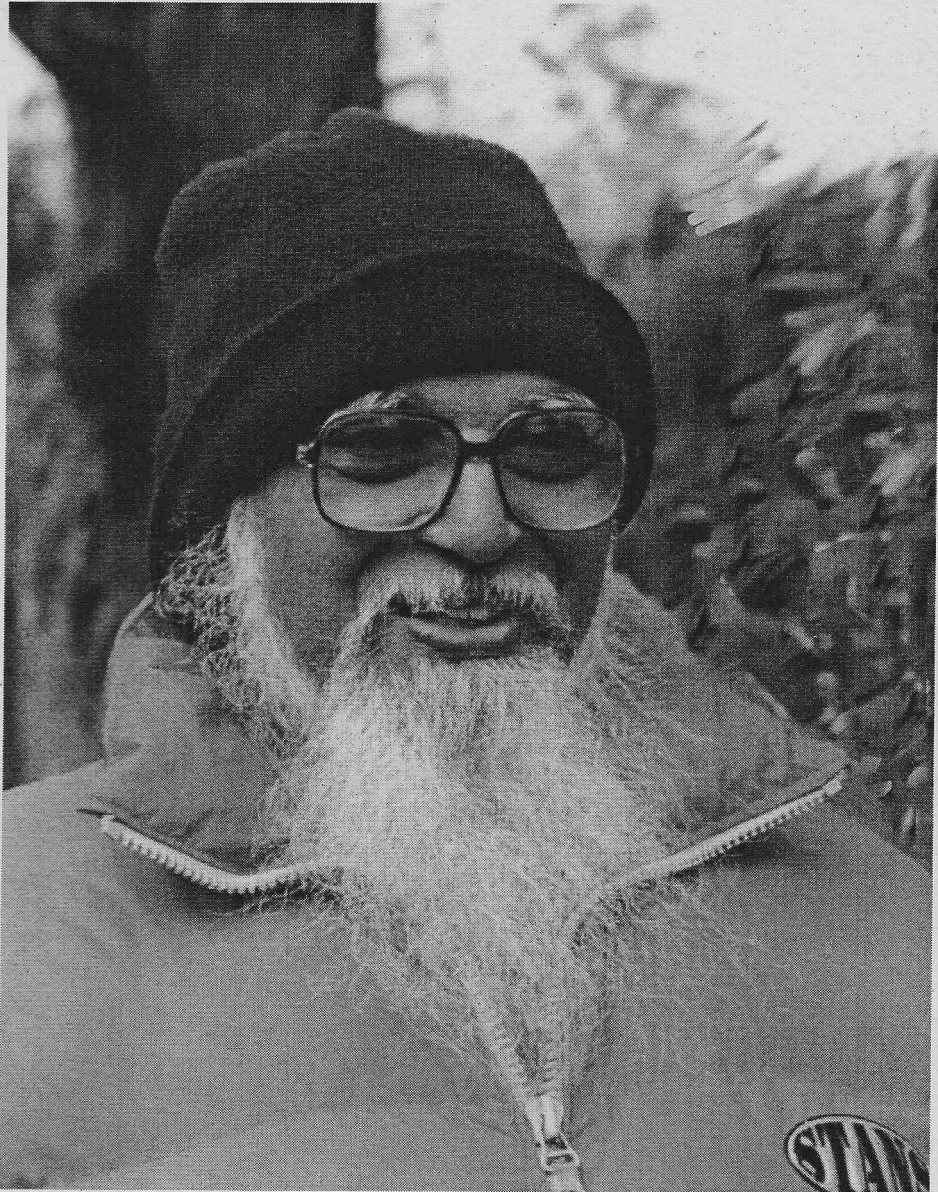


# GURUKULAM

VOLUME XVI • 2000

FIRST QUARTER





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# GURUKULAM

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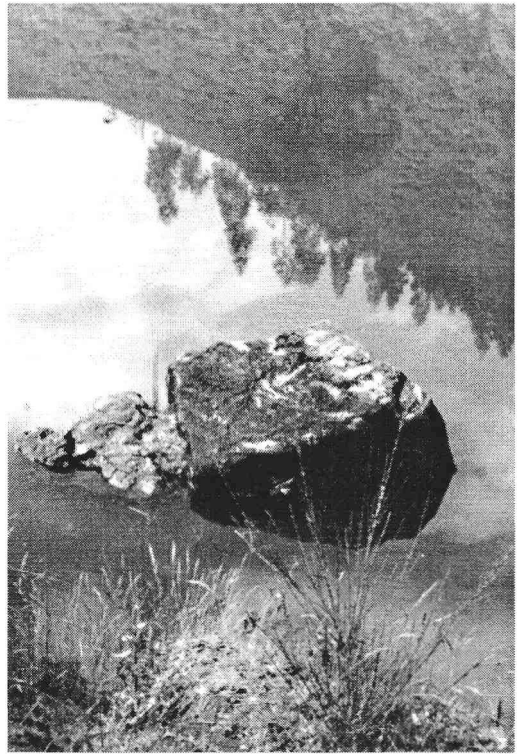
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COVER: Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati.

# Moral Love

I was walking in the garden, seeking the solace of the first signs of Spring's renewal as I pondered sadly on the ways humanity has been repeatedly afflicted throughout history by the scourge of totalitarian rulers and governments which use terror to perpetuate their power position. Such dictatorships have brought extreme suffering to generations of human beings. Although recent history has seen the crumbling of the huge totalitarian system which held much of Central and Eastern Europe in its iron grip, it is painful to confront the grim deprivations of basic human rights that continue in many places throughout the world. Human beings are again and again faced with crises of conscience, contending with injustice in their immediate experience or responding to the suffering of their brothers and sisters near or far. But, for those fortunate to live in circumstances free of daily tyranny, a regrettable insulation can grow which obscures the voice of conscience and our universal need to love our neighbors as ourselves.

As I pondered, I felt as if the earth itself was speaking to me in the tinkling sounds of the water in the fountain, the wind whooshing through the branches of the fir trees, the honking of the Canadian geese overhead: "Humans are so arrogant. Even in the rare times when you think of loving your neighbors, you only think of other human beings like yourselves." Jolted to attention, I sat very quiet, listening to the cry of the suffering planet. It made me think of the global agony caused by what Vaclav Havel, President of the Czech Republic, recently called "the dictatorship of money, of profit, of constant economic growth, and the necessity, flowing from all that, of plundering the earth without regard for what will be left in a few decades, along with everything else related to the materialistic obsessions of this world, from the flourishing of selfishness to the need to evade personal responsibility by becoming part of the herd, and the general



inability of human conscience to keep pace with the inventions of reason, right up to the alienation created by the sheer size of modern institutions." \*\*

Feeling oppressed by the power of the dictatorship of greed, I lay flattened upon the grass, but after some time, each blade became like a prick of conscience, reminding me that Havel continued by saying that these phenomena "cannot effectively be confronted except through a new moral effort." Like Nataraja Guru, he characterized this as "the imperative and the need to live as everyone ought to live and therefore...to bear responsibility for the entire world."

I thought about the challenge of responding to the obvious need for moral effort in the context of our modern discomfort with the idea of moral education coming from our concern about the link between dictatorial systems and the imposition of externally defined patterns of "good" or "moral" behavior. Such definitions are also often limited by their source in a particular sub-section of human society such as an ethnic group, nation or relig-

ious organization. Lovers of freedom naturally shy away from the manipulations of authoritarian leaders who attempt to impose their narrow definitions of moral behavior on others.

At the same time, the value of freedom needs to be expanded from that of the freedom to pursue pleasure. Around the world, it is becoming more and more apparent that persons blessed with every kind of wealth and external freedom are suffering from the internal tyranny of confusion, anxiety, obsessions, dis-ease and despair. Their lack of inner freedom continues to expose greed and the highly developed expertise in satisfying it as ineffective means to gain happiness.

The promptings I felt as I remained deep in thought seemed at one moment to be coming from the hills in the distance, another from the fruit trees about to unfurl their dainty petals, another from the worms wriggling in the dirt, another from the cloud floating overhead. It was as if the world itself was speaking to me, highlighting the link Havel made between the new moral effort he envisages and "a transformation of the spirit and the human relationship to life and the world." It pointed in the direction of the fundamental source of moral behavior indicated by Narayana Guru in his set of verses on ethics in *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (21-25) where he assures us that "all that is known this world, if contemplated, is the being of the one primordial Self." My sense of anguish receded as I felt enfolded by the earth below and trees above, reminding me that when moral effort begins with contemplation of our essential oneness with all, it is not imposed by an authority outside us, in fact, there is no outside at all. Such contemplation leads us far from the idea of moral behavior according to cold dictates and toward the warm glow of wholesale transformation in which doing good and the realization of the Self are one and the same thing.

That is why Narayana Guru also says: "what each performs for the happiness of the Self should be conducive to the happiness of another" and "what is good for one

person and brings misery to another - such actions are opposed to the Self." This emanates from the same compassionate stance exemplified by Jesus when he said "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Love is the active manifestation of moral education, love of one's Self which has no limits. In the context of such love, it is unthinkable to divide up one's identity into chunks which are pitted against each other, leading to the sacrifice of one ethnic group for another, the sacrifice of the poor for the wealthy, the sacrifice of the natural world to human greed or the sacrifice of the future for the present.

In the face of such unthinkable sacrifices being made daily, we are in dire need of moral guidance from the wisdom teachers revered throughout human history for the love shining at the core of their lives. So it is with deep gratitude that we draw near to the light of Guru Nitya's vibrant moral philosophy. His commentaries on these verses of Narayana Guru demonstrate his natural inclusiveness, with facets reflecting the moral love of Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Socrates, Lao-Tzu, St. Augustine and Aristotle, as well as that of parents attending to their children, the lover caring for his beloved and the doctor for her patient. Informed by his living example of courageous compassion, they light our way toward an unlimited moral education that begins with ourselves and can be shared in freedom with the coming generations.

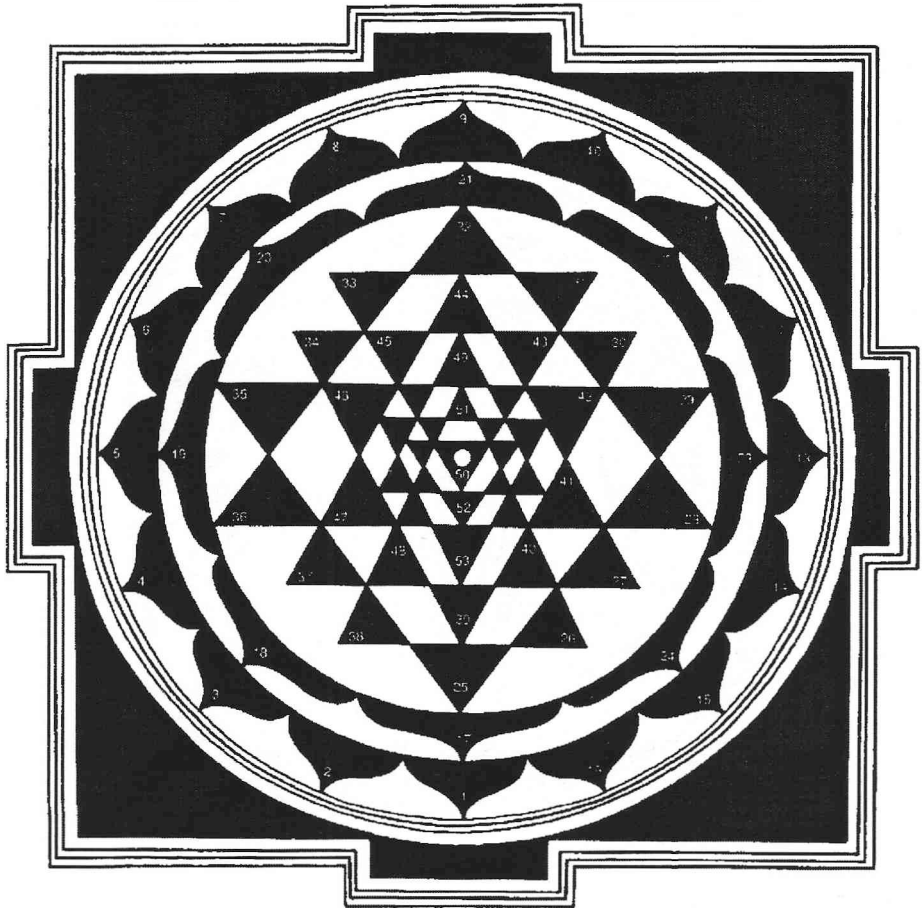
As I sat in contemplation in the garden, warmed by the light of the sun which illuminated the entire scene, I was permeated by the surrounding beauty which was infused with natural goodness. The grass no longer pricked, the geese no longer admonished. The sorrows of all were my sorrows, the joys of all my joys, and peace was everywhere.

*Nancy Yeilding*

\*\*Translated by Paul Wilson in *The New York Review of Books*, September 23, 1999.

