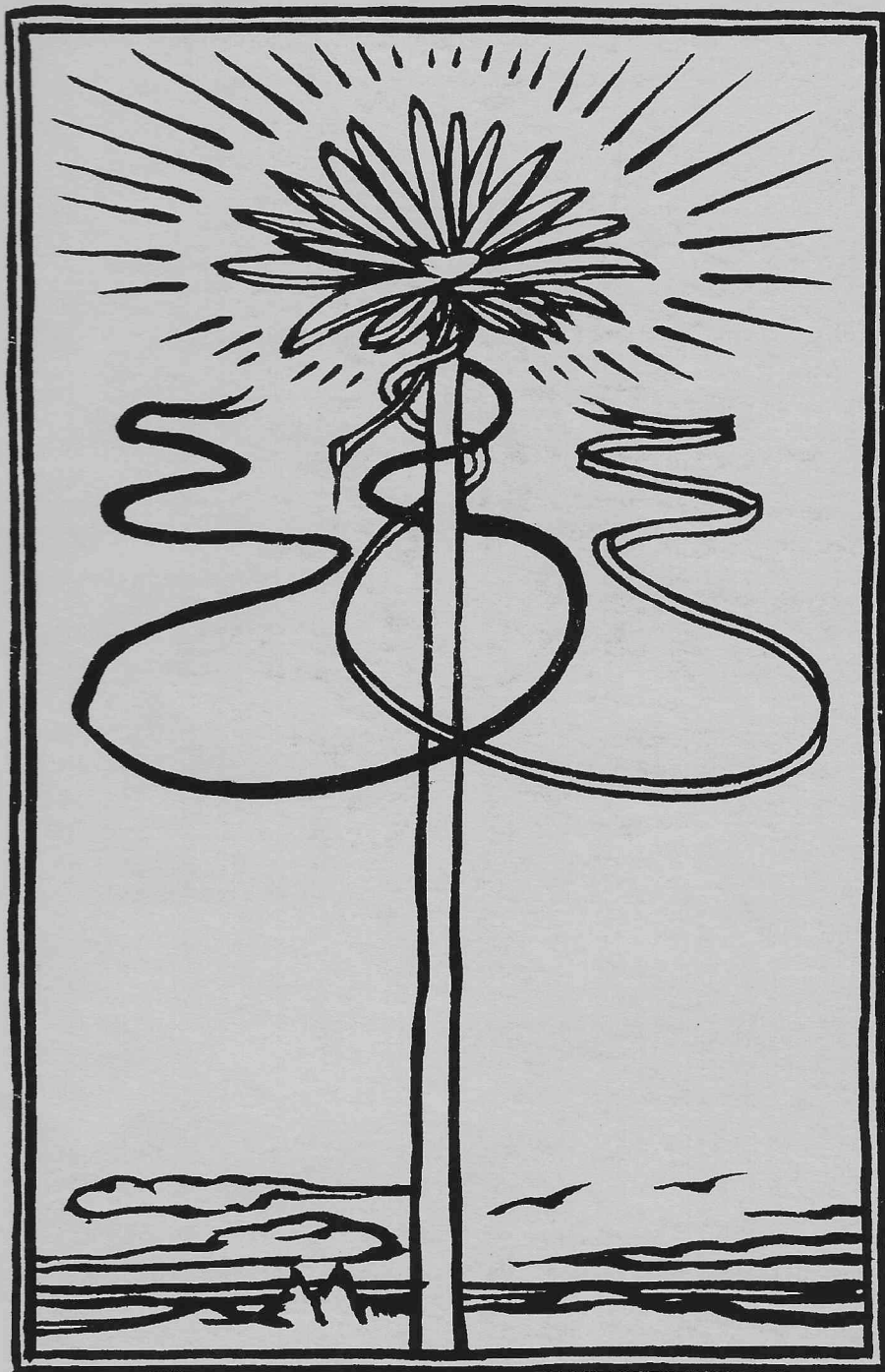
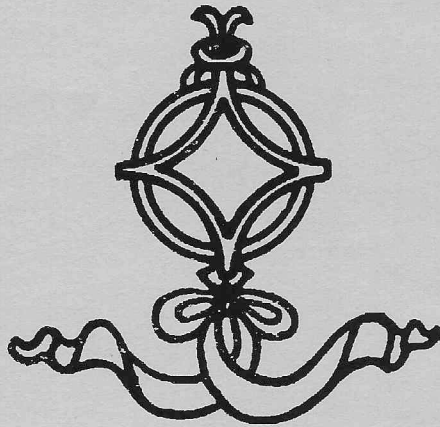


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XIV • 1998

FOURTH QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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'Tis the Gift to be Simple

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be...*

The radio was playing the familiar folk song as I answered the door to welcome my young friend who was visiting home on a holiday from her university.

"Oh, I know that song," she said, as she hummed the sweet melody, "but what does it mean to say that it is a gift to be simple?"

"It comes from an early American spiritual tradition which emphasizes a simple way of life as a discipline to heighten one's closeness to the essential, the sacred, the eternal."

"Were they some of the Christian Protestant groups who came to America to escape persecution?"

"Yes, their sincere response to Jesus' example and teaching was to place high importance on practices that emphasized cooperation more than competition, simplicity more than luxury and humility more than achievements."

"Ugh. That sounds boring. I put a lot of energy into trying to excel and it is thrilling to me when I win a race or get an A on a paper or an exam. I worked really hard in high school to be the best and because of that I was accepted at the university where I wanted to go."

"How are your studies going?"

"I like what I am learning in my geology class and I find anthropology fascinating. But I find myself going in so many different directions. I don't know how I will ever choose a major. It is so hard to know what I would really like to do for my career."

"Just since the time of your grandparent's youth, the options have gone from a very narrow range to many possibilities."

"That old song is pretty, but it seems outdated. I wouldn't want to live with even the restrictions my grandparents had, much less with those their great grandparents had."

"Until relatively recently, most people used to live on farms or in villages. Their diet was largely determined by what they or their neighbors could grow. For example, the cereals they had were what grew

in their particular area. Now every city in this country has several supermarket chains, each of which has a whole aisle of cereals in multi-colored boxes."

"Yeah, my sister and brother and I used to fight over which breakfast cereal we wanted. Finally my parents started buying three different boxes to stop the squabbling. They each had their own preferences, too, so our meals were pretty chaotic."

"Maybe that song has something to say to us after all. If you and your family had decided together to choose a more simple way, perhaps there would have been less squabbling."

"Shopping for groceries certainly would have been easier. But we would have given up our freedom of choice."

"Perhaps you would have gained a more important kind of freedom."

"What do you mean?"

"Our society places a lot of emphasis on freedom of choice. A lot of our collective and individual resources are devoted to that pursuit. When your focus is on your particular tastes and how to satisfy them, not just for breakfast, but for dozens of food items, articles of clothing, entertainment options, cars, furniture, decorating ideas, tools, destinations, etc., your energy is channeled in the direction of developing preferences, longing, looking, acquiring, comparing, etc. That heightens competition regarding the acquisition of things and the funds to buy them and even in one's tastes which fuel a sense of superiority."

"Isn't that what freedom is all about: freedom to do your best and get the best, freedom to think how you want to and enjoy what you like as long as you don't hurt anyone else?"

"When you are enjoying that freedom, does it make you happy?"

My friend got a quizzical look on her face and then mused silently for awhile. She said slowly, "Well, I am happy when I get what I want, but I am unhappy when I don't. A lot of the time, my head is full of voic-

es, competing interests clamoring for attention. Or I am arguing with someone else. That doesn't make me very happy."

"I think the song is talking about the kind of freedom that comes when we aren't arguing with others or being torn by conflicting desires or longing to be something we aren't."

"That sounds good, but I don't think it's possible. There are so many things I want to do that there is no way I can do all of them, so I am bound to be torn or longing for that which I cannot have or do. Even when I am content, other people create trouble for me, because they are jealous."

"It may not be easy but it is definitely possible. Even though it may seem contradictory, you can gain more freedom by restricting your choices."

"That definitely seems contradictory!"

"That is because we have equated freedom with choices instead of with its more fundamental basis. An ancient wise man put it this way: 'The changing world is all permeated by the divine; by turning away from the changing world, you will be able to enjoy the presence of the divine everywhere'."

"I have had times when I was hiking with my Dad up in the mountains when I felt that the whole world was sacred. The beauty of nature made my heart open up."

"Didn't that give you a vast sense of freedom?"

"Oh, now I see what you are talking about," she said as she smiled. "Yes, I felt free as a bird, and full to over-flowing."

"The ancient seer continued by asking, 'Whose is wealth?' and suggesting that when you know that the essence of everything is One, that allows you to move freely in the world."

"But those moments are brief, like vacations from how things usually are. I don't see how I could feel like that all the time." My friend paused for a moment, and then slowly added, "Although it would be wonderful to have that kind of freedom more often."

"When you are rushing through many tasks to reach a series of goals or to try to achieve several goals which demand your time and energy, how do you feel?"

"I usually feel excited, bothered, unsure, eager to reach my goals, many things at once."

"How is it when you are hiking?"

"Well, we walk along the trail, breathing the incredibly fresh air, looking around at the trees, listening for birds, stopping to enjoy the vistas. Time just seems to flow rather than being crammed full of things. The beauty and peace of nature are around us all the time."

"You can have similar experiences even when you are at home or at school by focusing on where you actually are and what you are presently doing, instead of on what you want to achieve or get."

"Yes, I have had times like that when I was working on an art project, reading a fascinating book or writing a paper on something I was really interested in. But I can't imagine being able to feel that way when I have to cook dinner or do the dishes or study for a math exam."

"Almost every spiritual tradition assures you that you can. Just like when you are hiking, if you cease to think that the only value in cooking dinner is eating it and the only good thing about doing the dishes is having them done, you will start to see the many possibilities inherent in what you are doing. Cooking can become an opportunity to feel connected to the sun and rain which nourish the earth to provide our food and to the many hands which plant and harvest it, doing the dishes can be a moment to share laughter or a song with someone who is working with you or to feel the satisfaction of bringing order out of chaos; the math exam can bring a sense of wholeness when you see how a formula is solved."

"Yes, I have experienced all those things at times. I am starting to see that when I accept where I am and focus on what I am doing, I feel happier. And freer. So now I have an idea of what the song means when it says 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be'."

As we said goodbye, I found myself humming, 'And when we find ourselves in the place just right, 'twill be in the valley of love and delight'.

Nancy Yeilding

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:15

kramānyatvam pariṇāmānyatve hetuḥ

krama - succession, natural law, underlying process

anyatvam - difference, variety

pariṇāma - transformation

anyatve - in variation or difference

hetuḥ - cause

The distinctness of succession is the reason for the distinctness of transformation.

In sūtra 14 we considered the continuity and contiguity which are required in the contemplative discipline for the mind to arrive at *samādhi*. *Dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are like sowing a seed and carefully preparing the environmental facilities to prepare the seed to germinate. A number of factors are conducive to the germination and growth of a healthy seed. There can also be an equal number of opposing forces which arrest the unfurling of the potentials of a seed, right from its preparation to germinate.

In the sowing of a seed we see the alpha point of life. Similarly, in the imbibing of the purpose of yoga a number of ideas floating in the air all come to a single point where the potential is brought to the full grasp of actualization. This is a crucial point in the parameter of growth where the ideal and the actual intersect. Where the vertical parameter is crossed by the horizontal parameter, four factors come to unite in a decisive manner. The

first is time – the time chosen to initiate an aspirant into the discipline of contemplation. The second is the spatial requirements for the aspirant to commence the discipline. It is within the time/space reference that the ideal intervenes with the potential. The idea that is sown into the mind of the aspirant is not static. It is meant to be a developing, growing, actualizing possibility which can ultimately culminate in the total realization of the Absolute in its fullest sense. The idea to be contemplated is therefore to be looked upon as a purpose which has a quality of the *élan vital*.

When such kind of contemplation is aided by a formula such as of a mantra, the mantra is called *mūlamantra*. Before a seed is planted, the field is prepared and a furrow is made where the future roots of the seed have to strike. The mantra which suggests the preparation is called the *mūlamantra*. When this has been satisfactorily done, the initiation is given to the aspirant. This is like the sower placing the seed in the furrow in an appropriate manner with adequate irrigation and manure. The seed that is placed in the furrow is called the *bījamantra*. *Bīja* means seed. That means the actual commencement of the discipline is given.

Now we have accomplished the first part of the process, bringing a purposeful idea to be borne in the attentive devotion (*śraddha*) of the yogi. What is thus received and accepted as the inspiration for development is *dhāraṇā*. *Dhār* means supportive. *Dhāraṇā* is the inception of the

dharmi of *yogasamādhi* in which all *dharma*s pertaining to the discipline can come in a proper way. The proper way of development is called *ānantarīkātā*, i.e., the sprout projecting itself above the earth and the root going vertically down for its self nourishment. In the *ānantarīkātā*, there is also *anantaram* which means difference. The shooting up of the sprout and the root piercing into the earth happen in opposite directions. Yet these opposites are of a complementary nature. Prior to the opening of the cotyledon, the first leaf formations have been held in security. Similarly, the aspirant in a process of discipline considers the time given to him or her for contemplation as a protection for maintaining the process of actualizing the idea to its fullest measure.

The root brings nourishment from the deep hidden source of earth. It is complemented by the sprout going into the light and getting guidance from its placement in the atmosphere. It is held in perfect alignment with the heavens. A yoga student needs to delve into his or her own *svadharma* to derive more and more enthusiasm from the deep-rooted traditional values which he or she has inherited. The sprout is suggestive of the disciple sitting in absolute resonance with the loving care of his or her preceptor, who gives full attention to the disciple.

Similarly the disciple gives credence to every word that comes from the Master. The disciple is also fully attentive to the life model of the Master. *Dhyāna* is the oscillation of the inner psyche between one's desire to know and one's determination to be benefited by every intuitive flash. Devotion comes in the form of intense dedication. Outwardly one withdraws the five senses from external distractions which brings poise to one's psychophysical system. There is a channeling of all centripetal energies to be in absolute resonance with one's *dhāraṇā*, which the yogi aspirant keeps with great zeal through observations made of the Master.

When a seed receives moisture and subterranean energies from the soil, it undergoes various changes. That change is

what is presented here as *pariṇāma*, evolution of consciousness and the inner nature of the conscient. *Dhāraṇā* is supported by *samyama*. *Samyama* is bringing together one's inner energies to a point of unification of the natural facilities of one's life and the spiritual requirements of transformation. The knowledge that fills a yogi's consciousness in such a situation is called *viveka khyāti*. Without any distraction from the outer environment, one feeds into oneself the sustaining awareness of dedication. From there the *pariṇāma* begins. The evolution (*pariṇāma*) has to take one to the highest achievement of *samādhi*. But before that, the evolution has to pass through several stages.

