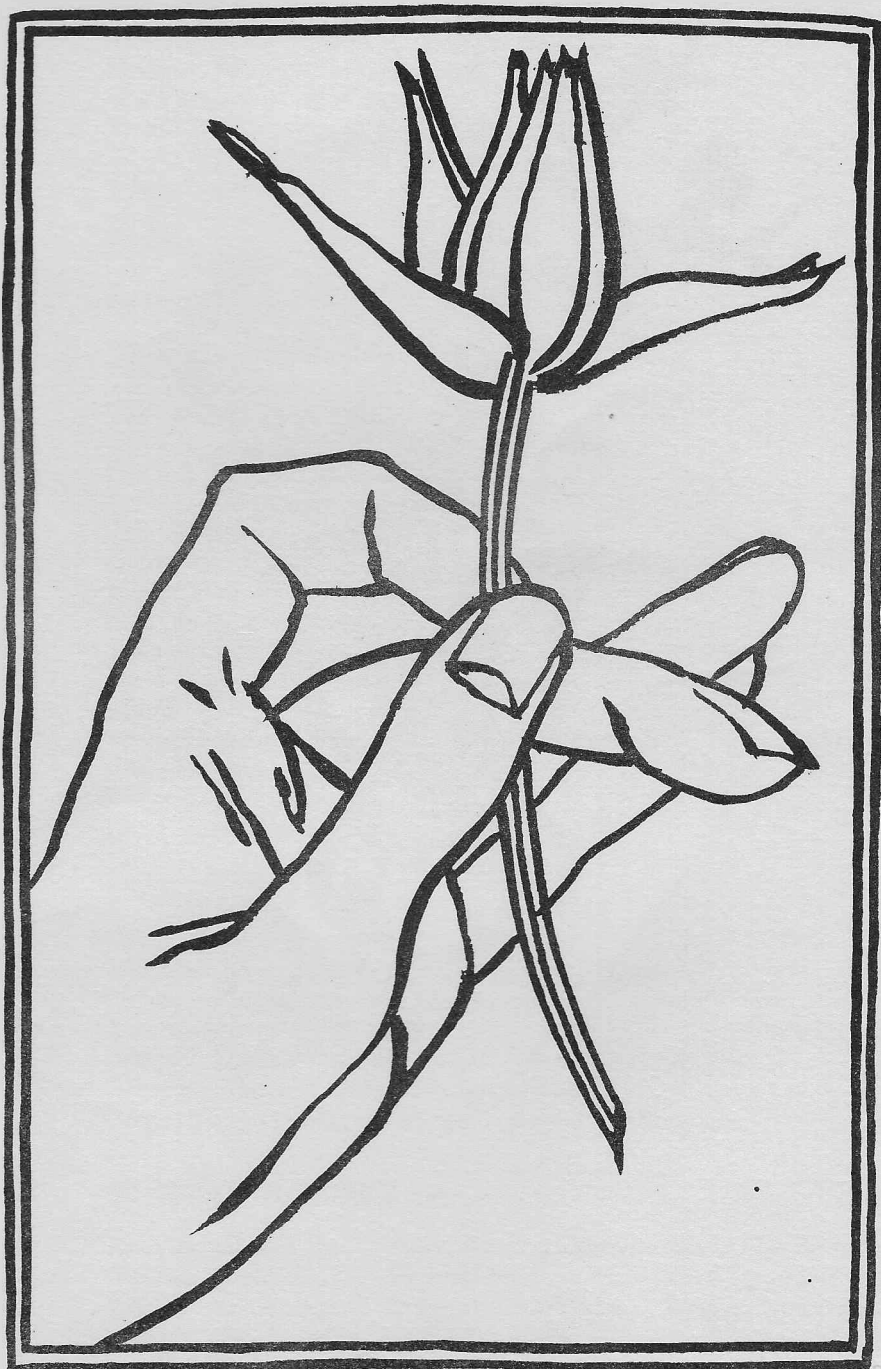
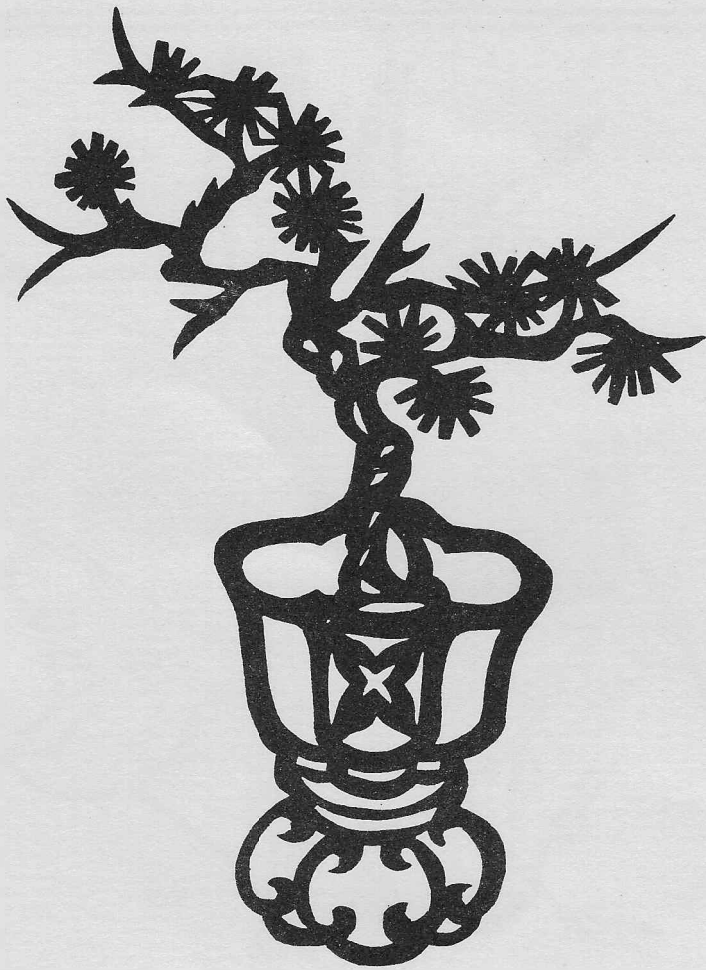


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XIV • 1998

FIRST-SECOND QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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Living Yoga

A young friend of mine stopped by to visit recently. She had taken a class which included a study of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and that had piqued her curiosity about Indian philosophy. She asked me:

I always thought that Yoga was a type of exercise, since I know people who take Yoga classes to keep their bodies limber, but I noticed that each chapter of the Gītā is called a Yoga. What is the connection?

Yoga has come to the West from India, and has been presented in different ways by different teachers and practitioners. In India, it is a holistic philosophy which includes both theory and practice. The Yoga exercise classes taught in Western countries have evolved from an aspect of that philosophy. They typically emphasize stretching, conscious breathing and relaxation, which can all be very beneficial. But that is only a small part of Yoga.

The theory and practice of Yoga date back to very ancient times in India. Many of the *Upaniṣads* refer to the fundamentals of Yoga which had been known and practiced long before the *Upaniṣads* were recorded. Each of the major waves of the revaluation of spiritual thought and practice have taken Yoga seriously and found it worthy of being reviewed and freshly presented.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* took into consideration not only Yoga but all the major schools of philosophy which were prominent before it was written. It was an attempt to update and synthesize the most helpful teachings of all the prior teachers into a single text which would guide its students to a better way of life. It is that spirit of synthesis that is reflected in the title of each chapter as a Yoga.

In our class we learned that Yoga means union. That seems to go along with the idea of synthesis. But what is being united?

The two counterparts implied in Yoga can be simply understood as the spirit or Self and body or matter, considered the non-Self.

In the same class we studied books of Western thought which talked about the mind-body problem or spirit-matter dichotomy. Those seemed almost like technical discussions of philosophical terms. Is that what the Yoga school of philosophy goes into?

There are many texts and teachers in the school of Yoga philosophy. Some of them are like that. But the two most important sources of the teaching of Yoga, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, present Yoga very practically.

What is Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras?

Patañjali was a teacher who wanted to convey the essentials of the science of Yoga as concisely as possible so they would be preserved for posterity in a pure form. *Sūtra* means thread; the *Yoga Sūtras* are a string of aphorisms on Yoga. In both the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Yoga Sūtras*, Yoga is a process of self-transformation as well as the goal of that process.

I have seen cartoons which show a yogi sitting in a cave or on top of a mountain meditating. Sometimes they are shown standing on one leg or sitting on a bed of nails. If that is the goal of Yoga, it seems pretty weird to me.

The *Gītā* is set on a battlefield. The battle that Arjuna faces is a symbol for the trials and tribulations of life which each of us face. They come in many different forms, usually not quite as extreme as actually fighting a war, although of course many people have had to face the prospect of killing and/or being killed. By placing the guru Kṛṣṇa and student Arjuna in the middle of a war, the author of the *Gītā* showed his full intention that whatever was taught there should have meaning right in the middle of the lives we lead.

Gee, even though I read the whole Gītā and we studied it for several weeks, I didn't realize that. There must be a lot more going on there than our class covered.

We are lucky to have commentaries written by compassionate teachers like Nataraja Guru and Guru Nitya which unfold Yoga as a living path which we can

walk in our daily lives. They also make it clear that Yoga is not a religion or religious practice. It is a way of life open to all.

So what is the goal of Yoga?

The *Gītā* says that Yoga is "disaffiliation from the context of suffering."

Disaffiliation from the context of suffering - that sounds good, but what does that mean? Is it really possible not to suffer?

Suffering comes from a case of mistaken identity. Instead of identifying with the universal Self, we identify with a physically and psychically separate, broken off piece of it. If you think you are nothing but the tiny bit of the universe that is bounded by your physical outline and personal experience, you will constantly be feeling buoyed up, buffeted about and battered down by many "outside" forces. That causes suffering, both petty and serious.

You must have had moments when you didn't feel separate, when you felt merged with the world around you and were suffused with a feeling of well-being. Those times give us glimpses of our true identity with the ground of all. When that recognition comes to stay, there is no longer an "out there" to inflict suffering on you. That is Yoga. Yoga is also the path to realizing your innate one-ness with all. It does so by re-establishing the equipoise of the mind/body system.

I've had moments like that. But they are gone in a flash and then I'm back to going up and down. All the energy and motion of life and my responding emotions seem very powerful. It is hard to imagine being peaceful in the midst of all that. But I don't see how I can just stop my life in order to get it under control. And, actually, it's mostly fun and exciting right now, so I don't think I'd want to stop it even if I could.

Yoga begins with some basics of wholesome behavior which you can start applying right now without stopping your life. They are sensible aids to enhancing the quality of life. The first step is to practice non-violence, truthfulness, not stealing, adhering to uprightness in life and not being greedy.

Somehow I thought that you were going to start talking about things I wouldn't understand. But telling the truth, not stealing and

not being greedy are all things my parents have taught me since I was small. They aren't always easy to do, but I've certainly had plenty of experiences to convince me that I'm happier and things go smoother when I can.

These restraints are all ways to help us reduce our inner mental and emotional "static" and improve our relations with others. Yoga fosters our ability to look deeply into our behavior and its motivations and bring about changes.

I don't like fighting so non-violence seems pretty easy.

Non-violence means more than restraining yourself from out and out blows. In meeting our needs for food, shelter, transportation, etc., human beings have wreaked havoc on other forms of life all over the globe. Non-violence means that we attempt to cause the least disturbance possible to that which we encounter each moment and to the world system as a whole. To a certain extent, we can't live without taking life and harming other forms of life. So Yoga guides us to compensate by giving back to the world.

That makes a lot of sense. I get the gist of the idea of being upright but it isn't very clear.

It has to do with tuning yourself to a normative notion in life that goes beyond your limited and perhaps selfish desires and ends. You strive to have the most universal view of that which sustains life and its potentials, and persistently relate yourself to that.

Yoga has a lot more common sense in it than I thought. I would like to learn more about how to apply it to my life.

The more you learn about Yoga, the more you will see it is very practical. It also goes much deeper than a light-hearted practice of attitudes or disciplines. When it becomes, as described by Nataraja Guru, 'an integrated whole-hearted and lasting way of meditative life', then it has the power to disaffiliate us from the context of suffering. Until then, we can remember the assurance in the *Gītā* that even a little of this way of life saves one from great distress.

Nancy Yeilding

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:10

tasya praśānta-vāhitā samskāraṭ

tasya: by its (*prākāśa*'s)

praśānta: undisturbed

vāhitā: flow

samskāra: the continuity of conditioning (is not obstructed)

By its undisturbed flow, the continuity of conditioning (*samskāra*) (is not obstructed).

The continuity of consciousness is usually compared to the flowing of a stream, which is very familiar to us. If there are suspended particles of dust in water, they also flow along with the stream and to some extent give a coloration to the water that carries them. Another example we can take is that of light passing through a yellow, red or blue glass. The light appears to be yellow, red or blue as the case may be. Similarly, the spirit or pure consciousness which is evanescent and prevailing in and through all organisms, is neither conditioned nor colored in its original state. However, in conjunction with *prakṛti*, the *puruṣa* has to carry with it the three-fold nature-modalities: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The individual functioning of the knowledge that animates every atom of the individual's organism is afflicted by these three modes. Shadows of the three modes are generated which deposit permanent images of the interplay of spirit (*puruṣa*) and nature (*prakṛti*) in consciousness. Hence three modes of culturing or conditioning

(*samskāra*) are deposited in the personal psyche even though its basis is only the pure consciousness of the Absolute. The conditioning and coloration is derived from the pain, pleasure and indifference felt by the sense organs such as olfactory, taste, visual, tactual, and auditory. These correspond to the five elements that go into the constitution of a living organism: earth, water, fire, air and space (*ākāśa*).

