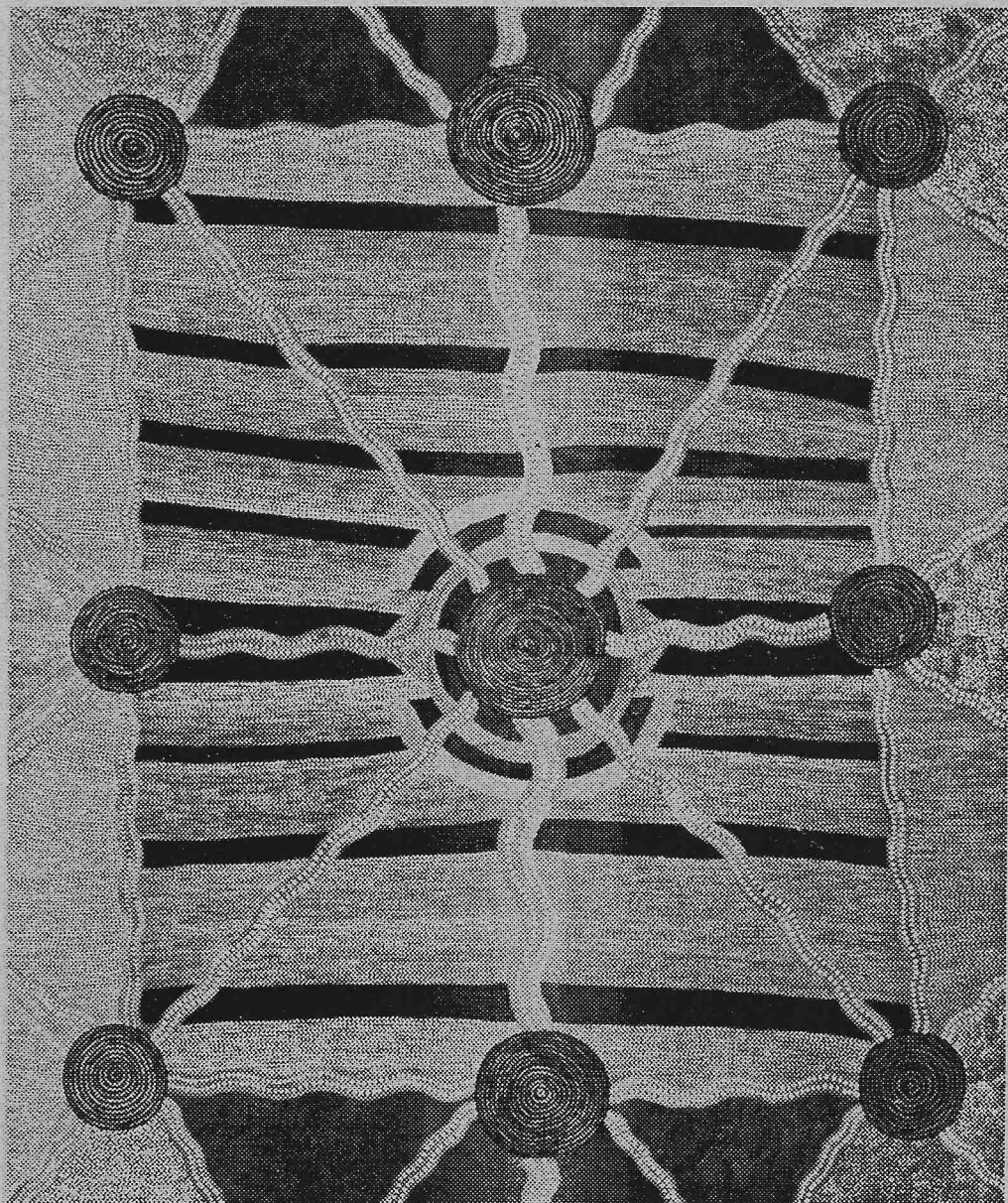
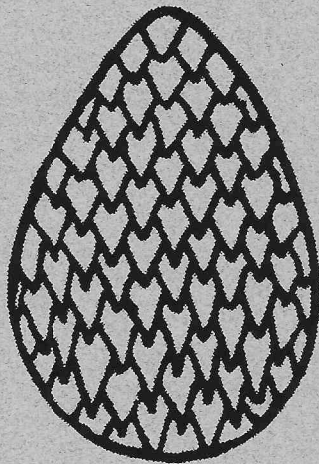