First is the preparation to preserve the ideal state of the contemplative consciousness by preventing all possible distractions from coming to it (*nirodha pariṇāma*). *Nirodha* is putting up a protective wall to safeguard the contemplative's conduct from being affected by anything that can go against one's will. In sūtra ten, this growth in the right direction is described as *tasya praśānta-vāhitā samskāraḥ*: "its flow becomes tranquil by repeated impression."

Then it was pointed out that with the cultivation of disinterest in everything, the psyche itself gets a graceful direction to go into one's aloneness. We will be further making ourselves familiar with this in the fourth *pāda*, where it is given as *dharmamēgha-samādhi*. All the objectiveness given out as *savitarka* transmutes into *nirvitarka* and this is sequential to *samādhi pariṇāma*. Thereafter the yogi gets the evolution of one pointedness (*ekāgrata pariṇāma*). We have emphasized this in sūtra twelve.

This takes us to the main theme of contemplation of the contiguous evolutionary process which reveals to us more and more integrity in *dharma* and starts developing special features in our life which are indications of our intense relationship with *dharma*. The special features are called *lakṣaṇa*. *Dharma pariṇāma* leads to the *lakṣaṇa pariṇāma*. Consequently that brings the yogi to a well established state. This highly coveted position is called

avasthā pariṇāma. The aspiring student should know the three phases which come one after another: *dharma pariṇāma*, *lakṣaṇa pariṇāma* and *avasthā pariṇāma*. That leads us to the very substratum wherein lies the latent, active or unmanifest inherent traditional wisdom.

Pariṇāma can be transformation of the inbuilt potentials otherwise called *dharma*. *Dharma* essentially belongs to the primeval cause of anything. In the primeval aspect one cannot expect anything to be distinct. Only when the dynamics of change gradually are expanded into modifications and formations does *pariṇāma* become a process. The primeval cause is like an unexpected source of energy which is co-eternal with the universe, which precipitates sequential events in a natural development. Time is not a thing. It is an adjunct of a mass or a potential mass which has a developmental sequence in it which can be either gradual or spontaneous.

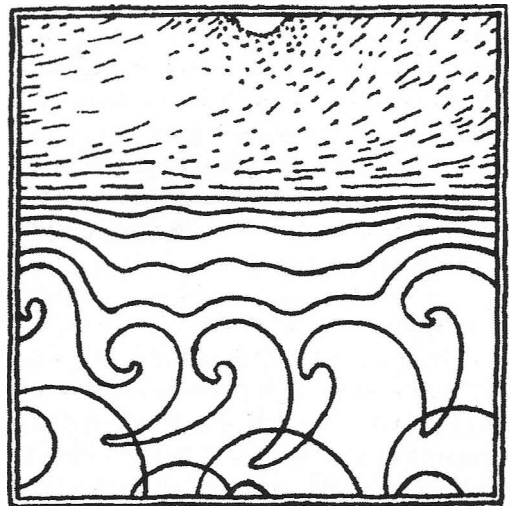
Thus transformation has three frames of reference: formal, nominal, and essential. One of the factors which promotes transformation is the intense urge or desire to increase one's dynamics of change. Another is the accompanying consciousness which is always prompting change. Change can affect extensions as well as intentions. The material cause of transformation is either a re-assembling or restructuring of the basic stuff with which vital energy is in the process of accomplishing a fact. In the present case it is the transformation or transmutation of a physical and physiological body into a psychic and spiritual manifestation.

In the ordinary case, human life is directed from inside with a biological will to live. The generality of things in this world flow with a rhyme and rhythm of natural unfoldment. But in the case of a yogi, one's life is liberation-oriented. That naturally makes an aspirant conscious of a continuous responsibility to reduce physical and physiological impacts on one's psychosomatic system, allowing one to draw on all the energies which are lying dormant in one's libidinal life energies with a view to channelize them into the

transcendental. For that, the sensory system and everything that tends to exaggerate the physiological significance of life are to be consistently averted. It is like releasing a bound up source of energy.

The spontaneous energy that is functioning all the time, which can be consciously controlled or can be allowed to function autonomously, is one's own life breath which is also called the vital energy. Although time, space and mass are present in that context, all three are allowed to flow in unison. As the unfoldment of what is held within a form is to be allowed to become formless, all possible conditionings are to be avoided. As the vital energy has a role in the organisms of living beings, it becomes either an animal urge to be energized, or a rational extension of a person's egoistic goals.

Both of these are great waste of energy for a yogi who wants only to conform to the idea of being transformed into one's ideal. That is why the aspirant employs the method of *samyama* as a preliminary step. One withdraws one's consciousness from being locked up in the body and one's energy from being spread out into patterns of consciousness through several identifications with one's time, space and physical peculiarities of the mass of consciousness (*prajñā*). Several years of conditionings that have gone into the human physical energies, mental matrices and social moorings are to be sublimated. Thus,



the person behind the seeker is to be transformed into a free-flowing energy.

Three kinds of *samādhi* are advised before one enters into the transmutation of one's present mode of living into an ever-increasing silence that can efface all word dynamics, all thought dynamics and all expectation dynamics. In the beginning that may amount to a drastic alienation of oneself from all one's mores, which can initially be quite frightening. In the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya* this is given as follows: The order of causation is compared to the process of making a jar out of clay. But the oneness (*kaivalya*) that is aimed at by the aspirant yogi is not like the accomplishment of making a jar. The process is not one of creation but of absolutist reduction in which consciousness is absorbed in the pre-conscious and the pre-conscious is absorbed into the sub-conscious. The yogi is giving up the programming of day to day life and cleansing his or her inner light (*taijasa*) with the removal of all images.

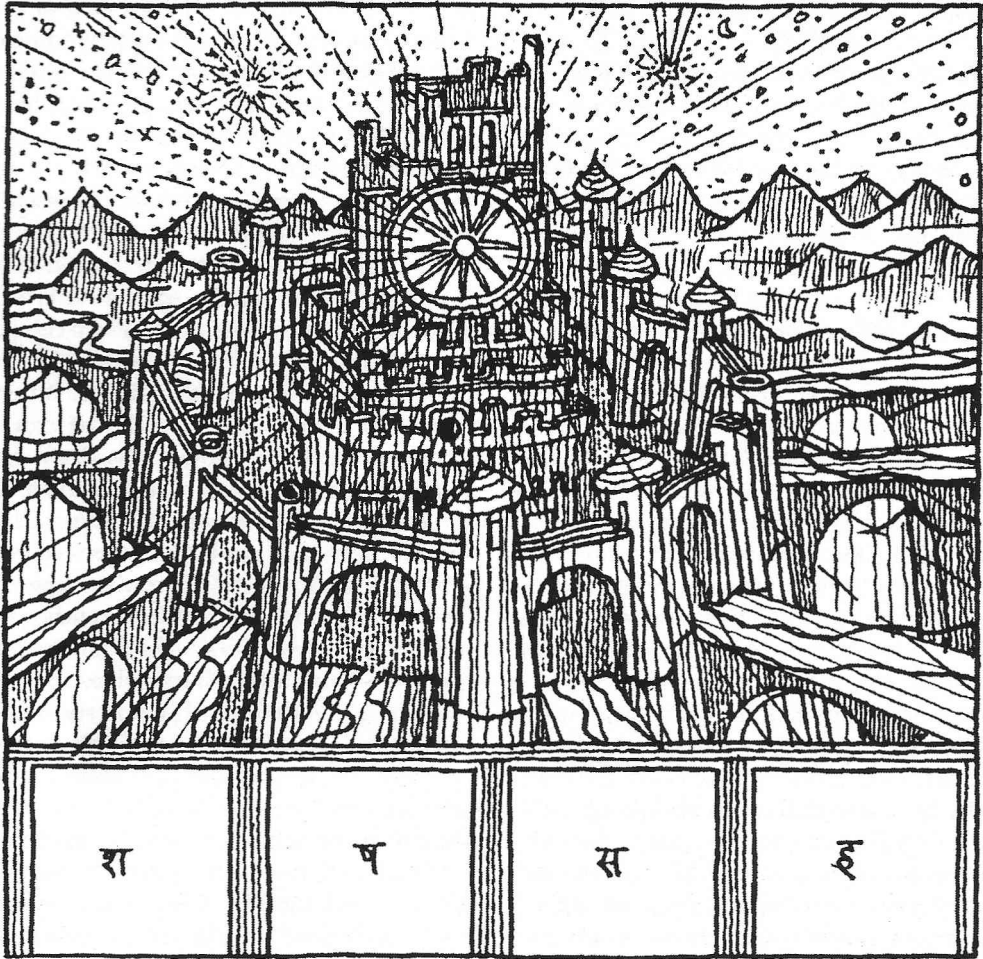
Thus, the yogi is shifting total interest from the transactional dynamic (*jāgarita sthāna*) to the dream dynamic (*svapna sthāna*) where one becomes a witness to the inner parade of images. Beyond them, the only factor that remains is the urge to remember and the urge to imagine. These are to be held as the only link that remains for a long time between the individuated self and the absolute causal Self. It is more an act of waiting than self-inducement or self-projection. There is a purification that comes on its own, and one allows oneself to be totally cleansed by the most immediate presence of the indefinable. No analogical comparison is given here. This is happening in the transit area of contemplation moving from the monitored to the non-monitored state of remaining in a pure state of being rather than attempting or achieving anything.

Introduction to Sūtra III:16

There is a lurking paradox in the heart of the Absolute. This paradox touches the life principle on the one hand and the principle of inertia on the other. In Sanskrit, the life principle is called *jīva* and

the inertial principle is called *jada*. Some of the great secrets of spirituality arising out of the *Upaniṣads* are revealed by familiarity with the Sanskrit language and the rules that govern the use of vowels and consonants. All vowels stem from vital energy (*prāṇā*), and all consonants are formulated through the process of the psychic visualization of basic symbols. In the nucleic aspect of voicing a sound, special tones can be arranged as a principle of bonding between a sonal notation and a visualized consonant. That is how meaning is put into articulated words. All words articulated by a human being are purposeful. The purposiveness stems from a purely biological necessity modified by the physiological limitations of the body and the structure of the faculty of articulation. Several vital organs participate in this, such as the ear which receives the vibrations caused by the molecular movement of air. An impression from the outer world is made on the thin layer of skin which forms the drum of the ear. Inside, the raw material of the impression is fed into the notion of a word which is interpreted by some inner mechanism of which we know very little.

At the far end of the Sanskrit alphabet are four sounds which are mainly caused by the pressure of wisps of breath, *śa, ṣa, sa, ha*. They are like hisses. In these four sounds the spirit of the vowel and the spirit of the consonant combine mysteriously like half and half aspects of the manifested world and the creative principle of manifestation. These two joined together are symbolized by *Ardhanārīśvara*, which means half *nāri* and half *īśvara*. In Samkhya Yoga, the two halves which come together to make up this world are said to come out of indistinctiveness (*avyākta*). According to Samkhya, the two principles that in a mysterious way structure the world are *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is derived from a metaphoric expression of the indweller of a city. The human body is allegorically referred to as a city with nine gates, *puram*. The indwelling being is called *puruṣa*. Afterwards, in the Indian languages, *puruṣa* came to stand for the



male principle, but this is not supported by Samkhya. It is only a collective fallacy. The other half is *prakṛti*, which means "proliferating accumulation with a purposive increase to generate the world."

Puruṣa and *prakṛti* are mythologically symbolized as Śiva and Śakti. Those who are swayed by the artistic descriptions of Śiva and Śakti in religious poetry, painting and sculpture, will lose this path of inquiry completely. Śiva, also called Śambhu and Śankara, means the silence which transcends all modulations. Śakti is the principle of dynamics which is infused into the all-pervading silence. Between motion and stasis lies the great world of manifestation. Indian people have taken a sociobiological clue to understand the freedom of spirit and the hindrance of freedom. When a man is coupled with a woman, his social behavior totally chang-

es. The attitude of a single man is to move aimlessly. The woman comes and questions the aim of his movement: "Where are you going?" From that comes the first sociobiological motion of a man. In order to understand how the cosmological behavior of the Supreme is interpreted in terms of psychological behavior, we have to look into the origins of myths and legends and the formation of social mores and conventions. This is beautifully represented in Sankara's *Saundarya Laharī* which begins by saying that if Śiva and Śakti are not united, then Śiva has no power even to pulsate. Pulsation is the beginning of life. Śakti is that dynamic or energy which gives pulsation to the life principle called Śiva. Together they are called *Ardhanārīśvara*. *Īśvara* is the controlling principle; *nārī* is that which makes every motion serve the purpose of continuity of a mani-

fested world series; *ardha* means these two are brought together.

There are two silences: the silence in death and the silence resulting from the canceling out of opposites in the *Ardhanārīśvara*. In the androgynous principle, when there is the canceling out of the spirit principle and the manifesting principle, the Absolute and the relative, it is there we say there is an enigma, a paradox lurking in the middle. We have to go into it to formulate a proper methodology for our search. A philosophical search is constituted of three principles: the subject matter for study, the methodology, and the resultant factor of relating the subject to the ultimate object of the search. In a wisdom search, the methodology is the link that bridges the gap between the subject of the study and its ultimate purpose. The object is called *prayojana*, that which is generated according to a plan or purposive scheme and which brings a sense of fulfillment. The *prayojana* of a person getting married is the propagation of the species by bringing forth sons and daughters. That which is born with a purposive adherence to the scheme of life links one generation and another. This is the physical, material, social aspect of life. There, silence comes from the canceling out of two opposite poles, the principle of Śiva and the principle of Śakti (which are not to be mixed up with god-persons).

The second silence is that of aloneness. A man is not going to a woman or vice versa. Instead they seek a silence with no indication of a relative factor, called *kevalam*, mere aloneness. The silence which comes in the creation or manifestation (*vibhūti*) is like the flywheel of a huge factory rotating at such high speed that it cannot be seen, yet it is causing many other wheels to rotate. That is the silence of the supreme wheel turning. The other is going to the ultimate end of aloneness where nothing is created (*kaivalya*). There the power is switched off and all creation comes to a standstill. Both of these kinds of equipoise are given as chapter headings of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*.

A person who has taken human form

in this world, after seeing the fun of creation, birth and death, ultimately comes to see the purposelessness of all the alternating phases. Such a person prefers to move away from purposelessness to a self-existing purpose which is not part of anything else. Then there is only pure spirit, *cit*. There are three phases of horizontalization: from *cit* to *caitanya* to *cetana*. When the slow process of the spirit or life principle getting into the matrix of the cell jelly formulates out of that a vibrant factor, then we say that *caitanya* is in it. When it pervades the whole organism, it can act very powerfully or remain just like a dead nail. There is a kind of equilibrium between spirit (*cit*) and inertia (*jada*). There are millions of gradations between the Absolute and the relative, the aspect of Śiva in its aloneness and the variegated manifestations of the world which we see around, in and through ourselves.

