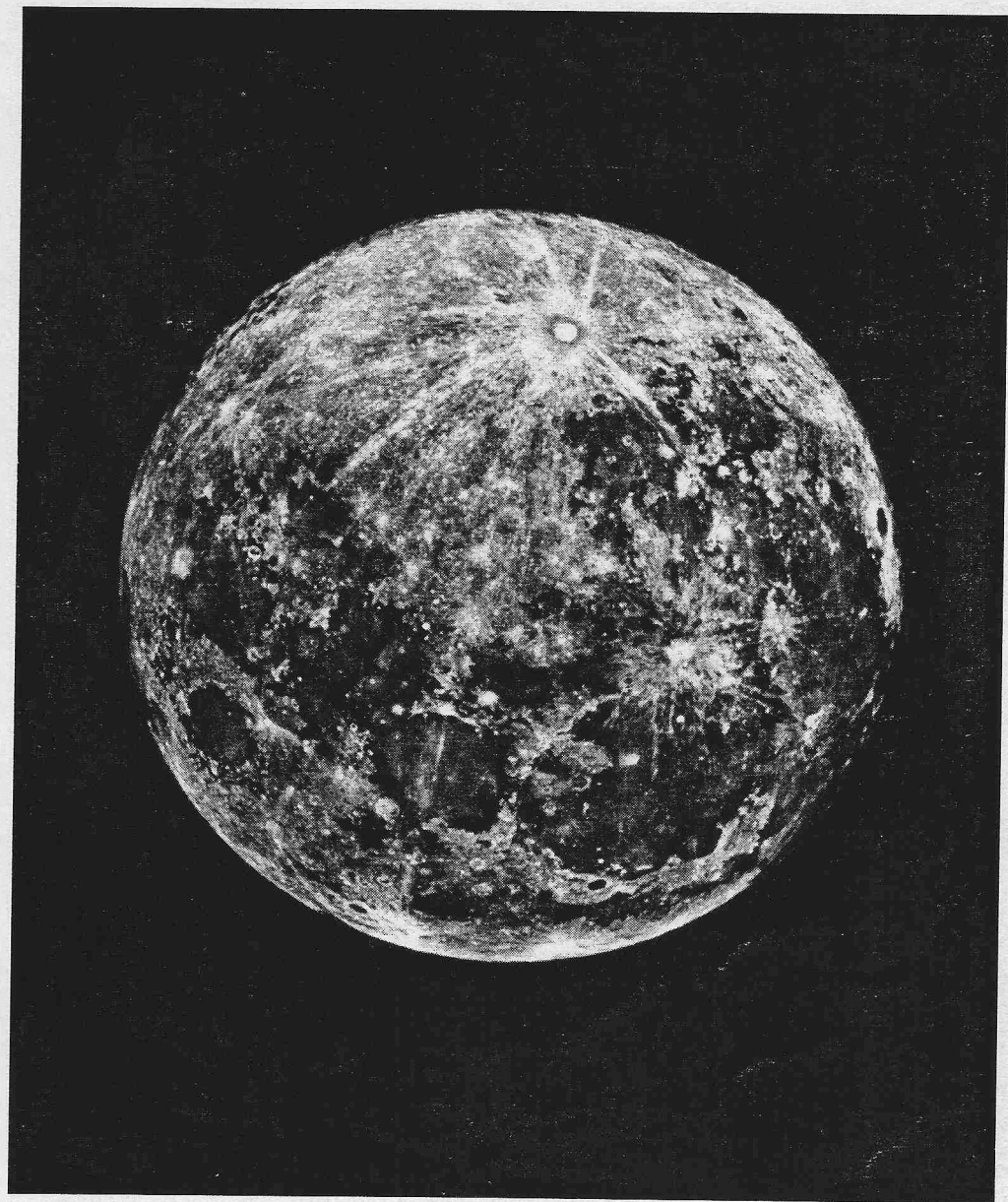
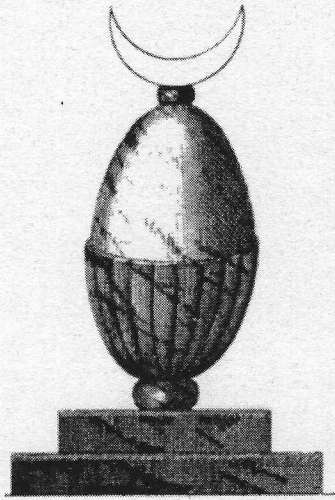


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XVI • 2000

THIRD-FOURTH QUARTER





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GURUKULAM

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COVER: Moon, from Lick Observatory, University of California, Santa Cruz

Moon Dreams

As the sun set, the rhythms of the world seemed to become slower. The birds started settling in the trees and the wind died down. Human activity was affected, too: the noise of the traffic became more subdued, children playing outside slowly drifted toward home. As dusk deepened, I noticed a faint blur of light appearing and disappearing in the garden. When it came near I realized it was the opening and closing wings of a luna moth flying about, catching the rays of the rising harvest moon. Light began to pour through the trees, creating luminous shadows and silvery clearings in which all movement seemed arrested—as though everything was holding its breath at the sight of such beauty. The moon emerged from behind the trees and the simple nursery rhyme came to mind: “I see the moon and the moon sees me,” reminding me of the human awareness of the intimate relationship between the moon and human life that has inspired veneration of the moon through many millennia.

Then I felt the soft touch of the air stirring and realized the moth was very nearby. I gently thought, “Luna, like the moon you were named for, your light comes and goes as your wings open and close, but tonight you are both here to visit me.” As the moth dipped low in her flying about, she seemed to be responding: “All forms of life on earth are affected by the moon. How could we not be when the moon’s position in relation to the sun affects the whole earth’s magnetic field, atmosphere and weather, and its gravitational pull is strong enough to cause high tides every twelve and a half hours and even raise up the earth’s crust in some areas?”

As the enormous moon became fully revealed over the horizon, I felt as if all my inner tides were also being lifted up. Snippets of songs celebrating the moon’s effect on the human psyche came to mind and I sang bits of them to Luna whose light feet tickled as she landed on my arm:

“Shine on, shine on harvest moon. . . . Blue moon, you saw me standing alone. . . . Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me, starlight and dewdrop are waiting for thee; sounds of the rude world heard in the day, lulled by the moonlight have all passed away.” Songs around the world associate the moon with love; its soft glowing light is like the solvent of love, embracing all in its glow: “The moon sees somebody I want to see.” Whether romantic, devotional, familial, or compassionate, love softens the boundaries that enclose and limit us. The moon is an ever-present reminder of the beauty that awaits our hearts when we take the risks of opening them wide. Even the new moon has a dark presence in the sky, reminding us that absence, loss and grief are natural and inevitable parts of life’s ever-repeating cycles. Like the moon, we can make our love constant in the midst of inconstancy, accepting the natural waxing and waning of feeling as distinct from the essence that perseveres.

I realized I was humming Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata as Luna began to fly in large, swooping motions, tracing spirals and arabesques in the air. It was as though she was creating a mysterious evanescent world of moonbeams beckoning my spirit to soar with her to its peaks and down along its ridges, reminding me that while the light of the sun calls us to wakeful, transactional life, the shimmering light of the moon calls forth the potentials that lie germinating in the dark to blossom in our imaginations and intuition. Poets of all ages and cultures have celebrated the moon, like Shakespeare:

How sweet the moonlight
 sleeps upon this bank!
Here we will sit and
 let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears:
 soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

(*The Merchant of Venice* V.1.54)

The moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven.

(*Midsummer-Night's Dream* I.1.9)

Or Shelley:

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon

(*The Cloud*)

Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's
unclouded grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy
which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world.

(*Queen Mab*)

Or Kalidasa in his *Kumārasambhava* (translated by Hank Heifetz):

Joined with the woman whose face
was beautiful as the moon
and now more beautiful,
as it is with the world
in autumn moonlight,
the lotuses of Śiva's eyes opened wide
and the waters of his thoughts cleared.

7.74

In a rising held back
till the day had ended,
the eastern sky now,
compelled by the night,
first shows a soft light, like a smile,
then pours out, as its secret,
the circle of the moon.

8.60

And now, giving up its earlier redness,
the circle of the moon has turned white.
Surely, among the pure by nature,
no change brought about
by the stain of time can last.

8.65

The changing shape of the moon as it goes through its monthly phases is a potent image of the mutability of life, tuning us to the ever-present possibilities of transformation. Too often, we are riveted to the "facts of life" and miss the creative

possibilities that lie hidden in our dreams. The moon gently reminds us to slip free of the grip of the concrete to explore new connections and combinations, give fluidity to our modes of expression, and try out different ways of being.

When Luna folded up her wings, it reminded me of hands folded in prayer and I thought of the more reverential forms of acknowledging the moon's influence. Images of moon goddesses have been found on all continents dating back to 7000 B.C.E. and before. Worship of the moon has been associated with ancient Egyptian, European, Grecian, Roman, Polynesian, Indian, Chinese, and North and South Native American cultures. The moon has long been a symbol of spiritual illumination in mystical traditions as varied as Zen Buddhism and the Druid mystery celebrations of the Celts. Some favorite verses of the Japanese poet Saigyō came to mind that communicate that even though the moon is a symbol of change, contemplation of the moon is a gateway to the limitless.

In Spring I spend day
With flowers, wanting no night;
It's turned around
In fall when I watch the moon
All night, resenting the day.

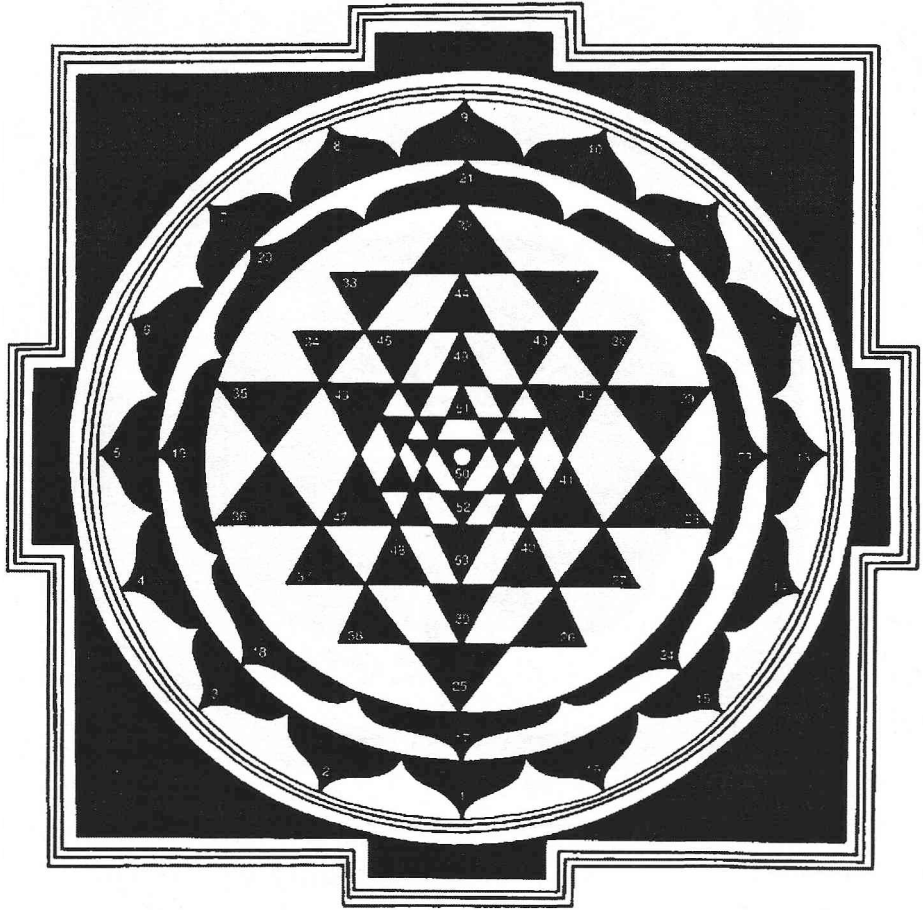
Limitations gone:
Since my mind fixed on the moon,
Clarity and serenity
Make something for which
There's no end in sight.

The moon climbed overhead, diminishing in size at the same time its brilliant light flooded the world around me. Luna settled on a nearby branch, bathing her open wings in the moonlight. The eyes in them seemed to be fastened on the moon. I found that even with my eyes closed, the moon's glow filled me with its serene glow. Like Luna, I was drawn to be still, so that when my eyes opened, my vision would be transformed.