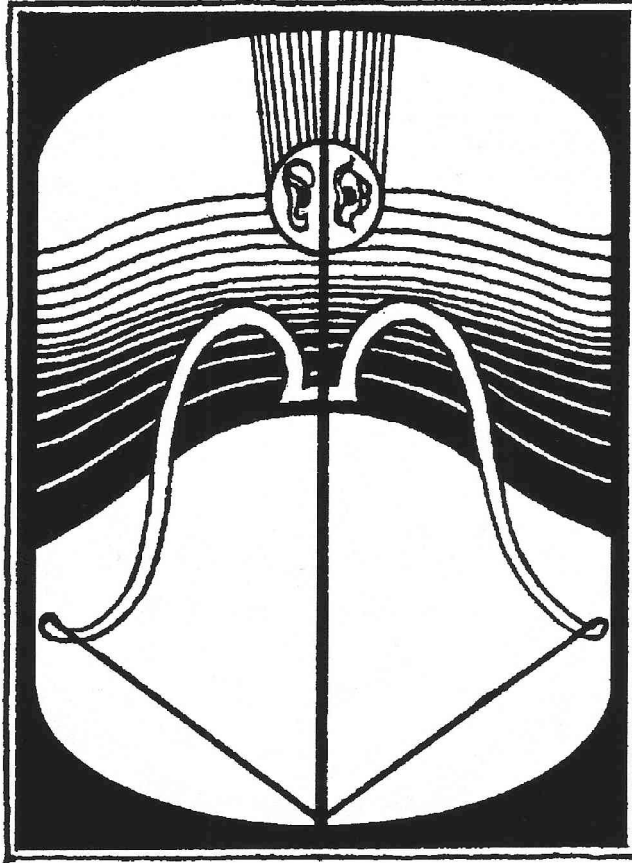
# Meditations on Śrī Cakra

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



In 1990, while staying at the Portland and Bainbridge Gurukulas, Guru Nitya gave a series of meditations on Śrīcakra (above), a proto-linguistic depiction of a person functioning within a cosmic system. In this diagram (*yantra*), the four upward-pointing triangles represent the supreme spirit or universal consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the five downward pointing triangles represent nature composed of the five elements (*prakṛti*). They are so interlaced that no aspect of reality can be seen as entirely physical or entirely spiritual. Each of the two rings of petals represents a fully opened lotus flower, indicating that both the microcosm and the macrocosm unfold like the blossoming of a flower.

Śrīcakra is an aid to meditation which is intended to become unnecessary as the mediator comes to recognize his or her functional and essential unity with All. Meditation begins with the petal at the alpha point of the diagram, proceeds clockwise around the outer petals, then around the inner petals. Then, beginning with the triangle placed at the alpha, it proceeds counter-clockwise around the exterior points of the triangles until the final four which are placed on a vertical axis. Each petal and point has a seed mantra associated with it, as well as an aspect of divinity envisioned as the Supreme Mother. Each meditation reflects the transcendent power of beauty to lead us to the oneness of Reality.



*aim nāmākarsinī*



## Meditation Six

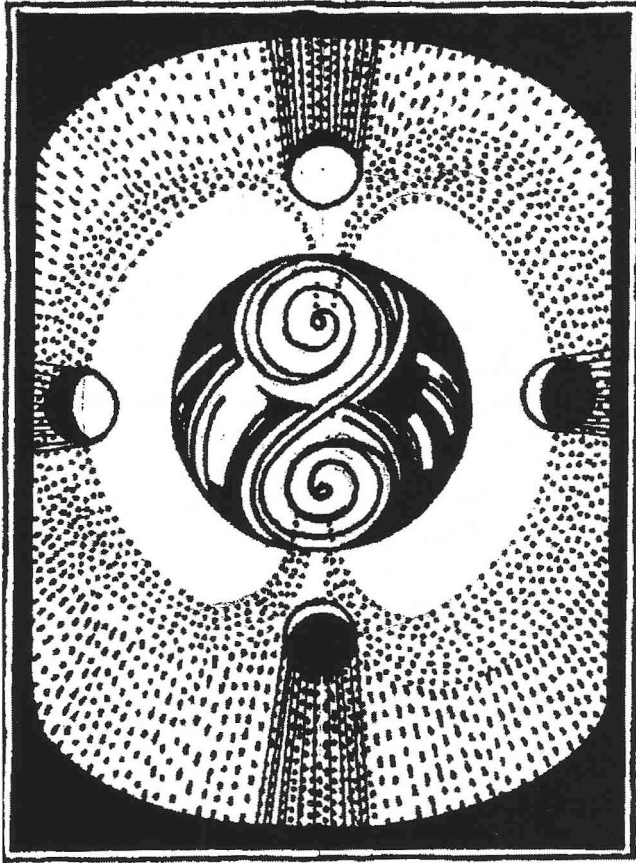
O Goddess of the eternal sound, your dynamics are of Śiva's bow. You select words of your choice as arrows, and from your bow you are shooting them into my realm of consciousness. An arrow can wound the body but your arrows bring to my mind the elixir of immortality. They fill me with ecstasy. O Mother, veritable incarnation of love, every word brings to me a hymn praising your excellence. It is like a blooming flower of Spring. Its fragrance fills the air that I breathe. It is beautiful to my eyes; its honey is sweet. The earth that is scorched with hot sun and the vegetation which is about to wither are revived by the cool breeze of the Malaya mountains. Even so are your words. Every word with which you are praised is like a gentle breeze wafting in my life.

O daughter of the Himavan, like the compassionate tears of the snowy mountain, the heavenly Ganga comes to this earth. It revives the land and grows food for millions. With food the body is nourished. Even so, O Mother of all sciences, poetry and music, you create a flood of delight in every connoisseur's mind.

The words that transpire between two people are like the disembodied god of love, Anaṅga. The word cannot be seen with the eyes, but it brings understanding between hearts. A word of love is like a hand stretched in friendship. It is with your word that we correct each other, give assurance to each other and share the ecstasy of our inner selves. When heartless people give war cries and advance to attack, you come with your charming smile that disarms them. To them you give your gentle word which brings peace and serenity to their minds.

From your lyre the enthralling music of the spirit rises and fills the world with its melody. When people are physically tired, mentally frustrated and hopelessly want to terminate their lives, you come as a guru and give them the eternally shining word to light the lamp of their wisdom which remains as your guidance forever in them. Such is your compassion, O Word incarnate.

*aiṁ nāmākarṣiṇī*



*ēm smṛtyākarsinī*

## Meditation Seven

O Mother, you are the transparency of pure consciousness. You are the magnetic field of cosmic memory. You are like a housewife who meticulously remembers all day and all night the sequential order in which your loving care is to be shown. You do that for the entire world, as if each person is your child and each home is yours. Established in the future, you are sending sprouts of memories to the present. Thus you are at once the embellisher of the past, the enhancer of the beauty of the present and the dynamic unfurling of the future.

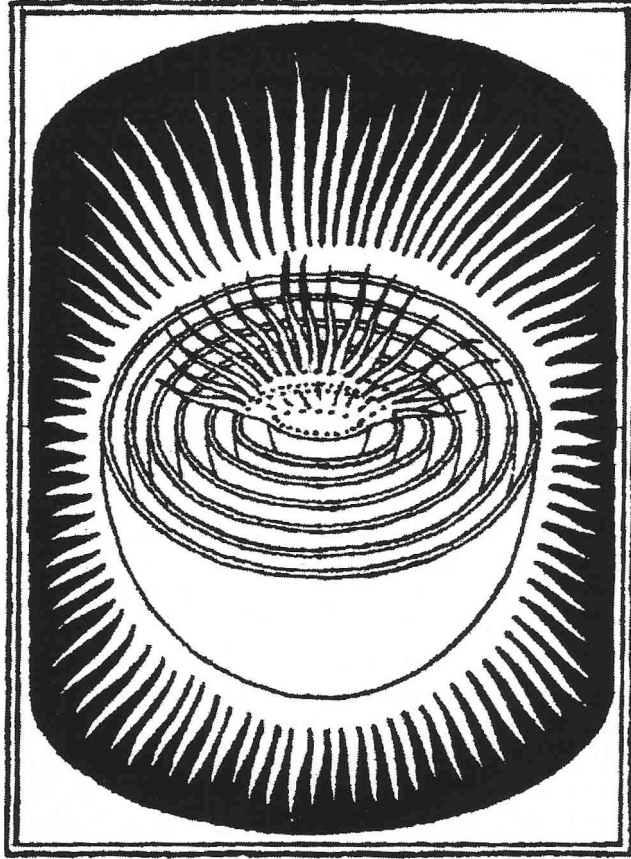
Even before it is dawn you paint the eastern skies with magenta colors which tell us that another glorious day is at hand. You have also commissioned your cocks to crow and declare the gospel of each new day. You send your gentle breeze to rouse buds which are ready to unfold. Before the arrival of the sun, mist comes and leaves dew drops on every petal to enhance their beauty. Men and women who are tired and lost in deep sleep are called back to the new day. When the world wakes up, your cows are there with their udders full of sweet milk.

Then the program begins. You are the programmer. Millions are your instruments, but each person thinks that he or she is doing his or her ambitious work. You allow them to have that identity and just go on inspiring them to complete whatever they are doing in the busy world. All are pacing their steps in tune with your ceaseless dance. Millions are the variations of the sounds of the silver bells attached to your anklets.

O enriching Mother, everywhere one can see the semblance of your nourishing breasts. Poets see them in the foreheads of elephants. It is a mystery that your middle cannot be seen from full moon to new moon in its waning and new moon to full moon in its waxing. You make all the variations of sine curves. In the process of transformation you keep your rhythm. Sometimes you let us go as free as freedom can; then you bind us and take us around by a leash. Sometimes you allow us to enjoy with abandon. At other times you are insistent that we should confront the inevitable.

You preserve such a vast history for us that not a single incident registered in the memory of the countless million beings is allowed to perish. A written book is your best symbol. Everything written and explained offers a new challenge to us. We are asked to revise, revalue and restate. Again and again your husband, the Great Dissolver, regenerates the vacuum, the cosmic *pralaya*. Like the world re-appearing at the opening of the eyes, you re-establish everything in its fullest glory. You are the *tripura sundarī*.

*ēm smṛtyākarṣinī*



*lṃ dhairyākarṣinī*

## Meditation Eight

O Mother, you ride on a lion of great strength and valor. You are seated on a couch which is of the form of Śiva. Your throne is none other than the lap of your lord Parameśvara. You are the queen of all queens. How can I be afraid when I follow you, holding with trust your little finger in my hand?

By shining in the firmament the sun showers solar energy to animate all living beings on earth. Even so are you the incarnation of the magic syllable, *AUM*. With your own radiance we are also shining forth as beams of your effulgence. You have kindly vested in each of us the capability to hold the elixir of your wisdom.

You have made us intelligent beings. It is to your intelligence that everything in the world adheres. The truly brave one is intelligent. The child sleeping in the lap of the mother is not afraid of anyone. You are brave and fearless because you are seated in the lap of your lord. As for us, individuated beings, we are laid in the lap of the three *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Once in a while *sattva* shines in us. Then we also feel brave and see your assuring smile. But when *rajas* and *tamas* cloud our vision, we are rocked by the storms of uncertainty. Then we lose comprehension of you and fall into distress.

Even when a person is comfortably sleeping on his cozy bed wrapped in warm clothes, he can get a nightmare and shriek in fear. But, on waking up, he realizes that what he experienced was only a figment of his mind. Then he regains his clarity and becomes strong again. My prayer is that every time I slip into the darkness of the lower regions of mind you will wake me up. Allow me to share the eternal transparency of your intelligence. One's ego becomes a devil only in the dark. Fear is a product of ignorance. I am so grateful to you that you send us an appropriate means at a right time to dispel our darkness.

Bless me, Mother, to see you always seated in the island of rubies which is in the ocean of spiritual bliss (*śivānanda*). May I see you seated in the shrine of the jewel of consciousness (*cintāmaṇi*) which is in the lovely forest of the *kadamba* trees. May I always see you absorbed in the bliss of supreme consciousness (*cidānanda*). That will give me my life's fulfillment. You are the light of my intelligence. In the waves of ecstasy that come from your grace, may I laugh and play around like an innocent baby.

*Ṃ dhairyākarṣinī*



*lūm cittākarṣinī*

## Meditation Nine

O Mother, who is ever immersed in the bliss of the Self, the base foundation of all living beings is your matchless radiance. Some beings stand stationary with their feet firmly rooted in the *terra firma*. Folks call them trees and creepers. Then there are others who live in the watery expanses such as fish, whales, porpoises, crocodiles and other water animals. Human beings and other land animals are comparatively less restricted. We run around from place to place. The birds are freer still to fly in the sky.