Ākāśa cannot be clearly determined to be fully spiritualistic or fully materialistic. Its material basis is the vibrating frequency and the spiritual counterpart is the quality of the sound that manifests in accordance with the quality of vibration. Sound causes disturbances in the eardrum and the cochlea which can be affective either as pleasure-giving sounds or a pain-giving sounds. Pain in Sanskrit is *vedanā*. For the purpose of perception, sensation is inevitable. Therefore the specified mode of electromagnetic energy implied in the sound is called *samvedanā*. *Samvedanā* (*samyak vedanā*) is natural and normal disturbance which is appropriately in tune with perception. The image that it leaves in the memory tag of the recalling faculty will have the quality of pain that repulses, pleasure that attracts or neutrality that brings indifference. The *sattva* quality belongs to pleasure; *rajas* belongs to pleasure as well as pain which is of oscillating and alternating nature; *tamas* is an admixture of pain and indifference. This is how the conditioning or culturing (*samskāra*) of the auditory aspect of consciousness continuously helps the physical and psychic or-

ganism to imbibe certain value fixations in a stream of auditory consciousness.

No other sense organ is more pervasive than the skin which entirely covers the body. The skin is the counterpart of the central nervous system and therefore the conditioning of pain and pleasure is easily registered by touch. Further it is intrinsically tied up with the instinct of reproduction. Hence it generates libidinal energy. Sexual energy is transmitted through the reproductive organs of the male and the female with an uncontrollable dynamic. Several areas of the human body are sensitive to pleasurable touch such as the cheeks, lips, palate, tongue, the neck area, armpits, the breasts (particularly in females), the two sides of the ribs, the lower abdomen, the anus, the area where the two thighs meet, the toes, the heels, the groins, and the reproductive organs. The kind of pleasure that comes with the stimulation of each area is different. The pleasure aspect which inevitably comes through various kinds of raptures when the body is touched leaves a highly grasping fascination in the body-mechanism. That is why males and females of many animal species cling together in a long-term embrace. This has been very much elaborated in the arts and science of love-making, in books such as those of Vatsyayana of India and Havelock Ellis in the West. There are similar books in Chinese which have more elaborations than any Indian or American book.

Another strange phenomena of sexual conditioning is the dialectical polarity implied in the erotic relation. There is very little parity between the sex needs of male and female. Due to nature's necessity to continue the species, female memories of sex relationships are more lasting whereas, in the male, sexual interest is easily broken. The male sex energy is both sportive and abortive. Therefore, male memories of sexual relationships are psychologically very disturbing and shameful. To get over the guilt feelings, some draw a veil of forgetfulness. *Rajasic* and *tamasic* indulgences affect the *sattvic* tendency of the male so much that he becomes less and less affected by the lure of sex in the long run. He is by

nature polyandric and gets easily tired of the woman with whom he is bound legally or obligatorily. Even when, in the name of civil behavior, a man may continue to show sympathy to the female whom he courts, there grows inside him a sense of shame, guilt and revenge. This accumulated negativity goes very much into the *rajasic* and *tamasic* aspects of man's memories of his previous sex. That is why of all human relationships, that which arises from physical touch is more complicated and pain-giving, and the pleasure that it offers for only a few moments is looked upon as a deception.

In spite of all this, the idea of love has a spiritual glow in it which belongs to the unitive aspect of the *cit* or pure consciousness of the Self. The two Sanskrit terms *cit* and *cittam* are born of the same root. *Cit* is pure consciousness of the Self and *cittam* is the libidinal counterpart ingrained into the memory which has the confusing quality of being deeply colored in individuated consciousness. That is why Indian spiritual teachers, such as the seers of the *Upaniṣads*, put great stress on maintaining the virginity of both males and females who aspire for spiritual realization. In most of the Indian spiritual books, we can see a chauvinistic exaggeration of the evils of sexual longings between the male and the female. Consequently, in the course of time, *brahmacarya*, the spiritual discipline to walk in the path of truth, became identified with the virtues of celibacy. Because of this custom in India, men and women are socially segregated except for their necessary relationship through the bond of marriage, and even that is given a rigorous discipline in *Upaniṣads* like the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. The *Prasna* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads* also support the retention of celibacy for spiritual aspirants.

The third source of the evolutionary formation of the conditioned psyche comes from the organ of visual perception. What is sun for the universe is the eye for the living body. The sun is one of the voluminous luminaries which is several times bigger than the planet earth. Yet its counterpart, the tiny eye of a person, more than compensates to make human efforts pur-

positive.

In the matter of efficiency, lower animals such as the frog and the chameleon, that have to live by clearly seeing their surroundings and fast-moving prey, excel. Human eyesight is more colored by the physical charm or beauty of the sex-object than by the sexually impressive object of love-making. In the style of life expressed by creative pursuits like literature, art and music, human aesthetic fixations are more on the products of cultural evolution than the objectivity of the expansion of the species. Consequently the *samskāra* born of human beings is a million times more complicated than that of any other species. The human psyche and the history of ethical considerations are more of an idealistic nature. Even when a man or woman is desirous of mating, out of the sheer consideration of physical charm, one hurtful word from the spouse is enough to immediately turn the most beautiful or handsome person ugly or repulsive.

These *samskāras* haunt the changing consciousness of a person from day to day and the colorations they bring are more psychological and sociological than empirical or ontological. Two other sources from which *samskāras* come are from food habits and the subtle affectation of fragrance or abominable smells. In love-making, male and female counterparts behave as if their mate is a psychologically edible object of enjoyment. The duality of love and hate is nowhere more profound than in eating

habits. Human beings are carnivorous, and to some extent even cannibalistic. Love-making can be easily seen as a scene of war-making. What one eats is partly what one smells. The nostrils are the gateway to the relishing of food. That is why food-catering agencies go in so much for making food very aromatic.

Although the *samskāras* are fragmentary aspects of our life we need to understand how, like dust in water, they color the stream of consciousness which is identical with the life energy that begins with the first pulsation of the spermatozoon and continue in a dying person ready to be cremated. The *sūtra*, however short it is, speaks volumes to us.

Sūtra III:11

sarvārthataikāgratayoḥ kṣayodayau cittasya samādhi-pariṇāmaḥ

sarvā arthatā: the multifarious interests

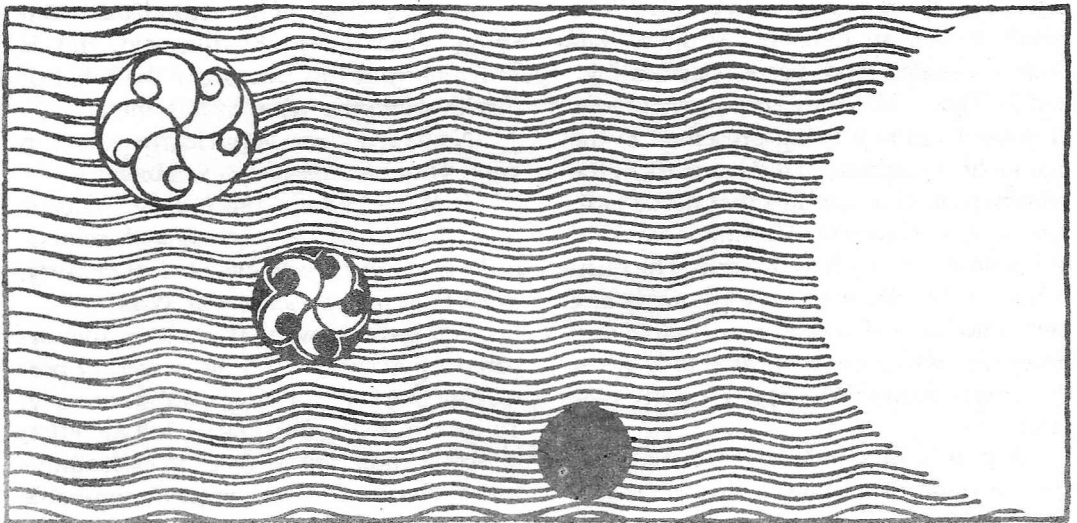
ekāgrata: is the one-pointed interest

kṣayodayau: arising from the weakening of
cittasya: (that accompany) the presentation of memories

samādhi: of ultimate absorption

pariṇāmaḥ: the transformation

The transformation of ultimate absorption is the one-pointed interest arising from the weakening of the multifarious interests (that accompany) the presentation of memories.



In this *sūtra* there is no reference to mind, although in most translations *citta* is translated as mind. This is wrong. The four inner organs (*antah karana*) of consciousness, *manas*, *citta*, *buddhi* and *ahamkāra*, should be understood as one leading to another. *Manas*, the questioning faculty, triggers remembrance; remembrance leads to the selective and judging faculty of the intellect and finally to the ego which is the affective faculty. As the Indian people have been educated for two hundred years or more in the English language, the Sanskrit *manas* became a substitute for mind. But the Western concept of mind does not in any way do justice to the concept of *manas*. In Sanskrit, *manas* is understood as an initiative function of consciousness in the form of raising a question so that what is indistinct or vague may be made clear. The mark of *manas* is *samsāyam*, doubt. Several emotions are triggered by doubt such as fear, anxiety, curiosity and even pathological tendencies of expecting the unfavorable to happen.

Manas is essentially interrogative. It initiates the cognitive function of the individualized organs of perception. When any stimulus of energy from the external world is presented to any one or all of the sense organs, the initial reaction is to express a doubt at the lack of clarity in the presentation of one or other partial interest. Hence the natural question comes which is the most primary function of cognition. In the question "What is this?" there are two significant ideas to be clarified: 1) 'What', which means an indistinct stimulus has been presented and needs clarification; and 2) 'This'. There are countless millions of possible stimuli being presented to the organs of perception. 'This' is a mark of the presentation of a stimulus that needs judicial inquiry. Hence the Vedantins say 'this' is *viśamā* the difficult to discern. The difficulty can be resolved only by analyzing 'this' into several constituent qualities of properties which are replicated only when the interrogation 'What?' is properly narrated.

A person may turn to five things successively and ask, "What is this?" "What is

this?" "What is this?" "What is this?" "What is this?" The answers can be very different, such as: "This is the cry of a baby." "This is a painful hot touch." "This is a bronze image of an icon worshipped in a temple." "This is a sweet drink." "This is the smell of jasmine." In all these five answers what is common is 'This'. Without the elaboration given through reference to the properties, qualities or cause of the item concerned, nobody can infer what 'this' is. *Manas* is only a pointer to the 'this' with an implied suggestion to cogitate. Psychological cogitation on the appearance of whatever is presented is possible only by comparison to other appearances which have approximations of agreement or difference. For instance, in the first answer, "This is the cry of a baby," the first notion taken into consideration is what relates to the sound. The sound can be made by a machine, a mechanical accident, an animal or a human being. Thus a universe of sounds are summoned to the attention of the cognitive faculty. The sound is close to a cry of a human. Through a previous familiarity with the sound, the cognizer decides that the cry was of a child. To go from stimulation to response needs all the associations to be brought together to make a relevant answer to the question "What?" That is why F. H. Bradley once said, 'This' is different from 'This' because of the 'what' of this 'this' and the 'what' of this 'this'. In the five questions asked, we repeated 'this' five times. The 'what' of the first 'this' is different from the 'what' of the second 'this', and so on. That is why Bradley said, 'this' is different from 'this' because of the 'what' of this 'this' and the 'what' of this 'this'.

Narayana Guru very clearly puts it in verse 41 of his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*:

In the statement, "This is a pot," 'this' is the difficult to discern (viśamā), and 'potness' is the viśeṣa, the identifying mark of property, which is given in the answer to 'What?'

Patañjali knows that we have five organs of perception. All the organs of perception can be stimulated simultaneously. To discern the indiscernible, full attention of observation is to be given to each stimulus. Each stimulus can trigger innumerable

appropriate or approximate memories. Thus one-pointed attention cannot be given to any one of them because of the attraction that comes from many divergent objects in a cluster of memories. For that reason they act as a distraction instead of attraction. For this reason it is the manifold matrices of memory that come in the way of giving concentrated attention to one stimulus at a time (*ekāgrata*).

Some people complain that their minds are like chatterboxes. When thought after thought comes in quick succession, they cannot concentrate on any one stimulus or thought. Why? The faculty of cognition is very similar to the photographic lens of a highly sophisticated camera. Only at the focal point does it give a clear image. A little away from the focal point in any direction, the image is blurred. Similarly, concentration comes only when an object of interest is viewed by the central focus of the whole consciousness of the persona. But in a matrix of memories, perceptions from all the five senses come in a confused admixture.

Narayana Guru gives an advice which is like a sweeping remedy for such confusion of cognition. He says, "By the irrelevant rush of memory, consciousness can become very much distorted and distressful. Therefore keep your consciousness free of memories." Although specific memories are necessary for transactions, an uncomfortable compulsion comes along with every memory for the cognizer to move into numerous unwarranted tangents. We forget the Self-luminous inner light by which alone even the fictional ideas come or the tangents are pursued. As soon as a person encounters another person, the objectivity of seeing a person is automatically subjected to all the previous prejudices connected with that image or similar images. Many subjective prejudices are projected on that image. So a simple observation is not possible.

Here the aim on meeting the object is to clear the consciousness of all irrelevant ideas except the totality of the existential unit, the knowledge of its subsistence, and the ultimate absolute happiness or the ne-

gation of it. One gets absorbed only into the Self and not into the non-Self. The final absorption of the conscious mind into the central reality of one's comprehension is the ultimate goal that is sought. That gives a challenge to the cognizer from the first stimulation. If one-pointed attention is only given to the reality of the Self, the subject's cognition and connotation get a contemplative status. When one meditates on the dictum, *ayam ātma brahma*, the Self is the Absolute, the ego is dismissed and in its place comes one's identity with *brahman*, the Absolute. That is an evolution or transformation (*pariṇāma*) of the cognizer into the central meaning of the cognized. Hence the inquiring mind is treated as a non-entity and what is subsistentially established is a conviction of one's identity with the Absolute. This one arrives at by dismissing the each 'this' and in their place comes the sum total of all possible thises, That. In Vedānta it is called *tat*, that which is truly beyond time and space. This state of being is called *samādhi*.

