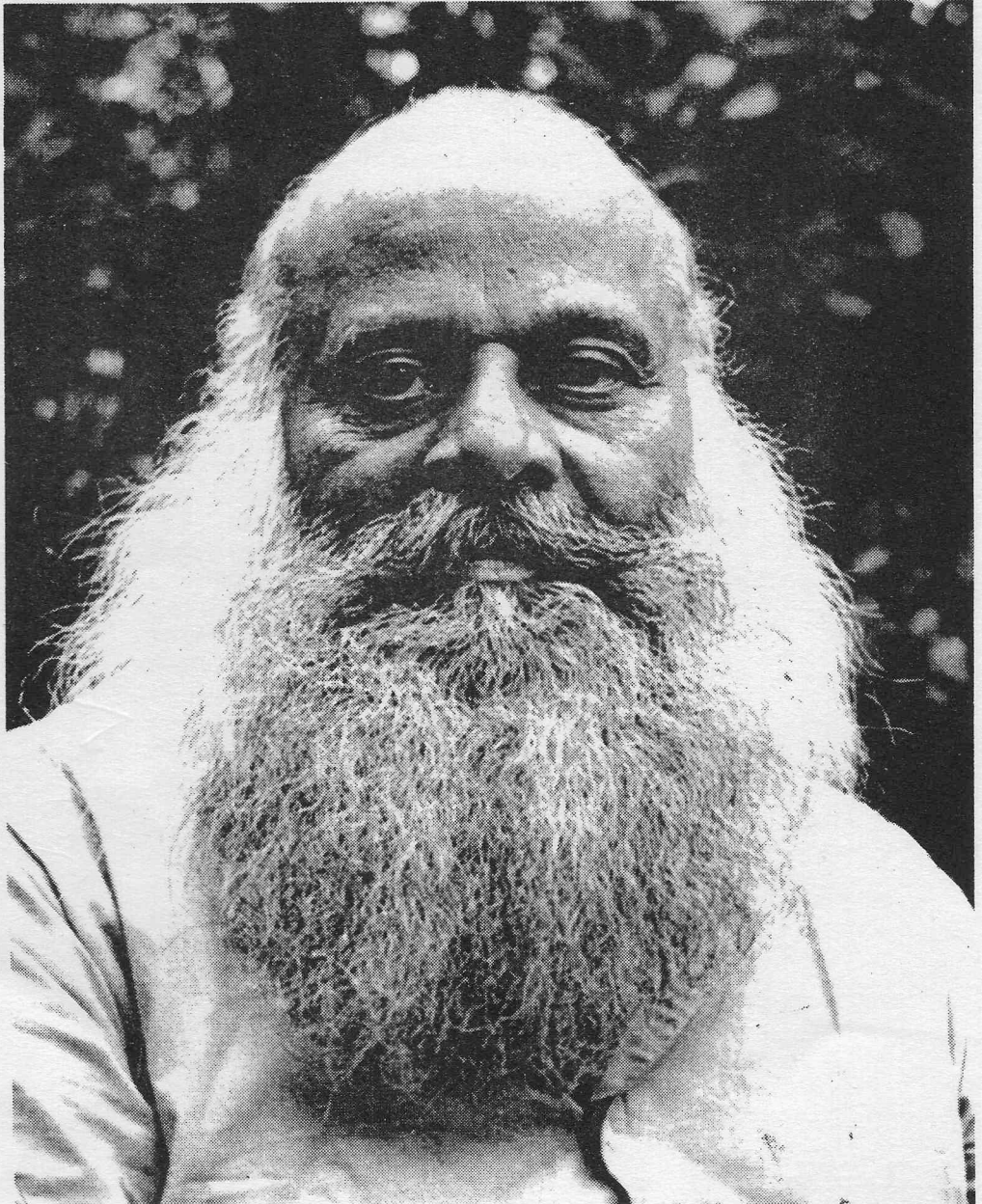
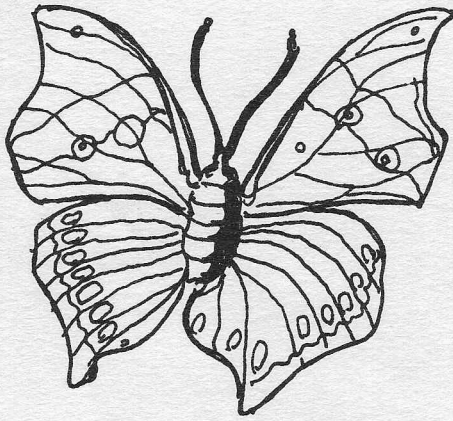


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XIII • 1997

FOURTH QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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The Meaning of Life?

"What is the meaning of life?" Human beings have pondered this question for millennia, and pursued the answer by looking in many directions. One branch of inquiry, biology, has gone deep into the study of living things to investigate the secrets of life at all levels from that of the biosphere to complex ecosystems, from majestic creatures like elephants and lions to minute fruit flies and paramecium, and even to the tiniest bits of genetic information. In order to probe deeply into the nature and texture of life, whole careers have been spent focusing on a single organism and extensive papers written about the relevance of a single gene. When we read or hear of the work of the naturalists and biologists, even if we don't understand the particulars of their discipline, we are drawn into their fascination. They have revealed that the world is teeming with millions of life forms, many so tiny they can be seen only with a microscope, like the little rotifer called monostyla:

*It zooms around excitedly, crashing into strands of spirogyra alga or zipping around the frayed edge of a clump of debris. The creature is a flattened oval; at its "head" is a circular fringe of whirling cilia, and at its "tail" a single long spike, so that it is shaped roughly like a horseshoe crab. But it is so incredibly small, as multicelled animals go, that it is translucent, even transparent . . . Two monostyla drive into view from opposite directions; they meet, bump, reverse, part. . . . Whether we are aware of them or not, in the puddle or pond, in the city reservoir, ditch, or Atlantic Ocean, the rotifers still spin and munch, the daphnia still filter and are filtered, and the copepods still swarm hanging with clusters of eggs. These are real creatures with real organs leading real lives, one by one.*¹

The seemingly insignificant details of the lives of fruit flies and even bacteria have proven to be the source of great knowledge about the most fundamental mechanisms

of all life forms. The solitary meditations of scientists on the microscopic details of the genetic coding of life are revealing secrets which generate awe, both fearful and wonderful, as their implications are pondered. The latest developments in genetic research and engineering which include the cloning of life forms has heightened public concern and debate about life's meaning. At the same time, the investigations, which have gone deeper and deeper into the minutest little "building blocks" of life have come to a greater insight into its meaningful organization: even "the irregularities or surprises molecular biologists are now uncovering in the organization and behavior of DNA are not indications of a breakdown of order, but only of the inadequacies of our models in the face of the complexity of nature's actual order. Cells, and organisms, have an organization of their own in which nothing is random."² It is as though nature has written her own story in the genetic codes of organisms and we are just beginning to glimpse the details.

Sadly, the intense concentration on the particular has, at least for some, become a door opening to the infinite, heightening a universal sense of compassion and even identity. Scientists are beginning to sound like mystics when they speak of things like the "butterfly effect" in which storms in California can be linked to the flutter of a butterfly's wings in the Amazon or the possibility of our being able to enjoy a clear-running brook depends on the survival of endangered fresh water mussels no bigger than a finger-tip. Our greater knowledge is also revealing the damage wreaked upon that order by the exponential growth of cities, roads, automobiles, industries and use of natural resources (not to mention the explosion of nuclear weapons). We are thus slowly and painfully returning to the ancient understanding of nature as an indivisible whole. The very analytic method which for centuries led human comprehension away from a cos-

mological perspective to an increasingly fragmented view is now leading us back to a vision of the interconnectedness of all life.

Fascinating though the discoveries of science may be, they can seem abstract and distant compared to the yearning and attempt to find meaning in one's own life. Human beings have long looked to the stories of other people's lives to help them find answers and guidance. The written record of a person's life, biography, has often been connected with "the rich and famous," whose stories are considered interesting because of the significant role played by the subject in society or history. Great warriors and political leaders, acclaimed artists, writers, musicians, scientists and religious leaders - these are the typical subjects of biographies, many of whose stories have been written more than once, with each author projecting a different view of the same person's life. Autobiographies share the same popularity; those of celebrities are often on best-seller lists and discussed on radio and TV talk shows.

But the lives of "simple folk," when brought to public attention, have also engendered much interest. There are many instances of a previously unknown person such as Anne Frank becoming famous as a result of their sharing a written record of their life experiences. In many biographies, the craft of the story-teller plays a significant role in generating interest, but more often, it is the action of the story upon the reader that is absorbing. Whenever someone takes time to record the events of a life and reflections upon it, human beings are eager to listen. In our day to day life, we are often telling each other our experiences, bits and pieces of the stories of our lives. Even the widespread fascination with mundane gossip and soap operas is fueled in part by the human need to make sense of decisions and actions and their consequences.

Both the telling and the listening or reading have the potential to emphasize the ego, the particular attributes and importance of a certain individual. Many autobiographies especially are self-indulgent ego-trips, often including self-serving dis-

tortions of reality. Even so, the reflection required by the seemingly self-absorbed task of writing one's own story can work to shift one's affiliation to that of the witness which is able to view the events of life as part of a much bigger picture. Each time we read or listen to the story of another's life, we are given an occasion to see the particular life in a much larger context of society and history. If we delve even deeper, every life can be a window on all life. When we identify with the witness of life instead of with the doer or experiencer, that perspective brings compassion and calm reflection, enabling us to come closer to the secret revealed by the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*:

Whoever sees the self of all as one's own self and one's own self as the self of all, does not slight any. When all beings are known to have become the Self, what delusion is there or what sorrow for one who beholds this unity?

When we shift our allegiance to the witness, we discover that the meaning of life is not to be found in our individual decisions, actions or attainments as we make our way in the ever-changing flux of life. The search for the meaning of life is fueled by the yearning to know how to solve the dilemmas of life and be happy. What the *Upaniṣad* makes clear is that the answers lie not in what we do but in what we are - and in our awakening to that reality. But that awakening is not restricted to the realms of mysticism, philosophy and religion. If we approach them with open hearts and minds, common endeavors such as the science of biology and the literature of biography can be the means to an expanded awareness of life and the happiness and peace that come from shifting our identity from the particular to the All.

Nancy Yeilding

1. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Bantam Books, New York, 1974, p. 123-124.
2. Evelyn Fox Keller, *A Feeling For The Organism*, W.H. Freeman & Co., New York, 1983, p. 201.

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:7

trayam antaraṅgam pūrvebhyah

The three are internal in relation to the preceding ones.

Sūtra III:8

tad api bahir-aṅgam nirbījasya

Even that (*sabīja samādhi*) is external to the seedless (*nirbīja samādhi*).

Sūtra III:9

vyutthāna-nirodha-samskārayor abhibhava-prādurbhāvau nirodha-kṣaṇa-cittān-vayo nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ

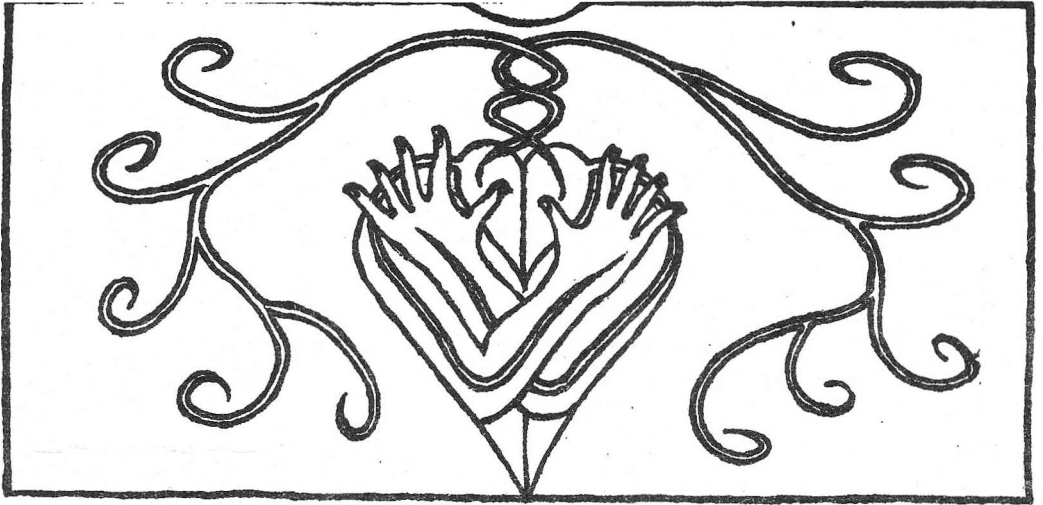
Nirodha pariṇāma is that transformation of the mind in which it becomes progressively permeated by that condition of *nirodha* which intervenes momentarily between an impression which is disappearing and the impression which is taking its place.

To understand these sūtras, we need to refresh our memory of the concepts describing different modes in awareness: *kṣipta*, *vikṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *nirodha* and *ekāgrata*. If we watch the flow of consciousness within ourselves, we will see a similarity between it and a phenomenon seen in modern electronic equipment. As soon as the monitor in a computer or a television set are switched on, we can see the fast movement of a flowing light which passes

through the monitor or the video screen, longitudinally or latitudinally. A similar thing happens as soon as the awareness of consciousness comes to our recognition. This is the *kṣipta* aspect. *Kṣipta* means continuous flow. On the screen or the monitor, we see modulations of light and shadow interlace to generate an idea of vision. Once the vision is recognized, forms are presented in a contiguous manner. They elicit concepts in us which are usually expressed as sounds or letters.

The general light and darkness which are ever ready to polarize thus become more specific (*viśeṣa viśiṣṭa*). Specific ideas that float in the consciousness, which has for its basic frame the inseparability of time and space, become *vikṣipta*. Once a specific modulation happens, the bearing of the conceptual on the percept becomes very intense, as if the spell of *vikṣipta* arrests the flow of consciousness until it is fully registered as a vivid modulation generated by the external signal and the internal interpretation. This is like the experience of an infatuation and is called *mūḍham*. For a moment, one becomes lost between disorientation and orientation. Part of the stunning experience belongs to *nirodha*, the shutting out of any further stimulus from entering into consciousness. Awareness is thus prepared for one-pointed attention - *ekāgram*.