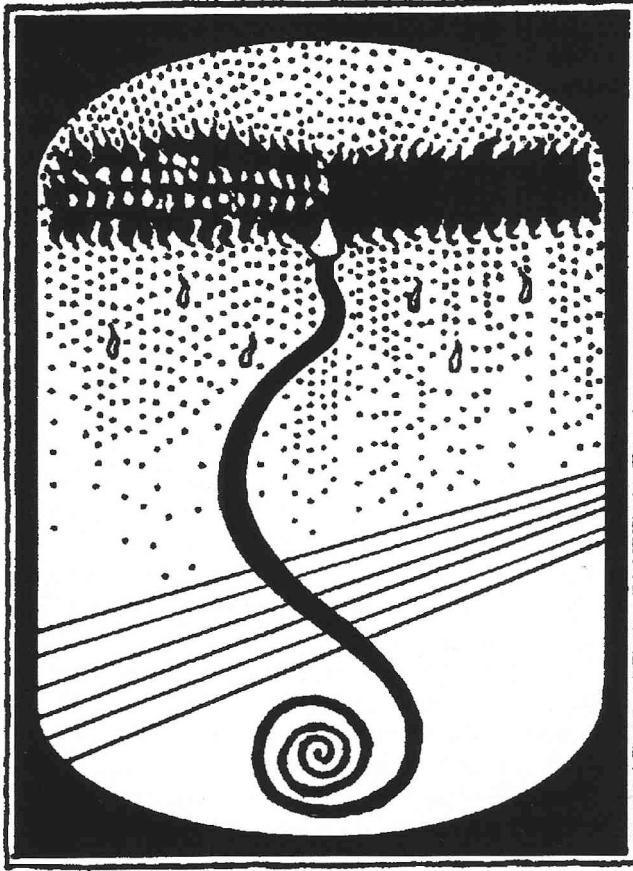
You have given us many habitations of panoramic beauty and you provide us with sustenance which we can easily find. You have taught us how to gather around a hearth and make a family. All day, we have a witness of all our actions, the sun in the firmament. At night, we forget the scorching heat of the day on seeing the cool sheen of the moon and the shimmering light of the stars. Such is the care you have shown to us, O Mother who never forgets anything.

You have given us eyes to appreciate, a nose to smell, and a mouth to relish all the delicious food which comes like a divine magic to our table every day. You have given us receptive hearts which are always willing to accept the love of all beings around us with the same ease that we allow the overbrimming love of our hearts to flow into others. Your honey is sitting in our throats; when we speak, the sweetness of your love trickles with our words. Sitting in the center of our hearts, you take charge of our lives and give your commands. By closely watching your likes and dislikes, we make our bodies worthy instruments to carry out your errands.

You have made my heart full of treasures of the finest values you approve of. Also I have the inheritance of unequaled wisdom which you have channeled from the seers of the past. O my Heart, I pray that you give me strength to show my reverence and devotion to my heritage of wisdom. Let the finest wisdom you have taught to your devotees sit in the center of my eyebrows and give me guidance.

Even when I wander in the wilderness of horizontality, my base foundation (*mūlādhāra*) will also remain firm in you. My remembrance of your ever-pure intention is the cleansing agent with which my heart is always kept pure and simple. My memories are the finest flowers I offer to you both in the dawn and in the dusk. As days pass by, I become a clean mirror to hold out your image for the entire world to see. Your blessings are with me.

*lūm cittākarsinī*



*ṛṇ gandhākarṣinī*



## Meditation Ten

O joyous Mother, you are the smile on all lips. You are the thrill in every heart. All the cycles of the universe that have blossomed and drooped have their imperishable essence in the four *vedas* of the transactional, the dreaming, the deep sleep and the transcendental. It is from these *vedas* you draw the ideas of your creation to present, like in a kaleidoscope, a newly structured design, novel in form, unique in color impression and suggestive of fresh meanings of archetypes.

To see your hidden bliss manifest in the simplest of forms, you have created this concrete universe with a mountain there, a blue sky beyond and shimmering stars in the sky. You take as much care to decorate a violet or the wings of a butterfly. Thus from the far-off sky you make a descending slope of your creation to where we sit here on the lawn in which every blade of grass has its stipulated dew drop mirroring the entire universe. You enter into its countless gross creations and make each one a symbol of a pure idea of beauty or goodness. Where you are gross, there you are also subtle, and your subtlety becomes evanescent and transcendental.

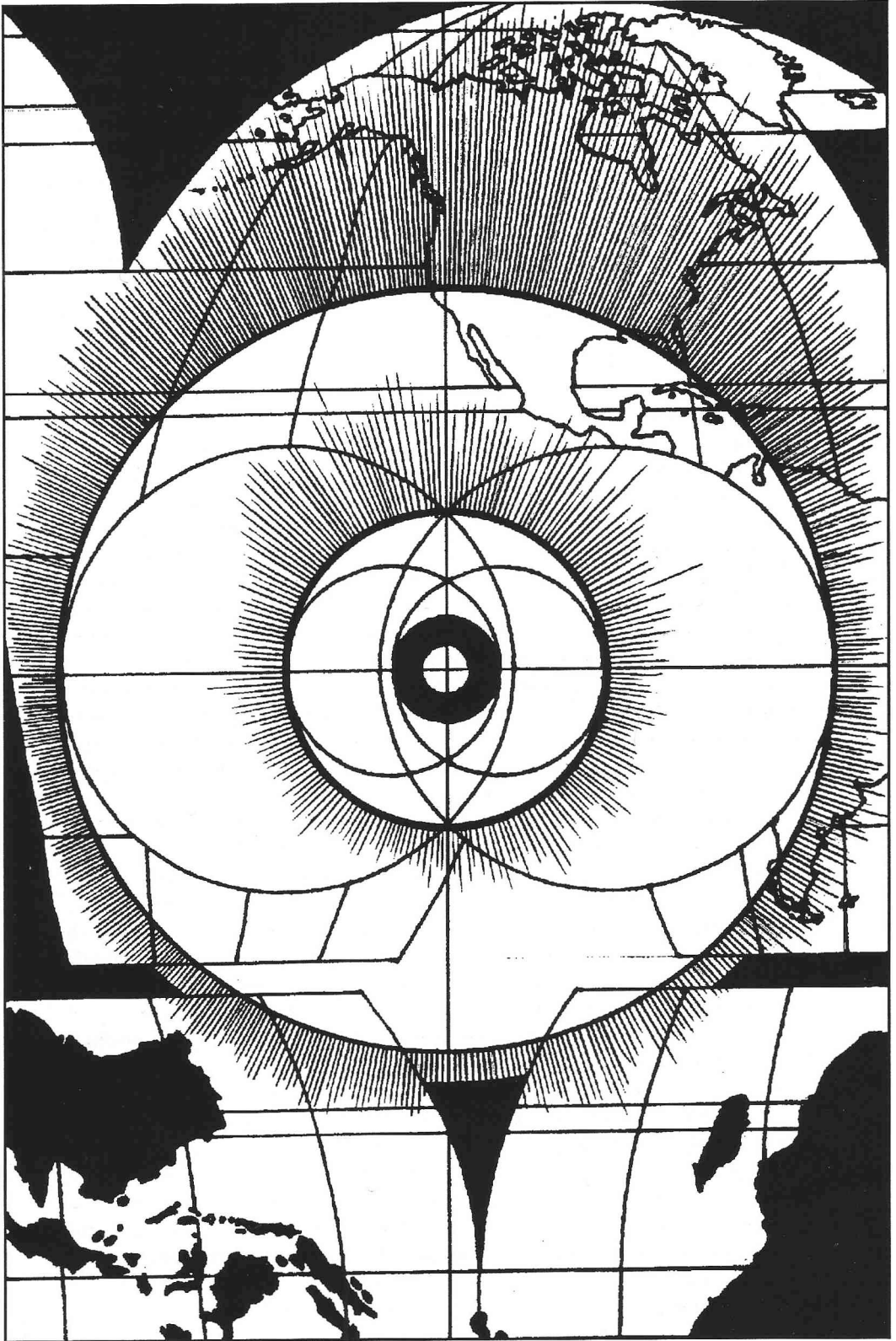
Rising step by step from the base foundation (*mūlādhāra*), when your creation comes to the peak of the thousand-petaled (*sahasrāra*), all spoken words melt in the silence of your heavenly choir. The earth under our feet, rushing torrents of rivers, leaping flames, ceaseless winds, the vast sky, the ocean and its waves, the knower in me and my desire to act and accomplish, all rise into the heaven beyond, leaving nothing but the pure awareness of the brilliant Word.

As the beautifier of the three worlds, you have this universe for a studio and you use our imaginative minds as your colorful brushes to paint a million panoramas each day in colors bright and dark. Our tireless efforts to cope with your commands are rivaled by the chirping birds, the flowering trees and the bees that gather honey. When the sun sets, you do not abandon this world to the tyranny of darkness. You give it a mystical look by bringing the moon each night in a different shape and the twinkling stars which look for their corresponding eyes to whisper a secret to.

You make the entire world a cradle for your babies to lie in with their eyes closed and dream the most lyrical themes which even poets cannot conceive. Your magic is such that even the cruelest person and one who is hardened by the stubborn facts of life changes into a model of innocence when you give the tender touch of sleep. So, my dear Mother, I also seek the comfort of your fondling, night after night when my limbs are tired and I retire.

When I wake up every morning, please make me as fresh as a flower and as brilliant as the morning sun. The flower has its fragrance. The sun has its effulgence. May I bring your light and fragrance to the world with my bright disposition and sweet words emerging from the depth of truth. The wind comes and gathers the smell of flowers and takes them away. Like that, let each night gather my awareness to rest in your care and let the following day bring it back to me as my certitude which will keep me as wise as you want me to be.

*ṛṃ gandhākarṣinī*



# Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

## One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction by Narayana Guru

### Translation and Commentary by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 11

*"ahamaham" ennaruḷunnatokkeyārā-  
yukil akamē palatallatēkamākum;  
akalumahantayanēkamākayāli  
tukayil aham poruḷum tuṭarnniṭunnu.*

"I, I," thus, all that are spoken of,  
when carefully considered,  
inwardly are not many; that is one;  
as the receding I-identities are countless  
in their totality, the substance  
of I-consciousness continues.

We have before us the picture of pure knowledge, as given in verse four. When we came to verse five, the Guru pointed out how difficult it is for us to remain identified with that pure state of knowledge because of the many recurring identifications such as the sleeping one, the wakeful one, and the possessor and promoter of urges. It was shown more explicitly in verse six how the necessities of life, like sustenance of the body, pressure the mind to make us seek different activities and involve us in different situations. These come to us day after day and night after night. It was noted how challenging it is to remain in the pure state of knowledge. We can either transcend all the necessities of life and remain unaffected, without any transformations or transmutations, as the ever-abiding, pure knowledge of consciousness; or we can seek the company of one who has learned the se-

cret of transcending all the changing forms of the eternal flux.

Now we know where we stand. We admit to ourselves that it is very difficult to remain unchanged. We are constantly being dragged away by the flood of events in spite of our great desire to remain unaffected. Some terrible force is carrying us along from situation to situation. Then we were asked to examine this force which distracts us, and we realized that we are attracted by things like beautiful objects, sweet sounds, gentle touches, fascinating fragrances and delicate tastes. It is as if we are constantly being enchanted by the varied and countless distractions presented to us by our senses.

Just as we were given a choice earlier to seek the company of a liberated, realized Master, we are here given another choice. It is whether to just be helplessly swept away, or to make an absolutist break from the tendency to succumb to these kinds of pulls by discerning the value implied in each such pull. When you are attracted towards the beautiful, that thing by itself has no power to attract you if you are not already alive to the quality you see in it. Before you see beauty in something, there must be within you an idea of beauty, a power to see it, and a love for it. The occasion only awakens that dormant sense of beauty in you. If your inside was not thus stimulated and aroused to be projected onto the subject, you would not have been pulled in that

direction in the first place.

So instead of projecting your inside onto an outside object and then clinging to the object, why not use the essence of the object as an opportunity to examine what is lying within you? In other words, you can make the object a mirror to reflect your inner beauty. Then you are not distracted; the very object of distraction serves as a tool for you to go deep inside and see the beauty in yourself. The knowledge of the pure knowledge which we are becomes enriched with its own *vibhūti*, its own possibility of showing its many natures. This kind of verticalizing all tendencies, breaking away from the external objectivity of the pull and reversing the value vision, is a continuation of sitting at the feet of a wise one.

We are still dealing with a problem which surfaced earlier. In verse eight, the five kinds of distraction were given. In the next verse we went a little deeper, to the very cause of why the dormant tendencies in us wake up at all. Then we saw that our life is a kind of nursery ground, filled with the seeds and seedlings of millions of tendencies which are all lying buried in an apparent deep sleep called *susupti*. They germinate and sprout in two directions. One is the conceptual world of subjective fancies, dreams, imaginations, thoughts and reasoning. The other is actualization in the world of space and time, name and form, action and reaction. In this way an inner world and an outer world are filled with the bountiful blossoms of various expressions. These grow to form a tree of life with its six-fold changes of being: birth into a special form of existence, growth and change, replication, decay and disappearance. An aspect that is different from all this is pictured as the one who sits and watches. The pure aspect of knowledge likewise persists, while the changing, impure state proliferates. It does not proliferate to such an extent that the pure state is completely annihilated, however.

