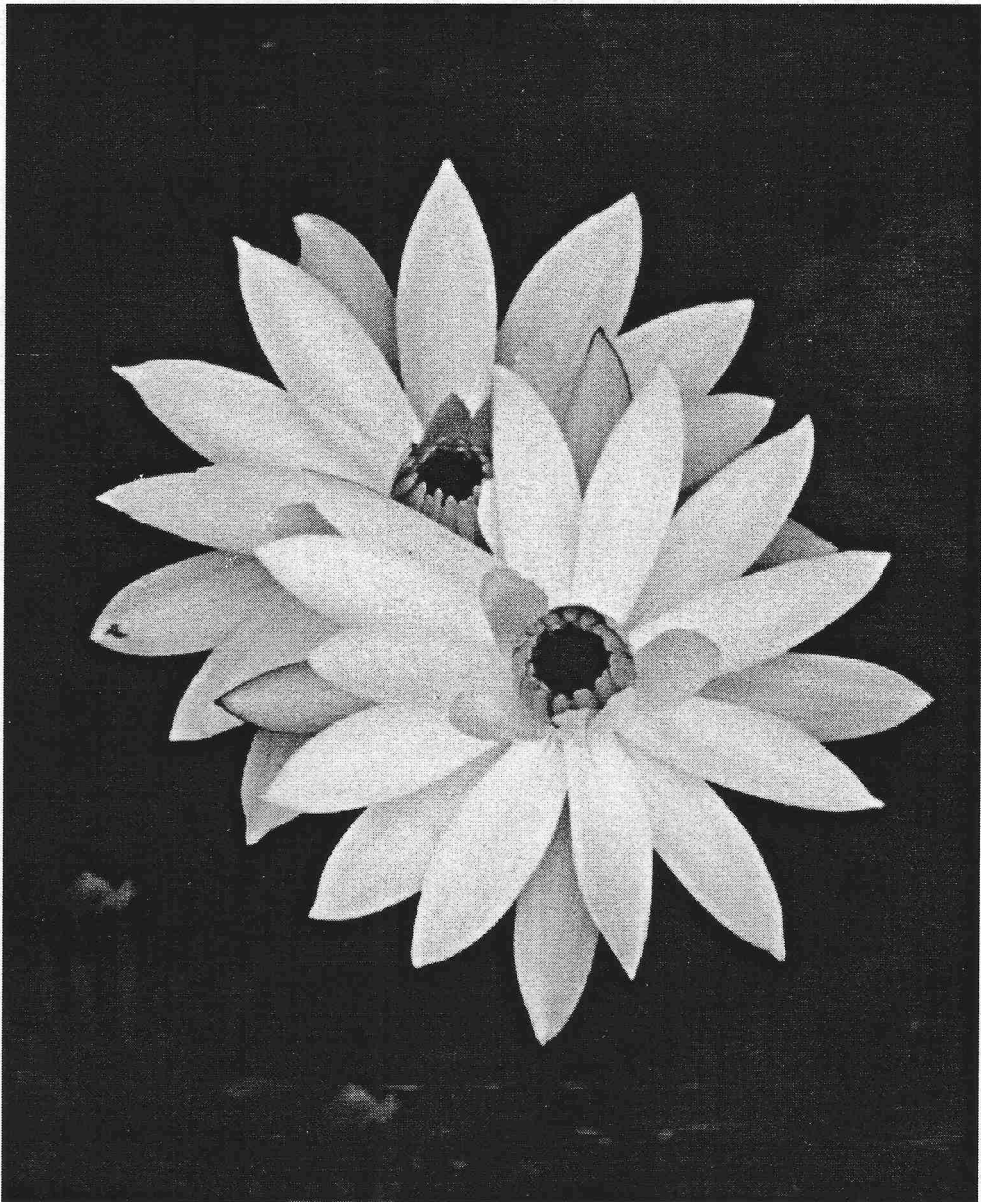
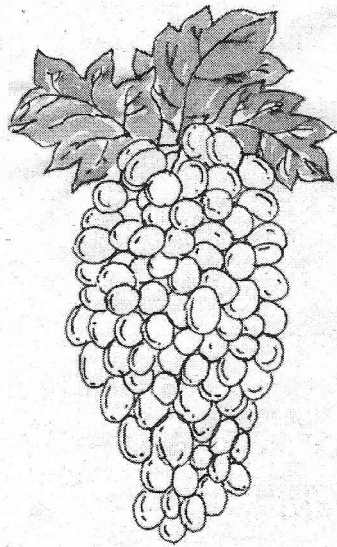


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XV • 1999

THIRD QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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Practicing Yoga

As I was working on the wisteria vine growing along the front porch, a friend came by and greeted me. I welcomed her with a cup of tea and she said,

The last time I came, we talked about Yoga as disaffiliation from the context of suffering. That sounded good, of course, although somewhat distant. But that phrase has continued to ring in my mind as I have been learning more about all the suffering in the world. My parents protected and provided for us with such care that I was very ignorant of the extremes of life. Now at the university, I have friends whose lives have been very different. One friend's parents had to flee Laos to survive, another grew up never knowing when the family would be awakened by her father's war-induced nightmare screams. Both of them are bright and energetic, but there are times when they are fearful or depressed for no real reason. I try to cheer them up but I get frustrated. The worst thing is that now I am unhappy, too, but that does not make me more understanding. I am more impatient than ever and just want to get away!

When I asked her what was troubling her, she said that she had been in a car crash in which her back had been injured. Her boyfriend had been driving and, even though it wasn't his fault, she couldn't help feeling resentful that she was hurt and he wasn't. She burst out:

I know that's an awful way to feel, but now I can't compete and I'm letting my team down! And when my back hurts, I can't study well. I just feel miserable! I feel cut off from everyone. Then I remembered what you said about Yoga - can Yoga help me?

The great teachers of Yoga, like Patañjali and Vyasa, were very compassionate. They were responding to the real sufferings of human beings when they wrote their very practical words of wisdom. When most people hear the word, "philosophy," they think that it means remote, theoretical speculation. But Yoga is a philosophy that guides us from suffering to abiding happiness.

Well, that is just what I need. I am ready to listen more seriously. Please tell me more.

Patañjali expressed the essential teachings very concisely. He first listed all the obstacles so that each person could diagnose their own stumbling blocks. You have probably encountered most of them: physical pain, distress and disease, mental depression, doubt, paranoia, exaggeration, laziness, hankering after objects, delusion, insanity, having no firm ground for spiritual orientation, instability in faith.

Wow, that covers just about everything, doesn't it? It sounds more like a list a modern sociologist or psychotherapist would make than an ancient Indian philosopher.

Our society has certain prejudices that get in our way of finding guidance, such as favoring new over old, but the essential obstacles to clarity and stability remain the same.

But that list doesn't include outside forces like war, oppressive governments, earthquakes or accidents. What about things like that which we are powerless to control?

Such kind of external forces are equally ancient. If you think about them, you'll see that they result in one or more of the obstacles we listed. Yoga doesn't promise that it can protect you from such problems. Remember, the assurance was not that of destroying the context of suffering, but of offering the way to disaffiliate yourself from it. That is, to overcome the obstacles presented by the inevitable challenges of life.

The pain in my neck makes it hard for me to concentrate on my studies and I'm afraid of failing my courses. I'm depressed because I feel like I am letting my team down. I'm worried that I'm going to get lazy and fat from not working out. I'm probably exaggerating but I can't seem to stop. Now I understand better how someone could go crazy from all life's pressures. So I feel very acquainted with all the obstacles except the last two. I've never had or felt I needed a faith or a spiritual orientation. My problems feel very here and now.

Yoga is not a religion nor does it insist on religious practice. Patañjali is focusing on instability in faith as an obstacle to a steady mind. Constantly switching one's faith, religious or otherwise, from one ground to another, disturbs one's entire psycho-physical being. That is what he is advising against. Yoga offers a way to discover for yourself a firm grounding in life which will enable you to maintain your inner balance in the face of suffering.

That is definitely what I need right now. How can I get it?

Patañjali gives a number of alternatives to choose from, each of which employs the repetitive practice of one truth or principle as the means to remove obstacles. The first way he gives is to constantly repeat AUM and dwell on its meaning.

AUM! I remember chanting that with a whole group of people - I felt very serene. But how does one dwell on its meaning?

AUM represents all the states of consciousness: wakeful, dream, deep sleep and that which transcends as well as permeates the other three states. It also represents the eternal teacher, that which reveals to us the light within and around us. To dwell on its meaning as you repeat it keeps it from becoming a mechanical repetition. Instead, you become filled with gratitude for the ever-present light that goes beyond everything known and yet is nearer than near.

AUM.....AUM.....AUM.....I think that if I adopted that as a steady practice, that would be enough by itself. What are some of the other ways?

One is to cultivate attitudes of friendliness to happiness, compassion to misery, gladness to virtue and indifference to vice.

It is usually easy for me to be compassionate when someone is miserable and naturally friendly to someone who is happy. But nowadays, I find myself being envious when someone is happy and irritated when someone is unhappy. I feel so ashamed, but I don't know how to stop those feelings.

Patañjali has given us a very useful yardstick to measure how we are doing. He was a very wise teacher who knew that human beings are very different and

in need of different kinds of guidance at different points in their lives. So he also listed some ways that are very much in our control. One of these is to show absolute interest in a single sensory experience or action.

Can you give me an example?

One is to gaze at a candle flame without interruption. Another is to simply watch your breath moving in and out of your body. Why don't you try that right now?

Hmmmmmm.....if I just watch my breathing, my mind does naturally settle down. And I don't notice the pain so much. Oh, I never thought Yoga could be so simple.

Yes, and this is something you can do any time, wherever you are. Patañjali gave several other suggestions of how to practice one truth or principle.

That is plenty for me. Why does Patañjali list so many practices after saying it is not good to be unstable in faith?

These are not examples of faith, but of practice. Do you see how the wisteria vine is sending out shoots vigorously in all directions? Some of them are growing in the direction of the sun, where they can get nourishment. Some of the others are growing up under the roof where it is cramped and dark. So I am pulling them down and directing them to grow where there is room and light. Only then will they be able to generate beautiful fragrant blossoms. Yoga gives us a way to give our minds similar direction. People are different, so Patañjali has placed before us a number of alternatives. Then it is up to us to choose and apply them.

I always thought that spiritual teachings were very magical and mysterious. But this seems very practical, even scientific.

And just as the proof of various processes in science has been tested over and over by experiment, these practices recommended by Patañjali have been used by many people over the ages to overcome the obstacles to clarity and stability.

I feel more peaceful and hopeful than I have in a long time.

Nancy Yeilding

The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patāñjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Sūtra III:17

śabdārtha pratyayānām itaretarādhyāsāt samkaras tat pravibhāga samyamāt sarva bhūta ruta jñānam

śabda: the word or sound
artha: the meaning, object or purpose
pratyayānām: idea or content
itaretara: of each with the other
adhyāsāt: because of the coinciding or superimposition
samkaraḥ: mixture or confusion
tat: their
pravibhāga: distinctions, differentiation
samyamāt: by performing *samyama* on
sarva: all
bhūta: living beings
ruta: of the sounds
jñānam: knowledge, comprehension

The sound, the meaning (behind it) and the idea (which is present in the mind at the time) are present together in a confused state. By performing *samyama* over their distinctions comes the knowledge of the sounds of all living beings.

Expanded Translation: The sound regulated by the principles of grammar (*śabda*) points to the objective nature that reveals its meaningful mental content (*artha*) as ideas which come one by one sequentially overlapping (*itaretarādhyāsāt*) and therefore cause confusion (*samkara*) to the listener by hiding the separateness of the in-

dividual tones of each sound (*pravibhāga*) which hinders the speaker's intention.

This anomaly of misunderstanding the implied intention of the producer of the sound is to be met with the performance of carefully structuring and molding the intended message, so that the meaning of the words carefully listened to can be strictly brought into the intended formation of the message that is psychologically evolving from the semiosis of *śabda*. This course of conveyance of meaning belongs to a process of four-fold evolution which commences from the spiritual beyond (*para*), enters into a subtle psychic projection (*paśyanti*) and then goes into a hidden alchemy (*madhyama*) and lastly emerges out of that unconscious interlude to produce a steady state of recordable gross nomenclature (*vaikhari*). If one can accomplish this sequential manifestation from spiritual origin to oral verbalization or calligraphic impression of symbolic word-images (*alekhanam*), he or she will comprehend the meaning of all sounds produced by any being. Although the explanation of *samyam* sounds complex, the yogi need not sit down to contemplate on the process of communicating by sound. It is as simple and natural as seeing a beautiful flower or laughing on hearing a humorous episode.

When we read the English sentence, "The sound, the meaning (behind it) and the idea (which is present in the mind at the time) are present together in a confused state," the sentence begins with the

article 'the'. In the eye, the impression of each letter comes one after the other, sequentially. But the phonetics of the letters, 't', 'h', and 'e', do not keep their separate identification when we read 'the'. Similarly, when we say "the object and the idea are present together," each word is presented to our faculty of hearing sequentially. For the purpose of clarity, pauses between the words are shortened or lengthened. In addition to the placement of words in a sentence words are placed in the formation of a sentence, the syntax of grammar and logical relevance all impact the interrelationship between words. Although it appears that the faculty of articulation is making an impression of a sentence, it comes from the combination of many purposes conceived by a person's soul, so to say. The psyche decides what the impact on the listener should be. What is heard in phonemes or seen in calligraphic figures is only a symbol of the purposive meaning that the speaker wants to convey.

Two souls which are trying to connect to each other bring together two sensory and motor systems, the afferent and efferent ends of the communication line. The meaning that clicks between the word of the speaker and the hearing of the listener is far removed from the calligraphic part of writing and the phonetics of speaking. Language has beyond it the total function of a person as a soul or Self. It is to explain this that the Indian science of language brought in the theory of *sphoṭa*. Each time we hear a word, sentence, or whole statement, what happens is the bursting of the meaning from the conglomeration of the sound that is heard. How it comes nobody knows. The same effect can be conveyed without using any words at all. With the mere winking of an eye, the shaking of a finger or hand movement, people can communicate, sometimes better than with words.