The second sūtra of the *Yoga Sūtras*, *citta vṛtti nirodha*, defines yoga and presents three basic ideas. The first word is *citta*. The mark of *citta* is remembrance which is called *anusmaranam*. *Anu* means 'going



along with' and *smara* means 'memory'. The biosphere is a reservoir of atmospheric air which is the source of vital energy. *Ākāśa* or pure space, inseparable from time, has the quality of facilitating non-resistance. This quality of the time/space continuum enables the vital energy to be carried by the breathing function of the lung. In-breathing and out-breathing continuously provide living organisms with the necessary energy to keep every cell functional. Along with the rhythm of the breath, consciousness is continuously flowing as a collective aid for regulating life in an organism. All this is implied in the prefix *anu*. The heart's blood flow and the lungs' respiration have between them an intimacy of rhythm. This intimacy is indicated in the word *anusmarana*.

Cogitation, with the aid of the five senses of perception on the physical side, is organized and regulated by the pulsating rhythm of the heart and the respiratory rhythm of the lungs. The combined force of the circulating blood and *prāṇa* gives rise to an internal illumination, which is usually recognized as consciousness or awareness and has a continuous functional operation. It is recognized as cognition synchronized with connotation. The first part of every cognition is like a question which specifies something which is to be immediately responded to. This particular function is a transformation of vital energy into units of awareness. Every interroga-

tion of the cognitive faculty begins with the remnant of a previously acquired memory, and the response is a device by which the cognition is either dropped in ambiguity or molded into an idea that is more or less self-contained. The modulating vibration (*vṛtti*) of consciousness thus forms a continuous chain of memory.

Every memory has in it an indication of pain/pleasure dynamics. The Sanskrit word *smara* is akin to the libidinal energy that functions as a catalyst to activate both the sensory system and the motor system. Libidinal energy operates expressively or impressionally. If we delve into the physiology of the stimulation of glandular secretions, we see that the secretions which flow out of the glands into other areas of the body get into bio-chemical and psycho-chemical amalgams. All the natural functions by which the consciousness of a person becomes fully conditioned and colored with nature's purposiveness are libidinal.

The ultimate separation that is required of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* cannot be achieved unless recurring memories are minimized and finally emptied out. This is why *citta-vṛtti-nirodha* is given the first and foremost place in Yoga discipline. The rate of incoming stimuli and the outgoing responses is to be brought to a central, neutral zero. *Citta-vṛtti-nirodha* is pivotal in obtaining union. In the term *nirodha*, *rudh* means to cause a blockage. In the physio-

logical psychology developed in the West, we see the device of a synaptic resistance and the lowering of one's resistance, which enables the easy passage of nerve-energy. *Nirodha* is to be understood as something quite close to synaptic resistance. Now the question arises, "Who blocks the synapse, and who opens it?"

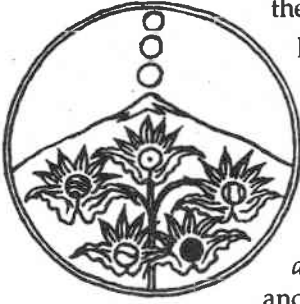
Life is goal-oriented. The goal is chosen by a central value which controls all other values in a person's life. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, the ultimate goal is *kaivalya*, the aloneness of the spirit (*puruṣa*). The counterpart of *puruṣa* is *prakṛti*. Functionally, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are of a contradictory nature. To be alone and unalloyed in its singular function is the nature of the spirit or *puruṣa*. *Prakṛti*, on the other hand, is always compulsively establishing relationships for the purpose of replicating every mode that is generated with a combination of conditioned entities.

Patañjali uses the term *nirodha pariṇāma*. The ego always has an affinity to know, to do, and to experience. The individuated person who is purposive in his or her functions is continuously envisioning the possibility of attaining a new status for the ego as a specific knower, specific doer, and specific experiencer. There is no biologic function in which two opposite forces interlock. When the individual tries to readjust, the organism changes its functional mode. A disabled person becoming strong enough to enjoy the amenities of life through continuous aspiration and exercises is a transformation (*sādhana pariṇāma*) which makes a *rogi* into a *bhogi*. Here *rogi* means a handicapped person; and *bhogi* means one who has the ability to enjoy. In the further path of *yoga*, the experiencer recognizes the exaggerated effects of the love for pleasure and the possible negative consequences of over-indulgence. Then the experiencer becomes a freedom-loving spirit, one who wants to break away from all shackles. That is the *pariṇāma* which makes a *bhogi* into a *yogi*. The subtle changes through which a *bhogi* can degenerate into a *rogi* or a *bhogi* can rejuvenate himself into a *yogi* both come from the adoption of a specific attitude.

The five factors of *cittavṛtti* (*kṣipta*, *vikṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *nirodha* and *ekāgra*) provide us with a familiarization with the whole path. Although *yoga* aims at *samādhi* and *kaivalya*, a peaceful steady state of silence, the very nature of *kṣipta* is continuous motion. The fact that a *yogi* is advised to have a posture, *āsana*, which is stable and comfortable, is like negating all tendencies to move. Turning *kṣipta* into *samādhi* may seem like a contradiction of one's own reality. However, when this dialectical interplay is properly understood, *kṣipta* is understood as the life-force. Physiologically, the normal function of a living body is arrived at through the complementarity of two contradictory forces which are continuously controlling and regulating all flow of energy.

The *kevala* which is spoken of does not actually mean an alienation from anything. It is arriving at a neutral zero by finding out the law of contradiction, which, in modern days, is spoken of as finding a homeostasis. In our daily practice we should again and again come to the neutral zero, where the *ekāgrata*, one-pointedness, of consciousness comes without effort. Only through a relaxation of all compulsions acting in the body does one come to the supreme silencing of the plurality of function. That is real *ekāgrata*, and not taxing one's sensory system or lifting oneself out of all awareness. An ideal state which is close to this establishing of neutral vision is what happens every day in *suṣupti*, at least for a few minutes. Thus Patañjali's choice of *citta* as the starting point, and *vṛtti-nirodha* as the means of the fulfillment of life, is a very ingenious theory.

The evolution of the subliminal energy that is involved in the stream of consciousness (*nirodha-pariṇāma*) has two sets of functions to be considered. With *yama*, *niyama*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyahāra*, a lot of effort goes into the disciplining of the *yogi*-aspirant's personality-formation. The five natural promptings of consciousness are to be taken as the *de facto* operation of consciousness. To these five dynamics of consciousness, we are giving a continuous direction as an added discipline, to make



the evolution purposive and efficient.

Kṣipta, vikṣipta, mūdha, nirodha and *ekāgra* are to be counterpoised with *dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi*. This is

somewhat similar to a musical situation in which the promptings of music within a person, aided by his/her natural talents which are supported by the vital energy, and the conditioned aspects of the rhythmic motion which is well-established in the musician, are enhanced by the various facilities which are available to orchestrating the music. Similarly, the first five modalities of the stream of consciousness which can result in one-pointed attention are consciously directed to transform the flow of consciousness to assume *dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

Yoga thus teaches that there are five categories of consciousness which naturally belong to all human beings. To them are added the counterpoints of reciprocation, which are to be deliberated from moment to moment. The main stress in the discipline is to avoid the compulsion of feeding recurring memories with relevant or irrelevant associated ideas. A common link in the facilities and facilitation is what we have come across as *samyam*. The deliberation put into them is attentiveness. When the attention is perfect, one-pointed interest becomes naturally aroused. The arousal is positive, but yoga teaches us to have an attitude of disadoption to the natural promptings of the sensory system.

Although the external energy coming through the sensory organs has within it rational as well as irrational promptings, the main device to inter-relate the physiological part with the psychological is the use of words. Every word links personal consciousness with an item of consciousness having a memory-tag in it. Words are revealers of meaning. Meaning always points towards an affective purpose. Affection comes by relating the tonal aspect

of a word and the psychic image it is projecting. These two parts of the function of a name or noun, when taken together, are called *pratyaya*. *Prati* means functioning as a counterpoint; *aya* refers to the immediate presence of an existential factor which is recognized as 'this'. The stream of consciousness is going from one 'thisness' to another 'thisness'. One item of cognition is distinguished from another item because of the specifying quality towards which the question 'What is this?' is always directed. Thus *pratyaya* is the unique or novel presentation of a new monad of consciousness which is given primacy of attention.

What Patañjali suggests is not allowing any new 'this' or *pratyaya* to initiate any function in consciousness. So he says, 'Have *pratyahāra*'. *Prati* means image, *hara* means dismissal. When a number of promptings to accept a memory by relating it to previous images of pain/pleasure interaction are dismissed, the prompting of consciousness becomes less and less. This is what Patañjali is advising the yogi to do in order to move bit by bit to the cherishing of unmodulated consciousness. This implies an active deconditioning and decoloration through lapses of interest.

Although this adventure in consciousness may sound tedious and difficult to cope with, there is a rewarding sense of pleasure and peace that results from this practice (*sādhana*). When all the promptings are consciously treated as distractions and dismissed, the incumbent yogi will have a sudden loss of consciousness which is not immediately recognized. Yogis call it *niścinta*, the absence of any thought. It is as if the aspirant yogi's subjectivity and objectivity are canceled out, such as in deep sleep. Such lapses are only occasional at first, after which the contiguity of consciousness is soon resumed. By repeated practice, the desire to know anything at all vanishes, at first for a short while. Then, in due course, there will be long lapses of conscious deliberation.

When through *samyama* one enjoys the cultivation of an idea such as love, or the quest for truth, in the middle of the joyous

feeling, consciousness about that fades out. It is as if the yogi is not performing anything, and the lapse of experience is almost identical with deep sleep. In fact, it is not sleep but an intermittent imperiential state. This transformation is happening between what yogis call *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa*. *Savikalpa* is in resonance with an idea or sensation. In *nirvikalpa*, there is nothing to which consciousness can hold on. When a person goes into deep sleep, there is a complete loss of the memory of one's name, form and identity until one wakes up. Still, there is monitor in the unconscious that is maintaining all the vital functions of the living body, such as breathing, digestion and body metabolism.

Vikalpa is the formulation of ideas in consciousness, the seeds of which are mainly biological, so they cannot easily be dispensed with. Until the return to idea-formation is completely negated, one does not come to the non-seeded stability of yoga-consciousness (*nirvikalpa samādhi*). Our inner ability to get an intellectual picture of the whole thing takes time, and that may go on causing discursive thinking. The best thing is not to analyze what comes to pass, but to allow all factors that come intermingling in such states to uphold their own way of continuing the evolution of yoga-consciousness.

Before a word is attempted for articulation, its purport and the nature of the effect that it will convey to a listener have to manifest in the threshold of one's consciousness. Only when an idea gathers into the nucleus of a word-formation does a person get an instrument to work with. This facilitates the conjoining of the latent or potential devices in the sensory and motor system into a word dynamic.

The general energy source, energy release and energy organization of an individual's total life is very similar to the process of word dynamics assuming the capability of a spoken word. When a word is articulated to another, the same word dynamic helps the listener to gather all the relevant potentials to interpret the word that is heard. This is the origin of *samyam*.

Through millennia, ideas have been coming to disciplined seekers in an intuitive way, like a flash of lightening. These ideas were then passed from the seers to their disciples, and on to their disciples, for the well-being of the listeners. *Samyam* is like a creeper originating from a seed, then branching off in different directions and threading through the perceptive consciousness of all those who are ready to be spiritually evolved. The instructions from a teacher to a student, through a hierarchy of such teachers and students, have been transforming humankind through millennia with the suggestive power of *samyam*.

In *samyam*, the word of the preceptor is the main instrument by which the disciple's persona is carved out or orchestrated. In every person there are resonating ideas as well as dissonant ideas. When all the possible resonances adhere to each other, a nucleus emerges as a persona. In the context of yoga, *pariṇāma* is evolution through attention, change, growth and stabilization to a perfected state. The *dhāraṇā* that is put into a yoga-aspirant's consideration can be as minimal as a mustard seed. But when it resonates with several potentials, the inner organs of consciousness jointly assume responsibility to choose the right model for evolution and the personality of a yogi comes into being. This is like the organic growth of a sperm in an egg becoming a chick, the chick becoming either a hen or a cock which grows into maturity and breeds its species. Several elaborations happen which affect the total organism. Thus the yoga student goes from listening to instructions, to meditating on instructions, to finding in all external environments appropriate challenges to be accepted and converted into one's own natural counterparts in the process of evolution.

We have to keep in mind the



three prospective states of mind, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. At each level there has to be a certain conscious participation to work out one's change as well as a taking of responsibility for the retention of the evolved mode. When one is at the *dhāraṇā* level it has to resonate with one's own inner *dharma*. One should not try to change oneself so much as to alienate oneself from one's *svadharmā*. At the level of *dhāraṇā* one has to go through an intense contemplative phase to make sure that the word dynamics taken for *samyam* will yield the correct result. A test of whether one's *dhāraṇā* is congruent with one's *svadharmā* is the continuous experience of the growth of an inner joy.

If a service is rendered to another, and that only brings repentance, hurtful and negative feelings, and a wish to get rid of the situation, no compassion will come, and the association will not yield any resonance with one's innermost Self. Thus the very first consideration in actualizing *dhāraṇā* is to look introspectively at the quantitative and qualitative growth of joy within oneself.

When that flourishes, *dhāraṇā* is both the foundation of yoga and the pointer to the goal of achieving perfection. Then one is ready to go into *dhyāna*. Actually, the *samyam* that was used to clarify the nature of *dhāraṇā* itself has the contemplative quality of *dhyāna*. It is in this sense that meditation is a mediation. The oscillating inner light of consciousness has to weave between the objective and subjective banks of the river of consciousness, like a big fish moving in a stream, alternately touching one side and then the other. *Dhāraṇā* becomes a habitual measuring the joy that one feels, and the joy that one is able to share with all whom one resonates with outside. In the contemplative (*dhyāna*) aspect, one has to see that one's ego does not transform into a parasite privately feeding upon one's spiritual exercise, gloating on the importance of one's relativistic position in integrating the external and the internal.

To grow into the unlimited dimensions of the Absolute, one should be on the

lookout for any relativistic factor becoming negatively conditioned in the transactional consciousness. A yogi par excellence is described as one who transcends the localization of one's spiritual or moral enterprise. The locus spoken of here is called *bindu*. If a *bindu* fixation comes from one's personal preference, that will soon grow into a mark of self-appreciation in its narrowest sense. Such a mark is called *kala*. Laying marks or *kala* is called *kalpana*. When a *kalpana* is socially oriented and prompted by altruistic ideals, it is called *sankalpa*. In social circles, such socially attainable efforts are very much appreciated. That may encourage a person to be a social reformer or a philanthropist. But those efforts will not bring a person to the status of a *puruṣa* released from *prakṛti*. If the materialization of physically demonstrable feats to make a person megalomaniac, then the mark made by such a person is *vikalpa*. There has to be a self-releasing awareness that prevents the identification with socially accepted titles from imposing on the consciousness of an aspiring yogi. This implies the necessity to normalize and naturalize one's life from moment to moment for a continuous discipline. The contemplative has to be super-conscious of the innate factors that prompt consciousness and the outside factors that color consciousness. The yogi has to go beyond the binding of localization and of any special mode into which one's personality gets bonded. Then alone does the yogi become a transcendent being (*bindu-nāda-kalātita*).

