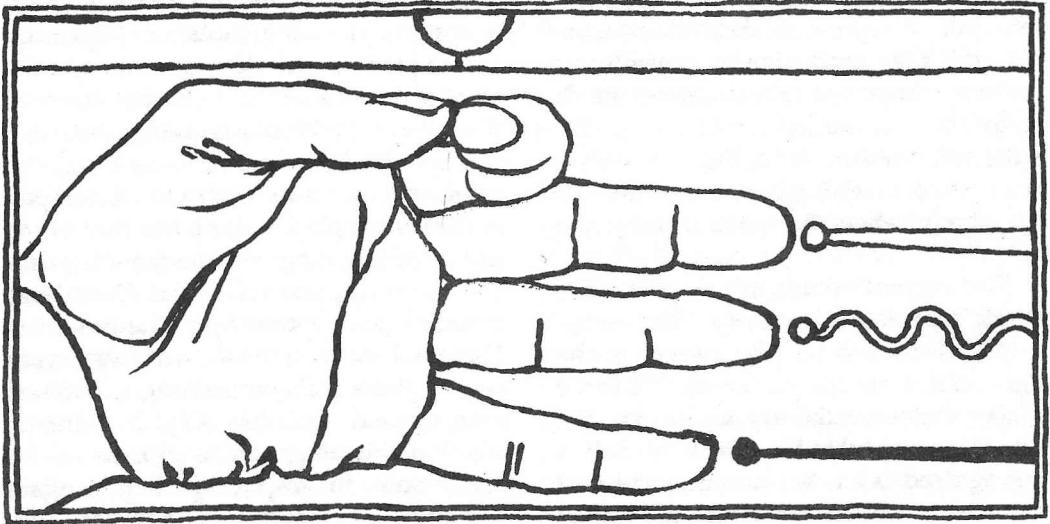
Dhāraṇā and *dhyāna* both happen in the *samprajñāta* aspect of the self. The accompanying consciousness, of which we are partly aware, is therefore called *prajñā*. The pure light (*dhi*) is *cit* in itself. It is the same *cit* that undergoes two transformations to identify with the horizontality of the phenomenal, *caitanya* and *cetana*. The pure noumenon that remains is *cit*. The indication for *samādhi* was already given to the yogi when the aspirant was asked to sit in an *āsana* both contiguous and continuous; i.e., having no aberration in the harmonious flow of the consciousness (*dhi*) within. The three aspects of elaborating the final *bhūmika* within *samprajñāta* are thus *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

All persons, whether *bhogi*, *rogi* or *yogi*, are exposed to the external world of stimulation and the internal world of conditioning, which includes reflexes and biological, psychological, psychic and spiritual drives. The only difference between them comes from the degree of affliction of their value vision. A *bhogi*, who has continuous craving for sensual gratification, is governed by the association of ideas. Such a person gathers more and more experiences from sensory pleasures, becoming almost totally blind to value discrimination. As a result, the biological and

physiological instrumentation for such gratification is subjected to fatigue, lesions and progressive pathologic degeneration. Consequently such a person can no longer enjoy with full satisfaction, and the system suffers from malfunction. When the same attitude is continued, the *bhogi* becomes a chronic *rogi*, one afflicted with diseases of deterioration.

The sensation of pleasure that comes to any person emanates from the nature modality of pleasure which basically arises from the substratum of the self, *ānanda*. The same indication of pleasure also makes a potential *yogi* look for the hierarchical value of pleasures which can take one to a peak experience. The pleasure principle can pilot the search for *kaivalya* or it can lead in the opposite direction, into the intensity of the different colorations that can come from *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Except in very rare cases, the would-be *yogi* comes to know of the possibility of ascending the ladder of a hierarchical value system only after going through childhood, early adolescence, and the very emotionally-disturbed period of adolescence maturing into the state of youth. Most people have been led through the path of *samsāra* until their preconscious state, conscious state and unconscious state are all deeply conditioned with worldly transactions.

The purity of *prajñā* can only be achieved and maintained by the discrimination of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* from *sattva*,



rajas and *tamas*. That is why Patañjali first presented the disciplines of *yama* and *niyama*, followed by *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*, to wash out the dirt which has accumulated in the psyche. Even if one intellectually understands the gains that can come from *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, there is a great danger of the *dhāraṇā* becoming infected by the pollution of a contaminated ego. In the early stages of Yoga, *abhyāsa*, persistent practice, is recommended with a view to decolorizing the colored psyche and deconditioning the conditioned memory impact on the cognitive faculty.

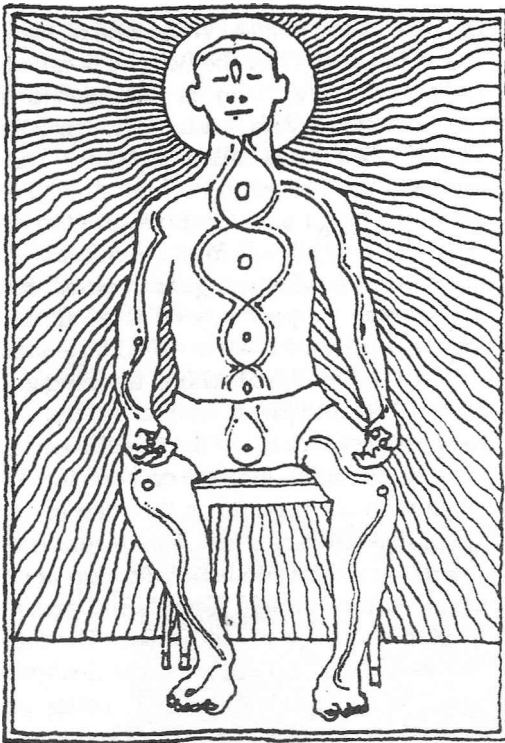
In modern books, such as the *Rājāyoga* of Swami Vivekānanda and the *Integrated Yoga* of Sri Aurobindo, certain revelations of the ancient disciplines can be found. If a student reads them, he or she should also consider the fact that these yogis lived a disciplined life of high intensity. Otherwise, the new-age layman, enamored by the eloquence of these masters, is likely to make vain attempts to imitate them without accepting the necessary discipline in one's life. As we are now in *Vibhūti Yoga*, it is not proper on our part to show any haste in furthering our studies without sitting with every term given in the yoga books, such as *vitarkā*, *vicāra*, *ānanda*, *asmitā*, *samprajñāta*, *asamprajñāta*, *sabīja*, *nirbīja*, *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa*. Each of these terms is to be examined and experienced personally before we look for any peak experience.

In the Bhagavad Gītā it is clearly enunciated that the *jñāni*, a person of unitive wisdom, who belongs to the Samkhya discipline, and the yogi, a person of unitive action in wisdom, have no difference whatsoever between them. It is further said that only the uninitiated differentiate between unitive knowledge and unitive action. In India the two main schools of discipline which seekers of wisdom adopt, are the path of Yoga and the path of Vedānta. Vedānta means coming to a finalized conclusion of the known and the knowable. Yoga means attaining the aloneness of the Self, *kaivalya*. The Vedāntin considers that his knowledge is perfect when he is fully established in the light of

the Self, called *prajñā*. When one is established in the light of the Self, he is called a *sthītaprajñā*, one who is established in *prajñā*. When a yogi is established in union with the Self, he is called *yogārūda*. There are common factors in becoming a *sthītaprajñā* or a *yogārūda*. Both require the discipline to free oneself from the influence of the nature modalities (*guṇas*), *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A person who frees himself from nature modalities is called a *guṇātita*.

In a conventional school, teaching goes by syllabus, and promotions are given with the grading of tests. In the *Gurukulas*, each person promotes himself or herself. The promotion is not made on the basis of any grade that another gives. That means there should be a continuous building up of certitude within oneself. One should pass the muster of one's own certitude. Therefore one should go through the same discipline again and again until what is being performed as a *sādhana* practice becomes a natural habit and a chosen behavioral pattern. One should know, not only intuitively but also rationally, the nature of one's inner transformations. *Vibhūti Pāda* stresses that one should specifically know each advancement that one makes in the understanding of the Self through continuous burning away of dross and becoming benefited by a contiguous growth of intuitive certitude. This holistic growth, which is at once of the internal person and the external, requires that one return again and again to the fundamental teachings given in the first two sections of the *Yoga Sūtras*, *Samādhi Pāda* and the *Sādhana Pāda*.

The first *sūtra* of the *Vibhūti Pāda* was given as *deśa-bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā*: *dhāraṇā* is the confining of the mind within a limited area or place. We are always in a chosen space; that is our *deśa*. Until one becomes a full-fledged *jñāni* or *yogi*, one's space will have a limitation. It can be a spot of attention in one's own psychophysical person, or it can be on the horizon seen at the far off fringes of one's vision. We put ourselves into a time/space frame of reference. Within that frame of reference we have to establish ourselves as relentless pursuers of the wisdom of the Absolute.



Then alone will it lead us to a retainable idea of continuous inspiration. We are growing in time and space; our understanding is expanding in time and space. Even so, our union with the Absolute is getting stabilized in time and space.

Ultimately one may transcend one's temporal awareness, and that knowledge will thereafter be a knowledge of all time, without having a reference to a given time. That is the starting point to familiarize oneself with one's own nature, or the nature of the Self. Many yogis find pressure laid on them by lack of time or the disadvantage of the environment in which they try to reach their Self. Actually the test of yogi is such that one is oblivious of time. That can happen only when the yogi has no special name to identify with, and no time schedule as to when to attain Yoga. Keeping this in mind, we should know how far or close we are to Yoga.

Yama and *niyama* are again and again called to our attention. The very first *yama* is *āsana*. *Āsana* is defined as 'being seated steadily and comfortably'. If we watch our mind and body just for five minutes, we will be surprised to see that our thoughts

are fleeting and our body is restless. We cannot forcefully bring our thoughts to a standstill. But our body is willing to accept the time that is given in our body-consciousness. With advantage we can begin steadying the body. The essential requirement of *āsana* is the ability to comfortably maintain the alertness of one's physical posture and value vision for a considerably long time. Even when the body is not engaged in any activity, there are many autonomous functions happening within it, such as respiration of vital breath, circulation of blood, transfer of necessary hormones and enzymes from one area of the body to another, etc. The salivary glands have to function to keep the mouth wet, the tear glands should function so that the eye balls may not become dry. For all this, the natural passages for the conveyance of fluids and energies are to be maintained in a rational way. Here the first consideration is given to the normal harmonious function of the autonomous system of the body. Body and mind are not two; if there is harmony in the body, there is harmony in the mind also.

The body is covered with highly sensitive skin and one is continuously exposed to the clothes one wears as well as to the environment of the air that is constantly bringing one stimulation after another to the body. If you sit for a while, strange feelings may disturb you, as if something is crawling all over your body or biting the skin. You should find out why you cannot sit still even for five minutes. If you do not give much attention to this hypersensitivity you feel in your skin, the body gets used to it. That is why it is preferred that in the beginning one should sit in a clean place which is well-known.

Then one finds that one's breath is going up and down. That is a motion, a movement; and that is to be incorporated into the discipline of keeping oneself steady for a long time. If you watch the rhythm of the up-going and down-going vital breath, your body/mind complex will get into an inner tune. Slowly the mind gives up its inclination to go from one thought to another thought. You may think

that thought is something other than yourself, something external which comes and distracts you, but that is not so. You are your thoughts. There is nothing special in the content of the thought other than a recall of memory, an interpretation of a sensation or an anxiety about tomorrow. Everyday, whether one is a fully-established yogi or not, one should resign everything from the mind for a while and watch one's breath as passively as possible.

If we consciously watch our breathing, we can see that it is always accompanied by the natural readjustments of the body posture. All pains of the body, whether faint or even imagined, or acutely distressing, are connected with the circulation of vital energies in the body, particularly in the form of winds, recognized by the Indian medical system as *vāta*. The windpipe from our nostrils to our lungs is known to us. We also know how the winds produced by decayed food material in the small and large intestines are channeled through the column for which the rectum acts as a vent. But all incoming and outgoing wind does not belong to these main windpipes. There are more than a million pores on our skin, through which wind can come in and go out. Our five organs of perception are also interconnected with the seepage of air between them. The arteries and veins and their extremely invisible inflow and outflow belong to the same system.

Āsana is a well thought-out method by which the body can be put into the most comfortable positions, so that the autonomous system can take absolute care of inter-relating all channels of vital energy. People who have not given much thought to it, and who have not studied the anatomical structure of the human body, have mixed up acrobatics with *prāṇāyāma* and distorted *āsana* postures as feats for display. They are true enemies to human welfare. Patañjali, the very seer of yoga, did not mention contorting the limbs of the body and the vital faculties inside to a state where the faculties would be congested, or the natural flow of energy would be distorted. There is an intrinsic mutuality be-

tween *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. The masters of unitive discipline were very particular not to impose on any person any discipline which was not easy and natural to perform. The perfection of *āsana* is to sufficiently forget about your bodily functions so that consciousness can be directed to the very source of life on earth. It is far from the practice of anything which is obsessive or inhibitory. Without teaching people the physiology of rest or the bio-chemistry of inner serenity, simply asking people to adopt a certain posture is meaningless.