Then we were brought to a situation to focus our attention on that pure state. If the five senses are deceptive, and if the five organs of action are giving you vari-

ous promptings toward doing, let us keep them all aside except one. We turned away from all the senses other than hearing, and all the organs of action other than speaking. We tried to see what the content is when we say "I," and what it is when we say "you." 'You' and 'I' are different because I am myself and you are the other. But when I say "you" you say "I," the same as what I say. An 'I' here and an 'I' there. It sounds strange. Even in what we expect to be the other, there resides in its very core an 'I'. I understand the 'I' of the other by reference to my own 'I'. Thus, this 'I' is a great secret. In it is pure knowledge. It is also tainted by what is not pure, and can thus differentiate between 'I' and the other. The secret of the other is in 'I', and the secret of 'I' is also in the 'I'. The One is in it, and the Many also originate from it. In the present verse we are asked to look for an 'other' within ourselves. For this, the *aham* or I is to be seen as *ahanta*, the *ahanta* of this moment and the *ahanta* of the next moment.

*Ahanta* may be translated as 'I-consciousness', but it has a larger implication. To understand it, we must first understand *abhimāna*. *Abhi* means in the present situation; *māna* means measurement. Your 'I' measures the present situation as that which belongs to this moment and has these characteristics. Whenever you experience something there is a kind of knowledge content by which you measure its worth, you assess its meaning and what kind of affectivity you have for it. This value assessment determines the depth and kind of identity you have with that situation. This is the implication when we say *ahanta*, ego-identity.

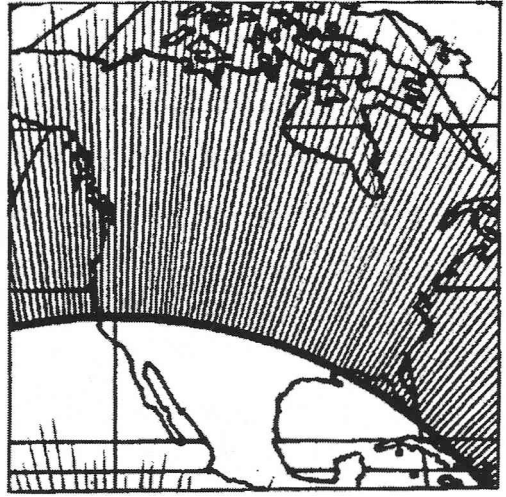
Now you are sitting here and listening to this commentary, so your ego-identity is that of a listener. When you got up from sleep this morning and decided to come for class, you had a different kind of mind; you were thinking of all the things you needed to do to get ready. The content of that time was different from the present context. Yesterday, when you were sitting here and listening to another verse, you were thinking of some other ideas. When

you were at your workplace you had another kind of ego-identity. In the passage of time, you go from one 'I' identity to another, which is here described as *akalum ahanta anēka*.

Over the course of a day we move continuously from one set of interests to another. While our ego-identities are many, we do not think that the person we are in the morning is different from the person we are in the evening. Nor do we think we are in any way different than what we were two or ten or twenty years ago. Why? There is a continuity when we put together the essence of the differing 'I' identities, which is here expressed as *akayālītukayil*. All together, as Narayana Guru describes it, "Despite countless receding I-identities, in the totality of their substance the one 'I' continues," unbroken.

What is 'I' then? 'I' is a consciousness or knowledge of a knowledge of the nature of the present moment. In other words, knowing that you have knowledge of the nature of the present moment, which itself is an expression of that knowledge. This is very important to know. And what is the content of 'I'? The content of 'I' is the knowledge of the knowledge of this moment that that knowledge is of such and such a nature. Where does the 'I' idea reside? It resides in the presentness of the time factor and also the content of what is presented in this moment. Without time and without content, that 'I' does not occur to us.

The content of this moment is one of listening, one of being attentive. Absorbed in contemplation, there are no sensual ticklings, no relishing of anything such as eating or drinking. We are not disturbed by someone coming and threatening us. Thus, this moment has its own quality. We live in that quality. We know it. Therefore, 'I' as an *abhimāni*, as a measurant of this moment, has its own qualitative uniqueness. Yesterday when I was in the marketplace, did it have the same quality we are experiencing now? No, it had another quality. The 'I' of the past was of that time with that nature. Now it is this time with this nature. After two more hours, it



will be of that time with another nature. Within me I am seeing several different 'I's': the 'I' of now, the 'I' of a previous moment, and the 'I' of a moment which is yet to be.

Do I really, seriously think that these are all different 'I's?' No, I don't. Why? Because I have an assurance from inside that there is no break. If I have such an assurance, am I reasoning it? No, it is an intuitive perception. I really do not know whether it is reasoning or imagination or intuition. I just have a clarity, an absolute certainty from within that I am the same. Where does that sameness remain unbroken? It remains in the essence of all I have measured in the past, as my memory. It is in my experience of measuring this moment and my expectation of what I will be measuring in the next moment. There is a contiguity in my memory, experience and expectation. My unitive state is a continuum of memory, experience and expectation.

Now we have a scheme, a method by which we know how *relata* give us a clue about unification or unitive understanding. Within 'me' are many worlds of interests, which can all be linked together as my world, my life story, my biography. They are all tied together with this centerpiece: "this is what I have lived, the great matrix of my memory." So I have a method to unite things which seem to be differ-

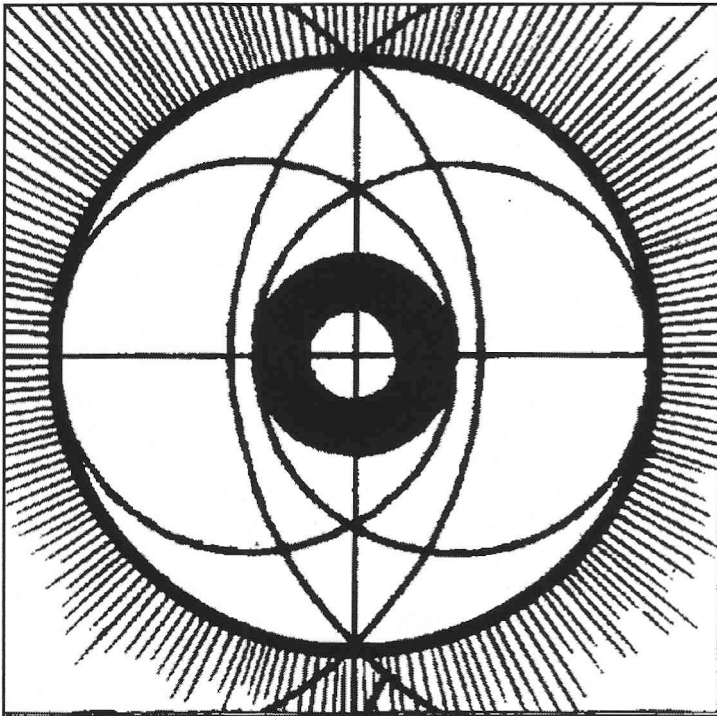
ent from each other. All that I have to look for is one homogeneous principle that resides in everything.

In the previous verse, this pure aspect of me was shown sitting under a tree. It was very cautious, so as not to be caught by the twin aspects of the creeper growing upon the tree. This creeper is like an octopus, with its tentacles extended on all sides: it might catch me and swallow me up. But I wanted to become a contemplative, and broke loose from it by sitting under the tree cautiously and vigilantly, giving up all activity. Now it cannot catch me. I have become a seeker with great diligence, relentlessly looking for the unbroken inner unity. I cannot find it in my ego identity, but I can see a thread of pure

consciousness going through all.

Now we have the correlating secret of the one and the many within ourselves. The one and the many are also lying in the transactional world of time and space where my whole unit becomes one. There are also others with similar kinds of bodies, with different kinds of value-visions and value-formations and different behavioral patterns. The problem becomes complex, but I am not afraid because now I have a scheme to deal with it. It is with this preparedness we are entering into the arena of life, fully armed with a correlative scheme to live out our unitive understanding.

*(Continued in next issue.)*



# *The Eyewitness is the Atman*

*Even though we do not say the word,  
the word meaning is existing.*

*Even though we do not see a thing,  
there is a space for seeing.*

*The word we do speak is also the unseen indeed.*

*This is the value of all values.*

*The eyewitness is the Atman.*

*What desires to know becomes the knowledge.*

*How to know the knowledge of the knowledge?*

*The very form of knowledge is sight and hearing,  
on which point, both meet.*

*That point is the light of Atman.*

*When the silence is filled, everything will become still.*

*The stillness of the consciousness is secured in silence.*

## *Universal Consciousness*

*The central point of the universe  
is nothing but a tiny dot.*

*It is covered by boundless sky.*

*In order to know this, a wave should arise.*

*What arises as wave is nothing  
but the rising of the mind*

*Whoever has seen the universe  
becomes the universe itself.*

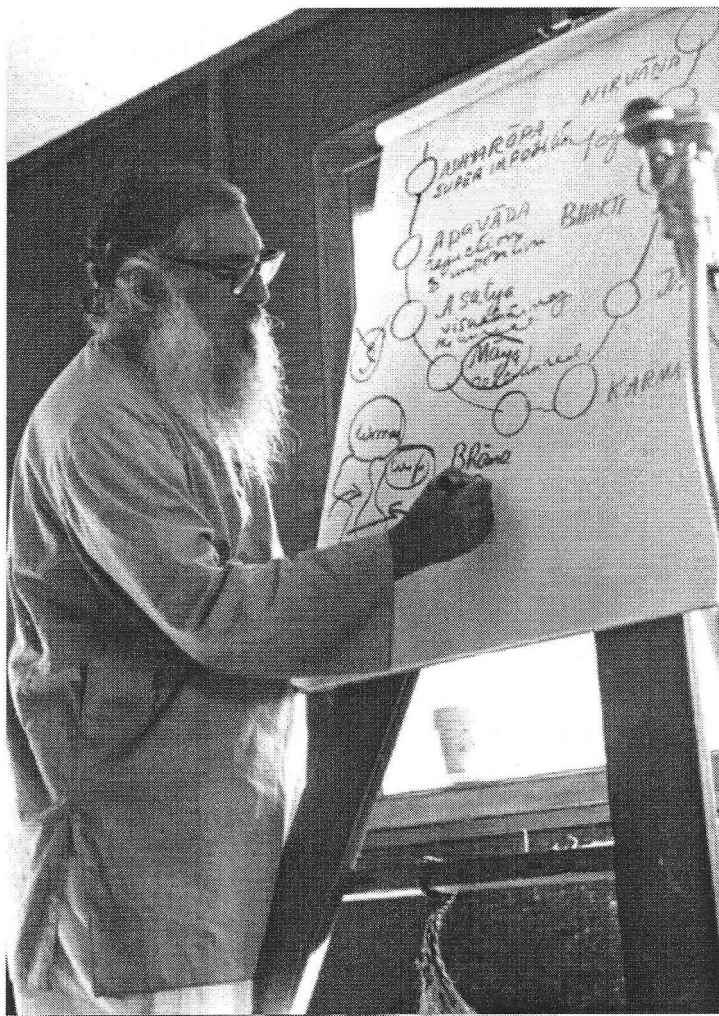
*To go behind the sight of the eye,  
one should have an imagination.*

