

GURUKULAM

VOLUME XIV • 1998

THIRD QUARTER





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- 3 BRINGING THE RAIN by Nancy Yeilding
- 5 THE SCIENCE OF HARMONIOUS UNION
Commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*
by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 16 ONE HUNDRED VERSES OF SELF-INSTRUCTION:
Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*
Translation and Commentary by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 22 BAMBOO AND BUTTERFLY by Ariana Schwartz
- 24 AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ABSOLUTIST
by Nataraja Guru
- 33 FROM GITĀNJALI, SONG OFFERINGS by Rabindranath Tagore
- 34 THE INTELLIGENT PERSON'S GUIDE TO
THE HINDU RELIGION by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 41 EAST-WEST UNIVERSITY REPORT
AND NARAYANA GURUKULA NEWS
- 44 PHOTO AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

GURUKULAM

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Bringing the Rain

As the afternoon rain tapered off and the emerging sun turned the remaining clouds pink, I walked out to the garden with a basket to pick beans. Plump from the rain, green and purple beans hung in abundance from their vines climbing up trellises. As I plucked them, a stranger walked into the garden and greeted me with the gentle age-old gesture of joined palms.

"Oh, so it was you who brought the rain," he said. Wondering what he meant, I greeted him and offered him a fresh bean to munch. He murmured in delight as he took a bite and asked me when they had been planted.

It was easy for me to remember the bright day in late spring when I had gone to the garden with my trowel and shiny bean seeds. In the neighboring row, the peas which I had planted just as winter was fading were already hip height. Working around them, I had made a trellis of poles and rough twine for the beans to grow up. "About two and a half months ago," I replied, wishing I could share the joy of putting my hands into the warming earth to prepare small beds for the beans to sleep in until water and the sun's warmth on the soil would cause them to burst open, sending a sprout above and roots below. It had felt as though my heart was singing them a growing song.

My voice must somehow have conveyed my feelings because he said, "Ah, you harmonized with life's energy."

"Something like that, I guess," I mused, but then had to chuckle, remembering how I most definitely had not felt in harmony with the life force of the slugs which had devastated several plants when they were just opening their first two leaves. I explained my chuckle to him, describing how, when the plants were young, I had gone on "slug patrol" early each dawn and late each night, by flashlight, picking the slugs off the tender plants and relocating them far away with

strong admonitions to leave the tender garden plants alone.

"Well," he replied, "that is part of the dharma which you properly conform to as a gardener. The universe is a constant cycle of becoming and dissolution which each of us has an inescapable part in." I could no longer contain my curiosity about who my visitor was, so I asked him. He said, "People call me Jaimini and give me credit for the school of Karma Mīmāṃsā in ancient India philosophy. I tried to summarize centuries of reflection (*mīmāṃsā*) about ritual which is essentially a science of subtle correspondences."

I replied, "I have read some of your writing, but I have to admit I found it to be very scholastic. I don't think I would ever have associated it with gardening."

He sighed, "Yes, I know. I seem to have been petrified between the covers of huge books. But what I was talking about wasn't dry, it was the fabric of life itself, which every gardener is part of. When I studied the *Vedas*, I was inspired by the vivid beauty of their images and emotions. Listen:

*Instill in me abundantly that fragrance,
O Mother Earth, which emanates from you
and from your plants and waters,
that sweet perfume
that all celestial beings are wont to emit,
and let no enemy ever wish us ill! * (p. 125)*

*When Breath of Life with his thunder
roars o'er the plants,
then pregnant with pollen,
the flowers burst forth in abundance!*

*When Breath has poured down with the rain
upon the vast earth,
then plants come forth
and herbs of every sort. * (p 206-7)*

*Brimful of sweetness is the grain,
brimful of sweetness are my words;
when everything is a thousand times sweet,*

how can I not prosper?

*As a spring gushes forth in a hundred,
a thousand, streams,
and yet stays inexhaustible,
so in a thousand streams may our corn
flow inexhaustibly!*

*Three measures I apportion to the Spirits,
four measures to the mistress of the house,
while you I touch with the amplest measure
(of all that the field has yielded).*

*Reaper and Garnerer are your two
distributors, O Lord of creation.
May they convey hither an ample store
of riches never decreasing! " * (p. 273)*

* *The Vedic Experience*, Raimundo Panikkar, All India Books, 1977.

"Yes. those are beautiful," I said.

"You can also hear in these verses the longing of humans to better understand the workings of the universe and to experience more harmony. Sacrificial rituals offered them ways to do that," Jaimini explained.

"How?"

"The indestructible universe itself is a perpetual rite of sacrifice. Before my time this was expressed poetically by the seers as being composed of the fiery principle that is both the source of all as well as that which devours. They saw it as being eternally paired with the offering, the substance on which the fiery principle lives.

I loved the poetry of the ancient seers and also saw that underlying it was a truth that could be seen scientifically. There are subtle correspondences between the forces of nature of which our energies are an integral part. The on-going cosmic sacrifice was symbolized by the placing of offerings such as edible foods into a household sacrificial fire. The offerings were accompanied by songs and chants. The purpose of the whole performance was to keep people aware of their role in the eternal principles of creation and dissolution. However, like anything else, it could be done mindlessly. I wanted to remind people of the meaning inherent in

their every sound and every action."

"Well, humanity today still has a crying need for more understanding of the true nature of existence and more harmony with it," I said. "But the elaborate rituals of your time frankly offer no help at all to modern people."

"Oh, I know," he said, "but the underlying meaning of them is still valid. It is a part of something as practical and ordinary as your garden."

"Well, I certainly do feel a great sense of harmony and peace whenever I am working in it."

Jaimini asked, "You do it very consciously and willingly, don't you?"

"Yes, I start planning the next year's garden in the winter, almost as soon as I finish putting the garden to bed each autumn. The changing seasons create a rhythm of changing tasks which has emerged over the years. It is like a year-long dance which brings great joy."

"That's it," he said. "Your willing participation brings you fulfillment."

"You know, the strange thing is that even when something I plant doesn't come up, or is eaten by slugs or deer, and we don't get to enjoy the fruits of my labor like we will enjoy these beans, the over-all process is still a fulfilling and happy one."

"Yes, the value of sacrificial action cannot be measured in terms of any obvious sense of gain or loss. The important results are those that come from the awakening and harmonizing of inner and outer energies. There is a concordance between the macrocosm and the microcosm, the inner psychological and physiological functions of the human body and the outer functions of the universe. The *Gītā* describes it this way: *Food is the cause of beings and from rain food is produced; sacrifice has its effect in rain and sacrifice has its origin in action.*

"Remembering the way he had greeted me, I asked, "Is that what you were referring to when you said that I brought the rain?"

He smiled mysteriously as he plucked a few more beans to add to my basket.

Nancy Yeilding

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:13

etena bhūtendriyeṣu dharma lakṣaṇāvasthā pariṇāmā vyākhyātāḥ

etena - by this

bhūta - in the objective phenomena, elements

indriyeṣu - in the sense organs, instrumental phenomena

dharma - property, inherent quality, law

lakṣaṇa - characteristic, mark

avasthā - condition

pariṇāmā - transformations

vyākhyātāḥ - are explained

By this (the prior aphorisms), the transformations of inherent quality, characteristic and condition in the objective phenomena and the sense organs are also explained.

In the case of *Homo Sapiens* the ground of consciousness is the Self, *ātman*. As the Self has to sustain all the functions of individuation, one's characteristic *modus operandi* is held intact by the Self-luminous light of consciousness. This is one's *dharma*, the animated nucleus of a person's life.

From this longitudinal inner light, a living person's secondary quality of cerebration, general awareness, sensory perception, and the binary function of subjectivity and objectification come. This is the mark (*lakṣaṇa*) of the horizontal elaboration of *dharma*. The functioning of a person within the frame of time-space continuum in the transactional world of waking,

dreaming and sleeping is one's condition (*avasthā*) for a life time.

Dharma, *lakṣaṇa* and *avasthā* are the three contiguous elaborations of the Self in all manifested beings. Manifestation is the coming together, as if from opposite sides, of inertial elemental matter (*jada*) and the Self luminous, spontaneously maneuvering spirit (*cit*). A living organism is a confection of a mass evolved out of five elements (*bhūta*), *ākāśa*, air, fire, water and earth. *Ākāśa* is the unobstructed space-donating principle. It is neither matter nor spirit. It has a passive neutrality of its own and is the most subtle of all elements. It is called an element because of its prior existence before any other manifestation. *Ākāśa* has only one quality, the vibratory motion of sound. The self-existing monad of *ākāśa* is distinguished as *śabda tanmātra*. It allows the tonal monad to be carried by the monad of air which is molecular in substance. The characteristic of the air monad (*vāyu*) is tactual. In its physical manifestation as gross air, the vital breath, is the pioneer in producing all sensations. The monad of air is touch (*sparsa tanmātra*). It is an experiential entity. Air is the most formidable bridge between spirit and matter. Friction between its fine particle basis can produce thermal states. Thus air is the coordinator of all bodies held in *ākāśa*. The manifestation of thermodynamics within it is the basic architect of all creative transformation of the world stuff. Fire (*agni*) is the universal blender of all separatist tendencies in the physical formation of things. The monad of fire is

rupa tanmātra with illumination (*prakāśa*) and burning (*tejas*). It can burn and nullify shapes and forms and can thus erase names. It can fuse simple bodies of variegated nature. It can melt or boil solids to change into liquids or gases and cause combustion. The next element is water (*jala*). Its monad is taste (*rasa tanmātra*). It has sapidity. It is complementary to fire. It is a universal solvent that can restore the mobility of the frozen, especially by accommodating fire in its fold. Water is the gentlest carrier of life into parched dying molecules. Finally we come to earth, the nursery bed of all germinating forms of life. The monad of earth is smell (*gandha tanmātra*).

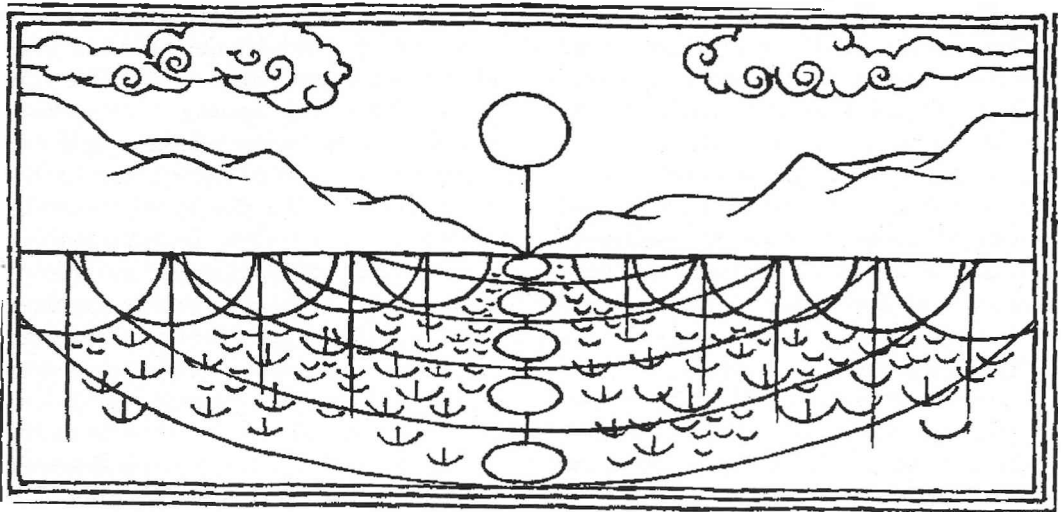
Nature (*prakṛti*) is not to be taken as dead matter. These quintuplicated monads are ready to be compensated with the four-fold emanations of the spirit of life, the organizing monitors of the self: the questioning mind (*manas*) the reservoir of memories (*citta*), the judging, intelligence (*buddhi*) and the affective core of life (*aḥamkāra*). The five elements of nature (*prakṛti*) and the four inner psychic organs (*antakaraṇa*) make an excellent harmonious blend of spirit and matter.

The mark of the five elements that constitute an animated body is its retentive cohesion by which the ideational possibility evolves in the subtlest of elements (*bhūtas*), space (*ākāśa*) in which the indistinct cause can roll the ball of manifestation, marking off a conjunction in time and space where manifestation can happen with an earmarked location (*sthana*). From there on, evolution assumes material instrumentation with spirit and matter beginning to polarize. The nucleus of awareness from which an idea can surface comes from the spirit of teleological envisioning. It is reciprocated by the movement of elemental counterparts in the *ākāśa*. Vibratory motion that can reverberate in the elements goes into the making of the organ of hearing. The *dharma* here is of the oscillating power of creation that manifests between the spirit of *puruṣa* and the biologically evolving mechanism to hear. Its distinctive mark of hearing and

listening is the sensory quality. This *dharma* of the ear to hear persists from birth to death unless the instrument is damaged. Animation of the living organism to have a sensory instrumentation is the *dharma* and its quality to become instrument of hearing is the *indriya dharma lakṣaṇa* of the faculty of hearing and listening. If the environmental facility is to listen to a beneficial (or a harmful) instruction, the training from early childhood is to utilize the instrument to grasp oral instruction. That can be called the condition of instrumentation (*avasthā*). Evolution happens vertically from the alpha of the Self, through the beta of the oscillating function of hearing and listening to arrive at the omega of the state of the evolutionary goal of becoming. Thus *dharma lakṣaṇa avasthā* are the contiguous means of evolution.

What is said here of the evolution of the hearing faculty is to be seen as the mode of evolution for the other faculties of touching and feeling, seeing and looking, tasting and savoring, smelling and discerning the odor. Whatever faculty is involved, the principle of the spirit percolating into the inertial body material is the same. In the confection of life, the spirit (*puruṣa*) and the pure stuff of matter (non-qualitative *prakṛti*) engineer the evolution of the elemental matter to become animated matter to experience sensation and sensibility (*bhūtendriya dharma pariṇāmā*). The quality engendered by the purposiveness of manifestation such as to be an organ of hearing is the evolution of instrument (*lakṣaṇa pariṇāmā*). The device serving the purpose of the individuated person from birth to death is the evolution to obtain the facilitation of the talent processed continuously through the experiencing of pain and pleasure (*avasthā pariṇāmā*).

In the process of manifestation, what is to be taken notice of is the innate generic implementation by which the evolving organism assumes a morphologic mode through which the species reveals its class. The *dharma lakṣaṇa* starts maneuvering further growth and change. It is called *vyūthana*, getting out of the indistinct stuff



to pronounce the hall mark of its uniqueness. This individuates the species. The genetic code that is to be maintained in its bodily manifestation is a must for *dharma pariṇāmā* and that automatically takes care of its morphology, physiological structure and behavioral pattern.