Dhyāna ultimately brings the yogi to a unity or unified state of consciousness in which there is no borderline between the conscious, preconscious, or unconscious states of awareness. When one comes to such a maturation, that which is called 'innate' and that which is called 'environmental' lose their specific meaning. It is as if all dualities whither away. From that time on, *samādhi* sets into one's nature. Thus with *samyam*, one can free oneself almost entirely from the compulsions of phenomenal impressions and biological and sensory adhesiveness to the wakeful symbols of external life.

At the very outset, we spoke of the phenomenal world in which the world-illuminating external light acts upon us like a grabbing force and binds our sensory organs to the items of particular interest to each organ. To explain that force, we also spoke of the inner Self, whose light is to some extent blended with the external light in the oscillating awareness of the individual (*bhāna*). The two termini between which *bhāna* oscillates are the external objects of perception and our internal appreciation. Typically we labor under an obverted perspective, thinking that the source of all pleasures is outside, and that we have to labor to maintain an intimate relationship with the objects of pleasure to attain a continuous experience of happiness. That is why, in Vedanta, phenomenal experience is considered to be a vulgarized transformation of the numinosity of the Self. It is this vulgarized consciousness that makes us think of the shadow as the real.

In Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (verse 17) he describes it as a lamp which burns with shadows for its illumination:

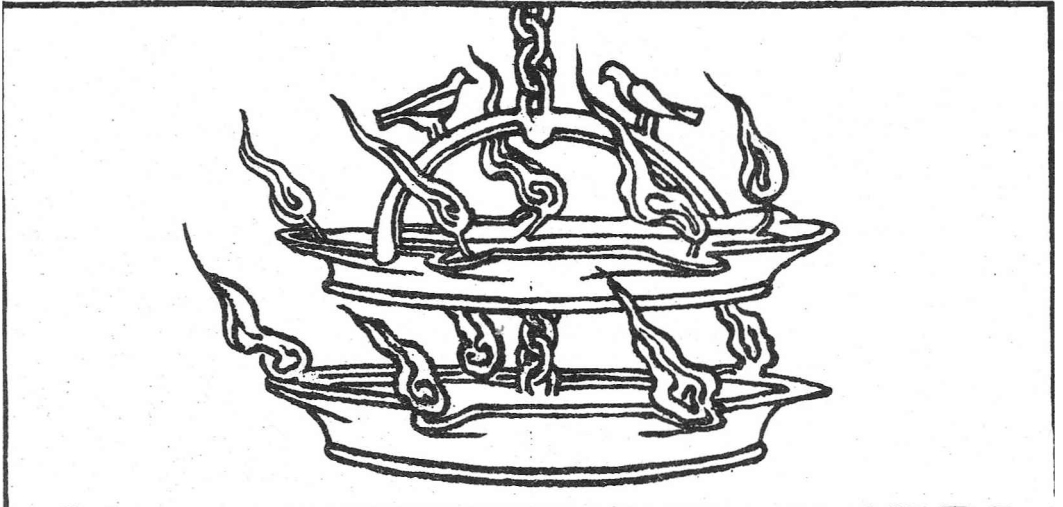
Having two tiers of five petals,
whence pain arises,
rotating, beginningless,
hangs the lamp of the self,
burning as the shadow (of true being),
with the oil of latent urges and
mental modifications as the wicks.

Only when this last vestige of phenomenality is transcended, does *samādhi* become an accomplished fact.

We began with familiarizing ourselves with the five facets of the stream of consciousness: *kṣipta*, *vikṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *nirodha* and *ekāgra*. These biological, physiological and psychological formations which arise out of the continuous inflow of *prāṇa* and outflow of *apāna*, are mainly of a vitalistic order. On the opposite side of the manifestation of consciousness in a living organism is the source of the *puruṣa dharma*, or the reality of the spirit which is in every manifestation of life.

All living beings have *svarūpa*, *svabhāva* and *svadharmā*. *Svarūpa* is the outer morphologic manifestation which provides every individuated being with its recognizable marks, its uniqueness, novelty and the essence of individuality. If one longitudinally views the growth of an embryo into a fetus, the fetus into a child, the child into an adolescent, youth, middle-aged person, elderly person which finally come to a stop after death, there are many changes in a person's *svarūpa*. Yet it is held within a frame of reference of individual uniqueness. There are certain specific features by which an individual can be distinguished from another individual through all their morphologic changes.

The individual living organism is subject to certain pressures which come from genetic compulsions as well as others which come from social convictions and



conventions. The *dharma* of a person is woven into a specific garment which has vocational significance. The two major types of man - the introvert and the extrovert - have a significant voice in deciding the individual's *dharma*. Form as well as functional preferences go hand in hand in deciding ones *dharma*. However genetically restricted and sociologically confined a person is in choosing his/her likes/dislikes, most people in this world do not vocationally fit into the *dharma* indicated by their family affinity. There is often a confusion of *dharma* at the juncture where adolescence is pressurized into its maturity. It is with such a personal history that people seek yoga discipline. Therefore both the seekers and preceptors like to classify students according to their *dharma* as much as possible in order to insure they are disciplined in such a way that they can achieve maximum evolution. Then, a deeper search is made to find out what is the *svabhāva*, the spirit that has come to manifest from the deepest source of an individual's life.

In the *Gītā* it is very clearly said that even highly evolved people cannot act against their functional typology. *Sūtras* 5-15 of *Vibhūti Yoga* can be seen as a preparation for a spiritual surgery. Within every individual are a number of interests and many universes of desires. When one wants to become a yogi, sometimes some deep cuts are to be made into ones philosophy of life. Certain urges and habit-formations come in the way of choosing beneficial *bhāvas* or moods to resonate beautifully with to one's *svadharmā* as well as *svarūpa*. Racial crystallization comes in society mainly because of the identity of the color of ones skin with certain formations of the physiological organism which is to be continuously used, with a given language, etc. These are rather peripheral or superficial, but they have deeper roots in the human spirit. Whatever our ideologies are, we are trapped by our racial coloration or conditioning, food habits, social conventions and obligatory pressures. To be a true yogi, many things have to be cut away to transfigure a unique, novel indi-

vidual personality so that one can assume a neutral position in one's spiritual, moral and social expression. That is why the *sūtra* refers to the deliberate disciplining of the mind to bring about a transformation.

Even though there are many fruit trees growing in an orchard, after the sprouting of the seed, each tree is governed by its integral law of unfoldment. The mango tree brings mangoes, the orange tree brings oranges, the peach tree brings peaches. Like that, every person is unique, in spite of the universality of the one life shared by all. There is an innate order of how a person's potentials wake up in time to unfold in a sequential manner. If we look at the physical changes from the embryo to a child, from the child to an adolescent, and adolescent to mature adult, we find there are sequential developments of inner coordinations and correlations, so that one stage of development can lead to the next. For example, the child receiving the nourishment from the mother, then the child beginning to develop teeth, the digestive system becoming capable of receiving more and more solid food, and then the channeling of energy from the food to carry out several workloads, are all neatly coordinated.

We can see similar physiological development throughout life. As sequential growth comes, the faculties acquire new abilities to function differently from their previous performance. For example, with puberty the generative organs function differently. Great psychological changes also come, along with many subjective considerations into which people wake up, finding they have abilities to be a trader or artist or political leader. This innate expansion of personality can impel a person into actions which are very different from his/her previous behavior-pattern. There is a causal factor which can bring about radical changes in personality formations, called *pariṇāma-anyatva-hetu*. It is here that the yogi wants to make a special study of the kinds of conditionings which attract the personality. It is possible to change the functional pattern of curiosity, gathering

memories according to certain inner requirements. After the personality begins to unfold, a person comes to the crossroads of life almost every day.

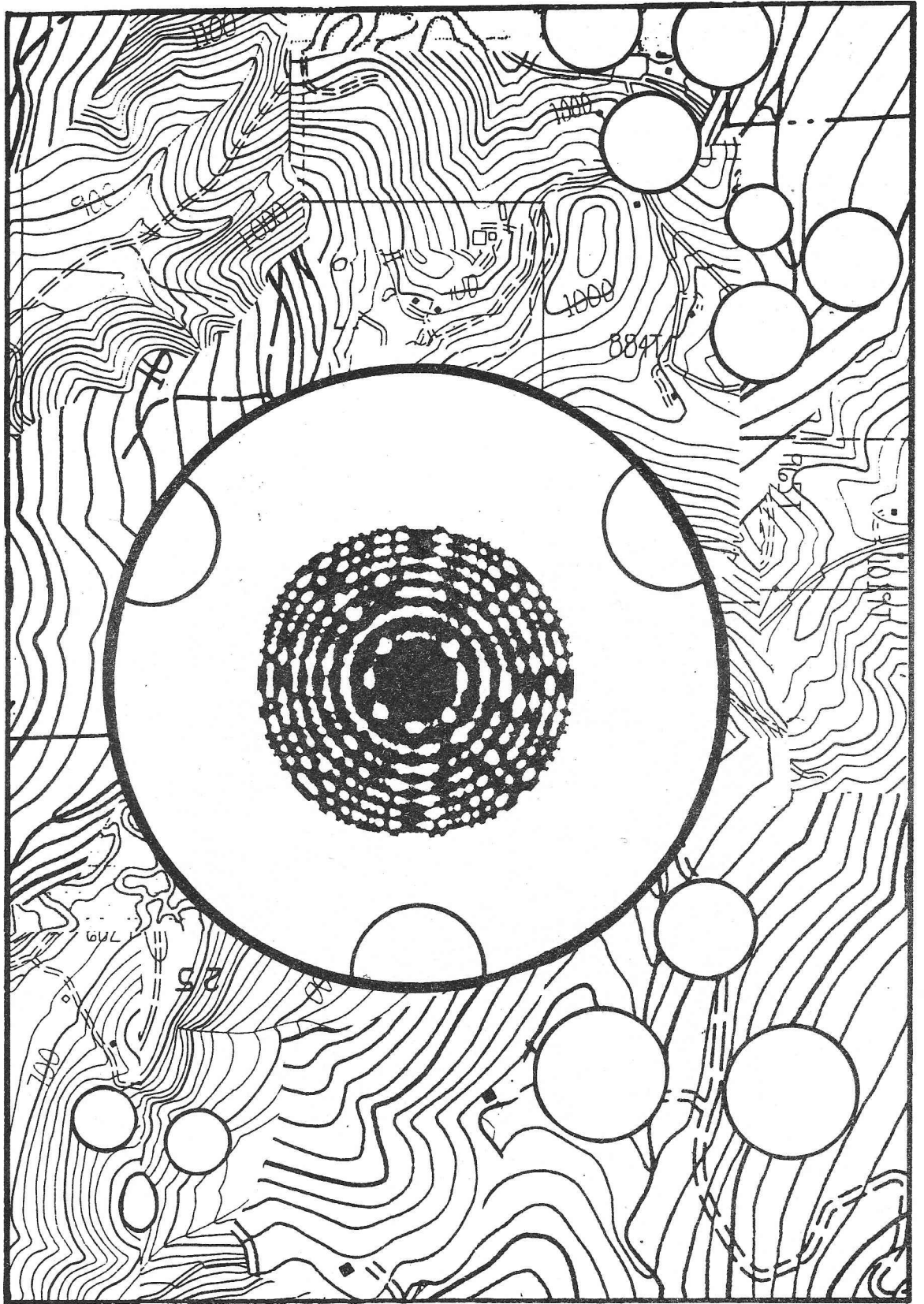
When a certain desire is raised to the status of the will to act, the affectivity that comes to the ego can develop certain pathological traits like irrational inhibition or obsession. As the goal-orientation of different people gets fixed in different ways, it gives rise to several classes of people in the same community who represent different values.

Any concerted effort to identify with a

particular value has to sculpt within oneself, more and more firm identifications. We will be more benefited by this study if we look at our own *pariṇāma* or habit-formation to see how we are different from many others of our age-group and social standing. We can be more like self-molding sculptors of our own life, or self-directed composers of our own music of life. And all these are built on a leading idea which we adopt for disciplining ourselves in a long-term program to arrive at our destiny.

(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

*arivumarīññitumarthavum p̄mānta-
nnaṛivumorādīmahassumātramākum
viraḷataviṭṭu vilāññumammahattā-
marivilamarnnatu mātramāyīṭṭam*

Knowledge, the object of interest,
and one's personal knowledge are nothing other than *mahas*;
merging into that infinite, Supreme Knowledge,
become That alone.

Consciousness is like an ever-flowing stream. We do not always know the whole of it. We hardly notice the contours of a riverbed, tending to look only at the effect it has on the surface. A river will occasionally enter into a gorge or a ravine and drop out of sight. Our experience is similar to this.

"Oh, here is my child," a mother thinks without thinking. It is not a mere idea. It fills her with a great joy. Although she does not say "I am rating this experience as a value," that is exactly what is happening. In this example there are three phases: cognition, connation and affection. The initial cognition or registration of the child in the mother's awareness can be summarized as "here is," or *asti*. Then follows the recognition that this is her own child, known as connation, *bhāti*. Her unspeakable and spontaneous joy is at once a knowledge and an affectivity, *artham*.

In the present verse, Narayana Guru says *arīññitumartham*. The Sanskrit term *artham* has two definitions which are relevant in this context: value and meaning. What immediately strikes a person is an intuitive recognition of the value. The rationale for it comes only later when one can sit back and ponder over the experience. Although psychologists prefer to say that the experience of affection follows connation, the Guru has changed that order. In the term *arīññitumartham*, 'the captivating lure of its

value', he combines the intuitive recognition of the meaning and the value one confronts in the wake of an experience. His reference is not merely to *bhāti* but to the flash of consciousness that comes with the affective impact of the situation. Thereafter the person cools down. Next the Guru brings in pure connotation as such, which he describes as *ṣmāntam arivum*, one's personal knowledge. Affection is called *ānanda* in Sanskrit. It does not stand alone, which is why he identifies it as the conscious experience of being affected.