The teaching of *prāṇāyāma*, item by item, with separate fees levied on the gimmicks being sold almost amounts to criminal interference in the lives of others. The frog, the fish, the tortoise, the snail, etc., cannot be taught to regulate their breath. So nature provided them with fool-proof devices. Human beings have trouble finding out their devices, because in the evolutionary path, they mistakenly left nature's instinctive ways to find out for themselves, using their intelligence and their discretionary options.

Even a child who does not know anything about *prāṇāyāma*, has a natural rhythm of breathing in and breathing out. If the nostrils of a child are clogged and air cannot easily pass in or out, nature helps the child to keep the mouth open and breathe, rather than be suffocated. It is to our advantage to know the mechanisms connected with our autonomous breathing and voluntary breathing. This you can easily experiment with. Close your mouth, hold your nose tightly, close your eyes and thrust your fingers in both ears. Try not to breathe. In less than one minute you will struggle to get the passage of breath immediately open. The autonomous device that governs your breathing does not trust your voluntary faculty to take care of it. On one side breathing is connected with *āsana* and on the other it is a great transformer of your vital energies into your general awareness and specific monitoring of awareness to deal with problem-solving in many known and unknown contexts of your life.

(Continued in next issue.)

Praśna Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

Mantra 3

Then Kabandhi, son of Katya, approached him and asked: "Venerable sir, whence verily all these creatures are born?"

Seeker: I notice a reversal of the order of the disciples when they ask questions. Sukeśa's name was mentioned first in the first *mantra* and Kabandhi's name is the last. When they ask questions it is Kabandhi who asks the first question.

Guru: This reversal of the order should be considered as part of the method of presentation adopted in this *upaniṣad*. When the people in a group are named it is the most important one who will be mentioned first. Others will be named in their order. When a thesis is developed and presented methodically, the core of the teaching will normally only be arrived at at the concluding part of it. At least such is the method adopted in this *upaniṣad*. The dissertation begins from things and ideas familiar to us. Questions concerning such primary matters will be asked by the less mature in the group.

Seeker: Were the other seekers also present for Kabandhi's question and Pipalāda's answer?

Guru: A question might be asked by a particular seeker, but the answer given will be meant for all. Since the question asked by each disciple emerges from the answer given to the previous one, it is clear that all six were present when the dialogue took place.

Kabandhi's question shows that the *upaniṣad* begins from the inquisitiveness that arises from an ordinary experience of

the world. Each question takes us to a new realm of higher thinking and by the final question we attain an integral vision of absolute reality.

Seeker: With my limited acquaintance with philosophy I understand that there are two basic questions to be asked, namely, "who am I?" and "whence this world?" But Kabandhi here asks only one question.

Guru: Suppose the questioner is yourself. Where do you exist now?

Seeker: In this world, as part of nature.

Guru: Can you live by keeping yourself apart from nature?

Seeker: Never. Wherever I am, I'll be part of nature.

Guru: That means you exist as an inseparable part of nature. Now suppose you become fully aware of the reality concerning the entire nature. Does it not include the awareness concerning you also?

Seeker: Yes, but it has not occurred to my mind as yet.

Guru: For this reason, these two questions are not usually asked in the *upaniṣads* at the same time. If the question is about the origins of the world, the answer comes to a close in the awareness concerning oneself. On the other hand, if the question is concerning oneself, the answer will take you to the reality of the whole world. Sometimes the search will be for the intimate reality and in order to find it, one will be asked to know what is ultimately real in oneself. Finally one becomes convinced that the same reality that underlies oneself underlies everything. In short, though the enquiry here is concerning oneself, we

need not look at the world and ourselves as two.

Seeker: What is meant by *praja*?

Guru: Literally, the word means one who was born. Everything that comes into being could be called a *praja*.

Seeker: We know all living beings are born by the mating of males and females. Is there anything philosophical in it?

Guru: This chapter helps to turn our attention to a supreme principle which has arranged for the creation of living beings through the mating of males and females. This principle here is called *prajāpati*, which means the lord of creation. Pippalāda's answer begins with a reference to *prajāpati*.

Mantra 4

To him he said: "Prajāpati (the lord of creation) verily was desirous of offspring. He performed austerity. Having performed austerity he produced the couple rayi and prāja, thinking that they would produce creatures for him variously."

Seeker: The teaching begins with the statement that *prajāpati* became desirous of off-spring. Tell me more about *prajāpati*.

Guru: According to Indian mythology, the creator of this world is Brahmā. There must be volition behind any act of creation. This volition could be figuratively called the lord of creation. Narayana Guru prefers to call it *viśvavīrya* which means the cosmic creative urge. When Brahmā, the primeval reality, is conceived of as throbbing with the inner urge for the creation of the cosmos, it can be understood as *prajāpati*.

Seeker: Could we compare the desire of *prajāpati* for offspring to the desires we have in our day-to-day life?

Guru: Yes, but only in the sense that the inner urge for self-expression is the motive behind them.

Seeker: Could you make it clearer?

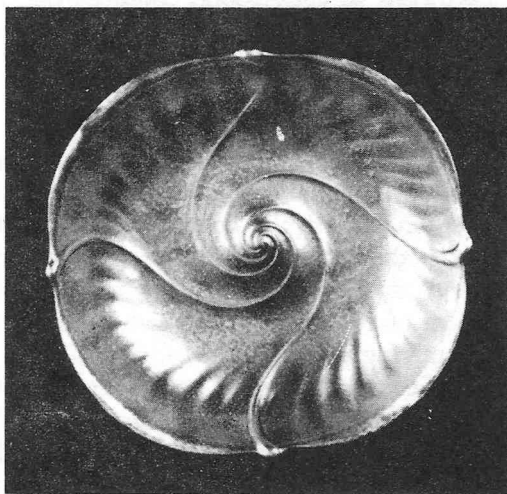
Guru: One reality underlies everything in this world. We'll see as we proceed with this study that that reality is pure

consciousness in essence. We have the direct experience that what we call 'I' in each of us is a consciousness that is conscious of itself. What is real is called *sat* in Sanskrit and consciousness is called *cit*. That means *sat* in each of us is *cit* in essence.

Consciousness never remains inactive. It is always in some functional state. It always wants to see for itself what the potentials hidden in it are. Motivated by this urge for self-unfoldment, it transforms itself into everything and actualizes the happiness (*ānanda*) of self-expression. It is easy to see the nature of self-expression in small children when they create and destroy numerous things as part of their play. They do it simply for the sheer joy of doing it. The creative urge in them finds expression through these activities. It is the same with the consciousness which is the underlying reality of everything. It also is active, creating for the sheer joy of self-expression. Narayana Guru, in his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction) says:

Knowledge, to know its own nature here, has become earth and the other elements; spiralling up, back and turning round, like a glowing twig it is ever turning.

The same inner urge for self-expression is to be understood as the desire of *prajāpati* for off-spring. In fact this urge is always there in the ultimate reality, resulting in the beginningless and endless becoming.



Seeker: *Prajāpati* is stated to have performed *tāpas* with the urge for creation. Is this *tāpas* similar to that undergone by seekers?

Guru: Yes, *tāpas* means a kind of self-heating in order to realize what is real. Reality undergoes a self-heating in order to actualize the potentials inherent in it. Even in the worldly sense, no creation is possible without some heating up. We see that the factories which produce new things out of raw materials make use of heating in one form or another. The same is true with the creation of the world. In the case of creative works done in factories there is a worker to do the heating. But *prajāpati* is to be understood as both the raw material and the worker. *Prajāpati* undergoes a self-heating in order to actualize the inner urge for bringing out everything.

Seeker: It is stated here that *prajāpati* created the couple *rayi* and *prāṇa* instead of creating directly. Why?

Guru: Kabandhi's question was concerning the origin of living beings. We know they are born as a result of the mating of males and females. But the couplehood understood here is not simply that of male and female. Pippalāda conceives of it as a basic principle that embraces the structural scheme of the world. This scheme includes in it micro-organisms at the one extreme and *prajāpati* at the other. Even non-living entities need not be excluded from it. For this reason, Pippalāda illustrates a series of contexts in which this principle of couplehood could be discovered. The statement that *prajāpati* created the couple of *rayi* and *prāṇa* from himself is the beginning of such illustrations.

Seeker: What are *rayi* and *prāṇa*?

Guru: In *vedic* literature *rayi* is a word only used to indicate material wealth. But here in the *vedāntic* context, it is used in a more abstract and general sense. *Rayi* and *prāṇa* do not here stand for any specific form of couplehood, but rather a symbol signifying a universal principle.

Seeker: The word *prajāpati* means the lord of creation. He should therefore be capable of creating everything directly. Why did he then depute *prāṇa* and *rayi* to

do the actual creation?

Guru: We unconsciously mistake *prajāpati* as a personal god and that is why such questions arise in our mind. Everything that happens as a part of nature is an expression of the act of *prajāpati*. In a more poetical way, it is stated here that *prajāpati* conceived the idea that *prāṇa* and *rayi* together would create everything for him. The desire of *prajāpati* mentioned here could be considered as the desire in all males and females to mate and to produce offspring. *Prāṇa* and *rayi* are merely two mutually reactive functional modes of the creative urge or *prajāpati*.

Mantra 5

The sun indeed is prāṇa. Rayi is moon indeed. Rayi is indeed all that is materialized and non-materialized. Therefore whatever is concrete is rayi indeed.

Seeker: Evidently this *mantra* tries to make clear what is meant by *prāṇa* and *rayi*. All of us understand the physical body which always goes with *prāṇa*. But here *prāṇa* is equated to the sun and *rayi* to the moon. As forming a couple they are also indicative of the male and female principles. No such relationship has ever been thought of between the sun and the moon. Thus it seems that, instead of clarifying things it makes it more obscure.

Guru: We have already seen that the words *rayi* and *prāṇa* are used here in a broad sense. It would not be wrong to say that they are akin to the duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* of the Sāṃkhya system or the yin and yang of Taoism. The duality of matter and energy in modern science is also somewhat similar. At the earthly level they could also be conceived of as male and female. But the *prāṇa* and *rayi* of the present context are to be understood in a broader sense than any of the dualities mentioned above. It is a sort of duality that encompasses the entire system of life both in its individual and cosmic aspects.

In the ensuing stanzas of the *upaniṣad* various levels in which the duality of *prāṇa* and *rayi* could be understood will be por-

trayed. First the sun and the moon are stated to constitute the couple who emerged from *prajāpati*. It is followed by seeing a year as *prajāpati*. The couple born of this *prajāpati* constitutes the two halves of a year in which the same moves to north and south respectively. The solar day is visualized as *prajāpati* where day and night are the couple emanated from him. Finally, food is seen as *prajāpati* where sperm and ovum are to be understood as the couple produced by it. Such is the graded manner in which various couples are depicted as emanating from *prajāpati*. It is evident that time and procreations are thought of as going together. The brighter part of time is called *prāṇa* and the darker part *rayi*. Day is followed by night, brighter fortnight is followed by darker fortnight, brighter half year is followed by darker half year. Similarly, *prāṇa* and *rayi* are to be understood as the brighter and darker aspects of the cyclic process of life. We also have the daily experience of our mind becoming bright at certain times and moody at other times. These dual functional modes of our life could also be considered as *prāṇa* and *rayi*.

Seeker: How do the sun and the moon come in here:

Guru: We know that the sun is seen in daytime and the moon at night. Therefore the sun is poetically conceived as symbolizing the brighter aspect and the moon the darker aspect in all the dualities outlined here.

Seeker: We know *prāṇa* is the vital function in each of us. How can it be symbolized by the sun shining in the sky?

Guru: In fact *prāṇa* is not symbolized by the sun. Both *prāṇa* and sun are symbols. All of us have the direct experience of *prāṇa* in us. This *prāṇa* brings vitality to each of the cells of our body. Yet we do not know how it happens. We simply assume the existence of a *prāṇa* as the causal force behind it. We are not sure whether such an entity actually exists, we could also say that

the entire vital function of an organism is symbolized by the word *prāṇa*.

Similar is the case of the sun. We have learned in our science lessons that it is from the sun that all living beings absorb energy for their substance and growth, yet we are in the dark as to how this works. It is an inexplicable process of constant sending forth of energy by the sun and the constant absorption of it by beings, along with many other factors, that makes life possible in this world. Seen as related to individual beings, this process is symbolized by *prāṇa* and as related to the cosmic system it is symbolized by the sun.