Other forms of life which all basically belong to the scheme, demonstrate biological purposiveness (*vyuthana*) to meet their generic class such as in a pea seed germinating into a pea plant, or an acorn germinating into an oak, or an egg of a chicken breaking out of its egg shell as a chicken, or a human baby coming out of the mother's womb.

Every *dharma* belongs to its *dharmi*, archetype. In the creative process, the archetypal mode is carried out through several inhibitions of the free flow of energy and the suppression of various tendencies that belongs to concomitant species of the same genus. Then alone does the relevant physiological capability come into the growing body to show its natural trait (*svalakṣaṇa vṛtti*). The depressive aspects of the conditional state of each class of embodied organism clearly show their personal marks of body shape, temperature, voice fixation, mode of articulation, preference of food, sexual affinity and defense mechanisms.

In the Samkhyan theory of nature modalities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* pertain to the psychosomatic basis of a living organism, especially the human being. Al-

though the three *gunas* are mentioned as separate categories, they come as a result of the binary aspects of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* represents the numinous and luminous aspects of the Self. In Vedanta, there is only one Self, and that is of the nature of pure consciousness which is unconditioned. That is not the view of the Yoga philosophy and the Samkhyan fundamentals. In both Samkhya and Yoga, the plurality of manifestation is accepted.

Samkhya accepts graded conditions of the spirit and matter in order to explain the interlacing of the numinous spirit and inertial matter. The spirit is to be understood here as the light of consciousness (*prākāśa*). When light comes as a counterpart of inertial matter, the transparency of the spirit gets compromised with inertial darkness. As a consequence, a translucency comes between the transparency of the spirit and the opacity of matter. It has no separate existence apart from the interaction between *sattva* and *tamas*. Hence the purity and clarity of the spirit can be very slightly affected by the inertial darkness of *tamas*. Similarly the opacity of inertial darkness can be slightly touched by the pure, clear *sattva*. Thus there is the transformation of both *cit* and *jada* in the field of its operation called *bhūtendriya*.

The term *bhūtendriya* is to be very clearly understood. All Indian systems of philosophy accept the five elements: *ākāśa* (time/space continuum), *vāyu* (the air that

fills wherever *ākāśa* is), *agni* (the thermodynamics of fire), *jala* (the viscous aspect of water), and *pṛthivī* (the earth in which granulations are possible). Each of these five elements has a basic monad which can come together with the others in an orderly distribution. Each element has a *lakṣaṇa* of its own. It is by the *lakṣaṇa* or mark that one entity is distinguished from another. The apportioning of the monads for the manifestation of the five elements is the initial principle of creation.

The word *vyavasthā* is to be understood as specific positioning to constitute a system. Specific attention is given to each part of a complex body. That is indicated by *vyavasthā*. It is the relation between the monads that indicates the *sthāna* of each monad. The monad should be loose enough to make conjunctions as well as disjunctions. At the same time there has to be a qualitative inherence, so that, in accordance with the property (*dharma*) of an embodied being, its coherence can be maintained as a viable relationship of stability.

Therefore any study we make of the universe should start with a principle of unity in which a law of coherence comes naturally. In each element there is a principle by which its inner stability and characteristic is separately maintained. For example, the *tanmātra* of space is sound, the *tanmātra* of air is the principal of touch or tactual inter-relationship between two monads, by which a basic bond can be kept. It is this aspect which gives air the quality both to instill life and also to promote life as a vital force. The *tanmātra* of fire is the luminous aspect of light and the dynamics that control motion and friction. A more intense relationship between monads accounts for the generation of thermal energy. Contradictory forces evolve as the particles move from subtlety to grossness. It is almost close to the relationship between fission and fusion. From there on the evolution of characteristics that are firmly retained in the physical world (*dharma pariṇāmā*) becomes more and more. The *dharma pariṇāmā* of the constituents of air, out of which bodies can be

elaborated, comes when combustion happens. It is followed by the breaking up of relationship counter-balanced by the conjoining of particles. There is a close affinity between the water element and the earth element. Only when we study the whole gamut of the characteristics of the evolution of dimensions where space becomes pronounced and events are framed by time, do we find how exactly the three nature modalities originate from the subtlety of pure light. No event happens separately in the psycho-physical world. Several causes are always interwoven in the fabrications in which we can see distinctly a temporal aspect continuously modulating every space of the *ākāśa*, which is otherwise purely unconditioned.

We should have a clear idea of how nature is evolving out of the spirit. According to the Samkhyan philosophy, if we trace back from a body to its origin, we will come to a unitary aspect with no distinctive spirit or distinctive matter. The Samkhyans call it the *avyakta* or the indefinite. There is a continuous evolution going on from an initial indistinct aspect to that which is more and more distinct. The dynamic of that is called *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is something like a nourishing energy which releases a latent power of creation. The combination of *avyakta* and *pradhāna* accounts for the primary fundamental called *mahātattva*.

Some of these basic concepts of the Samkhyan systems have been borrowed into Vedanta to make another system of structural composition. In that, what the Samkhyans call the *prakṛti* issuing out of the *puruṣa* or the principle of consciousness, is considered the negative Absolute principle of *brahman*, which Sankara calls *māyā*. In general, Vedantins accept it as *avidyā*. The same comes in modern psychology as the 'unconscious matrix'.

Whether it is in the Samkhyan sense or the Vedantic sense, every modulation has a recognizable mark which becomes a substratum for the ongoing program of more and more specific evolutions. The Vedantins consider it as a factor of horizontalization in time and space, which they

want us to recognize as an increasingly growing shadow of the primary light. They call it *adhyāropa* or *vivartha*. Whatever name we give to the functional aspects of consciousness regulated by structural secrets, it will not help us to explain away many unknown factors which give special modes of operation in a living body.

A question can be asked as to why we go into all these elaborations. The answer is that without having a full view of the elements of manifestation, one cannot bring a holistic reconstruction of one's consciousness, which is spread throughout the coordination and correlations in a living body. One's *dhāraṇā* has to find, first of all, the position (*sthāna*) of each modulated consciousness which is to be subsequently remodulated, so that it can bring a universal change in one's spiritual comprehension. It is the clouding and the conditioning into dark and clogged coordinations of consciousness that results in bondage. Only by pinpointing two opposite functions which are coexisting in every particular structure of the psychosomatic system can we find out where malfunctions and dysfunctions come.

Without changing the position of a structural entity, one cannot correct a functional deviance. When the functional deviance is corrected, certain fixations which have come in physical life become disentangled and more lucidity and flexibility come into the system. Thus from *sthāna* we go to *lakṣaṇa*, and from *lakṣaṇa* we go to the *dharma* characteristics. This is a two-way revision going from the most subtle to the gross, and from the most gross to the ultimate causal entity.

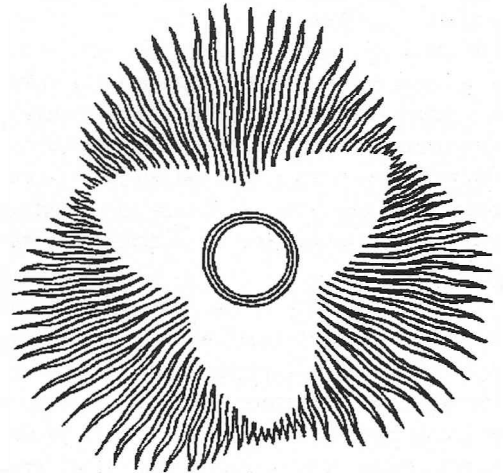
To accomplish this rather difficult restructuring of the individuated self which will stand in harmony with the universal law of harmony, the *dhāraṇā* in us is to be made very thorough. The *dharma-pariṇāmā* itself can become a *pariṇāmā* of the *dharmi*, and consequently one can re-establish the impersonal beginning from which we have come to the crystallized aspects of physical fixation. So along with *dhāraṇā*, there has to be the effort of not only visualizing what the spirit is, but also

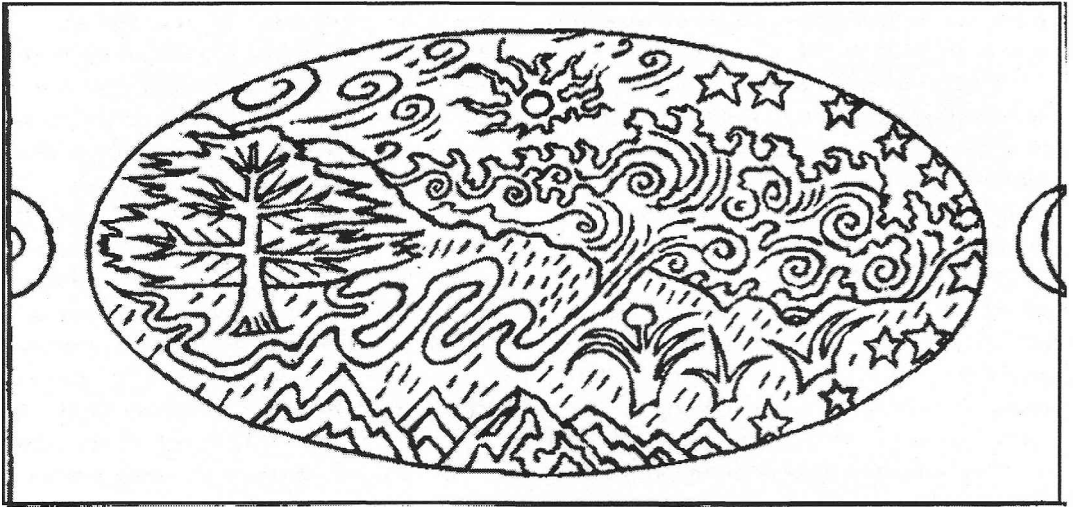
how the aloneness in the Self can be achieved as *kaivalya*. Considering all this, our body is only a very negligent part of the total scheme of human evolution and counter-devolution. This is to be realized through consistent introspection

From the Vedantic point of view, the Absolute (*brahman*) or the supreme ground of life (*ātman*), cannot be differentiated as separate entities or factors with separate existential verity. These two terms are conceived to indicate the one truth otherwise called *satyasya satya*, the Truth of truths. By convention the Absolute is looked upon from three angles of description - existence (*sat*), subsistence (*cit*) and axiological value significance (*ānanda*). *Sat* is the epistemological reference of the existential subject matter of Vedantic studies. *Cit* is the methodological reference to the self-revealing character of the Self, otherwise known as subsistence. *Ānandam* which axiologically refers to the proliferative purposefulness implied in the contiguous dynamic characters of the Self necessitates the manifestation of the phenomenal world. It is this proliferative increase and contiguity into the phenomenal, which fetches the name *brahman* for the Self.

Among the Vedantins there are different schools holding different views of the Self, *ātman*. For Sri Sankara, the Self is one (*advaita*) and unqualified (*nirguna*).

Patañjali's Yoga system is not based





on the Vedanta philosophy of Sankara; It was developed on the basis of Kapila's Samkhyan concept. The basic stand of Samkhyan philosophy admits the reality of the world. The world is not created; it is based on the self-generative principle of a binary cause in which *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are both primeval. Neither the *puruṣa* nor *prakṛti* is an evolute. But the proliferative changes in the world are evolutionary. In the individuation of a person, *jīva* is a separate *puruṣa* unlike the *puruṣa* in the Vedanta philosophy. *Prakṛti* in its unmanifested ground, is constituted of the illuminative principle of *sattva*, the evolutive principle of *rajas*, and the involutive principle of *tamas*. The presence of *puruṣa* is catalytic to formulate individuation with a separate *puruṣa* while the tri-modal nature belongs to the eternal nature or *prakṛti*. Based on these principles, Patañjali gives the doctrine of *pariṇāmā*. The Yoga system recognizes an individual's participation in nature's evolutionary dynamics, in which the spirit (*puruṣa*), influenced by *prakṛti*, can be ultimately reclaimed to the state of aloneness (*kaivalya*) through the evolution of *dharma* (*dharma-pariṇāmā*).

A yogi in *nirvikalpa samādhi* has no knowledge whatsoever and has no experience of his ego comprehending anything through the instrumentation of the senses or inner psychic organs. That state of the yogi in *turiya* resembles no state at all, and

yet such a reality is also to be conceived as having the supportive reasoning coming from the homogeneity of the Self. What supports the experience of peace and inner awareness which is not modulated with time/space specifications is looked upon as a *savikalpa* aspect of consciousness. Is it the same beingness of universal truth that is maintaining the status of *savikalpa samādhi* or not? This is a possible question that could be asked.

That is why the posterior critic makes the comment that when any conditioning (*vṛtti*) affects consciousness, the universality of consciousness becomes subjected to relativistic considerations. This is true. Epistemological truth, ontological truth and teleological truth are all to be accommodated as possibilities in the transition of a person with biologic and sensory conditioning who is struggling to become free of conditionings. For that reason, a graded step-by-step presentation is given, in which the totally unconditioned Absolute in all considerations, is to be kept apart from discursive reasoning. It is to be looked upon as transforming not substantially, but only as a temporary appearance.

Vedanta has invented another perspective in which change is seen as the superimposition of an idea on an unchanging reality. This superimposition is necessitated because a constant horizontalization is seemingly happening in

which an individual person has no ability to stop the change or erase the change. Therefore space as well as time are to be re-conceived. Space is considered as the 'here' which is marked by the mass of a body into which the idea of the Self is interjected. This is a compromise in which the cosmic phenomena of the universal being is limited to the frame of reference of time, space and mass.

At least two of these entities - time and space - are marked off distinctly by one unit of mass and another unit of mass with effective interludes between them. Then the universal time of pure duration changes its quality (*lakṣaṇa*) into that of a measurable entity, in which motion plays an upper hand. Similarly space becomes distinct only when two units of mass are looked upon with special features of conditioning. In the subjective consciousness of a perceiver the inter-space is negatively looked upon as a measurable entity between two tangible points.

This paradox of spaceless space and timeless time has been a problem for philosophers from time immemorial. That is why Spinoza and others thought of looking upon space as space-spatializing and time as time-temporalising. To get over the confusion of piling imagination on imagination, Patañjali accepts the norm of the ontological phenomena as directly belonging to *prakṛti*. By accepting the principle of evolution, a major hurdle is gotten over, so that relativistic time and relativistic space can be given their respective viability with sufficient modifications in the triple occasion of the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep. Patañjali accepts these three changing aspects in the episodes of human awareness as evolutes, and a conditioned nature, *prakṛti-vikṛti*, is attributed to *prakṛti* itself.