A person contemplating on the great dictums, "This Self is the Absolute," "This consciousness is the Absolute," "That is the Absolute," irrespective of the different modes of connotation, comes to the central verity that there is only the irrefutable pure consciousness. The same can be seen through all the disciplines spoken of here. A person who turns into the opposite direction from the light can be concealed by his own shadow. All the people in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" were only seeing their shadows and hence they gave a wrong interpretation to their identity. It is this illusory error which Patañjali wants to correct. Not knowing this, many followers of the path of yoga are trying to torture their nervous system by steadily looking at a dot or a particular part of their body, thinking that is how they come to the one-pointedness of their search. This is a gross misunderstanding of *ekāgratā*.

Sūtra III:12

*tataḥ punaḥ śāntoditau tulya-pratyayau
cittasyaikāgratā-pariṇāmāḥ*

tataḥ: when
punaḥ: again
śāntoditau: subsiding and arising
tulya: there is homogeneity between
pratyaya cittasya: the presentation of consciousness by *citta*, the memory faculty
ekāgratā: that is the one-pointed
pariṇamaḥ: transformation, evolution

Again, when there is homogeneity between the subsiding and arising in the presentation of consciousness by *citta*, the memory faculty, that is the one-pointed transformation.

The four great attainments suggested by Indian scriptures are *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. The first is to become fully conversant with the characteristics of one's own self. This is attaining a perfect insight into the innate laws governing one's life, which is already presented in the seed that is unfolding in the embryo to flow in the directions of the immediate goal, and finally reaching one's ultimate goal. The evolutionary unfoldment of one's innate law (*dharma*) leads the persona of the individual to grow and make the functioning of every faculty meaningful by degrees. The second attainment (*artha*) is never separated from the first. It is very much like the seed of a plant growing out of the ground. Its hidden root is guided by the innate law which prompts it to find nourishment to bring forth the flowers and fruits of meaning; this is the dynamics of growth in the alpha. Just as a plant receives sunlight, carbon-dioxide and oxygen in alternation, and prepares the nourishment for the whole plant in the leaves, the steady growth of a person in their socio-spiritual atmosphere requires spiritual and moral energy from the environment.

Thus *dharma* and *artha* go hand in hand. The inseparability of the meaning and the law is essentially the mold of the individual organism to grow into its innate characteristics, *svadharmā*. Even when the embryo is growing in the mother's womb, there is an unconscious teleological tendency for the organism to shape out of its contents, all the

necessary constituent faculties by which the *jīva* (personalized spirit of the individual), can develop the four-fold inner psychic organs conjoined to the psychophysical adjuncts by which all the coordinations of the sympathetic and parasympathetic future functions can be well coordinated in the growing central nervous system.

At the stage of the embryo, each new being lives in the unidentifiable time/space continuum of its inner prospective design for the self-evolution of a future individual. Hence that space is called *avyākṛta ākāśa*. *Avyākṛta* means that which has not assumed the necessary form to function. But it is undergoing a moment-to-moment formal and substantial modification and emerging into the distinctive limitation of actual time and space. In other words, the evolving being is getting developed in the *vyākṛta ākāśa*. Thus, much before an individual comes to know that he or she has a future, it is developed within a mold (*karu*). Once born of the mother, the child is endowed with all the necessary limbs and faculties, and is given a quarter of a century for further evolution and development. That is why the first twenty-five years of a human individual's life are dedicated to gaining full familiarity with the path which will lead the individual to his or her assigned commission. The pursuit of life begins even when the person is an embryo, a fetus, a child. The outwardly manifested hands and legs, eyes and ears, the body properly covered with skin, and the motion that comes into the limbs much before the child comes out of the mother's womb, are all part of the well-conceived evolution of the individual.

Then through the nurturing and training given by parents and other external guides, the young person comes to know the restraints (*yama*) and observances (*niyama*) which suit a person to live in harmony in the society into which he or she has been born. This brings a certain amount of rhythm which offers guidance for the collective function to which each individual is exposed in society. There is dysfunction and malfunction in the cognitive, connative

and effective functional mechanism of the psyche and body, only if there is disharmony in the family or in the social environment. If *yama* and *niyama* are properly conceived and introduced into the life of an adolescent, he or she will not have much of the agonies of growing up.

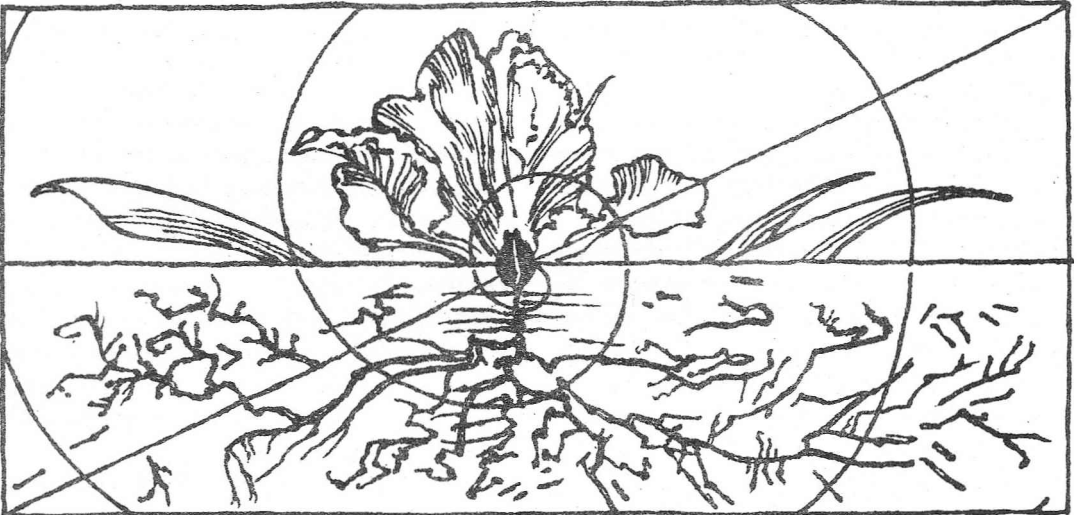
A well-disciplined person automatically comes to recognize the social setup to which he belongs. Thus there will be a certain evenness in the flow of a person's stream of consciousness. When *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyahāra* become the motivated behavior of the yogi-aspirant, the next immediate goal is to instill a proper *dhāraṇā*. The ultimate goal is to become perfected in *samādhi*. In a yogi-aspirant's life, it is expected that each mode of behavior will be more or less in tune and in harmony with the rigorous discipline undertaken. As one proceeds with *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, one's growth and evolution seem to be the same. All through this stage, the *kāma* or desire of becoming a perfected person is very much restrained and held close to the attainment of one's ultimate freedom. Thus *kāma*, which in the case of a layman is often bracketed with wealth or the acquisition of the means to pursue pleasures, is now bracketed with *mokṣa*.

This can be very clearly seen in the Vedanta philosophy in which *yama*, *niyama* and *pratyahāra* are substituted with *sāma dāmādi satkasampatti*, the discipline of becoming established in calmness and the

resoluteness of one's will to carry out one's tasks even in the face of pain and obstacles. Although in the first twenty-five years of pursuit, a number of scattered values necessarily draw the attention of a youth to experience several forces of life, they are all brought to a homogeneity to give the value vision an inner coherence and natural supportiveness.

Hence it is said that in the ultimate *samādhi-pariṇāma*, the many-faceted interests become unitive, holding the single purpose of life of finding one's aloneness in the ultimate spirit (*kaivalya*). Vyāsa describes it as the harmonizing of the previous apprehensions of life into a collected and well coordinated memory system. Then, because of the similarity between the previous and the present, the futuristic interest falls in line with the necessary evolution that will naturally take place as the *samādhi-pariṇāma* of a yogi. In his gloss, Vacaspati says: "When both these cognitive acts of him (yoga-aspirant) who has become inclined towards trance (*samādhi*), become similar to each other, it becomes one-pointed." He further says: "This shows the achievement of trance (*samādhi*), and also of one-pointedness (*ekāgratā*) itself."

Vyāsa gives a warning that in this discipline, the incumbent yogi should not show any slowing down of his deep and sustained interest. One should contemplate on all the suggestions given in *sūtra* 12 to get into the full spirit of *sūtra* 13. If *sūtras* 10, 11 and 12 are not revised again



and again with deep contemplative interest, *sūtra* 13 will not yield any result.

Before going to *sūtra* 13, we have to make a revision of the science of *pariṇāma* (evolution) given in the second section, *Sādhana Pāda*. There is a time factor in the lives of all living beings. The first consideration is the sequential order in which the organism goes from one stage of development to another. In the case of the lower forms of life such as plants, they have a seasonal longevity. The breaking of the seed, emergence of the sprouts and roots, the leaves growing in an orderly way, the stem branching off, flowering, fruition, distribution of seeds and consequent death may take only three to six months. In the animal world also, insects, rodents and reptiles have a sequence of growth which is of short duration. In microbotic beings an hour is long enough to grow and reproduce. In the case of human beings who have a very complicated biologic growth order, many inner coordinations have to take place with fairly long pauses between one stage of growth and another.

When we look at human beings from the angle of nature-nurturing the only purpose of their manifestation is to grow into mature persons who can reproduce other members of the same species who are biologically similar. Nature is not purely biological. The male and female have to interchange through reciprocation many of their physical and physiological body fluids and biochemical substances in the reproduction of their progeny. As a result, socio-biology enters into their lives as they physically relate with their spouses or any member of the opposite sex. Because of this they have to share their capabilities in other fields also, such as finding nourishment for themselves and their progeny. To prepare themselves for this, they should learn the science of life, both theoretically and practically. Wherever theory and practice go hand in hand, the faculty of observation, learning, and memorization with the ability to recall, are all to be developed to a high degree. Apart from this psychological and sociological sharing, human beings are endowed with ethical and aesthetic qualities.

In both these fields, men and women have to achieve insight into the promptings of their behavior. Natural urges, passions, and whims can topple the sociologically conceived law and order by which one's behavior can be ethical and one's performance can be aesthetic. Consequently, it takes a long time to make oneself well-established in the intellectual appreciation of the socially, morally, aesthetically and spiritually established conventions of life. To bring this excellence in life, fresh coordinations are to be established between the sensory and motor system.

Certain promptings which are latent from childhood change radically when the adolescent male and female are near to gaining the capability of functioning sexually. If we watch a child sucking its mother's breast, we can see two libidinal pleasures of which the child has no awareness. When the same child comes to the age of 3 or 4 these promptings cause the child to behave in a somewhat awkward manner in the eyes of elders. Between 5 and 7, sex differences are more consciously felt in growing children and their behavior patterns show more evident indications of the latent desires coming to the surface. Between the ages of 8 and 13 both boys and girls have very painful days and nights because the animals in them are becoming very wild and the children do not understand themselves. Puberty can come in a girl's life as early as 12 or 13. Between the suppressed desires to have sex with the opposite gender, undreamed of desires and promptings come to the surface. Normally these confused states are controlled in the early stages of youthful life through properly chosen habits. Sexual problems and emotional outbursts like anger, envy, revenge, etc. are usually absorbed into social behavior by the time one establishes oneself in one's socially stabilized life. Unfortunately, in a large percentage of people, their biologic and psychologic passions will continue to storm even in their old age. There are a few people who can never come out of the chaos of their emotions even till the day of their death.

Patañjali is very well aware of this hu-

man peculiarity. Hence in the *Sādhana Pāda* he gave a warning in *sūtras* 12 and 13. In *sūtra* 12 we read: "The vehicle of action has its origin in affliction and these are experienced in visible and invisible births."

Our visible birth is from our parents. The potential for the sperm of a father and the ovum of a mother to present the special individuality traits in our life is due to the genetic contributions they make. The genetic specialties of the rudiments which go into an embryo are not visible to us, but this invisible base brings definite peculiarity in each child even when they are born of the same parents. To a great extent, in the biologic world the visible behavior is controlled and maneuvered by the designs of instincts. When we longitudinally look at the stream of life which is flowing through each one of us, our origin is from a distant antiquity and there is no way to know from which generation of parents the seeds of our ability to perceive and conceive and make reactions to stimuli come.

Sūtra 12 is supplemented by *Sūtra* 13 which says: "It ripens into life-state, life-experience and life-time, if the root exists."