Nancy Yeilding

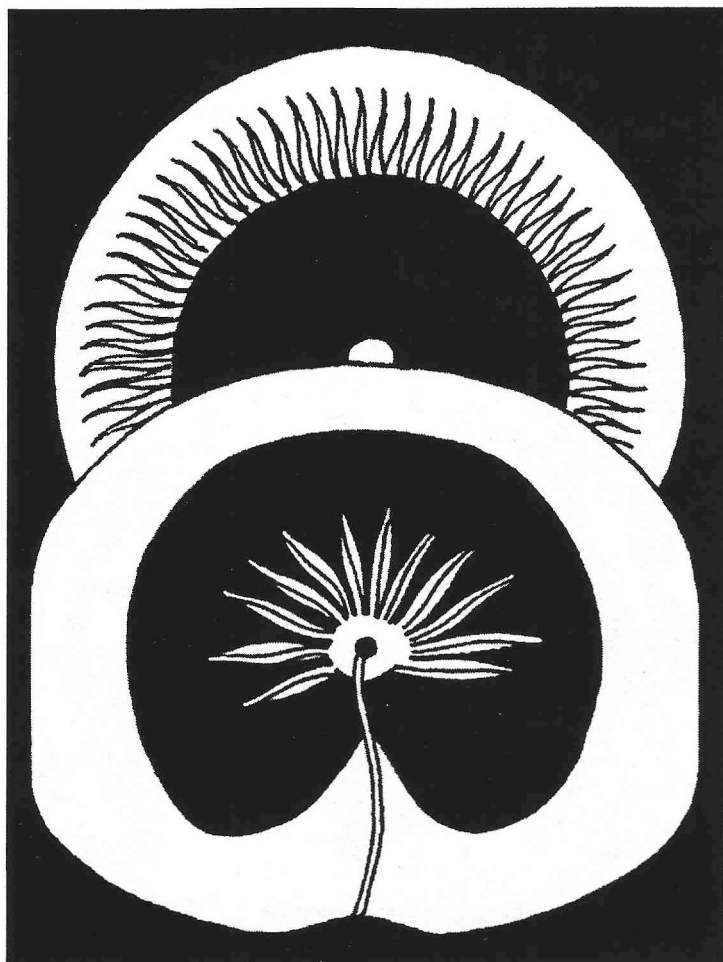
Meditations on Śrī Cakra

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 meditator 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.



AUM buddhyākarṣiṇī

Meditation Sixteen

O Mother, the inspiring deity of all muses. The poets and artists of high sensibility, when they are gently roused by the golden beams of the morning sun, are elated with the sight of beautiful mountains and blue lagoons studded with white lilies. All facts of life become transformed into the suggestive concepts of beauty's highest landmarks. Their realization of factual beauty spontaneously suggests to them their own incomparable moral excellence.

As one born in the lotus pond, every morning I wake up with the resolve to sit at your feet and listen to your words of wisdom. You are so very eager that your precious words should not fall in the wilderness of an unintelligent mind. Each day you make me more receptive than before and sharpen my intelligence to go into the subtlest sugges-

tions of the mystical purport of your precious words. The beautiful magenta with which the rising sun paints the eastern sky is a poetic suggestion that you are not a person here or there but the composite blend of every joyous thought and inspiring word.

Millions are the lotuses in the lakes around the world. However numerous they are, each flower directly dedicates itself to you and you kiss each one separately. Such being your generosity, I never feel neglected or slighted. Every other person who is graced by your blessing becomes to me a brother or sister in the collective exultation we experience. In the night these trees and rocks, hills and dales, lakes and water lilies were all indistinguishable dark masses. When the sun appears he stretches his golden fingers to smooth the petals of every flower, brighten the leaves of every tree. Even the blue-black rocks are painted in red and gold hues. It is by offering their feast of beauty that they honor your presence. To be a participant in this feast is to share with you your boundless joy.

Countless are your faces with which you display to the world all the moods that poets speak of and musicians sing of with joy or pathos. The past, present and future transform in the eternal present. The spiritual space and time that you assign to your children does not ever generate any crowd. The rishis, saviors, prophets and all such blessed beings are allowed to put on a face that closely resembles yours. Like one burning lamp being mirrored in a million mirrors, the light that kindles the lamp of wisdom in every mind is your own.

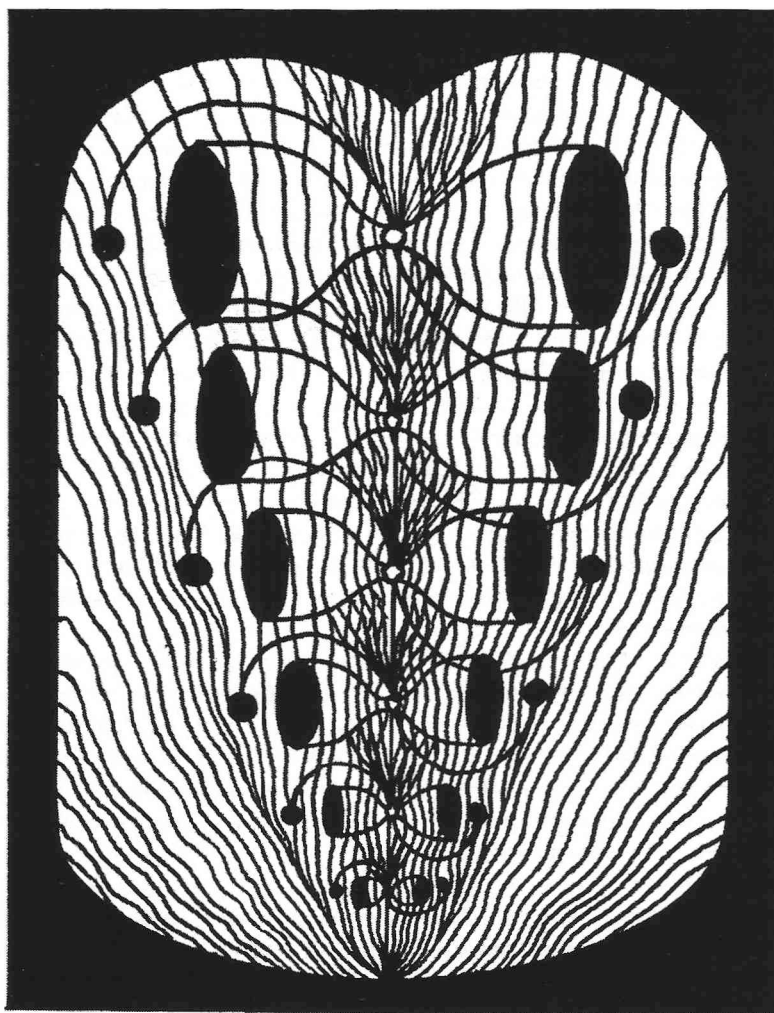
Inspired by your incomparable beauty, Brahmā the Creator summons another of your aspects. That is how you become the mother of all muses. Both science and poetry find their eternal sources in you. You are putting the world into harmony with your gentle fingers playing on these strings of your *vīṇā*. When I sit in peace in the shrine of your eternal presence and play on the strings of my own *vīṇā*, you are so very compassionate that you replace me and my *vīṇā* with your eternal immanence in me. Although you have a million faces, when you fondle me, embrace me, and kiss me, your essence is of one melody or another.

I do not gather flowers in the garden to offer you in a conventional way, but I gather the blossoms of musical notes from the strings of the *vīṇā* and, with deep reverence, offer them to you. The music I arrive at through your compassionate inspiration is an ever-purifying Ganges and I become an instrument to bring that flow to fill every heart. Thus there is no separation between the singer, the song and the listeners. Purity alone abides.

Day after day we increase the blessedness of this world and look forward to the final consummation of love in the ultimate comprehension of the one beauty that gives at once freedom and fulfillment. Even in those who come with only a spark of intelligence, you carefully shield that faint spark and blow it into a conflagration that will illuminate the entire world. However clumsy or filthy is a heart that is turned towards you, you purify it and make it a most worthy instrument with which to love. Those who have tasted your love will always know what love par excellence is. And the world will continue in the untiring pursuit of your beauty. Apart from beauty there is no other truth and the realization of that is merging oneself in the blazing light of love.

The hosts of the blessed ones gathered in your congregation are from every country, every age, every culture. To be part of this congregation itself is a blessedness of sharing. In that way we live in the pure duration of your eternal being.

AUM buddhyākarṣiṇī



*ṭm ṭhm dṃ nṃ anaṅgamadana
kulasundarī tvarita*

Meditation Seventeen

O Mother Sāvitrī, beauty in its truest function does not pertain to any particular object or part of anything. Wherever your supreme bliss seems to manifest, even as a flicker, there one marvels at the vision of beauty. As your beauty cannot be discerned from the beautified, people call that beautiful. When true beauty is intuitively envisioned, all regrets of the past and anxieties of the future vanish from us. In such a case the mind does not linearly move from perception to perception or conception to conception. Instead of such horizontalization affecting consciousness, the numinous core of consciousness verticalizes itself, marking the alpha in its polarization with the omega. In such a case, the contemplative and contemplation together become the manifestation of your beauty.

From among the intonated words the *sāvitrīs* choose and string together words of musical harmony and punctuations of rhythmic delight. The listener is exposed to the magical bursting of meanings which remain hidden until the sky becomes vibrant with the special features of articulation. Even before it is being sung or recited, by your grace alone the musical excellence of word wisdom and poetic metaphor are commingled. See-

ing this wonder flowing without effort from one's own articulating tongue or the pen that one handles, the aspirant becomes excited, giving himself or herself entirely to be used by the hidden source from where such treasures are coming forth to the delight of the poet and his or her several lovers.

It seems as if every poet is standing with folded hands at the sanctum of beauty, expecting the portals to be opened. This reverential waiting upon the supreme source of wisdom and beauty is called *tapas*. When the hour of envisioning comes, each one is filled with ecstasy and stung by the madness of beauty. Each becomes overpowered by the exaltation that ensues from one's inspiration and pours out words of exquisite beauty. In fact this beautiful world is not created of mud and stones. It is elaborately created with metaphors and similes and the ingenious suggestions that have come from millions of poets over the centuries of civilization's growth.

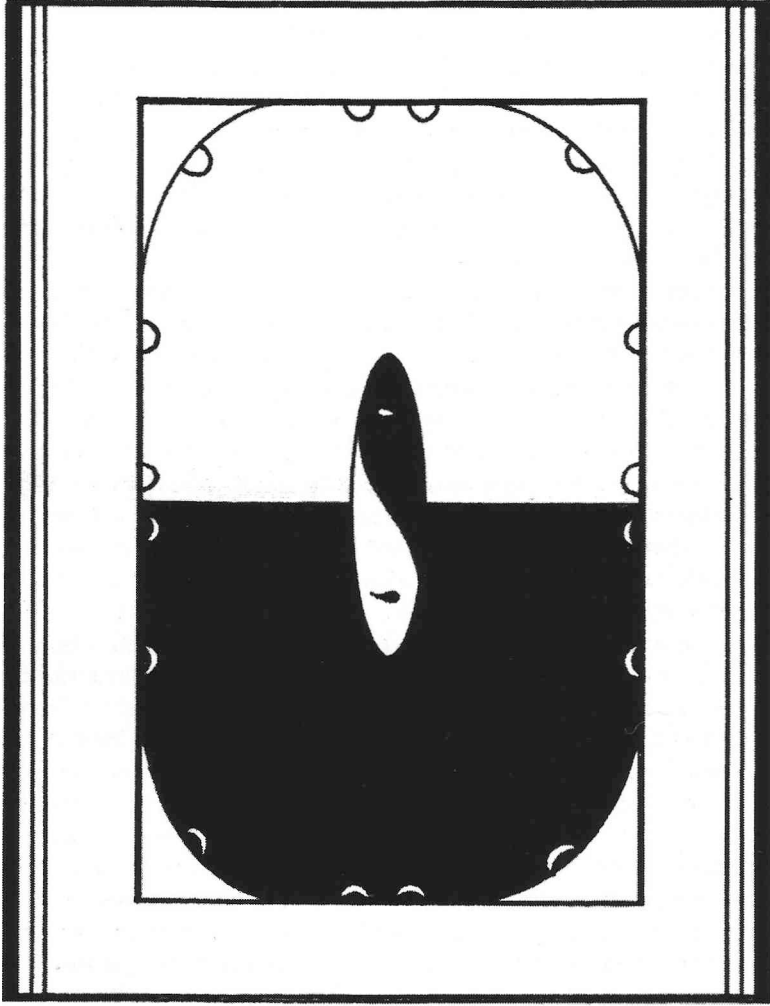
It is a wonder that what you gathered from the drum (*damaru*) of your husband was only a few consonants and a few vowels. You have given the bond of meaningful union to consonants with appropriate vowels so that they hold each other and go around and around, dancing the path of poetic significance. You have created not only languages but also collective admiration for sights as well as sounds. Himālayas, Merus and Kailāsas are perhaps never seen with the eyes, but when they are heard of through the descriptions of the poet, the connoisseur's wisdom eye is opened to share the poet's vision. If you scrape away all the words you have given us, the world will disintegrate and fall into pieces. The seemingly insignificant conjunctions and prepositions not only give syntactical finality to a sentence. They also hold lovers together in the eternal bond of union and even keep enemies in abeyance.

What is seen is little and what is heard is much. By meditating on you my perishable being has now become the imperishable *akṣara*. Like a tree and its cool shadow, the glowing sound and its self-elaborating meaning stand together. Like the proliferation of a tree's branches and the multiplication of its foliage from a tiny seed, from a single word the cluster of language arises, ever producing new words and new meanings.

Where we cannot reach and yet are sure that there is a sublime height from where your grace descends, that we call *parā*. Even though we do not have any eye beyond the eye that sees meaning, we decide that there are archetypes from which alone we get all typical designs. We call it *paśyantī*. If *parā* and *paśyantī* are our presumptions, the middle ground which you conceal so meticulously from us is the workshop of your word creation (*madhyamā*). You never share with anyone the secret of choosing the right word with the sweetest of intonations and intense energy which gives it an irrefutable wisdom dynamic. You can give a word the luster of absolute transparency so that on hearing it the listener's mind immediately comes to certitude. Such is your secret culturing of words.

Then you pass them on to our organs of speech where they are given expression (*vaikharī*). The speaker and the listener simultaneously come to the wonder of your secret creation. With these words you lead us into the marketplace where, forgetting you, we get into noisy bargains. We follow your steps to the holiest of holy places and listen to hymns and praises and become filled with ecstasy. You lead us to the seat of wisdom where the finest elucidations of truth are given with logical excellence. We are also led to concerts and operas for our rejoicing. For the human device of an opera or a concert, several devices and a hundred people are needed to participate. But when you preside in the inner shrine of our musical throne, you are satisfied with the simple device of a human mouth and its tongue, larynx and windpipe. One person to sing and a million people to listen—all are transported to the highest realm of ecstasy if you are pleased. Such is your loving care for us and the infinite devotion with which we relate ourselves to you. You are both the transcendent *sāvitrī* and the immanent *vāsinī*.