GURUKULAM

VOLUME XVII • 2001

THIRD-FOURTH QUARTER





GURUKULAM

VOLUME XVII • 2001

THIRD-FOURTH QUARTER

- 3 MID-SEPTEMBER, 2001 by Nancy Yeilding
- 5 MEDITATIONS ON ŚRĪCAKRA by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 16 ONE HUNDRED VERSES OF SELF-INSTRUCTION:
Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, verse 16
Translation and Commentary by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 21 AWAITING STABILITY by Emily Teitsworth
- 22 A DATE WITH THE DIVINE by Nitya
- 24 INTERVIEW OR INNERVIEW? by Showkhat
- 28 REVELATION IN THE WILDERNESS by Dr. G.H. Mees
- 36 BOOK REVIEW by Deborah Buchanan
The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony by Roberto Calasso
- 40 EAST-WEST UNIVERSITY REPORT AND
NARAYANA GURUKULA NEWS
- 41 NOT JUST SURVIVING by Peter Oppenheimer
- 44 PHOTO AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

GURUKULAM

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITION

GURUKULAM is published by Narayana Gurukula and the East-West University of Unitive Sciences. Its policy is that enunciated by Narayana Guru when he convened the Conference of World Religions at Alwaye, South India, in 1924: "Our purpose is not to argue and win, but to know and let know."

NARAYANA GURUKULA was founded by Nataraja Guru in 1923 as a world-wide contemplative community. His Successor, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati, continued the wisdom teaching of unitive understanding from 1973 to 1999. The current Guru & Head is Muni Narayana Prasad.

PUBLICATIONS BOARD: Deborah Buchanan, Sraddha Durand, Scott Teitsworth, Robert Tyson, Nancy Yeilding.

EDITOR: Nancy Yeilding

PRODUCTION STAFF: Deborah Buchanan, Sraddha Durand, Mat Gilson, Desiree Hunter, Andy Larkin, Millie Smith, Harmony Teitsworth, Scott Teitsworth, Robert Tyson, Stella Tyson, Indra Vas, Nancy Yeilding.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION USA: Yearly: \$20.00 for three issues. Outside USA add \$4.50 for surface mail, \$14.50 for air mail. Write to: GURUKULAM, 8311 Quail Hill Road, Bainbridge Island, WA, 98110, USA.

E-mail to: islandgurukula@foxinternet.net.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION INDIA: Yearly subscription for 4 Issues is Rs. 100. Write to: Narayana Gurukula, Srinivasapuram P.O., Varkala, Kerala, 695145, India.

PRINTED on recycled paper at East-West University Press, Bainbridge Island, WA, USA, and Mangala Offset, Varkala, Kerala, India.

COVER: From *Kooralia*, Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, 1980, Australia.

Inside Cover: Pine Cone, Symbol of Life and Fertility

Mid-September, 2001

In Moscow, as in Sweden, Australia, Peru, Germany, and many other countries around the world, people spontaneously streamed to the United States' Embassies, with flowers, flags, and candles—symbols of shared grief and connection with those who are suffering. One group listened in tears, hearing as if for the first time Christ's words.

*Blessed are they that mourn:
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek:
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are the merciful:
for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the peacemakers:
for they shall be called the children of God.*

In Pristina, Kosovo, with dark eyes and faces etched by their own recent terrors, people poured into the streets with American flags, carried by waves of empathy, pondering Christ's teaching.

*Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them which
despitefully use you, and persecute you;
That ye may be the children
of your Father which is in heaven:
For he maketh his sun to rise
on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.
Be ye therefore perfect,
even as your Father which is in heaven
is perfect.*

On a street in East Jerusalem, Palestinians gathered with flowers to share their grief at the tragedies in New York and Washington, haunted by the images of fiery deaths. They lit candles to express their common cause with those suffering in the US as they listened to the words of the Qur'ān.

*Praise be to God,
The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

*Nor can Goodness and Evil
Be equal. Repel Evil with what is better:
Then will he between whom*

*And thee was hatred
Become as it were thy friend and intimate!
And no one will be granted such goodness
Except those who exercise
Patience and self-restraint,—
None but persons of the greatest good fortune.
And if at any time an incitement to discord
Is made to thee by the Evil One,
Seek refuge in God.
He is the One who hears and knows all things.*

In Japan, near bouquets of flowers outside the US Embassy, a silent group listened as a monk chanted the words of the Buddha.