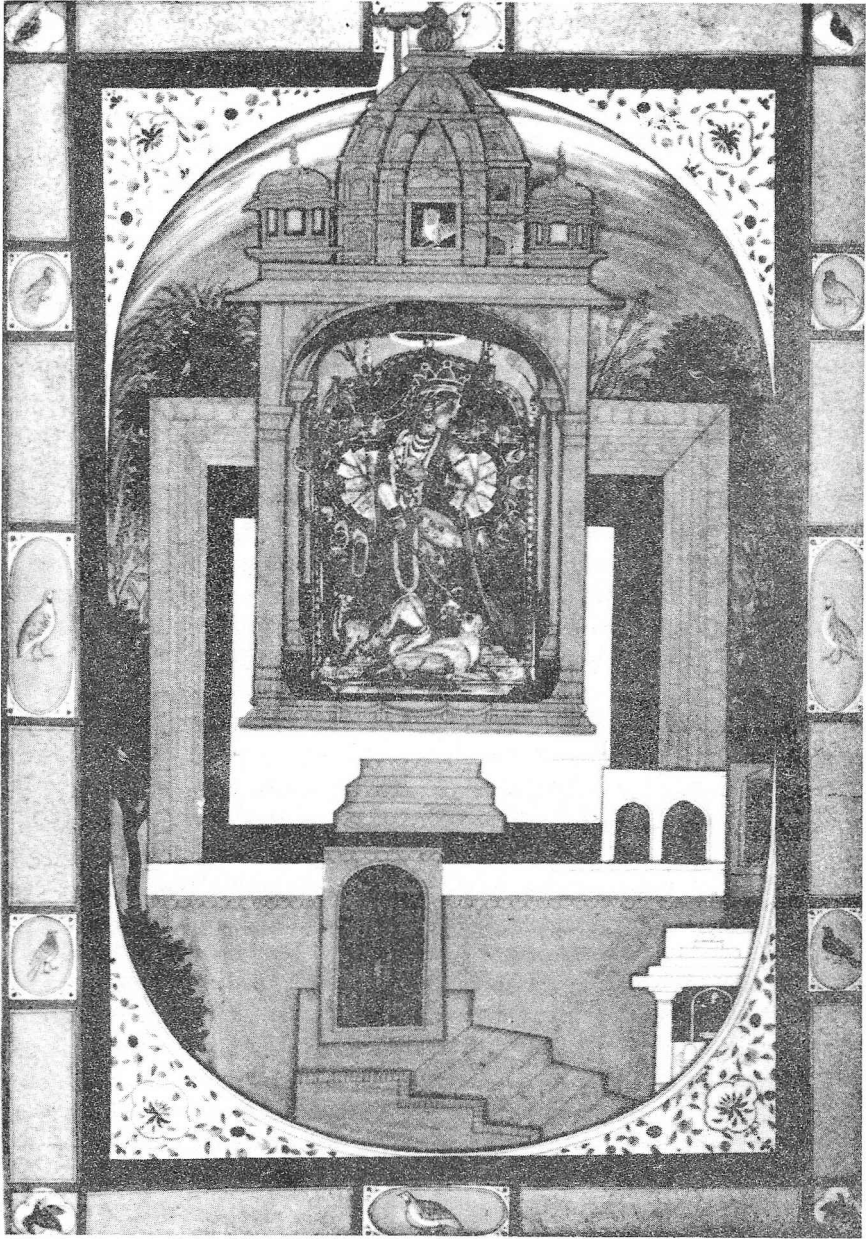
The root aspect of our behavior is seeded in our individual *dharma*. As time passes, our *dharma* opens up into our actions which are in resonance with our latent tendencies. Time during our life alternates between the wakeful, the dream state and our deep sleep. These variations come every day in the course of 24 hours. We have repeated programs of the wakeful, dream or subjectivity and withdrawal which are all prompted by the pattern of life to which we belong (*jīva lakṣana*). Nature's nurturing is continuously going on within us from birth to death. It is dangerous to oneself and also to fellow human beings to allow all instinctive promptings to become expressive. Hence this *sūtra* is given to prepare a person to meet the unfoldment of the dynamics of inner states.

The life experience spoken of here is like a mirror in which we see the unfoldment of our innate tendencies or traits. "Ex" means outside, "perience" means become familiar. What is inside a person is judged by others or inferred by others from the

words he speaks and the actions he performs. We meet the performance of others with love or hatred, shame or appreciation. We will naturally try to avoid any negative tendencies which we discover through our outward actions. We can change through restraint, by avoiding repetition and by learning to imitate the good examples of others. On the other hand, a person can become chronically disabled by not restraining his desires and passions. Such a person becomes a *rogī*, a physically and mentally afflicted person. A person can also become gluttonous, lecherous, uncouth, shameless and disorderly. Such a person becomes a *bhogī*, an indulgent enjoyer. When all negative and evil tendencies are discovered and promptly corrected, a person improves in several fields of his or her life. With such correction a new culture (*samskāra*) is developed within oneself. *Samskāras* can be noble or ignoble, evil or virtuous. Destroying evil or negative tendencies is called *samskāra kṣaya*.

When *samskāras* (conditioning) accrue and their influence becomes a permanent feature in an individual's life they are called *vāsanā*, which literally means 'fragrance'. A jasmine or rose flower has in its petals certain subtle particles which can waft its smell into the air around. When this material basis of fragrance is further reduced to a more subtle energy that can remain without the parent body, it is spoken of as the *vāsanā* of the flower. Similarly it is believed that our personality development has come not only from the present life, but from several previous lives. Like *samskāra kṣaya*, the reduction of *samskāras* in one's life, there can also be the removal of the potential that has come from several previous lives. This is called *vāsanā nasa*. The yogi is always trying to reduce negative *samskāras* and also *vāsanās* which have come to color or condition one's present personality. It is for deconditioning and decoloring that a yoga aspirant is asked again and again to naturalize and normalize the nucleic function of his or her internal life.

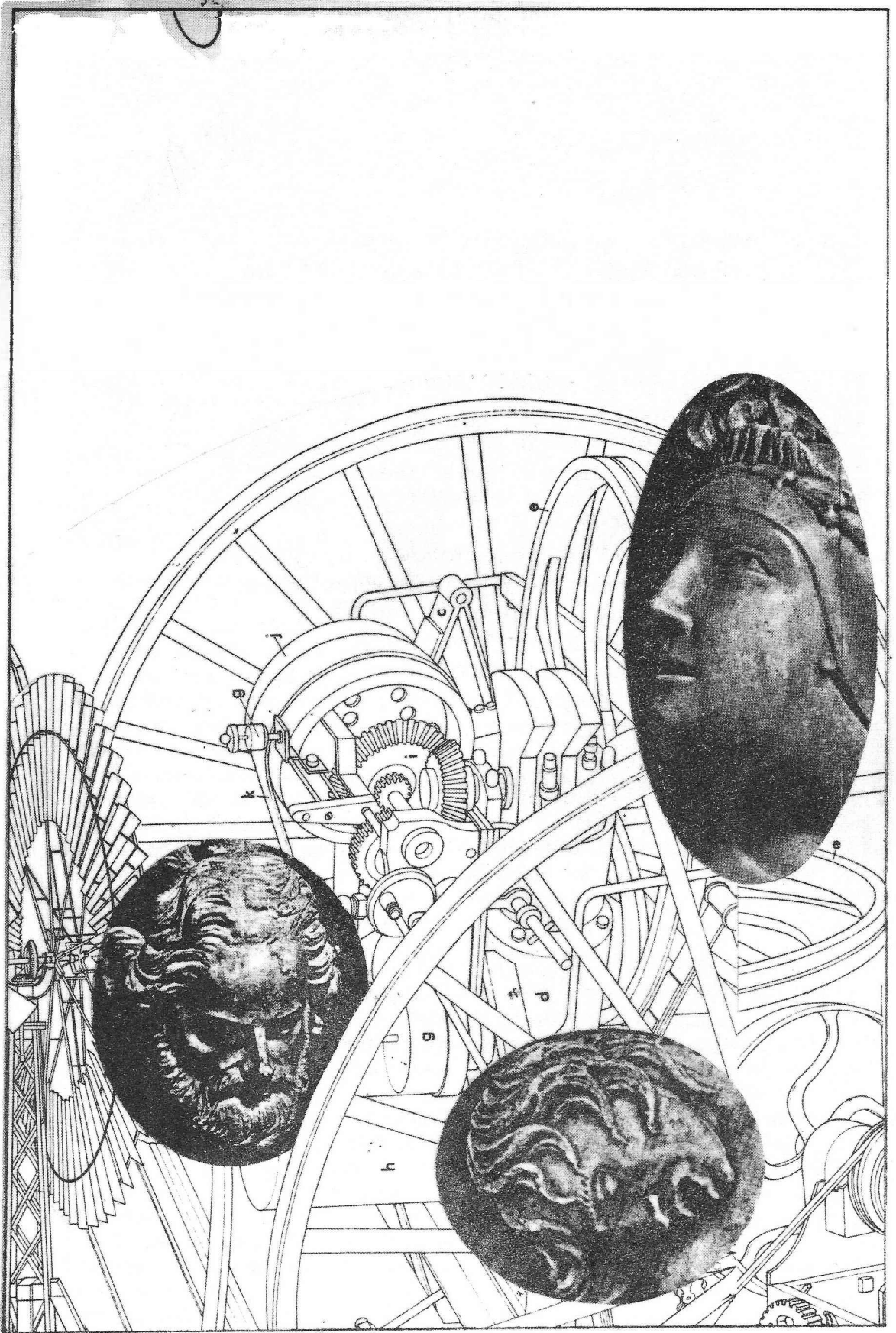
(Continued in next issue.)



Pilgrimage

On the way to the city,
the temple city of my Goddess - Meena -
with a heart full of faith and a hopeful mind.
Coming to you my Goddess,
wishing to meet you there.
Will I be able to see you?
Tell my mind.
Or will I be left in the hallway
with the emptiness of your absence?
How long have I wished and waited
for this visit!
Oh, since I have eyes to see your visions;
since I have ears to hear your melodies,
since being born into this world,
I have been looking for you:
in solitude, in my meditations,
in my dreams and fantasies,
in my thoughts.
Oh, indeed,
in my every deed and word
of my past lives
I have been seeking you!
And now, the time has come,
the call was heard.
I started my journey
towards your temple city.
Restless, foodless, sleepless, and selfless,
I am on the way to the city -
the Holy City of your dwelling
to find myself.

Gopidas



Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 5

*ulakar uṣāñṇi uṣarṇnu cintaceyyum
palatumitokkeyumurrupārttu nilkum-
vilamatiyātaṣṭakku udikkayum pin-
polikayumillitu kaṇṭu poyiṇam*

Worldly people, having slept, wake and think many thoughts;
ever wakefully witnessing all this shines an unlit lamp,
precious beyond words, that never fades;
ever seeing this, one should go forward.

It is said that the British philosopher Bishop Berkeley had a maxim: "Think with the learned and speak with the vulgar." Those he referred to as 'vulgar' were people who are not philosophically inclined or disciplined. In the present verse Narayana Guru speaks of *ulakar* in somewhat the same sense to mean those who are not philosophically critical in examining life and pondering on high values. For most people, ours is a world of getting and spending, where their only lot is to wake and sleep and conduct themselves as their fancies dictate.

In verse 2 the Guru spoke of *jagat*, the several worlds of interest that come and go. In the same vein, the term *lokam* is to be understood as "the passing universes of interest." Like many other biologic species on earth, human beings are caught between alternating spells of geotropism and heliotropism. When the sun sets, our energy wanes and we go to sleep. When the sun rises, our energy returns and we wake up to engage in the day's activity.

We do not know who puts us to sleep and who wakes us up. Where does our motivation come from, and who supplies us with energy to carry out the intentions of the mind? The Guru speaks of a light that intently looks on whatever we do. What could that light be? A picturesque

mention of such a light is made after the narration of a legendary episode in the *Maitri Upaniṣad*:

Verily, the gods and the devils (Asuras), being desirous of the Self (Ātman), came into the presence of Brahma (the Creator). They did obeisance to him and said: "Sir, we are desirous of the Self (Ātman). So, do you tell us."

Then, meditating long, he thought to himself: "Verily, these devils are desirous of a Self (Ātman) different (from the true one)." Therefore a very different doctrine was told to them.

Upon that, fools here live their life with intense attachment, destroying the saving raft and praising what is false. They see the false as if it were true, as in jugglery. ¹

There is a recurring idea in several *Upaniṣads* of the two kinds of knowledge that influence our life on earth. One is called *avidyā*, ignorance, and the other is *vidyā*, knowledge. Living according to the motivations of one's ego-centered interest is called *avidyā*. It is mentioned in the *Īśa Upaniṣad* that such people are living in darkness. Giving one's attention to transcendental ideas is called *vidyā*. Paradoxically, it is mentioned in the same *Upaniṣad* that those who are attached to transcendental ideas live in even greater darkness, as it were.

It is hard to determine when someone is wise and when they are not. A passage to this effect comes in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.5), the *Munḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.8), and the *Maitri Upaniṣad* (7.9):

*Those abiding in the midst of ignorance,
Self-wise, thinking themselves learned,
Hard smitten, go around deluded,
Like blind men led by one who is himself blind.²*

The Guru's reference to "people of the world (who) sleep, wake and think many thoughts" should be seen in the light of these *Upaniṣadic* passages. He instructs us to turn to that which witnesses all our thoughts and deeds, which he compares to an unlit lamp that is nonetheless mysteriously shining. In the *Maitri Upaniṣad* we read the following description:

Assuredly, the nature of the ether within the space (of the heart) is the same as the supreme bright power. This has been manifested in threefold wise: in fire, in the sun, and in the breath of life.

Verily, the nature of the ether within the space (of the heart) is the same as the syllable AUM. ³

What is referred to here as fire, sun and breath is not three separate entities, because in the same *Upaniṣad* it says:

*Adoration to Brahma, who dwells in all, who remembers all!
Bestow all upon this worshipper!
With a golden vessel
The Real's face is covered o'er.
That do thou, O Pusan, uncover
Unto the Eternal Real (satya-dharma),
the Pervader (Vishnu).*

He who is yonder, yonder Person in the sun--I myself am he.

Verily, that which is the sunhood of the sun is the Eternal Real. That is the pure, the personal, the sexless (a-līṅga).