*ṭṃ ṭḥṃ ḍṃ ṇṃ anaṅgamadana
kulasundarī tvarita*



*śṃ śṃ śṃ hṃ anaṅakuśā
nilapatāka nitya*

Meditation Eighteen

O Mother Maheśvarī, as the symbol of Śankara, you have listened to the percussive expression of the consonants. From his blue throat you received the sixteen vowels. By embellishing the consonants with the vowels, and stabilizing the vowels with the consonants, you are continuously creating a world that is expressive of your immaculate value in every item that phenomenally comes and goes and meaningfully adorns your hierarchy of values. With your two eyes you create the day and the night. For each shade of light and shadow that heightens the contrast or subdues the merger of light and shade, you create ever-new nuances of aesthetic sensibility.

Day and night come together as the dawn and the dusk. In the morning you allow the eastern skies to glow brighter and brighter in their magenta blush. Slowly from the gray and blue sky a brilliant pink and golden color ensues. In their ponds, the lotuses are roused to receive the morning sun with their unfurling petals. The red petals are already brilliant in their hues but they become doubly so when gently fondled by the golden rays of the morning sun. You reverse the order of colors in the evening.

The earth, sun and moon, the blue lagoons and their water lilies are all your creation. Being so intimate with you, these luminous bodies share with you the secret of your beauty, which is none other than your intense love for your Lord. You do not have anyone else to adore. Whatever overwhelms you in your hour of beatitude is the pure essence of your devotion, *ekarasa*.

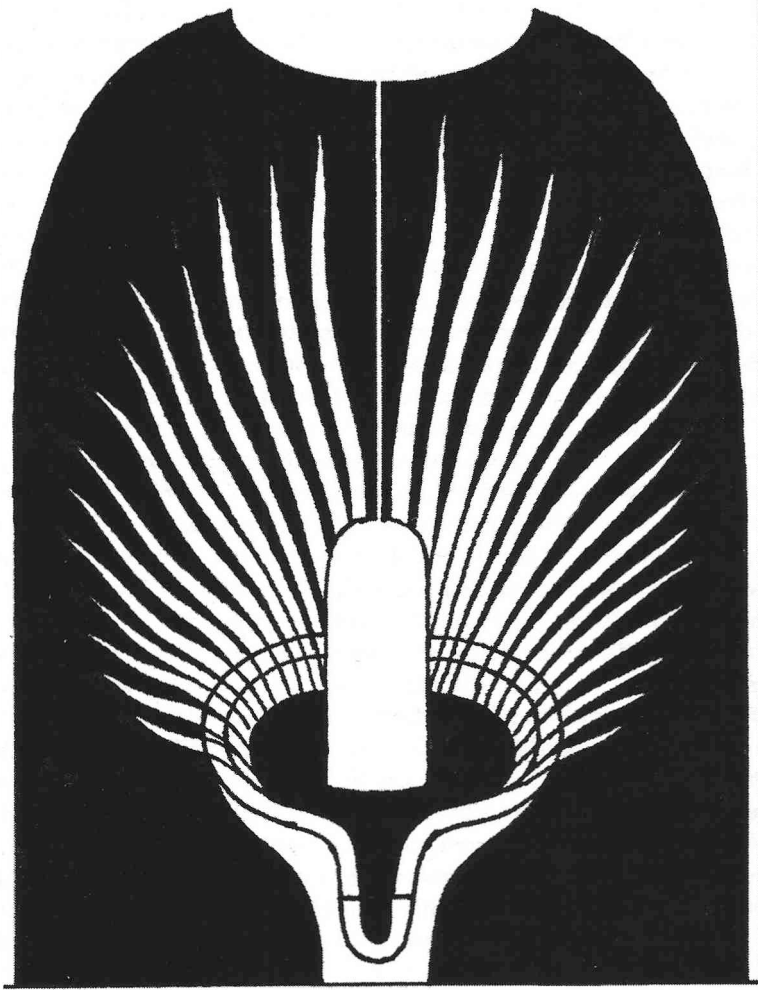
Although celestial nymphs like Urvaṣī are naturally endowed with superseding beauty, they cannot claim the purity of your essential beauty which has no outside or inside. For all those who receive their pain-pleasure stimuli through their sense organs and those who are hankering after the images of beauty by dwelling on mental images, aesthetic enjoyment is a fleeting momentary distraction. For that very reason, the entire world is suffering without gaining a steady ground. They are further disturbed by the infatuating shafts of erotics which Cupid is ruthlessly shooting in every direction.

When a person is attracted by another, each sense organ is competing with the other to enjoy the beauty of the person they have chosen as their love object. The eye wants to see more and more. The ear never tires of listening to the sweet little talks of the other. When the lover fondles the beloved he cannot keep his hand restful. It glides all over, as if the magical touch is elsewhere. As all the pleasures of love-making are entirely born of suggestive illusions, men and women become a wilderness for each other to ramble in. After every attempt to fulfill oneself with carnal pleasures, both men and women fall into deep disgust and frustrating meaninglessness.

All the tall talks of ethical fidelity and one-pointed loyalty are thrown to the winds each time a new erotic tide wells up in one's heart. Like the bumblebees which look so deeply engrossed in their infatuation with one flower, then leave it to fly to another with a new zest, men and women seek others in whom they see fresh avenues of interest. Animals in the act of intercourse are not conscious of their counterparts. They look elsewhere as if the true spouse is only an archetypal idea in their imagination. Similarly, the person held in a deep embrace is only a physical excuse with no spiritual substance. That is why most people come to a sense of guilt and absolute revulsion after consummating their love.

O Mother, you knew the secret of disturbing the tranquility of *śm*, Śankara, and out of that to produce *ṣm*, Ṣaṅmukha and, again, to recover the peace with *sm* and *hm*, continuous contemplation of *so'ham*. Anaṅga, the god of erotics, is for you only a momentary device (*anaṅgakuṣā*). To counter the distractions of Eros you have the sixteen vowels to line up as your retainers, (*ṣoḍaśa nitya*). Each sound, when taken separately, is powerless. But when consonants are tied to each other with the musical melody of vowels, they all become powerful. I am also powerless, just a name, but when I become established in you, I represent your tonality (*śruti*), your musical notes (*svara*) and the all-captivating melody (*raga*). Bless me that I become eternally auspicious by knowing and possessing your secret treasure.

*śm ṣm sm hm anaṅgakuṣā
nilapatāka nitya*



*tṃ dhṃ dṃ thṃ ṇṃ anaṅgamadanāturā
sarvamaṅgalā vijaya*

Meditation Nineteen

O Mother, the ultimate discerner of the desirable, to precipitate creation and to proliferate your creatures you have invested libidinal dynamics in them. You send Manmatha, the churner of minds, to every one. Sitting in the eyes and ears and in the ticklish organ of touch, this disturber of mind's tranquility generates an unappeased hunger and unquenchable thirst to get closer and closer to one's beloved. There is not one single sentient being who does not know the subtle games that are played in the field of erotics. Even a single glance or the wink of an eye can communicate volumes of de-

sires and a tacit agreement to get into any game that one's partner suggests in silence.

In a simple wish, you are the controller of its unfoldment and operation. If you so wish, you can keep the seeds of desire sleeping in the granary of a person's *susupti* or causal consciousness. Once you have allowed the environmental facilities, the seed sprouts into its vertical growth and horizontal demands. Before coming to the actual world where experiences await a lover, he or she choreographs the whole love scene in the green room of dreams. If there is only one possibility in the actual world, there are a thousand possibilities in the world of subjective imagination. Finally, when chances get into collusion with your assent and nature's connivance, the stage is set for the actual game which can hook one into a chain of karma that can recurringly happen a hundred times thereafter, sometimes even through many lives. When, in an ecstatic mood, blindfolded with love, one gives oneself into the embrace of another, nobody knows what is awaiting the lovers, a tragedy or a comedy.

The *śiva liṅga* is a perfect symbol of the immobile assuming a position to stir. Your all-moving libidinal fountain sits firm as an unmoved foundation. O Śiva and Śakti, what games of paradoxes you play to erase out of our minds even the last drop of reason. We have read in the legends that when the supreme Lord, in his anger and shame, burned away the god of Erotics and reduced him to ashes, you shed your tears of compassion for him and gave him permanent residence in the secret chamber of your own genital. If every woman is your replica, how can the world ever escape this fun-loving god who comes out hunting from every love-sick woman?

In the very sound *hara* there is *ha*, the exclamatory sound, and *ra*, the letter symbol for rejoicing. The auspiciousness for which your lord Sankara is praised even changes his basic character when he is in communion with you. He expects the world to join his frenzied dance. Then alone is he pleased to say "Hail, Hail." If I am to be awakened from the seed state of my deep sleep, please send to love me not the limbless Eros, but his annihilator, the Lord himself. Allow me to have my identity with you so that I will not love anyone but him, the Lord of auspiciousness.

When I offer you flowers and oblations, that can substitute for any love-game people play. If I am to walk blindfolded, let it be always toward you. If I am to be embraced, let it be your grace ever-enveloping me. When you created me as a particle you did not forget to include in it any constituent of the cosmos. Thus you and I are led by the same law of cyclic creation and dissolution. So I am sure that nothing can happen to me other than whatever is decreed for you and the entire universe. I know this is a difficult game to play, but the reward that ensues from it is the most covetable. If it is your desire that I should walk through the fire of scorching emotional flames, let it be, so that thereafter I can live, putting my trust in my self-confidence and my unshakeable faith in your trusteeship. Salutations to you, Vijayeshvari.

*tṃ dhṃ dṃ thṃ ṇṃ anaṅgamadanāturā
sarvamaṅgalā vijaya*



*ṣṃ kṣṃ anaṅgamālinī
citrā jvalamālinī*

Meditation Twenty

Mother, your basic mantra is *ṣṃ* and your seed mantra is *kṣṃ*. You are self-luminous by nature. The primeval Lord is in his eternal state of pure auspiciousness. In that state he is like an infinite stretch of waveless ocean, tranquil and placid. It is your sport to take a spark of your Lord's reality and create the living self by providing it with a body, mind and psychic animation.

You know how hazardous it is for a newly born child to become familiar with the conditions of this world which is at once beautiful and ugly, pleasure-giving and painful. It is with alternating stress and joyous fondling that you give each person the experiential abundance of the varieties of pain/pleasure situations which enable them to

become ultimately desirous of liberation. You are always with them and, like a physician of good will, whenever they need a drastic treatment, you stand by as if you are stony-hearted. But when aspirants cannot withstand the acid test of the exercises you give any longer, you take them in your own compassionate hands and lull them to sleep. Your ultimate goal is to make everyone perfect, enjoying the supreme peace of your Lord.

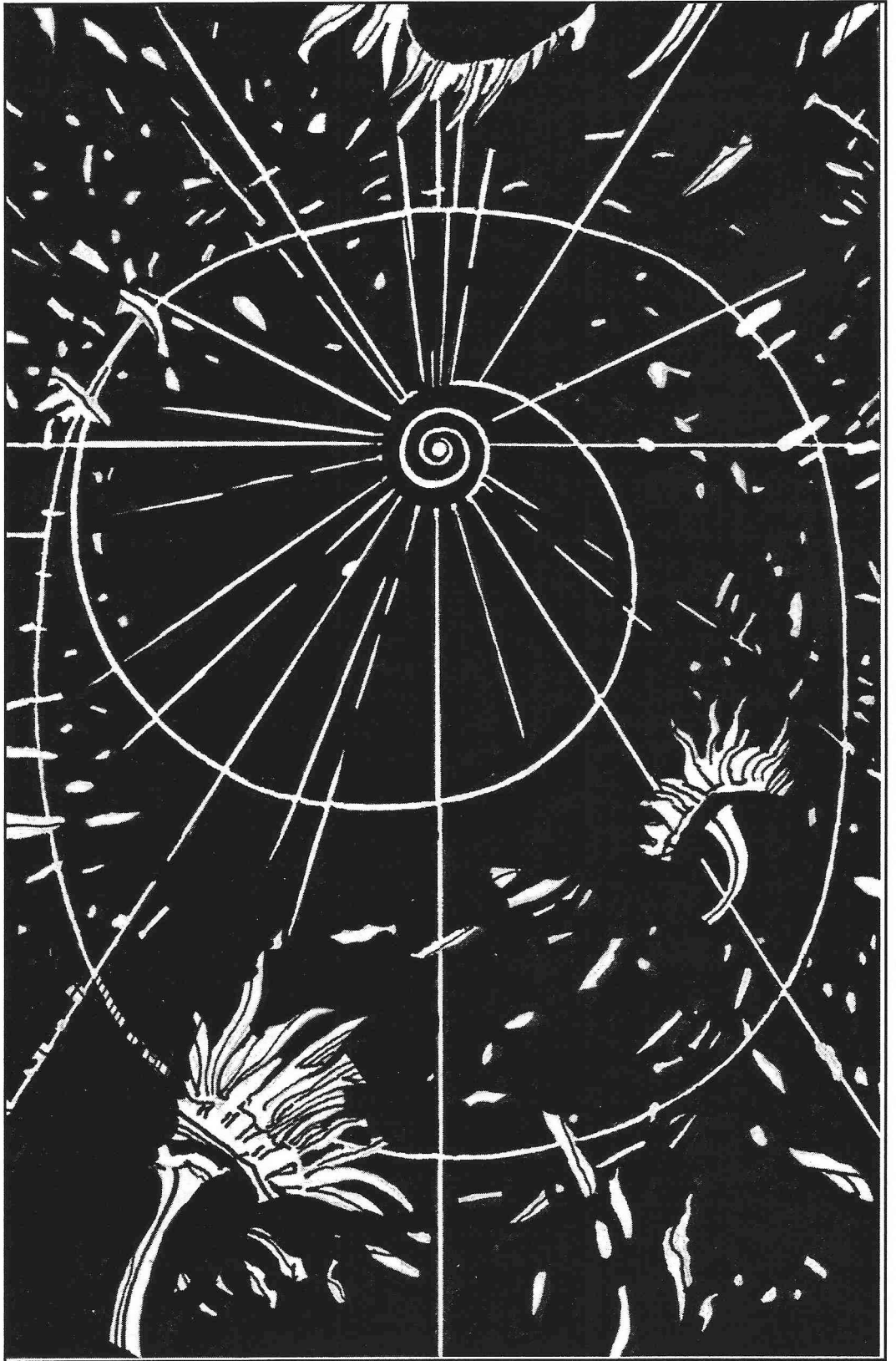
That is why the basic mantra *ṣṃ* is always kept before you like a final cause to transform the *jīvas*. Your seed mantra *kṣṃ* suggests two of your opposite intentions. One is exposing the aspirant to the most difficult of tests. The letter *kṣa* is indicative of distress and hard labor. But when it terminates with the sound *ṃ* it is suggestive of the final liberation (*mokṣa*). When you are so intimately interested in our personal life, it is only natural that we look for you, but you are not to be seen anywhere. You are like the string on which flowers are strung which is concealed by the flowers. In the same way, we see only our crying faces, smiling lips, or wonder-struck eyes. Your instrument is the bodiless Anaṅga. You are also like that. Keeping yourself hidden, you only show us the spectrum of love. Like a river, which washes and purifies all those who enter it, you also cleanse us, sometimes with our cheerful laughter and sometimes with our overflowing tears.