*There is a flowering, wish-fulfilling tree  
which gives whatever is desired.*

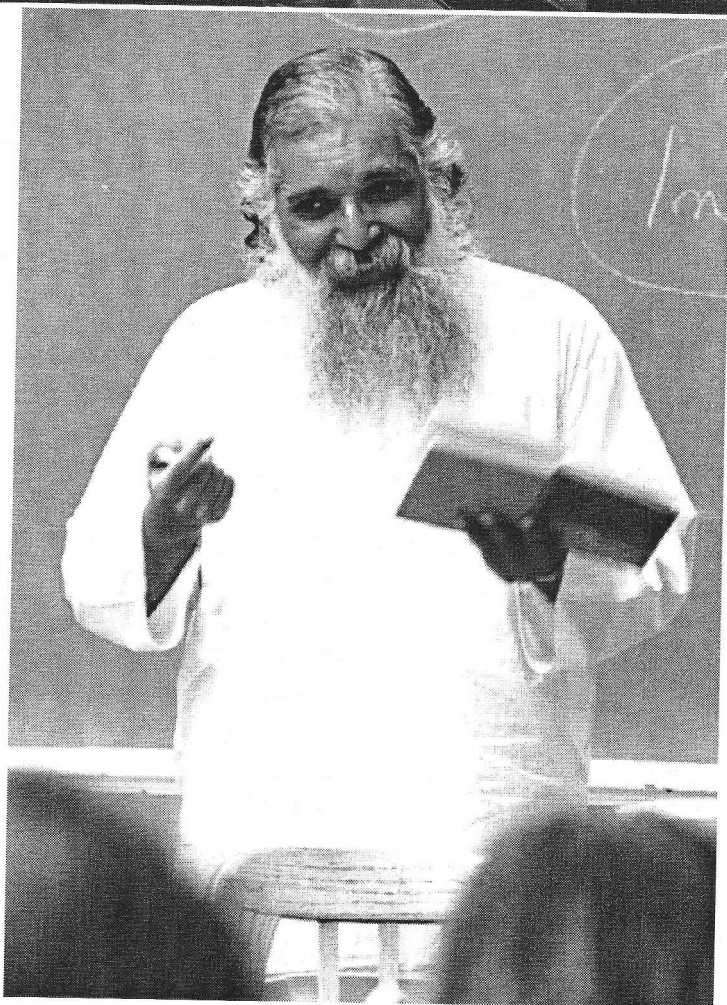
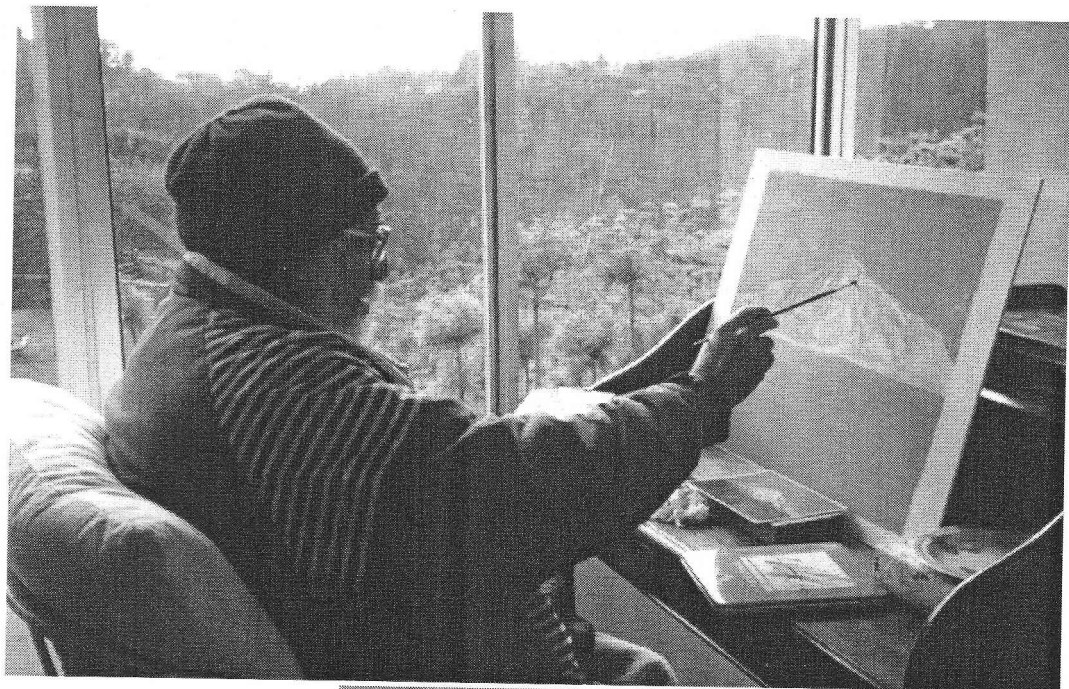
*This tree is the very root of the dot.*

*Just as the honored beauty of a flower  
expresses the value of the plant,  
so do the honored values of this universe  
show the universal consciousness.*

*Tyagisvara*







# Guru Nitya

*K.P. Ramakrishnan*

*Wisdom, on attaining perfection,  
as a law of its own,  
blossoms as splendid flowers  
which have the fragrance of love.*

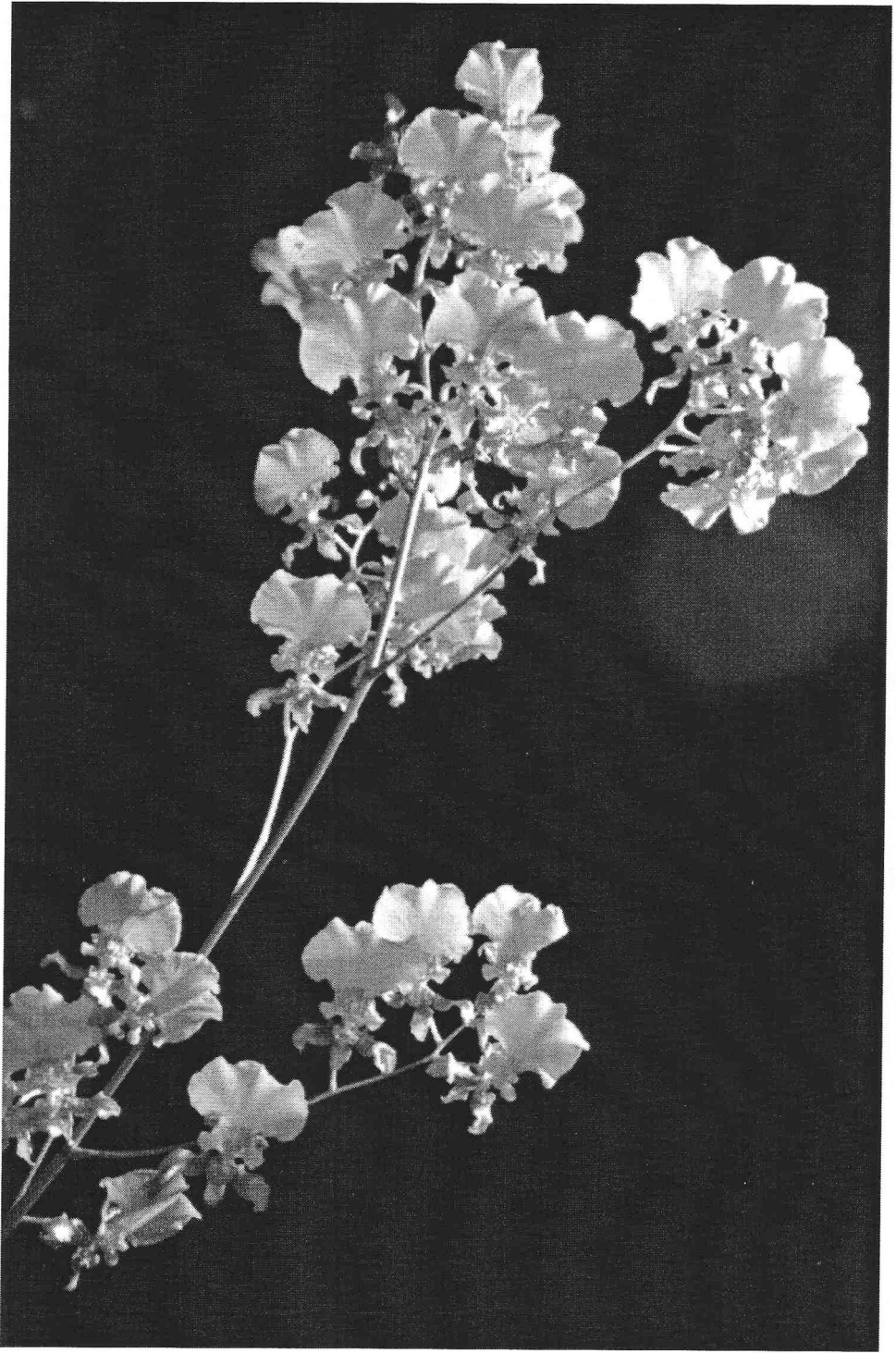
*In the midst of the complaint  
that there is no one to love and to be loved by,  
it is a miracle to become the lover of all.  
To shower unceasing love on all whom one comes across,  
tying them all forever with the unseen thread of love,  
is an even greater miracle.*

*Giving noblest form to the saying of Kumaran Asan,  
"the world rises from love,  
with its basis as wisdom,"  
Guru Nitya created a world of love, ever-expanding.  
And in it, he shines like a luminous star!*

*On that ever-growing tree of love,  
not only the birds made their nests,  
but the blind, mentally diseased,  
poets, artists, scientists and philosophers;  
men, women, children,  
all found a serene, sacred place of their own.*

*The soothing, shady branches of that tree of love  
became a safe and secure shelter  
for people far and near.  
Its caressing.....like a cool breeze!  
The fragrance of its smiling flowers.....like silent whispering!*

*Guru Nitya, who created a world of love and beauty,  
who invited us all towards that joyous world,  
who took hold of our hands to lead us towards peace and freedom,  
is not just a memory now.  
He is not just somebody to be praised  
as we look into our past memories.*



*The cloud, when pregnant with water,  
cannot hold it but has to rain.  
It pours refreshing delight on the watery marsh  
and on the burning sand as well.  
It is indifferent to whether the soil is good or bad.  
Whether one deserves its cooling comfort or not  
is beyond the grasp of our reasoning minds.  
Like the rain that showers from above  
with such aptitude and spontaneity,  
Guru's love was flowing all around.*

*By giving love, he made it ever-increasing,  
thus glorifying the greatness of love.  
Guru used to say:  
"Showing love is not all,  
it should come from deep within."*

*His divine medicine of love  
when sprinkled, kindled the human heart.  
It cured the natural tendency  
of the obstinate and perverse human mind  
to slant towards the old rotten attachments,  
its lethargy and morbidity that prevents our growth.  
All these were exposed and shown to us  
and a divine correction was happening.*

*The personality masks that we put on ourselves,  
even the small mistakes and errors which we think insignificant,  
the thorn of hatred in our minds,  
all these were cropped off  
by the magical touch of whole-hearted acceptance  
of each of us as we are.*

*He was available to anyone anytime  
who really wanted to be freed from the torments of samsara.  
Because of his openness  
he could walk straight to the core of our hearts  
and a silent communion happened  
through a kind of love-dialogue,  
after which, all the hellish torments of the past  
were evaporated and vanished.  
Such a great attractive force, beyond words, was Guru Nitya.*

*From the clutches of chaos and confusion  
Guru was leading us towards peace and contentment,  
towards the world of wisdom.*

*That which is most desirable and auspicious in us  
which has ever been there and which is most noble to us,  
the innermost core of our being  
which we are unaware of,  
was shown to us for no cause.*

*When the words of Vedas and Vedanta  
were revalued and restated in the light of present day human life  
the essence of yesterday turned out to be the precious values of today.*

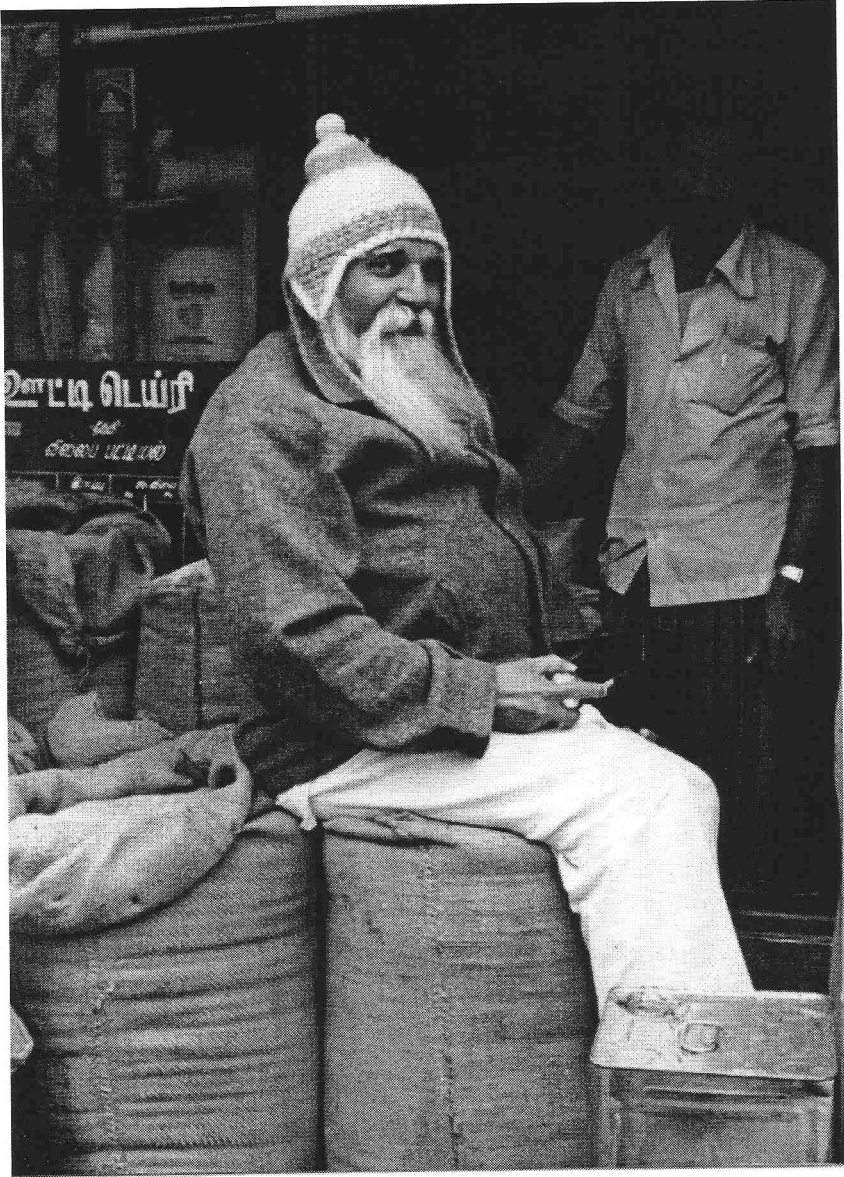
*When his very heart beating  
took the form of words and flowed out,  
words were rejuvenated with new meanings,  
which exploded in the listener's heart.  
By their ever-fresh and provoking qualities  
even the passerby was attracted –  
Guru was creating a new upanishadic situation.*

*Such a Guru  
will never be content to live just in our memories.  
Our memorial speeches  
are nothing but putting new attractive masks on ourselves.*

*What Guru expects from us is love,  
love for ourselves and for the world.  
What he taught is  
to be responsible for ourselves and for the world.  
It is nothing new, nor is it old.*

*In the path of light which Guru lit,  
let us move ahead, unwavering.  
In the world of Truth  
and shining forth in Wisdom,  
let us live in ananda.*

*asato mā sat gamaya  
tamaso mā jyotirgamaya  
mṛtyormā amṛtāmgamaya  
AUM śantiḥ śantiḥ śantiḥ*



# Śraddhānjali

## for Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

AUM Guru Brahmā, Guru Viṣṇu, Guru Devo Maheśvara,  
Guru sākṣāt param Brahma,  
Tasmai Śri Gurave namaḥ  
AUM śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ.