Thus ontological experiences are in the wakeful/dream phenomena, when the inner psychic organs are functioning without any maneuvering principle, and the subject/object is canceled out in the unconscious (*susṛpti*). Patañjali or Kapila do not encounter the unnecessary bothera-tions of Vedantins. Time is considered as

a mirror in which changes are reflected. And that is given a status for conditioning reality in the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep.

As the universal and fragmentary can both be accepted in which the universal is to be held as a principle for normalization, instead of hypothecating the state of individuals, the ontological necessity of the individual can be left to himself, because when the tri-basic aspects in *savikalpa* are forgotten, the *nirvikalpa* state takes care of itself, as there is no subject/object duality there. In this way Patañjali leaves to rest the controversy between the universal and the particular.

III:14

śāntoditāvvyapadeśya dharmānupātī dharmī

śānta - the latent, the subsided

uditā - the active, the manifest

avyapadeśya - the unmanifest, the yet to be

dharmā - the properties

anupātī - inhere, are correlated

dharmī - substratum

The substratum is that in which the properties - latent, active or unmanifested - inhere.

We often speak of the integral characteristics of humankind. In a generalized and symptomatic definition, the human is universally described as *Homo Sapiens*. In general, this means that human beings are reasoning animals.

In India, the highest goal is to preserve the most ideal value-vision of humankind, which is otherwise called *manavika sanātana dharma*. *Manavika* means pertaining to man; *sanātana* means a characteristic that is beginningless and imperishable; *dharmā* is a characteristic that cannot be differentiated from the one in whom the particular characteristic inheres. However adorable is such a concept, human beings, like any other species of the animal world, have both built-in and acquired characteristics which are promi-

nent racially, geographically, culturally, aesthetically, morally and rationally.

In the last four to five hundred years there has been a continuous mixing of blood and the grafting of genes between different groups of people who had been living in isolation for millions of years, which has now presented to the world many varieties of biological, physiological and psychological types. We can no longer hold the view that the integral characteristics which people all over the world held ten generations ago, are still maintained intact in all of us. The main changes can be seen in the morphology of individual human beings which was previously prominent in the size and shape of their skulls, teeth and certain variegations which were held unchanged for millennium, such as the hair and color of the skin. Less evident characteristics are the behavioral traits which have recently changed so much. Consequently, the general outlook of humanity is undergoing fast variations. However, biological features - such as the basic anatomical structure - is maintained, even though the size and formations of certain bones do not maintain the status quo of any set of people.

Another rapidly changing factor is the ability to compute and apply logical necessity.. As humanity is moving towards certain new goals which are hitched to the necessities of life, it has brought in sociological compulsion to compete and integrate with new trends. This has affected humanity's faith in religion, political ideology and basic social togetherness. That is why Patañjali says that the *dharma* that arises from biologic and psychological matrices to which an individual belongs cannot be clearly predicted, and it becomes vivid and known only in the present.

Thus we have before us an almost beginningless past, a historically conceivable and analyzable present and a highly speculative future. Every person is standing on the promontory of the present. The past is receding without giving him or her any time to gather from it all the treasures of his or her ancient heritage. This makes most people alien to their own previous

beliefs and to the instrumentation used by their forefathers. There is a dire need now to equip ourselves with more and more sophisticated instruments, both of the world of machines and the world of ideas. Previously, ideas and ideals belonged to an integral whole; it is no more so. Today's ideals are dictated more by the pragmatic demands of life than by any aesthetic, moral or romantic appreciation of values.

The present is a very crucial turning point, where each person has to make an immediate choice of the path to tread towards the future. Sometimes this is to be done by burning all the bridges behind. The next point is to make a new leap from the present to the future. The leap can be very risky. But there is no time to sit back and meditate on it. Stormy winds of socio-economic compulsions make every individual a bonded laborer with his hands and legs tied to someone else's unfamiliar ways of both motility and communication.

These are all opposed to the final vision of the yogi, who seeks aloneness or *kaivalya*. The present world is no longer one of free choice. It is a world where the complexity of conditioning at several levels of human life - such as the sensory, rational and the multitudes - merge into a fusion which is on one side culturally, morally and spiritually very confusing. At the same time it offers an adventurous restructuring of one's own self and fashions the environment of one's neighbor to suit one's own savage dreams. Fortunately, the veins of characteristic potentialities are such that one can select certain invulnerable forces of life, and can even succeed in promoting certain values which can open new havens of cultural regeneration. To attempt such a bold step, one has to study more deeply the implications of this *sūtra*.

The first thing to notice is the source material from which we have evolved into our present states, and then to develop a teleological insight into future possibilities. The present is always a challenge for a person. If one can avoid a total break from the past, one can treasure within oneself some of the highest accomplish-

ments of humanity as a source material to fashion the present into the actualization of one's dreams. But one should have the widest historical perspective so as not to trample upon any potential that can be of immense use in the future. Otherwise the onrush which one makes can become suicidal.

To compare these states by adopting certain known examples, we can look at a huge banyan tree or oak tree which came from either a mustard-like seed or an acorn; we see that it is holding out on its own all its characteristics, through hundreds of years or even through millennia. We also see how the potentials in rice, wheat or barley, which we sow in our fields as seasonal crops, are being transformed as new seeds with more and more sophisticated culture. The quality of wheat today is not exactly what it was hundred years ago, while the oak and the banyan tree maintain their characteristics. Similarly, we have a heritage in us, part of which is fast-changing and part of which is unchanging.

Going into one's aloneness need not necessarily be a replica of the old dream of an ancient bard, because we are forging the possibility humankind itself into a far-advanced, reformed human being with very many new insights. Our forefathers could collect only a handful of sand grains from the sea-shore, or a pint of water from their own well. Today the galaxies of stars are almost like sand to us, on the beach of the time/space continuum. We are learning how to tackle cosmic energies. So new *vibhūtis* are in the offing, and today's student of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* can be a hero of adventure in reaching the aloneness of the inner spirit of this universe which is a million-fold closer to our knowledge than it was even a quarter of a century before. We are a new race with new dreams and new challenges.

In the previous *sūtra* we looked at three essential components of the living universe. The first one was *dharma* or integral characteristics. We have been dwelling on it so far. Now we have to look at the second principle, *lakṣaṇa*. *Lakṣaṇa* is

the mark by which one newly arisen trait out of the old indiscernible matrix of characteristics has become prominent.

In ancient days we believed in saviors, prophets and leaders. The familiar analogy picked up by religion was that of the Good Shepherd who was tending a flock with absolute control. That was a *lakṣaṇa* from medieval times almost to the time of the great dictator, Hitler. Today we communicate with cosmic forces. This not an individual pursuit; it is certainly of a team, in which each individual is as precious and as inevitable as any other. This new *lakṣaṇa* arises out of a kind of intuition which was never known before, which manifests abundantly. An individual is no longer the final authority to decide what is true or false, what is good or bad, what is to be fostered or what is not to be fostered. It is as if a universal truth is dawning with ten thousand suns, each complementing the other. The silt, the filth on earth, has in it the potentials for the new future of the world, and that is in absolute harmony with all, from a storm in the sun to the disaster of Jupiter mercilessly being hit by a wandering comet. So we cannot take refuge in a cloister or in the backyard of our home. The new goal has to be more collective than of a single individual. Humanity is the central figure. We have been detailing here only one *lakṣaṇa*, one mark of humanity. Today the human sky is a million times vaster than the sky of a Galileo or what can be scanned by the most powerful telescope. More intent studies are to be made to characterize the new shades of humanity.

The third aspect we are asked to look into is how to determine the natural place in the world for a new mark which has become fully pronounced. In our personal lives, this means the place or role we have to fill. In Sanskrit this is called the *sthāna*. *Sthāna* is the point of interaction and intersection of space and time which is to be occupied by our crucial activities stemming from our deepest thoughts being brought to their final actualization through well-conceived processes.

The *sūtra* says that the substratum is

that in which the properties - latent, active or unmanifest - inhere. The substratum mentioned here is none other than *prakṛti*. When a particular property disappears, we may say that it has become latent in *prakṛti*. When it becomes manifest, we may say that it has taken an active form in *prakṛti*. So the appearance and disappearance of all kinds of properties in nature, through the medium of different elements and compounds, is merely a question of their being manifest or unmanifest. All of them are present eternally in *prakṛti*, and can be made active or latent by bringing about the necessary condition.

This special way of treating *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* in the *Yoga Sūtra* is to be reviewed in the light of Vedānta, because our purpose of writing this commentary is not merely to interpret Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, but also to apply it in our lives in a manner that is congenial to us, with a conviction that the Self is eternal and universal. At the same time, we should not do any violence to the Sāṃkhyan epistemology to which the *Yoga Sūtras* belong. The whole crux of the problem resides in understanding *pariṇāmā* applied holistically in Patañjala, which is apparently not in agreement with Śaṅkara's *Advaita* concept.

Among the five Vedāntins who have instituted separate schools of Vedānta based on the *Brahma Sūtras* and the *Upaniṣadic mantras*, only Śaṅkara is in radical disagreement with *pariṇāmā*. In the present case, the terms used by Patañjali are *dharma* and *dharmi*. *Dharma* is always known by its mark or *lakṣaṇa*. The *dharma* of *ākāśa* is that it is known by its property of sound (*śabda*); air is known by its *dharma* of touch (*sparsa*); fire is known by its properties of light and thermal power (*prakāśa* and *tejas*); water is known by its sapidity, and earth by its odor (*gandha*). The *dharmi* here stands in the Vedāntic position of the *puruṣa*. The *puruṣa* is in conjunction with *prakṛti*. That is why *dharma* is mentioned apart from the *dharmi*.

Yoga is very much an ontological science which also conceives teleological transformation; the effort in an individual which has to bring about the transforma-

tion (*pariṇāmā*) being different from person to person. Patañjali gave universal status to *prakṛti*, but the *puruṣa*, which accounts for a person's sensations, mind, memory, intelligence and affectivity, is to be explained in terms of the conditioning that becomes established in accordance with the hierarchical history of individuation. Patañjali treats *puruṣa* as separate in each individual case, whereas in Vedānta the *puruṣa* is put in the position of *māyā samvalita īśvara* - the God in the individuated Self veiled by the relativistic coloration of *māyā*. This special effect of the three-fold nature modalities on each separate individual is what Śaṅkara calls *avidyā*.

From the Vedāntic epistemological point of view, Śaṅkara's position is tenable. Vedāntins like Ramanuja, who treat the *jīva* as a manifested aspect, and Nimbarka, who treats it as an indeterminate relationship between *jīva* and *īśvara*, allow us to treat Patañjali's interpretation of *īśvara* as a separate person, free of the three-fold modalities of nature. Our interest here is not merely to uphold a theory, but to apply it to our personal lives to arrive at the final goal of release (*mokṣa*), in the case of Vedānta and *kaivalya* in the case of Yoga.

At this point we do not want to enter into an elaborate philosophical analysis. Instead we shall give the *sūtra* the acceptance of an aspirant who wants to make the *pariṇāmā* of *dharma-lakṣaṇa-sthāna*. *Pariṇāmā* is often looked upon to see what the ultimate is, to which an evolution brings a person in whom the light of the spirit and the modalities of nature are in natural conjunction. Conventionally, the ultimate evolution should result in the purification of the spirit to remove all of its conditionings caused by *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This is to be effected through the last three steps of Yoga - *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. In *samādhi* itself we have seen that there are grades such as *savikalpa samādhi* and *nirvikalpa samādhi*. They are further described as the seeded *samādhi* and the non-seeded *samādhi* i.e., *sabīja-samādhi* and *nirbīja samādhi*. Only

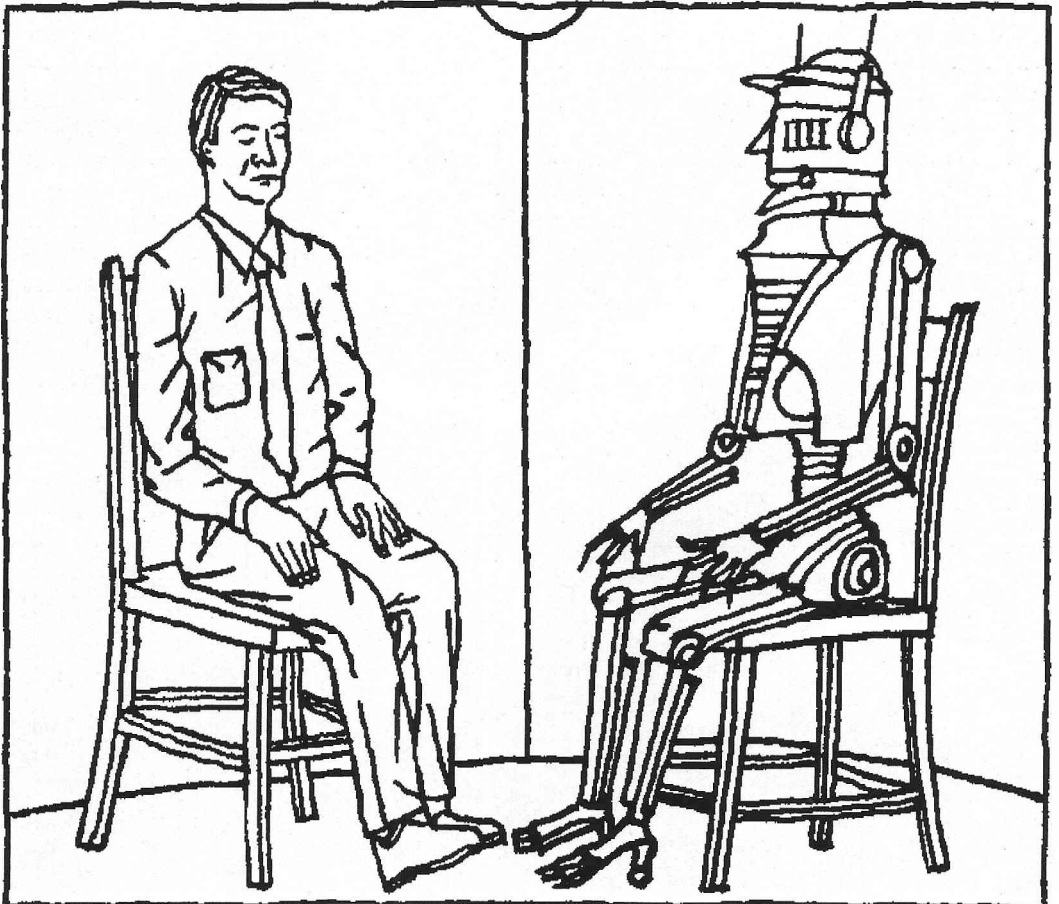
when the final *samādhi* is of the *nirbīja* state, is there agreement between Vedanta and Yoga.