The methodology of search serves two purposes. One is to explain a subject oriented probe which provides a slow process in which several objects can be included in the whole scheme. The other is a departure from the popular purpose which is set for life. There one comes to one's own true nature called *cidānanda*. That is why Narayana Guru, in his study of Yoga, refers to the incumbent yogi as a person who is bringing his or her whole attention to bear upon *cidātman*. He coined the word *cidātman* and gave it as the ultimate goal of a yogi. In the process of living, if a person is not focusing on *cidātman*, he or she is living *cittendriyakalebarātma*, which means catering to the sense organs which are limited and established in a physical body. The theme of *cittendriyakalebarātma* is what is happening in a fully manifested human organism; everything else is outside its limitations. That is on one side. For the yogi, *indriya* and *kalebara* are left out.

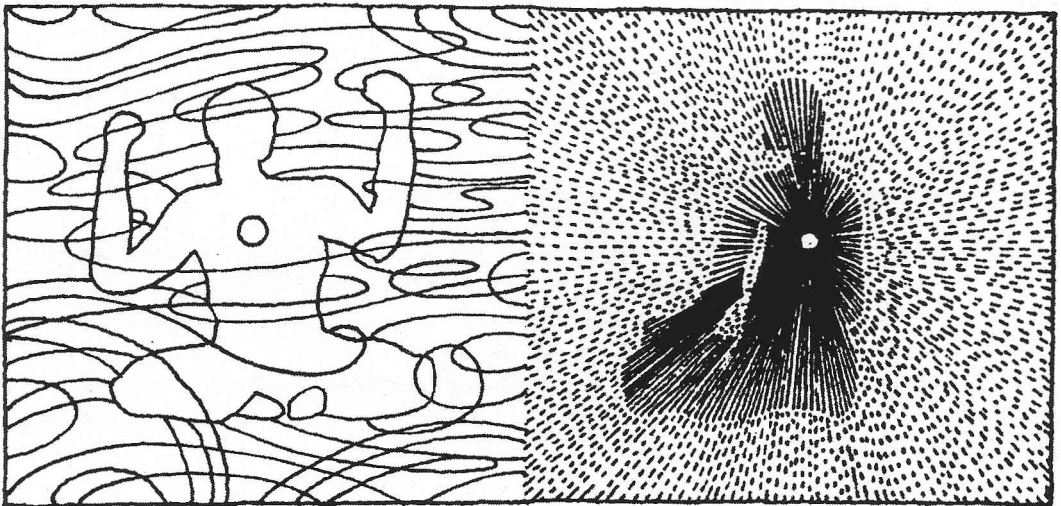
This is how the whole scheme has to be seen. Otherwise you will have no idea of what you are trying to study. If your purpose is to come to the realization of the pure Self, you should not meddle with that which stimulates your senses and

triggers you to go into various types of mentation such as *cinta*. *Cinta* is the circular flow of energy in which your cognitive faculty goes around and around in the same track; it is a repetitive activity of your intelligence. Another possibility is to observe the biological and physiological aspects of your body/mind and make a gimmick to master the whole system. That kind of a scheme tries to achieve a planned purpose through a principle of cause and effect chains. In fact, the whole world is doing that. Many so-called teachers or masters are inventing new gimmicks and many people fall into their clutches.

Those who are spiritually more alert want to take advantage of the word wisdom that comes from a person who has crossed over, one who has fully opened to the secret of the *pranava*, *AUM*. Only such a one is properly called a master. He is not a fake teacher, someone from whom you can buy your realization. A master only sets an example to show you how to commence your search. The rest does not come from him. You yourself have to open up to *A*: the secret of the workaday world of transaction; *U*: the secret of the subtle world of pure subjective consciousness; *M*: the underlying secret of the eternal unconscious; and the secret of diving deep into where word and mind cannot reach. Therefore, yogis on the highest path ask for two things. One is *amanaskatvam*:

going beyond the pale of the mind, having no-mind, such as is described by Buddhist philosophy. The other is *niścinta*, giving up the circular path of mechanically going round and round, getting caught in familiar anxieties, obsessions, etc. No one has studied spirituality or psychology with greater depth than Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras*. We need to proceed very carefully to find our way through the mesh.

In the *Vibhūti Pāda*, two worlds meet: the world of the ambitious and the world of the renouncer. In his *Nirovāṇa Darśana*, the finale of Yoga given by Narayana Guru is three-fold. First there is impure *nirovāṇa* (*āśudha nirovāṇa*) which comes to those who are desirous of attainments in the field of Yoga, called *siddhikāmis*. If they come to know a contentment and they think their Self is that, they have fallen into the error of self-delusion. Pure *nirovāṇa* (*śudha nirovāṇa*) comes only to those who are no longer seeking anything to be achieved by this body. Between these two is an intermediate, *śudhāśudha nirovāṇa*. The transition from one to another does not happen in a second. It is to be slowly worked out. So for some time the seeker may have to keep his or her ego to tide over from the causal chain to where cause is no longer existing. This is found in religions such as Christianity and Islam, not just in the *Darśana* philosophy of the Hindus. Jung calls it the *mysterium tremendum*, the tremendous mystery. It cannot be ana-



lyzed or described.

This mystery is the theme seen in genesis by all religions. The Old Testament commences with the void and the darkness which covers everything. In the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* and afterwards in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* also, it says that in the beginning there was nothing even to wink. But the Indian mind, which is prolific in its imagination, cannot hold on to the void for a long time. When it comes to the mystery of the beginning, how something comes from nothing, then the major dichotomy of the Indian spiritual revelation enters in. At first there is only pure being, without name or form, time, motion or event. But, just as light casts its shadows, being is followed by becoming. Becoming is variegated, with emergence, persistence, transformation, withering away and giving rise to new formations. This is the general background to keep in mind when thinking about the duality of becoming surfacing in being. The major difference between being and becoming is that being has no mark or indication and therefore no name or form. The formation of a form is what we call modulation.

The unmodulated is called *avyākṛta*. *Akṛti* is functional form. Any thing necessarily has a form. It can have specific indications of morphologic detail which show action potentials. A general form can have within it special functional forms like the hand which has four fingers that stand apart from the thumb. Being is the total unspecified general ground and becoming is a phenomenal formation which occupies some space (*aśa*). If all spaces are occupied, we refer to the entirety of spaces that are specifically earmarked as *ākāśa* (*a* means whole, holistic). The word *śāyana* is used to identify anything that is lying in *ākāśa*. *Śāya* means to lie down. Ideas are first formulated in our unconscious or subconscious like a sperm entering into the ovum in a woman's womb. (Womb is called *garbhaśāya*). Pregnancy is for an idea of a child to manifest, to lie down there and to receive nourishment to grow into a multi-cellular organism.

In the Indian creative description of

anything that comes into being, whether a cell or the universe, the differences are only in dimension; the principle is the same. The *ākāśa* is like a woman's womb in which many events happen. Events can be specific, collective and general. Here is where Jung sees a tremendous mystery or paradox. In Sanskrit it is referred to as *vyrudhyātmika*. *Vyrudhya* is contradicting or opposing. *Ātma* is the corpus of knowledge in which something can be presented. When a dialectical pair is put together in a single phenomena, that is called *vyrudhyātmika*. Therefore the paradox is not something totally opposing something else, but between two factors which have the possibility of separating or synthesizing. In segregation and coagulation we have to find the fact of becoming.

Even if becoming is so profound so as to erase the awareness of the totality of being, being is never affected. Indian spirituality maintains both the purity of the One and the emergence of several shades of duality which are dependent on the Absolute. Relative modulations come sequentially, like a seed whose shell breaks so that a shoot can come up and a root can go down. For the sake of convenience, structure and method are different in different formations. A lot of economics can be seen in the creation of anything in this world. All creations are necessitated by purposes. The concept of a creator creating the world is alien to Indian spirituality. Instead it conceives of *svayambhū*, that which manifests by itself. In the Semitic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, the most fundamental thing is a creator, bringing all creations out of his imagination. Hindus, on the other hand, speak of the Word as the origin of everything. Nothing is born without a word to indicate it.

In all this we have to see the mysterious paradox which is not a mere static symbol. It is eventual, functional. It has a history of its own, with origin, development, transformation, withering away, being consumed and coming back in a new form. That is considered to be the purpose which is apparently like trial and error,

improving upon whatever has been created by demolishing it so that a better idea of purposiveness can emerge. This is all crystallized in the Upanishadic theory of sacrifice, *yajña*. *Yajña* implies a sacrificial fire into which offerings are made and purified. From that comes a new quality, *apurova*, the unanticipated. Whether the purpose of the sacrifice is for a child to grow into an adult or vegetables to grow into a substance to nourish the whole world, the same process is there: something is to be burned away to bring the light and life of becoming. Light is the luminous. When it specifies as the body image, there has to be the spirit of luminosity which is numinous, the numenon. In contrast to numenon is phenomenon. Thus, our study of life is paradoxically placed between death (total inertia) and life (continuous animation).

The first cause of creation is considered to take place in the coming together of the two faces of this paradox. From there, all Indian studies of the unfoldment of manifestation show gradations of physicality, morality, spirituality. Ultimately, a thing is considered empirically real when it is tangible and capable of being presented to a body which can see it, hear it, touch it, etc. What is empirical is naturally ontological, having a significance in the here and now. All ontological truths also point to the future; they are teleological. We can't distinguish cause and effect because the original cause and the final cause hide in each other. When a potter is making a pot, the material clay is being fashioned in the here and now, according to the final cause which is in the mind of the potter. Teleologically, he holds before him the final form the pot should have. The molding of the pot is continuously guided by the result he wishes to obtain. Ontological truth transforms while we observe it. We sit in the present, thinking of a future which impacts the past and makes the present into that desired future.

Becoming familiar with truth means living with it through all its phases. So we have to depend on the recorded memory of those who have gone before us, their

experiences and conclusions. From there we can go on and make further conclusions. After hearing truth from a trustworthy observer, we have an idea of what to look for. As in the Taoist analogy of a seeker looking in the forest for a cow-like animal which he has only heard about, we have to give our faith to what we have heard, not as a dogma but with an anticipation that it will come true if we are sufficiently diligent and observant.

In India, wisdom is divided into *a priori* - prior to experience; and *a posteriori* - after experiencing. The teacher/preceptor is the one who briefs you and tells you what to look for in your own experience. You listen and contemplate on what you have heard. That is called *manana*, in which mind is added to mind; the mind of the preceptor is added to the mind of the student. It is all to be sequentially built up. When you first hear, it is only an idea. When you try to visualize it, you psychically give it a form. That postulation helps you to make corrections as you proceed, putting stress on the relevant aspects and discarding the irrelevant. You go from an idea to a working scheme to a consequential effect that you can visualize. Finally it becomes a real vision of your own insight; you develop your own *darśana*. Then it becomes a reality of this world. Reality in this case means that which is again and again concurring. Concurrence with what has happened before is what makes a certain thing real.

Naturally, in the scheme of being and becoming, the first model will not be perfect. Life is a continuous pilgrimage from the crude to supreme perfection. This is where analogy comes in as a partial indication. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, *prajāpati* is spoken of as having three children: *asura*, *manuṣyā* and *deva*. *Asura* means one who is like a brute, devoid of light. Through refinement, the brute becomes human (*manuṣyā*). Through continuous sacrifices the spirit can overcome matter and transform the brute into a person, then into the divine light (*deva*). There are degrees of identification with the brute, the human and the divine. In the

spiritual creative thinking of Indians we see many similar archetypal variations such as the four forms of the mother goddess: Kalī, the demon slayer with blood dripping from her teeth; Durgā, the ferocious yet loving protector of her children; Lakṣmī, full of splendor and good fortune; and Sarasvatī, the goddess of wisdom.

In Indian mythology, there are many such archetypes which can be used to determine the type of a person. To raise oneself through the hierarchy of values to the highest requires great discipline. Only once in a thousand years do we come across one of those rare *gurus* who has come from thousands who have tried to walk the same path. To effect that kind of transformation in oneself requires a discipline which is like walking the blade of a sword. You subject yourself to great risk to come to that.

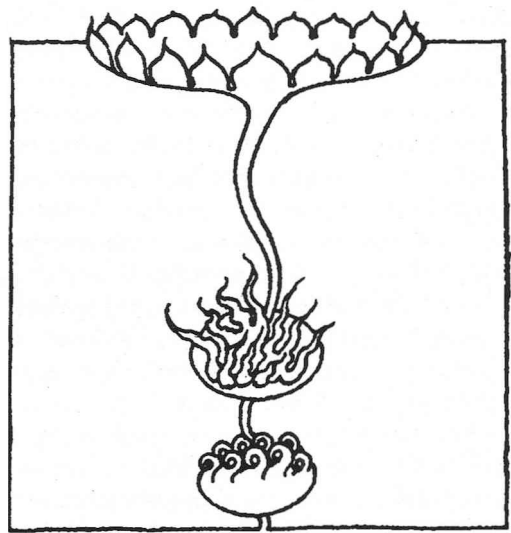
In the study of *Vibhūti Pāda*, we are exposed to another type of hierarchy in which the energy of *kuṇḍalinī* is symbolized as rising through the synergic centers of the body from the base to the thousand petaled lotus (*sahasrāra*). In this scheme, two major principles which control the totality of manifestation are located at the genitals and the navel. At the navel (*maṇipūra*) is the fire of becoming, where food is digested to sustain the life of the individual organism. In the genitals (*svādhiṣṭhāna*) resides the impetus for the propagation of the species. These two have a great impact on human behavior. The great power that resides in these two centers can be transformed by light, purified so that it becomes a power of great illumination. As we proceed with the study we should not forget that the synergic centers and the image of *kuṇḍalinī* rising are symbols, like a map which should not be confused with the territory it describes.

The inconceivable basis of everything, manifest and unmanifest, cannot be strictly named or expressed with the configuration of conceptualized words. It can only be indicated with the mark of a voiced phenomena. The Sanskrit term for that is *vid*, meaning the potential to evolve into awareness or knowledge. The totality of

all potentials is called *samvit*. The prefix *sam* indicates a positive assertion, on hearing which, one should expect to enter into a hitherto unknown phase of knowledge. In a living organism, that indication comes like a call to the manifesting Self to be vigilant to encounter a new possibility. All encounters are characteristically bound to cause a disturbance in the steady state of a structure. Disturbance in Sanskrit is called *vedanā* (pain). Nothing can happen in the totality of consciousness without implying an encounter with pain (*samvedanā*).