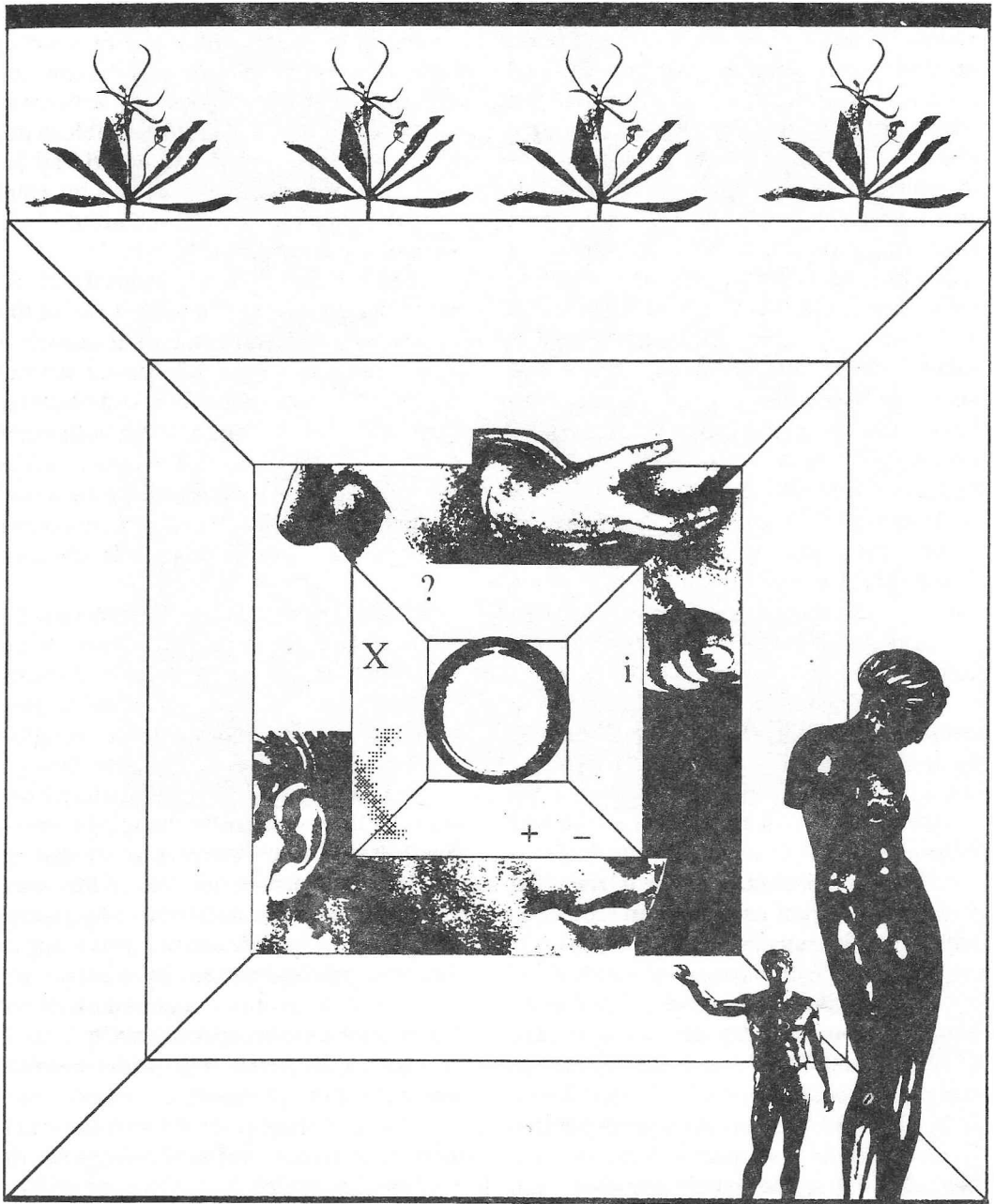
Seeker: That which is materialized and not materialized are considered *rayi* in this stanza. In the case of the dual aspects of *prāṇa* and *rayi*, I think the former is to be considered as non-material and the latter as material. Then we can not say, both materialized and non-materialized come under *rayi*. Moreover, it is followed by the words "therefore whatever is concrete or materialized is *rayi*." I think this needs clarification.

Guru: The words *mūrtā* and *āmūrtā* are not to be understood in that sense. *Mūrtā* translated here as the materialized means that which is in a distinct and tangible state and *āmūrtā* is its opposite. No tangible form is eternal. Every form gets changed and new forms emerge. The material that assumes these constantly changing forms is changeless in essence and it has no distinct and tangible form of its own. In this sense it is *āmūrtā* (non-materialized). Appearing in the form of specific entities and being an indestructible abstract reality are thus conceivable in the realm of material existence. It is in such a realm, concretizability is lastly termed *mūrtā*, when it is said "therefore whatever is *mūrtā* is *rayi*."

The next stage portrays how the sun is to be seen as the source of energy for the total system of life.

(Continued in next issue.)





Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 2

*karaṇavumindriyavum kalēbaram to-
ṭṭariyumanēka jagattumōrkkil ellām
paraveḷi tanniluyarnna bhānumān tan
tiruvuruvāṇu tirañṇu teṭṭēṇam*

The inner organ, the senses, the body,
the many worlds known by direct perception –
everything, when contemplated,
is the glorious embodiment of the sun
that shines in the sky beyond;
this should be known through relentless search.

Take your mind back a few hours to when you were in deep sleep. At that time there was no consciousness. This can be analogically related to the world being completely merged in darkness. As dawn comes, things slowly begin to appear. Similarly, the deep unconscious in you slowly moves, and a vague awareness of consciousness comes. When that awareness becomes assertive, questions come to your mind. "Is it morning? What time is it now? What am I going to do today?" There is always some question coming up in your mind. This interrogative aspect of consciousness is called *manas*.

According to Vedantins, there are four categories of wakeful consciousness. The first is this questioning aspect, which is an attempt to assign meaning to whatever confronts you. Meaning is given to sense impressions or stray ideas by relating them to something already known. A new impression or idea is oriented in relation to previously experienced situations. When it is thus given a formal fixation, it finds a place in

your scheme of understanding. In order to do this, you recall the memories which seem to be associated with what is being presented to your senses or mind. This faculty employed in the recall of memory is called *cittam*. It is the second category of consciousness.

After the relevant memory associations are revived, they are then used to decide the nature of the current impression or idea. The third category of consciousness is a faculty used to predicate the subject appropriately. It is called *buddhi*. You are in a state of suspense until you make a judgement on the value of the new stimulus. Once its nature is decided, you feel either satisfied or disturbed by it. This feeling affects your personal identity in a variety of ways. The fourth category of consciousness is the affectivity of the ego, called *ahamkāra*. *Aham* means 'I'. You relate your personal experience to a central consciousness in you called 'I' which is affected in terms of pain, pleasure or indifference. With this, one unit of impression has been almost instantaneously processed regarding its significance to you. Taken all together, these four aspects – *manas*, *cittam*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkāra* – are called *karaṇam*.

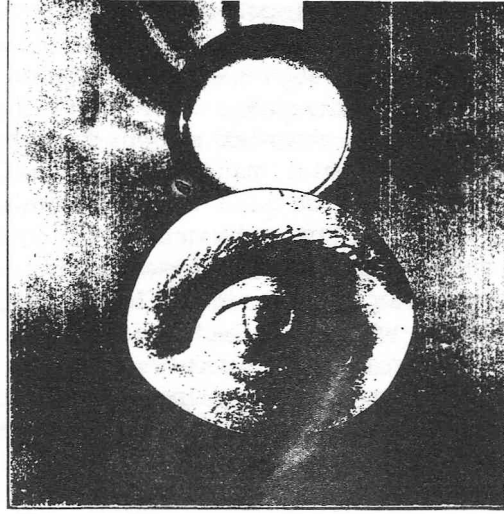
After going through the process of questioning, recollecting, reasoning and being affected, you pass on to the next stage: reacting to the situation. For this you need the use of your organs of perception and action. The senses, body and mind all come together in a confection which becomes a holistic action, monitored by the major urge, drive or interest that dominates that particular moment of your life. Each action-inaction complex contains a whole universe of interest. After one interest is fulfilled or thwarted, your mind moves on to another; thus you go from one world of interest to another in a continuous sequence. These worlds spring up from the awakening of the latent urges lying buried in the unconscious.

The external world is revealed to your eyes by the sun or some other physical source of light. All the visual images you see are only transformations of light. Similarly, there has to be a light from within for you to actually become aware of these visual images and other impressions. Just as visible things are transformations of light, what you experience as other persons, things and interests are all transformations of your consciousness.

You can profitably use this verse to detect your latent urges, hidden propensities, and even your basic drive. Your senses are bombarded with countless millions of stimuli, out of which only a very small percentage are consciously recognized and grouped together into meaningful patterns. Our minds cannot attend to many ensembles at a time. Usually only one is promoted to interact with an item of interest. In each encounter, you need to learn to detach your mind from its fixation with the heart of the situation, so you can make a mental note of the dominating interest that motivates either an action or a reaction. It is both intriguing and educational to discover the hidden motivations and strategies of your mind. This will loosen the compulsive hold that unconscious predilections have on your conscious ability to choose. The chain of associated ideas which your recall of memory evokes can even bring to light many childhood shocks that have become cankerous. When you come across the same attraction or interest recurring again and again with assertive and irrepressible dynamics, you can recognize it as your major drive.

Your basic drive expresses the principle characteristics of your

matrix of *vāsanās*, or incipient memories. *Vāsanās* are the essences of consolidated memories, called *samskāras*. A *samskāra* is a processed or cultured impression that remains with you for the rest of your life. When you are born, you do not come to this world as a clean slate, as John Locke presumed. According to geneticists, we carry many hereditary factors in our chromosomes which form the blueprints of our lives. In



Sanskrit these are called *vāsanās*. The Indian concept of *vāsanā* is a little more complex than the geneticists' version. *Vāsanā* roughly corresponds to what psychologists call instinct. The rishis believe that each of us inherits both a body from our parents and a preconditioned, individuated self from a previous incarnation. Thus there are *vāsanās* that correspond to certain factors found in one's parents, such as propensities to mental diseases or physical ailments, and those that correspond to what is brought over from a previous life as refined causal factors processed out of the impressions, or *samskāras* acquired in that life. Both the genetic factor and the causal consciousness constitute the foundation of the present personality. Genetically, one's heredity is billions of years old. Psychically, heredity is ageless, because ultimately it is an integral part of universal consciousness, *samvit*, which is represented in this verse by the symbol of the sun shining in the sky beyond.

In the present verse, Narayana Guru is effecting a transformation of the individual's personal experience into a cosmic phenomenon. The author's intention becomes evident when this verse is read in the light of the opening verse of the first vision of his *Darśanamālā*:

In the beginning there was non-existence indeed.
 Dreamwise then again, by mere willing,
 everything existent created He, the Lord Supreme.

Here, he attributes the manifestation of this universe to the latent potentials in God's mind, which he refers to as *vāsanās*. In *Darśanamālā*, Narayana Guru pairs theology with cosmology, whereas in the present verse he is blending cosmology with psychology.

The psychic dynamism with which Verse 2 begins, when traced back to its origin, will be revealed to have its archetypal mode in the very foundation of the natural order. In what we call cosmic evolution, Narayana Guru sees the operation of a universal intelligence instead of accidental events leading to random mutations. In the third and fourth lines, he instructs the aspirant to see all the items enumerated in the first and second lines as aspects of a cosmic principle which is both effulgent, as light, and a provider of substance for everything to manifest.

The *karu* spoken of in the previous verse refers to that which is here called *bhānumān*. *Bhānumān*, sun, is derived from the word *bhān*, which means shining or brilliant. *Bhānam* is a word that can mean both 'light' and 'knowledge'. In St. John's Gospel, the Word is equated with God, and is described as both the material and the efficient cause of everything that is manifested here. The Guru is using the same concept of the primordial cause which has within it the intelligent scheme of the universe, and the substantiality that can be infinitely expanded into the myriad forms of the universe. The only difference is that he has dropped the theologic allusion to God. Instead, he uses an absolute principle which implies within it a cosmology and a psychology that have the same pattern or design for their respective unfoldments. The Guru expects the student to reflect as diligently as possible in order to understand all the minute details of the instruction given in each verse.