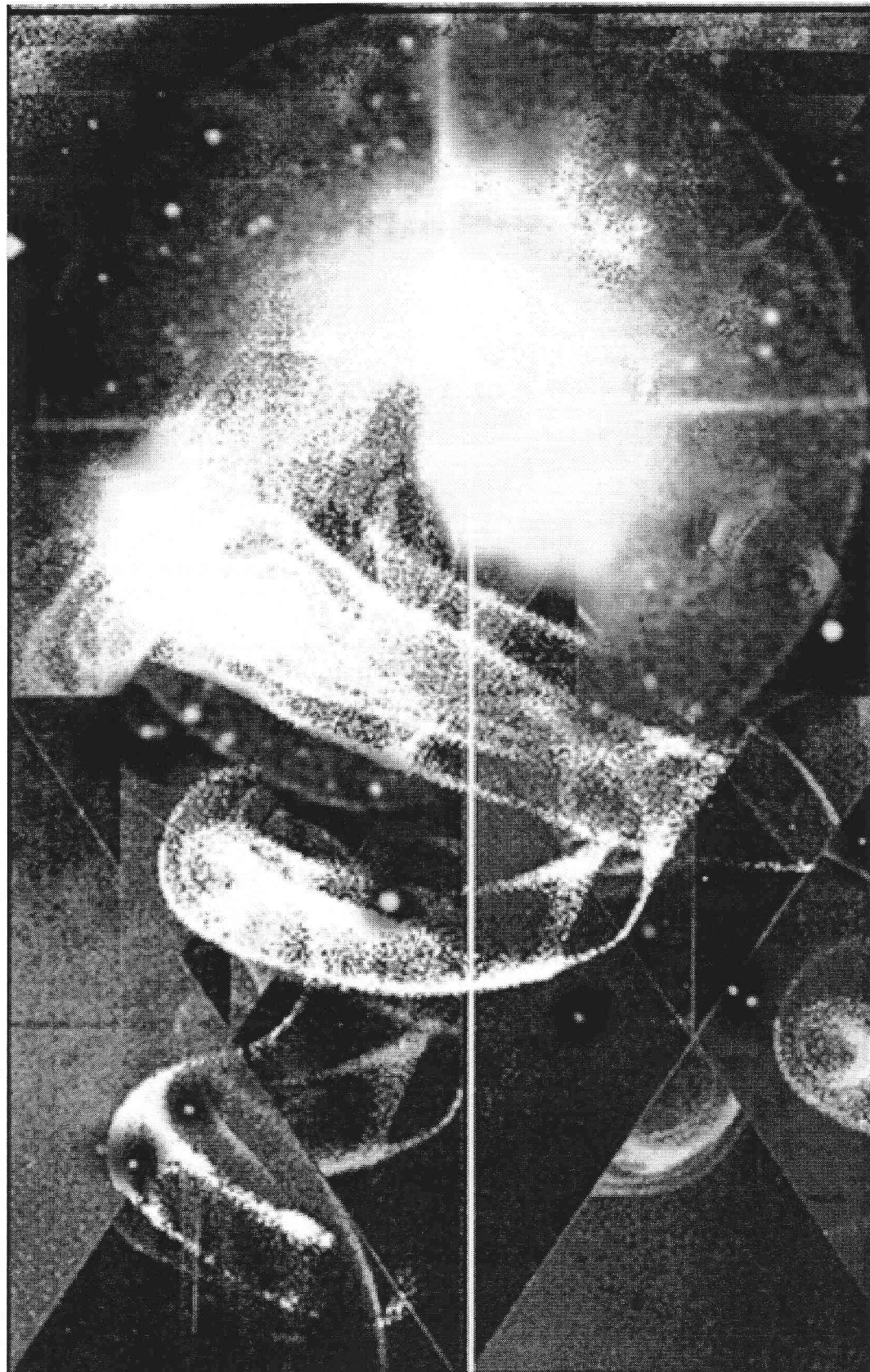
The ultimate stated in the *Upaniṣad* is *na punaravartti*; there is no possibility of a return. Historically speaking, what the world has come through by its own socio-economic and neo-cultural value fixations deeply affected by technological culture, stops short of an ambition which is non-futuristic. There is a deviation which has now become abundantly manifested in the course of human life. It stops with the kind of *dhāraṇā* that is put into all the modern disciplines of life, which mainly ratify the worthwhileness of living in a world of plenty, in which the sensory system is promoted to the highest possible instrumentation of life. In it, what was previously considered as mind and *citta* (which are different from intelligence, and *aḥamkāra*) are now made into a confection of acquiring a prospective memory. That

is aided mechanically, through the almost unlimited ability of adding collective memory to individual memory, through the technological conversion of human intelligence into cybernetic intelligence. Hence, those who turn to the *via negativa* suggested in the second *sūtra* of Patañjali, of wanting to have a totally deconditioned *citta* are only a negligible minority.

But at least for the sake of bringing Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* to its logical conclusion of *kaivalya*, we should look into the possibility of effacing the continuous conditioned fixations called *samskāras* and the consequent feedback which comes from the *samskāras* in the form of *vāsanās*. They are typically so identified with the stream of consciousness that it has become muddied with a pathological influx of worthless pursuits.

(Continued in next issue.)





Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 6

*uṇaraṇaminniyuraññaṇam bhujiccī-
ṭaṇamaśanam puṇarēṇamennivaṇṇam
aṇayumanēkavikalpamākayālā-
ruṇaruvatuḷloru nirvikārarūpam?*

One has to wake up, then go to sleep,
has to eat food and embrace; thus, in this way,
many ambivalent urges arise; therefore,
who is there to comprehend reality's one changeless form?

This verse ends with a rhetorical question: "Who is there to realize the one changeless form?" Both the problem and the solution that are going to be elaborated in the rest of the work are here set forth. In the world of spirituality, there are many antinomies such as God and Satan, good and evil, the numenon and the phenomenon, the transcendent and the immanent, *brahman* and *dharma*, and the Absolute and the relative. The antinomies presented in this verse are the changing life-urges and the unchanging form of the Absolute.

As soon as we enter into any field of inquiry, what impresses us as paradoxical is the receding of the familiar and the certain into a world of vague ambiguity and incertitude. Sir Arthur Eddington gives the example of a table. He says that a physicist who is using a table has before him two tables. One is phenomenal and the other is real. The phenomenal table can be seen, touched and used. All the same, as a physicist, he knows that it is not real. What is real to him is an aggregate of fast-moving molecules that are invisible to the naked eye and are in a state of flux, ever agitated with the swirling force of entropy. Thus even a familiar table can vanish into an incomprehensible world of assumptions when one becomes serious about assessing its reality.



The position of the Vedantin is not very different from that of the physicist. He also has to tackle the paradox of appearance and reality vying with each other. The senses are easily affected by appearance, while the real is elusive and contrary to the very nature of the mind which is actively engaged in pursuing it. However hopeless this case may look, one cannot let go of the pursuit and accept the appearance as a *fait accompli*.

We are worldlings. It is the functional nature of the earth to rotate on its axis and revolve around the sun. As a consequence we experience the alternation of day and night. The earth is called *dhara*, that which supports. There are many things on earth which are supported by their latent potentials, their *dharma*. *Dharma* is both the structural and functional secret of all forms of individuation. Although the structural and functional system in an individual is a self-governing unit, it is part of a more complex system. The shimmering star in the sky and the eye that gazes upon it with delight have a physical togetherness that cannot be easily explained.

The psychosomatic effect of day and night was dealt with in the previous verse. Whether we are wakeful or sleeping, there is in us an essence that does not change. The *Upaniṣads* call it *brahman*, the all-embracing unitive principle. All the major functions of the body and mind are supervised and kept operating, even when we are asleep, by a governing intelligence that is constantly adjusting and tuning the individuated system to its maximum harmony. This harmony is experienced as peace, happiness and unity. Our basic nature is this changeless essence, referred to in the previous verse as the witnessing light of the unlit lamp.

Dharma is our second nature. It has the paradoxical characteristic of coupling the changeless with an ever-changing course of becoming. As individuated beings, we are modulations of *dharma*. Waking and sleeping is only one of the major binary functions of the complex mechanism of our nature. When we wake, the demands for nourishing the body and amusing the mind are keenly felt. For many, the main pursuit in life is in finding bread and butter and distractions that can save them from boredom. There are many words in Malayalam for eating, but in this verse the Guru has carefully chosen the word *bhujicṭteṇam* to reflect this idea. *Bhu* means that which manifests. *Bhuj* is that which causes becoming. It is also related to *bhoga*, enjoyment. One who enjoys is called a *bhokta*. We experience a sense of agency in three ways, as *jñāta*, the knower; *karta*, the doer; and *bhokta*, the enjoyer.

From verses one to four, our attention was focused on the knower. In verse five it was turned on the doer, and now in the present verse the focus is on the enjoyer. Seeking nourishment for the body is only one of

our several life urges. Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone, meaning that a person is not merely a body. The body is animated by an energy that knows, thinks, discerns and evaluates. This phenomenon is called the soul or spirit. The nature of the spirit is to pervade. It is characteristic of the spirit or the self in us to return again and again to the pure being of the universal Self to which it belongs. It does not feel at home when it is confined to the limitations of a body. Just like water finding its own level, the self is always in search of the boundless. The individual's attempt to cater to the necessities of the body is a relativistic form of *dharma*, while the spirit's need to transcend the limitations of the individual's body, family, clan, tribe and nation is its absolute *dharma*.

The spirit's affinity for the Absolute is like a child's attachment to its mother. Both have a compulsive need to relate to one another. Although the child and the mother have separate bodies, they were one for nine months. The period of the child's confinement within the mother's womb conceals many secrets of the spirit and its manifestation. Even before the formation of the fetus, a part of the child and the mother was together for ages, millennia, even from the very beginning of the universe. The child feels at home only when it regains its 'at-one-ment' with its seedbed, the mother. The mother feels the same way. She suckles the child, embraces and kisses it. When they are united they forget themselves. Paradoxically, the soul's search for its freedom through expansion binds it at every step. The mother introduces the child to the father, from whom the child got its equally timeless other half. The child's love is extended to the father and later to brothers and sisters. In this way, love expands the domain of interest and also creates new bondages.

The *dharma* that sustains the life-giving energy, that fosters the characteristics of the individual and unfolds as the growing personality, has several levels of formation and shades of meaning. As the sole ground of individuation, it is undifferentiated from the Absolute. As the primeval cause of manifestation, it is the temporal function that introduces motion into the field of spatial extension. As the existential base of individuation, it is an evolutionary process that channels and organizes indistinct and undifferentiated energy to assume definite forms of structural integrity that can function with physical, chemical, biological and, at the human level, psychological propensities.

As the dynamics of a living organism, it is a retentive store of memory that is used as a ready reckoner with which to decide courses of action and reaction that are conducive to both the organism's self-preservation and to the furtherance of its life term as a stable system. As the propensity of life urges, it is an amalgam of a pleasure-seeking collective will and a continuing process of individuation, in which every blind drive and conscious effort is controlled and decided upon by its longitudinal history. And as the immediate interacting agent that recognizes itself with the self-awareness of an I-consciousness, it is a homeostasis that governs reflexive and instinctive behavior, acquired habits, adaptation, and willed actions that serve the self-regulating system which is intent upon maintaining its fluid equilibrium.

Such is the complex sense in which *dharma* is to be understood. It is this *dharma* that decides the meaning of persons, things and events that are objectivized, from time to time, as the counterparts of the knower, the doer and the enjoyer in a person. Reading meaning into a situation is the

same as promoting a life urge or securing the system against attack or damage. The eidetic cohesiveness which one sees as meaning is what creates the togetherness of an ensemble or gestalt. Formulating a gestalt is identified by Indian psychologists as the configuration of *artha*. When *dharma* and *artha* come together, they impel the individual to desire, *kāma*. The desire can be for union, *rāga*, or for separation, *dveṣa*. This double-faced compulsion is essentially libidinal.

The thirteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* outlines seven modifications that influence the course of our lives: desire (*iccha*); hatred (*dveṣa*); pleasure (*sukha*); pain (*duhka*); the interrelatedness of properties (*saṅghāta*); the biotic principle (*jīva*); and the will to live (*sthairya*). Another pertinent reference is found in the *Yoga Aphorisms* of Patañjali, in which he lists five hindrances to spiritual union. The *kaivalya* or aloneness aspired to by the yogi, and the realization of non-differentiation with the Absolute aspired to by the Vedantin are not doctrinally different. They vary only in their methodological approach. So by examining the hindrances enumerated by Patañjali we can get a clearer understanding of the seven modifications of the *Gītā*.

Patañjali's five hindrances (*kleśas*) are: ignorance (*avidyā*); egoism (*asmitā*); attraction (*rāga*); repulsion (*dveṣa*); and clinging to life (*abhiniveśa*). According to the *Gītā*, the two constituent factors of our lives are the triple modalities of nature (*prakṛti*) and the consciousness that is characteristic of the spirit (*puruṣa*). Nature is seen as being responsible for the aggregate of cause and effect, and the consciousness of the spirit as being responsible for the search for happiness. As the spirit is imprisoned in the body, which is dominated by nature, the search for happiness is vitiated by the distorting and veiling principles of *rajas* and *tamas*. Even *sattva* has a tendency to create a sense of attachment to anything pleasure-giving.

In the diagnosis and treatment of these defects, yogis and Vedantins hold different views. In Patañjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, Chapter 2, Sutra 17 says: "the cause of that which is to be avoided is the union of the seer and the seen." The *Gītā* does not recommend withdrawal or turning away from the world that is seen, but the cultivation of a transparency of vision by which one sees the Absolute alone as the one reality residing in all. Perceiving the Self alone in everything is given as the ideal in the sixth and seventh mantras of the *Īśa Upaniṣad*:

Now, he who on all beings
Looks as just (eva) in the Self (Ātman),
And on the Self as in all beings--
He does not shrink away from Him.

In whom all beings
Have become just (eva) the Self of the discerners--
Then what delusion (moha), what sorrow (śoka) is there
Of him who perceives the unity!