We cannot conceive the temporal aspect of the present without presupposing that a potential past is always hiding behind it. All occurrences are indicated by the term *bhū*. Hence, the unknown past which has the potential to bring to awareness the quality of presence is called *bhūta*. That does not mean that everything belonging to the past has qualities that can be recognized or named. This we have already seen in Sūtra III:10 which says: "By its potency comes its undisturbed flow," which indicates that all disturbances remain untriggered or unexcited in an unknown depth. We will study this in greater detail when we come to analyze *samskāra* (impressions, residual potencies). What subatomic particles are to an atom, accruing *vāsanās* (incipient memories) are to the evolution of *samskāra*.

(Continued in next issue.)



In Pursuit of Happiness

*Happiness sweet seductive notion
Beckoning on to far horizons
Painting us brightly colored pictures
Can it be a will-o-the-wisp?*

*Over the ages chasing moonbeams
Greyhounds that hunt electric hares or
Lovers who think they've found perfection
Dreaming that its time to wake up.*

*Reaching the peak fulfills ambition
Pushed from that perch by stronger climbers
Some think it's power brings satisfaction
Gaining seats in Parl-i-a-ment.*

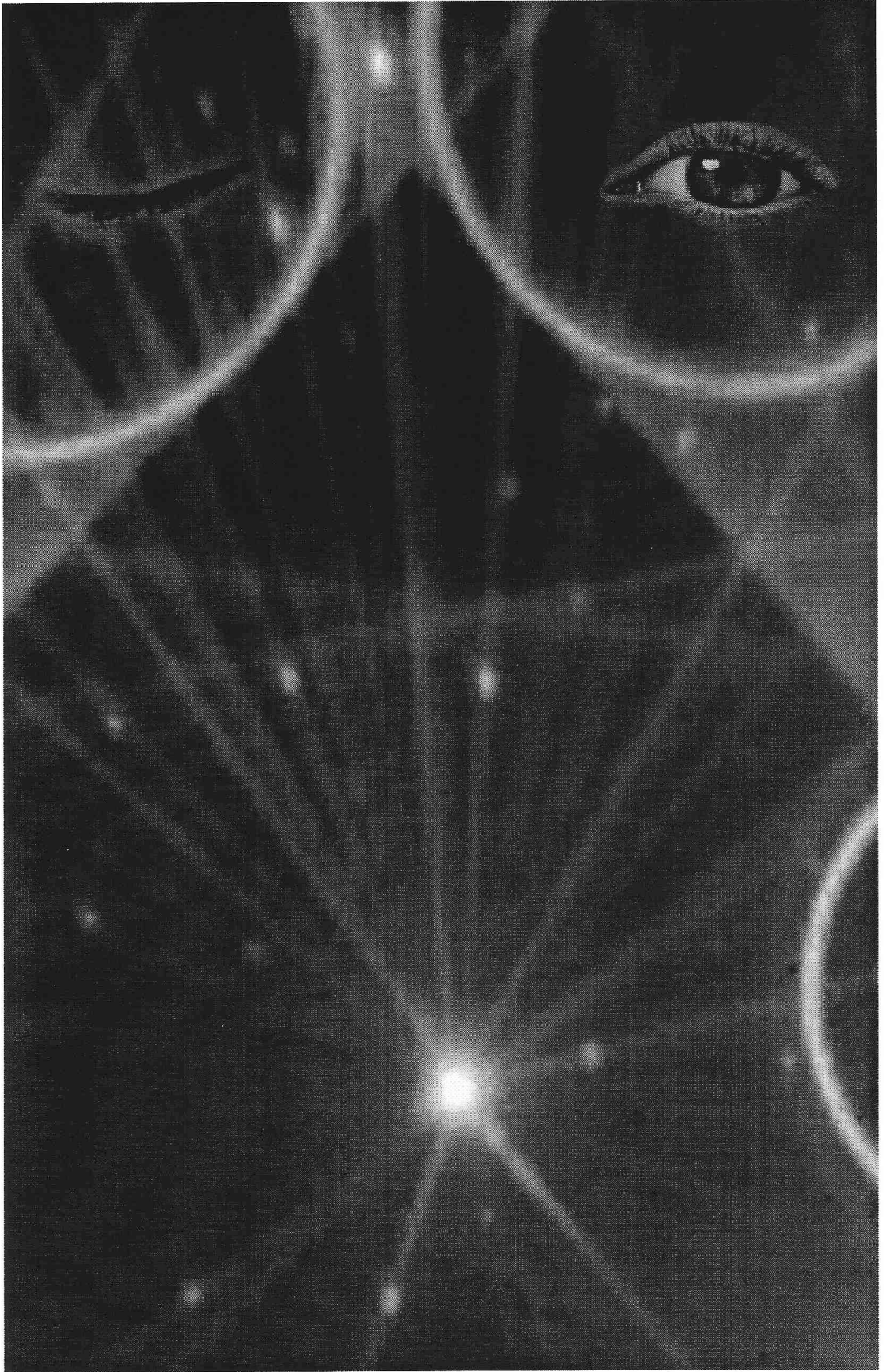
*Winning a sweepstake - starry riches
Buying a castle, drinks with Royals
Fame and hob-nobbing with the top guys
Lead role triumph in the West End.*

*Planning to soon write masterpieces
This year to win the Booker Prize
Or corner the market - brave newcomer's
Poems featured in Sunday Times.*

*Eternal bliss in forecast Heaven
Life after life reincarnation
Mystical flights that raise vibrations
Oneness finding freed into God.*

*Transient glory vain pursuing
Happiness here is nowly waiting
Loveliness shines in boundless oceans
Come in, joy, swim, open your eyes.*

Sheilah Johns



Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 7

*uṅgararutinniyuraññitātirunnī-
ṭaṅamarivāy itininnayōgyanennāl
praṇavamunaṅarṇnu piṛappoliññu vālum
munijanasēvayil mūrṭti nirttiṭeṅam*

Do not wake any more, and without sleeping remain as Knowledge;
if you are unfit for this,
then keep yourself in the service of those contemplatives
who live free from birth, awakened to *AUM*.

This verse sounds paradoxical, at least when we hear it for the first time. Narayana Guru instructs the seeker to remain steadfast, merged in knowledge, without having the need to alternate between the states of waking and sleeping. To be wakeful during the day and to sleep at night is an experience which man shares with most living beings. Is it within our power to inhibit the automation of Nature that governs our sleeping and waking habits? Is it possible to rid our consciousness of its tribasic fragmentation and keep it blazing without flickering?

The word the Guru uses repeatedly from the opening verse to the present is *arivu*, meaning the Word or Knowledge. We often think of knowledge as merely pieces of information. To correct such a faulty notion at the very outset, the Guru qualifies *arivu*, knowledge, as *arivilumēri*, the Knowledge that surpasses all knowledge. It is further described as that which is seen as the outside world and experienced within as one's subjective awareness.

In the six previous verses there are indirect references to six possible differentiations within the field of one's experience. In the first verse it is given as the inner world, the outer world, and the knowledge that knows both. In the second verse the Guru presents a graded hierarchical series: the psychic dynamics, *karaṇam*; the senses, *indriya*; the body, *kaḷēbaram*;



and the many worlds that are the objects of perception, *tottariyum anēka jagattum*. These together constitute the total body of experience.

In the third verse, the reference is to the eidetic world of perception where each sensory experience produces a mental image. It is difficult to discern whether or not the image has a genuine one-to-one correspondence with the original model whose presence can, at best, be presumed. In verse four, consciousness is

shown to be split into three basic elements, the knower, the known and knowledge. These are essentially the psychological version of the cosmological structure given in verse one.

Our attention is drawn in the fifth verse to the alternation of consciousness between waking and sleeping, and the tendency of the mind to become discursive and scattered during the wakeful state. The sixth verse highlights the shift of interest from one item to another in a continuous sequence.

It is only after covering all the things that can kick the mind out of gear, making it off-centered or eccentric, that the Guru places before the seeker two alternative disciplines from which to choose. The first is: "Do not wake any more, and without sleeping remain as Knowledge." Even a cursory look at the differentiating forces enumerated in the six previous verses will convince anyone how difficult it is to remain as pure Knowledge, let alone to escape the automation of waking and sleeping.

The seeker Narayana Guru addresses throughout this book is the Self within each of us. He is careful to underline the essential unity of the Self, even when describing its possible differentiations. In fact, his main interest so far has been to convince the seeker that his or her essential being is not in any way separate from the one Knowledge that permeates all.

In verse one the Guru asks us, as a mark of initiating the search for Self-realization, to prostrate with devotion and with our senses restrained before that shining principle which he calls *karu*. This does not mean lying down before an external God or a Creator outside, but committing ourselves to the truth that is here and now as this all-filling Knowledge, the Total Reality. The secret of equalizing the outgoing attention and the incoming stimulus is to be seen as the interiorization of the five senses and the filling of one's self with a sense of wonder for the adorable Absolute. The surrender suggested is an exhortation to return to one's own real wholeness.

In verse two we are invited to share the glory of the effulgent Self, adored by contemplatives as the unitive inner cohesiveness of all things, and the homogeneity of the one Knowledge to which all names and forms and states of consciousness belong. The Guru especially mentions

that one should be relentless in one's search. Any compromise, at any level, can unwittingly lure the mind off on a tangent. The various 'isms' and 'ologies' are historical testimonials to the sidetracking that has been happening through the millennia. He further cautions that unity, which is a marvel, can be comprehended only when contemplated. Only one in a million succeeds in this search, and even then only after extensive lapses. Implicitly, the Guru attributes our failure in this to the selective structuralism of the persona, which causes the search to be initiated on the basis of whatever incipient memory is stimulated at any given time by the changing ensembles of life situations.

We become aware of a psychic compulsion pushing us in a certain direction only when it becomes pathologically exaggerated, such as in obsessions, inhibitions, phobias and manias. Still, the so-called healthy mind is not as free to act on its own as one might wish to believe. Even a scientist who is firmly wedded to a creed of honesty in observing facts is likely to miss negative data when he is otherwise encouraged by some positive observations.

Another interesting discipline which Narayana Guru recommends may escape our attention if we do not give sufficient consideration to every word he uses. After bracketing the psychic dynamism, the senses, the body, and the many worlds known by direct perception, he looks beyond to the sun, representing the Self, which is to be understood as both the immanent and the transcendent at once. The Guru does not elaborate his methodology of bracketing, suspension, and phenomenological reduction, as Edmund Husserl takes so much pain to describe in his voluminous writings. He does, however, make an effective polarization of the here and now with the ever and everywhere, by resorting to an analogy for which the entire philosophy of Spinoza can be given as a satisfactory interpretation.

The secret of all polarization is that the counterparts of the dialectical situation share a common value, which has made the polarization feasible or even imperative. Mother and child, teacher and taught, ruler and subjects, lover and beloved, all are examples of dialectical bipolarity. The common interest in all these cases can be reduced to the experience of happiness. The counterparts are individuals who can reciprocate their thoughts and feelings. But the bipolarity suggested in this verse is not between two individuals. Rather, it is between one's personal awareness and the totality of Knowledge. As one of the counterparts is impersonal, the question of reciprocation does not arise. However, bipolarity makes sense only if there is a free flow of the essence of one into the other and vice versa, as in exosmosis and endosmosis.

By giving the analogy of the inseparability of waves from the treasury of the oceanic depth, the Guru has already given us the secret of sharing one's essence with the total, even when that total is of an impersonal nature. The example of the wave is not given to dismiss our individuality as a mere phantom, like the form of a wave, but to stress that the seeming separateness of the wave does not deprive it of its vertical relationship with the ocean. The constant awareness of this depth reestablishes one in the lost heritage of union with the Absolute.

In verse four, without resorting to any analogy, Narayana Guru explicitly describes one's true being as pure Knowledge, and exhorts the self to become identical with it. Pure Knowledge transcends the altering

states of our physical organism, so it is no more than legitimate to say: "Remain as pure knowledge and do not become afflicted with any bodily state such as waking or sleeping."

The Guru knows that such a rare identification with the Absolute is not within the easy reach of most people, so he gives the second alternative: to engage oneself in the service of a contemplative who has no more questions to be answered, and who sees this grand drama going on but is not assailed by it. Thus, with the seventh verse we are brought to the threshold of entering into a bipolar relationship. It is up to each of us to choose with whom we wish to establish our bipolarity. It can be with a living person in the sense of seeing the Word manifesting through one who is physically present. Or, if we have the power of relating to the impersonal, then the living Word is always present in our hearts. Either way, we are committed.

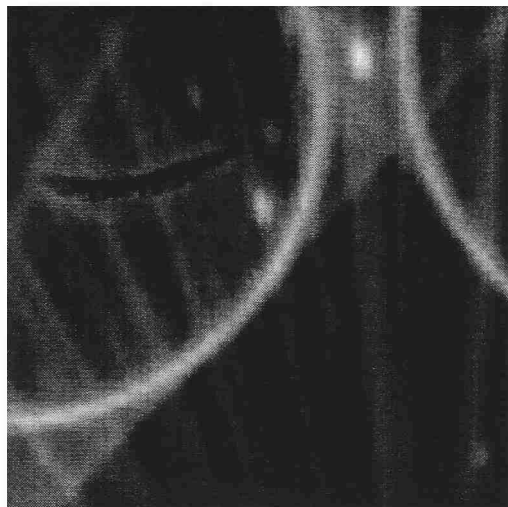
If we plant a seed, it needs to remain in one place to grow. It won't survive if it is pulled up every day and put in another place. Bipolarity has the same secret. There has to be contiguity, a continuation of natural flow. The sap of a tree has an ascending and descending movement. Like that, there has to be a reciprocal flow between the master and the disciple, between the seeker and the light that is sought.

In establishing bipolarity with a master, you should begin the discipline at a physical level, such as making your service directly available to your teacher. This provides you with an opportunity to decipher the meaning of the wakeful world by observing your teacher's reaction to various aspects of it. By pondering upon the words of instruction, you can decode the conceptual images of the world of subjectivity. By observing your teacher's neutral silence, you can learn the secret of abolishing incipient memories. From the teacher's overall identity with the transcendental, you can discover the nonduality of the transcendence to which we all belong.

Again and again in the path of the profound, there appear brilliant souls of deep understanding and infinite mercy who are looked upon by the world, rightly and gratefully, as the true saviors of mankind. Romain Rolland speaks of them as midday suns that shine at the zenith and remain with the destiny of man even after their physical disappearance. Lord Buddha, Socrates, Jesus Christ and the prophet Mohammed are well-known examples of such masters, who are shaping the minds and lives of people long after their deaths, despite the vicissitudes of human history.