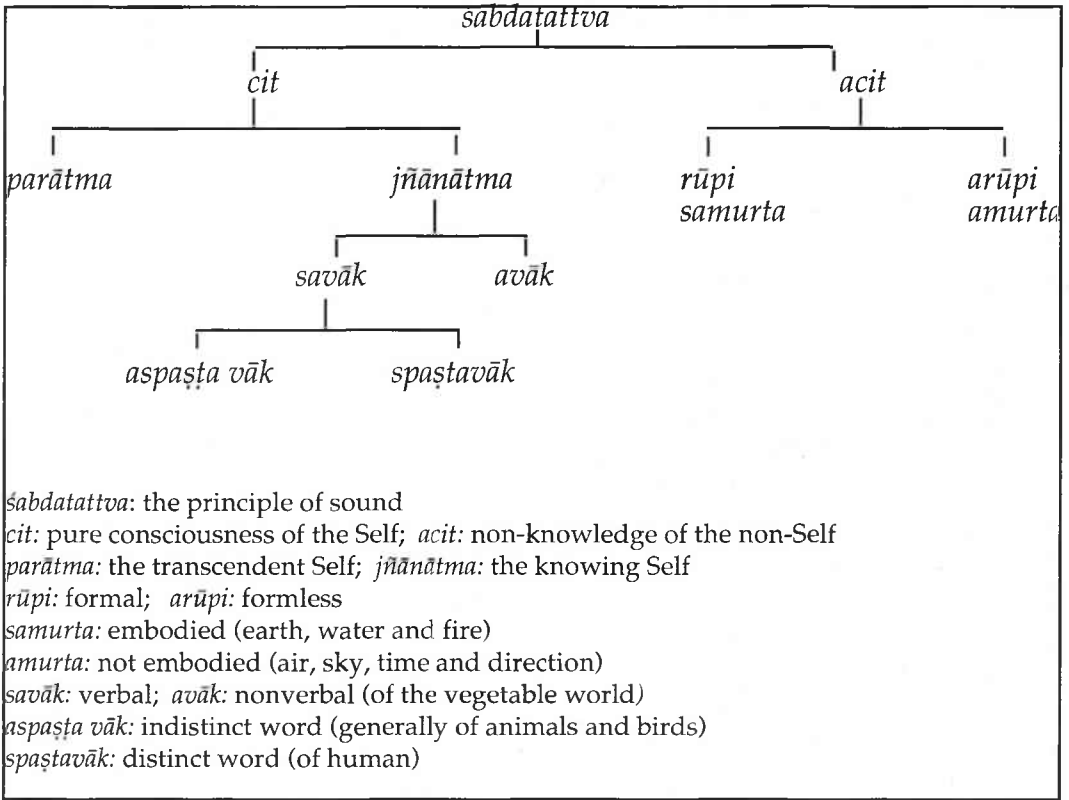
What is important here is to leave the tools of communication behind and try to understand the purpose behind the expressions of the soul which are sometimes conveyed by words and sometimes in

pure silence. That is why the word *buddhi* is sometimes translated as "the will to know" instead of just "understanding." A sound strikes the mechanism of the cochlea only for a split second and, immediately after the registry of a sound is made, it disappears and its place is taken by the articulation and registration of the next sound. Hence it is said that each of the sounds is not the word itself. Vyasa states: "The letter, however, is singly a constituent of the word. It has the potentiality of supplying a name for all objects; it is, as it were, of universal application, inasmuch as it appears in combination with every conjoined letter, it takes different places in different combinations, sometimes being placed before and sometimes after another letter." (*Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras*, Ed. B.D. Basu, Sudhindranatha Vasu, Allahabad, 1912, p. 209.)

Two source books which can help us understand the theory of hearing and listening are: *The Theory of Hearing*, by Ernest Glen Wever (Dover Publications, New York, 1949), and *A Historical Study of Indian Music*, by Swami Prajñānananda (Anandadhara Prakashan, Calcutta, 1965). In *The Theory of Hearing*, we are given the Western classical theories of Helmholtz Resonance, Place Theories and Frequency Theories. Much research has been done on the physiology of hearing which has developed the classical theories with attention to auditory nerve responses, frequency representation in the auditory nerve and the volley principle, which includes cochlear localization, sensitivity, loudness and fatigue, pitch and pitch discrimination, auditory abnormalities, the products of tonal interaction, temporal phenomena of auditory perception and binaural phenomena. In *A Historical Study of Indian Music*, Swami Prajñānananda makes a comparative study of microtones used in different musical disciplines.

In the most authoritative book of Bhartri Hari, *Vākya-padīyam (Brahma-kāṇḍam)*, there is a clear elucidation of the principle of articulation. It is given as shown in the diagram opposite.

The entire nature (*sarva-prakṛti*) is



śabdatattva. It has two aspects, the ground and the superimposition. The pure natural foundation is the ground. Superimposition comes from the manifestation of consciousness that seems to animate all organisms. In the natural ground there is continuity and no separateness. Separate units are distinguished only because of the limitations of individuated consciousness. It can be represented as follows:



cit: pure consciousness of the Self
acit: non-knowledge of the non-Self
citacit: Self/non-Self complex

Citacit, conscious/unconscious, is not a mixture of consciousness and unconsciousness. It is a superimposition of consciousness on an unconscious ground, such as where there is only clay, an on-

looker sees a pot or jar. Potness or jariness are superimposed on inert matter. Pure clay is looked upon as a supposition of body formulated out of the memory of the beginningless causal substance. On that is superimposed the impressions that are lent by sensory experiences. Pure being is called *sat*. When it is comprehended by living beings by blending the being with one's own self-consciousness, it is still not an existential thing. An over-all beingness is introjected into it as the base of what is consciously recognized as being.

In reality, the principle of grammatically conceived sound has two powers. They are *śrutiśakti*, the power of audition, and *arthaśakti*, the power of configuring meaning. It is the intermingling of these two powers which brings us the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world (*samsara*) is considered to be the world which we see which seems to manifest in ruminations, ideations, verbalizations and communication through spoken words or media of exchanging mental images, the world of animals which have intra-species and inter-species communication, organic

life forms like trees and vegetation and inorganic formations of hills, rocks, rivers, etc., which collectively give us the idea of here, there, etc., and enable us to separate the past, present and future. The personalized self of individuated persons relates to the world with: sensation (*samvedana*), pulsation (*pandana*) and through the symbolization of spoken or written word or visible, auditory and tactual imagery (*vācana*).

The word *śabda*, sound, has several synonyms such as *nāda*, *svana*, *dvani* and *pāda*. *Nāda* is an elementary sonal voicing which becomes rhythmic. *Svanam* is the most elementary articulation connected with the larynx which produces vibrations which a flush of breath is passing through the organ of speech. *Svana* is even more primary than *svara*, the elemental tone. Every sound is produced with microtones. According to Indian theories, the entire world is pervaded by *śabda*, the vibratory aspect of sound. As its origin and expansion is beyond the comprehension of human intelligence, it is called *śabdabrahman*. By its own nature, it is beyond the audible threshold of the hearing faculty.

Two divisions in Indian classification are *iham* (belonging to this world, here and now), and *param* (the beyond). Just as the known is coming from the unknown and consciousness from the unconscious, what is here and now comes from the beyond. The ontological aspect of life is epistemologically preceded by transcendence. Great importance is given in India to the act of hearing. The first consonant in the word *śabda*, *śa*, indicates the element associated with sound, *ākāśa*. Though *ākāśa* has no exact synonym in English, it can be understood as the time/space continuum in which the phenomenal world is placed. Until the experiment made by Western science known as the Michelson Morley experiment, ether was considered to be synonymous with *ākāśa*. In the failure of the experiment, ether was rejected by scientists as being non-objective. For Indian people, it was a great success, proving that thingness comes from nothingness. So, *ākāśa* is a link "element" connecting the

known and the unknown.

In the search for truth, we commence with the first experiencing of self-expression with the aid of sound. The primal scream of a child immediately after its birth is its announcement of its existence. Thus, it is only natural to begin the study of knowledge with sound. The Gospel according to St. John begins by saying "In the beginning was the Word." The English term 'Word' is not the exact translation of *Logos* which implies both an ascending and descending power. *Nāda* is composed of a nasal sound, *nā*, and a dental sound, *da*. The quality of *na* is flowing and *da* represents a resistance to the flow of sound, a beat. So *nāda* combines both flow and resistance. It is an elementary constituent of sonal expression.

The theme taken here is the creation of semiosis. All thoughts have to manifest in the transcendental as well as the ontological set-up. That is how spirit relates itself to matter. In the Bible also, God is first presented as a spirit above the abyss. The first manifestation is said to be light, yet light was made to manifest by sound. God said, "Let there be light," and the result was the coming of light. Visibility came after audibility. In the stream of consciousness, everything has to happen sequentially. The sound in which an idea is clothed is formed of sequential elements. Each language has an ingenious way of making confections of sounds which can be registered in the hearing faculty with a temporal sequence like going from point to point in space to make a line. All ideas come to us as fragmentary parts or particles when one point is adjacent to another, one particle is related to another particle. Therefore the beginning of everything is an article such as 'the' or 'this'. Different parts can be shifted around to be related with each other in different orders. The conjoining of separate units to make a consistent and contiguous reality is what is called *samyam*. Nobody comes to this world as a yogi or a grammarian or a logician. All events are happening in chaos and order has to evolve out of chaos. This particular chapter of is for understanding the special

features of organizing a meaningful whole.

India's primary stand in the world of knowledge is the great attention she has given to the importance of what is being heard. Hence, the authoritative texts which reveal the fundamentals of life are called *śruti*, what is heard. Vyasa begins his commentary on this *sūtra* by saying:

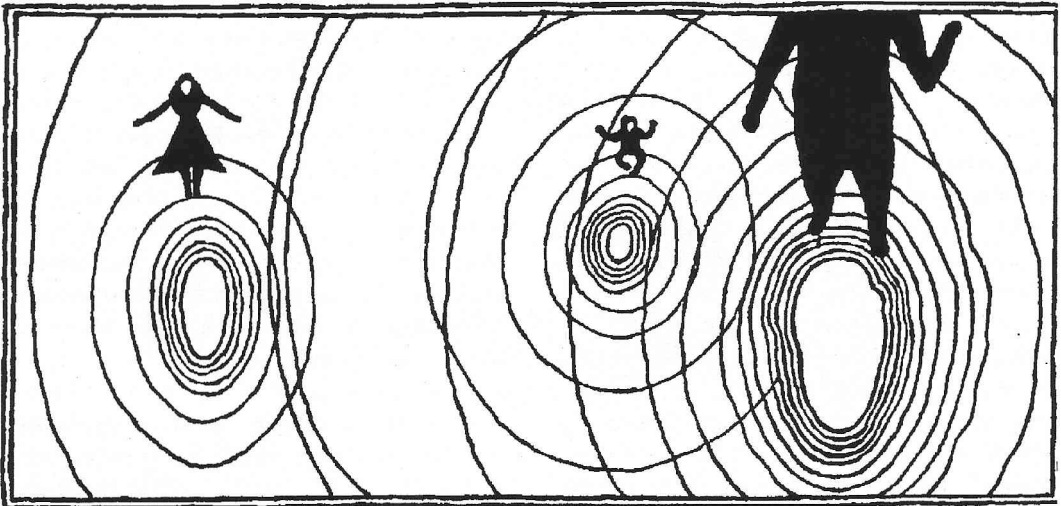
Now the power of speech functions in the manifestation of literal sounds only. The auditory power is the substratum for the changes of sound alone. A word, however, is taken in by the will-to-know (buddhi, understanding) all at once, having taken up a unified appearance just as the last literal sound ceases. (Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras, Edited by Major B.D. Basu, Sudhindranatha Vasu, Allahabad, 1912.)

When children play with dolls, they have to assume many things which are not in the doll. An inert piece of stone can be the father, a slightly smaller stone can be the mother, a pebble can be the child. The child has a will to believe what it supposes. In this game other children of the same age willing to participate in the game will readily agree that the stones and pebble are mother, father and child. A word which we articulate is also given a connotation which does not come from hearing it but from the assumption of the person who takes for granted that a spoken word has a certain meaning. Signs and symbols are basic in the formation of language. If a

man who has not known the Arabic language sees the calligraphy which represents Allah, however much he looks at it, the calligraphy will not reveal that it stands for Allah. But for a believer, even a partial sight of it will fill him with awe and reverence. Thus the formal representation of language is to be built on an assumption that comes from the core of one's consciousness.

It is very simple and easily acquired by babies from the day of their exposure to the phenomenal world. They have no difficulty in separating geometrical forms from one another. They will easily append a psychologically formulated nomenclature to a visible form. Compared to form, names are algebraic. This is happening like magic in every child. Before the age of three the child has the rudiments of philology and lexicography. The connotative aspect of the coming together of the visible and the audible has the power to deeply affect the child. It is to this phenomenon that our attention is drawn with a small term, *śabdārtha*, sound and meaning. The psychological attainment of deciphering sensory experiences is amazing. By simply reading this *sūtra*, we will not go to the heart of semiosis. One has to remove everything irrelevant from the context, just like a sculptor chisels away parts of marble or stone to get out of it a cherished form.