In Narayana Guru's *Yoga Darśana*, he combines the positions of the Vedantins and the yogis when he says:

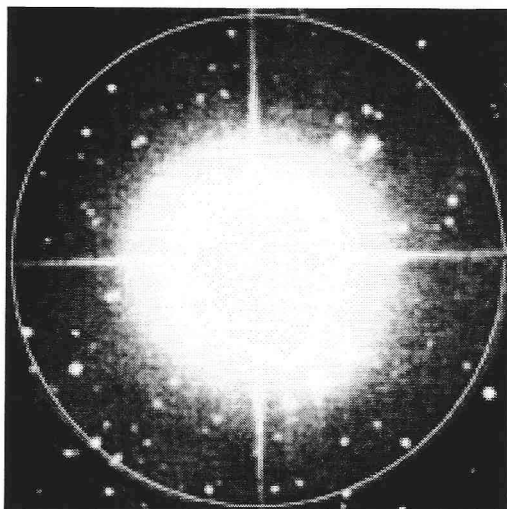
That which always unites the mind

With the reasoning Self, and also gets united with it,
And which is in the form of restraint,
That is praised as Yoga.

Where the seer, the sight and the seen
Are not present, there the heart
Should be joined, as long as
incipient memory-factors (are present);
Such is Yoga (says) the knower of Yoga.

Although the nature of consciousness is to seek liberation, the instrument at its disposal defeats that purpose. The serial order in which experience comes is: awareness, activity, and a consolidation of the total effect as a conditioning. Such conditioning inevitably leads to a future recurrence of the same experience, which will be dominated by a reaction of flight or combat if the accompanying emotion is painful, or attraction if the accompanying emotion is pleasure-giving. Identification of consciousness with the modalities causes forgetfulness of one's true nature. This is what the Guru laments in the present verse.

(Continued in next issue.)







Autobiography of An Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

CHAPTER THREE

Adolescent Ideals and Hero Worship

As I pen these lines in mid-October 1962 at the mature age of 68 years I hear again the rumblings of the war clouds as the Indian President Dr. Radhakrishnan and Prime Minister Nehru call to the nation to 'gird their loins' for what might culminate in what is being known in history since 1914 as a series of World Wars' of which this is likely to be the third. International wars can implicate the whole world as interplanetary feuds of the future may jeopardize the universe itself. To think that such contingencies are impossible or altogether improbable is becoming old fashioned whether reasonable or not.

The Beginning of World Wars

While on the one hand all kinds of absolutisms in thinking are getting discredited in the modern world, on the other side of the picture, necessities are growing into global, wholesale or absolutist proportions calling for total rather than piecemeal solutions. There is thus a lag, gap or hiatus between contingent thought and the necessary aspect of life which can spell disasters, large or small, to humanity. Unless humanity can bridge this dangerous hiatus that is ever widening between thought and action, these world wars must continue their series, inevitably. Unitive absolutist thinking is the ancient time-honoured solution of the wisdom of the East, which is unfortunately for mankind getting more and more discredited in the modern context.

Empiricism, analysis, 'operationism' depending on demonstrability, trial and

error methods, based on probabilities rather than the possible, mechanistic approaches, seeking piece-meal rather than wholesale solutions, 'practicality' of which the bomb is the supreme example that 'works' with one hundred percent destructive certitude, split second correctness and speed that would rival the velocity of light itself, such are some of the attitudes implied in the modern outlook. These attitudes are cultivated lopsidedly without the corrective normative goal or value of the absolutist approach. Relativism itself can be unconsciously treated as if it belongs to the absolutist context. We are living in times of intellectual decadence, in spite of the rich mine of Wisdom for which the East has been reputed. The echo of the rumblings of the clouds of the first world war seems of feebler negative import than what we are beginning to hear now which might take its place as the third world war.

Pre-University 'Teen Years'

From the end of the year 1912 to the eve of the first world war, or more roughly from the Delhi Durbar of 1911 when king George succeeded Edward VIII to the eventful date of 1914, the world was moving fast towards the great events of the century. The steamship and motor-car were beginning to be taken for granted and the Victorian era gave place to the Georgian through the gradations of the Edwardian, when I found myself back in the Civil and Military station of Bangalore, trying to do my matriculation over again, brow beaten and discouraged by failure in the London Matriculation.

I was about sixteen, yet I can definitely remember the beginnings of a social

and political sense (with some touch of sensitiveness to religious values too) marginally awakening in my consciousness. My love of poetry writing had already asserted itself and I tried my hand also at drawing and painting when the holidays were long enough for such luxuries. A broken violin in the house afforded me the pastime of music which I was able to produce, though of an indifferent quality, being able by my own efforts to follow *kirtans* (musical compositions) in accompaniment of any who sang them. I made enlargements of portraits of Swami Vivekananda, Napoleon Bonaparte and that of the Gaekwar of Baroda whose personalities seemed to have begun to have some meaning or significance for me, however indirect.

The cry of '*Vande Mātaram*' which later became the full-throated political slogan of the people of India, thirsting for freedom from foreign domination, was beginning to be raised to the annoyance and irritation of the British whose rule was perhaps at its best, at least for themselves at this period. Indian students, even of the college classes, at that time were innocent of any sense of political rights, being steeped in tradition and the dreamy idealism that marked a decadent era. Idealism were exaggerated beyond all proportion, as seen in the suttee which only recently had been abolished by Lord Bentinck, and the rigours of untouchability and the caste system still prevailing. India may be said to have been asleep or still unawakened yet.

I can remember how the sentence of transportation for life pronounced on Lala Lajpat Rai made a deep impression on me. It was hard enough in those days to be a 'moderate' in respect of the natural rights of the people. The brilliant English oratory and eloquence of Surendranath Bannerjee and Bepin Chandra Pal made equally their impression on me side by side with those of Burke, Bradlaugh, Besant and Macaulay. English education itself was the first stimulus for the political interest that awakened in me at this time, and slogans such as 'taxation without representation is

robbery' stuck in my mind tenaciously even in my teens.

As for religious awakening it was due to the personality of Vivekananda. He was the most interesting hero of my youth and I could repeat by heart the whole of his Chicago address before the Parliament of Religions even when I was scarcely twelve years old. I used to visit the Ramakrishna Mutt at Basavangudi in Bangalore even before my schooling in Ceylon. I was acquainted with the Bhagavad Gīta and could repeat some of the more familiar verses. Again I frequented the Ramakrishna Mutt regularly at Bangalore on my second return to this interesting, clean and park-like city, walking five miles from 'Barne Park' in the High Ground to the Bull Temple extension five miles off to listen to discourses by the Swamis. I had also started social service a little later and used to carry with me at school a box in which I collected coins. When it filled up to some extent I organized a feeding of the indigent to whom I delivered tickets in advance inviting them to come to an appointed place where they were to be fed.

Side by side with these awakenings to social, political, religious and aesthetic values I could feel within me the pressures of adolescence which first exerted itself and became evident in a tendency to idealize certain of my school fellows. While still in the St. Joseph's College I had my favourite boy, a white clad Anglo-Indian whom I had mentally idealized and was secretly in love with. This first wave of sentimentality which was of the nature of love at first sight and which acted as it were from a distance telepathically without my ever talking to the person of my dreams gave way to other waves of adolescent sentimentalism, the second of which was sharper or keener in the arrow wound it inflicted on me than the first one and was this time directed towards a class-mate to whom I brought roses from the garden each Saturday when we had morning classes. I remember walking through the morning August mists of Bangalore with the rose in my hand to give to my favourite friend.



Swami Vivekananda

At times also my tendency to idealize friendship of this kind went so far as to make me sit and compose a poem idealizing friendship. Hero-worship too found expression when exaggerated praise and admiration was showered on some teachers who happened to retire or get transferred. Love affairs with girl friends so common in the West, especially in the

United States where school children during and before adolescence had each their girl or boy friends, did not figure in my life as far as I remember except in one or two instances in which some such veil passed, as it were, and ruled the silken sail of adolescent personal preferences for one person or another.

This does not however mean that adolescence in the normal sexual sense was in anyway weak in asserting itself in me. The full force of adolescence in the form of inner pressures and infatuations was true in my case if not more so than usual. Brute sex in most cases did not come into overt evidence because of the tendency to idealize which seemed to form part of my character even from my earliest years. A prince among dreamers of dreams, imaginative and shy, representation from inside was more powerful always with me than any need for outer adventure in the actual sense. Eroticism in literature and in art especially in Sanskrit was a kind of shock-absorber by virtue of which actual outlets for sex were always driven inwards and often sublimated. I can only generalize and say that the stresses and strains of adolescence, generally speaking, were stronger in me than usual but that a rich inner life was able to pulse away the tides of instinct, emotion or passion and the need for actual sex satisfaction scarcely asserted itself in me as a necessity. I might have to say more on this subject when I come to more mature youth when love becomes more real and matter of fact.

Extra-curricular Studies and Activities

All education is not derived from schooling. In fact much of it results in spite of even wrong schooling, just as Nature can save patients from the ill effects of wrong drugs that might often be administered by doctors. The habit of voracious reading that I began to cultivate attained its maximum both qualitatively and quantitatively at this period. After books like *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Vicar of Wakefield* which I finished early, I was steeped in Scott, Dickens and Thackeray for many months. Although London slang

predominated in the writings of Charles Dickens, I devoured the jokes, sometimes understanding them but more often believing that I did so roughly at least.

I read one hundred pages a day which I had heard from fellow school mates was the respectable speed of a good reader although I know one or two of my mates who far exceeded it. Many phrases and expressions must have tumbled into a sort of shape in the subconscious repository to remain there inarticulate before they could be available to use in speech or writing overtly in the same way as many cement blocks have to go into the sea before a harbour breakwater can be walled up above the water level. Each type of person has a subconscious capacity which must be different in this respect because I have found that some pass more quickly from impression to expression in language than others. But often what is lost in time is gained in the larger capacity of content, justifying the dictum that the slow is sure. The dull student often makes up at the last round of the race, although starting slowly, and a hare and tortoise paradox is often implied here.

Various forms of indeterminisms, ambivalent polarities, compensating synergic sets, antinomies and dichotomies enter into the psycho-physical or somatic life of individuals to make characterology or type psychology a very intricate science indeed. all I can say about myself is that I was more of an introvert than an extrovert, and that over-sensitiveness and richness of inner *daivi* rather than *āsuri sampat* (spiritual rather than active endowment) distinguished the type to which I might have been said to belong. Arjuna and Rousseau may be mentioned as instances of this type which is full of reservations and hesitations, with inhibitive factors stronger than the over-active ones.

Although I read some detective stories and knew all about Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes series I soon gave them up in favour of the Three Kings of English Literature whose names I have already mentioned. Not knowing French at that time I did not read that great masterpiece

of fiction of all time, the *Les Misrables* of Hugo, which must have influenced English authors, contemporary or later, to write the novels they did. *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* made a deep impression on me and, after the fat volume of the latter, which I read with great attention and interest, was laid aside after reading it from beginning to end non-stop with absorbing interest, I said to myself that its pages contained a veritable education by themselves. This I felt again in respect of Hugo's great work *Les Miserables* which I read more than a decade later and which left me with the same feeling of wonder and gratification. A whole lifetime of education could sometimes be contained within the covers of some great books written by kings of literature.

It was at this period again that I was introduced to Shakespeare and Kalidasa. The minute criticisms to which *Śakuntala* was subjected both by Sanskrit critics and Westerners and the same for Shakespeare's plays, which were beginning to be critically understood, contributed considerably to my intellectual formation of that period. *Raghuvamśa* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* were equally familiar to me although at that time I could not see behind the latter the classical influence of Greek tragedy which shows the context of Gods of the Olympus or Dionysios through the threadbare Christian context of the "fruit of the forbidden tree." Even Shakespeare's King Theseus of *A Midsummer Nights Dream* was a mixture of an Athenian and a London background promiscuously mixed up. At that time I could not see this subtle influence in that light of which much of the originality of these authors became compromised for me at a later period.

Some verses of *Śakuntala* stuck to my automatic subconscious mechanism so intimately that there were days on end when I repeated one of the grandest verses in it incessantly. It referred to the King who relaxes at midday after a morning's *mṛigayavinōda* consisting of disturbing the peace of the animals of the forest which has its English counterpart in John Peel

with his hounds and his horns and his coat so gay in the morning of the popular ditty. The king Dushyanta unloosens here his bow string and then the wild boars are free to drabble their snouts in the quagmire and the wild water buffalo can enjoy beating the pond with their horns again and again while drinking too of the limpid waters at will, while the group of frightened deer fixed under the tree-shade can continue to chew their cud in peace. The bow itself according to the king was to have a much deserved rest after the tension of the forenoon. All nature thus went into another vectorial space, as it were, in its life aspect. Two worlds were contrasted here which had as it were a 'one to one' correspondence, one inner and the other outer, just in the same way as Shakespeare himself envisaged in the subtle technique of the famous knocking at the gate after the midnight murder of Macbeth.

Literature thus began for me to open and leave ajar its portals to let me have just a peep into its secrets. Shakespeare's genius was deep enough for me at that time but the deeper and all-inclusive genius of the scheme of reality kept in mind by Kalidasa was yet to be unraveled in its full glory to me. I was thus fully awakened to the beauties of literature at this period and was able to look for interesting poems or paragraphs anywhere.

Leadership Comes to Me Unsought

I have already mentioned that I was nicknamed Nitrogen by my dear classmates by way of a sarcasm mixed with attention comparable to the brine on the seashore, bitter and watery at the same time, the product of over activity of the temperament natural to adolescent youth. Boys of the age can be extremely nasty though with an undercurrent of generosity. When *Ivanhoe* was studied in the sixth form as a detailed textbook in English they could not resist in their mischief to nickname me cruelly Athelstane, the lazy unprepared one whose counterparts are the various characters like Caliban in *The Tempest* and Kumbhakarna in *The Rāmāyana* or other Falstaffs or fat boys of literature as in

Dickens. What impression I exactly made on those fellows to draw on to me this kind of calumny I ignore even today. When I know now that the same was waiting for me even in Switzerland where I was a teacher many years later and the boys and girls took all sorts of liberties with me as they even do now wherever I go, at sixty eight, there must be something the keen eye of youth discovered which I could not keep a secret from them.