Of the bright power that pervades the sky (nabhas) it is only a portion which is, as it were, in the midst of the sun, in the eye, and in fire. That is Brahma. That is the Immortal. That is splendor. That is the Eternal Real. 4

In the commentaries of the previous verses we have seen how our minds are influenced by the three modalities of nature which are triggered by our incipient memories. In the present verse, the difficult problem of transcending these modalities is broached. In Chapter XIV of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Arjuna is confronted with this same problem. He asks Krishna:

*By what marks, O Master, does he who has transcended those three modalities of nature become (recognized)?
What (is his) conduct and how does he transcend those three modalities of nature? 5*

To this question Krishna answers:

Light and activity and delusion when present, O Pandava (Arjuna), he is not dissatisfied nor hankers for them when absent. 6

The *karu* mentioned in verse one appears in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as *bhūtātman*, the manifesting Self. The three aspects of the *karu* are its self-luminosity as knowledge of knowledge, its manifestation as the psychodynamics that animates a person, and the eidetic world that is presented to the knower. These three aspects are described in the verse from the *Gītā* quoted above as light (*prakāśam*); activity (*pravṛtti*) and delusion (*moham*). Although the Absolute does not undergo any change, the negative principle of the Absolute gives rise to a superimposition of these triple aspects. In Vedānta, this kind of modification is called *nirvikāra*. Narayana Guru is preparing our minds to arrive at the notion of the unmodified Absolute, which he is going to present in verse seven. In this verse and the next he focuses our attention on the alternating phases of consciousness. The natural state of the Absolute is its self-founded brightness. The Guru equates this with the lamp which is neither lit nor ever dies. Activity and delusion, which are also attributed to the manifesting Self, *bhūtātman*, in this verse of the *Gītā*, constitute the changing world in which the common man is caught as if in a snare.

In *The Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius, Philosophia describes the unfortunate state of man: "Alas! How this mind is



dulled, drowned in the overwhelming depths. It wanders in outer darkness, deprived of its natural light. Sick anxiety, inflated by worldly winds, swells his thoughts to bursting."⁷

The remedy for this tragedy which the Guru suggests here is to see the light within that witnesses everything. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* it says:

*Two birds, fast bound companions,
Clasp close the self-same tree.
Of these two, the one eats sweet fruit;
The other looks on without eating.*

*On the self-same tree a person, sunken,
Grieves for his impotence, deluded;
When he sees the other, the Lord (is) contented,
And his greatness, he becomes freed from sorrow.*

*When a seer sees the brilliant
Maker, Lord, Person, the Brahma-source,
Then being a knower, shaking off good and evil,
Stainless, he attains supreme identity (samya)
(with Him).⁸*

The experiencing sensory-mind complex and the animating Self in us, born of the same principle, are described as two birds that are like intimate friends clinging to each other. According to Sankara, they are the individuated self and God. They dwell in the subtle body, which holds in itself the tendencies and impressions created by desire, ignorance and action. Of the two, the individual soul enjoys the fruit of action. The other, God, is by nature eternal, pure, wise and free, omniscient, having *māyā* as a limiting adjunct, does not taste, but merely looks on.

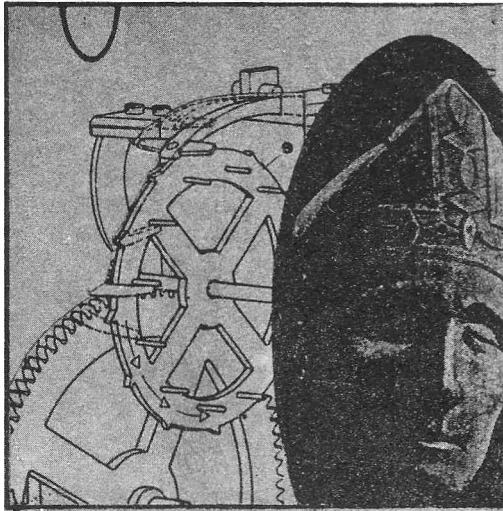
As the individual self is totally immersed in *samsāra*, the world of delusion, it repeatedly becomes despondent. It is believed that such a soul, degraded by its own false identification, is born again and again in inferior wombs. Perchance with the compassionate guidance of a blessed one, the individual may some day, by purification, discipline and meritorious life, achieve the sameness of vision to see the true light that shines within, recognizing: "I am this Bright Person who is the Self of all and is the same in every being." Then he or she would shake off all notions of duality, such as merit and demerit, and the two kinds of action that constitute bondage. Having become freed of all blemishes, the self will attain the absolute equality that transcends all duality. The *Gītā* says of such a state:

*Those however in whom that unwisdom in the Self
has been destroyed, to those wisdom shines
sunlike as the Ultimate (the Absolute).*

*Those having That (Absolute) for reasoning,
That for the Self, That for finalized discipline,
That for supreme goal, they go to a state of
final non-return, all their (relativistic) dross
being canceled-out by wisdom.⁹*

Compare the opening clause of the second verse given above, "Those having That (Absolute) for reasoning," with the opening line of the present verse, "Worldly people, having slept, wake and think many thoughts." Martin Heidegger says that the common lot of all human beings is their facticity, existentiality and forfeiture. But in the *Gītā* it is especially mentioned that there is no forfeiture when one's reasoning is unitive. Unitive reasoning is well-founded, regulated and directed to its object, as opposed to discursive reasoning, which is accompanied by the dissipation of interest. Nataraja Guru, in his commentary on the *Gītā*, says, "Such a reasoning establishes a direct bi-polar relationship with the object of its search. It does not get lost in endless ramifications. Bi-polarity, once established, is conducive to further reasoning along the same lines, culminating in the highest good, in the Self."¹⁰

The instruction given by Narayana Guru in the present verse is to establish a bipolarity with that ever-wakefully witnessing Absolute, the unlit lamp in us, which is precious beyond words. However, the Guru knows how difficult it is for an uninstructed and undisciplined person to raise himself or herself to that sublime state of perfect attunement with the Supreme. In the next verse he grieves for the sad state of man.



Notes

1. Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principle Upaniṣads*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 1971), p.456.
2. *Ibid.*, p.457.
3. *Ibid.*, p.449.
4. *Ibid.*, p.449.
5. *The Bhagavad Gītā*, trans. and comm. Nataraja Guru, (R & K Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973), p. 590.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 590.
7. *The Consolation of Philosophy of Boethius*, trans. Richard Green, (The Library of Liberal Arts, New York, 1962), p.5.
8. Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principle Upaniṣads*, p. 374.
9. *The Bhagavad Gītā*, Nataraja Guru, p. 270-1.
10. *Ibid.*, p.149.



The Todas, indigenous peoples of the Nilgiris, sharing their rich





cultural heritage, wearing their distinctive traditional shawls.



Autobiography of An Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

Upper Secondary Education, St. Joseph's

From the Bull-Temple Extension in the City, where we lived, to the St. Joseph's College in the Cantonment, the distance was about five miles. The four children of the Municipal Health Officer could be seen to cover the distance sometimes in a victoria, myself often sitting beside the coachman, with the reins and whip in hand. More often it was in a spacious double-bullock cart, which the Health Officer had to use when he had to make his rounds in the outlying districts of Mysore to prevent the plague, that we jolted along. This cart could be stationed like a gypsy caravan on the roadside when breaking journey, but in the City we progressed onward slowly, revising our lessons while seated within, past the toll gate to the Cantonment area, which was directly under the British rule at that time. We passed through the Lal-Bagh gardens, a remnant of a Moghul style garden started at the time of Tippu, and along the Residency Road and the Convent, to St. Joseph's where bearded Fathers of the Society of Jesus from Europe and clean-shaven Brothers of the same Order from England taught the different subjects in their own ways. Sometimes one bearded Father paid a short visit to another in the classroom and it was a sight to see them speaking in French or Italian, shrugging and gesticulating and guttural sounds predominating. French seemed harsh and ugly but I had a different opinion about it and thought it a sweet language when I had more intimate acquaintance with it in later years. When a French-speaking Swiss gentleman once told me that he had heard people speaking Tamil in South India and that it resembled spitting or vomiting, I could understand how the strangeness of

a language could be directly responsible for the ugly initial impression it could make, which toned into mellowness as intimacy grew. To understand a tongue well is to like it also. Tamil, when spoken by a genuine Tamilian, could be one of the sweetest languages to hear. The French Father who taught us English History in the fourth form had his own version of English History when it came to the differences between the Pope and Henry VIII. All the boys in the class had to kneel and cross themselves as the midday triple peals or chiming bells came from the adjoining Convent tower or near-by Church steeple. Education here had better shape than the miscellaneous and confused programme that was obtained in the Municipal school. It conformed at least to one set of definite values though somewhat limited and dominated by the Catholic context.

The continuity of this education, however, was again soon to be interrupted when we were admitted again for one year in the fifth form of the Maharajah's School, Trivandrum, and before I could come to the Matriculation class it was decided that the two brothers should go to Ceylon to appear for the London Matriculation which was the equivalent of graduation in the matter of admission into professional courses in England, where it was planned to send us for higher studies later on. Another kind of education awaited us in Ceylon.

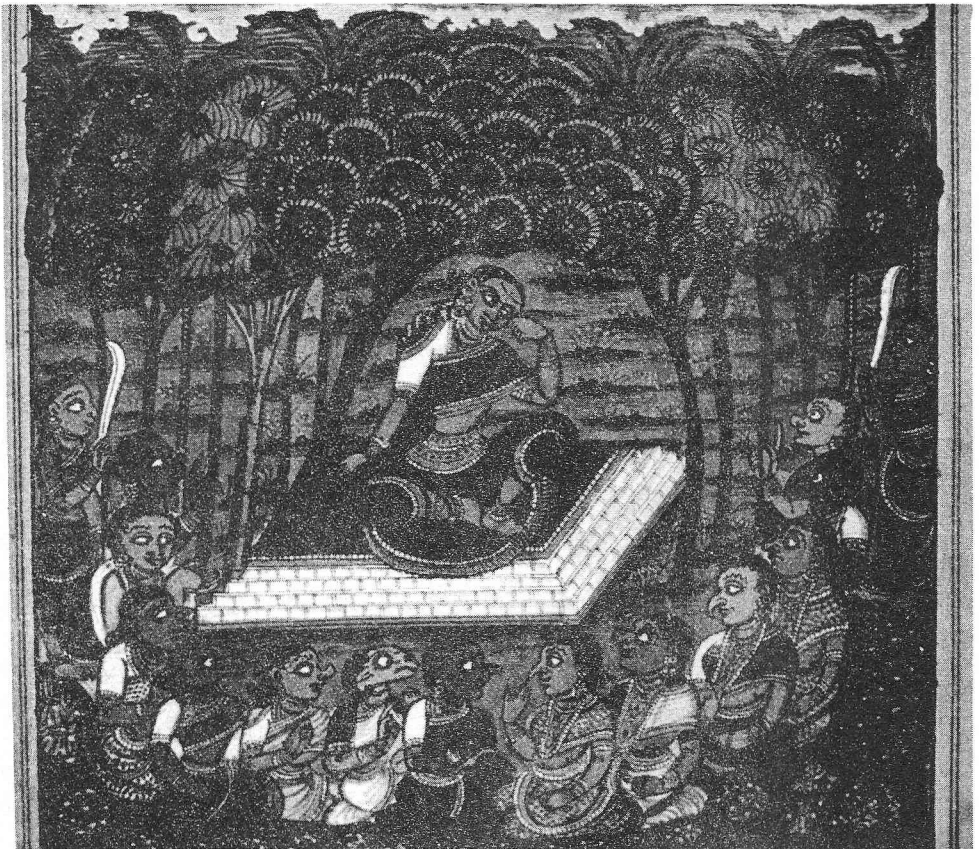
First Nostalgic Experience

My early schooling in India itself had a miscellaneous character with a multiplicity of media of teaching as between the various regions within which it had to take shape, if it had any shape at all. The transition from this education into a regular

English Public School outside India was more abrupt and implied a harder note in the gentle weaning -- which the process of education was supposed to be by those who understood its secrets.

It was with a lump in my throat and a mist in my eyes that I saw the ground receding behind as the horse and cart took me to the Bangalore Railway Station after I had said good-bye to all at the house where my early years were spent in security and happiness. I was to cross the seas after a few days in Madras to prepare for the life in the Trinity College, at Kandy on the island of Ceylon. As I progressed in the cart, I recognized for the first time that strange feeling within that overwhelms the spirit of man, however brave or mature he might otherwise be, of a certain attachment to one's country. Whether called love of native land or understood in harsher terms as patriotism calling for sacrifices sometimes, or penalties, there is down in the heart of all some feeling that one must have experienced at one time or another in one's

life, which comes under the name of nostalgia which, like its kindred maladies like love-sickness or sea-sickness, is part of the human make-up and given to none of us to escape altogether. One is said to love the ashes of his fathers or the temples of his gods when patriotism gets mixed with religious sentiment and nationalism can contain a blend of both. To emancipate man gently from the trammels and obligations of the voice of such a "stern daughter of the voice of God" which can even induce noble minds to suicidal fanaticism in extreme cases, is perhaps the greatest humanizing influence of a good education. Kalidasa makes his Kanva Rishi, in his *Sakuntala*, describe similar sentiments when he is overwhelmed by thoughts of the impending departure of his adopted daughter and wonders justly that no one however detached could be wholly devoid of such feelings. To be fully human and yet remain above instinctive sentimentality involves a normalization which is the task of a good education to accomplish.