When the cause of a sound mechani-



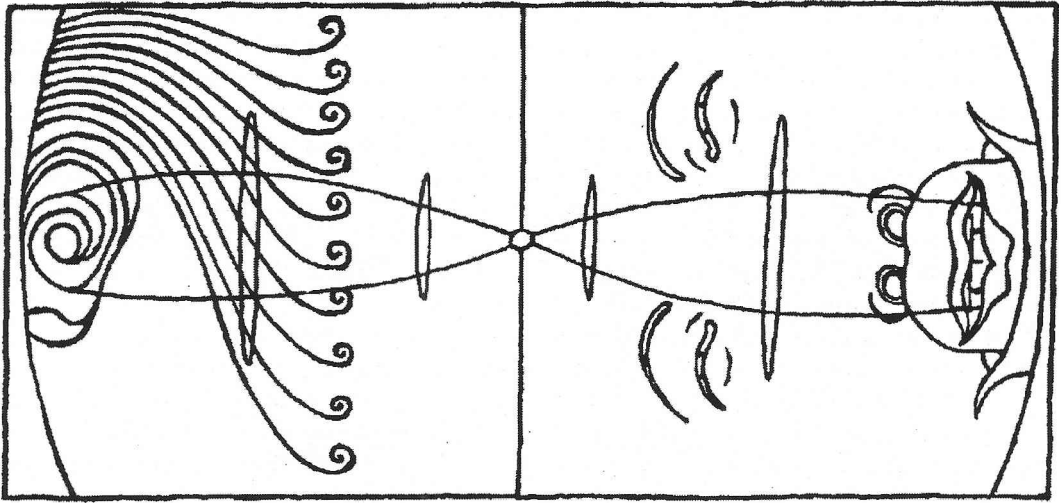
cally comes from the external world, as the vibration is using external air as a medium for its motion, the sound-producing stuff has a composite character. Air molecules are the material medium for the vibratory energy of sound to act upon. In the sound of speech or articulation, there are many sequential orders of motion-creating dynamics. The immediate necessity to speak is to express an idea. Consciousness is formulated according to a notion roused during the manifestation of the idea, taking advantage of previous memories. Memory is not any stuff sitting somewhere. It is a behavioral pattern caused by several microforces acting upon the medium at hand. Only when a certain mode of energy becomes cumulative in the breath does it act upon the molecular structure of a medium which itself has to act ingeniously to rouse a previous notion of a consonant which is animated by a vowel. These are generated with thoughts. According to the Indian concept, when the beyond (*para*), which by nature belongs to the unconscious, unfolds into the conscious, a purposive channeling of breathing is made to bring about a sound made familiar to a person by their cultural rearing. Conjoined vowels and consonants make a meaningful sound.

The Indian theory of the unconscious is not negative as in Western psychology. It is difficult to describe or elucidate the Indian theory of idea and sound coming into union to make a meaningful expression. The area of transference and transformation is the threshold between the beyond and the immanent. It is there that life-forces become energies of consciousness. Therefore, in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the unconscious origin of ideas is described as an omnipotent energy (*eṣa sarvajña*). It has an overseeing quality as well as a self-maneuvering ability. Hence it is described as *eṣa sarvēśvara*, the omnipresent god or power. A common term to describe this aspect is *prajña*, making an idea become luminous as knowledge (*pra*: properly; *jña*: a psychic illumination by which the hidden aspect becomes revealed). The sound *ja* means becoming

aroused from inertia to kinetics. *Na* means that which has not yet become clear. *Ja* is a power that pours out. *Na* is the disorganized stuff out of which organization has to come. Therefore, *jña* is a process of continuously transforming the unknown into the known. Thus what we call intelligence is only a pointer to *prajña*. Where *prajña* operates it needs many accompanying factors. As a result of the composite structure of hidden luminosity in causal consciousness (*susupti*), the sonal sounds transform into appropriate tones. Then an idea becomes a notion and a notion becomes a sound. With this kind of transformation of the placement of air molecules carried by a gush of air, a sound gets a meaning which is already residing in the self of the person who articulates.

When we say sound and meaning, it looks very simple. But to make meaning, the incipient memories of a person have to wake up from dormant latency. Until meaning comes to the speaker and listener, one does not know what particular sound can produce that meaning. Hence Patañjali says *śabdārtha pratyayānām*. *Pratyayānām* is a grammatical function of relating one form of energy with another form of energy. This is a continuous process. He uses the term *itaretara*: "of each with the other," to describe their contiguity. There is a superimposition of the energy that moves the molecular aspects of air monads and the revelation of meaning coming from previous memories. As a result, sound and meaning become a confection, *samkara*. The central focus of attention of the listener becomes attuned to this confection. Then alone does the idea of 'this' or 'that' become central to the act of knowing. In Sanskrit 'that' is *tat*, the indication or presence of evolving meaning. Then the listener becomes emotive, absorbed in the interest hidden in it. Without the interest in the manifestation of a meaning, our intellect will not recognize distinctions between sounds (*pravibhāga*).

At that stage, the purpose for which a person speaks employs certain psychological techniques by which the spoken word can be directed to a value within the frame



of reference of a goal-oriented need to articulate. This is called *samyaam*. A crude example can be seen in the making of a pot. The kneaded clay placed on the potter's wheel is a mass without inside or outside. The previous memories of the form of the desired pot rise in the potter to guide his or her finger movements to induce shape in the rotating mass of clay. Similarly, the conjunctions of vowels and consonants are to be regulated so that a meaningful word can be articulated with appropriate clarity and emphasis. The extension of the sound is to be fully controlled by the intention. This science of placing before another person what is psychologically conceived by a creator is technically called entering into *paśyanti*. Thus, from the beyond (*para*) to a possible vision psychically achieved (*paśyanti*), is only a preparation to articulate sound. That has to happen in secret, in darkness. We cannot exactly see how the sound of a consonant is being licked into shape by the vowel without the speaker's knowledge. Hence it is called the middle factor (*madhyama*). The resultant factor is called *vaikhari*.

The subtle intention of the speaker achieves a gross image, first sonally, then it can be articulated or represented in written or sculpted form with lines and strokes. Until the manifestation happens consciously in *vaikhari*, neither the speaker nor the listener are able to properly visualize the intention of the speaker. This very

subtle manifestation gives the spoken word efficacy to make the listener's mind fully empathetic with the speaker's purpose for speaking. This is *samyaam*. This is a *vibhuti* or power to grasp the hidden meanings of sounds. Natural and supra-natural forces are implied in it. Hence it is considered a yogic attainment.

In the science of Yoga, the very first reference is to the energy that comes from the deepest core of an individuated person like a stream that flows from the summit of a mountain to the ocean. As the water goes from the mountain top to the oceanic level, the contour of the land over which it flows will have different heights and resistances of all kinds. In the case of the stream of consciousness, what corresponds to the water reaching the ocean is the flow terminating in a total state of absorption.

The first impulse to flow is *kṣipta*. From the first throb in a new formulating organism, the flow is steady and continuous, if there is no resistance. It is this flow which becomes animated by the natural purposiveness which comes from the *dharma* of the individuated consciousness. Slowly, the conscious interest of a person starts acting when the ego is formed. Thereafter, the flow of consciousness has the special characteristics of maintaining its interest. The interest aspect is mainly emotive as well as volitional. If there is any environmental peculiarity to accent

the flow or change its course, *kṣipta* becomes *vikṣipta*.

In the psychic flow three kinds of dynamics can be noticed. The first is the cognitive power of knowledge which is called *jñāna śakti*. The second is the stimulation of the organs of action by the unconscious and conscious knowledge. The impulse to act is *karma śakti*. The third is channeling the outgoing action propositions for the self-preservation and motive actualization of the person. This is called the will-to-be or *iccha śakti*. In order to apply *samyam* to oneself at the cognitive level, action level and volitional level, one should be in constant touch with the deepest core of oneself and not deviate from one's own integrated personality requirement (*svadharma*). One should be very vigilant to discern what one knows, what one is doing and what one's strong motivations are.

In most of our conditioned reflexes, which mainly come under the sway of automation, an undisciplined person becomes vulnerable to being carried away by the knowledge aspect, the prompting of action and habitual volition. The yogi should restrain himself or herself so that even the most unconscious prompting is brought to a yogic awareness which comes from one's holistic intelligence (*prajña*). This action is the beginning of *samyam*.

When an outflowing energy is restrained, it is called *yama*. The first level of restraint, i.e., the highlighting of the compulsion of a conditioned reflex, trains a synapse to offer resistance to the automatic flow of energy. When it is established as a habitual restraint, *yama* becomes *samyamaḥ*. A yogi learns this quite early in the path of discipline in the initial practice of *ahimsa*, non-hurting. To be fully conscious and in full control of life's situations one has to use all of one's resources to be cognizant of any flow of consciousness in one's system and maintain maximum self-control to be in ethical empathy. Then no distraction can come out of cognition and no incipient memory will prompt one to move into any action which is mechanical

or compulsive. In the volitional aspect, one has to be compassionate to oneself. With this highly cultivated compassion to oneself and to the world, one promotes oneself to the full status of a yogi. In historical literature, we find this compassion in the personal life style of teachers like Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ and the Rishi Valmiki. This is the sense in which we should understand *samyam*.

Three intentions are usually held out before a yogi who wants to cultivate *samyam*. They are: *maitri*, companionship; *mudita*, inner cheerfulness; and *karuṇā*, compassion - lending one's spiritual acumen to help another to be properly brought under the influence of one's own spiritual vision. In Buddhism, they are given as *maitri*, *prajña* and *karuṇā*. Here the sound is not confined to one human speaking to another. It can be the gurgling of a river, the murmuring coming from the motion of leaves on a tree, birds singing, a wood cutter cutting wood. It can be any composite sound, because what the yogi wants to achieve is not partial knowledge of this world but total consciousness (*pūrnaprajñātvam*). Hence a yogi who has achieved that supreme attainment is looked upon as an omniscient, *sarvajña*.

(Conclusion of this series.)





The snake-rope illusion of Vedanta: the rope changes into a snake again. The rope has lunar and solar aspects.

Milarepa holds the rope of the lineage which is what we have inherited. The rope of routine transforms into the snake of illusion, and back again.

Charles Erickson

Why Do I Search For You?

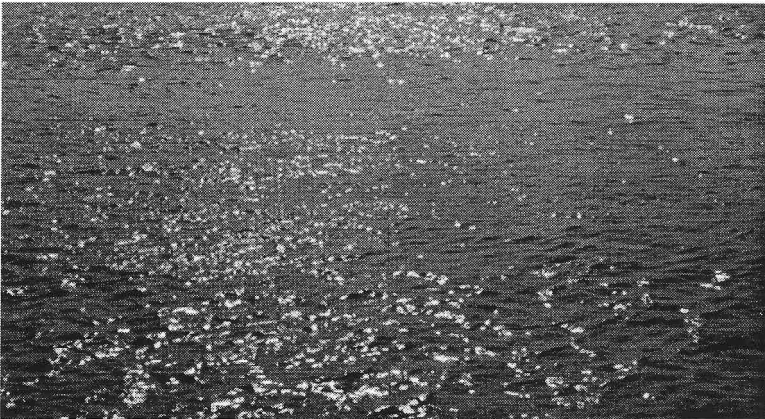
*If all the forms we have seen are You,
why do I search for
a particular form to adore?*

*If the sun is revealing all,
why do I search for
a ray of light to see the sun?*

*If all the words are about You,
why do I search for
a word to adore You?*

*If You are all and even I am You,
why do I search for
a hand for my protection?*

*You are all-filling,
a form of consciousness
self-value (atmanandam)
the golden light of knowledge.*





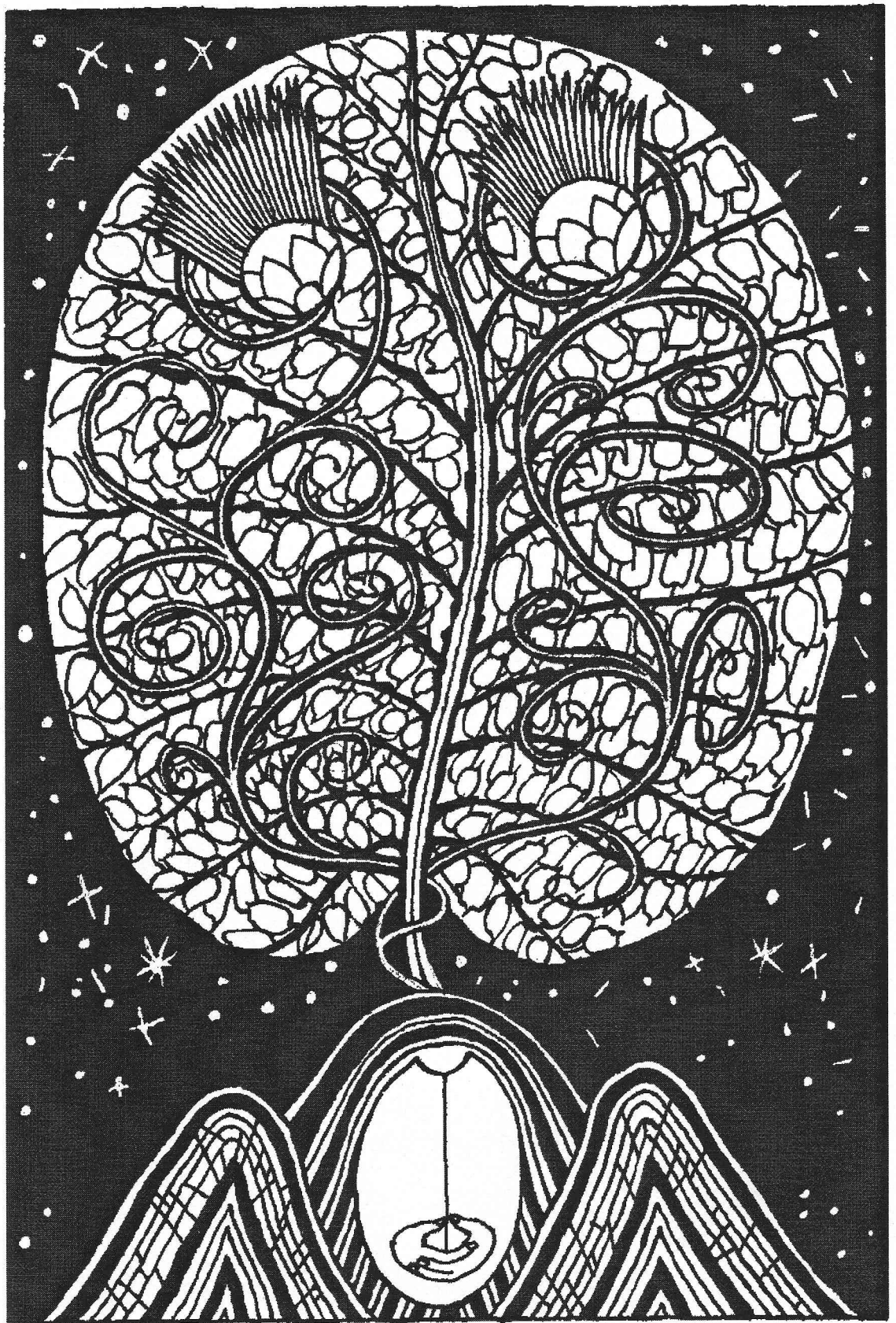
When

*When I peer into the depths
to know You,
I find myself,
only a drop of You, the bottomless ocean.*

*When I gaze intently above,
to know You,
I find myself,
only a vibration of You, the akasa.*

*When I sit in deep contemplation
to know You,
I find myself,
only a silent bit of You,
the fountain source of silence.*

Tyagisvara



Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction

by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 9

*irupuṛavum varumāṛavasthayepṇū-
ttoru koṭivannu paṭarnnuyarnnumēvum
taruvinaṭikku tapassuceytu vālum-
naranu varā narakam ninacciṭṭenam*

Growing on both sides, in a blossoming state,
is the one vine which has come,
spread out and risen to the top of a tree;
remember that hell does not come
to the man dwelling in contemplation beneath it.