When artists create symbols the critic has to interpret them. But in your creation the very pictures you present are themselves definitions and interpretations of the value we adore. We give names to forms to mark how distinctive each form is. We make endless studies of the specific peculiarities you have given to each item of your creation. Sometimes we put many silly questions. We ask why the dragon-fly has transparent wings and a brilliantly colored tail. We sometimes wonder from where a bee gets such tremendous power to beat its wings so fast that they disappear from our vision. If you expect us to flee from a charging cobra, why did you make it so comely with a beautiful hood and elegant neck painted with all the seven colors of the rainbow? It is obvious that your intention is not to meet the reasons that we have developed in our small brains. In spite of the hurried transactions and boring humdrum of life, you come to us like lightening and steal our hearts for a moment or two which make life so worthwhile.

When a friendly face is before us, when a sweet voice beckons us to return to an old friendship or invites us to make a new one, when a fresh flower is smiling at us, just in the place where another drooped, withered and fell, when from a glorious sunset we come to watch the full moon in all its glory, when a passing wind tickles the tree that casts its shadow in our courtyard, you are presenting to us once again the ever-flowing delightful song of the limbless god of erotics, *anaṅgamālinī*. Although the limbless cannot be seen, the flickering light of your effulgence and the passing melody of your voice are as vivid as the feelings we have in our devoted minds.

Traditional legends place before us many paradoxes such as Viṣṇu having his restful siesta on a serpent and going for aerial flights on the eagle Garuda. The eagle and the snake are supposed to be mortal enemies. The same paradox makes the burner of the three cities opposed to the beautifier of the three cities. There is more complementarity between the frenzied dance of Śiva and the unflickering sheen of your gentle dance (*lāsya*). Even when Eros manifested on your lips while you were intensely pouring out your ardent prayer, and the flame that leaped out of the Lord's third eye burned Eros to ashes, instead of scorching you, it lavished upon you the irresistible beauty of the Lord's love-infested mind. We are confused, not knowing how you transform a curse into a blessing and a tragedy into a peaceful rejoicing. O Śiva Śankarī, by meditating on the enigma of your mantra, I come to the neutral zero of your wisdom in which all pairs of opposites are burned out.

*ṣṃ kṣṃ anaṅgamālinī
citrā jvalamālinī*



Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by
Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 13

*triguṇamayam tiruṇṭṭaṇiññorīśa-
nnakamalriṭṭu vanaññiyakṣamāri
sakalamaliññu taṇiññu kēvalattin-
mahimayumarṛu mahassilāṇitēṇam.*

Having offered the flower of your mind to that Lord smeared with sacred ashes, the three *guṇas*, having cooled down the senses, unwound everything, and become calm, when even the glory of aloneness has gone, become established in *mahas*.

The theme of this meditation is one of the major subjects taught and discussed in all the major world religions. In the Semitic religions it is presented as an external temptation which comes to man to distract him and cause him to deviate from his divine nature and get caught in the snares of the external world. After indulging in this for some time he discovers he has fallen, and is filled with remorse and regret. He desperately wants to get back to his divine state, frees himself from temptation, and regains his divine state. This is the theme of Fall-Repentance-Return. Fall of course refers to falling away from the original divine state. Repentance means becoming once again pensive or thoughtful, reconsidering your present situation. Then you make a pilgrimage from the world of sensuality back to the domain of the spirit.

This same theme occurs in a very picturesque, allegoric way in *Saundarya Laharī*, one of the major works of Sankara. In it, Nature is considered as a great divine urge of creation, like a mother who is giving birth to many things, a mother of great creative intelligence. She is called *Devī*. *Dev* means Light. An embodiment of Light is called *deva*, and in its feminine aspect, *devī*. So *Devī* is the mother of all creation. Of course, this is poetic license. It's not that there is an actual person somewhere creating everything, but that we can see the whole universe as a divine intelligence of creativity.

The Indian mythological personification of the Creator is called *Brahmā*, who gathers the dust of the feet of the mother of creation. This dust is the existence that can become manifested in the various individuated forms, and the awareness of this individuation brings about interaction between one created being and another. We see the dynamics of creation exemplified at many levels. At the chemical level, it may be seen in molecular functions, chemical combinations, and various forms of synthesis. At the physical level, matter is patterned and directed by gravitational and electromagnetic fields and thermodynamics. On the psychological level, creation is revealed through our mutual attractions and repulsions.

The three qualities, or *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—are necessary for any creation. *Sattva*, the transparent, is the ca-

capacity to clearly represent existence. *Rajas* is kinetic, dynamic, activating—the energy that does the making and unmaking. *Tamas* represents the inertial force that stabilizes and solidifies creation. According to the legend, the Creator uses the three *gunas* to create the whole world. If you philosophically understand the process, you don't have to think of any external creator. Our mind is the creator. It has the ability to present anything to itself. When something is presented and experienced, it exists. Thus, the mind creates forms of existence, one after another.

After creating the existence of something, the mind assumes the role of the seer, with the creation as the seen. An interaction is unleashed between the seer and the seen. Then the mind thinks, "I am the knower." After developing an affection for the known or the seen, it perceives "I am the enjoyer." Yet it is all the same mind. There is an ego center which measures the situation, evaluates it, and says "I am its knower, I am its enjoyer. I am seeking enjoyment. I know what is pleasurable which is not yet present. I want to actualize it." Here the same ego assumes one more position, that of an actor.

"I am the seer; I am the actor; I am the enjoyer." When all three of these come together, we are in a single world of interest. A world of interest remains sometimes for only five seconds, sometimes for two minutes, sometimes for the whole day, a few days, months, or even years. Its length varies, but we go from one world of interest to another in a continuous series. This is allegorically portrayed in Sankara's *Saundaryā Laharī* as the several worlds created out of the three *gunas* by Brahmā. When we understand it in our own life, our mind is a creator which goes on taking these three modalities and making world after world.

Sankara uses a second allegory. The Lord of preservation is Vishnu, and his consort is Śrī or Lakṣmī. Here the Lord is none other than the interests in our mind. When a world is created, there should be an interest in it, a central joy to keep you glued onto it. There needs to be one value

in it which is glowing with attraction, and Lakṣmī is the glowing value that captivates our interest.

Take, for example, breakfast. The taste of it, the way in which it is lovingly served, along with your appetite, makes it very fascinating. Once you have eaten it, that value factor, the fascination, is gone. You are now satiated. You can't sit there all day eating your breakfast. So, however great the value of an individual world is, it cannot remain long. You have to be presented with another value: now office work, now school, now friends, now something else. Sankara says the Lord of preservation, Vishnu, has a terrible job to do. He has to keep supplying you with interest after interest. Yet he somehow manages to preserve these millions of worlds, which are called *anantam*, endless. Endless are the worlds of interest.

In spite of what the mind creates and the values presented by the various qualities, time devours all these things. So the Supreme or the Infinite is described again by Sankara as the great Lord who crushes all these worlds of interest in his palm, turning them into ashes. He smears his body with them. What we see as a great reality is only ashes smeared on the transcendental God. It is not even skin deep.

The enjoying self in you has many concepts of attraction, but when you turn to your inner reality all these seem false. At that point you begin a return. It is a pilgrimage from unreality to reality, from your sense orientation to the realization of your most divine center. And when does this take place? Every day, all the time, whenever our senses are drawn outward to get glued onto objects, and the great surge of excitement comes. This is the time to hitch it to the central core of our own divine being, rather than identifying the excitement with an objective, external situation, as we invariably do. Each time a pretty thing is attracting you, you become a beggar: haggard, poverty-stricken, wanting, desiring, stretching your hand, crying for it. You become miserable. Once you get it, you realize you have wasted a lot of time in pursuing this trifling thing. Now

that it's yours, you just put it aside.

I do the same thing sometimes. I wait for the Book-of-the-Month Club to send me some big book. I get very excited in anticipation of its arrival. But when it comes, I look at it and say, "Oh beautiful, wonderful! Put it on the shelf." Do I read it? No, I don't have time for it. I have other things to do. And what happened to that great value, that great excitement? It is transferred to the next month's offering. This month's book is already mine. I can take it from the shelf any time.

This happens between people also. Before someone is possessed as a friend, as a lover, as a wife or husband, many days and nights are spent thinking and worrying about how to get together with them. So many intrigues and posturings take place. But when they are finally yours, it can become a stalemate. Often you feel trapped, unable to extend your sense of adventure to the next person. Friends are not as easily stuck on a shelf as books.

God made Adam and Eve and gave them the bounty of Eden. They lacked nothing. Then their attention turned to the fruit of sensuality. They looked and tasted, and then they felt miserable. Suddenly they discovered they were naked and needed clothes. From that moment they knew shame, fear, anxiety—all the torments of exteriorized consciousness. They had been living in absolute freedom and great innocence, but they became subjected to guilt by entering into the world of necessity. Their descendants have yet to return to the heritage that was given them in the beginning by the Lord.

So, at the very height of the excitement and joy of gaining something, you are asked instead to relate it to the very core, to spiritualize that experience. You are not asked to kill the joy, but only to look for its essence. You have to realize that it is not produced by objects, but is an essential part of your own divine nature. If the joy we see in a person, in a desirable thing, opens a window for us to see the Lord, the Absolute, the Divine, which is our own truest Self, then everything becomes a door for us to enter into our in-



nermost sanctum. This is described in the first two lines of the verse: "Gather your mind-modalities as flowers and make an offering of them to the Supreme, who transcends all the necessities of the world."

You are not asked here to withdraw from everything, but to transcend everything. This is accomplished by spiritualizing, by seeing everything as divine. A sense of reverence should come and fill your whole being. You are standing before a child, your own child, and thinking of it only as a child which has come from you. But when you look with this new vision, it is no more a child. You see the divine manifestation in it. You can see your union with the Divine in that which makes your heart go to the child's heart, and the feeling of trust the child has in you. When you see that union it is no longer a discomfort, it is a devotion. You are not bound. Otherwise you feel obligated and bound to everything to which your senses take you. Now it is glorious that you are given an opportunity to be with your own real being. With that reverence which comes and fills you, your work becomes a devotion. It is a service, an offering, a dedication.

Sakalamalinnu means you are no more a person bound within the shell of this human mortal coil. You become expanded. Your expanded being fills everything, embraces everything. The spirit encom-

passes everything, and you are one with it. Now you are liberated; you have become free because the spirit is free.

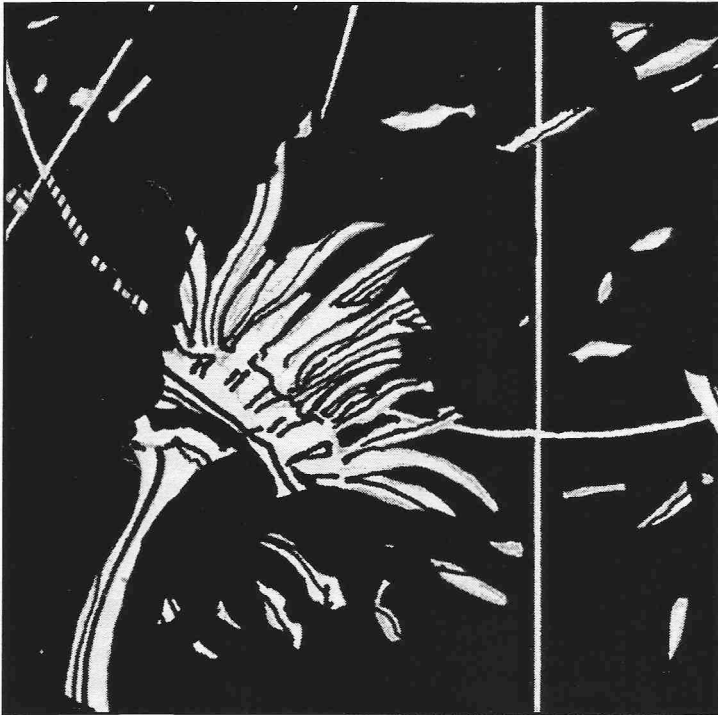
When you become intoxicated with this oneness, you may become funny for some time. You want to declare this to everyone, and you run after them saying, "Do you see what I see? I have found the Way! I got it, and you want it!" In this way we become not helpful but a menace. Cool down. Cool it. There is nothing to be excited about: you are just becoming real. If you have found it, others will find it. They are already in the process. Let them take their own time and do it in their own way. Don't get excited.