*Our life is shaped by our mind; we become
what we think. Suffering follows an evil
thought as the wheels of a cart follow the oxen
that draw it. Joy follows a pure thought like a
shadow that never leaves.*

*"He was angry with me, he attacked me,
he defeated me, he robbed me"—those who
dwell on such thoughts will never be free from
hatred. Those who do not dwell on such
thoughts will surely become free from hatred.*

*For hatred can never put an end to hatred;
love alone can. This is an unalterable law.
People forget that their lives will end soon. For
those who remember, quarrels come to an end.*

*Everyone fears punishment; everyone
fears death, just as you do. Therefore, do not
kill or cause to kill. Everyone fears punish-
ment; everyone loves life, as you do. Therefore
do not kill or cause to kill.*

*Conquest breeds hatred, for the conquered
live in sorrow. Let us be neither conqueror nor
conquered, and live in peace and joy.*

*There is no fire like lust, no sickness like
hatred, no sorrow like separateness, no joy like
peace. No disease is worse than greed, no suf-
fering worse than selfish passion.*

*Know this, and seek nirvana as the high-
est joy. Drink the nectar of the dharma in the
depths of meditation, and become free from fear
and sin.*

*The company of the wise is joyful, like re-
union with one's family. Therefore live among
the wise, who are understanding, patient, re-
sponsible, and noble. Keep their company like
the moon moving among the stars.*

In Bhopal, India, children in schools stood in silence, resonating with the losses and fears of children in the US, as oil lamps were lit in recognition of the oneness of humanity, voiced by the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanisads*:

Ever uniting thus the Self, that yogi, rid of dross, having contact with the Absolute, enjoys easily happiness that is ultimate. One whose Self is united by yoga sees the Self as abiding in all beings and all beings as abiding in the Self, everywhere seeing the same.

Whoever sees all beings in the Self itself and all beings as the Self, by that one does not slight any. In whom all beings are known to have become the Self, what delusion is there, or what sorrow to one who beholds this unity?

In gatherings around the world, human beings reflected upon that which connects us. We are connected by what we do and don't do, by how we act. Guided by the teachings and lives of the wise, when we examine the realm of cause and effect, we see the truth of their words. Hatred breeds hatred, terror breeds terror; compassion breeds compassion, mercy breeds mercy. Wherever we look, from our own day to day lives, to the actions of national governments, we can find ample proof that revenge breeds revenge, injustice breeds injustice. Heedless exercises of power, blind pursuit of resources, conquest by economic strangulation—these actions plant seeds of hatred that may take a long time to blossom, but blossom they do in anguish. If we look with eyes open to see—at history, at economics, at politics, at sociology—we understand that greed and selfish passion, whether on the part of a person, a country, or a corporation, not only cause disease and suffering in those at whom they are directed, they *are* disease and suffering in those in whom they reside.

When we examine our own hearts in sorrow we see the same truths reflected in our own actions and we recognize the desperate need for renewing our commitments to act in the light of these truths—to refrain from striking back, to bless those that curse us, to repel evil with the goodness that is greater, to do good to

those who hate us.

When we act with love, it bears fruit as well. We have all known the great good fortune that comes from acting with restraint and patience; we have all felt the rippling blessings of compassionate acts. We can call to mind many stories of individual, communal, and national acts of selfless courage, of generosity, of justice, of mercy, and of the blossoms of understanding, consolation, and peace they have engendered. It is very hard to act with love and compassion in the face of fear. That is why the great teachers guide us to seek refuge in God, to become one in mind with the Absolute, to seek Nirvana as the greatest joy, to be united by Yoga, and to keep company with the wise.