I could not act seriously and pretend to be firm or rigid although on the other side some of my college mates thought I was a very reserved and unsociable student. There must have been something peculiarly complex which eludes analysis which all the same must have been interesting as even bad qualities could be. I have remained an enigma unto myself. It was strange therefore that when the literary union of the High School met for elections and all the higher classes were gathered, I was unanimously elected its general secretary. I never dreamed that such an honour could come to me but the verdict was wholehearted and serious and I set about devising methods by which I could do justice to the expectations that my comrades placed on me so generously.

Retiring as I was in my ways I remember that I was also affected by some love of showing off or exhibitionism. I began to part my hair in the middle and took many months to decide the most smart fashionable way of signing my name, and to wear some of the gaudy silk neckties stolen from my father's wardrobe. Even some of the oversize coats that only fitted me roughly were thus dishonestly appropriated. I remember wearing a black coat and stiff collar with a purple silk handspun tie to go to the stand which was set apart for the High School students to greet the then Viceroy of India, Viscount Hardinge, on his visit to Bangalore near the racecourse at seven in the morning.

The school day of the year 1916 was celebrated with the full cooperation of all my school mates because I adopted the device of distributing portfolios, as it were, to all those whom I thought were my ri-

vals and wanted to be important themselves. For the first time I learnt the great lesson of organization which consisted in just sinking your own personality and neutralizing it to such an extent that every one who wanted to be important got a full chance, in spite of your importance in principle. Suppress your agency in action, called *kartrta* in Vedanta, and the magic is done and all cooperate fully. All you have to do then is to sit as it were informally on the table that your rival is using leaving your own official chair and make suggestions not from on high but as one among the many without letting your personality obtrude into the situation at all. Leadership seeks men out in this way and makes them do impossible things not by specific abilities of birth but by what is imposed on them by dint of extraneous circumstances.

Hero Worship and Search for the Perfect Man

A certain tendency to exaggerate and distort human values characterizes youth which is often fired by idealism though often misplaced. The appeal of the superman implied in every man, gets at this time of rich life an added impetus which when frustrated and misdirected could end in 'shallows and in miseries' when the full tide is missed. The impetuosity of youth can either make a young man a madcap or a desperado or else, when the surging vital forces are properly canalized and directed by good education, the buds of real genius might begin to sprout in them. In all this development the model man or the superman has his place to guide and fire the imagination of youth.

When such a model is not available, there is a desperate sense of frustration especially in sensitive youth. This urge is like a hunger or thirst which is both a moral, intellectual and aesthetic enthusiasm for truth. Man does not live by bread alone and love and freedom or other values exist in the higher reaches of the axiological scale in which man is to trace his spiritual progress upwards to his goal. There is both an ascent in the scale of values and a descent implied here. The hero



Nataraja Guru, 1920

has to be both a man and a God at once and in his conduct he has to be the embodiment of goodness and the God manifest on earth with enough of earthiness too. There is thus a subtle dialectical interplay of values which is the same as worship. Reverence is the word that Tennyson would perhaps prefer. In any case the model which occupies the mantelpiece for the time being, always has an interchange and interaction like that of osmosis between two solutions. There is a purificatory process which is bi-polar and this process is best guaranteed when a man accepts a Guru which represents the highest that can be thought of in the context of spiritual progress.

Gandhi as a Rajya Guru

It was a memorable day in Bangalore when M.K. Gandhi returned to India after his days of struggle in the name of indentured labour when he was in South Africa as a practicing barrister. How he entered my own life and how he became one of the earliest models of a hero of my adolescent years, is a long story in itself. To tell this in any complete form would take me back two or three years from this early period when I first saw the name Gandhi printed in a green paper-back book that was handed to me by a fellow passenger on a ship when I was returning to India after my studies in Ceylon for the last time.

The passenger in question was a vegetarian and told me that he was from the Island of Mauritius where he practiced law, often pleading for the Indian labourers who had legal troubles. Our point of contact was that we were both together in the ship's kitchen pleading with the chef for the omission of beef or meat or both from the menu which was intended for us. He turned to me in the dining room and asked me if I had heard of the name Gandhi. Mohanlal Karamchand Gandhi was his full name and through articles in the Indian Review of Madras he thought Indians knew all about him. In fact I was aware that none of my schoolmates had heard of him yet. This gentleman came all the way with his family who were seasick and in the cabin he politely handed me a visiting card with the name Manilal M. Doctor B.A., L.L.B. etc. printed on it.

I was elated by the recognition that this middle aged, goldrim-spectacled, well-dressed and sleek man of India gave me. We sat and talked about Indian politics on a deck seat and became good friends for the time being but it was as late as half a century later that I could even meet a man who at least knew him. This was at a party in Geneva when a man called Doctor was introduced to me who was a businessman in, I think Port Said, who was the nephew of the original Doctor I had met and lost contact with forever afterwards. Crossing the Atlantic several

times back and forth I have lost in the same manner several valuable friends whose contacts, if I had kept them up, I should have been very rich in friendship indeed in this world which is becoming smaller and smaller by developing communications.

After seeing the name of Gandhi for the first time in this manner, I found his name in magazines and newspapers more often. After the days of the Beer War in South Africa when Gandhi had played his part in Passive Resistance and after some correspondence with Tolstoy while yet in London, Gandhi developed the technique and philosophy of *Satyagraha* in India and when the names of Gokhale and Mrs. Annie Besant were at the height of popularity, this enigmatic little man returned to India to take over the reigns of politics and he steered the ship of the Indian Independence Movement till it was welcomed into the haven of Independent India.

Gandhi's name thus became more than a household word and my own hunger for hero-worship also being at its Zenith, I took to Gandhi with more fervour at that time than perhaps any other person of my age in that part of the country. There was a reception accorded to Gandhi at the Glass House in the Lal Bagh public gardens at Bangalore in which the future leader of politics in India was first seen with a Marwari turban and white cotton clothes sitting beside his humble-looking wife and a black boy sitting on the ground near him. The boy was one adopted from those who suffered in the Passive Resistance struggle in South Africa. The complete humility of the man was evident to anyone for a part of his turban was coming unwound but he sat unconscious of it while the multitude of thousands of all religions and groups of India watched him, including a smattering of Europeans, many praising him one after another on the platform while the crowd itself sat in silent admiration.

India seemed to be becoming a nation and not merely a country presenting merely a mosaic pattern of different peoples. This was what inspired youth and

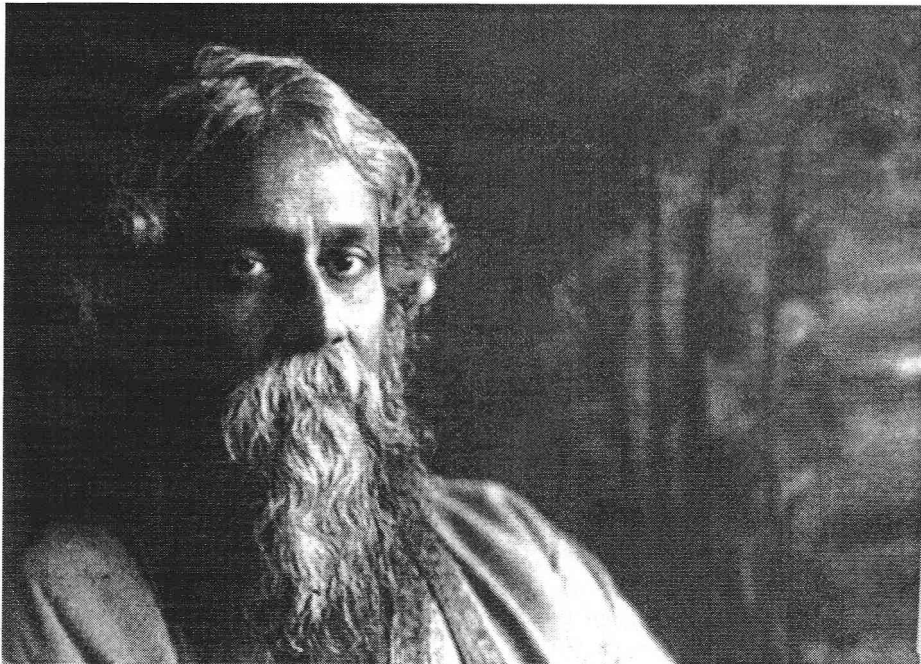
brought India together at least to such a degree of integration of sentiments as to be able to oust the typically shy, sensitive and self-conscious English. Whether the Chinese who are at the door of India while I write these lines (28th October 1962) can be made to give up occupied territory by sentimental negative warfare, is a matter for doubt. Yet the triumph of the negative way applied to politics was in itself a surprising phenomenon and any victory if a lasting victory it can be called, must give credit to this earnest, humble and enigmatic little man with lean legs and a hungry look, who proved to the world that negative force, under given conditions, could be as effective, and prove itself mightier than the sword. I had again a closer look at the couple and the black clean-shaven-headed boy on the platform of my High School itself where he came to unveil the portrait of Gokhale and I clearly remember Gandhi folding his hands humbly and reverently before the garlanded picture of Gokhale and calling him his *Raja Guru* (Leader in political wisdom).

Reserving for the present time the rest of the story of my worship of Gandhi I just

now refer to the other personality besides Vivekananda and Gandhi who entered into my adolescent life, as it were, with bang.

*Tagore Awarded Nobel Prize
for English Poetry*

That an uncivilized and backward people could produce a poet in the English language who excelled in it to such an extent as to obtain the Nobel Prize for Literature, was an event that enhanced the self-respect of the people of India, and made them hold their heads high in the view of outsiders who had succeeded in making them believe that they were an inferior race. To the question "Is India civilized?" the thundering answer came from Swami Vivekananda. To the question "Is India intelligent enough to shake off the foreign yoke in a manner in keeping with its own best traditions?" the intense answer came from the shrill, small voice of Gandhi. To the question "Does India understand cultural refinement and can it rise to heights of creative imagination?" Tagore gave the answer. In the fields of science and even in sport, such as cricket,



Rabindranath Tagore in the USA, 1916

Indians showed they were the equal of any others and thus gave to the youth of that generation, a fresh hope for the future, and opened up new vistas for their spirit of adventure and triumph.

Rabindranath Tagore was a name, high sounding in itself, and suggestive of the best aspirations of the youth of my generation. Vivekananda, Gandhi, Tagore, Bose and Ranjit Singh each added feathers to the cap that young India wore with just pride at that time. Tagore's *Gitanjali* did not make any meaning at first to most English educated Indians brought up in the tradition of Addison and Steele. The language was too laden with fable and allegory and many mixed metaphors blended their subtle suggestions together to give a kind of Upanishadic flavour and taste to his writings which were strange to the English genius. The pure literary dignity and value of the compositions however stood head and shoulders above the ordinary run of drab poetry that English taste considered respectable. The bold flights of fancy brought up in the shadow of Upanishadic imagination, so free and easy, was a new feature which a critic like W.B. Yeats was able to recommend in his

foreword introducing the '*Song Offerings*'. They were quickly compared to the *Gita Govinda* on one side and to the *Song of Songs of the Bible*.

In High School itself I heard these prose poems read out by a Tagore admirer. I became fired by the idea of possessing a copy of this book but as the first edition was sold at too high a price for an average Indian student's pocket in those days, I decided to copy the whole of the book into note-books and read and reread them many times.

I was familiar with Vivekananda literature from the age of twelve, when as I have said, I could recite by heart the Chicago Address. The life of the Swami had been read from cover to cover and the *Works* which were four or five quarto volumes, as published in those days, were beginning to be studied from end to end by me. Now came this transparent crystalline flow of prose-poetry or free verse which was like a confection, highly flavoured and sweet, reminiscent of the Upanishads themselves. It was certain that India was thus slowly and steadily coming to its own.

(Continued in next issue.)

From the Introduction to Gitanjali

I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the tops of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me. These lyrics display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture, they yet appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes. A tradition, where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and of the noble.

The traveller in the red-brown clothes that he wears that dust may not show upon him, the girl searching in her bed for the petals fallen from the wreath of her royal lover, the servant or the bride awaiting the master's homecoming in the empty house, are images of the heart turning to God. Flowers and rivers, the blowing of conch shells, the heavy rain of the Indian july, or the parching heat, are images of the moods of that heart in union or in separation; and a man sitting in a boat upon a river playing upon a lute, like one of those figures full of mysterious meaning in a Chinese picture, is God Himself. A whole people, a whole civilization, immeasurably strange to us, seems to have been taken up into this imagination; and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness, but because we have met our own image, as though we had walked in Rossetti's willow wood, or hear, perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream.

W. B. Yeats, September 1912

From Gitanjali, Song Offerings

Rabindranath Tagore

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.

*This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again,
and fillest it ever with fresh life.*

*This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and
hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.*

*At the immortal touch of thy hands
my little heart loses its limit in joy
and gives birth to utterance ineffable.*

*Thy infinite gifts come to me only
on these very small hands of mine.*

Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

*Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love, O beloved of my heart—
this golden light that dances upon the leaves,*

these idle clouds sailing across the sky,

this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead.

The morning light has flooded my eyes—this is thy message to my heart.

*Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look down on my eyes,
and my heart has touched thy feet.*

*Mother, I shall weave a chain of pearls for thy neck
with my tears of sorrow.*

*The stars have wrought their anklets of light to deck thy feet,
but mine will hang upon thy breast.*

*Wealth and fame come from thee
and it is for thee to give or withhold them.*

*But this my sorrow is absolutely mine own,
and when I bring it to thee as my offering,
thou rewardest me with thy grace.*

An Intelligent Person's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

OUR TEMPLES

Although we are not necessarily always aware of it, we are all essentially religious. In our external life we may accept or reject ritual or forms of religious worship. To judge a man's faith from his overt behavior is a very superficial approach. Even a person who rejects the authority of all established religions and the theological concepts of God seeks in his own heart the fountain-source of supreme joy which will also act as a guiding principle in the formation of his personality and in the crystallization of his behavior-pattern. Gaining, or to be more precise, regaining this absolute Value which lends meaning to life is the same as the realization of God or to be truly religious.

The instinctive quest for God comes to us first in the form of a general uneasiness. The mind becomes restless and loses its taste for many of the things to which it was formerly adhering. A vacuum or emptiness is felt in the core of our heart. To fill this vacuum we engage in various kinds of pursuits. When the source of joy is located outside our being we soon get tired of it and, becoming disillusioned, begin to look for the Real elsewhere. The cinema, radio, cocktails, cards and all such shortcut devices to happiness drop away from our interest leaving behind only their boring shadows in our memory. We get the clues for a more lasting joy when we seek for it in our own being. Guidance for such a search is given by the realized Gurus, the Sastras and is to be found also in the symbolic language of our temples.