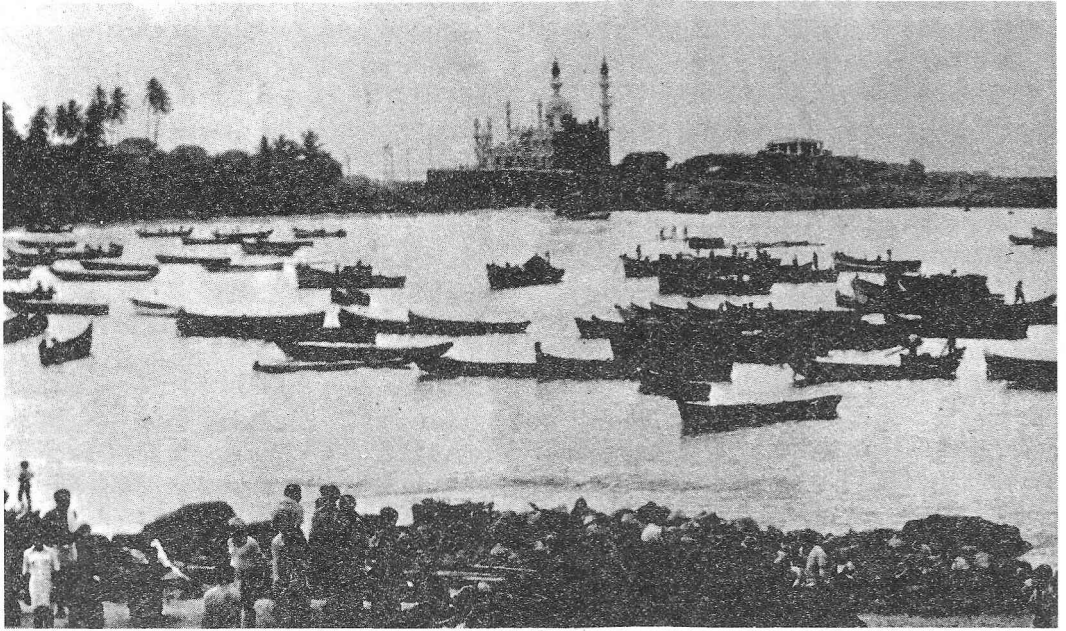
The cool breeze of Bangalore which waved the trees, the favorite playgrounds, pets and mates, not to mention parents and sisters were to be left behind for years and the prospect seemed bleak and colourless as we arrived at Madras among a group of Ceylon students who were studying medicine in Madras. The vaporous sultry days and listlessness that induced lack of taste for food and disinterested lassitude towards persons had the same nostalgic touch implied and spoiled all zest in living. Life seemed for a time empty of purpose and thus without any value. Something dear has to regulate life both from inside as well as outside. Loneliness and worry from which people suffer could be traced back to varieties of the same nostalgia in a general sense. Much poetry and music too are basically nostalgic in character. Counteracted, however much, by the opposite sentiment of love of adventure or wanderlust, it was the negative feeling that scored over the positive one while I passed through Madras and, after a short halt with friends, took train for Tuticorin, where a good ship of the British India Steam Navigation Company plied on certain weekdays as ferry boat between Colombo and that port.

First Crossing the Sea

From the world of the backwaters of Malabar to the experience of crossing the sea for a whole night in bad weather was an experience in itself. The contact with ships opened up for me the vista of a mercantile world of which I was innocent till then. If I had not made this contact sufficiently early I would have remained a stranger to a great part of what is interesting in English literature itself. Seafaring and adventure are part and parcel of English life and, bad as I was in respect of sea-legs, and prone to sea-sickness, the first contacts with this world of the civilized West had a strange effect on me. Before embarking we had to stay in a hotel for the night at Tuticorin, run by an Indian Christian with a Portuguese name, where we got a room for the night. This was because there was one more day for the ship to sail to Colombo by its schedule, which we did not carefully scru-

tinize before starting from Madras. The only hotel which was available was in a big colonial style building and was in reality not meant for catering any food that was edible, for it specialized in drinks for the sale of which the boarding department seemed only an excuse. While we were served with a meal that was only fit for a dog, next to the dining room, I could see two Europeans having drinks at the proper dining table. One of them resembled a character in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, or like a crook portrayed in Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*. His mate was pouring out some drink for him. The man who poured out the drink took only two or three glasses while the other proceeded in geometrical progression and both walked off after an hour or so of drinking. When we were at the pier at ten the next morning there was a drunken sailor lying as if dead on a chest in the hot sun, his face all red and with a dripping from his nose which dropped continually on the ground. I could recognize the same victim of the generosity of the previous scene. I took some time to piece the two pictures together as related through cause and effect and even today the full significance of this peep into civilization that I was given so early in my life remains to be fully elaborated in all its bearings in my mind. My recent reading of Voltaire's *Candide* has helped me very much in this matter. I am glad to say that the innocence with which I looked upon that first, which surely must of had a subtle subconscious effect on me, has not been totally wiped off from my nature in spite of two visits to America and about four visits to Europe with a total stay of about a decade exposed to what is called "Western Civilization."

Life in a medium sized British ship as it went full steam ahead over the Indian Ocean, where the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal mixed their waters and strange winds winged across the endless expanses of the waters, with league-long wings outstretched in which my soul must have participated through actual contact or by mental representation put me in a strange mood unfelt before. I looked round the



ship's inside and stood on the deck but before we were many hours away from shore the sun fell and all was dark. The cabin and the closed porthole left a security from Nature in whose arms we rocked trusting to the intelligence of those who made the ship and to that of the Captain who guided it, who must have been sitting at its helm guiding it from rocks and shoals. There was no other go but to trust to these powers. After a dinner served in Western style without rice unless asked for, I tucked myself into the well-made bed with just a foretaste of sea-sickness coming on me. While denying it, I had to press my lips together to swallow saliva now and then, as the pitching and rolling developed more and more. Soon, sleep, that gentlest of all nurses, came to my consolation and all was effaced for me till the sunlight streamed through the porthole and land was announced to be sighted next morning.

I politely said "Good Morning" to the fellow passenger and hastened to peep through the porthole, and there was Colombo revealed to view before me, as it was in the days before the first world war. Although modern Colombo has lost much of its character of old colonialism with its victorias and rickshaws and although new streamlined buildings are now seen here and there breaking the monotony of the

skyline, the musty smell of Western mercantilism still lingers here giving to the chief city of the ancient island of Lanka a touch that is not altogether its own. The smell of fish and the waving of coconut palms, with the warm seas and beaches, are not unlike the shores of Malabar; but Colombo is more open to the highways of trade routes, both ancient and modern, and the people represent a timeless civilization in which many currents and cross currents have made their contribution through ages. A light hearted lively people live here side by side with outcrops of deep strata of races bound to the land and a mixture of seafaring adventurers from the Western world who themselves become evident as substratifications with Burgher, Singhalese, Tamil and Moor. The harbour with its breakwaters with palm beaches all round and a city with tall hotels and commercial buildings and shrines, both Buddhist and Hindu, interspersed, where tram lines and bullock carts crossed or overtook rickshaws, and some cars -- that was Colombo of nearly fifty years ago. After staying at Cinnamon Gardens and in the city itself, we soon found our way to Kandy.

Trinity College, Kandy

Nesting in the hilly central part of Ceylon amidst the greenery of the vegeta-

tion with its lawns and sumptuous parks is that ancient capital of the Kandyan kings who, like highland clans of the Scottish lake district, once exercised their regime. The sunlit lake that gleamed in the very centre of this pretty hill-station with its neat hotels and the famous Temple of the Sacred Tooth where the relic of Buddha is believed to have been preserved through the two millennia or more, gave to this picturesque little town a setting and an atmosphere all its own. Round the lake there persists some of the vihāras where Buddhist priests, young and old, live by daily rounds of begging, as they did at least a thousand years ago. This very depth in time gave a dimension to the setting which few towns elsewhere in the orient enjoy. The yellow robe clinging gracefully to slim bodies, the shaven head and the begging bowl with the palmyra fan with which glare of the sun as well as the curiosity of the onlookers might have been meant to be warded off, Buddhist Bhikshus went about here in spite of the vulgar mercantilism that was corroding into the life of this little paradise from the coastal periphery of the island. Adam's Peak, which is the highest point on the central massive crags of Lanka, was associated with Śiva as well as Buddha and drew pilgrims from those of Islamic faith also once a year.

Trinity College, Kandy, was a full-hedged public school that was started by the Church Missionary Society, not far from the lake and the Temple of the Tooth. It represented the zeal of some Englishmen under the leadership of Reverend A.G. Fraser, the Principal, to combine in one institution what was the best in the message of Jesus and what Western civilization had to offer to far-flung parts of the Empire for the glory of that Empire and that of God at the same time. The intentions were perfectly genuine but some of the means and shapes that this zeal took were not altogether free from certain elements that cut at the root of the notion of true civilization in a human and universally valid sense. As H.G. Wells has strikingly revealed in his book called *The Great Schoolmaster*, referring to the life of Sanderson of Oundle, who

was a headmaster and who fell martyr to the inner conflict implied in the two slogans by which his own school inspired itself, which were to "love one's neighbor as oneself" and "Rule Britannia," the great teacher falling dead, as the author describes, while he was witness, when presiding over the school day. The headmaster was referring to the above conflict in so many words, with some visible emotion. At the core of the doubled-sided value that his zeal represented there was hiding a conflict which modern education has not even today succeeded in resolving. When we find that certain church services allow soldiers fully armed to their teeth to offer their prayers of a Sunday in some of the most important churches of the capitals, such as New Delhi, even now, it is not difficult to see how a sensitive teacher who took his educational rule seriously as a life mission should have paid the ultimate possible penalty in the name of the conflict left unsolved by educationalists even today.

Hardihood in the Name of the Lamb of God

Alison House was a big dormitory in which a hundred students, all boarders, with their Master in charge were lodged. I had my bed fixed at the corner of the main entrance to this spacious hall and, with all my belongings, had hardly settled down on the very first day of my admission when in the afternoon a cross country run of four or five miles in drizzling rain was announced by a bell in the dining hall. I had not yet had time to read the notice about this but was roughly ushered out of the hall by the prefects who followed like hounds behind the hares. The whole school was out and the first excuses which I made saying that I was running a temperature were pooh-poohed away by the teacher in charge. My temperature was not unconnected with my state of mind because the travel sickness and home-sickness weighed on my spirit heavily still. Bodily and physical indisposition had to be adjusted to the need of the hour and off I went, though reluctantly, following the lead of the six hundred others who went before me. Some prefects and teachers brought up the rear end and we made for

the first time the full round of the hillock behind the college. The winding road through thick wood and vistas of fine scenery here and there was called Lady Horton's walk, if I remember right. Wet and tired, we returned to the dormitory just before the evening dinner bell and had very little time to wash and change into dry clothes.

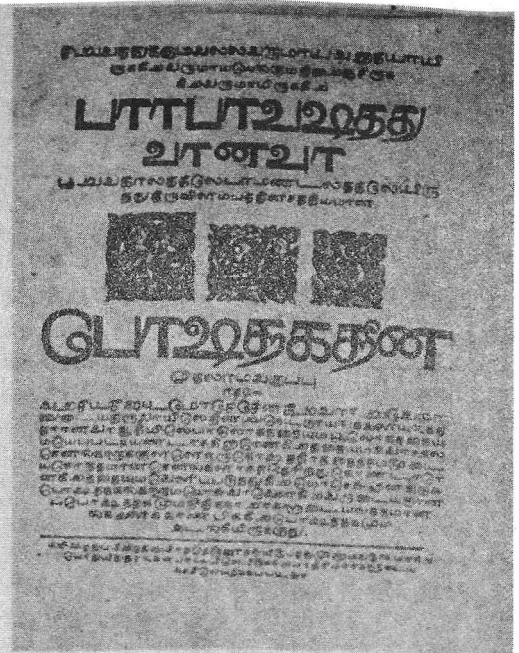
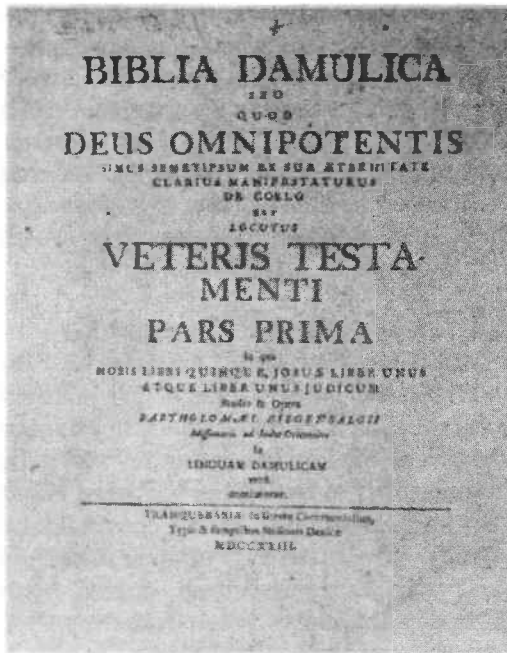
One item on the time-table followed thus after another, making public school life a busy one caught in the rigid routine of which contemplation or the negative aspects of education got hardly any chance to assert themselves. The harsh game of rugby, the ragging that went on in the dormitories, occasional bullying by big brothers of less tough guys, who were at their mercy most of the time, the Latin lessons which were compulsory, the rising bell which had to be obeyed rigorously, the hasty dinners in which instead of learning polite table manners of 'give and take', 'first come first serve' conditions prevailed to the detriment of the less assertive younger brothers brought up in gentle ways at home, the lessons that were given by six or seven European teachers direct from Oxford or from Cambridge who had the exacting ways with lessons understood in the European tradition which was mostly beyond the reach of children brought up with other vernaculars than English in other parts of Asia, the debates and speech-days with the exams and tests that came quite often, home tasks and vacations, made life in the public school full of outside events meant for making a hardy gentleman as understood on the English soil. The far-flung Empire needed talents for domination and administration of people who did not have the gun with them. They had also to be civilized in another inner sense so as to integrate them into one solid body within which give and take would build up a larger commonwealth for the mutual benefit of all its members. Education for citizenship had to be blended with education for making a moral and spiritual man whose life was at one with the great human family. One needed generosity and gentleness and the other a certain harsh attitude

of the colonial adventurer. The conflict implied in these two ideals treated together had not been faced in educational theory except by Rousseau but even well informed Englishmen like H.G. Wells (as he states outright in his *World History*) considered Rousseau a sentimental hypochondriac whose educational theories were worth nothing.