Lord Buddha was originally Prince Siddhartha, the son of a chieftain in the foothills of the Himalayas. Like any other person, he spent his childhood and early youth waking and sleeping, utterly lost in the confusion of his mind. Although he was pampered by his royal father and was given every form of indulgence, he was stricken with grief when he saw the misery of people around him. Old age, poverty, disease and death, which are taken for granted by most people, appeared to the young prince as shameful mistakes that challenged his compassionate disposition. He took the responsibility upon himself to find a lasting remedy to these ills of humanity. To find an answer to the secret of suffering, he renounced his royal palace, dear wife and beloved child, and passed through discipline after discipline with the hope of becoming awakened to a higher truth. That is the remedy: to wake up from the

wakefulness of our everyday life. From the hedonistic indulgences of a royal harem, he went to the other extreme of mortifying his body and mind, but found in that discipline the same despair he had encountered in the pleasurable days of his palace life. Finally he gave up all hope of waking up from the dreadful dream of phenomenalism and its uncompromising demand for *karma*. Like a miracle of miracles, a strange homeostasis brought him to the neutral zero that



balances good with evil, pain with pleasure, the wakeful with the sleeping, and light with darkness. On touching this point, Siddhartha became awakened and recognized himself as the blessed Buddha, who had discovered the golden middle path which is neither of waking or sleeping, fasting or feasting. He became very much like the proverbial bird of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, which silently witnesses the activities of its mate without succumbing to the temptation of any phenomenological urge.

The state of the awakened one is described differently in various religions; the models are not always similar in their external characteristics. In the *Bhagavad Gīta*, the state of the awakened one is described in the second chapter as *stitha prajñā*, well-founded in reason (Ch.II, v.55-68); in the fourth chapter as *jñāni*, seer (Ch.IV, v.18-24); in the fifth as *brāhmīsthiti*, one established in the Absolute (Ch.V, v.23-28); in the sixth chapter as *yogi* (Ch.VI, v.27-32); in the twelfth as *bhakta*, a true devotee (Ch.XII, v.13-20); in the thirteenth as *kṣetra-kṣetraijña viveka*, a true discriminator of the field and its knower (Ch.XIII, v.27-32); in the fourteenth as *guṇātīta*, one who has transcended the three modalities (Ch.XIV, v.22-26); and in the eighteenth chapter as *brahmabhūtaḥ*, the perfected contemplative (Ch.XVIII, v.50-57). Even a cursory glance at the verses referred to here will give us some idea of a contemplative who has sundered all doubts by becoming awakened to the secret of the alternating phases of consciousness, cryptically epitomized in the sacred syllable *AUM*.

There is a passage in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* which says if a person is kidnapped from his home town and taken to another city, blindfolded, and then released, he would still find his way back home. He could just get help and directions from one or several other people along the way. Like that, the bipolarity suggested in this verse for arriving at the true nature of oneself can happen with the help of one person or many. The real, essential bipolarity is with the quality of the person's knowledge. That knowledge is specifically stated here as "being conversant with the secret of *AUM*." *AUM* is otherwise known as *praṇava*. In the *Bhagavad Gīta*, *praṇava* is praised as the supreme essence of the Vedas, the revealed scriptures. Krishna identifies it with the Absolute. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says:

Now then, the *Udgītha* is *Om*, *Om* is the *Udgītha*. And so, verily, the *Udgītha* is yonder sun, and it is *Om*, for it is continually sounding 'Om.'¹

AUM in this context is called *anujñā*, meaning 'the word of consent'. People wake in the morning when the sun comes up. That is allegorically cited here as the sun giving consent to everyone to get up and engage in various activities. In a world of relative good and bad, pain and pleasure, and truth and untruth, one finds it difficult to agree with others in matters of contradictory values or situations which spell personal loss. But an absolutist who has transcended all such dualities does not feel restricted or restrained by inhibitions. He gives consent to all. No one is in greater agreement with the world than a realized person.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, *AUM* is looked upon as an efficient tool to realize the Absolute:

Taking as a bow the great weapon of the *Upaniṣad*,
One should put upon it an arrow sharpened by meditation.
Stretching it with a thought directed to the essence of That,
Penetrate that Imperishable as the mark, my friend.

The mystic syllable *Om* (*praṇava*) is the bow. The arrow
is the soul (*ātman*).
Brahma is said to be the mark (*lakṣya*).
By the undistracted man is It to be penetrated.
One should come to be in It, as the arrow (in the mark).²

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* also, *AUM* is looked upon as a means to meditate on the Absolute:

By making one's own body the lower friction-stick
And the syllable *Om* the upper friction-stick,
By practising the friction of meditation (*dhyāna*),
One may see the God (*deva*) who is hidden, as it were.³

In the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, *AUM* is identified with a number of triads: 'A', 'U' and 'M' as the sound form of the Self; feminine, masculine and neuter as the sex form; fire, wind and sun as the light form; Rudra, Brahma and Viṣṇu as the Lordship form; the *R̥g Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and the *Sāma Veda* as the understanding form; earth, atmosphere and sky as the world form; past, present and future as the time form; and breath, fire and sun as the heat form. All these are honored as aspects of *AUM*.

The reference to the knower of *AUM* as a wise person, worthy of adoration, is made in the opening passages of Gaudapada's *Karika on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. According to the *Māṇḍūkya*, the word *AUM* is constituted of the sounds 'A', 'U' and 'M', followed by silence. The 'A' represents *viśva*, the empirical world of name and form; 'U' represents the dream world, *taijasa*, which is a self-luminous and self-regulated world of subjective consciousness; and 'M' represents an undifferentiated mass of consciousness, *prajñā*, the presence of which one infers from one's experience of deep sleep. The silence that follows is the final aspect. Of this, the *Upaniṣad* says:

The fourth is without an element, with which there can be no dealing, the cessation of development, benign, without a second.

Thus *Om* is the Self (*Ātman*) indeed.

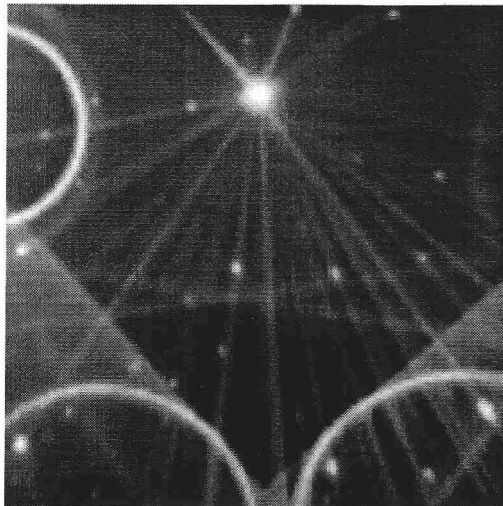
He who knows this, with his self enters the Self--
yea, he who knows this! ⁴

Commenting on this mantra, Gaudapada says:

The knower of Brahman, who has realized the highest truth, has entered into the Self by burning away the third state of latency; and hence he is not born again since *Turīya* has no latency (of creation). ⁵

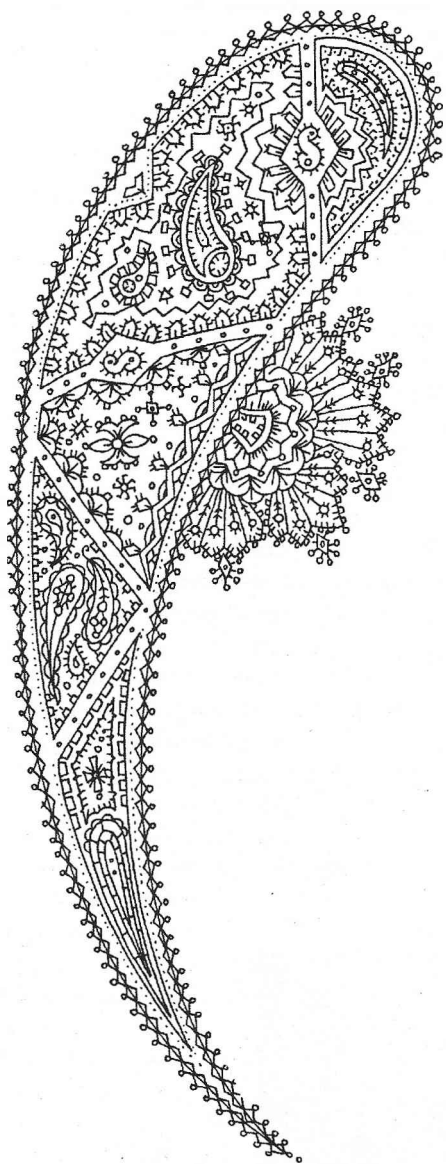
This agrees with Narayana Guru's description of the wise contemplative as *praṇavamunārnnu piṛappoliññu vālum munijanam*, "those great ones who ever live free from birth, in silent contemplation, awakened to AUM." To become fully conversant with all the implications of knowing *praṇava*, we recommend that the reader make a detailed study of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* with Gaudapada's *Karika*, keeping in mind all the implications of the *udgītha* given in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

AUM is said to have both a lower form and a higher form. The lower form, represented by our wakeful and dream experience, tends to horizontalize the affiliation of consciousness. As a result, both the senses and the mind are assailed by the dualities of pain and pleasure, and good and evil. The higher form of AUM, however, represented by *prajñā* and *turīya*, has the power to verticalize consciousness so that it can free itself from all bondage. In the next verse, Narayana Guru gives us the secret of verticalization.



Notes

1. Robert Ernest Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1971, p. 182.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
5. Swami Gambhirananda, *Eight Upaniṣads*, Vol. 2, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1966, p. 227.



Heaven's Invitation

*Full spectrum living
in a technicolor blaze.
Farewell, muted hues
with your pastelled haze.*

*Good luck, timid yellows!
Bon Voyage, fearful grey!
For I've just swept up the palette
of complete prismatic ways.*

*Shall we dance, deep magenta?
Shall we sing, violet blue?
Shall we love, true vermillion?
Shall we soar, copper hue?*

*Be my wings, be my vision,
be my sister, be my soul;
be my voice to reach the wounded
who have palettes not yet whole.*

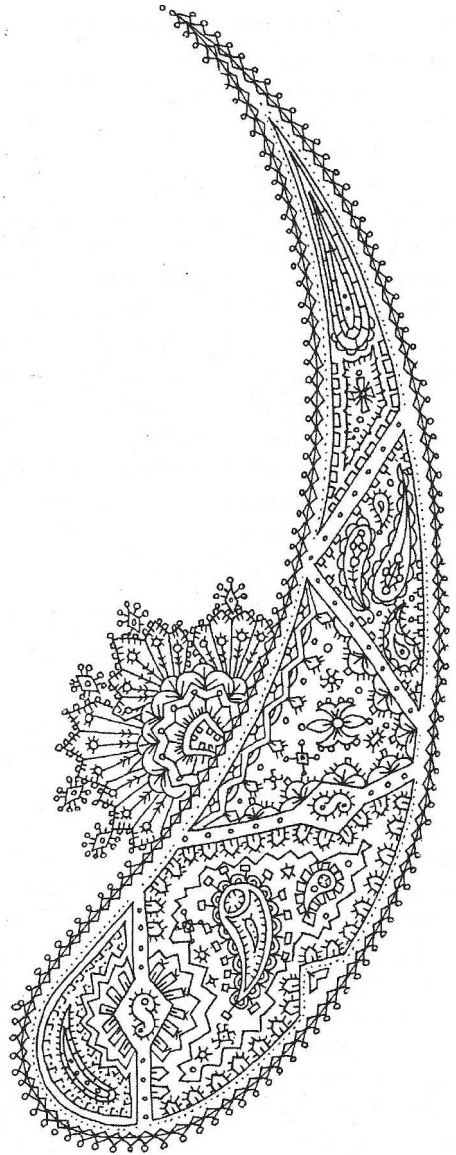
*Grab your pencils! Grab your brushes!
Find your fabrics, paints and dye.
Feel the rush of God's hysteria –
come on, now. Don't be shy.*

*Join the brilliant pulse of living
a complete full spectrum life,
and you'll find each day accompanied
by beauty, drum and fife.*

*Every morning when you're peeking
from beneath your sleepy eye,
remind yourself, in reverence,
God's coaxing us to fly.*

*Arise you sweet sienna!
Ole', you carmine red!
Wake up, oh, terracotta
I have juice and fresh baked bread!*

Peggy Grace



Autobiography of An Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

CHAPTER FOUR Glimpses of Guruhood

The transition from puberty through adolescence to the stage of a youth, the period of storms and stresses, alternating with smooth sailing periods through which every man passes is perhaps one of the most interesting parts of anyone's life, especially as seen in retrospect. Childhood has its fears and helplessness, but the journey to vigorous manhood, when both the body and mind survive through tribulations and trials, big and small, inner and outer, with its hesitations and bold resolves, passions and emotions, demands harsher fiber than what the silken sail of infancy needs for its texture. The twilight period between adulthood and adolescence was still lingering on with me through the years of the last stages of the first world war.

The Enigmatic Guru Figure

It is true that religious, aesthetic and political appetites were getting shaped and nourished within me by corresponding Gurus or model supermen who influenced my life as heroes. While I was still worshipping them, pouring out my innocent loyalties of adolescent youthful admiration as libations at the feet of such idols as Vivekananda, Tagore and Gandhi respectively, an enigmatic figure began to take its place step by step within me and not with a bang as in the case of the last as already mentioned. I hardly suspected, when as early as 1899 or so, as an infant, I was pushed into the presence of a strange man past forty who lived in a riverside hermitage twelve miles south of Trivandrum, that he would influence me most in

my life in later years. He was surrounded by a multitude of admirers and worshippers at that time, as I visualize him now, while he himself sat amidst the crowd in a sedate and silent attitude, sparing in speech, blessing with his unmoved eyes the people who, one by one, took the dust off his feet in adoration. I was asked to do the same, but I remember to have protested in my own infantile way, saying to myself that my ego though small was greater than that of any other man, especially of a stranger. The Guru himself noticed this self-assertion and remarked that as the son of a doctor I was not willing to prostrate to anybody. Perhaps a touch of absolutism was there from the very beginning of which I was not conscious. Beyond feeling in the atmosphere that this man was being considered someone very important, I did not see through what was the matter with the populace which constantly followed and seemed to fuss about this man. Such was the first contact or lack of contact that I established with a mysterious Guru, who was to mean so much to me in later life. I remember the second occasion on which the same thing happened to me which must have been at least three or four years later. This time this Guru figure was seen coming to the family house of my father in Trivandrum. The way in which all the relations stood in reverence before this enigmatic man intrigued me, but the situation itself was opaque to me in its significance. On being told that I was going to school in Bangalore and knew Kanarese the Guru asked me to read a lesson from my Kanarese primer which I did very shabbily, being hesitant and shy. I could understand nothing of holiness or of the religious feeling.

Many religious parents force their children when they are too young to show devotion and reverence when the feeling is still utterly strange to them. Rousseau was right here when he said that religious instruction, if at all given to children must come very late. A sense of mystery about the world into which the child might be born is about all that can be expected by way of spiritual development before the child attains adulthood.