In the last verse there was also a reference to a tree. It was bearing five kinds of fruit. Five birds, representing the five senses, were flying around and enjoying those fruits. In a note of drastic action, a hunter belonging to the same context as the tree shoots at the five birds and brings them down. This implies an inversion to verticalize the horizontal tendencies of the "birds."

Now we have the same picture revised in a more peaceful, contemplative manner. The whole life situation is once again symbolized by a tree. In a sense the tree represents the historical duration of consciousness. We are already familiar with the four alternating states of consciousness: the wakeful, dream, deep sleep and the transcendental. The wakeful and the dream states are conceived horizontally, while we think of a vertical core rising from the deep sleep state to the transcendental. We do not know anything in deep sleep, and the transcendent state passes unnoticed. What remains is the alternation between the wakeful and dream states.

Thus, the space of our everyday living is filled either with wakeful experience or dream experience. Our wakeful experience cannot make any sense if the external items are not meaningfully related to an

inner consideration of their worth or value. A glorious sunrise comes. You turn to it and say "how wonderful!" Outside is the sun, inside is the wonder. The love for the beautiful is embedded in us. Even when no beautiful thing is being presented, the capacity to appreciate beauty is still within us. Everything which happens in wakeful life has a corresponding urge, interest or value vision lying buried in the deep unconscious. This is the causal factor which produces the effect of what is experienced, called *suṣupti*, or *suptam*.

Suptam is the state of the unconscious, but it is not by any means empty. Like a seed pod, it has many seeds embedded in it. These are called *vāsanā*. Some of them are cyclic in their manifestations. For instance, there are certain kinds of lilies which flower only in a particular season. You can bury the bulb in your garden anytime, but it will lie there dormant until its proper season comes. Then it will flower forth. There are other kinds which are not seasonal, they just go on blooming. Whether seasonal or unseasonal, the seeds of all our experiences lie buried in the unconscious.

Now let's talk about the dream state. Where do all these images in our dreams come from? There is a myth-creating tendency within us, which is capable of finding appropriate symbols to make a language like that of a fairy tale. This is lying buried in the same place where the urges of the wakeful state also are. It is a common repository from which wakeful life and dream life are both manifesting. The wakeful and the dream are both causally related to the deep unconscious, where the seeds of all these concepts are lying in wait, seeking to be promoted in one way or another, either as an actual experience or, if an actual experience cannot be promoted, then as a dream experience. Freud and others think that a dream is the expression of an incomplete wakeful experience, a wish-fulfillment, or a prophecy or premonition of the mind.

There is a secret in all this. Where is it all happening? It all happens in the individuation of consciousness. The individuated consciousness comes from the non-individuated consciousness. Non-individuated consciousness has no time; time is a factor which only comes as a part of the structured functioning of the mind itself. The human mind can act only through a series of interrogations, *manas*. After *manas* comes *cittam*, association with memory; *buddhi*, judgment; and *ahamkāra*, affectivity based on the value-assessment. This completes one unit of mental activity. Almost immediately the next unit comes. We cannot attend to two units at a time, we can only go from one to another. In this way the mind becomes sequential, and the idea of duration is created. Time is essentially a way of looking at the movement of the conscious mind. We have made devices like clocks and sundials, but these are not time. Time is a kind of memory knot or an aid solely fabricated out of the human mind.

The mind also needs to be able to place things in some kind of setting. If there are three objects before us, they should be placed in a certain way so they can all be separate from each other. Composition is another of the mind's functions. It is like an artist arranging items when he wants to paint a still life. He puts the vase and flowers in a certain way, with some other object on the table placed just so. If he puts them all in one place it would be difficult to distinguish the outlines of one from another. So he has to spatially separate everything. If the same artist wants to paint a forest or a panoramic view, he still has choices to make, al-

though the scene has been composed by nature already. He may not choose to paint many small shrubs and trees. He might isolate one big tree, then two other trees, a stump, the lake, and a part of the hill. Out of the many elements he selects some and omits others; then he structures them to suit his sensibility. Similarly, the mind structures its own spatial and temporal compositions.

This goes on within a grouping of several minds as well. The world is already a complex phenomenon, structured by the compositions of many minds. This is the world tree to which we have come, and in which we can get lost. The Guru begins the verse by saying *iru puṛavum varum āṛ avastha*, which means the six states. These are: the state of being, even before birth, birth, growth, transformation or evolution, degeneration and final extinction. Everything comes out of the state of eternal being. Then it is born into the process of becoming as an individual; it grows, changes, gets old; and finally it dies, disappears, vanishes.

This is true of everything that transpires within the waking state. It is also true of our dreams. Before a dream comes, the elements of it and the reason for it are lying buried as a necessity in the seed state. When the seed is expressed as a dream, it sprouts into fantastic forms full of meaning. After a time, as another seed presses forward for expression, interest in the previous one wanes, and it disappears.

In our wakeful life, a particular necessity arises out of many potential necessities. It assumes a certain reality, a certain form. At that point the necessity becomes very categorical, a hard and fast imperative that can move us to action. Finally it is either fulfilled or its importance is slowly lost, and the interest dissipates and is gone.

In this verse, a certain creeper is branching into two and flowering forth as these wakeful and dream experiences. The deep sleep state lies hidden within us as a ground of tremendous potentials. It is an unconscious mass. We do not know what good things and bad things lie buried in it, like Pandora's box. When once life begins to function, this creeper comes up out of its seed. A new baby, like Deva here, says "my time has not yet come. Leave most of it buried. Every day I will express just a little bit." She programs little smiles for two minutes. Then one scream, then back to a smile. Then she has fifteen minutes of loud screams with a variety of expressions, and then she goes back to sleep. But next year, she won't sit in anybody's lap. She will push everyone away and be busy exploring everything.

In the process of the realization of the Self we are always trying to attain the state of the transcendental. The transcendental, or the witness, is here separated from the tree. The Guru symbolizes it by a contemplative who sits under the tree of manifestation. About him many things are happening. He sees that all these things are going on, but he just sits there, seemingly unconcerned. However, he is not sitting there as a careless hobo, because the creepers are always growing in all directions and covering everything. If you are not alert as you sit there, if you don't sit in the proper way, you will also be caught and covered. And yet, you do not run away from it. You sit right under it, doing *tapas*.

What is *tapas*? In the *Bhagavad Gītā* certain examples of *tapas* are given. For instance, I have these hands with which I can wreak a lot of destruction. I can also use them to create beneficial things or to help others. When my actions are withdrawn from anything negative, and my



potentials are allowed to operate for the well-being of the world and to contribute to the perennial virtues of life, it is a *tapas* or ascetic discipline of the body.

I can use my tongue to fabricate many lies, manipulate the minds of people, create difficult situations, cause agony for others, make two people quarrel or make whole groups of people fight. I can become a pedagogue of the streets, cause mass movements and revolutions and bloodshed,

even create a situation where one country goes to war with another, or a world war.

The great war of the *Mahābhārata*, in which so many people were killed, began with one man, Yudhiṣṭhira. He was challenged to gamble. With a rightful stand, he could have said "no, I don't want to gamble." But he said "OK." From that simple beginning the whole war started. A woman was ill-treated during the gambling. She said to her husband Arjuna, "I will not tie the knot of my hair until you tie it with the blood of the man who mistreated me." So he promised her, and for the fulfillment of that vow the great war was fought.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is similar. Sitā asked Rāma to go and get a golden deer. Lakṣmana was protecting her, but she abused him and sent him away. Then Rāvaṇa came and kidnapped her, and the whole epic began.

These are instances where the words used caused great misunderstandings and tragedies. On the other hand, we have Sophia or Sarasvatī, the goddesses of wisdom, and Vāgdevī, the goddess of the word. With them, the word is rarely used. When it is used, it is to console or inspire someone, to express a noble idea, to bring about something beautiful. It is used for a friendly assurance or to give courage. When we use our words only for these purposes, otherwise keeping silent, we are said to be doing *tapas* with our tongue or our word.

When the mind is withdrawn from all the horizontalities of life and is geared to a perception of higher truth and the manifestation of its beauty, we are doing *tapas* with our mind. The contemplative who is sitting quietly under the tree is not just wasting his time. Although he looks somewhat unconcerned, he is actively engaged, concerned with everyone and everything. He is full of love and full of consideration. If he wants to be able to save anyone, he has to keep from being entangled in the creeper, to keep himself detached.

If three people are drowning and a fourth takes pity on them and swims into the middle of the three, they will catch hold of him from three sides and all four will drown. So he needs to do it intelligently, first taking one to safety and then going back for the next. Only chance determines whether he can save all three. At least he won't be killed along with them.

Your compassion should be such that you are not caught in a snare in the name of compassion. You have to detach yourself. Martin Luther King spoke of having a cause for which you are willing to die. We want to change that to a cause for which you are willing to live. Dying is not a great virtue. Living is the great virtue, and not only living now, but living forever.

Have you ever noticed that when you dream you can be conscious of the dream being a dream, but that awareness does not prevent the dream from manifesting. You cannot get out of the dream until it is over, even when you know you are dreaming. A dream may be very fascinating, though very eerie; anything can happen in it. But it does not overwhelm us, because we know it will vanish as soon as we wake up. Our wakeful life can be very similar. Things may look so important, but there is another consciousness which says, "The world is like that, and it is just a passing phenomenon. We really cannot do anything about it."

This aspect of consciousness is symbolized by the person who is sitting under the tree. We are the tree. There is no other. In this tree, time and space are getting filled by our wakeful experience on one side and our dreams on the other; they are both originating from our own deep unconscious. While this is going on, the witnessing aspect of consciousness is removed from it and made to sit contemplatively under the same tree, watching all the many events of life taking place.

This is the imagery of the verse. Look for the creeper within you which is blossoming as your wakeful life hour after hour. Watch for your fantasizing aspect that is blooming in another direction. Also examine the root, the seeds of all this in your transactions in the wakeful and in your fantasies. Decide how much total participation you should have in these two kinds of functioning. If you involve yourself too much, it will pinch you. That pinching is here called *narakam*, hell.

Now turn inward and watch the silent depth of the unconscious. See how from that depth, into which we cannot penetrate, ideas spring up, concepts come as mental pictures. However much we try, we cannot go beyond a certain limit of consciousness to fathom the depth from which these thoughts and images come. Now add to that unconscious depth the many autonomic functions going on in the body, of which we do not know anything, either. By studying textbooks we know the inferential guesses made by people who call themselves scientists about what they think the functions of the kidneys, pancreas and many such vital organs are. But we are nonetheless ignorant about the reality of those functions.

We are, though, conscious of our breathing. Although respiration goes on most of the time without our being aware of it, we can do it consciously. Yet we cannot consciously hold our breath for a long time. Something beyond our consciousness compels us to give up that deliberation. A struggle of life and death comes, and we are forced to live.

When we add the unconscious in us to the unknown in us, the sum total remains at the causal source. We have as its counterpart our conscious experiences, and also those aspects of our behavior pattern which we do deliberately. There are aspects of our psychophysical organism that are known, and there are conscious reasoning, sensation and volition. Putting together the conscious and the known with the unconscious and unknown, we get a total picture of our individuation.

Now let us go a step further. If we retrospectively look into our lives we can recognize certain emotional patterns, beliefs, ways of looking at life and the like, which are similar or identical with those of our parents. We can think of many skills and talents we have learned from them. Here we have a conscious picture of the continuation of the life of our parents in us.

Next, if we call to mind whatever we know of our parents, such as their physical forms, voices, special mannerisms, and skills. Certain of their behavioral patterns, their beliefs and prejudices, make no sense to us. We very much want them to behave differently, think differently, or have different beliefs, but they are holding onto patterns we do not appreciate. We really do not know anything of their motivations, what is going on within them. We also do not know the genetic similarity they have with their grandparents and great-grandparents.

When all this is added up, we will find an extension or extrapolation of the unconscious causal factors in us. We can see the depth of that unconscious timewise, ranging back through millennia of the evolution of life. This gives us some idea of the depth of the unconscious, which we experience here and now within ourselves.

Next, we can call to mind a picture of the world. What is it that we call world? The world map may come to mind. Some of the recent satellite photographs of Earth may also come up. We may review pictures we have seen in astrophysics texts, ranging from formations of nebulae to the various constellations of the Milky Way, our own solar system and the planetary systems. Then we think of the Earth itself, with its oceans, mountains, political regions and national boundaries, and the historical rise and fall of cultures, dynasties and civilizations. Our present moment is structured out of all this. But apart from the concepts, do we know anything about the reality behind these images and pictures? No, we don't.

So, first we pictured the depth of our unconscious, and now we have a peripheral vision of the horizontal breadth that is historical, geographical, mythological and legendary. It is the world we appreciate poetically and aesthetically, the world we love and abhor, the world where we feel roots, and the world we want to demolish, change, reform.

Now place yourself as an individual in that world, which has a peripheral dimension of many conceptual images and also a great depth of the unconscious extending from you to the very origin of the universe. What you are now doing is an act of witnessing. Experience this aspect of consciousness calmly and uniformly, with no special interest. Just watch it and see it. Then compare this neutral state of mind to your consciousness when you very badly want to do something. See how enthusiastic you become, how much energy you put into it, how your whole system becomes animated with that enthusiasm. This is to be distinguished from the witnessing consciousness. Whenever we are self-pitying, or when we are enjoying all the changing, passing states of mind, this one consciousness is always looking on. It is never affected. Some other aspect in us gets affected and afflicted, and the witness sees how we are afflicted.