The world becomes much better. A demonic world is now transformed into a divine world. A bound person has become a free being. The worlds of interests just come and go like dreams. They are enjoyed, as dreams are enjoyed. You know that it is only a passing show. Even a pass-

ing show should have its merit, so you give it that much credit. Then you own the world, and along with it you become one with the Divine that is behind all that. Right in the world of immanence, you see transcendence.

This is the theme for today's meditation. When we leave this place we will become involved in several worlds of interest. Each time a world of interest is created, watch how you come to it and what the central interest is. Then see how it wanes and you get into another one and another one. Each time you enter a world of interest, relate its central value to the Divine, to the one reality behind it all. This is your pilgrimage. In the evening, examine the pattern that flowed and unfolded through the whole day. The spirit of this is to become a continuous living reality. Call it back to mind again and again.

(Continued in next issue.)



Windmills of the Mind

Shining gentle music
Stroking rippling sense waves
Lissome lovely notions
Touching
Tenderly with longing
One so cherished sailing
Through the windmills of the mind.

Churning like an ocean
Breakers without mercy
Huge hard-pressing spasmic
Heaving
Lost without a guy-rope
Searching for a life-raft
In the windmills of the mind.

Calm serene unbidden
Blissful tickling easy
Healing streams are rising
Joy licked
Limpid deeply moving
Grief dissolving gracing
All the windmills of the mind.

Sheilah Johns

The Prayer of St



The Dome of St. Peter's Cathedral, Rome

Lord, make me an in

Where there is hat

Where there is

Where there

Where there i

Where there is

Where there

O divine Master, grant t

To be consoled

To be understood

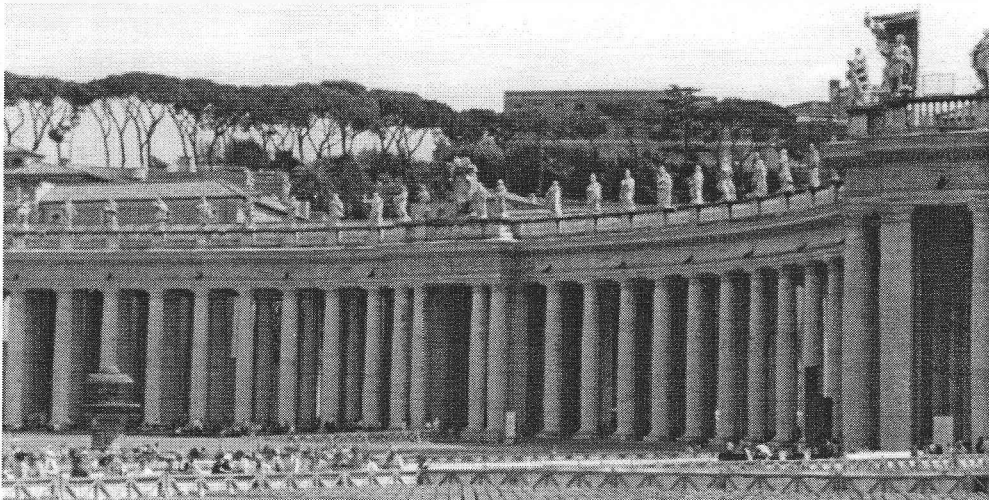
To be love

For it is in

It is in pan

it is in a

we an



The Saints and Apostles, St. Peter's Cathedral, Rome

The church o
and 9th centu
was in a statu
crucifix: "Go
you can see
himself to res

. Francis of Assisi

strument of thy peace.

red, let me sow love;

injury, pardon;

is doubt, faith;

s despair, hope,

darkness, light;

is sadness, joy.

hat I may not so much seek

d as to console,

l as to understand,

d as to love;

giving that we receive;

doning that we are pardoned;

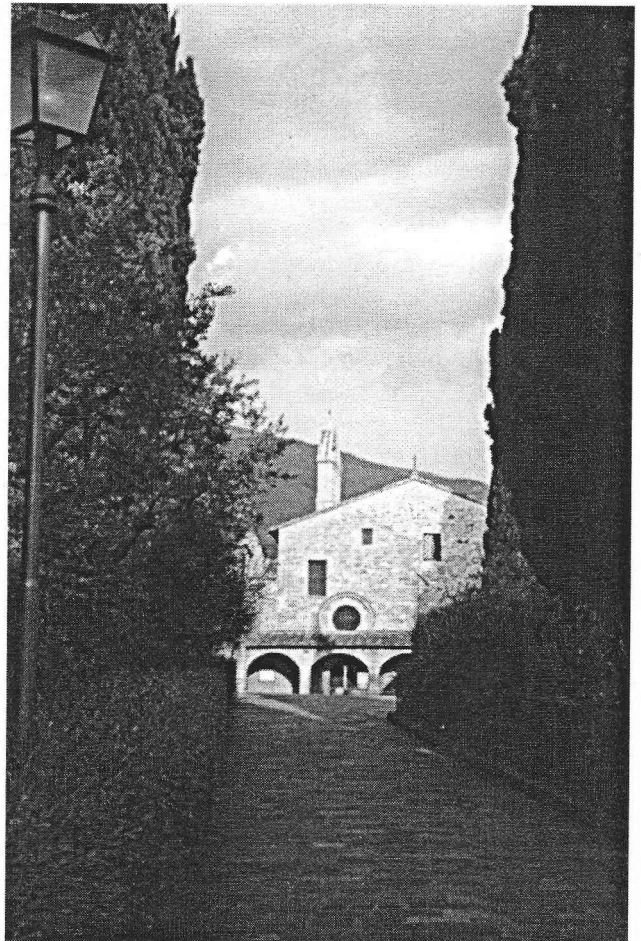
lying to self that

e born to eternal life.

San Damiano was built between the 8th and 11th centuries on the ruins of an ancient edifice. It was abandoned in 1206 when, invited by the Pope, Francis and repair my house, which as it is falling into ruin," Francis dedicated himself to restoring it.



Painting of St. Francis of Assisi in Assisi Basilica



The Church at San Damiano

Values and Life

Selections from *Values Magazine*

Nataraja Guru

The Role of the Guru Today

In the domain of contemplative relationships Guruhood represents a high human value. It constitutes the central notion round which the science of the Absolute lives and moves.

The Guru is not necessarily a living person. Śankara himself gives him a paradoxical status when he refers to him as "visible to Vedantic doctrines" yet "invisible" (*Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, verse 1). The high value that Guruhood represents requires the yogic or the dialectically contemplative eye to recognize and accept without distortion, one-sided exaggeration or confusion.

Although it thus belongs to a context of subtle dialectics which may be said to be beyond the reach of the common man, there is no notion which is so current a coin in the timeless India of the villages even today. The peasant grandmother teaches the child to touch the feet of the Guru and, although modernized sections in India feel uneasy when required to behave in this traditional style, a great deal of the ancient pattern of behavior persists in India at the present day. Neither is it likely to pass away.

Guru – A Suspect Word: The word "Guru" which has been introduced into the West through cheap and sensational literature has, in most cases, a strange effect when mentioned in the company of critically-minded intellectuals there. Something of the world of the hocus-pocus naturally lingers on in connection with it. Puerile or abject kowtowing sub-

jugation as well as outer tyrannical power exacting obedience in all circumstances are imagined to be implied in the Guru-disciple relationship. Often it is even suspected that Guruhood is a veil hiding hypocrisy or more disreputable tendencies. Such a suspicion may not in all cases be unjustified. But just as all patriotism is not the "refuge of a scoundrel" as Dr. Johnson put it, so claims to Guru-wisdom need not all be suspect.

In the varied public and private domains through which humanity is constantly shaping its future, it gets into relativistic impasses again and again. And whether in a village or at the head of a world assembly, the presence of a Guru or Gurus can give quite a new and unexpected character to the situation. Matters which, when left to themselves, would have ended in greater confusion, become reoriented, so that new solutions are reached and many a tension eased. A pinch of absolutism when added to the situation, from above as it were, can change its whole complexion. It is the "one pearl of great price" and the "little leaven" that "leaveneth the whole lump." As the *Bhagavad Gītā* puts it: "Even a little of such a way of life saves one from great fear" (II:40).

A Subtle Fire: Let us take the instance of the Guru Narayana. He loved to move from village to village. Guruhood came to dwell on his features with a natural grace by its own innate right. He cleared the jungle that had overgrown round neglected temples, he wrote new and better prayers for the village boys and girls to

repeat, he revalued and restated their economic, educational, social and religious outlook and tried to put order where chaos prevailed. He settled longstanding disputes and even interested himself in arranging marriages, avoiding ritualistic waste. He started weaving sheds for poor boys which normal authorities forgot or neglected.

While these miscellaneous items were being incidentally attended to, his overall status as a teacher of absolutist humanized wisdom still remained very effectively operative. The heat of the ascending contemplative self-discipline (known as *tapas*) that he represented in his personality as a Guru warmed the whole atmosphere *in and through* the existing set-up, without any duality or disruption, just as a ball of iron can be raised to white heat without changing its molecular structure.

The Guru-role is thus a subtle fire that fulfills without destruction. The Guru puts old wine into new bottles without creating dissenting new groups. No branch of human life is too mean or too noble for it. Viewing all humanity unitively, with equal eye, the Guru-role is both humble and proud at once. The friendship of a village cowherd lad is as important to him as being the head of a world gathering. As the water of an expansive dam is one with the water of the well that was once on the same site, but is now over-covered by the flood, so the unitive wisdom which the Guru represents counteracts all relativistic limitations and *in and through them* triumphs above all obstructions, bringing in a subtle factor to prevail in human affairs.

Guruhood Principle in Daily Life: As a matter of fact this same principle of Guruhood is already implicit in our daily human life. Why does a son when still young have to bend to the wishes of the father? Why should the wife be taken by the husband and guided through a public place? Why should a subject obey the ruler? Or, more philosophically, why should cause be related to effect, or a map be related to the land? Why should we respect a Maharaja of Nepal differently from the

Rajapramukh (princely governor) of an Indian State proper? When answered completely and consistently, it will be the same theory implicit in the principle of Guruhood that we are examining here.

Whether we speak of the international personality of the United Nations organization by virtue of which in certain instances at least, the International Court of Justice supports the supra-national rights of the Secretary-General of that body, or the right of a son on his father's death, to see that his father is decently buried, we tacitly accept in a certain sense of Absolute Necessity notions that are forced on us. What we wish to point out here is that even now in both the larger and local problems which face man, whether as a simple individual or as a member of the human race, a science of the Absolute is being relied upon loosely and unconsciously. As part of such a science, the subtle principle of Guruhood is implied in all worthwhile human situations.

If we are to save ourselves from the impasse that faces humanity at present, the Guruhood of mankind, whether particularly or universally viewed, when understood with all these implications, must become once again an operative and living principle in human affairs.

Freedom and proper spiritual orientation to unitive wisdom are crying needs of the present day. We must know the Truth that shall make us free. In this task which presses on us imperatively, the Gurus of mankind, whether contemporary or belonging to the long vertical line of Gurus who have lived at all times and in all climes, have a role to play which is neither new-fangled nor outmoded. . . . *As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, in a world without end.* . . . Let us bring such an attitude to bear on man's life, but more scientifically and positively than hitherto. Then many a closed door will be opened, many a hurdle will be crossed and many a conflict will be resolved.

Buddhism and Hinduism

The relation between Hinduism and Buddhism is subtle. The Upaniṣadic way of life is implicit in both. When overtly formulated this way of life must take the form of some such pattern of behavior or belief as is represented by the purest form of Buddhism. Both Hinduism understood in this way, and Buddhism, become complementary aspects of the same central human value implied in each.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks of Samkhya (rational philosophy) and Yoga (dialectical discipline) as the same. This categorical assertion is found explicitly stated in Chapter V, verses 4 and 5: "That Samkhya and Yoga are distinct, only children say, not the well informed (pandits); one well-established in any one of them obtains the result of both. That status attained by men of Samkhya (persuasion) is reached also by those of the Yoga (persuasion): Samkhya and Yoga as one, he who thus sees, he (alone) sees." But the subtle interrelation between the way of pure reason and the way of personal mysticism has remained puzzling even to commentators and critics.

When the sun shines the stars fade out of sight, but they are still there in the firmament. Buddhism, by giving primacy to reason and overt logic, brought the critical faculty to bear on the ancient background of Indian spirituality. In terms of pure duration, day and night are but aspects of the same flowing time. Hinduism or the Upaniṣadic way of life and Buddhism could be looked upon as the dialectical counterparts of the same central spiritual human value that knows no duality.