The Sunday and the Week Day Duality

Sundays were fully observed as Sabbath days at Trinity College. We brushed our shoes and polished them in advance and were lined up in our Sunday best to be marched off to the school chapel at about ten in the morning. A long church litany with hymns sung and refrains, responses and prayers interspersed, ending with benedictions and a sermon from the pulpit, were all regularly gone through. On certain Sunday evenings Christianity was presented as a rival religion to that of the Buddha and then one heard cheap religious propaganda that brought down the dignity of both these great names involved, as they had to be treated as belonging to the cheap competitive level of mere marketable commodities or patent medicines. The vulgar spirit of the salesman prevailed over any attitude that could be called spiritual. Expert proselytizing techniques were sometimes employed that did little credit to the high subject. Odious comparisons were established to bring discredit to one as against the other. The unjustness of these claims hurt the sensitive souls of many persons both among the propagandists and those whom these were meant to prejudice in the name of one religious group or the other. Duality which implies one standard of truth or justice for one and another for someone else always hurts the collective consciousness of man which cannot divide man into any strict compartments of sheep or of goats.

There was another cruder conflict still which tore the soul more drastically, which implied a duality too between the ideals held up on Sundays as against those that were presented on week days. The school cadet corps had to carry its rifles and go for



its practices of skirmishes and shooting exercises in which the very persons who preached with robes from the pulpit taught in another uniform, man to kill brother man. There was no philosophy which bridged the gulf between the blatant duality involved here. It is true that even on weekdays there were some minutes devoted before each morning in which reference was made to 'the tremendous personality' of Jesus Christ. Christ was the only saviour of men who could absolve mankind of sins, but to transform the first commandment was normal. There was only one door between two rooms, one that was for sinners and the other for those who were to be saved or were already saved and Christ kept that door, it was taught. Prophetic religions as opposed to those in the Orient which pinned their faith as much on values here as well as the hereafter had a certain zeal for the sublime which sometimes made them fall from the heights of sublimity to something so ridiculous that they often left a poor impression on the hearers. Sometimes the effect was the opposite of what was intended and I can remember that I myself indulged in some anti-Christian talk now and then and secretly read books and pamphlets then distributed from England by the Rationalist Press As-

sociation and avidly read Ingersoll and Spencer, thus representing anti-Christ in my own way though unconsciously then.

Muddling Through Secondary School

In spite of the dualism involved in the education to which I had to submit, the days I spent at the Trinity College were those that made the greatest impression on my personality. The English have a way, as they say themselves, of 'muddling through situations' without much logic or system. The Americans go one step further in the same direction and what they look to is whether something will work or not. Between the English and the American methods of education; which were coming into vogue at that time, pragmatic ideals in education were sometimes mixed with naturalistic and even negative ones and the overall aim of making a good citizen for the Empire and a good Christian fit for the Kingdom of God, made of the educational programme a hodgepodge through which one had to muddle, so as to be licked into some sort of shape. No single educational theory guided education. Unitive education transcending mere paradox was unknown. To love India is not necessarily to hate Pakistan and this neutral attitude is a patriotism that belongs to the nonrelativis-

tic context of the Absolute. Patriotism and Nationalism, just as idolatry or any other closed or static loyalty within a group, has to be given an open and dynamic character by any education worth the name. In the light of such an outlook the education that I received at Trinity College had many drawbacks but for this reason I cannot generalize and say that it was not good at all. It raked up many problems that burnt within me as doubts which I had to solve for myself independently of what my teachers taught me in the classroom. Trinity College successfully knocked me out of oversensitiveness and a general introversion with which I was affected in early adolescence. It put me in touch with a proper English speaking world which must have done a lot of good to my language. A Mid-summer Nights Dream and The Tempest, which we were taught in the Junior and Senior Cambridge examinations, were taught by graduates recruited direct from Oxford and Cambridge. This had greater value than what was obtained in India, where a kind of Babu English often replaced the vernacularised substitute sometimes called Pidgin English. There are, however, various kinds of Pidgin English, some peculiar to Ceylon and others to Malaya, each hinging the name at the other with a superior air. Thus the Bengali would readily laugh at the Madrassite while both of them only talked their own jargon. Where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise. Ceylon boys of those days had a high opinion of the progress of Ceylon in what they considered modern developments and were proud that there were electric lights in the chapel and asked me innocently if India had electric lights too. Coming as I did from Mysore State where hydro-electric schemes came into operation quite early in the history of Asia I could laugh at the ignorance of the boys with real superiority in this matter though not in all such items.

The Madras University Matriculation was a hurdle that the best students from Ceylon of those days alone could cross. Although Indians seemed slow in adopting European dress they had an easy walk-over

in matters where studiousness and intellect counted. I was myself considered only a mediocre student while in the fifth and sixth forms in India. I was allowed to sit in the Junior Cambridge class when first admitted, but when the first terminal examinations were over, I had scored first class, first marks, to my own surprise, even in Mathematics, which was my weakest subject. I received congratulations all round and I was conducted to the Senior Cambridge class straightway without further formalities by the Principal, A.G. Fraser himself, to the surprise of the whole class. I prepared for the London Matriculation Examination and no more considered myself a dullard. The London Matrix needed a good standard of English which I tried to acquire and in Mathematics and Physics too my efforts were not in vain. The classical subject that I had chosen was Sanskrit in which I could get no guidance at all, and text books, like Bhandarkar's series, on which I had to rely, with their Latinized nomenclature side by side with Sanskrit ones, confused me further. The syntax was a bugbear and the Sanskrit names for tenses and the irregular declensions and conjugations had no rival in any language except perhaps German, which I tried a hand at many decades later and gave up in despair. I could translate from Sanskrit into English quite easily, although the reverse exercise was more of an uphill task. When it came to grammatical questions involving rules with a series of exceptions, my patience often gave way. One has to learn a language by actually using it as children do at first and then enter the intricacies of grammar. If the latter is taken up first, with all brains except the best gifted for theoretical studies, failure has to be taken to be normal.

Break in Studies and Return to India

After more than two terms done at the Trinity College in which preparatory work was done in view of the London Matriculation, it was decided that a correspondence course done from the family home at Trivandrum where, because of transfer of the father and other reasons, the family had moved from Bangalore, would be more

satisfactory than a public school life with so many diversions. The Bogambra Green where the boys went for ruggar matches and cricket, which figured prominently in the formation of the young gentleman of England, as in Eton or in Harrow, had their exacting demands on health and energy. The humidity of Ceylon told on the health and every time that we played a match, some horse leeches were sure to creep under the stockings and be discovered much later bloated with precious blood that they had silently sucked. To pull them out was bad in that the salivary secretion meant for keeping the blood from coagulating while the leech sucked could not get extracted from the blood and often left a festering sore hard to cure through many weeks. The class lessons did not directly cover the portions required for the examination that was to be taken in one year. At the end of the second term, I therefore returned to Trivandrum and lived in a newly purchased bungalow overlooking the lake in the public park there which was duly named Park View. Correspondence lessons from the University Tutorial College, London came there and thus studies were continued without regular schooling. To master Physics or Chemistry without laboratory work or regular class lessons was not easy work and I did not have sufficient will power to cope with the demands of the situation.

I loved literature and even secretly indulged in composing poems. First it was a simple poem about a boy who grazed a buffalo on the slopes of Adam's Peak where we happened to go on an excursion. He was called Girbir Gulab, at least in my poem, and with my scanty knowledge of scanning and metre I adopted the iambic tetra-metre for the poem that consisted of about twenty-five verses. It told the simple story of the buffalo boy and how he rode on the back of animals while he grazed them in a pastoral paradise. The style of William Wordsworth had influenced me subconsciously. Even previously to this I had tried my hand at a full-hedged sonnet which described sunrise as seen from Adam's Peak which we had climbed just before my

coming to India. I had a big bound note book with the ambitious title of "The Complete Poetical Work of P. Natarajan" written in flowery handwriting on its first page. After a few years of this secret hobby which I was hiding away from elders in the house, who might have wished me to take to more serious studies, in which many more sonnets and poems accumulated in due course, I consigned this precious volume to the flames, saying to myself that I did not after all want to be a poet. To change one's mind is the privilege of youth characterized by erratic enthusiasms. This was the beginning and end of my career as a poet but exercises with phrase making and with rhyme have stood me in good stead all my life although my ambitious poethood itself was shut out. Physics and Mathematics demanded my attention but the will-power to master these comparatively dry subjects was not in me. I trudged along, however, as best as I could manage and returned to Trinity College again for a further period of schooling. This time I was not a boarder but stayed in the main street of Kandy with a family from Jaffna of the name of Saravanamuttu who was a lawyer. In spite of the difference of the actual subjects taught at school and the requirements of the London Matriculation, I was preparing for the examination to be held at the end of the year. I was thrown on my own resources in mastering many items of the programme of studies. In the matter of Sanskrit I had no help at all. No wonder, therefore, that when I sat for the examination and the actual paper in Sanskrit, composed and printed in London, happened to be an elaborate and stiff one, printed in a different script than the one I was familiar with, I failed in that subject, having answered but a few of the questions properly. Rumbings of the war clouds of the first world war were already beginning to be heard when, after sitting for the examination in Colombo, we sailed back to India. My early education was thus a miscellaneous and amorphous one and left me confused and very little confident about my own powers with many changes and set-backs.

(Continued in next issue.)

Journey to Eternity

What is the meaning of God?

"Nothing."

What is the meaning of nothing?

"Fulfillment."

What is the meaning of fulfillment?

"Silence."

What is the meaning of silence?

"Buddha."

Who is Buddha?

"I can't say."

Why?

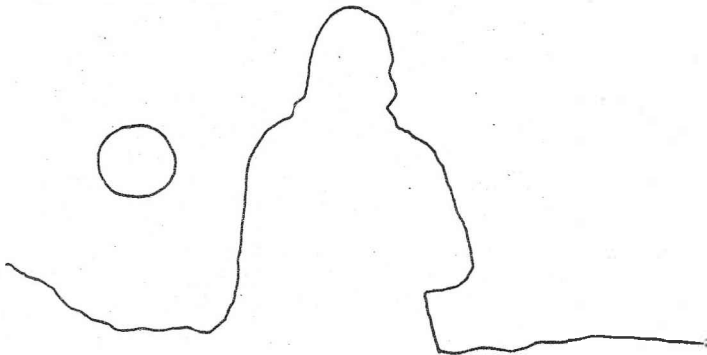
"Buddha is Eternity."

Oh! My dear I am sorry.

Now, you become Buddha.

"....."

Showkath



An Intelligent Person's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

PREFACE

We live in an age of critical enquiry. Until recently proof and demonstration were considered the criterion of truth. But the advancement of mathematics and physics has now outmoded the demand for experimental verification to establish truth. The certitude of truth depends on the application of a dialectical method, which can take us even beyond the realm of logical deduction and induction. Such a method was known to our ancients. Many times it was lost and rediscovered (*Bhagavad Gītā*, IV:2). This method is known to the *Bhagavad Gītā* as *yoga* and Plato called it *dialectics*. In this work the same method is employed with a view to interpret the symbolism of religious worship in India. We make no claim that it is exhaustive either in its scope or in its method. It is only written to evoke an interest in the mind of young people who look for an intelligent interpretation of temple imagery and religious ritual which might otherwise appear to be a crude representation of superstitious imagination.

For the interpretation of symbols on the basis of traditional psychology I am deeply indebted to Sadhu Ekarasa (Dr. G. H. Mees, MA, LL.D., etc.). For those who like to have a deeper study of the subject, his three major works, *The Book of the Signs*, *The Book of the Stars*, and *The Book of the Battles*, will be of great use.

For the dialectical method applied here and the historical sequence cited to show the stages of spiritual revaluation in India, I was mainly depending on my own Guru, Nataraja Guru. His authentic book, *The Word of the Guru* was of great help to me in

deciphering the stone language of Hinduism. If in the application of his method, I have erred anywhere, the blame is only mine.

FOREWORD

All who want to understand the spirituality of India as it manifests through idols and temples and the strange tales of the Gods, will find in this little book just the thing they need. In simple language Nitya Chaitanya Yati has managed by some wonderful capacity as a teacher to give here the essence of whole volumes of philosophy, as well as unfold some of the great mysteries and secrets of the Indian view of life.

The written word as far as spirituality goes is of comparatively recent date, perhaps a few thousand years old. But long prior to that, there existed other and equally significant methods of conveying spiritual teachings. Through symbol in wood, stone and metal, through remembered legends, and through ritual, many a deep message for the help of the seeker of wisdom was preserved. Even the written word of wisdom teaching has always employed a special language of its own, a *lingua mystica*, abounding in strange parables, enigmas, paradoxes, and even apparent contradictions. All these ways belong together. Their main objective is to lure the seeker away from the fixed grooves of thought and to introduce him to the absolutist or divine mode of perception and thinking.

Behind the creation of these methods, there have always been the wise men or Gurus. This is common to all religions. It

is not only Hinduism which adopts the striking symbol of the yogi, the Guru model, who sits with his disciples beneath a tree, and more often than not, teaches the highest wisdom by a pregnant silence. On the seals of pre-Vedic, and pre-Āryan Mohenjo-Daro we find this strange yogic figure. We have it in the figures of the Jaina heroes of the spirit, as we have it also in the figures of the Buddha and the Boddhisattvas.