Countless latent urges lie buried in a person's causal consciousness. What we call causal consciousness roughly corresponds to what Jung calls the personal unconscious. He speaks of "the longing of the unconscious, of its unquenched and unquenchable desire for the light of consciousness."¹

Not all of our urges are pleasure-giving. Very many of them are born of fear, and motivate us to avoid or flee. The rest are pleasure-seeking, ranging from the gratification of sensual desires to the achievement of sublime beatitude, the peak experience of a yogi or mystic.

In the present verse we are facing three problems of epistemological importance. First of all, we should know what prompts the mind to move from one universe of interest to another. We attribute this to the latent urges or incipient memories, which we have approximated with Jung's personal unconscious and its motivation. The second question is, "How do the latent urges get into consciousness?" Here the Guru traces their origin to *mahas*, the primeval stuff. Thirdly, "Why is consciousness fragmented into the knower, the known and knowledge?" From the second part of the verse we can deduce that a dissipation of interest causes the fragmentation of consciousness.

Let us now go into each of these problems in more depth. The individual ego has no independent existence of its own. What is termed 'he' or 'she' is only a relative factor. The only independent reality is the Absolute, which is defined in Vedanta as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. *Sat* refers to the ground of all things, whether physical or psychic. *Cit* refers to the source of illumination. It comprises both luminosity and what is illumined. *Ānanda* is the ground of all values. When conceived of as the Absolute, there is no division between these attributes, which are verbalized only for the sake of convenience. Also, within each of these three aspects – the ground of being, consciousness and the ground of value – there is no innate division.

Individuation is experienced only because of an obscuration of the original unity. In Vedanta a negative principle is postulated as a counterpart to the Absolute. The relation between this negative entity, *māyā*, and the Absolute is the same as that between light and shadow. Shadow has no existence and cannot maintain itself in the presence of light. Yet shadow is experienced by everyone, just as light is.

What is referred to here as shadow is to be understood clearly to appreciate its function. When Plato said that the visible world was a shadow of the archetypes in the world of the intelligibles, people thought he was speaking in terms of allegory. But in our own days, physicists and physiological psychologists insist that all of our sensory experiences and subjective emotions are made up of a series of projected images which are the same as shadows. For example, let us take the experience of seeing a thick blue book, which we identify as the Bible. We can trace the source

of this experience from two sides. We can go from the side of the object, which in the present case is a book. Or we can go from the side of consciousness, which recognizes it as the teaching of Jesus Christ and some ancient Jewish prophets. Vedantins prefer to look at it from the side of consciousness, whereas scientists would rather give credence to measurable external data.

Let us first lend our ears to the scientists. According to physicists, there are no colors such as blue and red. We see only material things that are illumined by light. Light is electromagnetic energy, believed to be constituted of photons. These energy-carrying photons can be heterogeneous or homogeneous. The quality of light is decided by the length and amplitude of its waves, as well as its purity. Visible sensations are directly connected with these three qualities of light: length decides hue, amplitude causes brightness, and purity brings saturation. For example, if a number of homogeneous photons come together, the light is called pure. Depending on the variations in wave length, it will appear to be indigo, blue, red or whatever. The amplitude is caused by the intensity of the photons. Light waves are measured in millimicrons. The human eye can see only the frequencies varying between 380 millimicrons, which marks the border of the ultraviolet, and 760 millimicrons, where the infrared begins. Waves outside these dimensions, such as X rays and gamma rays, can be measured by machines although they are not visible to the naked eye.

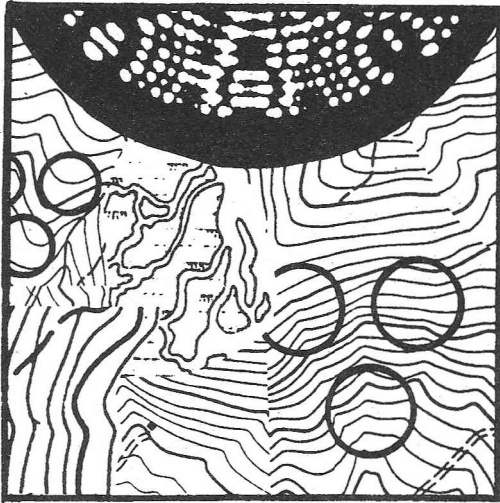
In visual experience there are three distinct phases of the channeling of energy. The initial phase has two parts. First external light, such as that of the sun, illuminates an object. Then the rays of the sun, affected by the physical and chemical properties of the object, are reflected, with considerable alterations in the length, amplitude and purity of the original light. Even at this stage the light has changed into a shadow, so to speak. This altered or physically conditioned light is radiated in all directions. A minute fraction of it falls on the lens of the eyeball. Whatever light enters the visible span converges on the retina. Thereafter we cannot make any reference to light. Light stops at the retina.

The retina is lined with rods at the periphery and cones at the center. From these, light kicks off electrical impulses which are conducted to the brain. This is the second phase, when light casts its shadow in the form of nerve impulses. Once the impulses reach the cortex they are further processed and related to previously registered and maintained coding of experience. Some strange phenomenon in the brain interprets the experience as seeing an object; a book for instance.

From the scientists' own verdict, it is clear that there is no way to decide the equivalency or one-to-one correspondence between the third version of an object given by the brain mechanism and the original object, because what we "see" is a shadow of a shadow of a shadow.

In relation to each of these stages, physicists, biochemists, neurologists and physiological psychologists have collaborated, proposed hundreds of postulates, and coined a vast number of impressive technical terms in Greek and Latin to explain the phenomenon of vision. With all that, the simple fact of seeing a book continues to be both a mystery and a wonder.

The mechanism of cognition is very elaborately dealt with by scientists, but they are at a loss to tell us how we recognize. To meet this



contingency a new branch of science has been developed, genetics. It is coupled with paleontology in the attempt to make a breakthrough in the understanding of latent memories. It is now postulated that the mind is not a *tabula rasa*, as Locke suggested. What we call mind is, according to the behaviorists, only an epiphenomenon caused by the collective functioning of the central nervous system. The human brain contains

about ten billion nerve cells, or neurons. These neurons are connected by synapses, across which chemicals diffuse, providing the means by which messages are conducted from one cell to another. According to Carl Sagan, an average human neuron has from 1000 to 10,000 synapses. He tells us that "the human brain is characterized by some 10¹³ synapses" and that "the number of different states of a human brain is 2 raised to this power—i.e. multiplied by itself ten trillion times. This is an unimaginably large number, far greater, for example, than the total number of elementary particles (electrons and protons) in the entire universe....These enormous numbers may also explain something of the unpredictability of human behavior."²

Scientists also tell us that each neuron, like every other cell, contains a chromosome with a DNA molecule in the form of a helix, composed of five billion pairs of nucleotides. These nucleotides are considered to be the storage of knowledge going back four billion years. Again Sagan reports, "The information content of any message is usually described in units called bits, which is short for 'binary digits'....Since there are four different kinds of nucleotides, the number of bits of information in DNA is four times the number of nucleotide pairs. Thus, if a single chromosome has five billion (5×10^9) nucleotides, it contains twenty billion (2×10^{10}) bits of information....How much information is twenty billion bits?...If a typical book contains five hundred such pages (300 words), the information content of a single human chromosome corresponds to some four thousand volumes."³

Although these are conjectures, scientists have at least come to the conclusion that in each individual body there must be some mysterious element of inestimable age, to account for the mind's capacity to readily recognize the rudiments of sensory experience.⁴ One can easily see that the substance that they refer to cannot give us any imaginable attributes of matter. The only reason they do not call it spirit is a simple prejudice born of the tussle between the Grand Inquisitor and the scientist, in which the Catholic church persecuted scientists like Galileo and progressive thinkers like Bruno. Scientists give heredity prime importance, postulating that incipient memories can belong to any member of one's hierarchy, such as a grandfather, a monkey who lived ten million years ago, an algae

of two billion years ago, a bacteria of three billion years ago, or even a virus of four billion years ago. When you read all this in a science text, you feel a compulsion to accept it because you are already impressed by science's technological achievements. But this is only half the story.

The real question remains "What is consciousness?" To make it more exact, "Why is there a mathematically precise logic and order, both in the structure and function of the physical world, which can be accurately detected and favorably interpreted by a homogenous human intelligence, and shared by any rational being anywhere in the world?" If, for the purpose of a unified normative notion, science can uphold a mythical "matter," what prevents a Vedantin from postulating one all-pervasive consciousness, which has both the intelligence to modify itself into the structured universe and the capacity to constantly appreciate itself, and which manifests as the individuated consciousness with varying clarity and levels of appreciation? When the scientist postulates the accumulation of information through billions of years, faithfully held together through millennia to be eventually activated across our synapses, the Vedantin attributes to primal consciousness the capacity to dream, the ability to imagine, the power to compute, the skill to design, and the sense of humor to perpetuate a universal sport. If both are myths, why don't we accept a laudable, pleasant one, rather than admit a pessimistic hypothesis which both begins from and terminates in uncertainty?

Both the Vedantin and the scientist agree that there are latent urges in us, that these urges are multitudinous, and that only one of them can hold the stage of the mind at a time. This accounts for the short span of a single universe of interest. Martin Heidegger's assessment of experience is admissible at this stage. Each experience takes place as if the individual is placed in a prefabricated world of continuance. This is what he called 'facticity'. The individual acts, refuses to act, or reacts in some manner to the facts that are presented, partly due to heredity and partly through the structuring of the environment. When one takes up the challenge, one gains an existential profile; one's interaction becomes existentially motivated. A wave in the ocean cannot remain stationary, because of the pressures of other waves which are eager to take its place. In the same manner, an interest either burns out through gratification or fizzles out as frustration. This is what Heidegger calls 'forfeiture'. The net result is one universe of interest giving way to another. We have already explained in the second verse that Narayana Guru recommends selective structuralism in sensory experience, in tune with one's innate disposition.

To understand the insertion of latent urges in our system, we can get a clue from the term *arīṇīṭumārtham*. We have already mentioned that *artham* means both meaning and value. The configuration of sensory data, and the conscious reading of meaning into it, come from the objective and subjective aspects of consciousness arising as gestalt formations. *Artham* is the same as gestalt. Like an implied figure in a jigsaw puzzle, there is in this seemingly chaotic world an overall normative principle which enables the orderly structuring of both things and ideas.

If we take sound as an example, we select, out of the full spectrum of possible sounds, fundamental notes at discrete intervals for our vocal and musical expressions. These are the musical notes, which can be arranged in scales and combined with different pitches and frequencies to

form complex harmonies. They are universal and timeless in their resonance and dissonance. There is no limit to the variety of combinations that can be organized from them. In fact, all the words we use are coined by structuring resonating sounds. In music we can see a perfect example of psychophysical organization creating meaning or value.

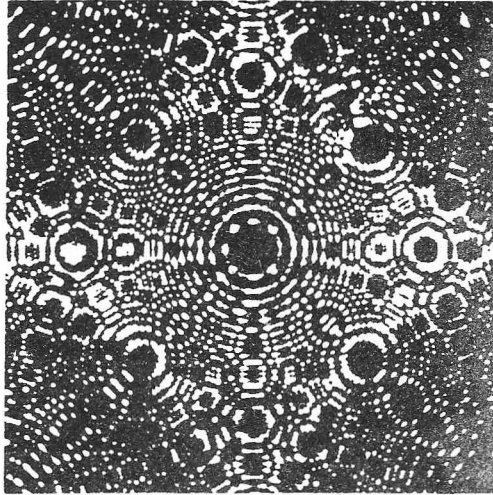
Sound is just one factor which is at once physical in its content and aesthetic in its potential. There are many other potentials in us that can be traced back to the very origin of this universe. We are all born with certain basic potentials, and undergo the recurrence of environmental feasibility and accidental or deliberate actualizations of these potentials, which build up the history of our experience. Experience, in the present case, is to be understood as a hierarchy passing through several generations in the physical sense and several cycles in the psychic sense.

A child already has the ability to distinguish one from many, above from below, and dark from light. These are like its fundamental notes. By continuous composition the child can increase the number of concepts, ultimately becoming familiar with vocabularies and ideas that might fill an entire dictionary and encyclopedia. Any piecemeal approach to this process, such as that attempted by behaviorists, will only mutilate the holistic experience of knowledge and lead to awkward conclusions. It would be like trying to understand a Beethoven symphony by carefully studying the constituent parts of a violin. Again, in a negotiation using a bank check, what is important is the purport of negotiation and not the instrument as such. Obviously, the paper check, the instrument, is visible, objective and easy to handle. But that does not justify the transference of our attention from the essential to the nonessential, since the physical form of the check is intrinsically worthless. What Narayana Guru is presenting is a science of the Absolute, not an analytical treatise on a delimited area of relative interest.

The third question to which we want to return is why consciousness is fragmented into the knower, known and knowledge. We have already seen that all experiences are composite productions which are consciously or unconsciously organized. The will to live is seldom actualized to its fullest and final satisfaction. In each unit of experience, the individual makes a thrust to approximate the final meaning or value which he or she is envisioning. In lower forms of life there is no conscious visualization of purpose; it manifests only as an instinctive motivation. In people it can range from a vague hunch to a clear vision like that of a prophet or an enlightened scientist.

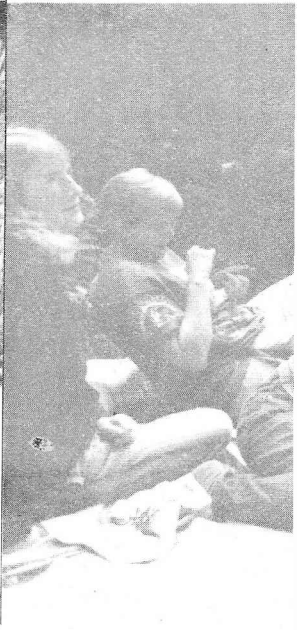
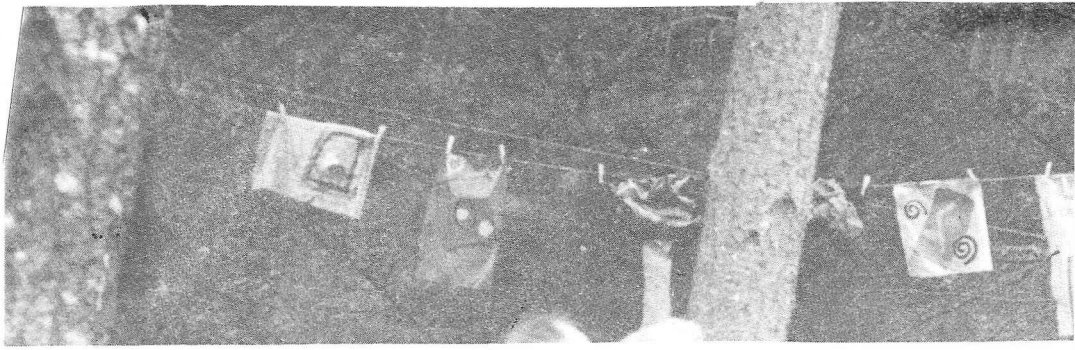
Living can be compared to an ambitious musician playing an unwieldy instrument. The haunting possibility of a musical composition gives him the urge to play. As he plays, there is no separation of person, instrument or music. When he is finished, he leaves the instrument and ponders over the accomplishment. Now he, his instrument and the music each have an independent existence. Like this, we cannot always remain at a peak experience. When there is a dimming or dilution of value, there comes a separation back into the knower, known and knowledge.