All this is pictured as the allegory of a tree covered with a blossoming creeper which has two vines. One vine represents the perceptual order of our conscious, wakeful transactions; the other the conceptual

order, including all our subjective fantasizing and imagination. The depth we have referred to is understood as the seed of the creeper. Its flowers are our individual experiences which have become permanent expressions, as well as what we have taken on from the recorded experience of mankind in the form of history, art, literature, and all the manifestations of human workmanship like the formations of cities and monuments.

The person sitting under the tree symbolizes that tiny bit of consciousness that witnesses the unfolding of life all about itself. Compared to all that, the witnessing consciousness is like a shimmering star lost in an oceanic universe of conglomerations. There is every chance of losing track of it at any time. Although it looks insignificant, it is the center on which all activities of our life find their ground and their motivation.

Long ago in bucolic India it was not uncommon for people to sit under a tree in contemplation. Nowadays this can only happen in ideal situations. When we try to locate that very peaceful witnessing center, we become aware of a terrible noise and a kind of restlessness in the atmosphere. When this kind of demand is made on the senses and the mind, it can evoke in us many strange emotions tied up with our latent potentials and incipient memories. Our curiosity is aroused and we become distracted. It is a real struggle to keep our balance and remain in absolute resonance with the passivity of the center. We sit for five minutes waiting for the noise to quit or go away. Then we become impatient. We get up to go investigate, and become entangled in whatever is going on. But for one who wants to go deeper into the reality of the Self, this is to be taken as a real challenge. How much forbearance can you cultivate, and how are you to remain unruffled in spite of the situation?

Our vulnerability to distraction produced the element of exasperation we noticed in verse 7. There the Guru pointed out that the many demands of nature, such as sleeping, waking, eating, mating and so on, come to us continuously. This flux leaves us little chance to know the changeless reality in which all the changes are mirrored. Yet while the mirror may be filled with the many turbulences of the external world, it remains unaffected. Similarly the pure witnessing consciousness, while seemingly being modified, really does not undergo any modification. In verse 8, the Guru recommended a rather drastic attitude to refocus our contemplation, which can bring it to a position of great stability as exemplified in the present verse by the contemplative beneath the tree.

The challenge here is both real and unreal. It is unreal in the sense that it comes and goes, but it is real in the sense that it can cause genetic potentialities to perpetuate whatever misery and joy we experience as individuated beings. The psychophysical organism used as a tool by the Unknown definitely undergoes substantial change, and it persists even beyond the individual's lifetime. Biologically it is proliferated and continued from generation to generation. This is why the Guru said, "Oh, who is there to know this unmodified state of the Self?"

Then he brought us to an enigmatic situation where we have two definite alternatives. One is to go beyond all these transient changes, to identify with the changeless and remain as that knowledge, *arivum*. As verse 7 pointed out, this is not at all easy for most of us. And if it is not possible to do it, we should then turn to those who have succeeded, establish bipolarity with them, and through that bipolarity also attain to

the changeless state.

The instruction of verse 8 is to adopt a drastic attitude. You should not allow your mind to be like a wandering dog in the street, you should become its master. This little awareness which is just witnessing has in it at least the potential for omniscience. In most of us, the omniscience of the witnessing element is a bit like the United Nations. The U.N. sees what is going on all over the world, but it has no power to stop a nation from indulging in any stupidity. It can only advise, "Don't do it." We also have a Unified Notion in the omniscient witness in us which sees everything. If we cultivate it, if we give it a volitional power, it would be like handing over all the world's militaries to the United Nations and giving it a mandate over the so-called sovereignty of the individual states. It would then be able to prevent atrocities.

This could actually happen, but at present it does not. There are certain individuals, though, who do practice it. They combine their witnessing consciousness with their volitional consciousness. This is extremely effective as long as the witnessing consciousness is established on a normative notion of good for all, highest beauty, supreme truth and unlimited commitment. That enables one to see the painted masks of each individual occasion which disguise the essential true nature behind it. Freud and people like him did great service to humanity by pointing out that both situations and the people who are confronted by situations wear masks, and we should tear them away. Very few people, however, know the nature of the reality hidden behind them.

We are here in a search to see what is behind the masks. What is immediately behind them are the very many urges which we call incipient memories, or *vāsanās*. For these forces defense is absolutely necessary, and the mask itself is the defense mechanism. Unfortunately, while these masks blindfold the individual from seeing his own reality. In the present verse, Narayana Guru implores us to come out of this deluding situation, to sit outside it and then watch the game. Once your mask is gone, it is easy for the witnessing consciousness to establish itself on the ground of an absolutist norm, such as universal truth, universal goodness, universal beauty.

That is why he said the person sitting under that terrible tree can do *tapas*. The need to be austere was already suggested in verse 8; here that austerity is made a permanent feature and not just a single action. The act of bringing down the birds progresses to a habitual performance of *tapas*. Many methods have been taught by the great Masters to achieve detachment from the ensnaring creepers of the world tree, and to cultivate an absolutist vision which can turn individuation into a tool to serve the purpose of higher truth, goodness and beauty.

Buddha said, have the right mode of seeing, of thinking, of speaking, of behaving, of feeling. How does one find the right mode? By taking refuge in the Buddha, by taking refuge in the four-fold truth, by cultivating the five virtues. In the morning, a Buddhist monk gets up and repeats three times that he is taking refuge in the Buddha, the *dharma* and the *sangha*. Then he takes five pledges:

*I take the vow that with this hand of mine I will never hurt any sentient being.
I take the pledge that I will not grab anything which does not come to me as benevolently apportioned by nature.*

*I take the pledge that I will not waste even a second in worthless talk or gossip.
I will not allow desires to take me out of the path of righteousness. I will always
stick by the right path.
I will not allow any kind of narcotics or addictive substances to pollute the com-
prehension of my mind.*

Then he will study the scriptures in company with his fellow monks, probing deeply into the life and teachings of the Buddha. This is one way to detach oneself from the entanglements of the world and become liberated. There are many others.

Another way is to walk into the open arms of Jesus Christ and feel the warmth of his love in your heart. He says, listen to the Word of my father, listen to the Word which comforts and saves. He enunciates the nature of the kingdom of God and how one qualifies to enter it. Then he gives the assurance that he will show us the path and the goal, the light and the bread, death and resurrection.

Or you can take the Islamic way, which is so beautifully given to us by the Sufis, of making Allah your beloved. Lao Tzu exemplifies the witnessing Self which remains at the neutral zero. A most wonderful way is to examine the paradoxes of life and try to understand their inner cohesion.

Still another way is as the rishis have taught. From ancient times down to, say, Ramana Maharshi in our time, they have all taken the question, "Who am I?" and diligently followed the track of where it led them. That path took them away from all the superficial disturbances to the pure light, which we have just now placed under the tree as the contemplative witness. This silent one is by no means a derelict. In terms of value, he is working harder and more effectively than most very busy people. He is exercising and experiencing great purification.

There are really only three states, the waking, the dreaming and the unconscious. Witnessing is not in itself a state, or *avastha*. It is the one which is seeing all the states. It is more like a catalyst in bringing dramatic changes to them. From now on we will be concentrating our attention on knowing more of this witnessing Self, which can detach itself from the three aspects of consciousness and remain pure.

(Continued in next issue.)



Autobiography of An Absolutist

Nataraja Guru

CHAPTER SIX Sex and Ideals

Infancy's silken sail and the vicissitudes of teen and adolescent years are as nothing compared to the stuff implicit in the rough sailing of shy youth passing into full manhood. The personality has to develop through these stages with the sex urge and idealism on either side, like two rocks, both of which when exaggerated could wreck life and spoil the future irretrievably. My early years at the Presidency College, Madras, were punctuated by an attack of dysentery which had made my health delicate added to a bad influenza too that took a high toll of life all over the post-war world. I was still adjusting myself to the heat of Madras, consoling myself again and again in my effort to overcome the sense of degradation that the sexual urges asserting themselves more and more strongly in my psyche-physical make up, called for. I administered different dosages of all available kinds of religious or spiritual palliatives that came my way. This particular period was filled with many silent inner upheavals which I alone knew and had to endure.

Sex and Ideals

Perhaps all men have a similar history to tell or perhaps some are born so pure from the beginning that such trials do not ruffle their sails at all. In my own case the stresses were more innate than overt. Nor did any problems present themselves that others had to solve for me. The dreamy introversion of my type of personality stood me protection here and all went well on the surface.

I shall not here fall into the error of

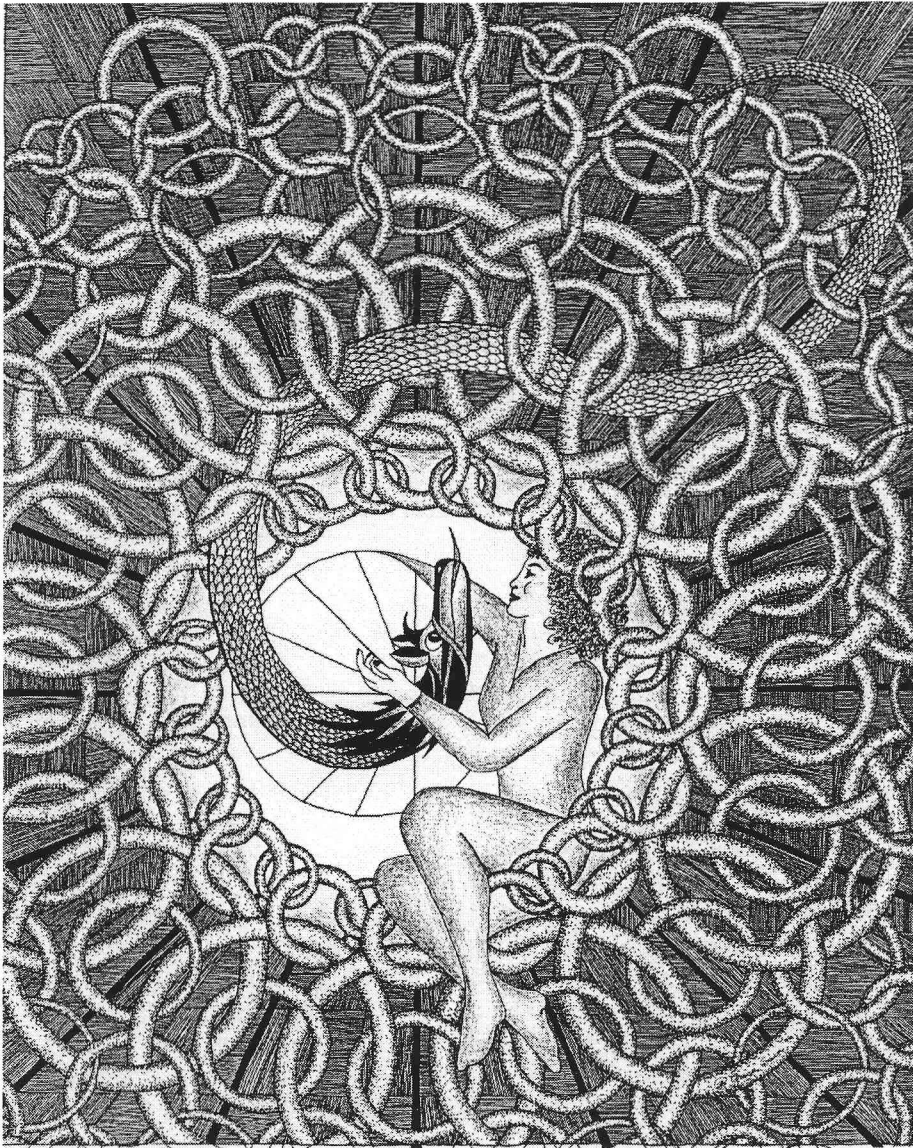
Rousseau who in his *Confessions* revealed so much of the inner workings of adolescent impulses so as to make respectable men blush and pity him as a lost soul. He himself in the beginning of his confessions challenged any such representation of the conscience of the whole human race to come to the presence of God's throne and if possible to dare to Laugh at his own weakness. God could know the weakness of the flesh of all mortals. The Christian world especially, which made capital out of the guilt of concupiscence to gain converts in its early days made sex look completely unnatural. At present there is a revolt of youth who revel in the nausea that free sex life must involve. Both excesses, whether in the name of prudery or sin, the profane or the sacred, could present a distorted picture of normal human nature. Austere people in India too talk of celibacy or *brahmacharya* in highly distorted terms and persons like Mahatma Gandhi in their autobiographies make out of normal human urges something that has to be confessed with a revenge as it were, to do violence to human nature for which some error is at least normal. Sin should be taken as an exception that proves the normal goodness, dignity and beauty of human nature as created by its Maker.

In spite of these considerations, all cannot be said to have been smooth sailing with me. Sometime breezes blew strong enough to perturb my tranquillity. I made characteristic errors of omission as well as those of commission which must have made some that knew me intimately at that time smile mildly at least at my expense. I could have been more intelligent and pure but whether all those who dared to blush at my foibles had themselves any

inner right do so is another matter altogether. Like a frail bark tossed about by billows as by wavelets that lapped on its sides, I sailed the high seas of adolescence, past the sensitive shape of youth, to a manhood that still held out more serious trials for me.

Even at this mature age of sixty-seven the tidal ebbs and flows and groundswells still affect me; but the days of actual bad weather and equally inner disturbances seem now a thing of the past. Life itself seems to be bound up with this question and to cease to have any movement at

all might be identical with loss of all life itself. As death by itself cannot be a meritorious end the whole problem for man is to be able to look upon sin or concupiscent without distortion or exaggeration. It must be in this sense that Krishna in the *Gītā* tells Arjuna that He, as the Absolute, is him self the re-representative of *kāma* (normal life urge) which finds the third place among the four *puruṣārthas* (ends of human life) in Sanskrit lore, the others being *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth) and *mōksha* (release).



My Academic Record

Entering the presidency College in the year 1915. I continued to live in Madras till the year 1922 when I emerged out of my college career with a first rank Master's degree in Zoology and Geology. In the early intermediate classes I was by no means a brilliant student but, as I got more and more adjusted to the climatic and inner stresses and strains, I began to shine more although still over-laden with a heavy weight of lethargy. I graduated in the year 1919 with English Literature which was compulsory for the B.A. (Pass) Course and two other science subjects of which Zoology was my main and Geology the secondary.