They remind us of the other way in which we are connected, not at the level of doing, but at the profound depth of being. *We are one.* We all have experienced the beauty and wonder of the planet we share as a common home. We reach around the world to each other because our hearts tell us that the differences and the separations—of country, of religion, of ideology, of culture—obscure a deeper truth. That truth is a unity we do not have to act to create. It is and we are That, whether we know it as God, Krishna, Gaia, Nirvana, Love, the Absolute, Truth, Spirit, Peace, or the Light of lights in our hearts. We do not have to act to create this reality, but when our actions reflect it, our lives become joyful, free of regret, blessed with the peace that passeth understanding. Narayana Guru said it in one small verse:

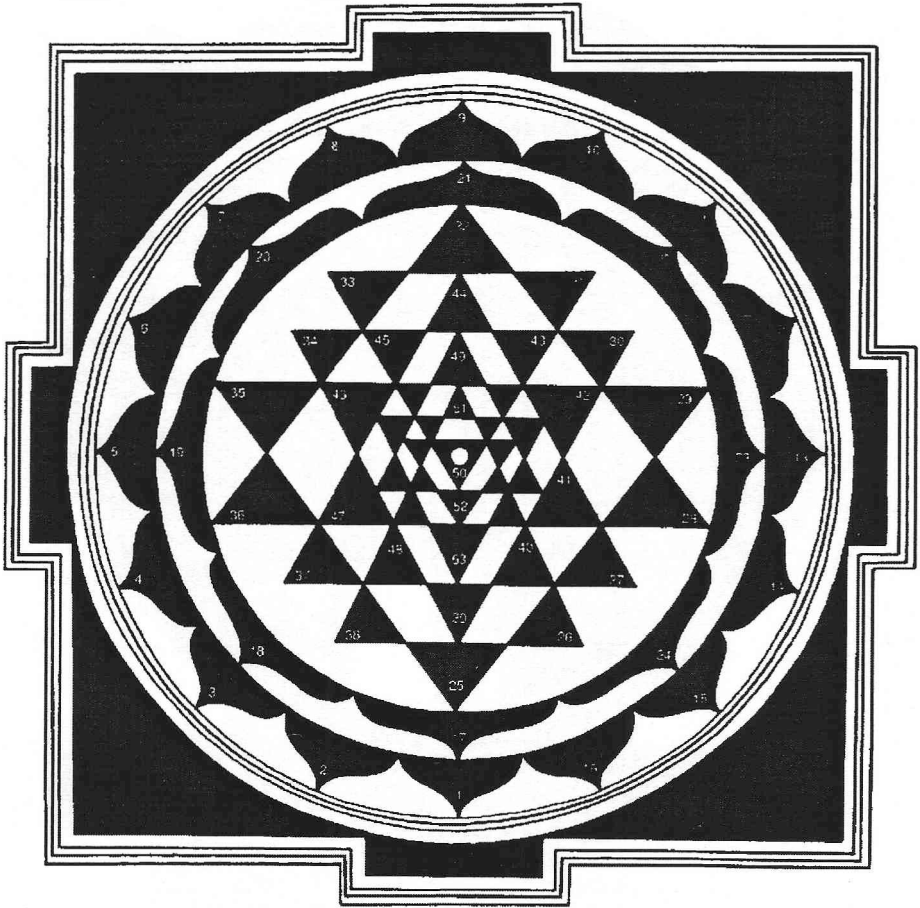
"That man," "this man"—thus, all that is known in this world, if contemplated, is the being of the one primordial self; what each performs for the happiness of the self should be conducive to the happiness of another.

When our hearts cry out in anguish, love and compassion to ask what we can do, the answers will be many, moment by moment, today and tomorrow, and the guidance is there in all traditions, to aid us in manifesting the truth of our oneness, to aid us in knowing the wonder of what we truly are.