Temples as Books in Stone

When we write *padma* or *lotus* the let-

ters which constitute that word are only symbols to indicate what particular sound is to be articulated. Those who are not initiated into the knowledge of the alphabets of the language concerned will not find any use for such marks. They may take it only as a few lines drawn in some peculiar or unknown way. Even the sound *padma* or *lotus* is only the symbol to rouse the idea of a certain kind of water plant. Our language, therefore, is nothing but a cluster of symbols. Our ancient people were very fond of expressing their ideas by carving symbols on stones or metal. Their poetic minds conceived everything in the form of beings, either human, divine or demonic. If we know how to read the language of the carved or even uncarved stones, each temple will come to appear to us as a very interesting and illuminating book on God-realization.

Is it Necessary to go to Temples ?

Water is everywhere. It is in the air in the form of vapor. It is in the sea in the form of salt water. In the tree we have it in the form of juice or sap. Ninety per cent of our body is water. But when we want fresh water to drink we go only to a properly kept well or to the water pipe. Similarly, God is everywhere, but the temple is a place specially consecrated for realizing God. The environment of a temple is sure to be more conducive for spiritual development than a fish market. Secondly, every bit of the temple is suggestive. Each icon speaks to us in a profound silent way how to look for God's light within us. When an intelligent man enters a temple he is actually entering from his physical being into the emotional, and from the emotional to the rational, and from the ra-

tional to the intuitional, and finally to the spiritual. Just as each of us have the *anna-maya-kōśa* (covering consisting of food), the *prāṇamaya-kōśa* (covering consisting of vital breaths), the *manomaya-kōśa* (covering consisting of thoughts) and the *vijñānamaya-kōśa* (covering consisting of consciousness) enshrining the *ānanda* (the joy of personal life), so the temple also has five *kōśas* or sheaths, each one helping or leading us into the other till we find ourselves in perfect harmony with the Supreme.

The Five Elements and their Symbolic Meaning

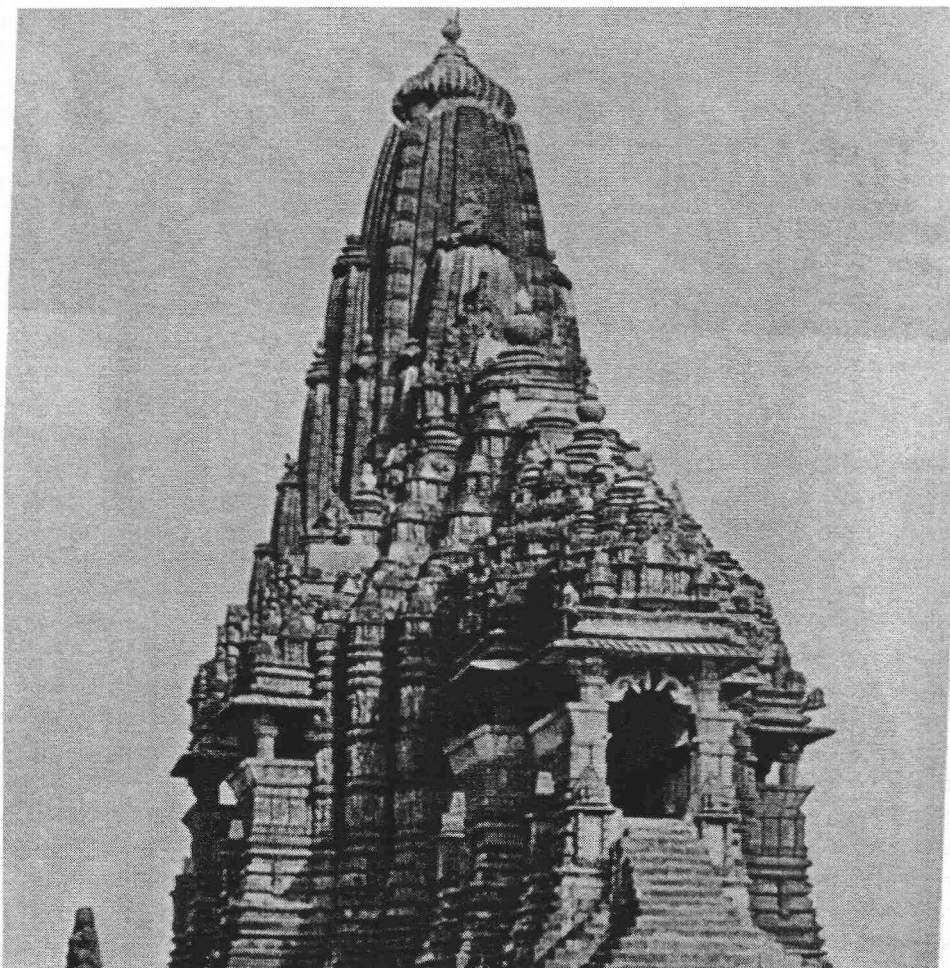
In religious literature all over the world earth, water, fire, air and ether have always been considered as the chief constituents of life. In all rituals, worships, devotional songs, mythology and religious literature we come across various references to these five elements. It is necessary to understand the symbolic significance of these five elements in order to get an insight into the specific meaning of the various references to earth, rock, water, plants, trees, flowers, fire, animals, air, birds, sky, clouds and various other symbols used in Hindu religious literature.

EARTH: Earth is a very gross form of existence. It has a physical form, with mass, weight, color and various other qualities. When its particles adhere to each other with great compactness, harmony and beauty, it becomes a priceless jewel. When they are loose and in disharmony, we assign little value to it, treating earth as mere soil. Earth represents our physical being. Reference to all manifestations of gross earth in religious literature have some connection or other with the physical aspect of our existence or of our materialistic interests. For instance, when we read that Ahalyā was turned into a stone the ancient author meant that she had become thoroughly mundane and materialistic in her interests. Lot's wife too in the Bible was turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back into the dead

past which Lot and his family were renouncing. Only by the grace of Sri Rāma's divine touch could Ahalyā be converted to the fullness of life. Such symbols are common in every religion. In St. John's gospel it is said that during a marriage festival in Cana when the wine was exhausted, Jesus had six earthen jars filled with water and by his grace converted them into very special wine. The marriage is the divine communion of the jiva or soul with God. In such a marriage between man and God the taste for the spice of Life is bound to be lost. So man turns to God for the real wine. Man possesses six containers for this wine. These are the eyes, the nose, the ears, the tongue, the skin and the mind. When these six are always exposed to materialistic pleasures they become earthy. But when they are filled with the pure water of devotion and blessed by God the very water of life becomes the elixir of divine joy. *In our temples the outer wall represents the earth or the physical aspect of our being.*

WATER: Water has a horizontal surface and a vertical depth. It represents our emotional life. The horizontal surface distinguishes the countless sentimental and emotional upsurges and exaggerations of our mind. Its vertical depth represents the pure emotional value. In a pond we see the beautiful flowers of the lotus and its spreading leaves above the pond's surface. But we do not see the muddy depth from which these flowers surge up. It is in the deep. The emotional expressions of joy are only the flowers of the lotus of feeling in the mental pond, and this lotus too has its roots in the instinctive depth of our being. To understand this in full, the psychology of relation and value needs to be studied seriously. Various shades of emotional life, both good and bad, are referred to in our mythologies with the help of symbols belonging to water. *In the temple-symbolism the padma-tīrha or lotus pool or temple tank represents our emotional life.*

FIRE: Water is less gross than earth. Fire is still more subtle. According to



Greek mythology it was stolen from the gods. It represents our rational faculty and is Godlike or divine in nature. Like the flames of fire our rational mind always leaps from one thing to another with an unquenchable thirst and hunger. Straw or dry wood put into flames are soon turned into mere ashes. But fire only purifies gold. Similarly all forms of lies are turned to ashes by the fire of reason, while truth gets glorified in the same flaming crucible. In ancient days the test of truth was always a test of fire. It need not be taken very literally. For instance the divine consort of Rāma, was recovered from the palace groves of Rāvana, Rāma subjected her to a fire-test. Many devotees like to believe that Sīta was actually thrown into an actual fire and restored by the God of fire. But it can have a better symbolic meaning. Rāma made a thorough-going critical ex-

amination of Sīta's days in confinement and the very fire of reason on which he was relying for the *bona fides* of her chastity showed to him in its clear light Sīta's great moral integrity. Even Lañka, the citadel of a counter-faith against the true God, could be turned down with the fire of critical inquiry. In the temple the fire is represented by the pillar of light and the rostrum for dancing before the sanctum saorum. Therefore, *these symbols represent our rational aspect of life.*

AIR: Air is far more subtle than fire. It has no form. It is not even visible. We only experience its effect. As Jesus says, the air bloweth where it listeth. Air stands for our intuition. Like a meteor appearing in the sky, intuition glows in our minds. Fire is fanned by air. Similarly, when reason is supported by intuition it becomes a

terrific force to influence a people or a country or even the whole of humanity. Clouds and birds of the air also convey the same symbolic meaning. In the symbolism of the temple the place of air is given to instrumental music and the hymns sung by devotees. The birds of the air also represent intuition. In the Bible it is said that God's spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. The vehicle of Viṣṇu is an eagle, as of Brahma the swan. *So the element of air represented by musical adoration of the deity stands for the intuitional aspect of our life.*

ETHER: Ether is the *ākāśa*, the all-pervading sky or space. Unlike the other four elements mentioned above, its physical existence is more presumed than perceived. Like the spirit it is everywhere and nowhere. It envelops everything. Ether or *ākāśa* therefore represents the spirit. It is pure knowledge. Just as the whole cosmos is surrounded and supported by sky-space, spirit alone encompasses everything. Like the sky above and below and in all directions of the compass, the world-spirit is everywhere. In temple symbolism sky or space is the inner shrine where one gets a vision of the deity. The dancing Natarāja, for instance, is represented as God in *Cid-ambaram* or the sky of free intelligence or consciousness. *The Śrīkōvil or sanctum sanctourum therefore represents the spiritual aspect of our life.*

Temple Symbolism

India is a sub-continent. It has a greater pre-history than actual known history. Many streams of civilization have merged into each other to give India its present highly complicated religious and social background. It is not unusual to see in the same family some members having the features of Romans, Arabs, Mongols and the pre-Aryan Dravidians. In the cultural growth of India through many centuries people with various religious notions erected several hundreds of temples from Cape Comorin to Mount Kailas. But strangely enough in the distribution of these temples and in the installation of the

deities there is involved certain order which belongs to an inner principle of the country's religious growth.

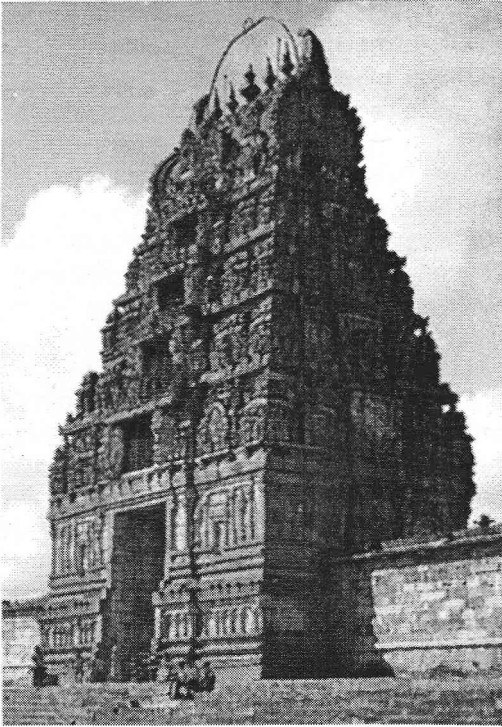
In the North of India we have Śankara presiding over Kailas in the glorious heights of manifestation. In the South the virgin Kumāri is watching over the sea which is the counterpart of the mountains. Though the high Himalaya, and the deep ocean appear to be poles apart in all respects, they are interconnected with a bondage of the highest principle of love and kindness. The Virgin of the South is having an eternal *tapas*. *Tapas* literally means heating-up. The water of the sea gets heated up and flies towards the peaks of the Himalaya and crowns Kailas with silvery snow. From the Himalaya Śankara (Śīva) in his compassion keeps the Ganges flowing back to the sea, thus giving the water of life to all.

With the exception of Kailas the deities in almost all the temples of North India appear in pairs as Rāma and Sīta, Rādha and Śāṃ, Śīva and Pārvati. But in South India we find that deities are singled out. There are separate temples for Śīva and Devi. The deities in the North are in an active pose, while in the South they are either in a contemplative or in a reposing mood, such as we see in the Śrī Padmanābha temple at Trivandrum.

Temple architecture in India is a science by itself. Every bit of the temple has to conform to a highly complicated traditional psychology. There is not even one shade of human interest left out in the temple carvings of ancient India. For an unhealthy mind afflicted by the puritan spirit of Christian or Islamic morality they may even look shocking. But for those who have the capacity to take a unitive and comprehensive view of life, the art and architecture of the temples are not just the whimsical expressions of erotic artists.

The Outer Wall

In the Bhagavad Gita there is a reference to *kṣetra* (the field) and *kṣetrajñā* (the knower of the field), i.e. the spirit residing in the body. *Kṣetra* is also the name for the temple. Like the *jīva* or soul in the body,



the deity is in the temple. According to Sri Rāmānuja the whole universe is a temple to enshrine God who is its immortal indweller. In our approach to God we reach first the physical plane; the outer wall of the temple represents the physical. Before we pass through the outer wall of the temple we leave behind our shoes, upper clothes and official robes. This means leaving the world of social conformity. We are not entering a temple as a father or mother, uncle or aunt. Neither do we go there as a soldier, merchant or scholar. Everybody enters the temple as a devotee. Entering through the *gōpura* or gate of the outer wall must be accompanied by the consciousness that we are entering into our own emotional life and transcending all physical needs. In our daily life innumerable worries and tensions centre round countless physical necessities. Our visit to the temple should be at least an occasion to cut ourselves away from such mounting tensions which make us almost mad in the environment of our family life.

Temple Tank or Padma-Tīrtha

In temple symbolism water or the ele-

ment of emotion comes next to earth. Our physical existence has little or no value unless it can get into relation with other forms of life which can evoke our feelings. Some people mistakenly think the highest form of yoga is developing a sort of numbness of the body and the inability to feel. This is wrong. All healthy human beings should certainly have a good feeling content. In India feelings like attachment and hatred, desire and indignation, pride and rivalry, are all considered to be vices which are to be eliminated. Well, let your love and attachment be for God. Hate pretensions and falsehood. Desire to know yourself in all its glory. Be indignant about your own pettiness. Take pride in being upright. Let all your good dispositions be always in active rivalry against your evil tendencies. Detachment in life is impossible without attachment to something higher and nobler. So let the reservoir of your emotions be converted to an ocean of sustaining milk.