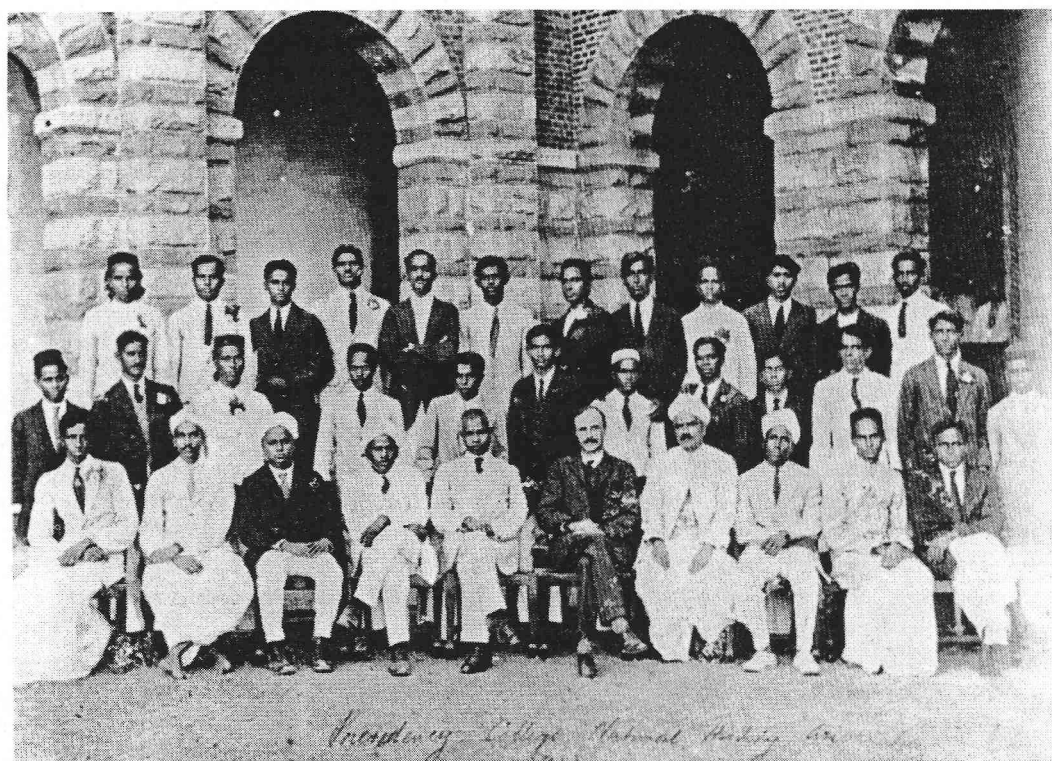
The former subject involved dissections and sometimes vivisection and although I tried to back out of the choice given to me I was obliged to stick to this subject against my conscience. Many rabbits, not to speak of frogs and cockroaches and one member at least of every important genus or species came on the dissection table. I remember putting a cobra in a jar with chloroform and cannot forget how it knocked at the glass lid before it was dead. This sin is still lying on my conscience and I do not think I can ever be consoled about it. Once later I had put a pigeon in a cage and forgot that during the holidays that intervened there was no one in the laboratory who could feed it. When I came back it was still alive and I dissected it and found that it had nothing in its gizzard. Even today I am cursing myself for this error of omission and wonder if I deserve to be forgiven at all. I plead guilty before the All Merciful and supplicate before him for full punishment I might still deserve if I have not expiated my sin already by any suffering inner or outer so far. Absolute self-surrender, I know too, on the other hand, can absolve you of all sin however grave, as the *Gītā* allows and the *Bible* recognizes too. It is in such matters that the Absolute becomes the last and the only refuge although it is true the doctrine is not to be treated as an excuse for error of the same kind to be indulged in, in the future. If the surrender is

absolute such a contingency would be out of the question anyhow.

After attending the University Convocation in 1919 with cap and gown on passing the Bachelor of Arts degree, I continued in the same Presidency College for one more year preparing for the Master's degree (through the Honors course then open to post-graduates under transitory regulations). Meanwhile my father had retired from Mysore Government service and had become a pensioner under the Mysore Government. The costly higher education of four of his children began to be talked of as a burden to the family. Sensitive as I was to such matters I thought of applying for the place of demonstratorship in Zoology at the Presidency College itself. It brought me a small remuneration of only between sixty or seventy rupees a month. The honors course was completed in one year but owing to some mistakes in identifying fossils in the practical examination I obtained only pass marks and was given a Bachelor's degree a second time at the end of 1920. I continued next year in the Teachers College, Saidapet, on the outskirts of the city and sat for the M.A. and the L.T. Examinations by special exemption to do so and in the year 1922 passed both examinations together with a rank in the M.A. and just a scrape through in the L.T. to the preparation for which I had not given any special attention, being more concerned in doing well for the Master's examination. If I add here that in the year 1932, ten years later, I got a Doctorate at the University of Paris (after nearly a decade of life as a wanderer) with a *tres honorable* mention I would have roughly said all I have to say in respect of my academic record.

Activities Outside College Life

The period of my study in the higher grades of university life coincided with developments and activities which were to become significant stepping stones to my later successes. Elements of altruism, religious sentiment, with some patriotism and dream of an India free from poverty and ignorance and a strong resentment of



Nataraja Guru When Demonstrator, Department of Zoology,
 Presidency College, Madras - 1920 (Second row, first from left.)

the foreign yoke, some of the vagaries of which rule, were blended in my imagination and upset my life then rather more than they legitimately ought to have done, as I view my life in calmer retrospection now. Youth is more alive to values of group life while the mellowness that age brings turns the spirit on itself and interests shift their ground from the outer to the inner zone of the person. As it actually happened in my case, before any actual religious feeling was ever felt within me even vaguely, an extreme compassion or pity for the poor was the first keynote to my inner life. This was felt even from the days at Trinity College, Kandy, Ceylon, as early as 1910, where I was elected a member of the Committee for Social Service under the guidance of one Mr. Campbell, who taught chemistry there. Later in the School Final classes of Bangalore the same interest, once awakened at Trinity College, continued to influence my thoughts and activities.

I remember how in the environs of the

beautiful town of Kandy in Ceylon I used to wander with other school-mates into the villages distributing epsom salts and quinine. Altruism as an instinct got a chance to be awakened in me at that time and took a stronger hold on me as the years went by. To help the poor out of sheer kindness of fellow feeling was natural and was perhaps the first step to other spiritual factors or values that entered my life one after another. While later as I remember, in Bangalore, there being no Social Service Union in the School, I was obliged to organize such service on my own initiative. I accordingly bought a box with a slot for coins and carried it at school with an appeal for small contributions from fellow students and teachers, one of which latter, I clearly remember, put a coin in it with an understanding twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face such as made me think that I was, if not a too naive, at least an out-of-the-way fellow.

My ignorance of the fact that one can-

not afford to be too good in this harsh world where mere goodness had little chance to withstand the blighting winds that usually prevailed was all my protection for my innocence at that time. When the box was fairly full, I arranged with the mother of one of my friends in school to cook enough rice and vegetables for about two hundred poor people. Disorganized or promiscuous charity was distasteful to me even then and for this reason I devised a method of issuing tickets for a free meal and went off all over the town issuing them to beggars, riding on a bicycle to spot them and give them directions to reach the place of feeding. These happenings refer to events separated by a decade each between Kandy and Bangalore. About a decade later still my own sense of doing good took the shape of running a night school and a hostel for poor students in Chintadripet, Madras, when I was still an honors student in Presidency College.

Altruism in Principle and Practice

Doing good to others is both a natural

sentiment and an article of faith. Religion has a different origin. It is the wonder of the visible world which is its starting point and the God or its equivalent in any religious formation occupies the center of its cosmology and then becomes revalued into higher and more subtle notions. Of these two sentiments that a young man might feel within himself, the pity for fellow men arises deep down psychologically rather than cosmologically. Theological religion is still another matter which enters the individual through group loyalties in the social context. It is true that all these aspects could meet in one Supreme Person when presented in revised and rearranged form, for the purposes of the faithful in different religious groups. The *Īśa Upaniṣad* has such a God and the *Śvetāśvatara* too presents a global and well rounded notion of the Absolute to meet the three requirements – cosmological, theological, and psychological. At present we are concerned with the sentiment of altruism which was the uppermost expression of spirituality for me at the time. Like the



para-kripa or extreme sense of pity that overwhelmed Arjuna in the battlefield as depicted in the *Gītā*, this sentiment asserts itself normally and naturally as the first overt expression of spirituality in the life of a normal person as a novice in spiritual adventures.

Altruism by itself however when treated apart from the good effects that might accrue to the individual reflexively, is not held in high regard in the context of the higher teaching of the *Upaniṣads*. There we read that *iṣṭa* and *pūrta*, two kinds of works of public benefaction, are attributed to people who are led by the blind and who are foolish and proud. On the other hand there are proverbs which record the popular conviction that doing good to others is meritorious. Vedantic prayers sometimes end with a prayer for the well-being of the whole of humanity. How are philanthropy and social service to be fitted into such a context correctly without violating the over-all normative considerations of that subject when scientifically understood? These were questions that had not yet asserted themselves with any definiteness within me during my post-graduate days at the University. Altruism has thus its own correct first principles, and applied aspects. When I graduated I was still innocent of its full and correct implication.

Life at the Victoria Hostel

India had hardly any public school in my time except perhaps those of a quasi-military character or those meant for the ruling classes of the time who could be the sons of Rajas or Maharajas or those of high officials or other important persons among whom were to be counted sometimes the large population of those called Anglo-Indian. They used once to be called Eurasians and the name and such a community still persists unabsorbed into the general population of India even to this day. The British rulers were not specially interested, at that time at least, in giving to Indians anything more than a clerk or a lower-officer-making education, although some could compete for the Indian Civil

Service which was once a complete preserve of the Britisher. Social life as between the students of a University was mostly unknown in India.

In such a context life at the Victoria Hostel, where students of various professional and arts colleges of the City of Madras had a common home where they got together each day and got to know each other in spite of the strict social stratifications that prevailed still, was significant. In the rooms all denominations, whether of the so-called castes or of Hindu, Christian or Muslim, rubbed shoulders, but when it came to eating, problems raised their ugly heads. The brahmin would not sit beside the non-brahmin in the same dining room and even among the brahmins there were those who objected strongly to the use of certain taboo foods not as between meat and vegetables only but based on certain further scruples against onions, radish, and so on.

Once I remember there was almost a skirmish over the question of *vengāya sāmbar* (lentil curry with onions) which a certain section of orthodox brahmins would not permit to be cooked in the brahmin section where Smarthas, Madhwas and Iyengars were meant to dine with a common kitchen. There were two kitchens for non-brahmins, one a vegetarian and the other a non-vegetarian besides a Mussalman and a Christian section which were based more on religion rather than on any difference of menu. Over and above these there was a tacit understanding written or unwritten by which none of the so-called lower castes outside the pale of the four main ones, could be admitted in the hostel at all.

The European wardens of the hostel believed that it would be disastrous to break into these traditional distinctions in any way and as they did not want to face more problems than what already existed, seemed to support the divisions. Whether they were all so bad as to connive at these distinctions to be able to rule better by dividing the people against themselves, is not sure.

Anyway it was a picture that be-

longed to a sort of ancient regime that presented itself to me when I myself, without declaring myself as belonging to any caste, became a member of the student community there. It was actually a miniature replica and cross-section of the social conditions that prevailed in the larger society outside in that part of India, only these distinctions were more magnified and took a more aggravated form, with many more compartments more watertight than in the hostel.

Could something be done to efface this blot which new India could and should not tolerate any more although it could have been taken for granted by a prior generation? This was a question that cropped up within me. I consulted the then warden Mr. S.E. Ranganathan who took some more interest in this question, being the first brown-skinned man to be appointed to the post. The pale-faced wardens before were indifferent and that suited them also. On the other hand the brown-faced man was not orthodox because he happened to be a thorough Englishman himself inside by his education and discipleship of the English. There were many turbaned and black-alpaca-coated members of the same generation who were similarly brown-faced but fully westernized inside like the pale-faces themselves.

I made a proposition to the warden by which a new section called the Cosmopolitan section could be formed in which all students, irrespective of diet or religious scruples, could get the food that suited them. It is not certain if orthodoxy would not enter again by the back door to take their place in Institutions of this kind when the common enmity that was a factor that ushered a spirit of integration or cosmopolitanism was removed as in present-day India. As it happened the scheme found favor with a warden who happened to be a cultured Indian Christian. He liked the idea at once and wanted me to collect signatures for it. If there was a sufficient number from the two non-Brahmin and the Christian and the Mussalman sections the new combined section

would be started. Some became scared of the idea and kept aloof and some thought it was not feasible. All was hopeful when to my surprise all agreed and one cosmopolitan section with vegetarianism as optional could bring together for the first time the students who had before to sit at separate tables though fellow students in modern India. The very first combined meal was to take place in the evening and the success or failure of the project was still hanging in the balance, because there were whispers among the cooks and servants who raised objections at the last moment saying that some of them would not remove the banana leaves (on which food in India is served) of the non-Hindus who were going to be admitted.

As the chief organizer I was again in distress when one of the servants was reported to be weeping in a corner at about eight at night because he thought he would lose his caste forever if he removed the leaves of the Mussalmans and Christians. The situation was critical and all was going to be lost again after victory had actually been sighted! If the leaves remained unremoved for any length of time a major problem would have been created. There was no use arguing with a poor man caught in the adverse logic of superstitious emotion. To have tried it would have been disastrous. No time was to be lost. I got a new idea. Let me remove the leaves myself the first day. Two or three others were there ready to follow my lead. We quickly started to remove the leaves and the sentimental objection was over. Once faced squarely, the problem lost all momentum and could not present itself any more. All went well from the next day and I hear that this Cosmopolitan Section is the biggest section in the old Victoria Hostel today. I remember dining there once again several years after but I sat among the students a perfect stranger, unrecognized as the one who got the idea once upon a time. As Heraclitus said, one cannot enter into the same river twice.

(Continued in next issue.)