We have already seen that "psychic dynamism" includes the quaternion of mind, memory, intellect and the ego-factor. If these are to be seen as the gracious embodiments of "the sun that shines in the sky beyond," we should first of all fix the meaning of the words 'sun', 'sky' and 'beyond'. According to the order of the words in the original Malayalam, *para* comes first. We have translated *para* as 'beyond'. Although the word, when taken alone, can mean 'other' or 'beyond', it is also used in the sense of *param*, which means 'the highest', 'most excellent', 'greatest' and 'the Absolute'. *Veli*, the word translated as 'sky', also means 'the open'. The sky in which we see the physical sun is a closed system, whereas the sky or space to which the Guru calls our attention is infinite: the open, spaceless space in which there is no difference between the Absolute and the space in which it shines. It is a space that is 'spatializing', and not a space that is 'spatialized'. It is in this material cause that we have to place the finalized expression of our mind, memory, intellect and ego.

The potential cannot be discerned in the way the actual can. By merely looking at a gene, one cannot say if it is going to be a black bee, a barley kernel, or a burly hippopotamus. Mind, which is the primary cause of all psychological phenomena, is similarly indiscernible.

Regarding memory, a crystal does not forget its geometrical form. You can dissolve and re-culture it a million times and it will always adhere to its previous shape. In the cosmic order of manifestation, the repetitive process reveals a built-in memory of everything which the entire sequence of physico-chemical transformation has previously undergone. The human mind belongs as much to nature as the design on the wing of a butterfly belongs to the gene structure of the caterpillar from which it emanates over and over again. Thus, the memory that functions within us is only a continuation of the cosmic principle of the economy of acquired know-how.

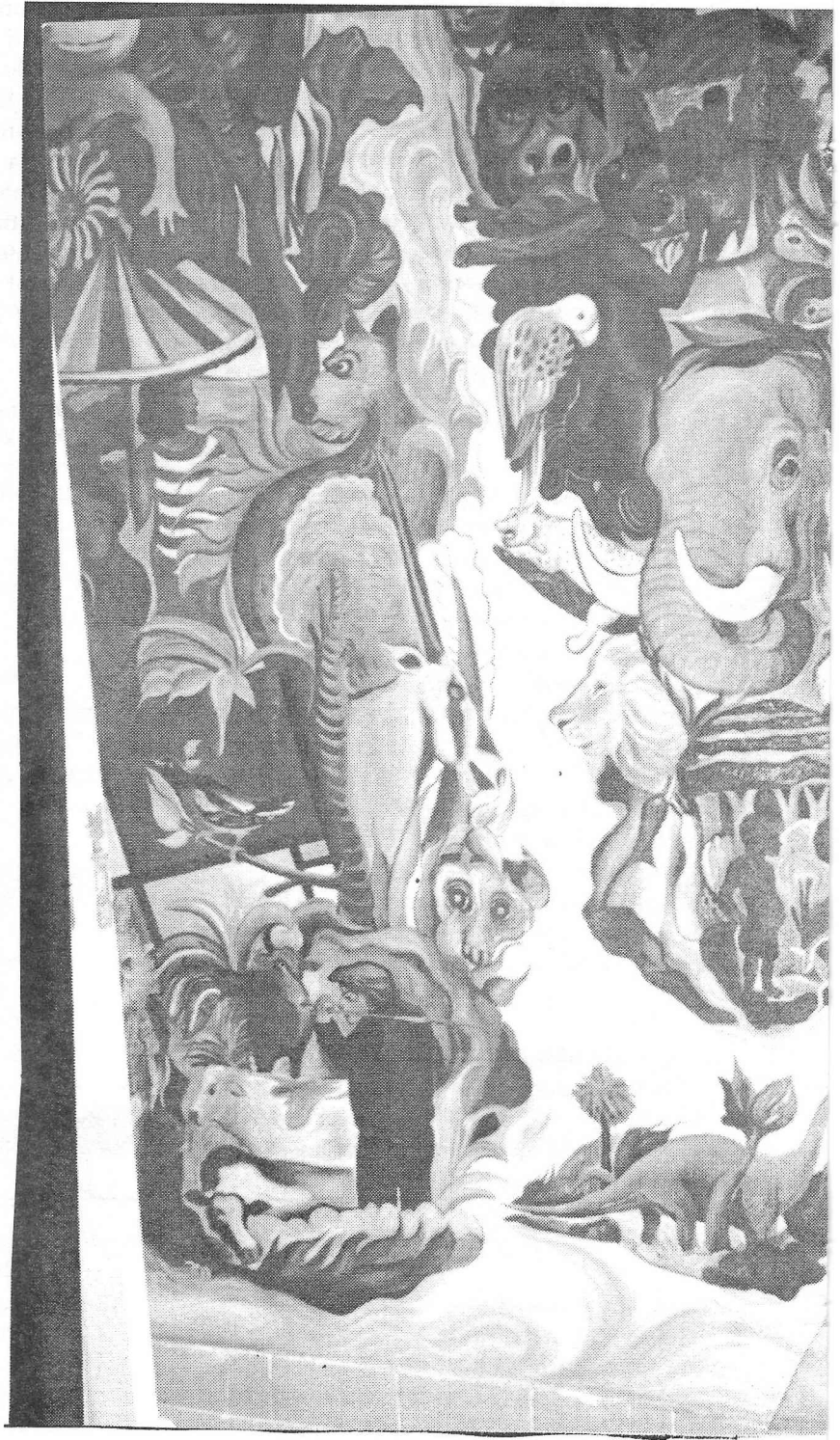
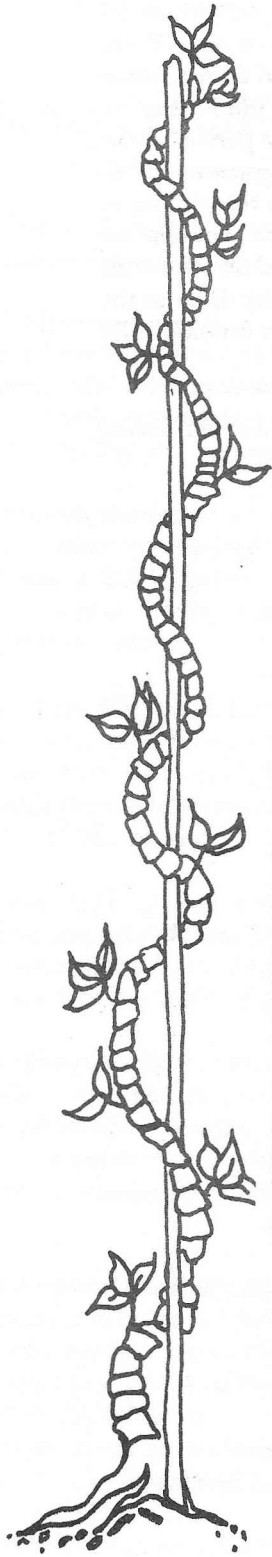
The intellect faces the problem of making categoric decisions. The laws of nature are imperative. They are precise to the most minute detail. The areas of indecision and heterogeneous functioning we see in human intelligence show the inadequacy of our methodology, which is unable to explain the more evolved in terms of the less evolved. The intelligence operating at lower levels of biochemical, physico-chemical and psychophysical levels is of a predetermined nature. At a higher level, there arises the factor of free will. The free expression of the human mind should be seen as both the cream and the scum of the final unfoldment of nature. The

nature we are referring to here is not infra-nature, but that which includes meta-nature and supra-nature as aspects of the nature of the cosmos.

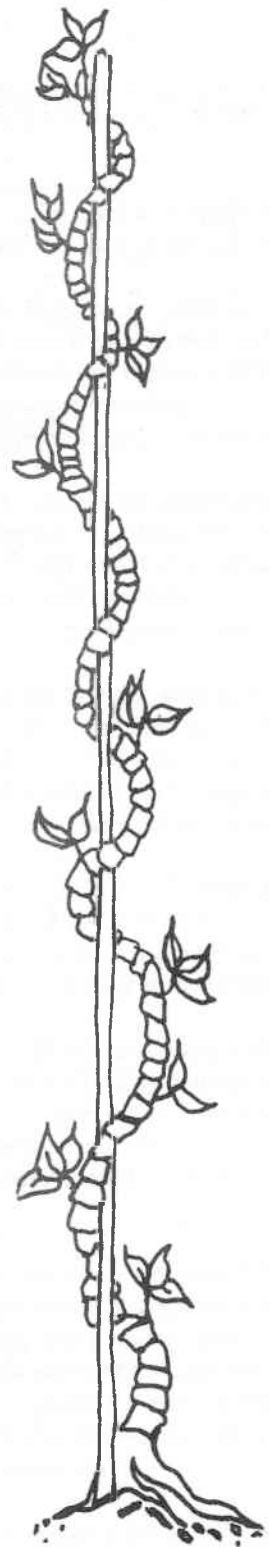
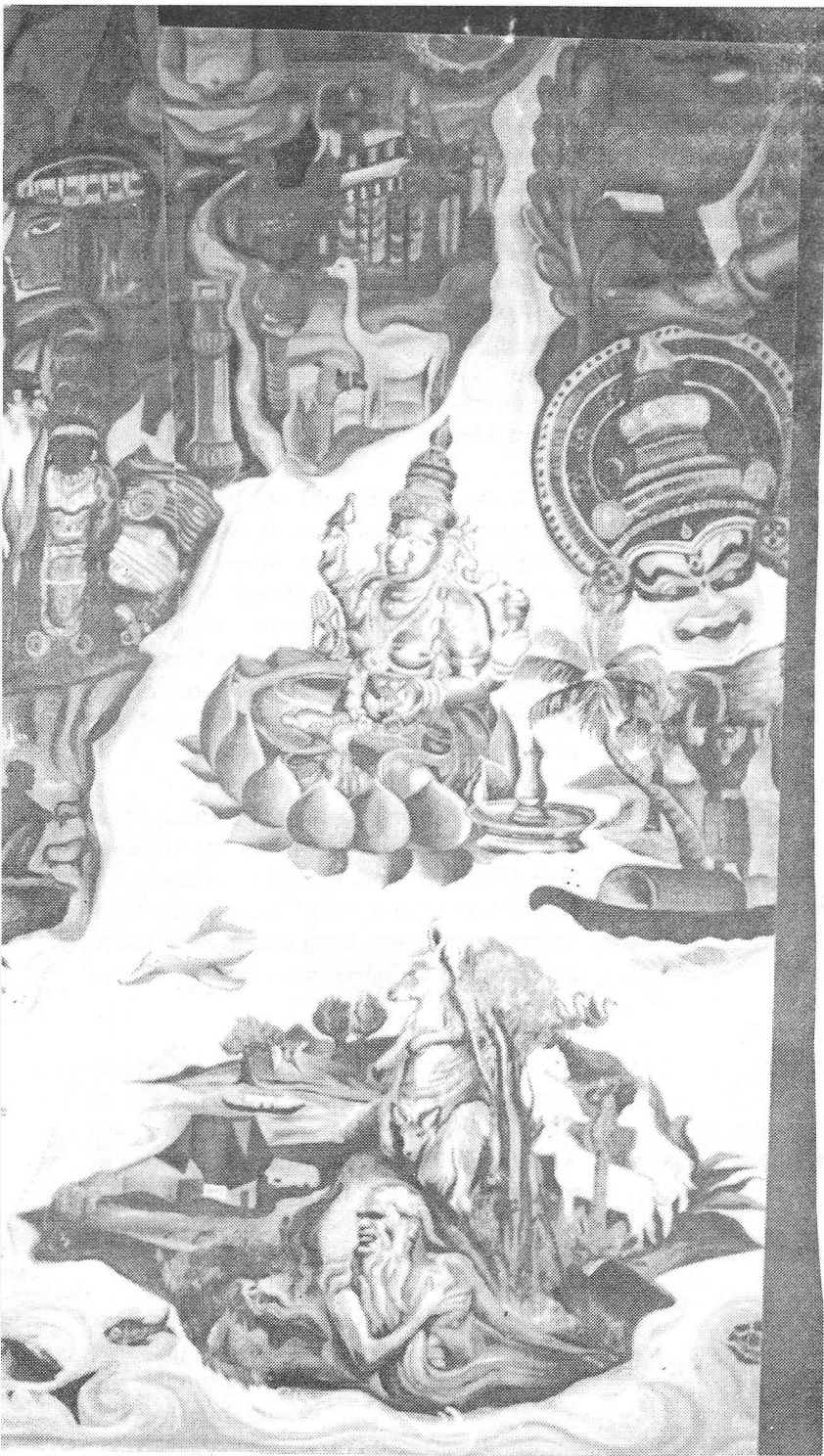
We have already explained how the interest of an individual decides the selective structuring of the data coming from the senses. There is an instrumentality which decides the division of a cell and then governs its development from a fetus to a mature human being. Without this instrumentality, nothing can manifest. The same continues in a person as the ego. We have to see *karanam*, the psychic dynamism, as a gracious modulation of the primordial light which has transformed into this universe. We are using the term 'transformation' rather than 'evolution', because we are aware of the conceptual limitation that is now imprinted on that word after the advent of a theory of evolution which does not attribute to the cosmic principle of transformation an intelligence that is ontologically universal and teleologically purpose-oriented.