It is as a true disciple of the Guru tradition of India that we must understand the author. He is not just an outside speculator writing by guesswork on this subject. He himself has been taught by a Guru, and that touch makes all the vital difference between his contribution and what might come perhaps by mere scholarship. He knows what he is writing about, as a disciple, as a philosopher, as one deeply interested in this whole subject of bringing people to the path where they can walk themselves towards the great goal of self-understanding or spiritual liberation. It will be evident to anyone that he has a width of scholarship himself far in excess of what he has ventured to express here. But in the interest of clarity, and because of a need to make this treatise as simple as possible, he has restrained himself.

Many readers will no doubt join me, not only in wishing the widest circulation for this book among all temple-goers and perhaps even more so among those who sneer at idols, but also in hoping that the author will write many more such books, for real works of qualified writers are all too few in this most difficult of all literary fields.

It is not only Hinduism, not only India, to whom Nitya Chaitanya Yati has done a great service, but to all seekers of wisdom everywhere. He has not taken away anything from the glory of the subject by "explaining" the divine figures. He has rather increased their value and given them a greater status than ever before. For this we are all grateful.

There should be nothing strictly wrong in referring to a true science of iconographical symbols as a major part of that

supreme science of all sciences, known as the Science of the Absolute or Brahma-vidyā. All is for the sake of the Self which is the personal equation of the universal Absolute. Ultimately it should be clear that once the meaning of all ritual, of all symbolism, of all wisdom direction is ascertained and fully understood, there arrives a cessation of all duality, of all difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. All becomes absorbed in the Central Reality. Dualistic religion merges into contemplative non-dual ecstatic religion. This work also urges the seeker towards that great end, an end which will be perceived and appreciated by the true devotee.

And somewhere on this path there is the entrance of the Guru, may be at first dimly, but stronger as the drawing together of the two polarities is reached. Whether as man-god or god-man, or as both mysteriously one, the Guru can never be omitted from such a situation. May the Guru be there when the seeker is ready to be whole-heartedly the true disciple. May the true disciple become also in turn the Guru! So may this wisdom be preserved, not in mere abstraction, but for the welfare of all. With this high aim, I am sure, this book is launched on the vast ocean of the literary world of today. May it carry its serious readers to that great and happy landing, that mighty and safe shore where they may find peace and understanding.

John Spiers

INTRODUCTION

Hinduism is a general term used to cover a vast range of religious phenomena. Among Hindus we come across people having all shades of religious faith. From down-to-earth materialists like the Cārvākas to absolute idealists like the Advaita Vedāntins, all have their respective places in the several chambers of the great family of the Hindu religion. Among them we have those who believe in a personal God and those who do not. And of course, all

do not believe in the same personal God. Each individual can have his own choice. Some choose Śiva, and others Viṣṇu, Devi, Gaṇapati, Subrahmaṇya and many other forms of God worshipped by the millions of people of India.

Henotheism

In ancient Greece also, many gods were worshipped. But the Indian approach to the pantheon of gods has one characteristic difference. Max Muller called it henotheism, i.e., worshipping one God only at a time as the Most High—the Absolute. For example, in a Śiva temple other gods are treated as demi-gods (upadevatas). Śiva himself becomes of lesser importance in a Viṣṇu temple. So we cannot charge the Hindu with polytheism, the worship at the same time of many gods. There is really no worship of a plurality of gods.

Different Conceptions of the Same God

Even the same god is not always portrayed alike. Take for instance Śiva. As Nataraja he dances with ecstasy; as Dakṣiṇamūrti he sits in calm repose with the silent gesture of a Guru; as Ardhanārīśvara he is half man and half woman. The same is the case with the Goddess Devi. As Sarasvatī, she is pleasing and benevolent, and as Bhadrākālī she is terrible. Even Viṣṇu can be either in a fighting mood as Śakra dhāra or in a yogic sleep as Ānantapadmanābha. The enigmas and paradoxes in such symbolic representations appear far too numerous. So, naturally, the mythological and iconological aspects of Hinduism do not make much sense to the common man. This gives rise to a tendency to treat Hinduism as a bundle of superstition. Such an attitude is not helpful. By denying our religion we are giving up our own spiritual and cultural heritage – and for wrong reasons, or lack of reasons. It is like cutting the roots of a tree. To save this great tradition and to get its benefit we must discover the lost meaning of its symbols. We should know why Gaṇapati is so named; why he should have an elephant's head; and why Subrahmaṇya has six heads and why he rides on a pea-

cock; and why Śiva should wear the crescent moon in his locks. This reevaluation of religious symbolic language has become today very necessary.

In the Language of Science

We live in an age of science. Our minds are so much disciplined with the logic, reasoning and principles of science that we cannot entertain notions which are vague, ambiguous or enigmatic. On the other hand our ancestors were mystical. They were highly imaginative and intuitive. They expressed themselves better through poetry and art. In Indian literature poetry appeared before scientific prose. To call a spade a spade is science. To call it a farmer's pen is poetry. Our forefathers had a taste for metaphors and allegories. Western critics may laugh at all these as anthropomorphic. But let us have patience. It is easy to mock, but difficult to assess the real value of our traditions. If we care to do any justice to the sublime imaginations of our rishis and wise men of the past, we must familiarize ourselves with the literary devices of their time. They even wanted stones and metals to speak to us concerning the eternal problems of life and the great joy they had in resolving them. The mystical language of mythology and the secret or hidden language of temple imagery becomes very interesting when we know how to translate it into the language of science.

The Main Key

If the symbols had been based on the subjective caprice of those who made them, we would never be able to correlate them to a common "language". But that is not so. We can correlate them. There is an inner principle in the network of symbolism used in the Indian religions. Both Freud and Jung agree that the sub-conscious can mold symbols of both specific and universal character which are projected in dreams. The same is also true for intuitive visions. If we classify all the symbols which occur in religious literature we can see that they fall generally into two groups, namely, those belonging to ascending dialectics and those belonging to descending dialectics. Apart

from this, symbols can be classified as belonging to the categories of earth, water, fire, air and ether.

In this essay an earnest attempt is made to throw sufficient light on all these aspects. We do not claim this to be an exhaustive treatise on the subject, but we hope at least

to evoke an interest in the mind of the intelligent man or woman so as to induce further research and study of something which is very precious to India and to us all.

(Continued in next issue.)



The Ganapati Yantra points at the identity of the macrocosm and the microcosm.

Darling Dialectics

Garry Davis

On the Occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Mahasamādhī of Nataraja Guru

While the temporal powers of states have once more prevailed in preventing my body from joining you on this joyous occasion, my thoughts, transcendent, join with yours in wonder as we contemplate Nataraja Guru's earthly visit.

I recall one day as we walked beneath the tall cedars at Fernhill, Nataraja Guru, in a conversation about wisdom, used the phrase, "my darling dialectics." I remember thinking the adjective was unusual as applied to a system of higher reasoning. But as I grew in understanding through the years, I came to realize the sublime joy the Guru felt in personifying wisdom itself throughout his being. It was as if his very cells vibrated to a higher frequency where bliss or ecstasy manifested. Indeed it was a real love affair, a state of being devoutly to be sought before all else. Jesus was said to have proclaimed that "The Truth shall set you free." Realizing the bi-polar nature of things – as Lao Tsu's *Tao Te Ching* reveals in the first chapter – is to arrive at that Truth or Tao or simply, in the Christian, Moslem and Jewish context, God/Allah/Yahweh. The effect can then render us sublimely loving...and happy.

That exalted, sublime state of Nataraja Guru – and indeed of all gurus, past and present – is what we revere today.

Now you are indeed blessed by my fellow disciple and dearest friend Guru Nitya, ever present with you keeping alive in his person the "darling dialectics" perennially taught by sages from time immemorial, exemplified in modern times by Sri Narayana Guru and our beloved

Nataraja.

As Advaita Vedanta is translated as the "Science of the Absolute," wherein pure dialectics is the course method, so then geo-dialectics may be known as the "Science of the Human Absolute," where temporal events play the main role as they relate one to another and all to the whole of humanity. To identify at once as the human actor, the act itself and the world ground of action is the bold view of the declared world citizen. In political terms, it is the sum and substance of sovereignty, eclipsing all lesser claims.

As humanity approaches the third millennium, it is not-so-slowly divesting itself of the dead "skin" of exclusive nationalism and conventional religion whose artificial borders promote division, fear, ignorance and violence. Today, space and the stars beckon one and all in increasing intensity almost as if human destiny itself was linked to the heavens as well as to Mother Earth. And well it may have been in the dim past. Those of us who today boldly claim citizenship of the human community as such may be merely the last of a vast panorama of fellow humans stretching back into antiquity who, in gazing upward, sought, in awe their holy origins.

Let us dedicate ourselves anew to the "darling dialectic" of "all for one and one for all," the at once mystical and down-to-earth formula for peace, both personal and global.

I send my blessings and love to you all in memory of the "darling dialectician," my guru, Nataraja.



East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



Village Children Enjoying the Guru Puja Feast
at Narayana Gurukula, Fernhill
March 22, 1998





Guru Nitya's Thoughts as Narayana Gurukula Joins The World Wide Web

Today we meditate on our universal belongingness to each other as children of the living Earth, Gaia. The Earth is a member of the planetary family of the Sun. The Sun is like a father continuously caring for the entire planetary system. The Sun is a star of great magnificence belonging to the Milky Way, and there are innumerable other stars with and without planets to which the Sun is like a brother. The phenomena of life is such that it originates with the simple structuring of one atom and then proliferates into countless millions. We can say that the growth phase of an atom into a multitudinous conglomeration marks an evolutionary process even of the starry heavens. Such is the system of the universal growth of anything. In the same way that all the atoms are inter-related, all stars of the heavens are also inter-related. However small a person is, he or she is a speck of Earth. Earth shares her life with all

beings, whether one-celled bacteria or multi-celled animals like humans, birds and fish. There is thus an intimate kinship between humans and all living beings which thrive on Earth.

Universal consciousness has now been initiated by the cyber-space of the internet. Cyber-space now presents the possibility of providing a universal mind to all. Human beings are animals which have the special talent to complete quantitative factors to create qualitative effects. This ability to computerize has now generated a World Wide Web where the consciousness of one person can respond to the consciousness of many. The greatest victory made by the W.W.W. is the annulling of all frontiers that have existed between state-owned areas. Now the sky has become one singular friendly sky for all. Until recently this idea of cyber freedom belonged only to the Sun and Moon and the starry heavens.

From solar energy came life, light and replicas of the one world in consciousness. Now, in the same manner, the World Wide Web is providing a path of freedom for any thinking person to connect with any other thinking person who is willing to share his or her joy and knowledge. That gives a new dimension to consciousness. Countless millions of new possibilities have suddenly sprung up. Any home can be the central home of the whole world, without negating its own uniqueness and identity. But that makes each person more responsible to maintain his or dignity, in the chivalrous spirit of caring for one's neighbor, too.

Until now wisdom and the ability to enjoy the mysteries of the world were monopolized by individuals or institutions. Now it is as if all the doors of private monopoly are flung open. A song sung by a lone person can now belong to the whole world. No invention or discovery can be privately patented any more. This freedom we enjoyed previously only in warming ourselves in the sunshine or keeping our companionship with the moon which provides us with her celestial company as we dream our poetic thoughts.

The uniqueness of a human being lies

in the ability to respond, not only to fellow beings, but also to every aspect of nature. We respond to the promises of earth, rain-bearing clouds and changing climatic influences, making ourselves quite at home with our world. Today no problem is a private or personal problem; it is a problem of life on earth. That makes us a million times more responsible than ever before. Corrupting or polluting one mind can become the devastation of the future promises of life.

We have the good tidings of the Internet as well as the tragedy of a universal holocaust which can happen any time. That is why we cannot leave our brothers or neighbors to take care of themselves. There is only one pulsating heart and that is the heart of the universe. We have to adjust all our pulsations in empathy with Earth's heart beat. The twenty-first century is still two years distant. But we are already in the world of amazing unity and unimaginable vastness. Fortunately nobody is alone. We can hold our hands together everywhere and reassure ourselves that we can rise as one body to maintain the decorum of our universal friendship. ❖

Welcome

to the Opening of The New Home of

Narayana Gurukula and East-West University

on the World Wide Web

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/4241/>

Summer Solstice, June 21, 1998



Sri Seshadri Bhagavatar
Carnatic Music Concert, March 19, 1998

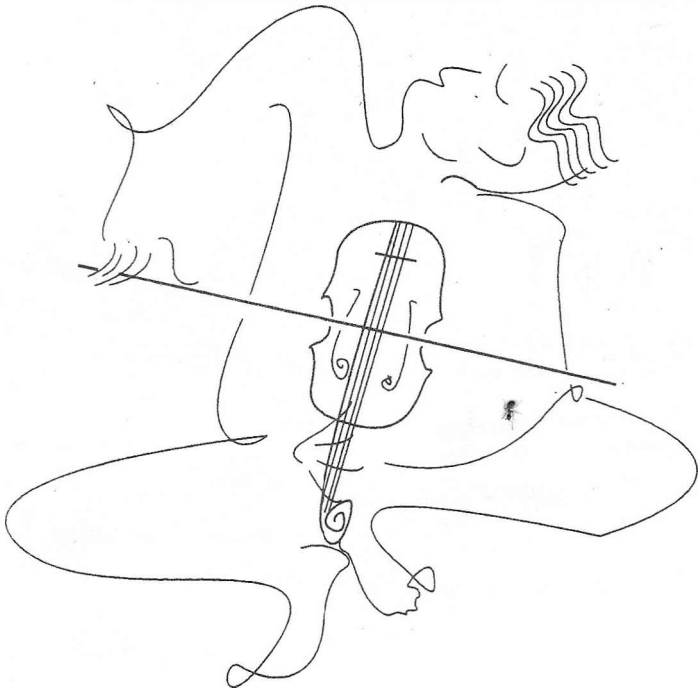


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