A dip in the lotus pool (*padma-tīrtha*) is absolutely necessary before entering the inner wall of the temple. This not only cleanses the body but also pacifies our emotions. Water in its purest form is symbolically representing adoration (*bhakti*). Outwardly, when our body gets washed in water our emotions get bathed in devotion or *bhakti*. Before we actually have our dip we look towards the sun and with a heart filled with thankfulness offer some water to him. That itself is a token of our recognition of the world as a teleological system where every bit of the universe is seen knitted together in one purpose. The sun brings water to our fields, our wells, ponds and rivers. The sun that caresses the lotus of the temple tank is only the objective counterpart of the inward sun of the Self in the firmament (*ākāśa*) of our mind which enables the lotus of devotion in us also to blossom. So when as a devotee we are taking our bath we should meditate on the purity of our own emotional life. Thus we get into our own emotional being which is the second step in temple worship.

Approaching the Inner Shrine

When the devotee goes further into the temple his attention is caught by a pillar with many lights erected on the image of a tortoise. According to Indian mythology when the *devas* and *asuras* used the mountain of Mandhara to churn the milk ocean of values, it was sinking into a bottomless depth. Then Viṣṇu became a tortoise and served as the rock bottom which supported the mountain. In other words, the opposing forces in us which use reason as a churning-stick should have an axiomatic basis. When Descartes, the father of modern European Philosophy, wanted to get at the whole truth he found his reasoning was leading him to an eternal abyss. He gasped for something firm on which to stand. Finally he came to the axiom "I think, therefore I am" (*Cogito ergo sum*). That served as a basis for all his systematization of philosophy. So one should have a foothold on which to stand. Mere reasoning will not help. Fire stands for our reasoning faculty. But here fire is given as a column of light resting on a tortoise. That means our reason should have the support of firm faith in the Guru or the *Śāstras*. The great edifice of religion is based on the rock of faith. Our own ego should not come in the way of the spiritual quest. As Tagore puts it, let not our lamentations mar the music of God. So the devotee should take the hint to have no more mechanical thinking, but should contemplate with, the full adoption of his Guru.

Just behind the pillar of light we have the *maṇḍapa* or pillared rostrum for dancing. A teen-aged virgin is supposed to dance on this platform facing the deity. It is not to please the world. The dance is the symbolic expression of becoming. When the world of becoming is out of tune with the Absolute it drags us into the world of necessities and sorrow. But when the dance is in tune with the Absolute it lifts us away from the mundane and brings us the joy of consecration and communion. Dancing is also a fire symbol. The restless flames of the fire appear as though they were dancing. So the devotee

has now left his worldly interests. His emotions are no more conflicting and the devotion for the Absolute is achieved. He has become contemplative.

Pañcavādya or Temple Music

Well, contemplation cannot be practiced. It cannot be mechanical or hair-splitting. Intuition plays a great part in contemplation. When we see great natural beauty, the sea, mountains, forests and stars, we are overwhelmed with joy. We become silent. We are transported in a harmony. Our thought waves get calmed down. Our mind is lifted to a new sublime height. On such occasions it is not unusual to get such ideas as a result of discursive thinking. Such an awakening of our mind where it perceives the hidden aspects of Truth, Beauty and Goodness is known in India as *darśanas*. No *darśana* is possible without intuition.

Air is the symbol of intuition. It is the medium for conducting sound waves. In temple worship the symbolism of air comes after fire. The music from five instruments, popularly known as *pañcavādya*, comes from behind the rostrum for dancing. It is significant that the orchestra consists of five instruments. They represent the music of life. Life becomes sweet and musical when our physical, emotional, rational, intuitional and spiritual aspects acquire a harmony among themselves.

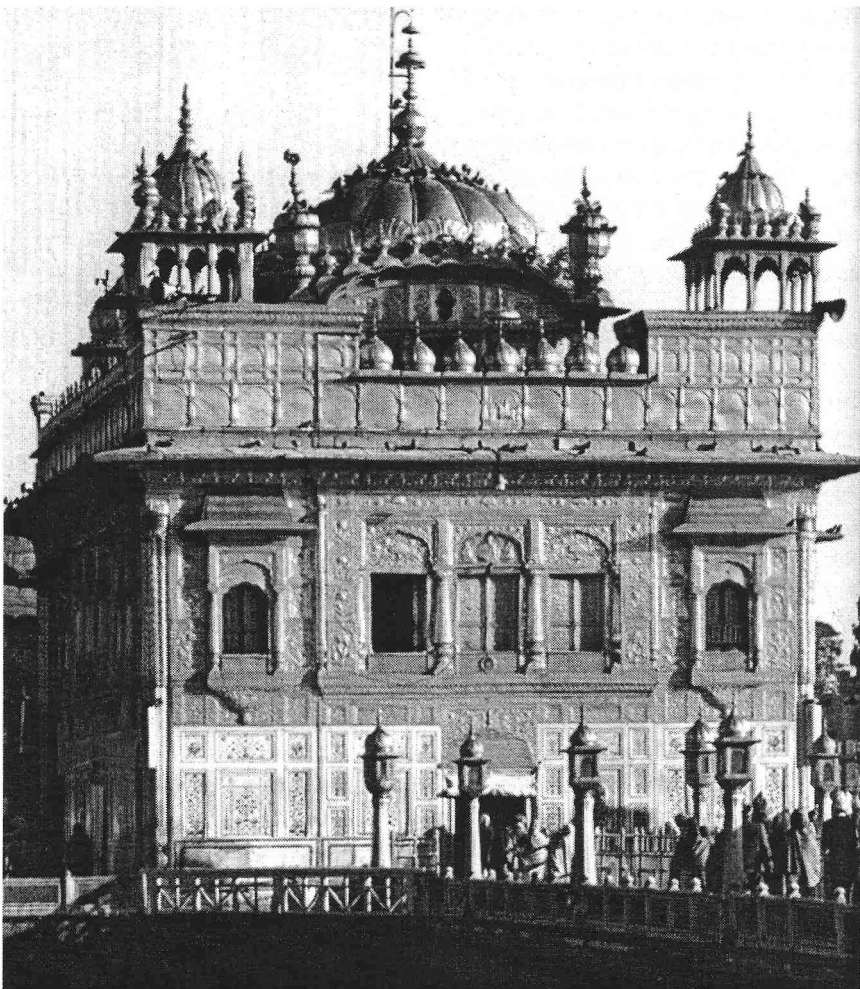
The grip of music on the mind is remarkable. Nobody can escape the charm of music. All agitations of the mind subside. Worries are forgotten. The mind becomes peaceful. After a pause of tranquility and silence new ripples of joy arise and fill the mind with a rhythm all its own. In Sanskrit such an experience is called *anubhūti*. This joy born of an inner harmony helps us to have an intuitive appreciation of the Absolute. The music that fills our ears opens the eyes of intuition. With our ordinary eyes we cannot see God. For that one should have his spiritual or third eye opened. We thus stand before the doors of the inner shrine with our third eye opened.

Patience is part of the spiritual discipline. It takes time for a tree to flower and for a fruit to ripen. Even so realization comes only when we prepare ourselves for it. That requires time. Of course, realization is not coming in bits or by degrees as some people think. Either we see it or we do not see it. Either we recognize Truth or we never know it. But we have to wait. So we should stand before the doors of the inner shrine with our attention fully focused on the doors. Any moment the door will be opened. Even when the outer door is opened there is an inner veil. So too when the sun blazes and the outer eye is opened we do not see the sun's light until our awareness removes the veil between the subjective and the objective. Even so we have to wait before the altar until the inner veil is drawn.

As soon as the veil is removed we see

a great effulgence. The light of a thousand wicks is waved before our eyes. Realization also comes like this with a glorious effulgence which can make us blind to everything else for the time being. The outer eye which was not used to such an effulgent brilliance soon gets accustomed to it. Slowly from behind the light, from a mysterious darkness, the divine form of the deity emerges. This stage of temple worship marks our progress from the intuitional to the spiritual. Our minds become filled with such a great ecstasy that the duality of the subjective and objective counterparts of worship cease. The camphor is lighted. It burns out, leaving nothing. The chiming of the bells also dies out. Everything becomes calm. Silence alone remains. Peace! Peace! Peace!

(Continued in next issue.)



East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



Guru Nitya's proposed course of studies for wisdom-seeking students of the Narayana Gurukula:

The Narayana Gurukula Foundation is a contemplative institute for higher education to benefit all wisdom seekers, irrespective of the student's country of origin, faith, language, gender, economic means, and educational status. As the Narayana Gurukula Foundation was founded by Nataraja Guru who was holding Narayana Guru in his mind as an exemplar in wisdom appreciation, there is bound to be a bias towards the fundamental teachings of Narayana Guru in the course proposed. The roots of the Guru's value vision belong essentially to classical Indian studies of Aryan and Dravidian origin. This natural affinity of the Gurukula to India's historical culture and civilization doesn't exclude the basic stand of the major religions of the world; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, various traditions of contemplative mysticism, the Jain and Buddhist religions which originated in India and theistic Indian religions like Saivism, Vaisnavism and Sikhism (of more recent origin).

The period for this course of studies is limited to seven years. Therefore, it is not possible to make extensive studies in the

above-mentioned disciplines. The main interest of this course is not to make a historical survey but to help students to evolve into their own utmost development, which they have to achieve by continuously channeling their immediate and present interests and abilities to their progressive unfoldment to fit into the future of their physical, aesthetic, moral, intelligent, and spiritual advancement.

The two basic aims of the Narayana Gurukula Foundation are:

1. Self realization in its most accurate and fullest sense.
2. For each person to become a fellow citizen of every living member of the human family of the world at large.

In other words each participant should be able to assume a total commitment to the welfare of humanity as a whole with unlimited liability. Such a course of study is to be placed within three spheres:

1. The enormous unlimited field of the possibility of search with a view of turning to the relevant field of the most probable.
2. Helping each person to become fully experienced researcher by making his or her program of action fundamentally based on the ultimate probe by which one

can narrow the field of the possible into the most probable.

3. The exposure to the expanding consciousness of extending one's avenues of interest to the maximum opportunity of promoting the most relevant probability into the facts of life by which actualization of values can result in one's personal endeavor.

Where to begin and what should be the priorities?

The search is to begin with introspection. By listing one's own value vision and making a studious effort to define, describe and illustrate the values which one regards as supremely important to the actualization of one's life's goal. Out of the value matrix each person can convincingly make a chosen path for his or her ultimate pilgrimage.

Why values?

From microbes to the fully developed wise person two questions are held before each:

1. Where is one placed? This question can be put better for human beings as 'where am I placed?' 2. Subsequent possible questions are 'what or whom am I related to?'

Ultimately there may arise the question, 'how can my chance relationship be fully taken advantage of to arrive at the most satisfactory performance. This necessarily has to include in it the uniqueness of a person as well as the participation of the person in the universal context. The desired result can be achieved only through positive relationships of caring, sharing, and working together from the basis of a commonly accepted criteria of universal and benevolent knowledge.

Why uniqueness?

To explore a person's position in the world, their placement in time and space have to be interlinked.. No person or thing can be simultaneously at two places at a given time. Thus, the position of the seeker comes instantaneously where the search is to be commenced. In reference to the

'position in time and space', a vista of a certain possibility might arise as an area of consciousness with deep temporal and futuristic significance. The first delineation that comes in deciding the viability of the possibility is by relating everything to the uniqueness of the seer or the knower who will be invariably also be the doer. Hence possibilities stem mainly from the uniqueness of the 'position' held by the programmer, whose program is a search or probe through which one's position can again and again be restored to a position of factual relationship in which the objective environmental aspect and the subjective imperiential aspect can be brought to bear upon on each other in the most meaningful manner. By pursuing this same methodology of reduction one comes to the unique fact of actualization. Thus without confirming the uniqueness of the educand, no program of education can be commenced.

Why universal?

The uniqueness of an individual, the individual's position and the individual's structural and functional reality stem from a homogeneity that constitutes the universal concept of space and time.. There is an ever changing, streaming flux of being which is paradoxically held in the changeless law of purposive change. Thus the universal is a matrix of innumerable varieties of uniqueness. This brings the categorized requirements of reaffirming the time commencement and it's closure. Thus space time continuum necessitates the individual to be unique. The same law necessitates the uniqueness of the individual to generate the universality of the social matrix, to which uniqueness belongs.

What order follows when relating the uniqueness to universality?

Our continuous search is for becoming fully conversant with values of the highest order. The values invariably belong to the relationship between two unique units. As if by magic, both the unique and the universal contribute to the universality of the flux of being. In other

words, the most desirable study is to decipher all values to make a probe into the seemingly irrefutable values and enable every individual to arrive at the certitude that can be self-evident. The probability thus resides in the varying and variegating relationship between several sets of uniqueness.

Is it possible to carve a program of search for possibility without recognizing the position that leads to a certain possibility?

Promoting healthy relationships between units and maintaining the position of a unique person can be a hypothesis which may bring contraries. The epistemologies of the unique and the universals can be correlated only by designing an overall epistemology. This can only be achieved by exposing the unique individual to the universal society and the universal society coming into encounter with various units which all share collectively. What results from it is well known in the world of science as evolution.

We begin this course of study with an invitation to those who understand that they may have to plunge into fundamentals. For that they may have to question precedent convictions which have been honored as the bulwark of faith held true for many eons.

At the first step of our entry into this

universal search, let each one of us prepare our own bio-data as a value seeker:

1. Time of birth.
2. Exact place where you were born.
3. The name and a short history of your father.
4. The name and a short history of your mother.
5. The structure of your family and your position in it.
6. You can leave out any comment on the schooling you had and the public programs which you happened to be associated with. Instead give the genuine questions that have come to your mind up till now.
7. The search you have made, if any.
8. Is the search continuing as an inner urge or have you given it up to revise and restart?
9. What are your personal convictions about yourself, your relationship with your most intimate partner or co-worker with whom you share your most intimate thoughts?
10. Do you have any religious faith? If yes, what? a. To what conclusion has that taken you? b. Are you fully satisfied?
11. If you are joining the course of studies of the Narayana Gurukula Foundation what considerations prompt you to look into its possibilities and probabilities?
12. What is the exact field where you want to actualize your highest search?



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Khajurāho, ca. 1000 A.D.

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