What makes a musician is that person's capacity to generate a symphony of ecstatic value. Similarly, those who seek the realization of the Self should be able to experience the unitive wholeness of knowledge in which there is no separation of the knower, knowledge, and the meaning or object of knowledge.

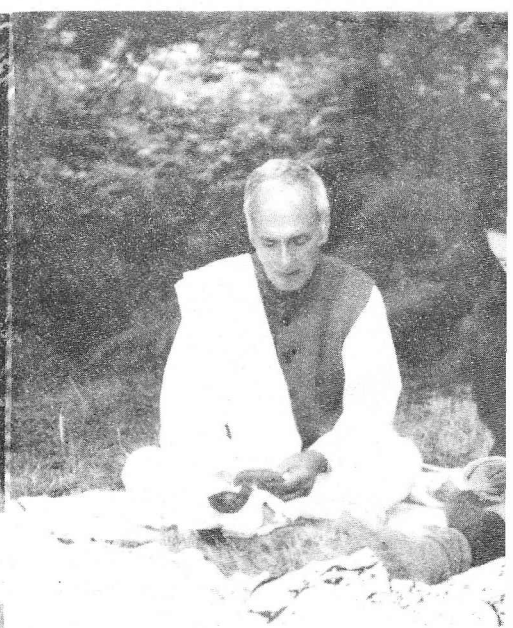
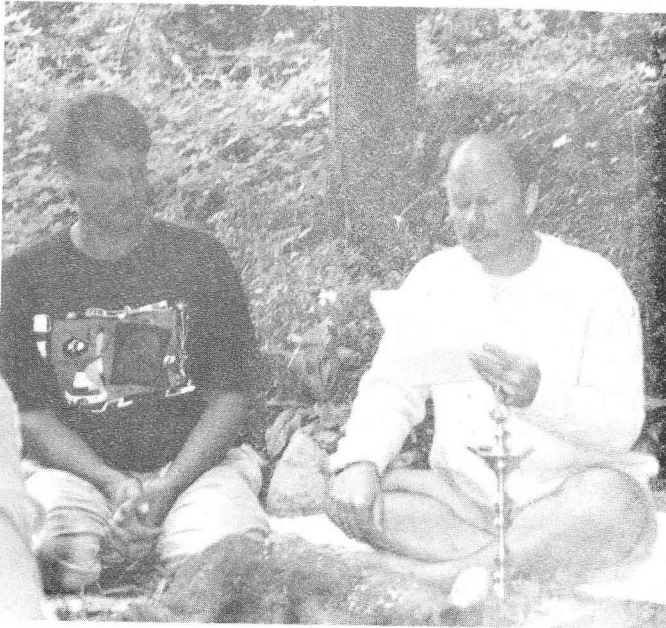


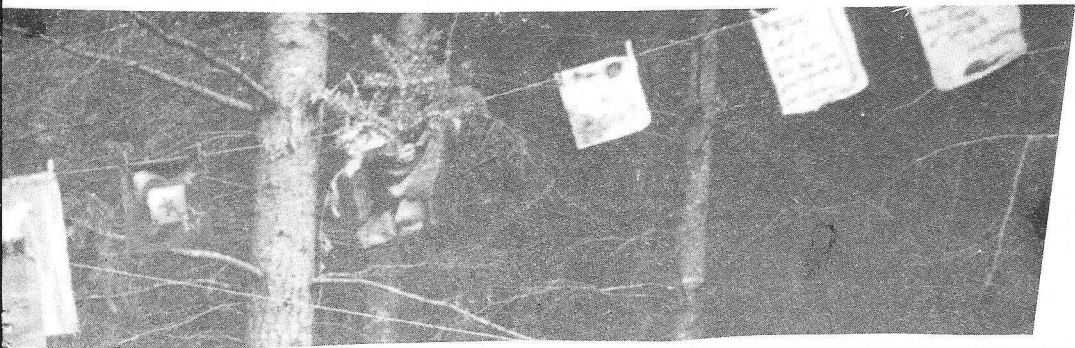
Notes

1. C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, (Bollinger Series XX, 1956), p.205.
2. Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden*, (Random House, New York, 1977), p.42.
3. Ibid, pp.23-25.
4. Please refer to the commentary on *Jñāna Darśana*, v.7, in *The Psychology of Darśanamālā* of Narayana Guru by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati for further elaboration of memory processes.

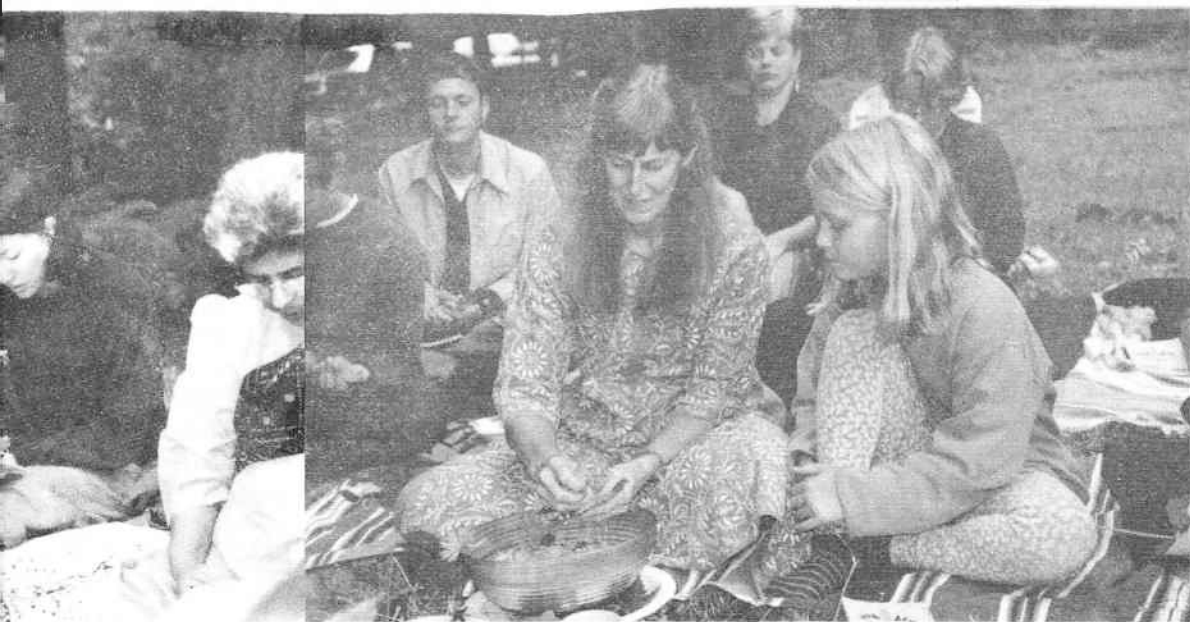


This earth (water, fire) is honey to all beings and all beings are honey to this earth (water, fire)





, fire)....The Self is none other than this. This is the immortal. This is *brahman*. This is all.



The Mother Goddess

Vyasa Prasad

To understand the relevance of the Devi, or Goddess, we need to journey to the very origin of human society. In the distant past, a common or related matriarchal religion pervaded much of the world. The mythical images of the Earth Mother are among the oldest in human history: Gaia in pre-Hellenistic Greece and earlier Bronze Age worship of female deities as incarnations of Mother Earth. It is not difficult to understand the reason for the primordial origin of mother worship. The mother is the first person to care for, nurture and support a helpless new born child. This utter dependence and trust is the basis of the worship of the divine as Mother. The mother gave birth, she nourished the young, she taught the first words to the child.

Modern psychologists like Eric Erikson have advanced the theory of psychosocial development in which the relationship with the mother during the first year of life builds the basic trust versus mistrust which operates throughout life. It is at this stage that the human virtue of hope, so fundamental in a person's life, is developed.

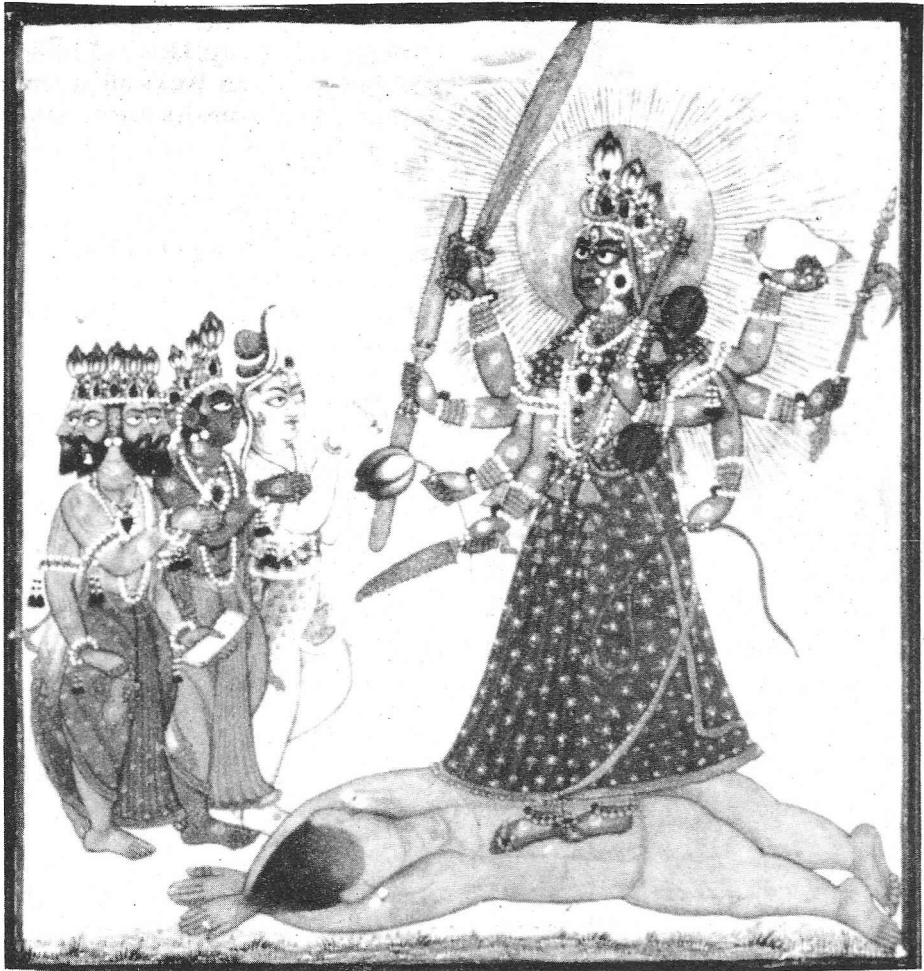
According to the theory of evolution, human beings are the culmination of millions of years of development. A special area of the brain like the neocortex, unique only to humans, has made it possible for human beings to perform complex thinking. This has endowed us with self-awareness, free-will and creative intelligence. Yet primitive brain structures show our kinship with the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. The most basic forms of cognition are "I am" (*aham*) and "this is" (*idam*). The search into "I am" leads us to alternating states of consciousness, touching the two limits of the unconscious and the superconscious. "This is" comprises the empirical world constituted of the ele-

ments, the starry heavens and the myriad forms comprising our social world. From the very beginning human beings experienced a limit beyond which their knowledge could not penetrate. There was obviously a subtler realm beyond the tangible world. The Mother Goddess became a comforting means to contact and worship this Supreme domain.

Recorded history is a few thousand years old, while prehistory determined through artifacts and fossils indicates the presence of human beings more than 40,000 years ago. In fact, paleontologists have discovered a woman's fossil footprint dated 117,000 years ago in South Africa. They have named this hypothetical female, 'Eve'. She has a particular type of DNA which is only carried along the female line and scientists believe that all human beings are descendants of this common ancestor. It is hard to imagine such distances in time having an impact in our lives today. It is easier to accept the presence of a man-made craft on the planet Mars, millions of miles away, beaming images of the surface of the planet to thousands of viewers on earth through the Internet.

The first type of society to emerge was the hunting-and-gathering-society. Kinship ties were the source of authority and influence and the family took on a particularly important role. At that time, a stable and strong female integrated the clan. We find the earliest images of the goddess of fertility from this period. Later, with settled communes, cultivation of the land began. From agriculture arose culture. Human beings became tied to the land, but with it grew their sense of security and ingenuity. They began to plan and invent, and could influence their destiny.

In the course of time human society developed a structure or hierarchy. There



*Devi as Bhadrakali, Worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
Basohli, Rajput, India, c. 1660*

came to be division of labor. Political ideas took root as well as the concept of property rights. In the beginning physical prowess was important to become leaders and guardians. But with the growing complexity of human affairs, thinkers and planners became more powerful. As mental abilities became refined, the production of artifacts developed. With them, culture could be passed on from generation to generation. Even the awesome mystery of the unknown could be penetrated and understood.

The primordial Goddess began to assume many roles. As BhūDevī she nourished the earth, as Durgā she protected, as VāgDevī she inspired the word. The Devī inherent in humans helped them to develop language and all the refined arts. Her

worship ensured abundant crops; she protected her devotees against attack; she became the source of wisdom. As society became organized, city states emerged. Prosperity brought in its wake rivalry and warfare, while rising population increased the susceptibility of diseases.