On the Indian soil, the eclipse of the outward religious expression called Buddhism followed in the wake of the changing political history of India. The supremacy of Buddhist kings passed, about the time of Harsha (6th-7th century), into the hands of new dynasties which in many cases were not opposed to Buddhism. In fact the period of Harsha's rule was exactly the one in which Sanskrit civilization

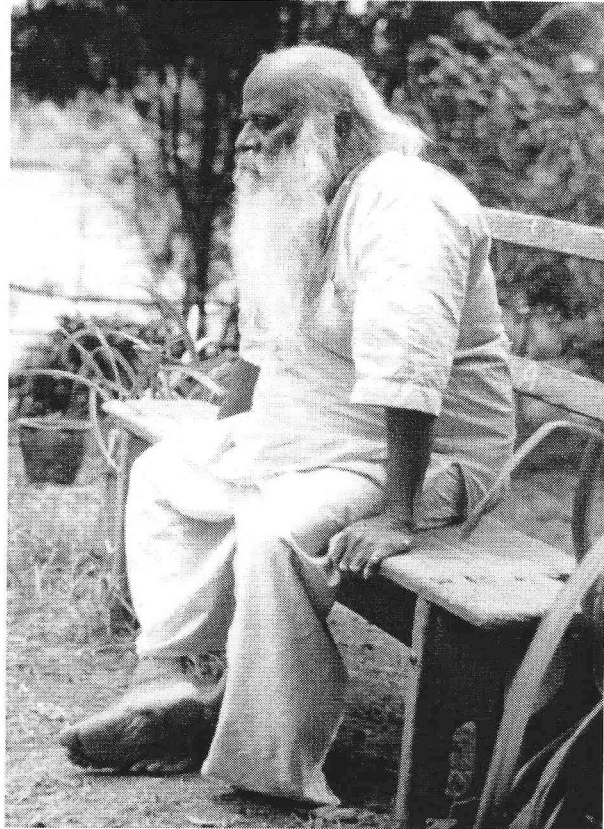
flowered and put forth its best blossoms. It is known as the golden period of Indian civilization and everything, including Buddhism, was subjected to drastic reevaluation and restatement.

Sanskrit culture at this period was a melting-pot in which all the best was fused together for a fresh expression. This expression did burst out, shedding its light uniformly over India and over what is known as Greater India beyond the seas. The prevailing pattern of Indian thought depends largely on this synthesis.*

One who understands Buddhism in this way truly understands it. The monasteries of the *bhikkhus* (begging monks) of Buddhism which received generous patronage from Buddhist rulers gradually became transformed into the *sannyasi ashramas* of India. The Upaniṣadic pattern of behavior of the *bhaikkhachari* (wandering mystic) was revived by Śankaracarya (9th century). This great Guru was able to revalue and restate even Buddhist doctrine in such a way as to raise the suspicion of the orthodox on both sides. The swamis of India began to receive the honor due to kings and the tradition survives to this day.

(Continued in next issue.)

* Readers are referred to the account given by Mrs. Gertrude Emerson Sen in *The Pageant of India's History* (Longmans, 1948, p. 262). She describes how King Harsha touched the feet of the Buddhist visitor Yuan Chwang, and how a great scholastic debate was held, which was followed by both Harsha and another king, Kumara, accompanied by Yuan Chwang, marching with all their great company of pandits and followers, to the capital city of Kanauj. The stamp of this recognition of spiritual leadership, Hindu or Buddhist, has continued among intelligent Indians to the present day.



What Religion Is to Me

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

I was born and brought up in India. When I was at school, once a year the teacher asked the class to respond to a classification. He called out, "Muslims" and some of my friends stood up. Suleyman was my best friend and he stood up. As I believed that I belonged to whatever he did, I naturally got up and stood with him. The teacher looked at me with unbelieving eyes and asked me to sit down. I could not understand this high-handedness that separated me from my best friend, but, respecting the teacher's arbitration, I sat. "Christians!" the teacher shouted next. This time I saw that my good friend Peter was standing up. As I did not want to lose both Suleyman and Peter, I stood up again, and again the teacher told me to sit down, this time with a note of annoyance. At this point I decided that I did not understand what game the teacher wanted us to play. Finally he said, "Hindus!" Next to me sat Paramsvara, the carpenter's son. He stood up, but, as I had never joined him in any of his endeavors, I sat where I was. The teacher looked fiercely into my eyes and shouted at me: "Stand up you stupid ass. You are a Hindu!"

I knew that I was not an ass; how then did I classify as a Hindu? I thought "Hindu" was another name for an ass. When I returned home I told my mother that my teacher had ruthlessly characterized me as a Hindu, which seemed synonymous to an ass. When my mother confirmed that I was indeed a Hindu, I felt crestfallen, but she continued by explaining that Hindu did not mean ass, but the majority of Indians who did not go to churches on Sundays and mosques on Fridays. In those days there was no temple near-by and I did not see the inside of one until Mahat-

ma Gandhi came to our village to open a temple for all Hindus. For long the word Hindu was a contemptuous term in my mind and Christian and Muslim were horrifying categorizations that segregated many of my friends at least on certain days or hours in a day. This experience of mine is shared in varying degrees of shame or horror by at least three fourths of the population of India who are considered socially taboo and are financially deprived.

After considerable exposure to education and religious display, I have come to terms with my Hindu grass roots and I have taken pains to understand the philosophy, mythology, ritual, ethics and above all the psycho-cosmologic dimensions of this mammoth, ancient culture which is at once dynamic and lethargic, universal and parochial, impersonal and individualistic, transcendental and exploitive. In spite of my devotion and study of the vast Hindu literature and that of its aftergrowths – Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism – I am still as much an outsider to Hinduism as I am to Christianity, Islam, Judaism or Shintoism. The main reason for such a sad alienation from my own hereditary grass roots is the natural aversion and anger that has grown in me towards the cancerous social observance of caste and all the anomalies connected with it. No person who cannot accept the caste system will ever become an ardent protagonist of Hinduism.

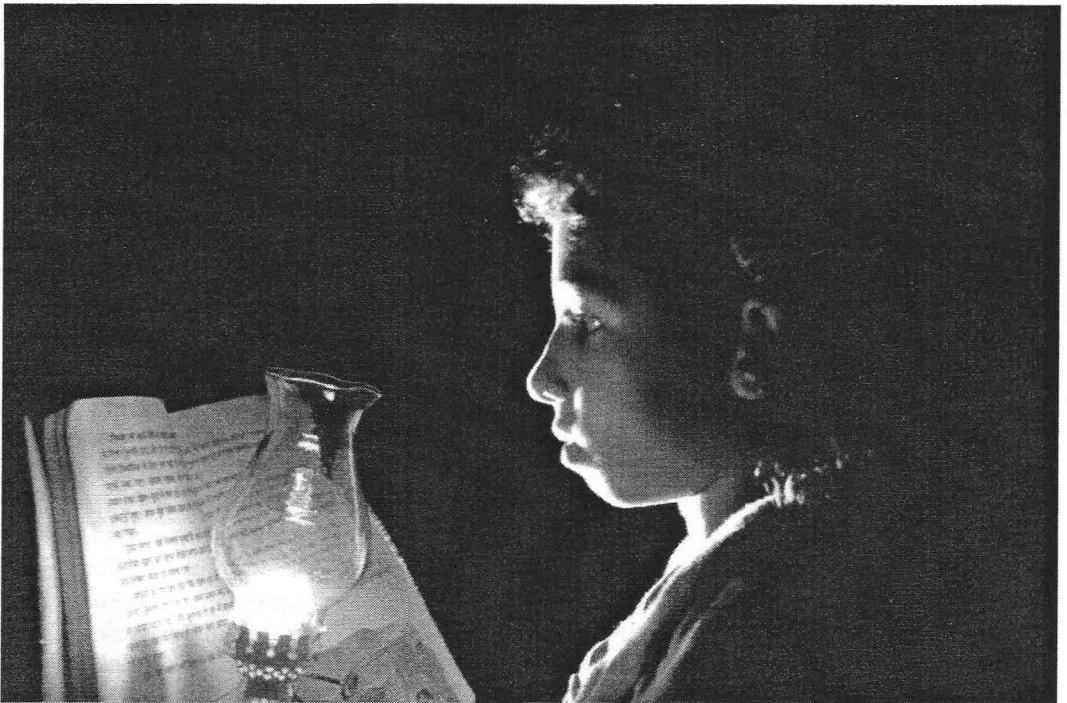
This deep agonizing conviction of the otherness of the very unconscious to which my myth and archetypal emotions belong, is not a solitary freak incidence with me alone. There are millions of well-meaning, educated Indians who feel a

natural abhorrence to the claims that Hinduism makes upon them. However, this gives little or no impetus to show love or sympathy for other religions. There is, of course, the glowing exception of Dr. Ambedkar, who sought refuge in Buddhism out of sheer exasperation, though history proved this to be a false step which was suicidal and self-defeating. Fortunately, Hinduism is not felt in the average Indian life as an organized monolithic institution, even though many politically ambitious fanatics have, time and again, tried to exploit the people's emotional affiliation to it for the purpose of building up a Hindu fundamentalist India. This has not succeeded and will not succeed, because a more genuine and immensely valuable spirit prevails upon the Indian mind. This is none other than India herself.

India is a unique country of calm and serene contemplative insight, and her children are deeply embedded in her un-

articulated commitment to the search and realization of a truth without frontiers and of a beauty that manifests universally in the very music and poetry of life. It is this genuine Indianness that has created such worthy sons and daughters as Mira Bai, Kabir and Tagore.

Such an open and dynamic sense of belonging to the essential spirit of India more than compensates for any spontaneous or studied aloofness of all religions, including Hinduism. The adherence to or the avoidance of religion of any sort does not affect in the least one's spiritual growth and dynamic acceptance of the truth and value of perennial philosophy, irrespective of its source being the Upanishads, the Enneads, the Gospels, or Buddhist lore. A human being is primarily and ultimately a human being, and there is nothing more tragic and shameful than if one's religion should cripple one into a creedist or a cultist. ❖



The Concept of Love in Literature

V. Ramachandran

Two of the oldest and most universal cults have been the worship of the stars on the one hand, and the emblems of sex on the other. The stars represent something beyond the reach of man, the symbols of changeless law and infinitude. Sex is the very focus of passion and desire, the burning of the will to live. Between these two poles the human mind has swayed since the dawn of intelligence. Love may be anything between these two extremes and it embraces a variety of emotions.

Love appears in literature in all its manifestations. We have to take into consideration not only maternal love, but the love of the child for its parents, not only the awakening desires of adolescence but the binding affection of a David and Jonathan. Dante's emotions on seeing Beatrice are not the same as the love of Romeo for Juliet, Tristram for Isolde, Othello for Desdemona, or Dushanda for Śakuntala. Dante's Beatrice, the real Florentine girl, becomes in imagination the poet's guide in paradise. It represents the process by which the attraction of sex may be transformed into a stimulus to spiritual activities. The fascinating love between Radha and Krishna is to be viewed in the context of Indian philosophy and mysticism.

Both in the East and the West, from very ancient times, philosophers and poets have explored the realm of love which is the fountainhead of inspiration and "the life-giving essence of poetry." There were numerous gods of love, like Cupid, Eros, Amour and Kama, to conquer the hearts of men and women with their strange weapons and queer ways. The Greeks visualized three different types of love – *Eros*, *Philia* and *Agape*. *Eros* is human love starting from the love of the

beautiful. *Agape* is God's love for all creation and *Philia* is friendship between persons.

Socrates distinguished between heavenly and vulgar love. According to him, the love of "the flower of the body" is base and vulgar, for it is not lasting and hence his contempt for it. But he admires the lover of the soul, for he is fused with a thing that is lasting. Plato accepted the Socratic principle of love. Thus, Platonic love is the affection between two persons, free from sexual desire; it is a striving after the infinite and a lowly adoration of perfect beauty. But Aristotle went further, looking for the psychological basis of the emotion. He found in love not a metaphysical principle, an aspiration after perfect beauty, but a natural physical bond between sexes, the sexes designed for the procreation of children. During the fourth century BC the Greeks and the Romans developed social patterns that combined the romantic and the realistic, leading to the emergence of love as a dominant theme in the classical literature of the West. Love assumed different forms which were portrayed in the drama and poetry of ancient Greece.

In the progressive development of human life through different phases, sex became taboo. The sacred became contrasted with the profane in the name of the unseen values. Sex and sin have been considered almost synonymous in the religious context of Christianity. The happy state of natural innocence was covered by guilt, obsessions and repressions from which humanity has continued to suffer.

The Renaissance was but the revolt of lovers and artists from the respectability of the Church. It was a headlong triumph of absolutists in terms of love and sex. Le-



onardo, Boccaccio, Shakespeare, Spencer, Marlowe and hundreds of artists discovered the beauty of the human form and sang of love through a revalued paganism which had smoldered beneath the theological support structure. Then came psychologists and educators who advocated co-education and a free development of the personality.

So far as India is concerned, Indian culture (i.e. Hindu culture) had an abiding interest in all the manifestations of love. "The Hindu never believed in the atrophy of any sense or sense organ. He has therefore idealized and deified every human passion and every phase of human beauty. The joys and griefs of amorous life are, therefore, as sacred as the joys and griefs of life in other spheres." Hence in India the act of love has never been considered a depravity. To the innocent contemplatives of India, the harmony of the two sex emblems (the *lingam* and the *yoni*) is an eloquent symbol of transcending all pairs of opposites or dualities. From the lust of the sensual to the supreme love in the sublime spiritual tradition, the Indian philosopher has depicted love in all its diverse aspects and levels. Whether in the field of poetry or drama or temple carvings, the mind of the Indian artist could soar to any height without being censored by social and moral taboos. But this golden age of art and literature underwent a great degeneration after the spread of Semitic repressions in the name of morality and religion.