Pujya Guruji,  
Where is the inner light you spoke of,  
When the outer light fails?

“The light has gone from our lives,  
And there is darkness everywhere.”

It is *dhyānam* time,  
But when I light the *dīvyā*,  
There is no *jyothi*, only *tamas*.  
I close my eyes,  
And a montage of images  
Flashes across the screen of my mind.

That episode you narrated from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*  
Where King Janaka asks Sage Yājñavalkya:  
What light does a person have?  
And the Sage replies:

“He has the light of the sun.”

But when the sun has set,  
What light does a person have?”

“The moon indeed is his light.”

“But when the sun has set, and the moon has set,  
What light does a person have?”

“Fire indeed is his light.”

But when the sun has set, and the moon has set,  
and the light has gone out,  
What light does a person have?”

“Speech indeed is his light. . . .

For . . . when a voice is raised, then one goes straight towards it.”

“Quite so, Yājñavalkya, but when the sun has set,  
the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, and the speech is hushed,  
what light does a person have?”

“The *ātman* indeed is his light.”

That festival celebrating the symphony of values  
Spanning the gamut from science to music  
Or yet again, that poetry festival  
Where free minds communed with kindred spirits  
In the *lingua francas* of the soul.

Guruji, how many such cameos, vignettes,  
collages and montages which run in flash-back  
on the screen of my mind, shall I recall?

The first time I came to see you at the ashram,  
And battered my head against the rigid ramparts of religion:  
"Where is this all-merciful God  
who inflicts so much suffering  
on those who have harmed no one?"  
And your quiet reply in measured tones:

"Get rid of your convent school-girl notion  
of God and religion, and then come to me."

Or at the library in the Gurukula:  
the books are neatly catalogued,  
books on all the sciences,  
psychology, philosophy, history, economics,  
the literatures of all lands.  
I am doing reference work for a literary conference.  
What bliss to work in such ambience.  
You walk in with a book of poems from your personal collection,  
"See if this book is any help in your work."  
As it turns out, it is invaluable.

Or that time you inspired me with a visit after your morning walk  
And gave a brilliant discourse in my garden  
To the background music of chirping birds.

What was your special magic that you made  
Each one of your śiṣyas feel  
that your discourse was tailor-made for them?  
Psychologist that you were,  
(Ah! The pain of the past tense)  
You sensed the many reservations and defenses in my mind,  
But you were patient with my  
Questing, questioning stance . . .  
Like a leitmotif or a theme-tune,  
Your wise words are the sound track to the flashbacks . . .

"When you close your eyes against the outer light,  
You should be able to see the inner light."

"But Guruji, you are at the top of the spiritual ladder,  
And I am floundering at the bottom."

"I did not reach the top in one leap.  
If you are prepared, I will guide you to the top."

One step forwards, two step down,  
One step forwards, two steps back. . . .  
And firmly back to square one.



Pain . . . . loss . . . . regret for the might-have-been,  
the lost opportunities . . . .

The last time I came to see you with a book, and  
camellias from my garden, which you loved so well . . . .  
Books and flowers . . . .

You were sitting in your study,  
Against the back-drop of your favorite poets:  
Cavafy, Rilke, Rumi, Neruda . . . .  
You gave me a copy of your latest book, and we spoke a while.  
I left soon, saying,  
"I don't want to tire you,"  
And you replied:  
"I'm very tired."

I did not realize that it would be the last time I'd see you.  
The rest of the images splinter through the prism of my tears . . . .

Guruji, you have gone

*"Among the radiant, ever venturing on,  
Somewhere with morning, as such spirits will."*

You are free, and we must live.  
Those who revere you most know  
That the death you have dealt  
Is greater than the death which has swallowed you.

Guruji, I salute you one last time  
with words from the *R̥g Veda* which you taught me:

*May your eye go to the sun, your life's breath to the wind;*

and in the *lingua franca* of our favorite medium, poetry:

"Why then? Why there?  
Why thus," we cry, "did he die?"  
The heavens are silent.  
What he was, he was:  
What he is fated to become  
Depends on us.  
Remembering his death,  
How we choose to live  
Will decide its meaning.  
When a wise man dies,  
Lamentation and praise,  
Sorrow and joy are one.

(W.H. Auden)

*Indu K. Mallah*



# Adoration, Grace and Peace

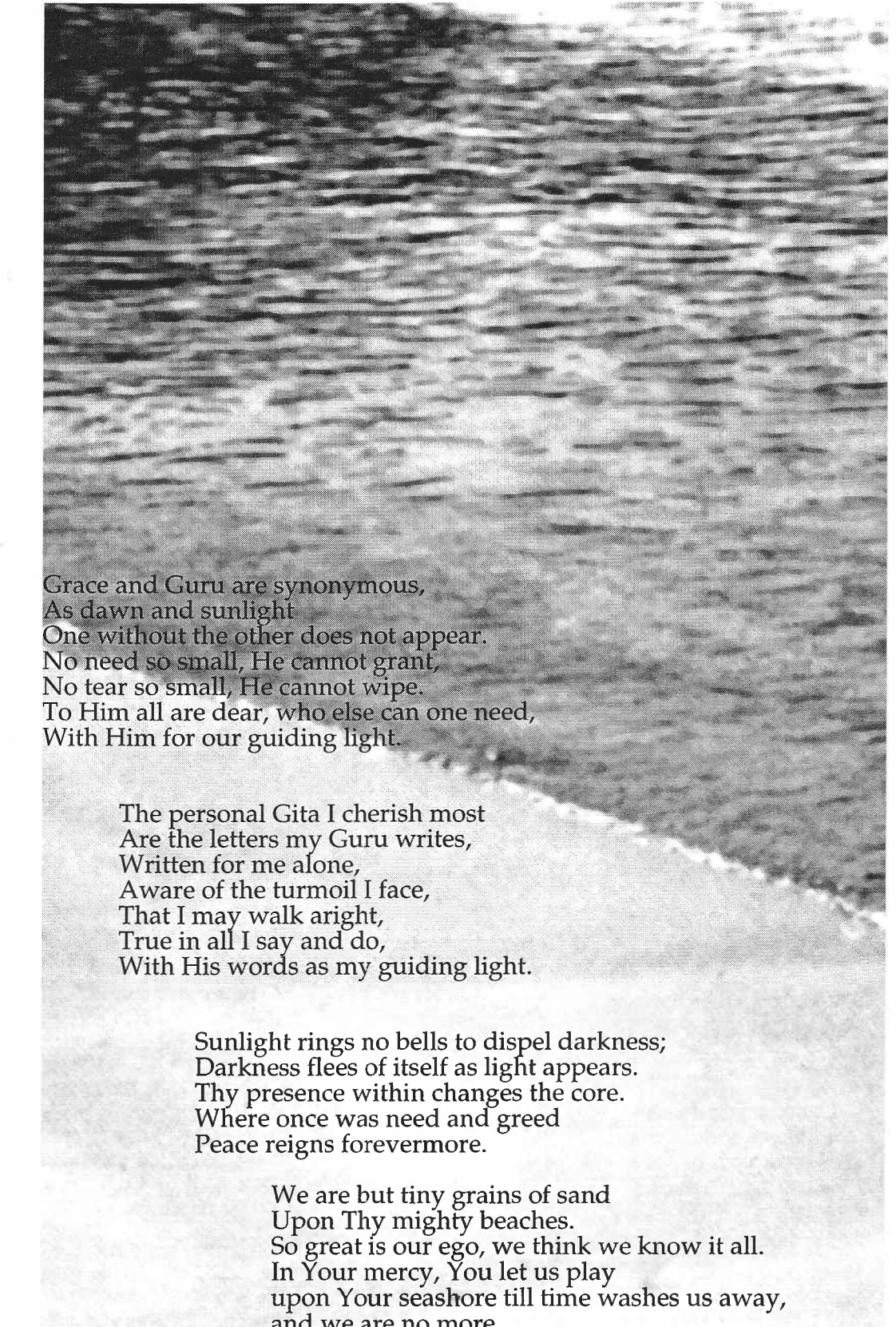
Maya Jaychandran

Thoughts like rivers flow to the sea;  
May my thoughts flow only to Thee.  
Gliding round corners, gurgling over rocks  
Roaring down cascades, to calm surfaces below,  
No need to struggle any more;  
Water into water, forever has flown!

We put Thee in temple, church and mosque,  
But Thou art at once over and beyond,  
Thy love can know no boundaries,  
No limit to Thy care.  
All else is our ignorance  
Of Thee, O mystic essence.

Even as water flowing over rocks  
Makes a hole in them, drop by drop,  
May Thy words of wisdom  
Melt a stony heart  
and make it soft and pliable,  
Thy grace to display.

Just a bubble on the surface,  
Of a river, cool and deep.  
Just a moment to deliver,  
All the commitments I have to keep.  
To all around, may love abound.  
Life's too short for hate or despair.  
Just prayerful, to be immersed  
Some day, in Thy river's riverness!



Grace and Guru are synonymous,  
As dawn and sunlight  
One without the other does not appear.  
No need so small, He cannot grant,  
No tear so small, He cannot wipe.  
To Him all are dear, who else can one need,  
With Him for our guiding light.

The personal Gita I cherish most  
Are the letters my Guru writes,  
Written for me alone,  
Aware of the turmoil I face,  
That I may walk aright,  
True in all I say and do,  
With His words as my guiding light.

Sunlight rings no bells to dispel darkness;  
Darkness flees of itself as light appears.  
Thy presence within changes the core.  
Where once was need and greed  
Peace reigns forevermore.

We are but tiny grains of sand  
Upon Thy mighty beaches.  
So great is our ego, we think we know it all.  
In Your mercy, You let us play  
upon Your seashore till time washes us away,  
and we are no more.

# An Intelligent Person's Guide to the Hindu Religion

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

MAHĀ VIṢṆU

## From Varuṇa to Viṣṇu

We pursue knowledge from the known to the unknown. First each one of us becomes familiar with our gross body and its needs. As we grow up we become thoughtful. Sometimes we live completely lost in thought and even forget our body. Slowly a feeling comes that there is something richer, more lasting and more valuable behind the body and even behind the mind. A new quest arises to dive deep into this unknown region. This search opens up new phases of experience which may be termed as spiritual.

In the evolution of the concept of Vedic gods also all these stages were passed through. Human experience may be broadly divided into cosmological (belonging to the phenomenal world) and psychological (belonging to the numinous world of the spirit). First gods were conceived at the phenomenal level. In other words natural forces were personified. But as contemplation became mature these concepts found their counterparts within the human psyche. As a result the gods as well as their worship slowly got identified with various spiritual aspects within the worshipper's own self. This is very evident when we make a pilgrimage from the *R̥g Veda* to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Our successive landmarks will be *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* and the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, the *Yoga Sūtras*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Such a study is sure to make us astonished

to see how the gross idea of a physical phenomena undergoes a series of revisions and reevaluations until it represents the most secret aspect of the Absolute.

## Evolution of Vedic Thought

The story of the first evolution of the Vedic gods is as follows. The Vedic Aryans in their practical life were aggressively positive and scrupulously indulgent in luxuries. But they had also a brighter side which was incomparably rich. They were endowed with observing eyes, a high sense of humor, rich in imagination and they were profoundly poetic in their appreciation of all values. As they looked at the world which was ever changing towards some purposive end they began to suspect an invisible hand guiding and regulating everything from behind. On earth they saw the panoramic cycle of changing seasons. The sky was never alike for two moments. But they were sure that the change was in the changeless. Their observations gave them the idea of the changeless sky with changing patterns of clouds and light. The earth was found to be the same with changing vegetations, physical formations and biological evolutions. The changeless sea appeared changing only because of its waves. So they conceived the idea of an unbroken Supreme pervading everywhere. This they called the Aditi. Aditi means the unbroken, the indivisible. Āditya or the giver of light came from Aditi. Āditya need not necessarily be the sun of the firmament. It can also be the luminous principle of the sky of consciousness (*cidākāśa*).