Nancy Yeilding

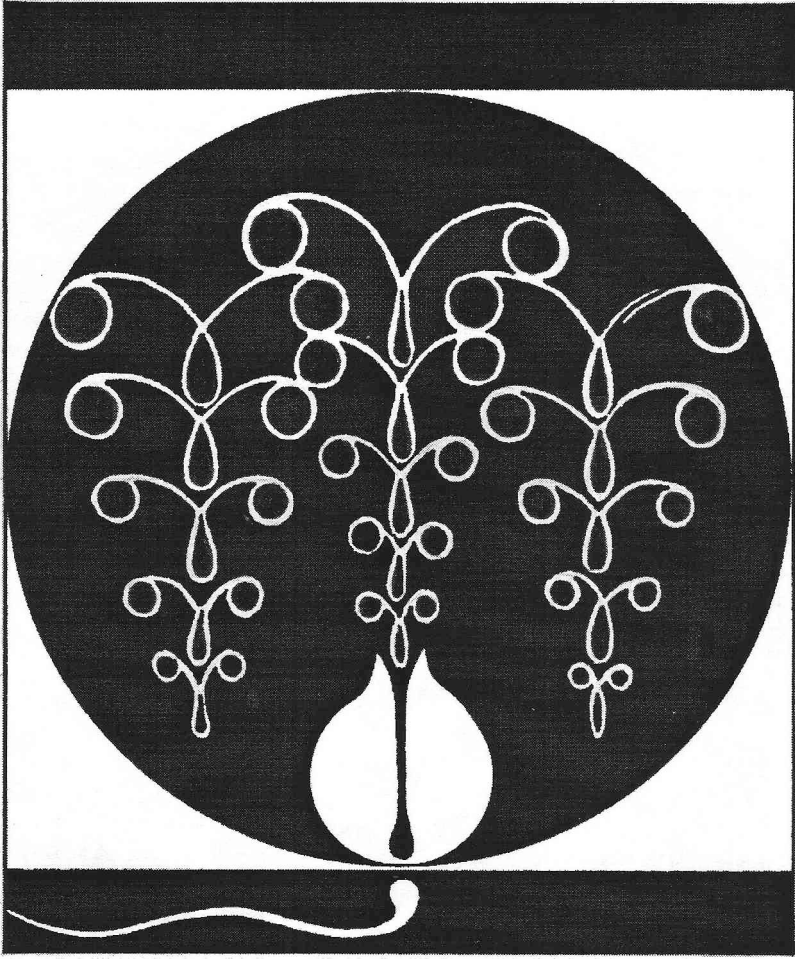
Meditations on Śrī Cakra

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.



chṃ sarvajrambhiṇī

Meditation Thirty-one

O Mother Sarvatantramayī, creation was initiated by opening the door of the primeval egg in which the essence of the spirit took refuge. It was like breathing life into a universal possibility. For a short while it looked as if nothing happened. The egg closed its mouth and seemed to go into sleep. Then started the chemistry of creation—the breaking of the cell and the proliferation of its replicas. What went into the primeval egg was the very secret of the Creator's breath. It was as if a lamp was lit in the new abode of life.

The fetus (*praja*) and its programmer (*pati*) are fused into one (*prajāpati*). Even before the egg develops into a fetus a secret computing is made of the eighty or hundred years which the incumbent person has to live. Its purpose and meaning, the ways and means of actualizing value after value until one arrives at the final destination—all these are to be glanced at. Almost instantaneously thereafter the growing cell is presided over by the programmer (*prajāpati*). All basic requirements are epitomized and kept in the ovum and the sperm. All of this put together provides the required materials out of which the person can be fashioned with a gross body which gradually enters into several shades of subtlety and ultimately disappears in the mystery of an unknown oversoul. That is how the potential becomes more and more vivid, almost like the sculpture, painting or music of an artist. That is the beginning of *kalā* (art). There are sixty four *kalās* already conceived by the Lord. Now it is up to you, Mother, to give us the advantage of each one of these arts as applicable in our lives.

We know that you are not mixing earth with water, kneading it into our shape to bake in fire, and bringing us out into your resemblance by breathing into our nostrils and placing us in the space you donate. That is too simplified a picture. Your scheme is a slow process of concretization in which we are given an internal watery environment where the body temperature is measured and adjusted with metabolic secrets. You have given us this respiration system, coupled with a circulatory system, to last a whole lifetime. You started the art of creation without any parent machine or separate laboratory for synthesizing the rare chemicals with which we are created, yet you do it with such engineering perfection and effectiveness. Do we have another example in this world of this unique model of creation which you have been bringing about so silently in the course of a few months?

Evidently the potential was projected into the actual. The potential was unknown to us. Because of the actual we presume there was potential. Again, because of creation we also surmise the possibility of an intelligent creator. You have serialized creation with many specific patterns. Nothing is more magical than the art of proliferation. As if out of nowhere and nothing you brought about masses of material which range from the hardest teeth to the slimy mucous membranes, all appropriately placed, one complementing the other. Your art of fusion (*kalānam*) is probably the very beginning of alchemy. You have the special skill to fuse space with time and spirit with matter. In your creation there is no waste and nothing is irrelevant at any stage of fusion.