With each development, a new aspect of the Devī manifested. The major Śaktīs, Kālī, Lakṣmī, Durgā and Sarasvatī, are worshipped with intricate rituals and offerings and, in spite of her pre-Vedic origin, some of her aspects were absorbed into the Vedic pantheon. According to June McDaniel, author of *Madness of the Saints, Ecstatic Religion in Bengal*: "Shaktism, one of the four great rivers of Hindu thought, is a complex, powerful and mysterious tradition. It embraces Durga's tiger like



Mother Goddess

Polished Sandstone

3rd Cent. B.C., Patna, Bihar, India

strength, Uma's doe-like docility, Kali's naked absoluteness, Ambikā's milk-white embodiment, Meenakshi's intimate tenderness, Vac's thundering voice of Kundalini consciousness, Mohini's sensual hu-

manness, Sarasvati's swan-like song of aesthetic sensitivity, Devī's pulsating creative cosmic womb, Bala's all absorbing innerness; Mariamman's earthy salubriousness, Ganga's fertile support of the heaven regions and lotus-like Lakshmi's nurturing care for all life. From the village goddess worshipped with jasmine flowers on the banks of a Bali rice paddy to Parashakti meditated on by tantriks in icy Himalayan caves as the Source, God for those of Hinduism's Shakta sect is of feminine form and expression." Common folk who cannot comprehend the conception of a primordial Śakti continued to worship simpler goddesses. Mariamman and her northern counterpart Śitalā are the most popular and are held in great dread as the goddess of smallpox.

To an uninstructed person Indian iconography may seem meaningless. But when the symbolism is deciphered, each icon speaks a rich language of metaphor and significance. The goddess has a vehicle, *vahana*, which symbolizes an essential aspect of her divine personality. Thus the lion or tiger mount of Durgā embodies her fierce strength and aggressive nature. The river goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, are identified by their accompanying mounts - the crocodile (*mākara*) of the Ganges and tortoise from the Yamunā.

Lakṣmī is mostly found in conjunction with elephants which reinforce her association with water, lotus flowers and good fortune. Sarasvatī is accompanied by the swan of pools and lakes which typifies her grace. The lotus represents purity, and so the Devī is often seated on a lotus. She holds in her hands a sword, or a parrot, depending whether she has set out to vanquish demons or to inspire poets and artists. Her *akṣara māla*, or rosary of alphabets, symbolizes her grace in providing the meaning in every word. She is associated with the *Vedas* and sometimes holds a small jar containing the elixir of immortality. As Śārada Devī she bestows *Brahmavidyā* or the Knowledge of the Absolute.

The basic questions that have existed since the dawn of consciousness are "Who am I?" "Where did this world come from?"

and "How am I related with this world?" Wise and contemplative thinkers could grasp the subtle secret of the unmanifest coming to manifestation. Humankind has come a long way and has enormously enhanced the reserves of knowledge. Individuals today are like the growing tip of a historic tree with billions of years of social evolution behind them. Indian culture is like a mighty river, flowing through endless time. The source is buried in prehistory while its termination is nowhere in sight. As it passed through time and space, it absorbed a plethora of experience and knowledge. Wisdom teachers, saints, prophets have appeared time and again to cleanse this river of the debris that has accumulated and have revived the spirit of humanity.

The present generation living in the threshold of the 21st century should assess and revalue all past traditions to give them new meaning and value in our lives. We are faced with the challenge of dealing with the modern world as well as preserving the wisdom and traditions of the past. The ancient world used poetic metaphors which have become unfamiliar in our scientific and technologically developed society. In many cases we are left with empty rituals and rites whose inner meanings and significance are all but lost. We can begin by classifying the diverse strands of traditions that have intermingled to create our culture into two broad categories: the contemplative and the active; or ritual and wisdom. Wisdom is far superior to mere ritual.

The consciousness of modern man is the sum total of what he thinks, feels and wills. His mind and senses draw him towards the world experience, shaped by direct experience and enhanced by the media which covers scientific, political, and commercial events. A gentler call in the heart beckons him towards the ancient and the mysterious which are preserved through philosophy, mysticism, religion, ritual and tradition. This gives life two main purposes: one is to perform one's duty in one's social context, and the other is to achieve self-realization.

Yet the need to alleviate suffering continues. Humanity is still prone to unknown and mysterious forces which all the scientific understanding of today cannot explain. The modern educator has to face the challenge of teaching a range of people, from simple village folk who cannot conceive a primordial Śakti, to intelligent and wise people endowed with penetrating vision and comprehension.

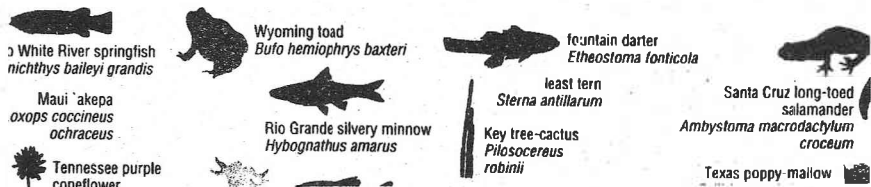
When all the routes have been traveled and all methods tested, the aspirant comes to the feet of the Divine Mother with an attitude of adoration. She accepts his or her offering and grants peace that surpasses understanding. It is this enduring mystery of the Devī and her eternal mercy in times of trouble that makes her an enduring symbol in the hearts of all devotees. Sri Sankaracarya describes her abundant grace in the *Saundaryā Laharī*:

Mother, the dust of your feet appear to the ignorant as a luminous island in the ocean of darkness and dispels their ignorance. The same is experienced by people of inertia as a flow of nectar of the divine flower of consciousness.

To poor people the dust of your feet is a collection of wish-fulfilling gems. Those who lie immersed in the ocean of samsāra (or becoming) see the same as the tusk of the divine boar that once raised the world from the abyss of destruction as the incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu.

As Tripurasundarī, "Beautifier of the Three Worlds" the Mother beautifies the triple realms of the cosmos, the world to which we belong and the consciousness that shines in each individual. It is to such a goddess that we offer our adoration.

The Devī, or Mother Goddess pervades every aspect of our lives, giving us meaning and purpose, protection and value. The myriad varieties of worshipping her are offered so that every human being feels confident that he or she is worthy of worship and deserving her grace. In her abundant love, the Cosmic Mother has tender regard for each and everyone of her creation. It is with this trust that many great souls have achieved the highest perfection by worshipping the Divine as Mother. ♦



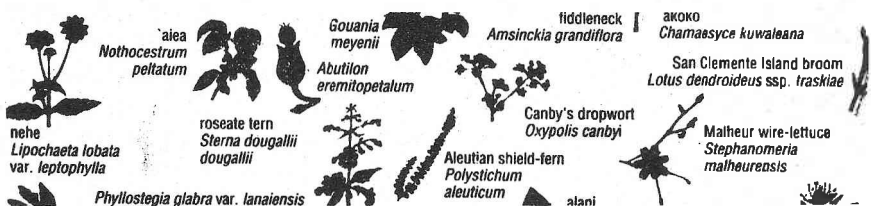
Rare, Threatened or Endangered

The Umpqua cutthroat trout,
The Catlow Valley redband trout or
Klalmath Mountains Province steelhead trout,
found just south of Cape Blanco,
The coho salmon of lower Columbia runs,
the sockeye salmon on the Snake River runs or
the fall chinook salmon on the Columbia
just below Bonneville.

Then the chubs: Oregon and Umpqua,
Goose Lake tui and Borax Lake.
Or the bull trout and Lahontan redband shiner.
Riffling fins in the liquid depths
of the desert's hot, strange waters or
in transparent mountain reflections
of earth's mottled surface.

Next the amphibians:
blotched tiger salamander,
one that is clouded, another black
and another named as a tailed frog.
The western toad, the Woodhouse's toad,
its cousin the foothill yellow-legged frog, and
the Crater Lake newt, isolated in that depthless lake.

Snakes and lizards mix together:
the common king snake, the northern sagebrush lizard,
the sharptail snake, or the desert horned toad,
on indefinitely in all the little crannies of dry and wet.





Above these corners of retreat, haunting cries:
 the dusky Canada goose, the grasshopper sparrow,
 the boreal owl and its fellow denizen
 of the night, the western burrowing owl,
 the black-chinned hummingbird,
 the upland sandpiper or
 the ferruginous hawk, full of ink and iron,
 even the famed, contested marbled murrelet.
 Curious little names, idiosyncratic,
 emblems of the observant eye,
 each nook of living its own
 beauty and resilience.

Shadowing this infinite, varied sweetness
 hovers a frigid darkness,
 dank and absent,
 a plainness that hides and annihilates
 all mystery, all breath.
 No wind moves in the spaces
 these creatures once inhabited.
 Instead the words crowd in--
 manage, possess, control and careless,
 barter, change and exchange, profit,
 and, above all, mine--
 inhaling all the air,
 saying and saying themselves
 with a selfishness that dulls all tenderness
 and suffocates all possibility.

Deborah Buchanan



One World Education

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Why one world? - Because I am one. What I perceive is my world. When I open my eyes, I see a world of infinite space which is presenting to my perception innumerable objects of various and variegated forms and dimensions engaged in various kinds of action-propensities. As soon as I close my eyes, the world with its variegated visions disappears. So I presume that at least for me there is one world. That is my only world. That world emerges from me, and that world is sustained by me until I withdraw my perception.

When I close my eyes and go to sleep, the world also becomes absorbed in my unconscious. When I re-awake, the world previously apprehended by me returns with all its magnitudes and minute details prompting me to act in accordance with the stimulation that comes, such as through the eye which sees innumerable objects illuminated by an external light. So when I keep my eyes closed or when I am asleep, not a single detail of the world cognized by me escapes the memory of my impression laid by the external light and my wakeful experience. Thus I am magically impressed with a panoramic vision projected in a mysterious space in mysterious sequences of time.

Corresponding to the light that illuminates the world, there is the light of my spirit into which the world-projection enters. The eternity of its image is etched permanently, to which I can add the impression that comes from subsequent perceptions of my eye and other sense organs. What is light to my eye is the medium of my vision. What is sound to my ear is the medium of my hearing which pertains to

the world of acoustics. The experiencing of heat and cold and the variegations of touch received by the skin are like my skin seeing and hearing energy fed into it. What I hear is at first only a sound. That which is registered forever through my hearing is a world of profound meaning which can be like a fragment of the eternal world out of which I can derive epics, lyrics, poetry, music and so many allurements of an enjoyable world.

By familiarizing myself with the taste buds of my tongue and palate, I can even conceive and generate with external physical objects, many delicious preparations which, though extraneous to my tongue, can enthrall me with all the possible alchemy of taste which is enjoyed by my spirit. Thus, within myself, I am the creator of my world.

Similarly, you have experiences. I can probe into your experiences and own them as my own, and you become a phantom which I produce in my imagination. The greatest magic is that I can identify your being with mine, and can substitute you for me. And also I can think that you are the creator of the world in your own imagination, just as I am the creator of my world. The world is one, but the creators are many. Also, the one world persists, whereas the creators disappear in the folds of time. Thus, the one consciousness we recognize as the collective essence of humankind permeates the universal mind that will be forever the threshold on which world education will remain and go on forever and ever. In that world I am also as a shadow. Thus, we are such eminently magical beings. We can multiply a pleth-

ora of ego-centered beings, self-created and populated in the abstraction of a mind which does not necessarily need any physical outfit or the normal accessories of what is life. There is only one matter and only one bio-chemical law.

The world in each one of us stands in comparison to similar apparitions. I need authentic information from within me, not the confused phantasmagoria of my wakeful hours which is similarly self-generated as the phantoms of the dream. I should be cautious about giving up this game of the wakeful experiences and dream experiences. So should you. When I am absorbed into the unnamable, the invisible abstractions are nothing but an unconscious

dream. Then I should not lament that this power of self-creation has gone away from me forever. I should educate myself to know everything in this world whether of physical acumen, or mental energy, or the abstraction of the self as recurring factors

Just as the day has dawned today, it will dawn after tomorrow's night also. Even the phenomenal appearances that confront us in the wakeful day, in the sleepy night, and in the oblivion of deep sleep have the same repetitive presence and absence. You and I have only one law with which we create, not knowing that we are complementing and supplementing each other's dream. All the same, your right corrects my mistake, and my right



corrects your mistake. Thus, in the long run of history, the individual creators in me and you become the one world creator, and the individual teachers in me and in you consciously or unconsciously become the one world teacher, wisdom incarnate.

Just as a whirling dervish goes round and round with his body facing every direction, the earth also continuously whirls. So too the imaginary atoms. Thus, the being can have the dimensions of a planet or an atom, or a person riveted to a psychophysical anatomy with a unique morphology that retains its laws of existence and molds around it a panorama of yesterday and the fascination of tomorrow. We are great dreamers. We dream the dreams of existence, the dreams of vicissitudes, and the dreams of oblivion. Through everything that is changing, I am the central point of consciousness of my wakeful self and my dream self. When I wake up from the oblivion, I know it was I who was wakeful, dreaming, and lost in oblivion. This is a world education of every self.

There is only one self, but by habit of fantasizing we say selves. If I am the owner of my existential verity, if I am the elaboration of the ideas of the sustenance of my existence, I am also the value that is being mirrored in and through every iota of this grand apparition. And as our "I" consciousness evolves into "we" consciousness, we cannot but identify the "I", "you", "he", "she", and "all" or "us", into an amalgam, and there is no harm in designating that amalgam God or world-consciousness.

So I say I govern my one world. As my world is a fleeting world, it cannot be the same in an emerging second or moment. It transforms like the magic rod of Moses into a snake. The holography of our physical experience does not get terminated as in a phantom booth, because the universe continues while the specific is reconstructed to be an integral component of the universal. It is in such a world of my self-government I preside over as the president of one world, where I obey the dictates of my conscience as a world citizen. So there is not much to show off or brag about my or your supremacy, or to cry,

belittling my self as inferior, owned and governed by another. If we are guided by these very self-evident thoughts, we will be able to locate a norm or certitude which can include in it the law of day, the law of night, the law of oblivion, and the law of Law also.

If we want to discuss it only in our transpersonal world of transactional rationality, then we can elaborate it to fit into the entire framework of the universe without minimizing the magnitude of any value that we can discern. It is also worthwhile to think that what is a phantom at one time is an irrevocable reality in a subsequent moment. Hence, a smile once smiled, and a drop of tear once shed cannot be annulled in the history of eternity. This is my concept of one-world, self-government, world government, and world citizenship.

Any one of us, man or woman, is at once the educand and the educator. The educand is like an all-absorbing sponge. The educator is an ancient spirit centrally placed in that sponge, which is in all reality the person within each one of us. The sponge-like educand absorbs everything surrounding it and generates within himself/herself like a self-generating, self-mending, self-revising, self-rejuvenating body-dweller of eternity.