Strangeness Persists

When I visited this enigmatic figure of a Guru about the age of ten or fifteen the mystery was still thick but had begun to be a little more transparent. I remember at least two occasions in which I was in his presence. The first was when I went to the ashram at Varkala when it was in its stage of being just established. The Guru lived under a tree near a clear brook and there was merely a *parnasāla* (a leaf hut) where living arrangements were made. He spent most of his time on a hilltop just acquired about a quarter of a mile away where, in another leaf hut, he used to meditate while the sea breezes greeted him and the gargling springs formed themselves into brooks round the hill that he had chosen for his abode. A part of ancient or perennial India was thus visible to me, a veritable *rishi*-abode of whose whole association and significance I was still ignorant at that time.

On the first of the two occasions I was in the company of my parents, brothers

and sisters and the youngest born, the fifth boy who was to be named in the presence of the Guru. This was done at a simple ceremony and afterwards there was a plain meal in which I participated with all the others. Even this I could call rustic and in keeping with the utter simplicity of life in the forest which was the natural setting in which Gurus have always lived. All this made but a vague and passing impression on me at that time, although, at the time of writing these lines more than fifty years later, the meaning has changed for me considerably. Early youth lives in a world of its own which is, vectorially speaking the opposite space of the one in which one finds oneself in maturer years. In that world, the Guru presence was only taken for granted as if in the background among other things some of which might have deserved less of my attention. Values in life change over from one side to the other in a strange way.

There was a deer and a peacock which were ashram pets, but which were nuisances by the damage they did to the neighboring cultivators who cursed them in spite of their contribution of beauty to the atmosphere of the ashram by their moving about in the place with such other-worldly grace. Here again conflicting values were evident. These impressed me more than the Guru himself, although he was the center of the piece, and only taken for granted in a subconscious manner. Three or four years later when I went to the same ashram, fresh contact was mem-



orable in that the Guru gave me recognition by speaking to me. Some one had reported to him that I had said that a lion or tiger could scare cattle away but the Guru added the first remark which he ever made to me, by saying that when wild buffaloes ganged together against a tiger they could be more ferocious. However, in spite of these contacts of preadolescent days, the Guru figure still remained an enigma to me.

A Closer Glimpse into Guruhood

About the year 1915 when my High School days were being completed and I was waiting for my School Leaving Certificate and the summer holidays were on, one day at Bangalore, there arrived the Guru to whom I would not bow in my infancy. With just a water pot (*kamandalu*) carried by an elderly darker-complexioned man who followed him like a shadow, the clean shaven-headed white robed slim and tall figure turned into the side gate of 'Barne Park' High Ground, Bangalore, where I happened to live with my parents at that time before going to College in Madras.

He had arrived by the morning train from Madras and was walking without any specified destination in mind but arrived by chance, as it were, as I gathered later from the attendant who was with him. In the Madras Central Station where he had entrained the previous night, he had left all his followers who were at least half a dozen in number with bedding and cooking vessels which he constantly said he wanted to rid himself of, but which the insistence of his devotees inflicted on him all the time, in spite of his protests. As it actually transpired, the story was told to me that, when the first bell had rung for the mail train to start, a man in the Guru's compartment occupying the lower berth (for sleeping only after ten p.m. according to the railway rules) objected by mistake to the Guru sitting on it when it was still only eight or so. On this the Guru left the train altogether on seeing which, the disciples with their baggage also got down from a compartment at a distance, but on

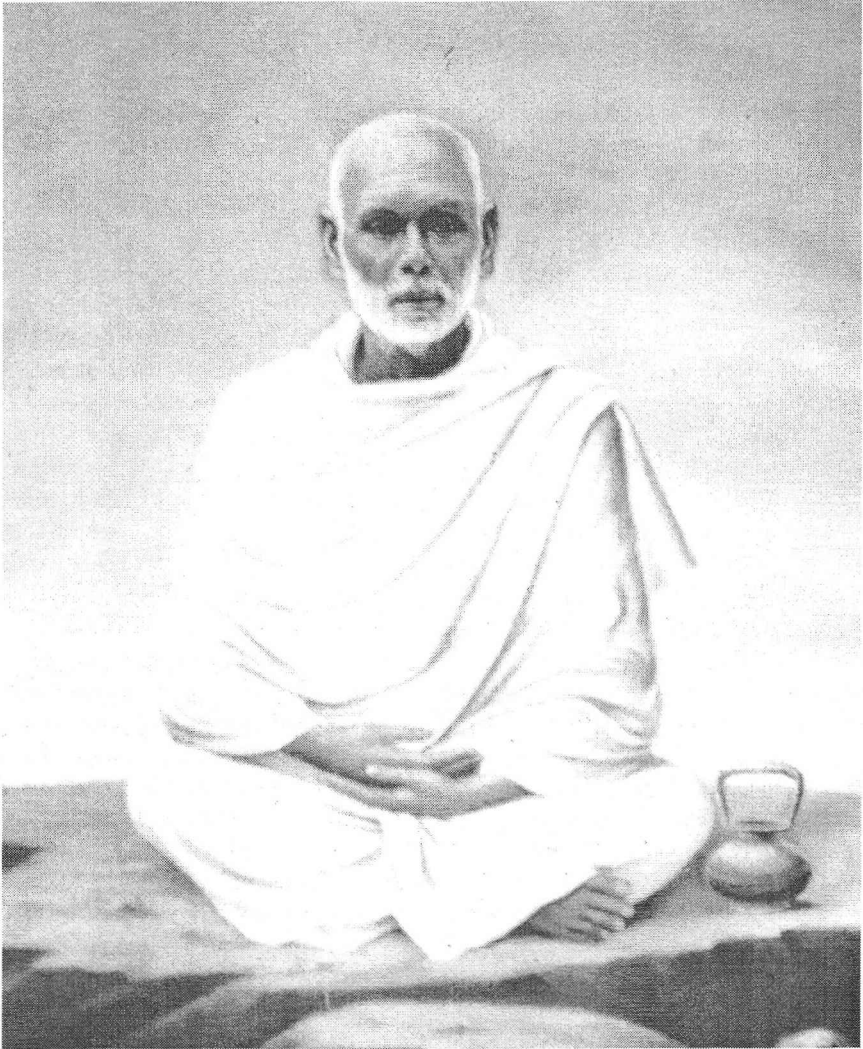
the stroke of the second bell and the whistle, the man who had objected to the Guru apologized and the Guru was in again, and thus it was that the Guru arrived with one man only with him leaving the others bag and baggage behind.

This interesting side event in the Guru's life helps to show what kind of informal, free and easy unburdened life belonged to him. Contact as between individual persons had not been established between me and the Guru at this time and except that he was respected by all in the house into which my respect was added naturally, there was no bi-polarity or mutual adoption between us as in a regular *Guru-Śiṣya* relationship. A disciple of the Guru who had stayed with us some time prior to the visit of the Guru had given me some insight into the way in which a Guru is respected in India. To think of a Guru in terms of a God was natural to the Indian mind. It was part and parcel as it were of the very spiritual climate of India. How exactly this kind of glorification was to be understood was still to me a mystery. How much of such respect was just traditional or social habit and how much original and genuine I could not make out.

During the four or five days of his stay under the same roof however, some kind of intimacy that was natural and living became established although the contact was a feeble one in the matter of any spiritual exchange between us. Traditional background respect however changed over into conscious and bi-polar adoption in the proper sense by slow degrees in later years. How the sense of Guruhood grew up with my life itself is one of the peculiarities of my discipleship, making it superior in certain respects and inferior in others, is a matter to be borne in mind by any one interested in how this rare spiritual affiliation takes place so naturally in certain cases as in my own.

First Glimpses of Guruhood

To live with a veritable Guru under the same roof just when adolescence was translating itself into manhood within was a rare and precious advantage. The lion



comes to your den. If the Ganges flowed through the basement of your house as in Hardwar or you had wild beasts for neighbors or had a full view of Mont Blanc from your kitchen window, you could feel no more cause for elation. An actual Guru to speak with you intimately and whom you could watch in his own ways and habits is as stimulating as when an untamed deer drinks water from your hand or birds peck grains off your palm. I was all attention and interest although I did not understand the Guru any more than on the previous occasions when I was privileged to contact him. A well bred pet dog could not be more all eyes and ears to the voice of the master. The world that Guruhood represented was still most-

ly a closed book to me; but there was an instinctive curiosity mixed with genuine desire to know more about it. Hero-worship, pent up within me to find a normal outlet, was as it were, lying in wait for its prey. The strange man was so sedate and taciturn that a glimpse into his person was not easy because he was like a high-born maiden in this respect, avoiding all prying into her grace. The hints that he threw out for me to bite seemed of a delicate and flimsy order indeed but the baits thus dangled judged by their effect as seen only in later years were of consequence though not of any antecedent importance at all.

He did not teach me philosophy as much directly but stimulated my curiosity

in his own insinuating way. To give an instance he came into my study where I had hung up certain pencil drawings that I had made. There was one among them of Vivekananda, in which he was seated in meditation, which I had enlarged from a book illustration. I thought that the Guru would compliment me on my artistic ability; he looked at it intently an instant and asked why there were certain patches on the face. He seemed to question the method of pencil shading and did not approve of it. This kept me guessing about the intelligence of this strange man who did not know perhaps that shading was normal to pencil drawings. Line, light and shade were to be employed according to him perhaps with more severe rules than modern art of the ordinary type now recognized. The severe lines of ancient Indian art did not favor this easy use of shading and had purer norms and standards here. Shading was a kind of falsehood and should not be resorted to too easily. A subtle dig and a gentle snub were anyhow implied in the remark though incidental and seemingly trivial.

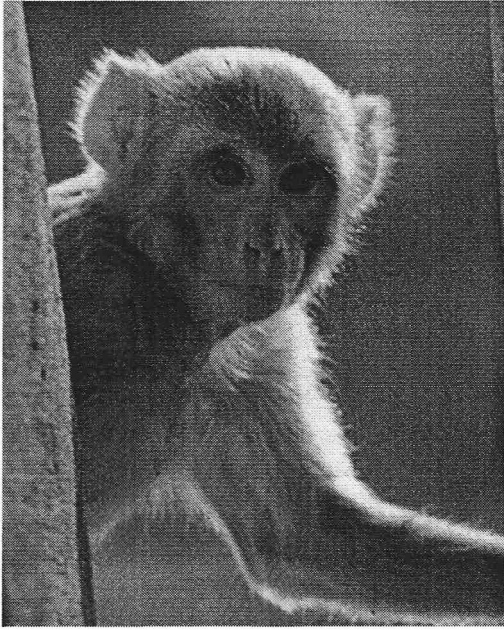
This was followed on another occasion when the Guru cut my complacent pride in modern education by asking me if I knew of a certain spirit of which people in Kerala talked about a lot which was wont to cause stones to drop from the roof. "If one could pick such stones, they were not any that could be seen as missing from anywhere near-by and one could put them say under a coconut tree and they could be seen day after day to be in the place where they were put." Such were the given data from the mouth of a Guru. After a certain pause the Guru asked me pointedly whether modern science had anything to say about such phenomena. Of course I had heard of such stories as the Park Lane ghost and water diviners, negative hallucinations and even vaguely of materializations. But the question of the Guru was too much for me at that time although fifty years later I found myself on better ground though still not completely at home in such a world of possibilities or probabilities. What the mind is capable of

parapsychologically still remains closed to modern science largely although psychic research has begun to discuss similar problems. The depth of the mystery of the guru figure had by now doubled itself in me.

It was during the same visit that the Guru was heard to make some concession to my ignorance in inner spiritual matters and explain to me the nature of electricity. In the bedroom where the Guru had slept the previous night there was an open electrical socket which had given the Guru a shock as he tried to put on a switch by himself in the dark. Referring to what had happened the Guru said that electricity gives an idea of the absolute Reality that philosophers try to define. Perhaps what he meant was that electricity could be taken to be the operational version of the metaphysical Absolute.

It was not on the same occasion but at least three years later that a similar topic was raised by the Guru which equally puzzled me. He referred to a piece of music played from a gramophone record and asked why playing the record many times did not have the effect of fatiguing the original singer whose voice was recorded. I had learnt in Newtonian mechanics that action and reaction were equal and opposite, thus linking cause with effect, but the problem presented by the Guru was confusing to me and at first seemed somewhat absurd. I tried to explain that the record reproduced vibrations etc. The Guru said he knew all that but the point was not that. Even to this day I find I cannot answer the Guru correctly except to say that the record confined itself to the operational plane only, while the living musician was more than an operational entity. Like printer's types and the printer himself there was a fundamental distinction.

On another occasion still, on my mentioning to the Guru that zoology taught me about a certain hermit crab which found protection for its abdomen in a molluscan spiral shell to which it got attached, the Guru abruptly asked me why I should not think that the hermit crab was created



as it was and that all the story of the crab occupying a shell was irrelevant or insignificant? I remember also his asking on a still later occasion if the Englishman who spoke of evolution had actually seen a monkey change into a man. It was of course a theory and not a fact directly given to experience. "The evolutionists would say," the Guru continued, "the process is so slow, that like the motion of the hour hand of a clock, we fail to see the evolutionary movement."

Thus topic after topic touched by the Guru started within me newer and newer doubts till I stood confounded and confused in the presence of his enigmatic personality. The education that I was getting began more and more to count as nothing as new vistas of intellectual adventure opened themselves before me one after another. Thus a new line of education was opened out for me by this enigmatic personality whose significance grew into my life more and more, changing the direction of its aim and giving it new content at every fresh contact. There were thus two different roads, one high and the other low or one cutting the other at right angles with a common participation point of insertion or articulation, into what might be said to be integrated knowledge or wisdom. Duality when admitted into the do-

main of education gives rise to many harassing situations or conflicts that will spell double gain or double loss.

Two Roads Without Proper Articulation

The visit of the Guru described above synchronized with the turning point between High School and College education for me. It was like the meeting of four roads each with a different background and purpose; Indian education with its own background and Western education grafted on with a background that was altogether strange and unfamiliar. East and West were never to meet proverbially. The Indian Guru could not find any place in the actual scheme I was submitted to, and on the other side there was no point of contact at all between values represented by Western education as adapted to the needs of Indian youth, and the deep seated inner urge for education coming up as it were from the proper soil of India.

Strangely however, at the very time when this conflict was felt keenly in my life there happened to be a sympathetic teacher who was the Headmaster of the High School where I studied. From his way of taking detailed English texts in the matriculation class I had developed a high regard for him as a man capable of great understanding and intelligence. He seemed to have understood me as I expected myself to be understood and there developed a certain mutual adoption and bi-polar relation between us resembling though only distantly that of a *Guru* and *Śiṣya* of ancient times. He was just a plain schoolmaster but had a family background which belonged to the spiritual heritage of India. The critical mind of the *mīmāṃsaka* (scholar critic) belonged to him and his English education had opened up for him the wisdom of the West in which he could at least find spiritual entrance. He was thus one in whom East and West could meet though not at a high mystical level but on the intellectual and the rational.