(Continued in next issue.)





One World Mural



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Biography of Narayana Guru

Nancy Yeilding

Scriptures of Mercy:
Anukampa Daśakam (1914)

*Such Mercy that even to an ant
Would brook not the least harm to befall,
O Mercy-Maker do vouchsafe
with contemplation
Which from Thy pure Presence never strays.*

*Grace yields blessedness; a heart Love-empty
Disaster spells of every kind.
Darkness as Love's effacer
and as suffering's core,
Is seed to everything.*

*Grace, Love, Mercy – all the three –
Stand for one same reality – Life's Star.
"He who loves is he who really lives."
Do learn these syllables nine by heart,
in place of lettered charm.*

*Without the gift of Grace a mere body
Or bone and sin and tissue foul is man
Like water lost in desert sand,
Like flower or fruit bereft of smell.*

*Those phases six that life do overtake
Invade not wisdom's pure domain;
Likewise the Mercy quality,
when human form has gone,
As good reputation's form endures.*

* * * *

*High scripture's meaning, antique, rare,
Or meaning as by Guru taught,
And what mildly a sage conveys,
And wisdom's branches of every stage,
Together they all belong,
As one in essence in substance same.*

Translated by Nataraja Guru

When the grace sought by the supplicant comes into one line with the source of

mercy and the showing of love to all beings, the sense of individuation and accompanying darkness disappear into the glow of Life's Star, the one Self. The same shining principle that Narayana Guru describes as exemplified and taught by Guru's and sages was the central factor in his own life.

A man was caught stealing jackfruit from one of the ashrams at night. He was brought to Guru. Guru asked, "Did you come and take jackfruit at night?" When he answered "Yes," everyone thought he would be punished. But Guru then said, "Don't come at night. There might be snakes. Come in the daytime and get plenty."

A man from one of the ashrams was caught stealing money from the offering box. When he was brought shamefaced before Guru, Guru said, "So, he really likes money? Good. I've been looking for someone who really likes money. He can be our treasurer."

Another time someone told Narayana Guru that the offering box placed at Śivagiri had been stolen. The Guru said with a smile, "The thief would have been in real trouble if the money had still been spread out among the people. Since it was all at one place it was easy for him."

Narayana Guru would sometimes visit Chintadripet, the slum area of Madras where Nataraja Guru was organizing the Advaita Sabha. One of the men of the community which had been outcast by society had been able to get some education. He had also taken the vows of a sannyāsin and was called Swami Advaitānanda.

When Narayana Guru came to visit the Sabha, everyone present stood and greeted him with folded hands to show their reverence, except Swami Advaitānanda. He merely nodded his head because he considered himself equal to Narayana Guru as a fellow sannyāsin. After Guru had been there for some time, he got up to leave. Once again everyone stood in reverence. This time, having been touched by the Guru's presence, and feeling ashamed of his earlier pride, the Swami fell at Narayana Guru's feet and clasped them in great reverence. Guru said, "No, no, not necessary." Swami Advaitānanda said, "There is a little ego in me." With great empathy for the need of someone who had experienced such oppression to uphold their sense of self, Guru said gently, "That is very good. Let it be. Do not leave it. Some ego is necessary."

At another time Guru was speaking with Swami Advaitānanda. He asked him what he was doing.

Swami: "In one week I'm going to give some lectures in Rangoon."

Guru: What lectures?

Swami: Lectures in Vedānta.

Guru: Where were you born?

Swami: In this locality.

Then Guru asked him to look around him at the poverty and filth that the people there lived in. He asked, "What is the hurry to go to Rangoon when there is so much to be done in Madras?" Guru went on to say he had been born in Kerala and had tried to improve the lot of the people there a little but that he hadn't been able to do much.

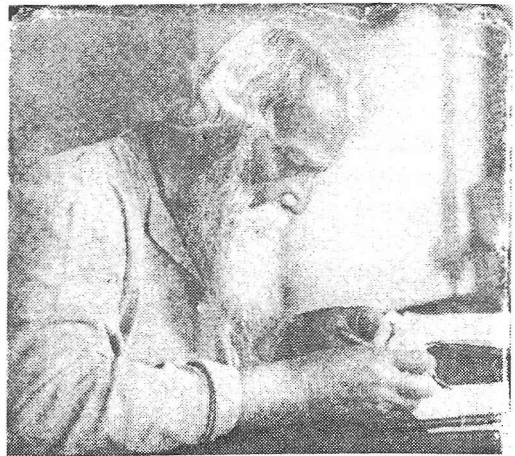
Rabindranath Tagore, the well-known poet, once visited Narayana Guru in Kerala. The followers of the Guru arranged a great procession including elephants and music. The Guru had the best carpets of the hermitage spread on the ashram verandah where the visitor would sit. A crowd thronged around to hear what the two leaders would say to each other. After they greeted each other with folded palms and sat down, the crowd fell silent. Tagore congratulated the Guru on the great work

he was doing for the people with his many reforms. Guru replied with great earnestness, "Neither have we done anything in the past nor is it possible to do anything in the future. Powerlessness fills us with sorrow."

Once Guru refused to ride in a bullock cart which had been arranged to transport him. Then the others with him asked him to get in because it was the only way they could reach their desired destination. He complied and they started off. But when the driver caned the bull, Guru got out and canceled the whole trip.

There was a dispute over some of the land at the ashram at Aruvipuram. A man was accused by some of Guru's followers of having stolen bananas from the temple lands. The magistrate, a devotee of Narayana Guru, proposed that the accused be lashed. When the Guru heard about it, he left the ashram to stay with a nearby family, saying that the air at the ashram was no longer good for a sannyāsin to breathe because it was poisoned by the man's pain. The man was soon released.

Guru went to install a Virabhadra (a manifestation of Śiva) at a temple at Ayiramtengu. He already had the image in his hand when he saw some crushed ants on the spot where he was to place the stone. He stood quietly for a few minutes, then



Rabindranath Tagore

put the image aside and asked the mason to do the installation.

Kindness to Life:

Jīva Kārunya Pañcakam (1914)

*All are of one Self-fraternity
Such being the dictum to avow,
In such a light how can we take life,
And, devoid of least pity go on to eat?*

*The non-killing vow is great indeed,
And, greater still, non-eating to observe;
All in all, should we not say,
O men of righteousness,
Even to this amounts the essence
of all religions?*

*If killing were applied to oneself,
Who, as a favor, would treat
such a dire destiny?
As touching all in equality, O ye wise ones,
Should that not be our declaration
for a regulated life?*

*No killer would there be
if no other to eat there was
Perforce, himself must eat!
In eating thus abides the cruder ill
In that it killing makes.*

*Not-killing makes a human good-
Else an animal's equal he becomes.
No refuge has the taker of life,
Although to him all other goods accrue.*

Translated by Nataraja Guru

Guru often imparted his vision of compassion with a wry sense of humor.

Once Guru asked one of his devotees if he was a vegetarian.

Devotee: Nowadays I am not very particular of eating meat or fish. I eat only when I get.

Guru: What a remarkable change. Formerly you were eating even when you did not get!

A protagonist of non-vegetarian food came to Guru to press a point:

Protagonist: Gurudev, do you drink

milk?

Guru: Yes.

Protagonist: Is it not an animal product?

Guru: Yes, it is.

Protagonist: Then what is wrong in eating meat also?

Guru: Nothing wrong.....Is your mother alive or dead?

Protagonist: She is dead.

Guru: Did you bury her or eat her?

While visiting the Cochin area, Guru asked about the way of life of the people there. Most everyone said they were in the habit of eating meat. When Guru asked for more detail, they said that they considered the tail of the cow the most tasty part. Guru asked, "Everybody eats that? The tongues of the people who eat all this must be very tasty. They should be cut and tried, too."

Five Verses on Inward Release:

Nirvṛti Pañcakam (1915)

*What name? Caste? Trade? How old?
From questions such, when one is free
He gains release.*

*Come! Go! Go not! Enter! What seekest?
From utterances such, when one is free
He gains release.*

*Departest when? When arrived? Whence and
even who?*

*From questions such when one is free
He gains release.*

*I or thou; this and that; inside or out;
or none at all;*

*From cogitations such, when one is free
He gains release.*

*To the known and the unknown equalized;
differences to one's own or that of others;
even to the name of such indifferent
From all considerations such,
one freed Himself becomes,
He the one Released.*

Translated by Nataraja Guru

Our social dealings are composed of such questions, our daily life fabricated of such distinctions. Useful tools, yes, but they fill every bit of consciousness so that we have no chance to know its pure nature, unfettered and universal. Each time we withhold from this pattern of specifying we give ourselves the opportunity to gain a glimpse of our true nature. Having left all such considerations behind him the Guru walked in freedom, merged with the one existence that gives rise to all consciousness which is inherently blissful when not divided, possessed, defined or categorized.

A woman wanted to join Narayana Guru's ashram.

Guru: Do you have children?

Woman: Yes. Guru: When you are at home, are you thinking of me?

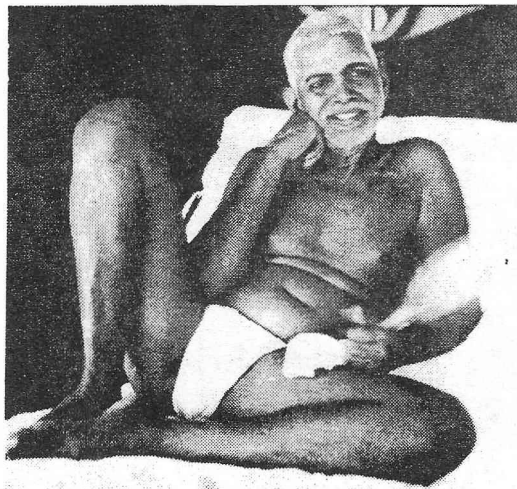
Woman: All the time.

Guru: And when you would be here would you be thinking of them?

Woman: Yes.

Guru: Better you are at home thinking of me all the time.

The Guru gave sannyasa to Earnest Kirk, a man from England. Instead of the traditional ochre robes and Sanskrit name, the Guru gave him a suit and tie and instructed him to continue with his given name for his sannyasa.



Ramana Maharshi

The Way of the Recluse:
Municārya Pañcakam (1916)

*For the hermit whose attachments are gone
His arm, makes it not for him a pillow?
The earth whereon his footsteps fall
Gaining sin-dispelling power,
Makes it not for him a couch?
For such as he, what use of goods here?
Ever merged as his mind is in the verity of
"That Thou art," His bliss transcends
inclusively all forms of joy.*

*Desireless, as he is for nothing ever asking,
Partaking of food brought to him by chance
The body just to sustain;
From all cares free,
sleeping on the thoroughfare,
Ever immersed in the vision of the Self,
The hermit, attaining to the unity
of Life and Self supreme,
He comes to his own state, radiant everlasting,
Of Being-Knowing-Joy.*

*In discourse the recluse excels,
But often restrained in words,
he is seen here as one ignorant.
Wandering, sitting, or standing still
Having once come to this changing body,
sanctioned by time,
He ever contemplates the state
Of Selfhood's uncut Consciousness Supreme.*

*Outside the scope of what is spoken of
as existing or non-existing
As unthinkable, ungraspable, minute,
non-short, stainless or supreme,
Immobile, erect, or most exalted,
He seeks to attain that all-fourth state,
Turning away both from this and that
As one who aims properly
To reach beyond both being and non-being.*

*Let him live in his own home, or in the forest,
Or at the water's edge--no matter;
With mind ever fixed in the Absolute
The Yogi ever dwells seeing all here
in terms of Selfhood.
Like a mirage in a desert land,
He enjoys bliss, that silent one,
Contemplating That Absolute Supreme
which is beyond all compare.*

In response to the urging of both of their disciples, Narayana Guru went to see Ramana Maharshi, another great contemplative of the time. He sat on a rock on the hillside near Ramana Ashram. Ramana Maharshi came and sat on another rock. They sat in silence for some time. Then Ramana Maharshi got up and walked inside. Narayana Guru asked the disciples of Ramana Maharshi, "Do you know him?" They answered, "Yes." He turned to his own disciples and asked them also, "Do you know him?" They also answered "Yes." Then he said, "Then only we do not know."

He then dictated these verses to a disciple who always followed him with pad and pencil. The verses were given to the chief disciple of Ramana Maharshi. Many years later a disciple of Narayana Guru, Swami Mangalananda, went to visit Ramana Maharshi who then pulled the verses out from under his pillow and gave them to him.

After remarking that he did not know Ramana Maharshi, he went on to compose these verses – thus pointing out that our usual sense of "knowing" a person, based on accumulated information and various impressions, is very different from the inner attunedness that can reveal and commune with the essence of another's being.