Reflections on the Beauty and Gifts of Guru Nitya

Wendy Oak

I met Guru Nitya in England in 1974. The countryside was filled with the burnished beauty of autumn colors, of russet reds and glowing, golden browns. It was the first of many occasions when we shared together the beauty of Nature. Guru Nitya was always so appreciative of the beauty of each moment and he would capture the essence of it with his watercolor brush strokes and pencil crayons. Even after he suffered his stroke last November, he would sit outside in the wheelchair and paint the glory of the Indian sunrise which signified the wonder and continuation of our beautiful world. For Guru Nitya, all life was beautiful, even the most painful situations. He called the stroke he suffered, his "Stroke of Good Luck." He taught through his example, to see beyond the immediate moment into the depths of the one beauty, the source of creation.

Whilst in Fernhill, Guru loved to take a morning walk, pausing to greet the children on their way to school, their beautiful smiles reflected in his own compassionate gaze. He would stand straight as a tree, looking out over the tea slopes to the mountains beyond and softly sing sacred verses, sending them out across the valleys to be carried silently in the wind. Guru said, "This is the most beautiful place on earth for me." The magic of this corner of the Nilgiris resonated in his heart. He wrote to me in England: "Wendy, come again to your sweet home of Fernhill." And I did. Many times over the years I came to share the lives and aspirations of the Narayana Gurukula community.

I recall that there was often music

playing. This included many of the classical Western composers, Mozart and Beethoven's choral and great symphonies as well as Indian ragas and flute music. I was fortunate enough to enjoy some recitals of South Indian music and dance held in the prayer hall to enchant and delight us all.

Guru's vision of beauty extended to all the arts, especially his deep connection with poetry and the written world in its many forms. Guru Nitya adored his fine collections of books gathered from India and around the world. He created the East-West University library in Varkala and built the beautiful library in Fernhill, places where people could come and learn and drink from these deep wells of knowledge.

He wrote many books. His philosophical works will live on to inspire many generations, and take a place with the great sages of India. His extraordinary sense of clarity and vision, his depths of perception and his ability to communicate across continents makes Guru Nitya a visionary of our times. The gifts he gave were so rich and diverse that all could enjoy on many levels of understanding.

He was a great traveler. He captured the hearts and minds of people all over the world and was welcomed into a variety of cultures, which he welcomed with warmth and enthusiasm. I recall the beauty of traveling with Guru in Kerala, of visiting the Backwaters, of the many talks he gave, and the love he extended to everyone he met. He always had time to stop and listen and reply with a gentleness, compassion and respect, however full his schedule was.

Such an accomplished man, he could

talk with philosophers, physicists, biochemists, astronomers, psychologists, politicians, poets, writers, painters, artists, musicians and spiritual leaders on every level of their work with ease, inspired by his vision of a one world consciousness. Yet more than anything, Guru lived from love. He could be so sweet and tender, allowing the little Gurukula cats to sit on his shoulder and smile, to enjoy the simple pleasure of life.

Guru Nitya's personal gift to me was the mystical name of "Oak" given so that I could become strong in the world and live

from his values in these troubled times. He gave us all gifts of inspiration, hope, and courage. I saw these reflected in the dancing flames of the one thousand and one lamps lit at the close of his Yati Puja. As we sat in the gathering darkness, all the lamps came together in one, unified, radiant glow just as Guru's life had done. The Narayana Gurukula values will move forward likewise, to bring light and love into the next millennium.

Rejoice!



An Intelligent Person's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

SARASVATI

The Beginning of A Golden Age

After Gaṇapati comes Sarasvati. It is only natural that the Guru is followed by Wisdom. Sarasvati is universally worshipped as the Goddess of Wisdom. It is really interesting to know the chronological sequence of Sarasvati in the evolution of Hinduism. She is not a vedic goddess. Sarasvati was introduced into the Indian Pantheon during the epic period. This period was one of great transition and reevaluation. The ritualistic aspect of religion, including animal sacrifice, was given a thorough-going revision. This is evident from the various parables in the great epic of the Mahābhārata. The Bhagavad Gīta, which occupies a central position in the Mahābhārata, reduces elaborate items of ritual to the mere offering of leaves, flowers, fruits and water as an oblation to God. In the reevaluation of Yajña (Sacrifice) the Bhagavad Gīta says "Better than sacrifice of any object is the Sacrifice of Wisdom". This transition from Karmakāṇḍa (the ritual action section) to Jñānakāṇḍa (the wisdom understanding section) is marked by the acceptance of Sarasvati as the all-pervasive effulgence of knowledge which is at once creative and eternal. The introduction of Sarasvati in Indian spirituality marks also the beginning of a golden age for art, literature and philosophy which could wonderfully integrate the spiritual and cultural values of both the Vedic and Pre-Vedic civilizations into a harmonious blend which down to our own day hold fast the spiritual integrity of India.

Hypostatic

Sarasvati is not a goddess of utilitari-

ans. She has nothing earthy about her. Her domain is what Plato described as "the World of the Intelligibles". She does not touch the ground of necessities. That is why it is proverbially held in India that Sarasvati's devotees have to take pride in their poverty. Her hypostatic character is symbolized by her vehicle, the white swan. The swan is a bird of the water as well as the air. In this context water stands for pure devotion and air for intuition. In other words she caters to the sentimental and intuitive aspects of our life. Her grace comes from above riding on the swan of intuition. So she is hypostatic in character.

Colorless

Sarasvati by herself is colorless like sphātika or glass. But like a prism which gives rise to a spectrum she mysteriously causes a colorful world of names and forms. Her mist-like veil is fabricated with time and space. This mysterious veil serves as an āvaraṇa or principle of screening Reality. Just as Eddington describes the material universe as wrinkles in space we may say that all the manifestations we experience here are only the designs in her veil. She is the invisible light giving visibility to all illuminations. There is nothing improbable in saying the light of all lights is invisible. Even a high frequency "light" as that of the x-ray is not visible to the naked eye. How much more should be the light of the Absolute!

The Word

A poet in a hymn of Sarasvati addresses her as "Sphoṭa Darśana Kalā Kutūhale". Sphoṭa is equivalent to the Logos or the Word. A wakeful mind is never empty. Every pulsation of the brain occurs

to become the unit of an idea. Each idea has something precise giving the certitude of a form, a name, a quality, a value and the accompanying feelings of pain, pleasure or indifference. This can be compared to the projection of a film on the screen. Behind the visible pictures there is the invisible projector. The sphaṭa can be compared to the invisible mechanism which is projecting a chain of ideas in the wakeful mind. Another name of Sarasvati is Bhārati, which literally means "one who takes delight in illuminating". It is the joy of Sarasvati to fill our mind with her light. In the Bible St. John begins his gospel with the words "In the beginning there was the Word; the Word was with God and the Word was God". In the same way Bhārati

the giver of light is also called Vāk Devi or Girvani, or Praṇava Svarōpini. Vāk and Gir literally mean the Word. Praṇava is the monosyllable Word representing the Absolute. In the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad the Praṇava or AUM is said to be Brahman itself. As Sarasvati is equated with AUM she is identical with Brahman or the Absolute. So she is called Brahnāṇi.

Rosary of Letters

Sarasvati is pictured with four hands. In one of the raised hands she holds a garland of letters. In the Bhagavad Gīta Sri Kṛṣṇa says "All this is threaded on Me, as rows of Gems on a string" (VII-7). Even so Sarasvati provides the thread of meaning conjoining the letters of language. The



world of manifestation presented to the human mind consists of three elements—a name, a corresponding idea and an object which substantiates the name as well as the idea. Thus though Reality is undifferentiated caitanya (subsistence) the empirical world known as vyavahāra is knitted together by words.

A Parrot

A parrot in her corresponding raised hand, like the owl of Minerva, is a symbol of the intuitive inspiration she gives. Being a bird of the air and fond of imitating the human voice, the parrot represents the intuitive or inspired art. Art is often defined as the imitation of nature. The Painter, the Sculptor, the Poet, the Dramatist are all trying to imitate or to repeat or to echo nature.

The Vedas

In the other two hands she keeps a grantha or collection of Vedas and a Vīna. The Vedas symbolize the eternal word and the Vīna symbolizes the spoken word or voice. The Vedas stand for Satya or Truth and the Vīna gives the harmony of five notes, which correspond to the harmony of the physical, emotional, intellec-

tual, intuitional and the spiritual aspects of life.

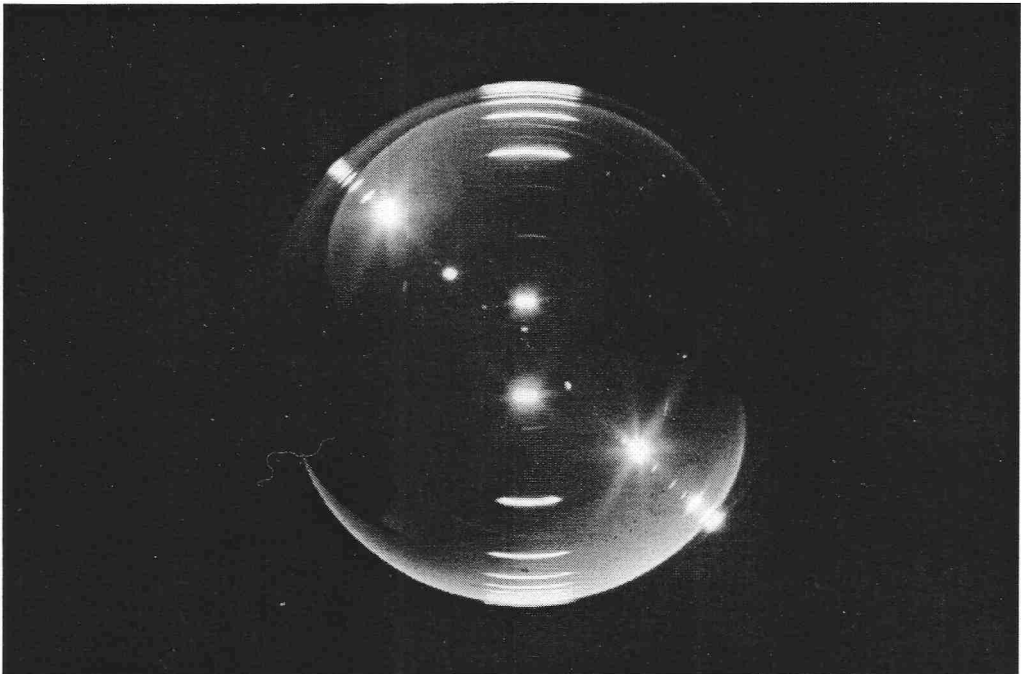
A White Lily for her Foot-Stool

The Lily is a water plant and hence expresses the purest form of devotion. It is said to be stimulated by the moon and not the Sun. The sun stands for Pure Truth and the moon for its reflection as the Śāstrās. The Lily stimulated by the moon thus combines the symbolism of devotion supported by the Śāstrās. Those who are devotees of Sarasvati cannot afford to be haphazard in their life. According to the Bhagavad Gīta it is demonic to go astray from the path of the Śāstrās (Gita XVII-5).

Śārada Kṣetram

Sarasvati is the Queen Monad or the Monad of Monads. She is the most bright and perfect. All beings enshrine her and reflect her light in various degrees of clarity and perfection. From the clod of earth to the pulsating brain of Śrī Śankara there is an endless degree of variation. The clearer and brighter among them are the chosen temples of Śārada where one finds a better expression of Her Grace and Glory.

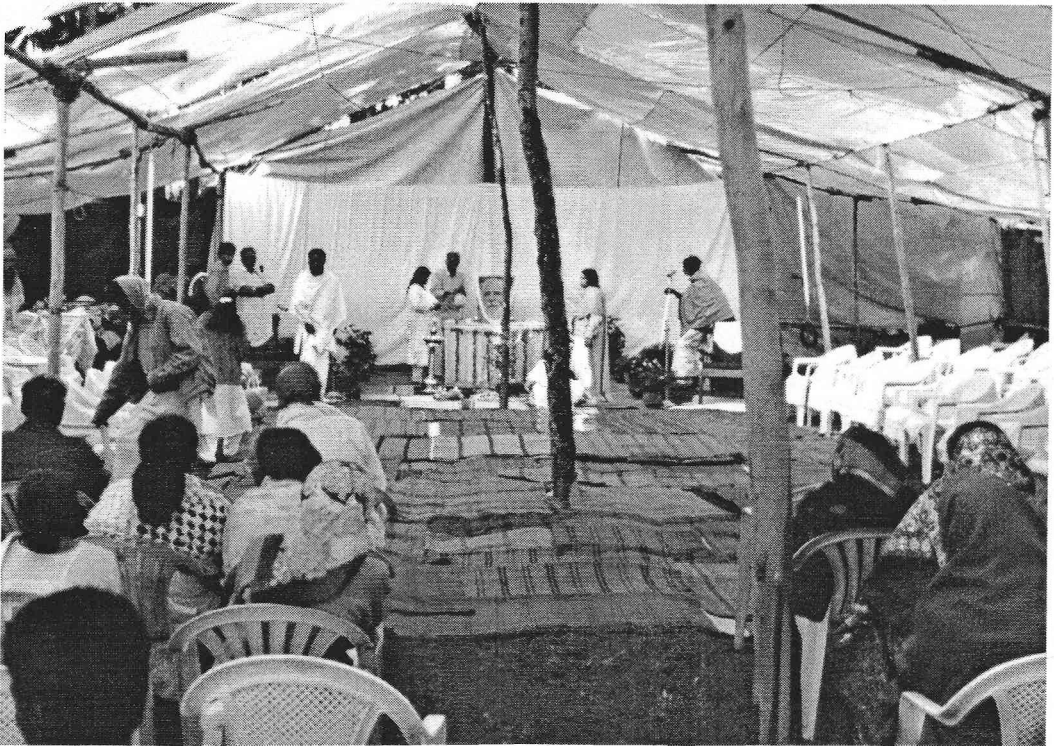
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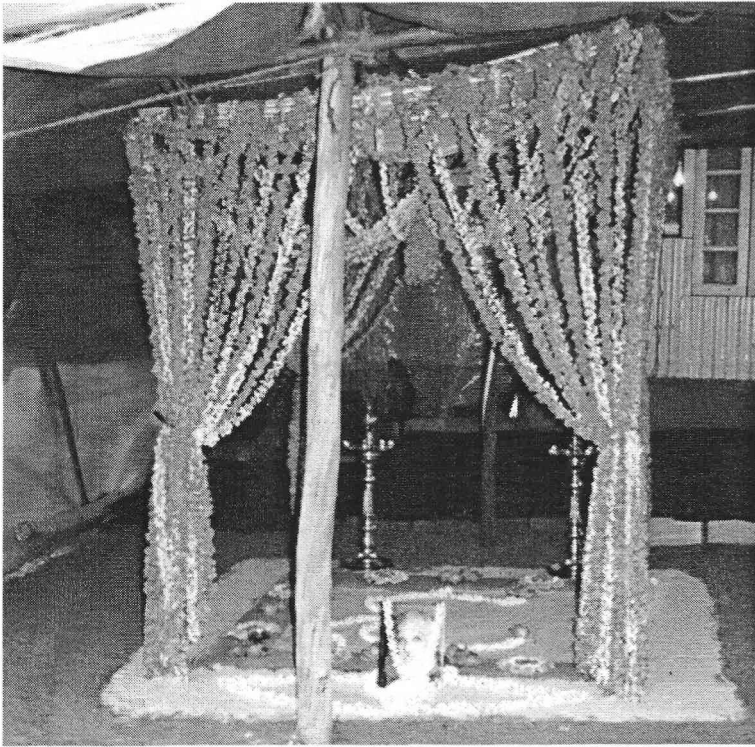
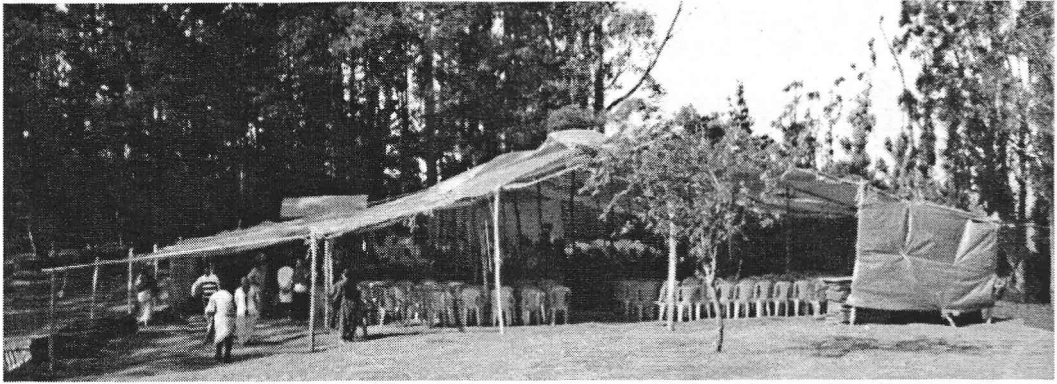
East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