After retiring as Registrar of the Mysore University this teacher became the companion in spiritual matters of the then

ruler of Mysore who sent him as a delegate to the philosophical conference which was held in Paris about the year 1926. Though mute and inglorious in most other respects, this man was a remarkable example of how a wisdom tradition could survive the barriers dividing one generation from another vertically and one cultural growth from another horizontally. In a long black coat, short of stature, plain, white-turbaned, be-spectacled, dark and unpolished socially, as he was, he carried a wise head on his shoulders which gave him a status above other retired schoolmasters of his generation in the India of that time. His name was V. Subramanya Iyer. The respect I had developed for him was reciprocated because he treated me with special favor as his student and remembered me long after with regard and affection.

I was keen therefore that this teacher should know the Guru who was then staying with me. I accordingly arranged for a meeting before the rare possibility passed away. The Guru on his part paid a visit to the High School and took interest in the plan of the buildings and the manual work sections, saying that boys must know how to do as well as to think. I was with the party as they went round the classes, and glad to witness the rare possibility of an Eastern mystic and a Westernized teacher establishing some contact at all. Such was the culminating event of my High School career which was coming to an end.

Clamor for a Bread and Butter Education

On the fifteenth of June 1915 I was officially understood to have completed my secondary education and declared eligible for admission into the University. The jam, jumble and bottlenecks involved in the rush for such an education, if worth the name at all, were happily to be over from this date. But all was not over in reality. Admission into colleges depended on being selected for interviews by each of the principals of the various colleges in south India. Applications were sent at random. There were hurdles of red tape,

back door irregularities, VIP pressures, sheer favoritisms, side by side with high marks and real or pseudo-educational requirements that still stood in the way. Dates of application were important and it was usual to see fathers with their sons and daughters trekking the streets to offices or institutions with sad faces as the fortunes of their protégés were being decided. Sportsmanship and scholarship counted not equally but sometimes preferentially for the former. Tribalistic considerations and rules of selection had to be satisfied. The task of an impartial principal sitting in his office was a difficult one because last-minute telephone calls from some M.P. or V.I.P. or turbaned royalty of whom there were hundreds, could upset the regular ways. Some professors also walked through the corridors to the room of the principal on the opening day, threatening resignation, at least in one case to my knowledge, if a certain student or as it happened a lady student, was refused favorable treatment. Before all chances in the different colleges were irretrievably lost after a certain date one had to contact by telegram those out-of-the-way colleges which might still admit the leftover applicants. Much gall and wormwood with clenching of fists and gnashing of teeth by parents or principals was often involved, all in the name of perhaps a n'er-do-well of a boy. I went through this anxious period calmly, but all was not yet over. Bad as this scramble for seats was in my days it was nothing like what obtains at present in India. Conditions have worsened in geometric proportion.

I was first admitted to the Central College, Bangalore, but then father, who had to go to Baroda (on services lent), could not keep three establishments, one for the boys in Bangalore, another for the two girls who got admission in the queen Mary's College in Madras and a third for himself in Baroda. It was thought practicable to take the whole group of five, three boys and two girls, four in the College first year, and the youngest boy in High School, to Madras. Again they had to live in this rumble-tumble growth of a city of

distances, in some place from which they could go to the respective institutions. While waiting for father to come back from the office of Dr. Skinner, Principal of the Madras Christian College, sitting in my carriage in the Fort district of Madras, it was made known that the Principal objected to having two brothers in two different colleges. The Christian influence for which the College stood, if good for one had to be good for both or not at all. This was the subtle dialectics. Other statistical considerations made for greater absurdity still with other academic authorities who based their judgments on probabilities rather than possibilities. These subtle impediments of the world of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, made me sour at heart already in my life while I was yet to see the world of job-hunting in India about which I might have to give a worse picture later. Nepotism, criss-cross interests, and partialities based on group life made such a tangled mess of the principle of equality of opportunity for all that the phrase itself began already to taste bitter in my mouth.

After all the tribulations, a solution came. The four of us got distributed between the Presidency College, Madras, in

the Marina and the Queen Mary's College in the same district. A house, the top floor of a Chemist's shop in San Thome, was rented and we settled there for some months or years before going to another house nearby and then to Komaleswarampet in the Mount Road area.

Life in Madras was very different in many ways from that of Bangalore ruled by a Maharaja. The fuller light of British colonialism played on one in Madras while Bangalore and Mysore were pieces of ancient India dropped from high as it were into the changing context of New India. Added to this was the actual and not merely political climate. For months on end the dream of Bangalore persisted within while the sticky heat of Madras made for sweating and sweltering as one sultry morning hour gave room to that of no less a sultry night. The breezes of the Marina sands were the only relieving feature and all the city came there in the evenings "to eat air" as the Hindustani idiom would put it, within the hearing of breaking billows and the glimmer of lights in a long row reaching to the harbor end from San Thome, twinkling like distant stars.

(Continued in next issue.)



University Senate Building, Madras

An Intelligent Person's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

GODS AND THEIR VEHICLES

The Body and Self

The temple is symbolically conceived as our objective counterpart. When we are physically entering a temple and proceed on to the innermost shrine contemplatively we are getting into our own being. The knowledge we want to gain from laboratories is only relative. In the words of Henri Bergson, it is a knowledge we gain by going round a thing. But absolute knowledge is entering into the being or experience of a thing. So instead of mechanically moving about in a temple with conventional air we should enter into the inner depths of our own being where alone we can realize the existence, the *satbhāva* of the Absolute subsistence or *caitanya* which gives the Supreme Value or *ānanda* to our life.

The deity and his vehicle are to be taken together. They are related like the body and the self. The deity represents our higher self and the vehicle our lower self. St. Francis used to call his body his brother ass. He considered the body as a vehicle upon which the soul rides. In the Hindu pantheon every god has a vehicle or *vāhana*.

Birds as Vehicles

Mahā Viṣṇu, Brahma, Sarasvati and Subrahmanya all have birds as *vāhanas*. Mahā Viṣṇu has the white eagle – *garuḍa*. Brahma and Sarasvati have the swan or *haṁsa*. Subrahmanya's *vāhana* is the peacock. It is very interesting to note the characteristic difference between these birds and their symbolic meaning.

Gods related with Vedic or Aryan spiritual background are hypostatic. Like

the archetype of Plato they are far above the world of necessities. In the strict sense of the word only a hypostatic god who is the Most High can descend or have *avatāras*. *Avatāra* is the coming down of a spiritual being with grace and benediction. Such gods have birds for their vehicles. The eagle can soar very high into the heavens and sometimes can be seen vanishing into the blue, The swan is also supposed to be living in far-off lofty regions. These birds belong to the Aryan Vedic context. But Subrahmanya of the Śiva family has the peacock which is more or less confined to the trees on which they live. They cannot soar very high. Subrahmanya as his name indicates is the Śaivite spirituality revalued in the light of Brahmanya or the philosophic aspect of Brahmanism. He is the link between the pre-historic Śiva tradition and the later Vedic culture. So his *vāhana* has the double character of being a bird and yet not of the heavens. His banner shows the crowing cock which also belongs to the earth and at the same time symbolic of spiritual awakening.

Air as we have seen is a symbol of intuition and sky or space is the symbol of spirit. A bird of the air coming from the infinite space refers to an intuition descending like grace from spiritual heights. Viṣṇu, the God of the Highest Value of Eternal Being, Brahma, the God of Becoming, and Sarasvati the Goddess of Wisdom, are rightly given the eagle and the swan respectively. Brahma and Sarasvati have the same vehicle, namely, the swan. Brahma is the immanent aspect of becoming and Sarasvati is the expressive counterpart of the same. Brahma is creativeness, or to be more correct, the principle of projection of this grand becoming called

Viśvam or the universe. Sarasvati as indicated by the mirror in her hand is its subjective reflection which alone can be a feeding reservoir of the perennial inspiration to the artists and writers.

Animals as Vehicles

Animals live on the ground. They cannot rise by themselves into the air. They move about on a horizontal plane. They represent the here and now actualities of life.

Animal in mythology is a fire-symbol. Fire represents the lower mind or rationality. Rationality here does not mean the reasoning faculty of man. It only refers to that part of the mind which is guided by instinctive urges and mechanical conditionings. From the elephant to the mouse all animals smell or sniff at their food. If the food gives a favorable smell which is conducive to pleasure they partake of it. If it gives a wrong odor they reject it. This is very much akin to our rational discrimination. Śankara says there is no difference between a cow and a man in this kind of discrimination which is of a lower order. A cow also runs away on seeing a brandished stick, and comes near on seeing a handful of green grass. Those who spend all their time to satisfy only their instinctive urges are said to have only an animal existence. The heavy body with its glandular secretions and instinctive urges and reasons guided by passions refers to the animal in us which in fact is the very vehicle in which we move about.

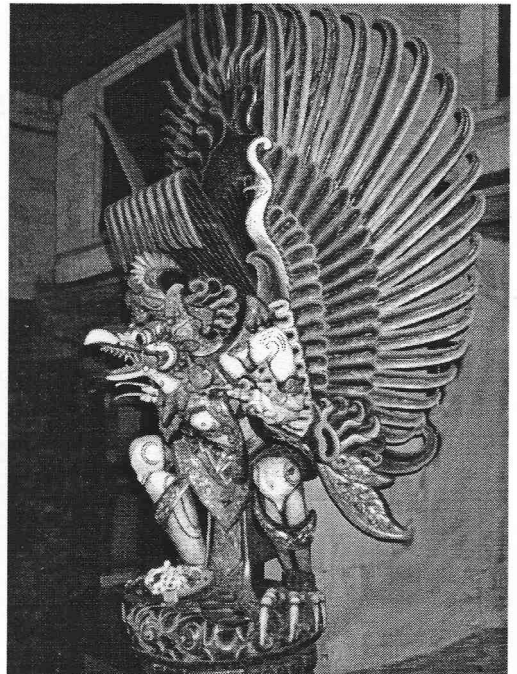
The divine and the animal are both in us. Our higher reasoning and intuitive perception or *darśana* of the Supreme spiritual values belong to the divine. The physical and emotional propensities which tie us down to the world of necessities belong to the animal in us.

Śiva's vehicle is Nandi the bull. Yama, the God of Death, rides on a buffalo. Gaṇapati has a mouse for his vehicle. Devi has her lioness. All these animals have their distinctive marks to be attached to their respective gods. Both Śiva and Yama belong to the negative path. In the *via negativa* both wisdom and tendencies which

are left behind by action are shared respectively by Śiva and Yama. Both the bull and the buffalo have brute force. But they are passive compared to the lion. The mouse *vāhana* of Gaṇapati marks the extreme pole of size in the animal world in which Gaṇapati tops the list, while the mouse is representative of the smallest life.

Animals in Our Own Psyche

In the civilized mansions of our cities we meet with socialized sophisticated men and women who are perfect in their manners and correct in their behavior. At heart they can be anything. But in outward conformity they give their full attention to achieve the approval of their fellow cenobitic citizens. On the other hand in the wildest part of the forests we come across human primitives and various kinds of animals: carnivorous animals like the lion, tiger, panther and wolves; clever and amusing ones like the jackal; strong, but gentle and intelligent elephants; nimble and timid deer and antelopes; charming and shy rabbits and squirrels. There is a great gulf separating the behavioral pattern of the sophisticated citizens and the denizens of the wild jungles. The city and



the jungle can both be seen in our own psyche. The conventional life of the urban dwelling belongs to our subconscious. The murderous instinct of the lion and the erotic and dominating disposition of the bull are not unlikely to peep out of our dark sub-conscious at least once in a while. The sly fox in us becomes very busy when we bargain in the market. So it is no wonder our highly imaginative artists and writers of antiquity thought of making allegorical reference to beasts to represent the hidden tendencies of our

sub-conscious.

No Conflict between the Divine and the Animal

The greatest teaching of Vedānta is yoga as given in the Bhagavad Gītā. In fact every chapter of the Gītā claims to be a new approach of yoga. Yoga is the bringing about of a harmonious union between opposites. Aspects of life with opposite character need not be kept away. They can be brought together dialectically, to complement each other. In the Śiva temple the



Ardhanārīśvara, Śiva and Śakti conjoined

liṅga is installed in the *Yōni*. The male and female factors are conjoined in a complementary union. In the *Ardhanārīśvara* also we find the male and female aspects merged into each other. This kind of union between the opposites is known as yoga. Śiva riding on the bull, Yama riding on the buffalo, and Devi riding on the lioness are also symbolic representations of yoga. In India as elsewhere people with puritanical notions speak of controlling the senses. This is neither approved by the Śāstras nor by modern psychology. Those who merely put a restraint on their senses are described in the Bhagavad Gītā as self-deluded (*mithyāchāra*). What is proper is to know one's lower nature and allow it to function in harmony with one's own higher nature. For instance consider Śiva. According to mythology he burnt Kāmadeva, the Indian God of Erotics, with the fire of his wisdom eye. He is an enemy of Eros. Śiva's vehicle, which is his lower counterpart at the same time, is the bull or libido. He does not annihilate it, but controls and sublimates its nature to carry him about in his own proper way of life (*svadharmā*). Yama, the King of Death, who alone teaches Naciketas the Science of Immortality (in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*), rides on the buffalo of death or absolute negation. The last three chapters of the Bhagavad Gītā are of great help to those who want to diagnose their own lower nature and *svadharmā*. Such a knowledge will certainly help us to harmonize the divine and the animal in us.

GAṆAPATI

Gaṇapati comes first. The first obeisance is to him. Everything auspicious should begin with a consecration to Gaṇapati or Gaṇeśa is the Lord of the Hosts (*Gaṇas*). The two *gaṇas* are the shining ones (*devas*) and the dead souls, ancestors, or *pitṛis*. The *devas* belong to the ascending path and the *pitṛis* to the descending path. The ascending path leads to the world of the intelligibles and the descending path binds us to actualities with the strings of action. Being the lord of

both, Gaṇeśa can offer us obstacles as well as release.

Gaṇeśa in Sanskrit is etymologically related to *Janus*. *Janus* is the same as '*Yana*' which means path. The Roman God Janus was symbolically representing initiation into a new mode of life. Gaṇapati as a Guru is the guiding principle at the crossroads of life. To stand at the crossroads not knowing the path to realization is not an uncommon experience of those who seek wisdom. Those who are wise take a hint from the finger post and proceed in the right direction. The finger post stands for the silent Guru. The Guru is truly the light that shows us the way. All those who deny the light stumble in darkness. Accepting the Guru is the same as accepting Gaṇapati as the *Vigneśvara* and denying the Guru is like getting caught in the noose of obstacles.