The Vedic texts of India extol sex and sometimes they prove shockingly sexy. The Upaniṣads also retained the Vedic attitude to sex. The *Bhagavad Gita* even goes so far as to state that the Absolute Itself consists of *kama*, the erotic value-factor, when not against righteous conduct. The four ends of human life (*puruṣārthas*) include this urge for full living called *kama* as an important component of a purposeful life. Later Vatsyayana made it an object of deep and intensive study and composed the *Kama Sūtra*.

This healthy attitude to love and sex has been reflected in Indian literature. From the *Rig Veda* down to the *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva, Indian poets have attempted to depict love in its "many-splendored" manifestations. In Vedic literature, the scope for the development of pure love was comparatively slight. But during the classical period love emerged as a dominant theme. Classical poets such as Kalidasa and Jayadeva gave importance to sensual and erotic descriptions of feminine charms, raising the theme of love to sublime heights. Sex attains a sacred status in their works where art, philosophy, morals and mysticism come together.

There might be variations slight or prominent in the approach to love in the literature of the East and the West. Yet the emotion treated is universal and has been present all through and has exerted its pressure in human life almost uniformly from the beginning. ❖

Politics As Unusual

Scott Teitsworth

Spiritual seekers tend to be liberal in their political outlook, and there are several very good reasons for this. They are first and foremost seeking truth. This leads to habits of mind in which they listen closely, pay attention to as much as they can, and consistently separate the wheat from the chaff, the important from the unimportant, in what they hear. This is perennially the best defense against acting in response to group pressures and being out of tune with one's innate sense of values. To become lazy in this regard is to drift into the dangerous position where one can easily be led astray, as history has reminded us again and again.

On the other hand, those who are not consciously seeking truth are often more complacent. Such people tend to be content with what other people tell them, and are willing to subsume their sense of truth to the beliefs of their congregation, be it within a familial, tribal, national or religious affiliation. Since such groups often demand of their adherents that they subordinate their personal values and sense of truth to the dictates of the leadership, this leaves complacent people vulnerable to the manifold manipulations of a managed, media-drenched society, which so often serves the few at the expense of the rest.

Those who are currently called conservative are really adherents to a radical anti-human business corporatism that is anything but conservative. They view human beings on the one hand as a cost of production to be minimized and on the other as "consumers" of their goods and services. They have built for us a new religion based on the worship of money, or

"markets" as it is euphemistically referred to. Unimpeded by social conscience, they tinker with the very web of life itself, while their advertising program is busy substituting the image of the multinational corporation for God in the popular imagination. In a few years such hubris has so far had only a modest success, but Madison Avenue has at least been extremely successful at turning people into unpaid walking advertisements for their "caretakers." The people and places of America are covered with corporate logos from sea to shining sea.

Spiritual seekers tend to feel a kinship with all of nature, and are often motivated to try to mitigate the effects of their life on the environment. Many realize we can bring human life to a premature end by the careless handling of our world, and seek ways to mitigate the damage we cause by our presence on it. But some would have us believe that God put the earth here strictly for our economic benefit, to use as wantonly as we desire. When we use it up we can get another or go to a heaven somewhere. Obviously, such an attitude dovetails nicely with the desires of global corporations to take as much as they can of our finite resources for their own profit, and leave it for the poor suckers in the future to deal with a devastated planet.

Narayana Guru wants us to care for all aspects of our life here, including the environment, since we are not going "somewhere else." He reminds us, in verse 20 of *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*:

Other than this the world has no reality;
"there is"--all such that people say is

without reflection;
even if to a numskull it appears to be a
snake,
will a fresh flower garland ever become a
serpent?

The Guru wants us to always act with care in the present, and not be deluded by spurious promises of future compensation into abandoning our fair share in what takes place around us. In this regard he distances himself from the fatalism that has crippled mankind's endeavors throughout the millennia and still holds us in its grip even in the so-called Age of Science.

Moreover, seekers of truth are usually aware of their own failings and shortcomings, which are often an important element in impelling them to a lifetime of self-improvement. Being conscious that within the transactional world we are not perfect, but subjected to and bent by powerful disruptive forces, breeds compassion: a sympathy with all other human beings, who struggle constantly with their problems and succeed only in varying and limited degrees in freeing themselves from them. Seekers agree with Narayana Guru, who says (v.43, *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*):

Even those of good action are caught by nature and whirled around in vicious circles;

one should know that non-action does not bring release from perverted action,
only the non-desire for the fruit of action.

The corporate religious approach, which in America has also become the political approach, is to severely punish anyone who makes a mistake. They think those who believe as they do are God's chosen people, and therefore not subject to error. Only non believers are sinful, and they should be punished for their non belief as well as any other behavior that can be made illegal. In other words, they feel that non-action *does* bring release, as in the "just say no" drug policy. This "zero tolerance" program has led to criminal punishments for moral, "victimless" crimes far in excess of those for rape and murder, for instance. Yet the most egregious crime of exploiting a gullible populace for massive profit is praised as "exemplary behavior" in line with "God's will."

We are at a crossroads in human life on planet earth. Many of us have seen in our lifetimes the transition from a nature-dominated planet to a human-dominated one. God is not going to step in and save us from our folly. We must act soon and definitively, or our children or grandchildren will see the end of our species, perhaps of the whole biosphere.

But we find, as we attempt to implement even simple and obvious reforms, that an invisible force is holding us back.



What prevents us from doing what so plainly needs to be done? Somehow we have abdicated our innate power for harmonious and beneficial action, and the global corporations have rushed to fill the vacuum, placing their employees in positions of leadership. These leaders actively oppose any restraints on their employers' rapaciousness, and essentially treat humans as second class citizens whose needs are subordinate to the demands of business.

The multinationals have worked hard and thoughtfully to achieve their ability to control all the variables, and to make market capitalism the new religion. In the US, they have put politicians in place everywhere. They have enlisted friends in religious organizations to preach on their behalf. They have hired scientists and lawyers to dispute common sense in every public forum. And most importantly, with their seemingly endless troves of money they have bought up all the media outlets: radio, TV and print. In a system where everything is for sale, truth has become a commodity that can be readily controlled by money.

For every election in America these dollar-worshippers stage an elaborate fraud. Sycophants of two seemingly opposed political parties compete for the available posts, but their real purpose is to keep power in corporate hands. The media follow it like a sporting event, which is very exciting. First one is ahead, then the other. Who will win????? No one ever speaks of issues of importance.

When an outsider occasionally appears to challenge the two party system, all voters are brought on board by the threat that the outsider might take votes from one and give the election to the other. It is made out that this will actually matter, because there *are* shades of difference between the two official candidates. One would cut down ten trees, the other eleven. One would allow a lot of factory pollution, the other a little less. One would appoint a very conservative judge, the other an extremely conservative judge.

Of course, they both agree we should

have a lot of prisons, and we should put a lot of people in them. Unpaid prison workers are already widely employed as the new slave labor force in corporate and government menial jobs. (Who says the South won't rise again?)

Most centrally, both candidates agree that unfettered global capitalism is the only solution to all our problems, and that information only makes people discontented. But by exploiting the minute differences in the official candidates, the media has been able to derail progressive politics through all of modern history. As long as phrases like "A vote for Nader is a vote for Bush" continue to sap liberal sensibility, America will never have a progressive movement capable of putting spiritual principles to work for the good of the world we live in.

Guru Prasad, in his *New Millennium Greetings* in this magazine two issues back, put it this way: "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 (and) not knowing why. We have to make ourselves human beings who live our lives with the awareness of who we are."

Narayana Guru has pointed out the way humanity needs to go to make our planet a heaven-world instead of a hell-world (v.23, *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*):

For the sake of another, day and night performing action,
having given up self-centered interests,
the compassionate person acts;
the self-centered man is wholly immersed in necessity,
performing unsuccessful actions for himself alone.

The current world belief system is to act for oneself alone. It is time to turn that around and implement the loving approach of the gurus. Time to overturn global capitalism and reinvigorate local activism with the compassion and common sense already pulsing in our hearts. ❖

One Foot in Front of the Other

I imagine your father, bare feet in the soft sand
molding their shape to village pathways, long
black hair shining with coconut oil, falling to his waist.
As he walks his tongue shapes the echoing resonances of new poems.
In paddies young green shoots of rice
reflect in the water, and in the quickening dusk
dragonflies hover, dart and disappear.

I see my own father, wearing knickers,
stealing away at night to drive his Model A
into the wind of the Great Plains, whistling
through the cornfields, the straight edges
of the Iowa landscape holding him firmly in their beliefs.
Before—in that flat, open space—the promise
of escape, of a world made by ambition and work.

In Delphi you and I search for that rent in the earth
where intoxicating vapors stream out, voicing
prophecies—slanted answers to secret questions.
We stroll in the winter light with spring only an intimation.
Tumbled marble reminds us of the oracle's voice and
the power of the past, whose shaping hands
laid on us in youth traced such varied destinies.

At the edge of the Aegean, colors of violet, purple,
crimson, a faint turquoise reflecting off the water—
these saturate the air, then fall into the rocky land.
We, too, are colored, our differences blurred by the streams of light;
then night begins to darken, colors are folded into indigo shadows.
Our shoulders lean into each other and our separate
histories erased into a darker earth.

Deborah Buchanan

The Timeless Guru Principle

N. C. Kumaran

*cidrūpena parivyāptam
trailokyam sa carācaram
tat padam darśitam yena
tasmai śrīgurave namaḥ*

In everything that is stationary and mobile in the three worlds of the past, present and future, what permeates as pure consciousness, is the Guru to whom we offer our salutations!

Introduction

When we are assembled to celebrate the *samādhi*-day of a *jñāna*-Guru like Guru Nitya, I should begin by telling you what exactly is meant by the word "Guru" and the principle underlying it. The word "Guru" literally means a "dispeller of darkness," implying the darkness of ignorance about one's real nature, accumulated over millions of lives. Śankaracarya in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* likens this ignorance to the sludge covering the clear waters of a pond, which in turn represents the pure consciousness of man to expose his intellect to reflect the glorious Divine Sun. Elsewhere, Śankara likens the Principle of the Guru to a burning coal buried in ashes. To a casual observer he, like the ashes, is of no worth. Little does one know that buried in the ashes there is hidden a source of energy that can burn away all dross of ignorance. Guru Nitya was verily one such *brahma-jñāni*, in whom all beings have become his own *ātman* (I-consciousness).

Our gathering today is not therefore to be looked upon as an expression of regret for a person who has passed away. Nataraja Guru, Guru Nitya's mentor, says on an occasion such as this should be one in which we take account of our own spiri-

tual lives and examine where we stand in our common endeavor for improving the lot of humanity as a whole.

How do we proceed in this direction? *Adhyātma Vidyā* (Science of Spirituality) of which the central theme is that of God as the Self (*ātman*) is the only way. In a simple analogy, in the *Daiva Daśakam*, the Guru compares the ocean to God, the waves of the ocean to the world of multiplicity, the ocean's depth to God's unfathomable mystery and the winds which cause the waves to *māyā* (illusion). For reaching the goal of life, it is not enough if we comprehend God as the functional Reality of things; we have to experience God as the transcendent and the immanent at one and the same time. Guru Nitya advocated such a holistic approach to everyday life, called *advaita jivitum* (*Advaita* in Daily Life).

An Advaitin (Absolutist)

Under everyday life conditions, the spiritual and the worldly are not two, but one, for the two aspects of the Divinity work with one objective. This is nothing other than the aim of human life – Happiness with a capital "H" to denote everlasting happiness. Narayana Guru, in a message on the subject, says: "Just as the human body enjoys perfect health, when all the limbs function in unison, mankind achieves its ultimate aim of Happiness, when there is harmonious blending of both the spiritual and the worldly." This unitive grandeur of the *paramporul* (Self/Absolute) as a silent witness is nowhere so picturesquely brought out as in the imagery of the two birds in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*:

Two beautiful winged ones, fast bound

companions
Cling to the self-same tree,
Of the two, the one eats delicious berries
While the other looks on, not eating.

Another instance of these two ambivalent trends in consciousness arising from within each person, where the Absolute resides, are known as *sama* (sameness) and *anya* (otherness) in the *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*. These two aspects of the Absolute are like light and darkness of opposing nature. What is recommended in the poem is *viveka* (discrimination) on the part of the wisdom seeker, opposed to sensual interests. Such an attitude of neutrality was Guru Nitya's.

The Gurukula: A Worldwide Institution for Values

Narayana Gurukula is a Guru-disciple *parampara*, founded by Nataraja Guru the disciple-successor of Narayana Guru, a sage-poet, philosopher and mystic, who lived in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th. His message pertains to real values in life or perennial wisdom. It is a God-realized person who is best equipped to live life fully. The "here and now" become important to such a person and not the past and the future. In Nataraja Guru's own words, the purpose of founding of Gurukulas could be stated as follows: "Man must become a better man and fulfill his role as man-in-life more fully and consciously. Man must attain the status of Manhood so that each man could contribute his share of goodness to the total heritage of humanity as a whole." While Narayana Guru blessed his dear *sisya's* proposal to found the Gurukula, the words the Guru uttered then are significant: "The whole world should become a Gurukula." By this Narayana Guru meant that just as in the *gurukula* (meaning literally, the family of the Guru), the father/mother in each family must take up the role of the Guru in bringing up their children so that they grow up without any prejudices with regard to differences in gender, caste, religion, economic class or status in society. Incidental-

ly, Guru Nitya mentions in an essay on "Challenges of Poverty in India" that the most important cause of poverty in India is man-made division among people according to caste and religion.