Guru Nitya's *mahāsamādhi* on May 14th of this year was honored by performance of *Yati Puja* and *Mokṣa Dipōam* at Fernhill Narayana Gurukula on June 24th and a Celebration of Guru's Light at Bainbridge Narayana Gurukula on June 5th.



Preparing for Yati Puja, Fernhill Gurukula



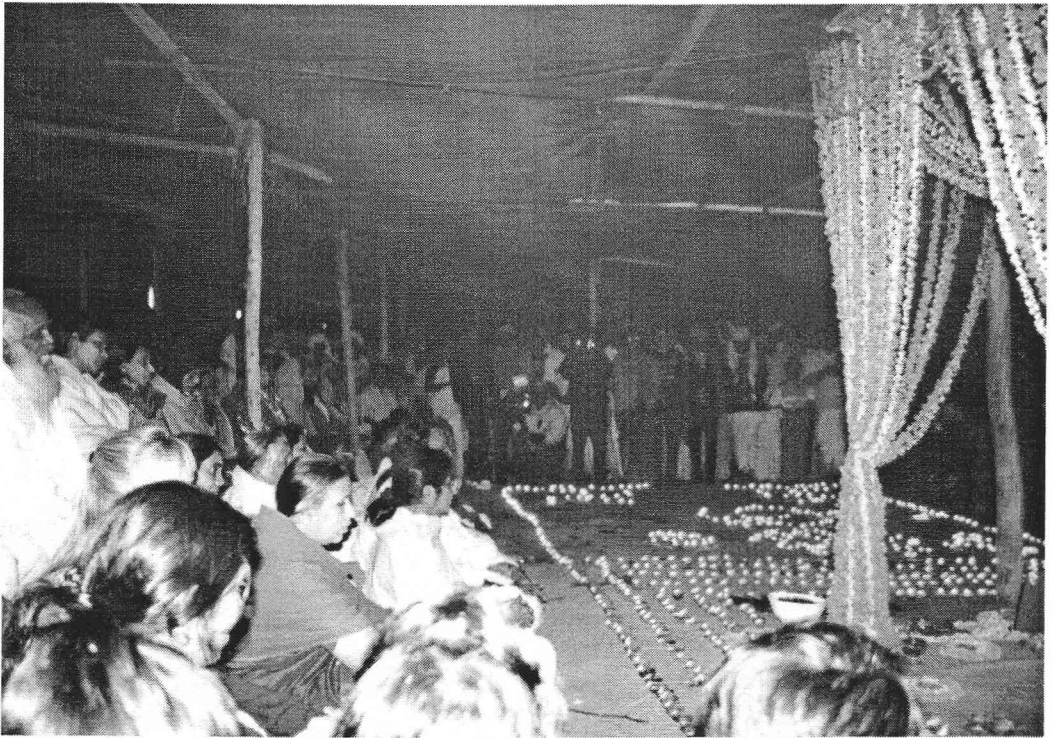
Soul Stirring

The road from Coimbatore to Ooty was lined with the flame of the forest in bloom: flowers, flowers and more flowers all the way. It was glorious.

I missed Guru's physical presence only when I arrived outside the main building of the Gurukula. That I guess had to be because he has always been there to receive us. After that instant, he was everywhere, so everywhere that he was constantly showering his love and guiding the thoughts.

The sun was out all the days, no monsoon as was supposed to be the norm. The sky was as blue as can be. Again flowers all over the place. There was magic in the air.

Sitting by his samadhi, I sensed he acknowledged every person's entry. It would be calm and then a strong wind would make the plastic sheets above flap

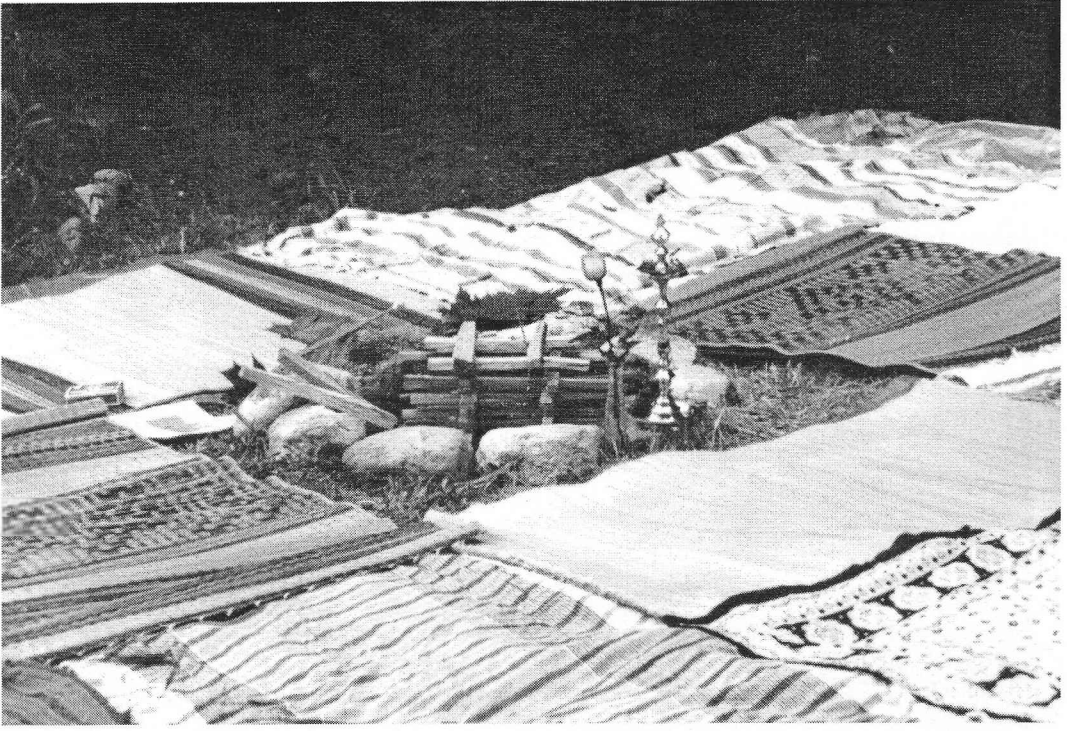


about wildly when someone came and sat. A calm would follow until another's arrival.

The mokṣa dipam day went smoothly. The homam, the sannyasins, the Christian sisters, the Muslim mullahs and the crowd that came – there was a certain togetherness – a kind only Guru could knit. To end it all, the food was so good – you just know that the main spice used was love. What can be achieved with positive vibrations! And when it is so altogether positive in every being, you can imagine its impact. There was also an atmosphere of a fair.

That night we all gathered at the samadhi and lighted a 1001 lights before prayers. It was a liberating night not just for Guru's mokṣa but for all. Late into the night, many little clay lamps still gave light in the gentle breeze.

Anita Kashyap



*akhaṇḍa maṇḍalākāram
vyāptam yena carācaram
tat padam darśitam yena
tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ*





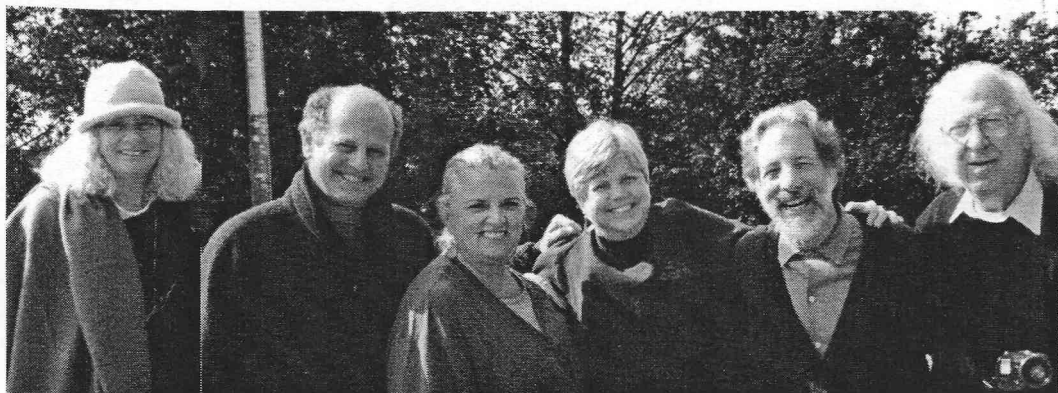
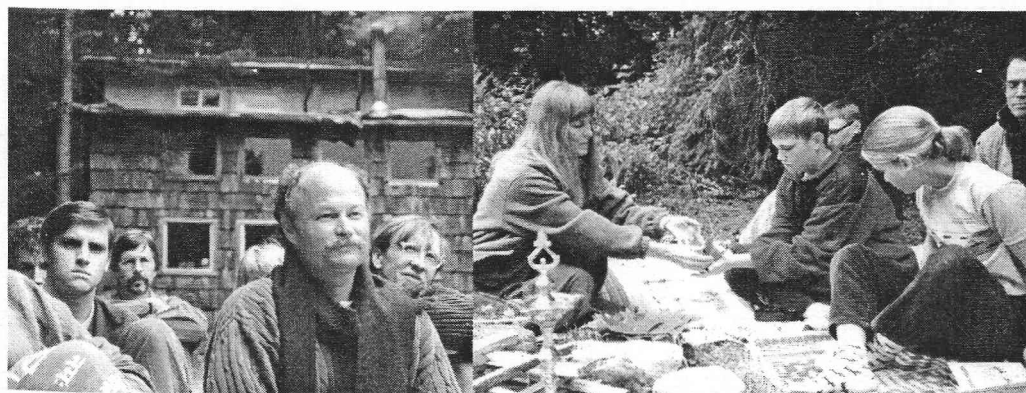
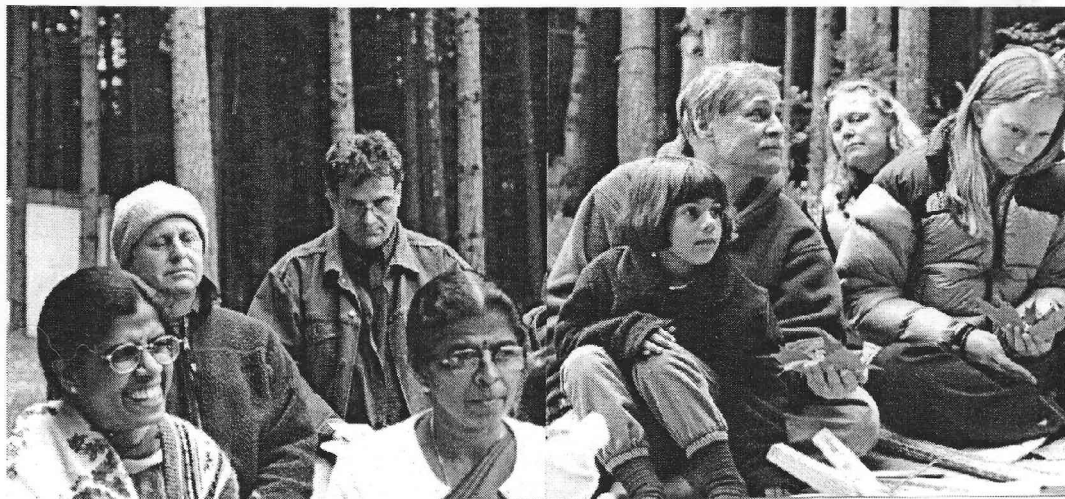
Being the Absolute, the Guru has no specific form
apart from the indivisible totality of the whole.
The Supreme principle of the Guru permeates everything stationary and mobile;
visualizing the truth of such a Guru, we salute Him.



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