## Sky Gods

The sky above for the early Aryans

was not a mere vacuity or empty space. It was a benign and compassionate benefactor sending rain, warmth and light. So they also suspected the sky to be an eternal witness watching all our deeds and words. This all-knowing aspect of Aditi became an adorable deity known as Varuṇa. Varuṇa knew not only their prayers and wishes but he was also responsive. For these pioneers in theology Varuṇa also became a moral dispenser. To evoke his grace they devised *yajñas* (fire sacrifices). Thus fire was ushered in as a new god, Agni. The drink poured into the fire as oblation also became another god,

Soma. The wind that accompanied the fire became Marut and the sun that brought light and life to earth became Pūṣan. Thus a pantheon of gods came into existence. The list of gods contained others like Mṛtyu, Rudra, Indra and Viṣṇu. It is amazing to see how these grossly conceived gods of the macrocosm later found a very relevant contemplative status in the microcosm presented by the *Upaniṣads*. (See *Bṛhadāranyaka* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*).

#### Viṣṇu

As time passed Viṣṇu began to appear



*Viṣṇu, in Vitala Temple, Hampi, Karnataka*

more and more in the chanting of *Brāhmaṇas*. In the *Bṛhadāranyaka* he first appears with the minor role of preparing the womb of the expectant mother. We get a further improvement of the Viṣṇu concept in the *Taittirīya* and the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. Only much later in the *Maitri Upaniṣad* Viṣṇu gets the status of one of the three in the presidium of gods. The idea of Viṣṇu undergoes further revaluation in the light of the *Sāṅkhya Darśana*.

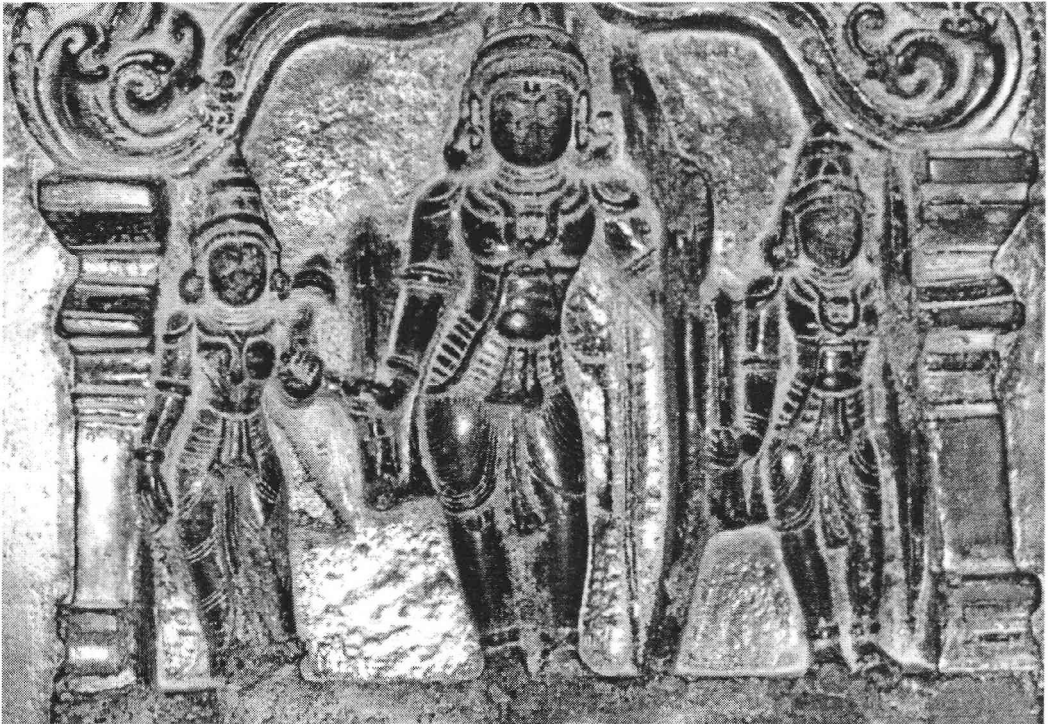
### The Sāṅkhyan Influence

The *Sāṅkhyan* rationalism was the first scientific approach made in India towards the study of mind and matter. This study went to the extent of even denying God. Vyāsa found the arguments of the *Sāṅkhya* substantial enough to be given serious consideration. So he incorporated both the *Sāṅkhyan* and the *Yoga* systems into his elucidation of *Vedānta* both in the *Brahma Sūtra* as well as the *Mahābhārata* which includes the *Bhagavad Gītā*. As a result of this Mahā Viṣṇu is lifted out of ritualistic theology to a profound metaphysical representation, the *puruṣottama*. The *Sāṅkhya* also in turn became theistic. This revision

of *Vaiṣṇavism* and the *Sāṅkhyan* school was brought about by Vyāsa with various literary devices as can be seen in the *Mahābhārata*, and more clearly in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

### Mahā Viṣṇu Revalued in the Rāmāyaṇa

To know the real value of Śrī Rāma we should review the *Rāmāyaṇa* in the light of the cultural history of India. Imagine two camps of hostile people – the fair-skinned *agni-hotri* Aryans, who came in their chariots and horses with a few women of their own race to settle down in the fertile valleys of the Indo-Gangetic plane and the other, the large masses of the dark-skinned natives, who lived a simple life adhering to the negative ideals of their contemplative Guru – *Paśupati Śiva*. The Aryans with their tact and goodwill got the support of many of the local chiefs and even entered into matrimonial alliances with the natives. For further cultural synthesis and the spiritual integration the Vedic Aryans were willing to identify Śiva with Rudra (a Vedic god of *tamasic* quality) and Pārvatī with the wisdom teacher Uma of the *Kena Upaniṣad*.



*Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, Vitāla Temple*

Deterioration spoiled the cultural core of both peoples. The Aryans became a pleasure loving people, addicted to *soma*, women and the delicacies of their dishes. Polygamy and polyandry were very common. The pre-Aryan people were also showing grave signs of cultural decay. They strayed away from their contemplative discipline. The opposition they showed to the Aryan dominance was too negative. So it became necessary for the wise well-wishers of the Indian humanity to resort to a major attempt to reconcile these two camps to become an integrated society on the one hand and weed out all exaggerations that had entered the life of the people. So, with this intention Vālmiki, a *ṛṣi* of tribal origin who was neutral to both the contending classes, composed the heart-touching story of Śrī Rāma who set the perfect model of a high ideal to the Indian people.

### Secrets of Rāmāyaṇa

Śrī Rāma opens a new page in the cultural history of India by becoming a full-fledged contemplative wisdom-seeker even in his adolescence which provided the theme for the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa*. His marriage with Sītā (a peasant girl metaphorically named as the child of earth), the adopted daughter of Janaka, the native chief who supported the Vedic *ṛṣis* like Yājñavalkya, indicates the confluence of two diverse traditions. Immediately after the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, Śrī Rāma had to prove his real worth by answering the challenge of Paraśurāma, the *brahmin-par-excellence*, who perfected his wisdom at the feet of Śiva himself and weeded out the *rajasic* aspect of the Aryan system by killing *ksatriya* Kings in twenty-eight rounds. Finally, Paraśurāma blesses Śrī Rāma and entrusts to him the mission of re-valuing Brāhmanism with a unitive outlook. Śrī Rāma took upon himself the great task of undergoing strict discipline to make himself a model for all. He went into a self-imposed exile, as a true son to save the moral dignity of his father. To the unkind stepmother he gave reverence and love. To the brother for whom he was per-

secuted, Śrī Rāma gave his blessings and touching affection. To respect the spiritual values of the non-Vedic *munis* of the South he matted his own hair and dressed in tree barks. Only with tears one can read his meeting with Guha. Śrī Rāma embracing the outcaste chief Guha is the soul of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is not a mere physical union of a King and a ferryman. It symbolizes the great union of the best values in the spirituality of the Aryan and the pre-Vedic traditions of India. This is confirmed by the fact that Prince Bharata, following the example of his brother, matted his own hair, before entering the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest and with reverence touched the feet of Guha.

### Rāvaṇa

The central theme of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the war between Śrī Rāma and Rāvaṇa. Who was Rāvaṇa? Rāvaṇa was the principal devotee of Śiva. In his one-pointed devotion to Śiva and severity of penance he had no rivals. But he made Śaivism a closed circle, and set a wrong example or standard of penance, such as mortifying the body and disregarding scriptural authorities. To revalue and integrate the great spiritual tradition of Śiva to be in harmony with the Vedic tradition it was necessary to defeat and eliminate extremists like Rāvaṇa. For this Śrī Rāma never used the *Śrī Cakra* (his divine weapon as Mahā Viṣṇu) or the *Rāmabāṇa* (his divine arrow). Instead of that he installed the Śiva liṅga at Rameswar (in South India) and with proper worship obtained the sanction of Śiva to eliminate Rāvaṇa with Śiva's own weapon *Paśupata*. (Śiva in ancient India was Paśupati – the lord of all beings). The event of Rāvaṇa's death marks an effective integration of India's rival traditions.

Śrī Rāma's beheading the *Śudra Muni* is also to be understood in this light. He was standing on head without food and water and was giving utter mortification to his body. Śrī Rāma as a Guru being a *Rājaṛṣi* led him to *Mōkṣa* and as a King he punished the *Śudra* for resorting to terrible disciplines not supported by the *Śāstrās*.

Thus Śrī Rāma for the first time in India's history brought about a unification of diverse cultural and spiritual trends. He became the connecting link between man and man. Even after several centuries we still hear Śrī Rāma's name sung in praise in every house from Kanya Kumari to Kailas.

### **Vaiṣṇavism revalued in the Mābābhārata**

Vyāsa who played the major role of correlating philosophical systems, coordinating the *Sāstrās* and revising spiritual concepts, gave a new orientation to the *Vaiṣṇavite* tradition by subjecting it to a thorough-going metaphysical interpretation, using freely *Sāṅkhyān* and *Yoga* terminologies and also giving fair consideration to other *darśanās*.

Vyāsa first instills in us a love for Kṛṣṇa by making his personality intimate and dear to us with various stories of his love and adventures. After creating a psychological rapport he switches on to a dramatic literary device whereby Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who had long remained for us only the son of Vasudeva and Devaki and the friend of the Gopis and murderer of Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra, is presented first in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as Arjuna's friend and charioteer. Slowly Vyāsa develops the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as a dialectical exposition of wisdom by raising Kṛṣṇa finally to the status of a *Guru* and Arjuna to that of a *śiṣya*. Then subsequently, in the chapters from the seventh to the eleventh Śrī Kṛṣṇa is treated as the Absolute (*brahman*), supreme person (*puruṣōttama*), the sustaining principle of the phenomenal as well as noumenal worlds. The most interesting aspect of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is the significant omission of the theological concept of Viṣṇu as the four-handed God with *śaṅkh* (conch), *cakra* (discus), *gada* (mace) and *paṅkajam* (lotus).

### **Mahā Viṣṇu's Symbols**

Mahā Viṣṇu is depicted in mythology and in temple imagery in human form with four hands holding a mace, a lotus, a disc and a conch-shell. He is usually

shown either as reclining on the serpent Ananta or riding on his vehicle Garuḍa, the white eagle. He may either appear alone (as usually in South India) or in the company of his divine consort Lakṣmi.

### **Gada (Mace)**

The *gada* is an earth symbol which shows Viṣṇu's sovereignty on the physical plane. He is the God of the manifested world. Though the physical world is impermanent it is not non-existent. As its substratum there is a necessary reality. This is none other than the reality (*sat*) of Viṣṇu or Nārāyana who is the immortal indweller of everything (*antaryāmi amṛtah*).

### **Padma (Lotus)**

The lotus is a symbol of both the sky as well as water. As a sky-symbol the lotus stands for the wisdom of a *Guru*. As the flower of a waterplant it represents the best blossom of *bhakti*. The lotus has a silent message for us. The roots of the lotus are buried deep in the mud. So are our roots lost in the mud of society. The stem of the lotus flower is shaken and tossed by the waves. So are we subjected to the emotional fluctuations of *samsāra*. But the flower of the lotus stands far above the reach of mud and water. Its bosom is only opened to the glory of the benign sun. Even so should we keep the lotus of our heart unaffected by the dualities of life and must offer it to the Absolute.

### **Cakra (Disc)**

The *cakra* or disc is a fire symbol. It deals with the realm of action. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna "The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O, Arjuna, by His power of illusion, causing all beings to revolve, as though mounted on a wheel of *māyā*." This wheel is identical with Mahā Viṣṇu's *cakra*. The *cakra* rotates on the axis of His will. His will keeps the world moving. The Lord is the Supreme Truth or *satya* and the whirling wheel is the reality of functional existence, the *ṛtam*



### The Śaṅkh or Conch-Shell

The conch-shell is an air-symbol representing the declaration of the Supreme word of the Lord. Śrī Kṛṣṇa declared the great message of the *Bhagavad Gītā* by first sounding his divine conch *Pāncajanya*.

### Lakṣmi

Lakṣmi is the divine consort of Mahā Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is not a God of negation. He affirms life. His grace brings to us the goods belonging to the phenomenal world (*preyas*) and the higher values of the noumenal too (*śreyas*). The embodiment of

this grace is Lakṣmi. According to mythology Lakṣmi is the most precious value which emerged from the churning of the milk ocean. Our own mind is an ocean of milk. When the divine and demonic forces in us clash and churn our mind, if we could dialectically balance our *buddhi* or intellect between the perceptual and the actual and keep our reason firmly rooted in the adoption to the Absolute (Viṣṇu), our effort will be blessed with the grace of Lakṣmi to enjoy both the *aparā* (here) and the *parā* (beyond).