Myself and my family have had God's blessings to be associated with Guru Nitya as householder-disciples of the Gurukula for half a century (1952-present). I remember Guru Nitya from his *parivrajaka* (wandering mendicant) days, his stint in the Vivekananda College as philosophy teacher and the days spent in Delhi as the Director of the Institute of Psychic and Spiritual Research. I now turn to certain interesting personal anecdotes relating to Guru Nitya.

Unforgettable Incidents

In the year 1972 or thereabouts, Guru Nitya and myself went to visit a common friend, Mr. V.G.G. Nair who happened to be staying at one of the Chennai hotels. After the customary greetings, Mr. Nair asked the Guru how he was getting on. The Guru replied "*yadrcchaaalabhasamtusto*," quoting a Gita verse, referring to one who is contented with whatever is got unsought. The full verse describes the general attitude of a man of wisdom, as he moves among men. Chances come to him, but he is not a fortune hunter. Conflicting pairs of opposites do not affect him. He is also a *vimitsara*, a non-competitive person. Guru Nitya was indeed one such.

The second incident took place in Varkala, Kerala, at the time of the annual convention in the last week of December 1977. I had gone there from Bombay, where I was working at that time. I was short of any extra cash to meet any eventualities on my return journey for which tickets were already purchased. I was scheduled to return that day and had gone to Guru's *parnashala* (hut) to take leave of him. I had not told anyone of my being short of funds for any emergencies. After I took leave of Guru, he gave me an envelope with instructions not to open it until I reached home. When I opened it, I found that it contained three hundred rupee notes. What love and kindness! In the

poem, *Vinayakāṣṭakam*, Narayana Guru speaks of Ganesha as *sada danavartam* (giver of generous bounty) even without the devotee asking for anything.

The third incident took place in 1993, when Guru Nitya was engaged in taking classes on *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* at our residence on the open terrace for a full week. Classes began at 6.30 a.m. and went until 8.30 a.m. Some of the devotees attending the classes had a problem in that they could not go home for breakfast and then attend offices. At this juncture, our neighbors, who were also attending the classes, offered to host breakfast in turn, thus solving the problem. At the end of the classes, all devotees arranged a potluck dinner, which was appreciated by all. Guru Nitya was immensely pleased with these gestures of amity and co-operation. Since the Truth behind existence is one and indivisible, one's code of conduct has necessarily to be caring and sharing with one's neighbor, who is none other than one's self in another name and form.

Conclusion

Guru Nitya is relevant today because of his contribution to *advaita* revalued and restated to suit the idiom and climate of the times. In the 21st century, India will become, hopefully, a global partner with the developed countries with high-

technology achievements. But what about India's ethos with a highly evolved spiritual culture along with *dharmic* ways of life of the people? It is not enough if the material quality of lives of people improve, as such development will be lopsided. The spiritual aspect must also develop alongside. Already we are witnessing the negative effects of the impact of technology, such as the tendency to grab wealth and power. This has to be countered with the tenets of true religion (wisdom teaching) as advocated by the Guru trio of the Narayana Gurukula. This will also be in tune with that taught by sages of the past like Thirumular, Ramalinga Adigal of Arulperumjoyti fame of Tamilnadu and Ramana Maharishi to mention only a few. Narayana Guru points out this truth in his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* laying emphasis on the right conduct of based on the knowledge that the inner person is one and the same in everyone:

"That man, this man,"
thus all that is known
in the world, if contemplated,
is the being of the one Primordial Self;
what each performs
for the happiness of the self
should be conducive to
the happiness of another. ❖



Sacred Friendship

*Sacred friendships grow with time
and shared adventures lived.
All life's beauties, traumas, joys;
missteps can be forgiven.*

*Sacred friendship holds the fiber
that weaves communal tribe ---
a platform, a foundation
from which all members thrive.*

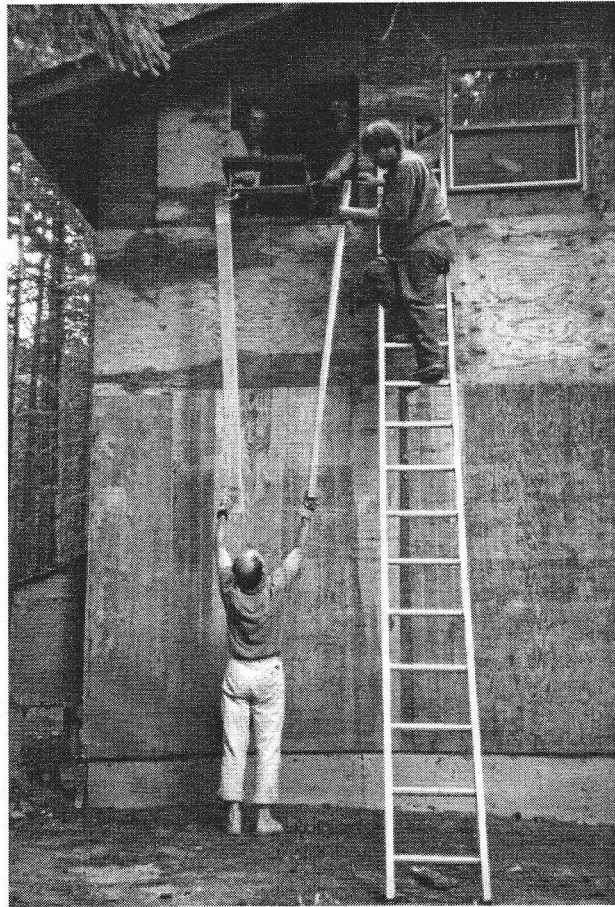
*Sacred friendships speak the truth
which honors all concerned
with integrity and loyalty,
allowing each to learn.*

*Sacred friendships based on love
encourage all involved
to cultivate their visions
while releasing problems solved.*

*Sacred friendships standing tall
in pounding drenching storms,
foul-weather friends, fair-weather friends -
both are sacred norms.*

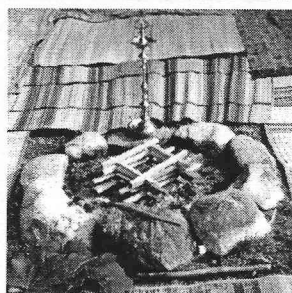
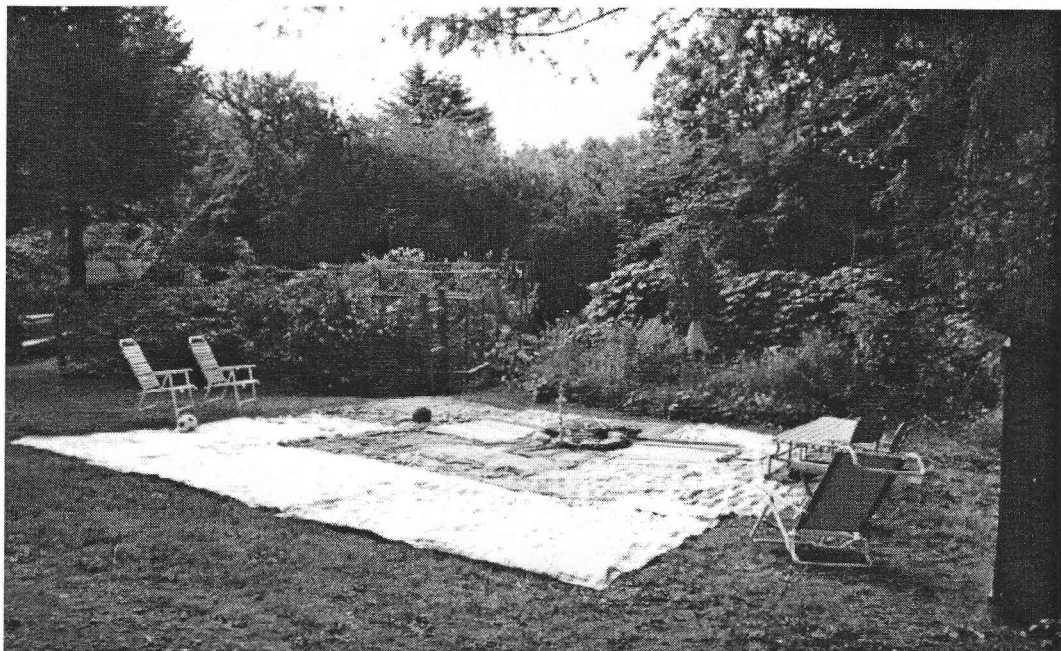
Peggy Grace Luke

East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



Lowering the camera out of the Press Building, Bainbridge Gurukula

Guru Puja, September 3, 2000, Bainbridge Gurukula



East-West Creativity



Sreyas and Preyas

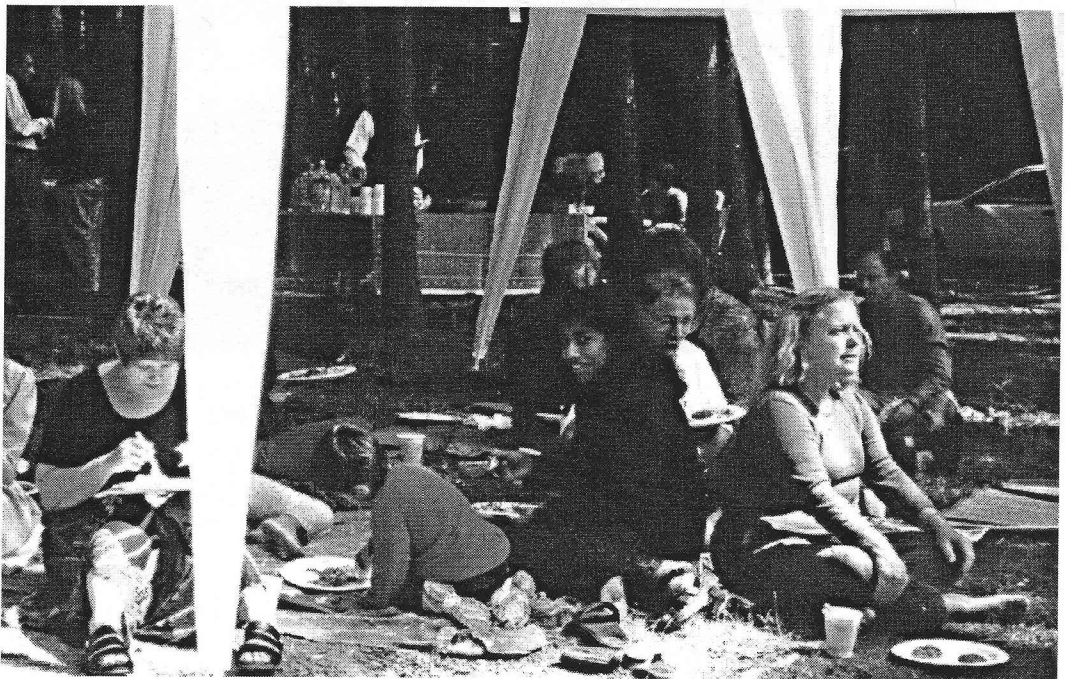
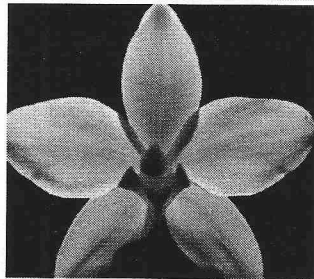
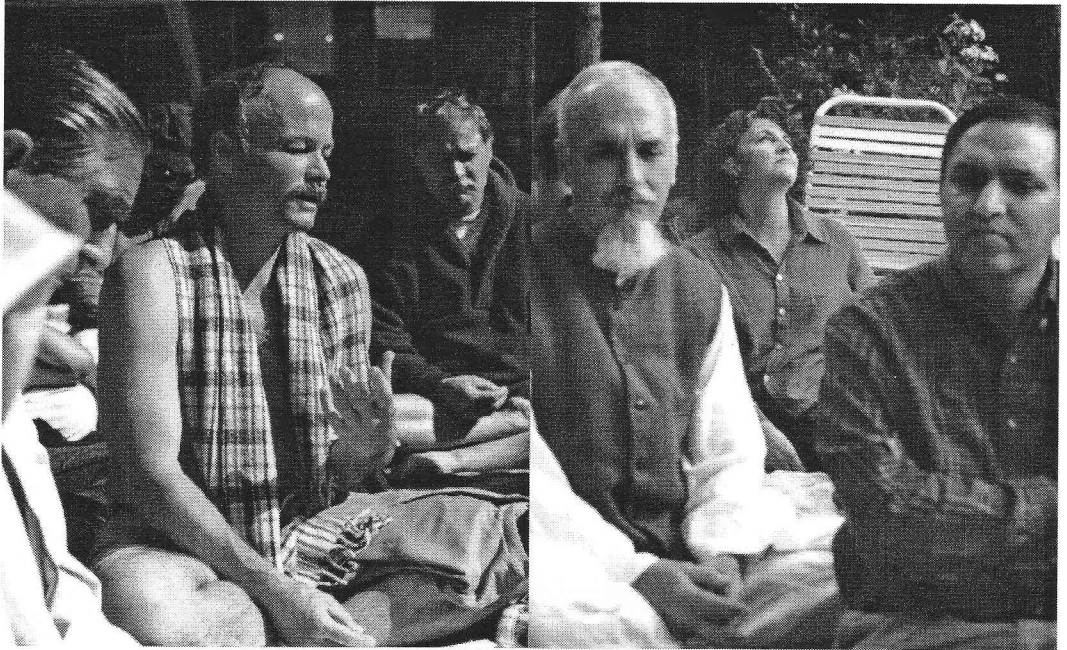


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