These verses are equally pertinent to Narayana Guru's way of life as they are to Ramana Maharshi's. Except during his last illness (when he was carried from place to place on stretchers) the Guru continuously traveled throughout South India, often on foot, living simply on what was spontaneously given him. He dressed in two plain pieces of white cloth, preferring the ground or a bench to a soft chair or bed, walking among the people in silence or with simple, compassionate words, completely free of social convention, finding and sharing contentment everywhere because he carried it always within. ❖



Kerala Inland Waterways

A Comprehensive Theory of Mind

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

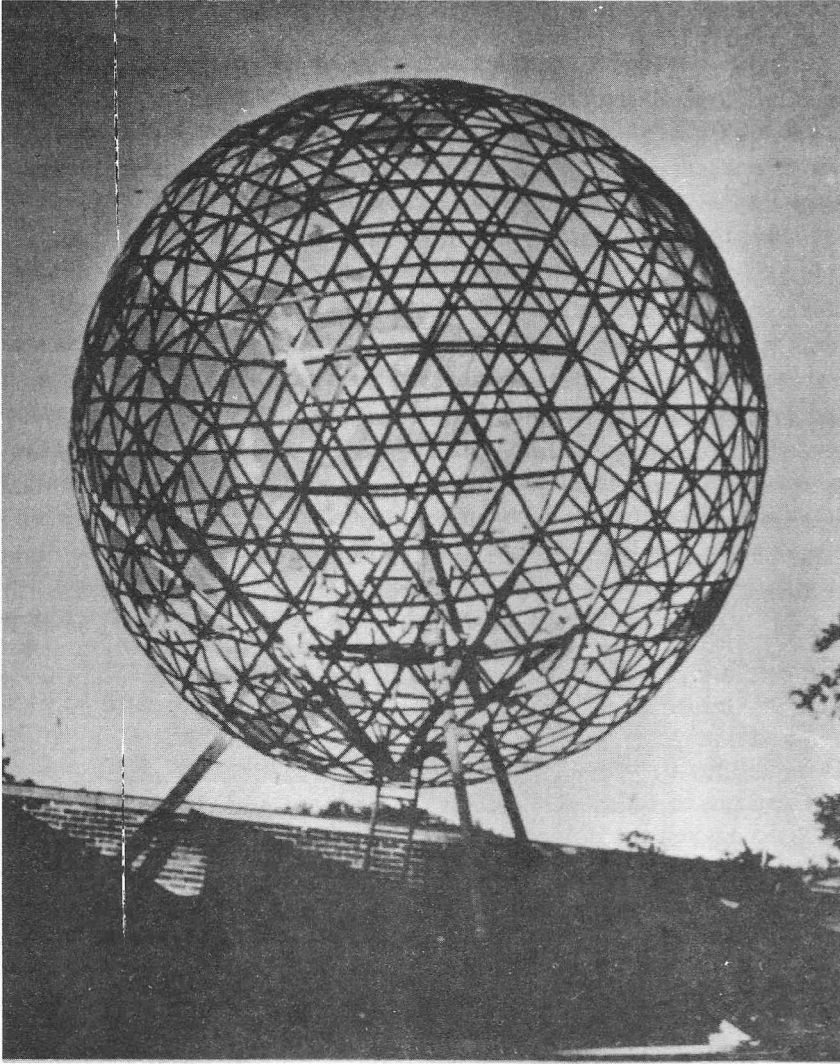
Will To Be and The Will To Possess

Problems are presented only in beings which have a will to perpetuate their being. The foremost of the instincts is that of self-preservation. It brings into focus self-awareness, awareness of the world and its nature, and the faculties which are at the behest of the being who wants to cling to life. Necessity with a capital N also refers to the most primary cause which can precipitate many consequences and effects which are of advantage or disaster. To be born is to come into an arena where one has to take up arms to meet one's necessities and defend against the adversities of nature's reluctance to budge. For the time being, let us delimit our field by focusing on the necessities of the human species, one of the recent emanations of nature. But nature's provision for the personal protection of a human being from the adversities of the natural habitat is meager compared to other species.

Human sensibility begins with exposure to the climatic conditions of nature. The earth revolves as a satellite around the sun with the two poles that are ice-capped. The polar regions gradually change into the temperate zones, and from there into the equatorial regions of the planet where there are both lush forests as well as sandy deserts. In spite of the lack of facilities in the polar regions, Eskimos have ingeniously made burrows in the deeply laid snow to shelter themselves from the fatal cold winds of the Arctic. From the very beginning man gave shape to his culture by building homes with his two hands. People like Karl Marx think that homo sapiens have been fashioned by the will to

work with their hands to survive in a world where there are alternating hot and cold environments. Marx was not altogether wrong in thinking of the need for home-building as a main cause of the creation of human devices which insulate human beings from heat and cold.

Later evolutionists like Henri Bergson went a little deeper in locating the cause of human evolution. Although the hands are the most manipulative limbs of the body, the talented activities of the nimble fingers of man are always directed by the two eyes on the face which are well secured by the forehead and cheekbones. The ability to turn the neck a full 180 degrees is complemented by the flexibility of the torso which gives man a chance to be fully observant of both the available amenities as well as the dangers that can occur in his surroundings. Thus the eye is the leader of all the other faculties. Although sound is more primary than light, wherever man imagines that a sound is heard, he immediately turns his eye in that direction. Thus the eye symbolizes the entire world of knowledge. The eye chooses and immediately a will is formed persuading the hands and feet to act. In between there is a liaison which makes the tongue active to give oral instructions to oneself and others. This possibility of articulation is fed by the modalities based on the memories of experiences of the past (*citta vṛtti*). Thoughts evolve into images, and images perfect themselves as symbols. Varieties of symbols are made by the manipulating intelligence such as sound symbols, form symbols, impressionistic symbols and expressionist symbols. All these can come under the blanket term nature, expressed



in Sanskrit as *prakṛti*. The *pra* in *prakṛti* stands for its profoundness; *ṛti* means actualization. *Prakṛti* is the profound actualization of all the required instrumentation that can make any living being a vital link in the creative exuberance of the world.

Thus nature's purposiveness is behind the creature's instinctive urge to preserve its species, and the species can be preserved only by preserving the individual. Every individual has to assume responsibility for individual defense. Even a child shows tactics of acceptance and refusal as its first measure of taking responsibility for its perpetuation. The most important study that man has undertaken for himself is the study of relationships. All relationships are decided by the actualization of values

which are conducive to the purpose of life. Everything is related to some other things for the purpose of self-preservation or self-defense. The Indian *rishi* speaks of it as the bonds of life. The start in life of an individual human being begins with the bonds that are established between 23 pairs of genes, picked out of the 46 that come from the parents' chromosomes. Everything in nature is designed with two opposites holding on to each other, both activating and regulating. A bond is called *graha* in the *Upaniṣads*. *Graha* means grasping or holding fast. This is given in detail in the third Chapter of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* from mantra 1 to mantra 9. In the description of the *grahas*, the counterparts are all enumerated. The

first in the order is the grasping power of the vital breath.

All living beings have an incoming breath and an outgoing breath. Inhaling and exhaling have differing patterns in differing forms of life. Life is precipitated and perpetuated by the vital breath and it can perish if the rhythmic expiration or inhalation is choked. So far as man is concerned, toxic vital breaths can make inhaling unbearable. So a central human struggle for existence is to move into an area where the breath can be conducive to preserve life. When a newborn experiences the situation where it is no longer supported by the breath of its mother the very first act of the child is to clear the path of the inhaling wind pipe which is likely to be clogged with mucus or other filth. Therefore the child has to make a very dramatic primal scream to push away the natural obstacles to breathing. From then on, sometimes even for a hundred years, the rhythm of breathing will be kept in such a perfect order that man can usually even forget that he is a respiring animal.

The first will to live is indicated by the child freeing itself from its dependence on its mother for its breath of life. Immediately after the primal cry, the child turns to the next major necessity to preserve life, which comes from its hunger. The mother's milk that is made available to the child's mouth is conducted to its nourishment-seeking digestive system by its own vital breath. Thus the second grasping involved is the intaking of food. More details of the entire natural arrangement of the eight kinds of grasping and bonding can be read in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* in the mantras we have already quoted. This is mainly with regard to the physiological natural arrangement to precipitate love for life and its preservation.

The evolution of consciousness to make a full social human being has a history which is as old as humanity. Only a small initial portion of it belongs to the materiality of life. Otherwise the most profound story of evolution is in the adventures of the human spirit, lived through human imaginations and artifices that are

perfected by scientific and aesthetic pursuits.

The evolution of personality is mainly controlled by the development of instincts. The mutuality of instincts sometimes promote positive proliferation of complexities, while in certain cases, they negatively interact and inhibit each other. Two major instincts we have mentioned previously are self-preservation and self-perpetuation. In self-preservation, seeking nourishment plays the major role, and in the perpetuation of the species, sex is the most dominant. There is a spacing of time in the development of personality. In India traditionally the first twenty-five years are set apart for familiarization with all the biological and psychological implications of the development of interiorized coordinations of bio-chemical, biologic and sociologic deterrents that operate both unconsciously and consciously. In India the regularity of such laws is given primacy and the adolescent and youthful periods are considered the ideal time to pursue spiritual values in which ethical behavior with a moral vision is considered very important. This primary period of life is called *brahmacarya*.

In ancient Greece as well, there were youth hostels where young men who wanted to qualify to participate in the Olympics lived without indulgence in sex. The winners of Olympic laurels were called *bacca laureates* because they were rewarded with the decoration of *bacca* and *laura*, leaves and berries of olive trees. When Christianity came to the position of giving spiritual guidance to people, the Schoolmen adopted celibacy as part of their discipline. Instead of taking part in Olympic games, young Catholic Schoolmen were achieving intellectual and spiritual pursuits. They were rewarded with the title of Bachelorhood. That is how degrees and diplomas came to mark the excellence of scholasticism. These ancient disciplines are no longer considered very commendable by modern society. Education has become a prerequisite for providing economic stability and nourishment for a family. Until recently the man was the



breadwinner and the woman was to keep the home. Now for a better economic advantage, both men and women share the responsibility of becoming bread winners and sexuality is considered as the mainstream of man-woman companionship. All these historical changes have regulated the appetites of men and women somewhat differently in societies which are more sophisticated and modernized than in those which are ruled by tradition.

In ancient days men were to husband their farms (earth) and also their wives at home. They had to train themselves as farmers or hunters or breeders of livestock. The main vocation was in desiring the right type of life-style to procure food and shelter for one's family. The wife was to give herself as an obliging woman for the husbandman to generate children out of her. Just as man owned the land, he owned the woman also. They had a collective purpose: man to bring food material and the woman to cook it deliciously, and thus they could together enjoy their family life. This was the ideal for thousands of years. Man had to cultivate his own preferences in likes and dislikes. To make family relationships compatible, the woman had to make her preferences as close as possible to that of her husband. This became a very workable policy in any group life with more than two people coming together to

live. If either the husband or wife sought a certain kind of preferential pleasure or common happiness, it made it obligatory for all the persons concerned to put their effort into procuring the means to fulfill those desires. This was recognized in India from the *Upaniṣadic* period, and the *rishis* defined *karma* as a consequential factor of desire (*kāma*).

No *kāma* can be fulfilled without qualifying oneself by turning out enough work from one's side. Every action (*karma*) involves an expenditure of energy. The energy that is expended is to be replenished. So day to day life means expenditure and replenishing. To sustain the human body/mind, nourishment is required at least three times a day. It is also necessary to keep the body active so that its neuromuscular composition and circulatory system of blood, digestive juices and other glandular secretions can always be properly utilized. It is something like a reciprocal function: to eat to work and work to eat. In the case of family life in ancient days, when parents had several children, the workload on the husbandman and the food-facilitating wife was several fold larger than today. When several people of different ages live together, the needs are varied. A single parent cannot generate all their necessary facilities.

Families needed to be part of a social

system in which the needs of the society were met by the generation of consumer goods. The entire society came to depend on specialized consumer producers. The social responsibility became so binding on the producers that they were held answerable to provide the consumers with the items they needed at regular intervals with a certain amount of quality control and efficient ways or methods of distribution. Thus desire is not exclusively sexual. Sexuality is only one of the several major requirements of an individual. All need food everyday. Therefore, producing food and consuming food has an overall importance in the field of action (*karma kāṇḍa*). We can say the need to produce food, distribute food and consume food belongs to the horizontal world which has to go on feeding in sequences of a vertical necessity. The food that is needed to appease hunger at a given time is of horizontal importance whereas the hunger from the day of birth to the day of death which covers several years of vertical growth needs food as a vertical factor. It is food in principle.