(Continued in next issue.)



*Mahā Viṣṇu*

# East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



The 27th *Mahāsamādhi* Day of the Founder of the Narayana Gurukula, Pujya Nataraja Guru, will be celebrated at Fernhill, Tamilnadu, on 26th March, 2000. All are cordially invited to participate and also to contribute towards the expenses of running a free kitchen and distributing clothes to the needy.

In order to accommodate the outpouring of interest in celebrating Guru Nitya's May 14th *Samādhi* Day, the Fernhill Gurukula is opening the entire month of May for that purpose. Programs will be encouraged to evolve naturally continuing a bright and happy tradition of May Music, Dance and Poetry Festivals. Artists, dancers, musicians, poets, cooks and storytellers are invited to come, bringing their magic, to share joy and revel in the beauty of the gifted place of Fernhill Gurukula. It will be an opportunity for everyone who comes to give expression to their love and talents and wishes for a peaceful world of beauty and harmony, beginning with what's inside each one of us.

Several landscape designers, building architects, sculptors, gardeners, botanists, habitat restoration experts, and carpenters have been developing and sharing ideas for a permanent memorial for Guru Nitya at Fernhill. Nothing specific has been fi-

nalized. Inspiration to proceed without a sense of urgency is being drawn from the Donovan song, "If You Want Your Dream to Be":

If you want your dream to be,  
build it slow and surely.  
Small beginnings, greater ends.  
Heartfelt work grows slowly.

A general landscape and land-use plan has been developed to guide the specific development of Guru Nitya's memorial, and also the long-term, sustainable use and restoration of the land in keeping with his wishes. All who can physically come to Fernhill this spring are invited to join the outdoor work of landscaping around his *samādhi* place and restoring native Nilgiris forest habitat. As our globe is a community of interdependence, each person's contribution from near or far is valued and called for.

Divine Grace is eternal, and the Guru Principle lives within each of us. It manifests as the visible world with its innate laws and natural wonders. Its unmanifested nature is dynamic Silence, pure and blissful. These celebrations provide a beautiful opportunity to rededicate ourselves to That.

# New Millennium Greetings

## Swami Muni Narayana Prasad

Welcome to everyone, full of new hopes for the New Year, for the New Century, for the New Millennium.

Greeting each other at the New Year is common practice the world over. Underneath all such greetings is hope for a brighter future; but what underlies the passing of years, decades, centuries, and millennia is our memory of the past, of history. Our living on the other hand is in the present, between the past and the future.

All our hopes are nothing but our fancying. The same fancying mind formulates history by dividing the flow of time into years, decades, centuries, and millennia. Counting time in this manner and the resultant idea that we are at a new millennium are all the outcome of our fancying that the birth of Jesus marks the focal point of counting years. The flow of time, being beginningless and endless, has no such focal point; Jesus' birth was just like any other event in the world. Mankind began to think of his birth as the focal point of history's timeline with certain higher value notions as a norm.

Indians prefer to think of all events in nature as the sporting of the Goddess 'Prakṛti'. Does that Goddess have such a notion of a focal point in her mind when unfolding all events? Does she know the dawning of the new millennium at all? Possibly, not. Narayana Guru thinks of it like this:

*Yesterday, today, tomorrow, this other day,  
that comes ever new –*

*do not think in such terms.*

*Whatever is counted and measured  
incessantly,*

*is all but a delusion;*

*that undifferentiable is what is.*

*Ātmopadeśa Śatakam, verse 58*

The first sunrise in the new millennium will be like any other sunrise. Transfiguring such imaginary junctures into occasions for unrestrained euphoria is stage managed by big business magnates. The computer industry across the world has cashed in to the tune of billions of dollars thanks to the fears aroused when they set off the Y2K alarms. We have unwittingly allowed industrialists and their vested interests to guide our life. It is no wonder then, living as we do under the yoke of industrial interests, that we find ourselves living restless and worried lives not knowing why.

We have to make ourselves human beings who live our lives with the awareness of who we are. Knowing one's self is what is called self-knowledge or '*ātma jñāna*'. As a master par excellence, Narayana Guru exposed this self-knowledge in a way that would be understandable to the scientific mind of modern man. He showed us how to live one's life as an applied vision of this wisdom. His chief disciple and successor, Nataraja Guru, unraveled the scientificity of that wisdom. Guru Nitya gave emphasis to the bearing of wisdom on our everyday life.

Reality, wisdom, science, scientificity, all these are not the monopoly of any particular people, country, community, or religion. They are universal. An understanding of their universality takes us to perceiving life and its problems with a universal outlook, and it was to such a vision that Nataraja Guru was leading us gently. We, his disciples, are committed to follow it closely.

Thinkers may have many opinions about the nature of Reality. Each of their opinions can form an "*ism*." The possibility of many such "*isms*" does in no way make Reality many. The knowers of Reality like

Narayana Guru, are beyond all "isms", and their philosophical vision is in no "ism" at all. Yet, attempts to confine the guru's philosophical vision within the bounds of some "isms" are seen. Viewing the Guru and his vision through the colored glass of communalism had begun as early as when he was existing in his physical body, and he had reacted against it very strongly. The latest trend is to give him the color of secularism, to make his teachings into political ideals and party platforms. How the Guru who is beyond all "isms" treats these trends has been made sufficiently clear more than once in his works. One such clarification is:

*The bottom is real, the top is real,  
the end is real, that is real,  
this is real – such alternations go on,  
while all that exists is  
the primeval Reality alone.  
Ātmopadeśa Satakam, verse 19*

The danger lurking behind the above-said tendencies and the like are to be seen in advance and nipped in the bud. None else other than the Narayana Gurukula

seems to have the boldness and presence of mind to do it.

Nataraja Guru considered the prime objectives of the Narayana Gurukula Movement to be upholding the transparency and universality of the philosophical vision of Narayana Guru and its value in actual life, and to represent it time and again in terms understandable to the human mind of the day. This clarity of purpose follows the ancient tradition of India and the intention of the original guru, Narayana Guru. This process is to be continued unceasingly through the hierarchical succession of gurus and disciples.

May the Guru's Grace be upon all of us, to guide and enable us to carry out the intentions of our original Guru and the founder of the Narayana Gurukula Movement, with no lapse and no violation of their purity.

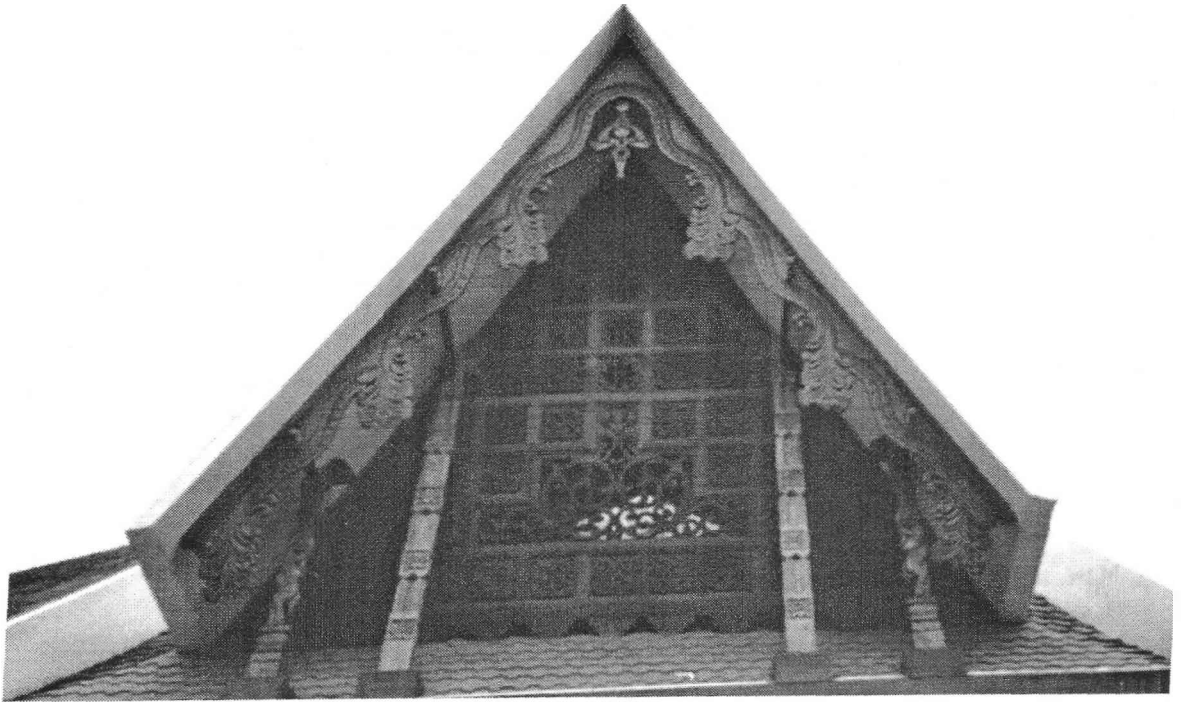
May the cooperation of the members of the Greater Gurukula family be with us for support.

May the truthful ideas and ideals of our Gurus be with all of us to guide us in the New Millennium.

Invoking Guru-Blessings to everyone.



*Fire Ceremony, 1999 Annual Convention, Varkala, Kerala*



*Peter Moras  
Raising the  
Flag at  
Brahma-  
vidya  
Mandir  
to Open the  
1999  
Annual  
Convention,  
Varkala,  
Kerala*



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## Gurukula Archive Update

The Portland Branch of the Narayana Gurukula Archives received its first donation since its inception at the beginning of the new millennium. John Griffin sent us a cassette tape of Nataraja Guru speaking on karma and reincarnation in December of 1968. This seems an excellent omen for the inception of the Archive.

On hand here from the Portland Gurukula's own preexisting archive are a number of interesting items. We have working drafts of a number of Guru Nitya's manuscripts, and a large box of recordings from several of his classes held in America. On reel to reel tapes we have most, if not all, of Guru Nitya's first American Bhagavad Gita class from 1970, and two tapes from the Saundarya Lahari class of 1971, both of which took place in Portland. Our old reel to reel machine has just returned from the repair shop, which will allow us to eventually copy these tapes onto cassettes for easier access.

A box of cassettes here contains 22 tapes from the Experiential Aesthetics class in the Fall of 1978 at the University of Hawaii; three tapes on verses 38, 39 and 40 of Saundarya Lahari; two on the Chandogya Upanishad; two from the Gita class at Portland State University in the Spring of 1978; two tapes of a discussion between Nitya and Dr. William Uttal on the brain/mind issue; and two tapes of a dialogue between author Don Berry and Nitya on methodology. A number of unlabeled tapes await a check of their contents.

Over time we plan to catalogue all the works we have, which process is proceeding much more rapidly at the Fernhill Gurukula, as well. Remember, if you have something you might wish to donate at a later time, we'd like to hear about it before it is forgotten. This is an exciting, if time-consuming, process, and we welcome your involvement.

Scott Teitsworth



# East-West University and Narayana Gurukula Publications

Island Gurukula Aranya  
8311 Quail Hill Road  
Bainbridge Island  
Washington 98110 USA

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/4142>  
or: <http://www.geocities.com/islandgurukula>

## By Nataraja Guru

An Integrated Science of the Absolute (Volumes I, II, III)  
Autobiography of an Absolutist  
The *Bhagavad Gītā*, Translation and Commentary  
The Life and Teachings of Narayana Guru  
Wisdom: The Absolute is Adorable  
*Saundarya Lahari* of Sankara  
The Search for a Norm in Western Thought  
Vedanta Revalued and Restated  
The Philosophy of a Guru  
Towards a One World Economics  
World Education Manifesto  
Memorandum on World Government  
Dialectical Methodology  
Anthology of the Poems of Narayana Guru

## By Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Beyond Cause and Effect  
The Psychology of *Darśana Mālā*  
The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (Volumes I, II, III)  
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The *Bhagavad Gītā*  
Neither This Nor That But....AUM  
Love and Devotion  
The Haunting Echoes of Spring  
Experiencing the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*  
A Bouquet of Verses in Praise of the Supreme Mother  
Sree Narayana Guru  
*Daiva Daśakam* (A Prayer for Humanity)  
Marxism and Humanist Nonarchy  
God - Reality or Illusion?  
*Arivu* - Epistemology of Gnosis  
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The Psychodynamics of *Pranava*  
*Gītā* - A Managerial Science  
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## By Others

*Gestures in Silence*, Deborah Buchanan  
*Of Love and Colors*, Gopidas  
*Narayana Guru's Relevancy for Today*, N.C. Kumaran  
*Mirror by the Road*, Peter Oppenheimer  
*The Philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru*, Dr. S. Omana  
*Basic Lessons on India's Wisdom*, Muni Narayana Prasad  
*Karma and Incarnation*, Muni Narayana Prasad  
*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Muni Narayana Prasad  
*Dhyāna Mañjuṣā: A Bouquet of Meditations*, trans. Vinaya Chaitanya  
*Edda's Diaries*, Edda Walker  
*What Narayana Guru Is Not*, Nancy Yeilding

## Publications Available From:

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643004 India

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