Each one of us is capsuled in two halves of the providential universal program of life. From the illumination from the far-off starry heavens to the fire-fly which brings us light, we are endlessly supplied with the revelations which continue to make our inner worth compensate for our meager individuation. Thus, we grow tall to be the universal memory that is to be retained in us for all eternity. Similarly, we can plant our feet deep into the terrestrial solidity of our existence and, like a tree, our roots go deep into the resourceful waters of the all-nourishing stamina of life. Though physically we may be a meager, five-foot man or woman, or even a seven-foot giant, that makes no difference in the unity of being of the indwelling, nucleic person.

The Indian scriptures describe the person in us as being the size of each person's thumb, and yet this miniature person can

fill our heart. This person is sometimes described as the immortal indweller of all individuated persons. Like a mole we can bury deep into the unknown and vanish into the essence of the subterranean world; or like a hawk or a lark, we can charge our imagination with wings and fly free in all the domains of human interest like an angel or cherub, unhindered by the physical nature of the world. That way each moment we are enlarging the encyclopedic registry of knowledge, held precious in the memories of all the world's poets, philosophers, artists, artisans, law-makers, and the pioneers of science and technology.

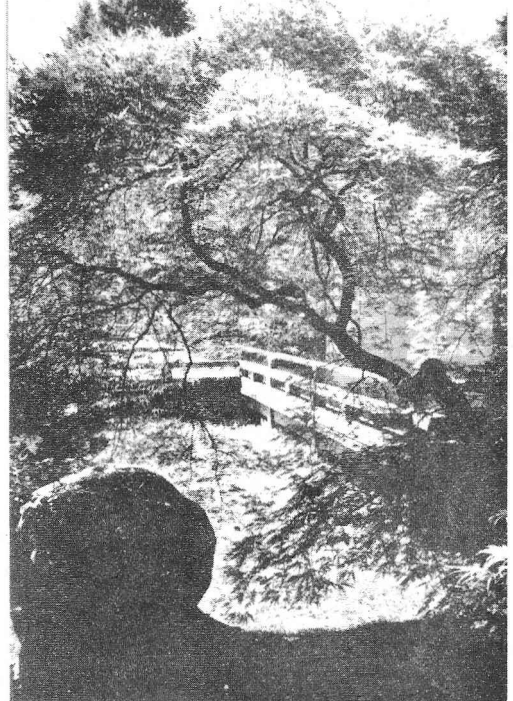
We do not learn by reading written words or listening to spoken words. The learning process is happening between the faculties of the cognitive self, emotive self, and desire-stricken self. In the sharing of the cognitive experience, emotive experience and regenerative experience, we are like a hydra. All perishing aspects of our self are like the imperishable energy of our everlasting Self. It is in that Self that we have to see how the educand and the educator in us are polarized and blended. Developing methodology and education, classrooms and demonstrations are the creations of the puny minds.

We belong to the universe, and not to the university. Knowledge comes not by paying for it, nor by burning the midnight oil. Every program of pain passes through the alchemy of our cognitive self, emotive self, and regenerative self. It is the gall-like pain that we receive with hesitation which afterwards transforms us into the enjoyer of an eternal elixir of timeless wisdom. And through our regenerative program, we pass on these treasures to the ever-manifesting aspect of our educative self.

What is presented in this paradigm is a microscopic summation of the super-macrocosm of all the previous universes which have gone into the making of the present. Unlike what child-like humanity sees in their pretend world, we do not need a chancellor, senate, or syndicate for world education, because the same truth is lived by every green leaf on any tree in the world which stretches its leaves to the grace of the

sunlight. Even a moth or a fly receives the full benevolence of the enlightenment of the world by virtue of life itself. There is neither justice nor injustice in this world. To each one is apportioned what cannot be heaped on, or deprived from another. Truly, there is no equality because the individual is unique, total, and complete. When each individual dives into one's own depth, surely there is "dual" in the depth of the individual (in-di-vi-dual). That "dual" is the ever-polarizing educand and educator.

The incidental warbling of our voice and the gesticulations we make never fail to become a part of the universal vocabulary of world language that is easily recognized by every soul. However simple or stupid it looks, every syllable, every word, and every impact of expression brings a subtle message to be shared between the educand and the educator. No educator has ever become enlightened without an educand blurting out seemingly paradoxical questions. In spite of the educator looking like the "top dog," he is always responding to the barkings of the "underdog," the educand. Such is the composite picture of the eternal magic of word wisdom which belongs to the educative process. ♦



World - A Three-Ring Circus

*Countless millions are the feet
that perch on it or wander about:
the shapely feet of the human,
the nimble feet of the fawn,
the heavy feet of huge elephants,
the tiny feet of little ants,
the feet of doves and sparrows
which are only extensions of their wings,
the feet of trees which we call roots.*

*And there is only one canopy over our heads
which is studded with the sun and moon
and the shimmering pearls of stars.*

*Our foot-hold is the ever-revolving earth,
that is restlessly rotating around the sun.
Restless in itself though it gives us rest
and a free voyage through space and time.
And, in fact, it is this spaceship
which is spawning time
as it turns and twirls.*

*What a sweet home we have,
so magically made and yet
factually fabricated.
Everything here is cycled and recycled.
The ancient is facelifted
to have always the freshness of a child.*

*Its laws are rigid,
time-borne and uncompromising,
yet full of enigmas and contradictions,
set elegantly to fit into a three-ring circus:*

*of the wakeful where reason bristles;
of the dream world where fantasy is bred;
and of the deep sleep where all are
wrapped and concealed
in the forgetfulness
of an opaque oblivion.*

Nitya



Autobiography of An Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

PRELUDE

Why I Write This Book

Nothing is so precious to one as one's own self and no one else can judge it better than oneself, provided one is truthful and fair. Essential human nature is the same in all and to reveal it without damage to its intrinsic dignity is, or ought to be, the legitimate aim of all biographies, especially autobiographies. The latter can take the form of confessions and may fall into the error of revealing more than what is consistent with the nobility and dignity of human nature by under- or over-estimation. When others write a biography the personal Boswell-Johnson intimacy counts, so that commercial banalities and distortions may be avoided. There are aspects in one's private life that one would rather speak for oneself than trust such matters of importance and delicacy to others who might, often by misplaced admiration, damage the values involved. There are sidelights that one could throw on many seemingly insignificant subjects which one can treat better when one tells his own story than in the form of formal essays or articles, by way of anecdotes or intimate incidental remarks casually made in relation to the living experience of oneself in life.

Although reminiscent moods, except when they refer to a clear spiritual content, are detrimental to the course of life of an absolutist speaker of truth, all memories being forms of regret, I have long nourished the idea of writing my own story so as to save my disciples the trouble of interpreting me. I see signs already of some disciples about to take their pens for the purpose and one of them as Editor of *Values*

at present actually prompts me in telling my story, merely saying "We disciples really won't find anything more interesting than that." These are some of the remarks and excuses with which I wish to kick off the ball, as it were, as Robinson Crusoe did, simply by the sentence, "I was born in the city of Bangalore in the month of February in the year 1895."

The long reign of the good Queen Victoria had not ended, and India had lived through the days of the mutiny against foreign domination for about four decades already and the memories of the Delhi Durbar of the early seventies were ushering in a period of a very settled rule that prevailed in the country punctuated later by the second Delhi Durbar of 1911. Mysore itself, of which Bangalore was a de facto capital, was ruled by an Indian Maharajah, although under the paramount power of the British. With its clean roads and attractive avenues, flower gardens and elevation on a plateau almost three thousand feet above sea level, Bangalore City had many features not shared by many other similar cities in India. February morning could be quite chilly and August mists could still hide the faces of by-passers on the same road on certain misty mornings. *Vasanta* is the name in Sanskrit for the season when spring meets summer, when nature abounds in flowers and the messenger of the season, the *Vasanta-dūta* (the Indian Cuckoo) plays hide and seek among the tall trees of the country-side, with its long-drawn and modulated musical note, giving that Kalidas touch to the lazy hours of the noon-tide. The generosity of the fruit season attracts plumed and other visitors including monkeys from neighboring parts.

It is true that rainfall is sparse and the village tanks are parched for many months; but welcome rains bring out the hut-dwellers with their ploughs, season after season, eagerly blessing the Rain-giver, themselves being blessed in turn. There is the kite-flying season too, when grown-ups forget to be serious and join the urchins of the village in high spirits, when the high winds prevail. Dust-storms and whirlwinds sometimes on very dry days drag their ghostly trail, crossing the parched grassy plains. Bamboos can catch fire and spread circling smoke on the hill sides, bats clustering on hoary banyan trees near the village wells and the kites flying high reveal the jungle India that Kipling's Mowgli knew well. A deer or two might leap across the field of vision and be gone in a trice while elephants could also be sighted, in their unconcerned majesty, not uncommonly round this country-side. The tiger and the peacock too added glory or a note of fear in thick forests, with stripes or spots. What particular planetary or natural forces conspired to make me born, as I was, in the middle of February in such surroundings, I do not hope to know in any wakefully precise terms. Just as the rainbow is a marginal effect, a sort of epi-phenomenon, forces from the farthest corners of the cosmos must have come to a sort of focal point in me to vivify my being and make me grow as a local fixed entity both as a lump of protoplasm and a bit of consciousness.

CHAPTER ONE

My Earliest Memories

From the date of my birth to 1898, about three years, I have no memories of my life at all. I did hear, and took for true, that I had a father who was said to be in England and that I was born in the lunatic asylum quarters where he had medical charge under the Mysore Government before he went abroad. The great plague that carried away hundreds of thousands of lives in Bombay and Mysore areas needed qualified doctors and, having bravely served in fighting the scourge in the thick of the epidemic at the risk of his own life,

when hundreds were dying round him, he was selected for higher medical bacteriological specialization and studies in tropical diseases generally, which he completed in a couple of years at Cambridge, at the Pasteur Institute in Paris and in Lille and Rome. When he returned the plague had not yet abated taking its abnormal toll of human life. One English doctor died of it while engaged in inoculating, a hero not of war but of peace-time. During the years of oblivion in which I must take it that I was living, I must have traveled to Trivandrum where, near the sand-dunes washed by the Arabian sea, on a bit of land which divided the dunes from the paddy-fields and coconut groves, the humble homestead stood where a delicate and fair young woman, who was to give birth to me, had passed her days with her parents and four brothers as the second born. She had a complete Sanskrit education together with her elder brother who later became famous as a poet and playwright, having himself often acted in his plays. He died early and the news reached Bangalore sometime during the years of the oblivion of my own earliest childhood years. It was thus to a house of mourning that I had come during the years that my father was abroad and when my psychological self began to prevail over the physical aspect of itself, I began, as it were, to sit up and take notice. The buffaloes, the ducks that swam in the puddles and swamps and the white paddy-birds which took to wings suddenly as men passed with palm-leaf umbrellas along the banked-up boundaries, the minnows in the stream-lets that fed the paddy-fields from the pond, the water-lilies, and hotter days which were more humid than at my birthplace in the Deccan--all go to complete the picture of my world of childhood.

Malabar, where humans flourished and multiplied more easily on rice, fish and coconut, presented a different picture to me about the age of three or four. I began to attend a vernacular school with my sister. It was a one-teacher affair, in a palm-leaf shed, where twenty or thirty of us wrote letters in the sand with our index fingers and said them loud so as to fix them

firmly in the mind both by impression as well as expression. Paper was just beginning to be known, but I had my first lessons written for me on a palm-leaf with an iron needle (stylus). We were allowed, during intervals, to search for a special herb with which to make the needle scratches visible by rubbing the juice with charcoal on the palm leaves. Thus it was that my literacy had its start in the ways of a by-gone India that we can see no more. The elder boys and girls sat on benches and had a printed book--a rare object in those days--to read from. Going to and coming back from school I had to beware of the leeches that were found in the streamlets that we had to pass in the middle of the paddy-field; sometimes there would be horned buffaloes that had to traverse a narrow lane in the opposite direction. The chameleons were thought by boys to suck human blood from a distance because of their clubbed tongues with which they caught insects. Other fears of childhood were about the vaccinator, newly introduced at that time who was dreaded by one and all. The cop was not known in the villages at all and was

a mighty man when he actually appeared. There was also a vague rumor about 'man-catchers', who must have been indentured labor-supplying agents for the new estates in Ceylon or India, which added to the insecurity of the country-side about which children could only fear without any full understanding. There were also mendicants who carried the mask of the monkey-god, Hanuman, who came round and were employed to frighten children into good ways, with their macabre voices and forebodings, besides the usual wandering minstrels, fortune-tellers, snake charmers and acrobats. I did not make much headway in my so-called education and my familiarity even with the Malayalam alphabet was of a dubious nature indeed when another page in my life was soon turned with the return of my father from his distant travels.

Home Coming and Return

Travancore of those days was synonymous with the farthestmost corner of India. Trains were unknown and reached only as far as Ernakulam in the then neighboring



state of Cochin, or one had to go from Trivandrum by heavy postal bullock carts as far as the town of Tinnevely for two days and nights through robber infested areas to reach the nearer railway station. Six or seven days had to be passed in canoes with thatch roofs along the break-waters before one reached Ernakulam. One embarked in such house-boats with provisions, propelled as they were with oars sometimes and mostly by punting with bamboo poles all the way. Mat sails were unfurled too, sometimes, when favorable breezes blew, especially when the ten or twelve mile long backwaters of coastal Malabar that intercepted the canals had to be passed. The steamboat came into vogue only a decade or two later and then it was the talk of all who wondered how it could overtake the country craft and disappear from sight within less than an hour, leaving only its trace of smoke behind for the admiring fishermen to watch in wonder, muttering words about the white man's intelligence.

A man who returned after a Western education was still a rare person in those days and except for one other there was no one heard of who had actually done so. The family house of Dr. Palpu (contraction for Padmanabhan), who was no other than my father, had plenty of visitors at this time who came to look at the curios, pictures and gifts he had brought from Victorian England and from the continent of Europe. There was general excitement about everything and all seemed strange and unbelievable. Top-hats, kid-gloves, binoculars and serial pictures of famous sights like the Eiffel Tower and the Vatican, not omitting the feeding of pigeons near St. Marc's Square in Venice and the Vatican in Rome, stereoscopic miniature binoculars with the Houses of Parliament within, all figured side by side with coins and articles of dress as presents for each. I was particularly excited about a box of gold and silver coins which when peeled proved to be bits of chocolate, which no sooner had the women tasted than they spat them out, saying they tasted like moist bran. The general excitement took several days before the wonder was over. In the confusion my Fez cap was

gone and the printed silk handkerchief which I had kept on a window, to be able to look at the picture on it in the morning, had been torn and used as wick-cloth at night, by some of the servant women of the house. My own sense of property was not strongly developed at that time and thus I withstood these initial disasters of my life quite stoically. Of the two routes to Bangalore, we chose the bullock-cart route and two of these carts started from father's house at dusk, carrying the family and some other relations who came half-way to the limits of the State to see the party off. I remember a breach in the railway line somewhere en route and crossing a ferry in large round tubs to continue our journey to Madras and thence to Bangalore.