Whenever people live together, both in their vertical relationship and horizontal relationship, two major items become inseparable counterparts. They are demand and supply. The science and art of understanding demand and supply and catering to the coordinations of these values has

developed as socioeconomics. Numerous needs are to be reconnoitered and equitably facilitated. The science of politics developed theories and the theories are enforced by political systems. Thus the meaning of life comes from a complex situation in which the most dominant principle that needs constant attention is to understand whether a desire is imperative or optional. Food is imperative, sex is comparatively optional. It is on the background of these realities that we have to develop the ethics and aesthetics of life.

The complexity of social life has elaborated and enhanced the psychological features of man. Consequently, commercialization has become an imperative in the world of demand and supply. Human weaknesses are many. They grow endlessly, while human virtues are comparatively few and they are overridden. Consequently, social and cultural demoralization and deterioration is commonplace in every community. If one cell in the body is injured, the injury can cause sympathetic reactions in other cells. Similarly, infection is very much in the value system. In this deep world of complexity we have to seek how the present day condition of life has become so pathologically deteriorated. To know what remedial measures are to be taken, more acute research and studies are to be conducted. ❖



Guru's Walks

Deborah Buchanan

Andy and I were joining Guru for a short, early walk, this time through the back streets of Manjanakorai and down to the small shrine at the edge of the forest reserve. As we turned the corner on the main road, I noticed in front of one of the houses--a shack really, very sparse and poor--a large satellite dish. I couldn't help thinking how totally strange and inappropriate all those programs (replays of British sitcoms and Indian musicals) were, beamed here into the Nilgiris mountains, to the cold air and dirt floor houses surrounded by tea plantations. Other than the satellite dish little change had come to this street. Garbage was still mounded along the far side, nuzzled and dispersed by wandering dogs and cows. Water drained down the side gutters, poured from kitchen pots and washing bins. Many residents stood quietly by their doorways watching us as we walked by.

At the edge of the street--a row of tea workers' houses furnished by the company--we stepped onto a small path that led down into the brush and then finally into a cleared area, under some large deciduous trees. Here was a small village shrine. Past it was an even smaller path into the woods, one of the few remaining patches of native flora. We three walked among the plants, touching them lightly and affectionately. Guru asked if we knew the origin of the name Nilgiris or Blue Mountains. Of course we didn't. It came, he said, from the native blue flowers, *strobilanthes* or *kuriñji*, that used to cover all the hillsides when he first began coming to Ooty, turning them into swaths of blue. So much of the native vegetation was gone, including these flowers, Guru said, that only now and then did one see the Blue Hills.

On our way out of the forest we began talking about the British gentleman whose

work on behalf of environmental preservation had been honored at a meeting Scott and I had attended with Guru on our last visit. We talked of environmental work in Ooty and Guru said, "Yes," he had begun the Save Nilgiris Campaign just to get people cleaning the streets, to be aware of what was happening in their city and villages. He was now only an honorary member but the organization had grown to encompass many different programs. It was like the sweeping he did many mornings just outside the Gurukula gate. The public roadway had been a public dumping ground, filled with trash and excrement. Instead of exhorting people to clean it up, Guru himself had simply begun going out and cleaning the area to each side of the Gurukula gate. Soon other neighbors began to sweep their areas, then to pick up and keep the entire road clean. Not that all the villages were completely clean, but one area was and an awareness of peoples' responsibility for their environment had begun.

On one of our last mornings in Ooty a large group of us were coming down the road from Indu Mallah's house where we had been for morning tea and literary conversation. As we came by one set of houses a dog--an upgraded, fairly healthy version of the 100% Indian Dog--lay in the road. A loud motorcycle went by and the dog never blinked. Then a little auto rickshaw, bigger if not noisier, came through. The dog at least looked, but still did not move. It's eyes were open, though, and it then spied our group coming down the road, at which sight he leaped up and ran off into the bushes. I laughed in disbelief. Why had the dog run from us and not the more threatening vehicles? "The dog knows the cars will always move for him," said Guru, "but when it saw two frightening things--

a tall *saiya* (Scott) and a man with a stick (me with my walking cane), it knew it had to leave. These were much more dangerous than the vehicles!"

We then saw someone loading a car with luggage, and Guru began to reminisce about a young boy, a train porter from the Madras train station, he had known long ago.

Guru as a much younger Swami had come off the train very tired and worn and the young boy had come up offering his services as a porter. But Guru was a ruppee-less *sannyasi*, traveling alone and impoverished. He told the boy he couldn't pay him, but thank you anyway, he would carry his own luggage. The boy had said it didn't matter to him, even without payment he wanted to carry Guru's luggage. So he picked up the bags and started off. Then the boy had asked Guru if he wished to stop in at the chai shop. Again Guru repeated that he had no money. But he did, said the boy, and he wanted to take Guru as his guest. So into a nearby tea shop they went. The boy, Guru said, was very gracious and grandly ordered two teas and

two *došas* for them, which they then ate. Afterwards the boy took Guru's luggage to his destination. Guru asked for the boy's address so that he might mail him some payment later. But in a slight mocking tone and with a cock of his head, the boy gestured to the street, "Sir, that is my home, there is no postal number for me." They bid farewell to one another. Guru was sure that on his next trip through Madras he would look up the boy and repay him for his kindness and services. "I never saw him again," Guru said, "but I still carry a sense of gratitude towards him, and a feeling of guilt at never paying him." We could see that Guru was still touched by the purity of the young boy's generosity.

Somehow, the conversation shifted to gardens and vegetables, and Guru was recalling the tomatoes he used to grow at the Gurukula in Somanahalli. The poor village neighbors had often come in the night and taken the ripe fruits from the vine. Guru had been angry about it, ready to storm off and find the culprits, but Nataraja Guru said, "No, No, it works very well this way. The tomatoes are finding a home where



Front Gate of Fernhill Gurukula

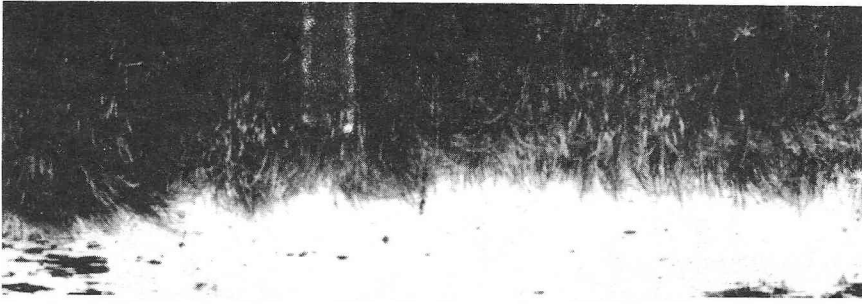
they are needed. If we gave them away, we wouldn't know who really needed what. Now they go directly into needy pots. It's the most economical distribution system."

At the last, as we came up the curve to the main road, Guru recalled the many roads around the world where he has taken walks. "Once you've traveled around the globe, you have a sense of where you are in the world and you can locate yourself. All of these places become part of you." Guru mentioned how there were neighborhoods and streets in the world, separated by space and in time as well, that were so familiar to him: Paris, Brussels,

Sydney, Portland. He said these early morning walks in Fernhill reminded him of how he used to walk in Portland. In my mind there were also the long country roads of Sonoma County in California that we used to walk the summer we all lived at Slusser Ranch, everything touched by the slant of the light and the rounded, rolling golden hills. We had walked many miles there, discussing philosophy, people's behaviors, our own of course, and many ideas and possibilities. Now we were on the damp, eucalyptus-scented pathways of Fernhill carrying on these conversations and our sharing. ♦



Statue of Nataraja Guru at Front Entrance, Fernhill Gurukula



*Dear little grass,
you did not go to kindergarten.
Instead you walked with tiny feet
and covered the whole earth,
spreading, wherever you went,
a green carpet, so cozy and beautiful.
You did not compete with your peers
to get a rank over their heads,
yet God has ranked you to be
both unique and universal.*

*You are fragile,
but when quake or tornado comes,
houses fall and towers crumble,
and mighty trees are uprooted,
with compassion you'll receive
all the crumbling glory in your palm.
When the mighty and the beautiful,
the brave and the wise depart,
you knit a beautiful green lace
to honor their graves.*

Nitya



East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



On 18th February, 1997 the Gurukula celebrated Guru Puja in honor of the founder Guru of the Narayana Gurukula movements.

Guru means a wisdom teacher who sets a model of living, meditative thinking, speaking, behaving and engaging in activities which are correct according to the norms of the Absolute. The Guru is the exemplar for all the disciples and participants of the Gurukula movement. The Gurukula is not a static body, but an ever flowing, growing, widening concept which is spontaneously furthered by the life example of the Guru. The Guru is more a spiritual presence than a person in a physical body.

We have had a total dedication of a century and a half of the direct influence of the two Gurus of the Gurukula. Narayana Guru's sources of information and inspiration came from India's spiritual history, ranging from prehistoric proto-Dravidian times, through the illustrious examples of the rishis of the Upaniṣadic period, the expansion of the classics of Sanskrit and Dravidian Tamil language, up to his own days (1884 to 1928). Nataraja Guru continued the tradition of Narayana Guru, personally expanding his consciousness in the realm of modern science and studies of

humanities. He both learned and taught arts and letters for over half a century in Europe, The United States, the Pacific Islands and Australia, while his base was always kept in India. With the help of his Scottish friend, John Spiers, he systematically re-created an authentic philosophy of the Gurukula by writing and publishing articles which were intended to be the syllabus of the future students of the Gurukula.

His main contribution to philosophy is on par with what is known in India as Yoga Mīmāṃsā, which in Vedānta is called the methodology of *anvaya vyatireka* and in Buddhist thought is known as *uha* and *apoha*. It is a self-correcting method of attacking a central problem from opposite poles. In the West, Plato included this method in *The Republic* as dialectic. Dialectic is the Socratic methodology of carrying out a method of reduction by putting sequentially relevant questions to the aspirant whereby the teacher makes the student answer his own question correctly and systematically. The Cartesian coordinates given by Rene Descartes offered a scheme of correlation which was later improved by Kant in his two books, *A Critique of Pure Reason* and *A Critique of Poetic Reason*. Nataraja Guru adopted the scheme

of correlation found in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* yet, in it, the Kantian concept of the transcendental and the implication of aesthetics were not left out.

One of Guru's contributions to the clarification of the ambiguity of higher philosophy was to directly point out that there is a lurking paradox in the very heart of the Absolute. He was not apologetic about it. He pointed out two aspects of the Absolute, one belonging to the Self as the contingent and the other to the non-Self of necessity. He also gave a structural key to understand the ambiguity of the Absolute as an element of wonder, thus showing how the paradox can be transcended. The method he devised was a vertico-horizontal scheme in which there is a continuous movement of a figure of eight which can be elaborated in the value vision of music, art and poetry, the contemplative sciences of *brahmavidyā*, the positive scheme of the world of actualities and the core of silence. So, in the Gurukula, we have included poets, musicians, playwrights and visual artists as guides to lead people to a correct sense of wonder in which one sees the explication of the Absolute.

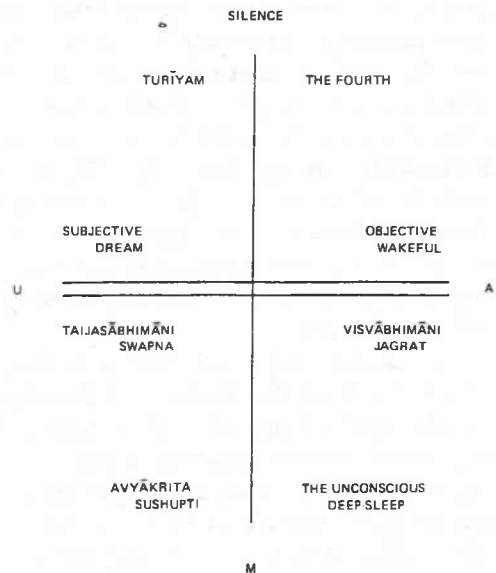
To arrive at the normative notion of the Absolute, Nataraja Guru looked upon Narayana Guru as his exemplar. So he presented a treatise on *The Philosophy of a Guru* by rearranging the normative notion of wonder, which occurs both in the vertical parameter as well in the horizontal perimeter. For all studies, he considered it relevant to make a three pronged approach with proper considerations of epistemology, methodology and axiology. He wanted the Gurukula to be a forum to discuss the possibility of evolving a One World Government, a One World Economics and a proper One World Education, to re-evaluate religion and to have a conflict-free conceptualization of basic terms with the creation of a unified science. These are all presented in a newly published book, *Experiencing One World*.

Nataraja Guru's study and teaching over a period of 60 years was ultimately summed up in his magnum opus, *An Inte-*

grated Science of the Absolute, in three volumes. It is based on a grand scheme to accept the philosophical visions of all well known seers and prophets and all philosophers who are worthy to be called so, irrespective of the time and clime to which they belong. His integration was based on a universally extended range of philosophical vision in which the epistemology of all philosophies are accepted without prejudice and are given their rightful place in an overall epistemology of philosophy.