Gaṇapati as a Connecting Link

India's spiritual glory was at its climax even before the growth of Āryan society in India. The pre-Āryan civilization was essentially contemplative, but negative. Śiva was the central figure in their spiritual life. He was worshipped as the supreme Guru. The departed ones were considered to be in his care. The pre-Āryan civilization at its best was one of renunciation. *Tyāga* (relinquishment) was its hallmark. But in its extremity it amounted to a total denial of life. This negation of possible enjoyment was not appreciated by the Āryans. In the Bhagavad Gītā, when Arjuna shows his preparedness to beg in the street rather than wage war, Kṛṣṇa refers to his attitude of negativism as *ānaryajusṭam*--an attitude that displeases the Āryans.

The Āryan concept of the good life is to have a happy life here and now, as well as in the hereafter, enjoying all the good things of the world. For the Āryan it was a covetable virtue to possess beautiful and chaste wives, many virtuous sons, thousands of good cows, plenty of food and reputation. The Āryan gods can smile. They even worshipped the light and fire. *Yajña* (sacrifice) for the shining ones was dear to them.

In the concept of Gaṇapati the pre-Āryan contemplative and negative traditions of India merges into the Āryan positivism. The South and North get linked in his worship. In the *havana* or fire sacrifice of Gaṇapati, the *tila* and coconut of South India find a place in the *agnihotra* which was foreign to their tradition.

According to tradition, the Mahābhārata, the great epic of India written by Vyāsa, the greatest revaluator of Indian spirituality, was dictated by him to Gaṇapati, and Gaṇapati wrote it with his broken tusk, using it as a pen. This story throws light on the entire spiritual background of India. Gaṇapati is the son of Śiva. Śiva as we know was the prehistoric God-Guru of India. As a literary device Vyāsa introduces the spiritual values of the happy Vedic life to the austere contemplatives who had no regard for the simple joys of life. The Bhagavad Gītā, the finalized wisdom textbook, itself comes in the middle of the Mahābhārata epic. From this it is evident that Gaṇapati's real role in Indian spiritual life is to effect a unitive integration of the diverse trends in religious understanding and practices in spite of their apparent differences.

Vyāsa was the great preserver of traditions. He compiled and arranged the Vedas in their present comprehensive form. The highly profound teachings of the Upaniṣads were strung together by him in the Vedānta Sūtras. He composed the Mahābhārata and the Bhagavad Gītā. Thus he happened to be the great custodian of India's highest spiritual tradition. Gaṇeśa sat at his feet and listened to his finalized wisdom teaching. Symbolically, Vyāsa presents Gaṇapati as the wisdom teacher forever for the preservation of the tradition.

The Lotus-Carved Seat

Gaṇapati is seated on a pedestal resembling the fully opened petals of a lotus flower. The lotus is a sign of wisdom born of devotion or contemplative mysticism. To sit is to be established. To sit on a lotus seat is to be a Guru to proclaim the tradition. This symbol refers to Gaṇapati's

Guruhood.

The Crown on the Head

To have a crown or a halo is the same as being anointed, with chrism or sanctified oil. The Christos or Christhood of Jesus refers to the same anointing. The "Anointed One" is the divinely blessed or commissioned teacher of the supreme wisdom. As a crowned king has full authority over the region he rules, so Gaṇapati has absolute authority over both *avidyā* (nescience) and *vidyā* (knowledge).

Big Ears

Being elephant-headed, Gaṇapati has very wide and long ears. Ears are for hearing. Wisdom never comes unsought. True wisdom is well-established in such a knowledge which is beyond the dualities of subjective-objective division. For all those who have not attained it there is the absolute necessity to sit at the feet of a Guru. Wisdom literature in India of the highest order is called *śruti*, which literally means that which is heard. In ancient days there were no written books to read. The tradition of India was to listen to a Guru. Listening, in Sanskrit is *śravaṇa*. One who listened to many great Gurus was known as a *bahu-śruta*.

Listening to a Guru and learning the *śruti* is an essential part of *brahmacarya* the "treading of the path of the Absolute". Thus in any true education worth that name, the disciple has to establish a reciprocal relationship with the Guru. Both the Guru and *śiṣya* should have only one common interest. Disadoption on the part of the disciple or the Guru is the greatest tragedy in the seeker's life. In Europe unfortunately this tragedy was repeated several times. The breaking away of Aristotle from Plato was a colossal blow to the Socratic tradition. On the other hand in India even a Guru of our own time can trace back the *paramparā* (hierarchical succession) to Ādi-Nārāyaṇa bringing in Brahma, Vāsiṣṭha, Śakti, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Suka, Gaudapāda, Govinda, Śankara, Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka and his own Guru, all in the vertical line of succession or *par-*



Gaṇapati

amparā. To be initiated into the secret of all secrets contained in the *śrutis* it is absolutely necessary to sit at the feet of a wisdom teacher and listen to him with one-pointed attention. The big ears of Gaṇapati are a symbol of *śraddha*, faithful attentive listening to the wisdom teaching.

Small Eyes

Eyes are to see. There are two poles. The outer organ is to contact the various and variegated objects; the inner pole brings the orientation of unitive vision. The wide opened eyes of the extrovert

sees the big bewildering world around him in which he is only an insignificant individual caught in the competitive world of technology, and mechanism. To have a comprehensive vision of the cosmos with its starry heavens as a complementary counterpart of the awareness within introspection is necessary. We should turn our eyes inwards and look into our own mind to discover our real self. We live, as it were, in two worlds, the cosmological world of objective phenomena and the subjective world of values within our own being. To link these two

worlds in one's own knowledge and to be non-dualistic, we have to be contemplative. Contemplative introspection is symbolically expressed by the small half-closed eyes of Gaṇapati.

Introspective contemplation in Sanskrit is known as *manana*. *Svādhyāya* or study of the scripture is to be followed by critical contemplation. It is not mainly for adoration that we stand before the altar of Gaṇapati. We should be able to read the silent language of contemplation in his symbolic features. His eyes require us to meditate and ponder on the values of life and the nature of our self.

The Long Proboscis

On hearing some intriguing news we say we smell danger. On hearing something unpleasant we screw up our nose, as if it had sensed some foul smell. A dog recognizes its master by smell. Even a pig will not care to eat something which does not give it a favorable smell. In all these instances we find the nose is associated with the function of discriminating between the pleasant and the unpleasant, the favorable and the unfavorable. This discriminative faculty at its best enables us to recognize the perennial from the falsehood. In Śankara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* the first qualification of the wisdom seeker is *viveka* or discrimination, followed by *vairāgya* (absolute detachment). Keeping oneself detached is a discipline. It refers to the practical aspect of spiritual life. The symbolism of the ear teaches us to listen to the wisdom teaching. The symbolism of the eye refers to its critical consideration and sympathetic appreciation. The symbolism of the nose consequently teaches us to apply that wisdom in our everyday life. In Sanskrit it is named *nididhyāsana*.

The Broken Tusk

Gaṇapati is shown with a broken tusk. According to tradition this deformity was caused by Paraśurāma who was an advocate of pure brahmanism. Gaṇapati as the son of Śiva was naturally his opponent. But the latter's acceptance of brahmanical values amounted to his tusk being broken.

The tusk, as we know, shows his individuality. Even those who become adepts of the highest wisdom develop a spiritual ego. The story of *Viśvamitra* illustrates such an instance. This spiritual ego is much worse than a worldly ego. It should be broken. Nārāyana Guru in his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* says:

*Skin and bone and excreta,
With all those traits of inner life
Which suffering do portend;
These know, one ego wields;
The other, growing
Doth fullness attain;
From self-gratification to save
O! Grant the boon!*

The pathetic humiliation of having the tusk broken is no shame to Gaṇapati. He requires that our egoistic horns also should be broken. That is why the hard shell of a coconut is broken before Gaṇapati.

The Pot-Belly

The potbelly is a sign of contentment. A beggar or a hungry man cannot settle down to peaceful meditation. Like Gaṇapati we should also be content. A maxim of the Chinese contemplative life is "Empty the mind and fill the belly".

The Rice Ball and the Vedas

Gaṇapati has a rice ball in his left hand and the Vedas in the right. Some times instead of the Vedas a lotus or the broken tusk or a *jñāna-mudra* (the gesture of wisdom-teaching) is shown. All these are symbols of wisdom. This is a delicate expression in the language of dialectics of yoga. With the ball of rice he wants to fill our belly and with the wisdom symbol he wants to nourish our soul. All good things of this world come under the category called *preyas*. The rice ball represents *preyas*. The Vedas, the lotus or the *jñāna-mudra* represents *śreyas* which includes all spiritual values. A really wise man never gives up one for the other. He accepts both. Enjoying a good meal is not against understanding a book of wisdom like the

Bhagavad Gītā. Each has its respective place in our life. A woman can plait her hair and put on her best jewels without sacrificing her spiritual virtues. Most of the excesses in the name of spirituality like eating bitter leaves, or fasting to death, and all such mortifications of the body are unnecessary. This simple but profound lesson was known to all great Gurus. Jesus advised his disciples to give Caesar his dues and to give God what was God's.

The Hook with an Ax

In one of his raised upper hands, Gaṇapati holds a hook which has also the blade of an ax. A determined seeker has to restrain his thoughts, words and deeds from going astray through dissipating channels. According to the Gītā a mind which gets bifurcated and is running in different directions seldom reaches truth. A contemplative has to bring his mind again and again back to one central issue. It is not an easy task. The mahout of the elephant controls the animal with a hook. Similarly, we should also have the hook of restraint to keep ourselves always on the path of the Absolute (*brahmacharya*). Like wild creepers which choke the free growth of a tree, irrational and sentimental ties prevent most of us from being free. It is with the ax of discrimination that we must chop them down.

The Noose

Gaṇapati has also a noose in another hand. A noose is a sign of bondage and an obstacle. Another name of Gaṇapati is *Vignēśvara* the Lord of Obstacles. One who can create an obstacle can also remove it. According to Śaivite belief, to which context Gaṇapati also belongs, all beings are cows. Śiva is the cowherd (*Paśupati*) and all beings are held bound by Him with a noose. He saves the stray cows from going into the wilderness by pulling the noose of destructive forces or of deliverance. Mind alone binds the mind. By knowing this we can diligently work out our deliverance.

The Mouse with a Little Rice Ball

A mouse for an elephant to ride on! Is

it not ridiculous? But herein lies the beauty and dialectical subtlety of the contemplative artist of the past. In Indian religion humor is not tabooed, particularly in the South. Saint Thāyamānyavar addresses Śiva as the 'Mad One' Nārāyana Guru calls Subrahmanya the 'Beggars' Son'. But beyond the humorous situation of an elephant riding on a mouse there is something which is akin to the inexpressible wonder in this dialectical picture which is referred to in the *Keno Upaniṣad* by the mere sound "Ah!" and in the Bhagavad Gītā as the wonder with which one speaks of Brahman, the wonder with which one listens to Brahman.

Among the animals on dry land the elephant is the biggest and the mouse is one of the smallest. Both Gaṇapati and the mouse keep a ball of rice in their hands. All beings are thus linked together on the physical plane with food. The first impulse of life is the eating of food. As soon as the child is born it cries for food. It is the same with a puppy or a newly born calf. Soon after they are born they suck from the mother's breast. The greatest wonder of the world is the provision in nature for every living being to get food and drink to suit its requirements.

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* food is first equated to Brahman, the Absolute. Because the first joy of life is the joy of nourishment. Life itself is nothing but nourishment. Decay is death. The golden thread of food links all forms of life from the highest to the lowest. Psychologically viewed, the joy of taking food is as much spiritual or belonging to the Ātman as the joy of meditation. It is in this joy Gaṇapati and the mouse get related.

The Universal is never seen but in the particular. The ideal never exists but in the actual. Even so the incomprehensible *Par-amātma* is to be perceived in the *Jīva*. The allegory of the elephant riding on the mouse refers to the all-pervading Almighty God residing in the tiny heart of his devotee.

(Continued in next issue.)

Love of a Tree

The west-wind whispered to the coconut tree:

"I love you in your tenderness....

I love you in your youthfulness....

I love you for your usefulness....

I love you for your loneliness...."

Rejoicing, the tree waved its leaves and said:

"Thank you my dear west-wind!

Your words are sweeter than my tender water..

If you touch me gently,

I will break a tender coconut for you....

But if you touch me roughly,

I will break a full-grown one for you....

And if you stand still,

Embracing me for an instant,

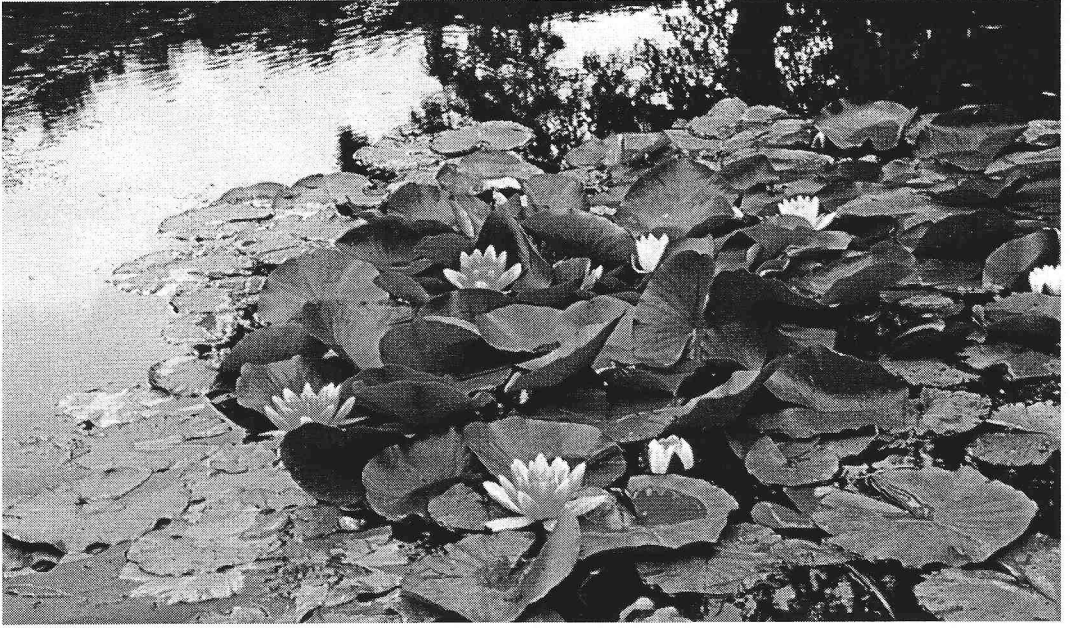
I will tell you why I am lonely...."

And, as well it is known to all of us,

The love between the tree and wind

Never tires, but rather increases day by day.





Two Beloveds

I love two beauties,
Two damsels,
Two angels.
I am the lover of
Two beloveds.
One is the lotus,
lily is the other.
With the lotus
I become the sun,
with the lily
I become the moon.
Though restless my time,
Yet tireless my love
And, endless my happiness.

Gopidas

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