Queen Victoria's reign ended in 1901. I must have been six years old at that time and I can still well remember hearing the salute of 101 minute guns that were fired in mourning her death at the Civil and Military Station of Bangalore, where the family had then taken residence. There was a horse which was being fed with gram at that time while I stood at the inner courtyard of the Angle-Indian style residence, with a portico and drive, and garden of fruits and flowers around. The horse drew a dog-cart in which, as Health Officer in the City, my father drove five miles each day to his office at the other end of the City. I had become by now a conscious individual though not a person in any social sense. I remember too, once sitting beside my father with a bugle in my hand, as he held the reins and drove through the streets, and my bugle went now and then by way of warning to pedestrians crossing the path. Regular lessons which were broken off on leaving Trivandrum were not properly resumed during the days in the Bangalore Cantonment. Some penmanship and spelling of simple English words, from the New Orient Primer, which had a rising sun on its cover and the story of Ganga Ram who was a cart driver inside; was my first book. I remember to have thrown away three or four copies of it dog-eared and torn in my efforts to master their contents, before I could claim even the first step of lit-



Government Buildings Bangalore

eracy in English. I preferred to play in the garden under the spreading mango tree where I made a little compound with bricks lying there and planted French marigolds in rows for trees along the drive with its two gates for entry and exit. This incident is specially interesting because already it contained in germ what became my main hobby in maturer life when building up four or five Gurukulas, which happened to be only a serious scale replica of what I did in miniature when at play in childhood. This cryptic prototype behavior pattern persisted through life in a strange and willful way with me. Vedanta refers as *vāsanās* to such archetypal psycho-physical tendencies with their persistent patterns of behavior implied in them in intentional terms. The acorn virtually contains the oak and the child is the father of man in this sense only.

More Regular Schooling Begins

There was a new extension of the City of Bangalore to relieve the congestion of the cent of the City where plague had become endemic. In the year 1902 the family moved into a newly built house in that place

which was a suburb which was then just getting built up. The architecture and taste in which the house and the acre of garden were laid out and built were modified adaptations of ancient Indian style to suit middle class Indians of that time. The light rains allowed for open terraces and there was an inevitable courtyard at the back of the house where the women folk could cook or eat or wash clothes away from public gaze. By no means streamlined or modern, there were ginger-bread decorations and multicolored window panes which did violence to good taste in their own way. It was named *Padmālayam* and each shrub and tree in the place was familiar to me and formed part and parcel of the intimate world of childhood days. One can be related with places almost as intimately as with persons. The death of a pet dog can affect one more keenly than that of relatives sometimes. The law of bi-polar relationship with persons, places or things or with ideologies, as in the case of martyrdom in the name of religious values, is so familiar that no experimental proof is called for, as some scientifically minded people might want. Common experience in such matters is the better basis of belief than experiment whose scope of yielding certitude in matters of human import is much more limited. Examples are as good as experiment when probabilities and possibilities are together and not compartmentally, as departmentalization of knowledge would alone justify.

The familiar Champak tree, which was big enough to support two or three of us at a time on its branches, the favorite mulberry bush, the fountain in which we bathed on hot days, the tennis court rolled and made ready by common effort, the stables and the vegetable garden in which tomatoes grew wild and beans could be raised easily, the grape-vines which attracted a stray monkey visitor, at times a pet and most times a nuisance, afforded much fun that made for a happy childhood. I was innocent yet of the horrid school bell and, except for a private tutor who would invariably turn up just when the play was most absorbing and who broke into the life

now and then with abruptness to take us to task for sums undone and copy writing forgotten, the earliest years of my life were spent more or less like a long holiday. I was not particularly good at lessons and grammar, both English and Sanskrit, which I was asked to study, was as difficult for me then as it is even now, as I cannot even today readily tell the difference between a gerund and a verbal noun nor that between *atmanepada* and *parasmaipada*, nor why or how the first conjugation was different from the second although the very first lessons of the very first book of Bhandarkar's Sanskrit Grammar, then in use, began with such distinctions. In fact I ignore them more now than in those days when I could imitate my fellow students and teachers who pretended to know all about them in a rough attitude of collective make-believe. Later, in my thirties, when I went into syntax of French grammar, I found that there were subtle discrepancies between parts of speech as understood in French and in English.

Latin and Sanskrit interrelations were more complex still. In fact, syntax is a mystery; it is a sort of horizontalized version of pure thought which takes place in verticality within the minds of all men, independently of the language which gives it publicly accepted form by often arbitrary structure. Until we get a syntax that is common to all languages it could not be said to be conceived scientifically. Arithmetic was no less puzzling because in making up a bill for groceries brought, I had to abstract the problem from the actual articles to do the sum correctly. The tutor, instead of helping me in the abstraction, tried to place before me samples of the articles involved. All numbers are abstractions which do not belong to the visible world. Empirical intelligence had to be put away before one could be good in sums, but my boyish tendencies dragged me to the visible rather than to the intelligible aspects of the problem. I do not think even now that if I was dull in sums, it was wholly my fault as, in the natural order of development of the faculties in the child, the visible precedes the intelligible. Sickly

boys, often with bad eyesight, could be seen sometimes to show themselves as prodigies in calculations which did not prove to be wholly advantageous to them in the long run.

Trials and Confusions of Early Schooling

With little English and less Sanskrit and torn between Malayalam and Kanarese for vernaculars, it was as a mistrusting rebel to the whole show of what passed for education of those days that I entered regular school, located as it was in Tippu Sultan's palace in the old fort of Bangalore City. The building itself was a historical relic which was renovated and adapted in a rough and ready way for the purpose of a lower secondary school under the City municipality. There was a musty smell in some of the rooms which were all ventilated and, with the group of thirty children of about eight or nine years in my class, which was the second year of my primary education. I was confused and lost. The textbooks were ill adapted. The typical village schoolmasters and the boys, who dressed and behaved in no decently regulated way, lacking accepted standards or methods, made me more confounded still. I just could not enter into the spirit of the situation. All seemed artificial and unreal. An orthodox Sanskrit teacher who must have passed seventy years gave us lessons in that language and, besides conjugations and declensions, long poems had to be recited, which I was not ready by previous preparation to do justice to.

As I was the youngest of the class I was also subject to constant bullying and teasing by the other boys. As I had a hair cut instead of tuft on my head, the boys enjoyed pulling my forelocks, calling me a horse. Once when they found that there was in the Reader the story with a picture of the Silly Lamb that got lost in the forest when all the flock returned to their pen, they could not resist the temptation to nickname me by that appellation and, what was more preposterous, two of them went to the extent of calling me aloud by that nickname when I was going for a walk with my mother, and that within her hearing!

This last extreme step upset me seriously as the limit and I wanted to have it out with the rude fellows. I promptly went up the steps to the headmaster's room and reported it to him the next morning, but the elderly, turbaned, bespectacled and long-check-coated headmaster genially smiled the matter off to my great disconcert. I could not understand how he could treat so lightly such a serious matter to me, which touched my good repute, but now when I remember that, on becoming myself a headmaster of a high school several decades later, I behaved almost in similar way when a boy came and said that a classmate had called him *enumpechi* (which meant something like Jack O'the Lantern), I advised him to retaliate with another name invented by him. He went satisfied. Christian morality would not perhaps approve of this: but between the rule of tooth for tooth and showing the other cheek there must be gradations which growing children could understandingly live through in every-day terms which should be considered normally permissible. The boys were not wholly to blame as I can say now that something in my character too must have justified the nickname conferred on me by fellow students. I can remember that all through my school career I had similar nicknames sticking to me.

When, later in the fourth form, the teacher once spoke of nitrogen as an inert gas, the boys with one voice decided that it applied to me and called me either Inert or by the name of the gas itself which resembled euphonically my own. Later in the Matriculation Class, there was the character of Athelstane in Scott's *Ivanhoe* as an indifferent and inactive hero whose goodness verged on the silly. This name stuck to me also for some time by common approval of my school fellows. When I reflect on it now, although I resented these at the time strongly, I can admit without damage to my self-respect that there was much truth in the innocent and spontaneous judgments. I thank my dear fellow students of that time, now from this distance of time, for the unconscious compliment that they must have implied. I find that this trait has

continued through my life, as I take a backward glance now, and must admit it is a kind of key to my own personality, which I can recognize more clearly now that I am nearing sixty-eight, than when I was in the thick of life's battle just beginning for me. From the second year of primary school to the second year of the lower secondary, which made three years in all, I thus spent my time as a half dazed, confused and ignorant pupil with perhaps a touch of the innocence implied in the nick-name with which my fellow students, with an unerring instinct, honored me.

Vicissitudes and Unfavorable Elements

The school bell, the recesses, the examinations, promotions or failures, with changes in school between Trivandrum and Bangalore, with different languages as media of instruction, with occasional troubles with fellow students, one of whom once lost his book and blamed it on me, with the bug-bears of grammar and arithmetic, my early school life was a period of not much directed effort nor of any tangible progress beyond the just average level. I repeated the first form in the Maharajah's High School in Trivandrum, where I had to recite Malayalam poetry instead of Kanarese, and then again after one year I was admitted into the second form of the secondary stage in the St. Joseph's College, Bangalore Cantonment, where both Malayalam and Kanarese could be omitted in favor of Sanskrit for a second language.

In Trivandrum as I sat in the first form one of the strange happenings worth recording took place. Occasionally the headmaster entered the class and asked all the Brahmin boys to stand up and gave them each a silver coin as a ceremonial religious gift, coming from government. In the water shed where thirsty children went during intervals there used to be caste discrimination too by which the free right to quench their thirst was denied to some boys. In the St. Joseph's High School there was another imported type of caste distinction as between black and white or mixed boys. Free fights were frequent between the two sections until the authorities separated them.

Strange again to say, that in one's own country there was unfavorable discrimination in many matters for the native-born subject of the country. It is nothing strange that apartheid persists in South Africa now and fights take place in India because the so-called low castes touch the drinking water of a village well, as reported even in today's papers. Progress in these matters seems ever marking time. Such discriminations that came to my notice even in early childhood must have had some stultifying and vitiating effect on my general attitude in life. While walking to and from school in Trivandrum I could not help hearing that certain of the roads were reserved for high castes only. These matters did not make me bitter at the time as I took them mostly for granted. I did not at that time understand fully, as I only realized later, its character as one of the major blemishes that tarnished the fair name of India seriously as a land of inequality between one human and another. True education could not thrive on such a soil.

(Continued in next issue.)

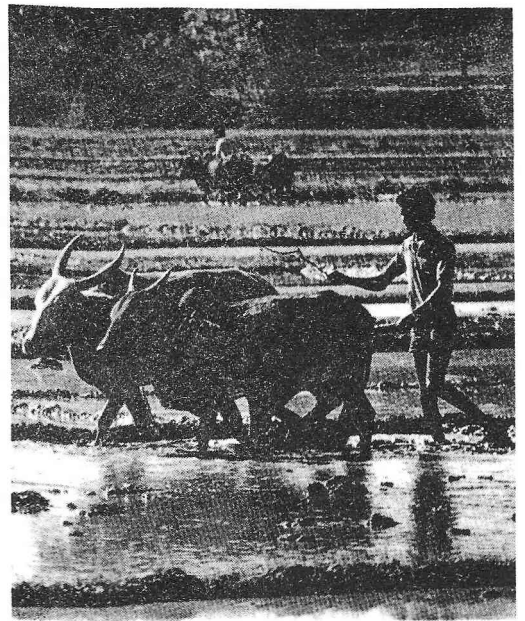


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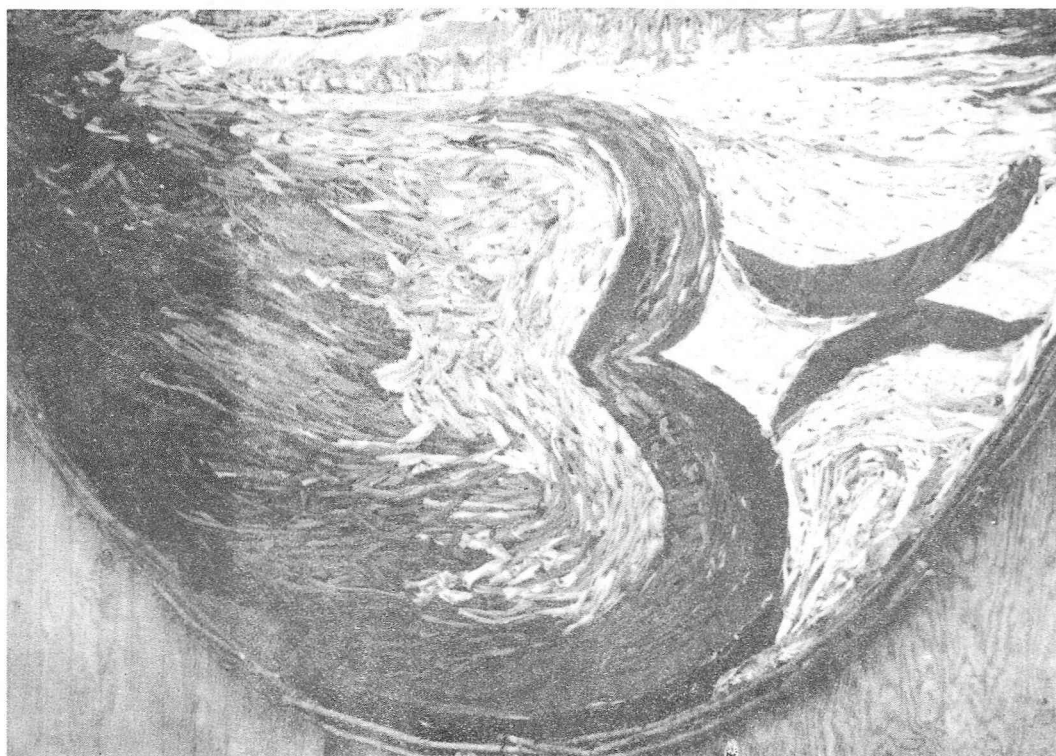
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