It is only normal that the methodology of individual philosophers appears to be in direct conflict with the methodology of others. Kantian dialectics, Hegelian dialectics and Marxian dialectics are meant to be at logger heads. But with sympathy or rather philosophical empathy, Nataraja Guru re-examined the studies of the three stalwarts and gave each one their due honor by making them contributors to universal fraternity in philosophy. Religions and schools of thought which even go to the extent of baring their daggers to resolve conceptual conflict are all brought to a neutrality of vision. In the Hindu religion, which is for some people notoriously rampant with idolatry, he can show a central unity in the fundamental notion of the Absolute such as the concept of Allah, i.e.,

SCHEME OF CORRELATION IMPLIED IN AUM



la ilahi illallah, which stands in complete resonance with *neti neti* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Nothing precious in any world religion is explained away or recommended to be deleted from the religious body of any of the world religions.

Narayana Guru presented the *Darśana Mālā* as an approach to the central verity of certitude by correlating the phenomenological error from two opposite sides, such as of a child who in his eidetic experience sees the non-Self as Self and the negatively oriented mind of an old dying man who makes the opposite error of condemning the Self as non-Self. No religion and no politician can thrive without giving allegiance to a central value that is precious to the human heart.

The present Guru of the Gurukula movement elaborated on all the above said items on Feb. 18th, 19th, and 20th, so that the participants could learn how they could have a year-long program of actualizing their value vision until February 1998. The Gurukula is a home of wisdom seekers devoted to the Imperishable Word. The Word can be understood as the *pranava* or the *logos* identified with the Word of God as well as the Word of the Guru. Wisdom seekers of the Gurukula live in continuous adoration of the imperishable truth represented by the Word. Unlike in many other institutions and schools, the students of Narayana Gurukula are expected to initiate themselves into their contemplative participation of wisdom search. The Gurukula is conceived as a celestial river flowing from sublime heights, greening the rich earth below and flowing incessantly through centuries. There are several milestones of wisdom teachers, punctuating the course of the river. Similar rivers of wisdom have been flowing in many lands, both of the East and the West, South and North.

India has a very rich spiritual heritage stemming from the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads*. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, a methodology for search and practice is given as a ritual of sacrifice to adhere to. Sacrifice is ritualistically modeled after the burnt sacrifice called *agnihotra*, which was prevalent

in the Vedic religions, as well as in the Semitic religion, the Zoroastrian religion and other spiritual traditions. Burning is a process of transformation of a body with name and form into the unspeakable and the invisible. This transformation is literally brought out by the dynamics of thermal power. Life itself is organically undergoing similar transformations throughout time and space. Human beings discovered the alchemy of transforming the substances of one's elemental being to achieve the improvement of one's state by bringing all the constituent elements of the previously formulated characteristics of one's body to a white heat of transformation. This is a process by which the undesirable aspect of one's physicality is exposed to death, and the dead and destroyed being is replaced by the new and the revised. This happens at every level of the regeneration of gross matter into sublime or poetic ideas. Through ages humanity has also discovered the language of symbols, signs and numbers. These are all brought to bear upon the kind of change that one wishes to establish in himself or herself and to the system to which he or she belongs.

All agree that in the beginning there was nothing. The term 'nothing' proclaims only the non-viability of any indication of existence, such as substantiality, existentiality, value utility, or elements of empiricism like visibility or tangibility. As a term it is wide and meaningful to suggest a potentiality to utilize a conceivable becoming. In the concept of 'nothing' there is an absolute certitude. It contributes to knowledge. This certitude of nothing as an interlude suggests a new possibility of 'becoming'. This suggested middle ground is given in the *Upaniṣads* as the space of non-modulation, *avyakṛtākāśa*. This no-ideas land has the epistemological possibility of including ideas of every shade of becoming. In the modern world we simply call it space. In Sanskrit it is called *ākāśa*. Between thingness and no-thingness, there is a turning point either to go into total negativity or to relativistic possibility.

The burnt sacrifice is a symbol of this

pivotal point between being and non-being. What is blended out of nothing and everything is something or not something. There we meditate on the well known four syllogistic possibilities of 'everything is', 'nothing is' 'something is' and 'something is not'. The seeming past and the seeming future blend in this formula, allowing untold possibilities. The entire theme of the two factors, 'being' and 'nothing', was conceived by our ancient masters as the gathering of several specific entities, representing the concreteness of earth, the viscosity of water, the thermal principle of fire, the transmuting effect of rendering mass into masslessness, and that which does not depend on anything external to itself.

When two sticks are rubbed against each other, their molecular friction generates a glowing fire which then consumes the entire supply of firewood, leaving nothing behind except unidentifiable ashes. Thus nothing is accomplished by burning. It is symbolically indicative of a phenomenological reduction. In a fire sacrifice, everything which we become familiar with through our sense organs, conceived of as valuable in terms of mathematical possibilities, is all finally annulled

to arrive at the neutrality of being - not being. That enables the sacrificer to gather or recapture a freshness which genuinely represents a new version of truth. Hence, all individual items brought for burning away in the *agnihotra* are considered to be qualitative specific items of relativity, *gauna*. What emerges from the gathering, apportioning, burning and going back into peaceful silence, is the non-qualitative, the non-representative, the non-existing pure state of neutral silence, called *apuroa*, never having been experienced before. This is a magical formula by which the past and future are brought to the crux of the eternal present. We have adopted this *homa* sacrifice as a starting point for our contemplative search for this reason. In its spirit it is sportive and thus it has no pragmatic or utilitarian reference.

EXPOSITION

The Guru Puja was followed by two days of exposition of rare photographs and paintings by the students of the Narayana Gurukula. These expositions were organized not merely for entertainment. The philosophy of Narayana Guru continued by Nataraja Guru is given in the spirit of the integration of the lower-self of man



with his higher Self. The lower self is mainly caught in the world of necessities, whereas the higher Self is ever in the pursuit of truth, freedom and all ennobling values of life. We encourage the participant students of the Gurukula always to develop their providential talents to go beyond the horizontal winds of socio-economic necessities.

A person who is a professional photographer takes many commercial photographs. But there are certain moments when light falling on a certain object from a certain angle reveals the secrets of the day and night. Light and darkness come into convergence and what the photographer clicks at the moment of chance intrigue becomes an immortal moment of being wonder-struck. Such are the photographs shared in the exposition.

There are young people who cannot go to universities to take degrees and tax their brains with conventional lessons. When seekers are tired of their daily struggle, we call them to live with us and turn in to their deepest core and see how wonderful they are. When they are given an easel with a canvas, brushes and pigments, their innermost poetic soul gets reflected in what they paint. They become very happy. They also make people around them happy. That is how the lower-self is lifted by the higher Self in our second day of Exposition.

DR. TARUN CHHABRA

Man is one of the blessed living species of the world. There is something which distinguishes man to be worthy of being among the wise and saintly. He is a homo sapien; that is a distinction which sociologists give to mankind. Jesus Christ found in man two eternal values which he thought were worth preserving. He said, "You are the light of the world." He gave one more dimension to man, saying, "You are the salt of the earth." Jesus also asked, "If the salt loses its saltiness, with what can it be savored?" This indicates that the inherent quality of a thing which makes it valuable can be lost, if due attention is not given to its integrity. In the Nilgiris, two features make the hill station very dear to

people. One is its high mountains and lush vegetation which keeps Nilgiris always of a bluish green in the panorama of vegetative richness.

The other is that a very rare freedom-loving people lives in the Nilgiris, the Todas. They came to settle here in the time of Alexander's invasion of the Northern part of India. The Toda tribe still maintains the ethnic purity of their culture so they can be considered as the historical monument of India's acceptance of culture from any part of the world.

Any formation of life which is believed to have existed for thousands of years is a precious phenomena. Just as the high mountains of Nilgiris cannot be artificially created, certain persisting natures in human thoughts, beliefs and behavior patterns cannot be regenerated. In such matters the question which Jesus asked is very relevant: "If salt loses its saltiness, with what can it be savored?" That is why great care is now taken by our authorities not to further denude the high mountains. Soil erosion damages roads and can wash away hills causing land slides. Any digging of soil before the monsoon can expose Nilgiris to the great danger of soil erosion and the killing of trees. It is with great zeal that we are now trying to preserve the mountain contours of our beautiful, precious hill station.

Equally precious are the Todas, the Badagas and other native people of the area. In the preservation and conservation of ethnic nature there is a great danger of alienating fellow human beings from the main stream of life. That will truncate the tribe's natural ability and will make them culturally anemic. But at the same time, not giving due attention to their ancestral values can deprive a people of their cultural heritage and make them go pale without any social stamina, robbing them of the hallmark of their culture. This is a very paradoxical situation.

What we experience in a small way in the Nilgiris mountains has its parallel in different parts of the world. Ancient American peoples like the Mayans, Incas and Navajos were exploited because the

invaders of their land had the advantage of exterminating them at gun point. What is beautiful about the Toda people are their pastoral ways of innocence and simplicity, honesty and uprightness. It is almost impossible to keep a sweet water reservoir in the heart of an ocean of salt water. And yet this almost impossible sociologic phenomena has been somehow maintained by the Todas in India through 2000 years of their aloneness. How did they do it?

Dr. Tarun Chhabra has made a thorough study of the historical back ground of the Toda pilgrimage to their adopted land. What is strikingly similar between the life of these people and that of the native American Indians is that they maintained their symbiosis with animals, particularly the buffalo. We can see many parallels both in the religious and socio-ritualistic behavior of the native American Indians and the Toda community. In spite of the influx of multitudes who have come to the Nilgiris to make a fortune, there was never any armed clash or conflict between the Todas and their neighbors. From where did they get that stamina of restraint and the preservative zeal to safeguard their higher values? The answer is: from their cultural heritage.

Socrates said, man's best study is man himself. It is valuable for us to see how several packets of ethnic culture constitute

the Nilgiris people. By studying one such group we will get an insight into the magical tolerance maintained by all the other pockets of the ethnic community of the Nilgiris. Narayana Guru gives a formula which is both to love your neighbor as yourself and also to allow your neighbor to be genuinely your neighbor.

Now we light our houses with the artificial arrangement of switching on and off the electric light. The burning candle and the temple lamp have been maintaining the light of the altar for centuries in spite of the short longevity of the candle and wick. The candle and wick stand for the sustained tradition of human nature. There is a paradox in maintaining eternal light through flickering candles. But the light that burns through millennium is the divine source from which our own souls are ignited and brought to life. It is interesting to think of the great wisdom that is maintained through the generations of people. We have to marvel certain inner behavioral patterns to which people have been devotedly holding on for many millennium. This is not just like reading a book on sociology or anthropology. Living close with them and yet not seducing and adulterating their purity is achieved by a delicate balance kept between social harmony and reverence for their long preserved inner purity. ♦

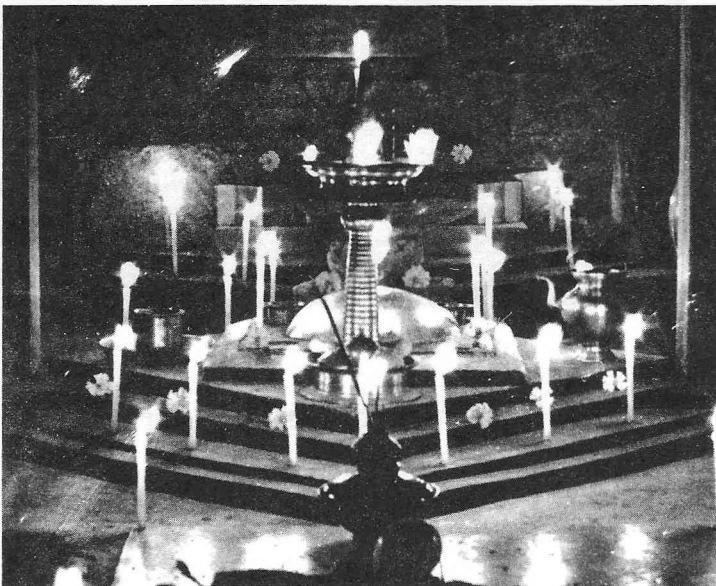


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Outdoor Classroom at Fernhill Gurukula

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An Integrated Science of the Absolute (Volumes I, II, III)
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The *Bhagavad Gita*
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Wisdom: The Absolute is Adorable
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The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Three Volumes
The Psychology of *Darśana Mālā*
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Vināyakāṣṭakam (Translation and Commentary)
God: Reality or Illusion?
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Other

Dhyāna Mañjuṣā
East-West University Prospectus and Yearbooks
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Edda's Diaries - Edda Walker
Basic Lessons on India's Wisdom - Muni Narayana Prasad
Taittirīya Upaniṣad - Muni Narayana Prasad
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