It was probable that there was nothing but the all-filling water. You brought into it the repository of all future promises in the form of this good earth which set boundaries for your water; then there was the ocean and the dry land. To the earth itself you have given a circulatory system to moisten it. In the deep of the water, in the marshes, on land and in the moist atmosphere you have extended specifications of your scheme of creation. You have your own scheme of thermodynamics and electromagnetism that are not to be sought in laboratory works. They are here and now in the spit-bug, the grasshopper, and the mosquito, as well as in the volcano and the dying star. These devices and their operation are not confined to anywhere in the world because they are the world.

You have a chemical scheme to produce an electrical impulse (*prakāśa*) from which evolves a sensory system that can interpret the response to a stimulus as painful or

pleasurable, to be accepted or to be rejected. As you are the artist and also the critic, it is the interpretation in the sensory system that gives us the quality of life. Life is the quintessence of its glow and the lyric sung in its praise.

You have a number of triads to shade your art from the most vivid to the most obscure. In *sattva* you have a clear-cut idea which comes as an intuitive flash. You color and enrich it with the elaboration of *rajas*. Then you fix it with the inertial freezing of *tamas*. Every bit of you is a unit of knowledge in the tri-basic form of the knower, known, and knowledge. It amuses you chop the continuity of time into the past, present, and future. Under our feet we mark the alpha on which we can stand firm. From there, we can rise into the atmosphere, then reach still farther, beyond the clouds, to the unending sky. Just as everything has dimensions, you have decided that the very concept of matrix should be of length, breadth and height. You have even fashioned three gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. With these you make small pellets of integral values. Each monad is a container of a probability that can actualize. It is the *dharma*. When *dharma* is released it becomes *karma*. For the release of *karma* you give the stimulation of a desire (*kāma*). *Kāma* is dynamic; it inspires, compels and bursts out as an irresistible volcano. That inspiring force is *codana* which is also the mark of *dharma*.

The irresistible restlessness to inquire into, to reach out, to examine, to verify and prove to oneself is the interrogative disposition, the mind (*manas*). Where there is no question there is no mind. It is the dynamic of a question which manifests as the compulsive mind. Where mind comes, it unravels and pulls away the veils that cover up all forms. The form is *ākāra*. *Ākāra* is the creative mold; it also decides how the indweller of each form has to act so that when beings emerge from the amorphous, the world becomes an aggregate of divergent forms, each one needing to be recognized with a special name.

You have a million eyes and a million minds because you have invested each of your creatures with a mind. Consequently each one's light is turned upon itself or himself or herself as well as being flashed onto the other. The light that looks outward is an eye of perception and the light that looks inward is a critical mind. The heterogeneity of the senses is to be brought into convergence with the homogeneity of a single mind. Outward analysis and inward synthesis are happening simultaneously. There has to be an all-comprehending eye and an all-systematizing rationale. Human intelligence is not satisfied and cannot be satisfied with what is immediately presented to the senses. It is interested in everything and everybody, not only of the immediate present but of the beginningless past and even of the unimaginable future.

The wheel of life emerges with the monads of the elements. On the axle of time it rotates. Each one's ego-consciousness provides it with a hub. All these are schematically represented by the *praṇava* which has the four wheels of: over-all consciousness (*bodha cakra*); the biologic incentive (*jīva cakra*); the action-potential (*karma cakra*); and the material subsistence (*vastu cakra*). There is another four-fold scheme in your creation: the natural propensities are held together by *dharma* (lawful order); for the actualization of *dharma*, *artha* (the meaning of life) is given; the dynamics of actualization come from *kāma* (desire) and the final transcendence from *mokṣa* (liberation). Each of the sixty-four *kalā*-s has, as in the I Ching, an upper trigram and an lower trigram, constituting the thirty-two *cit* aspects and the thirty-two *jaḍa* aspects. They also correspond to the genetic code.

When the fact of creation and the myth of creation are consolidated we get a vision in which Śiva is synchronized with Śakti. Your eternal dance of creation (*lāsya*) becomes punctuated with the Lord's dance of destruction (*tāṇḍava*). Such is the mysterious scheme of the sixty four modes of your creation. No wonder you are Sarvantantreśvari. Teach me, my Mother. Initiate me into your secret.

chm sarvajrambhinī

Meditation Thirty-two

O Mother, conjoiner of parts, when we wake and look above we see a vast stretch of an infinite sky studded with twinkling stars and the sun and moon. Underneath our feet we have this earth itself as a footstool. When did all this come into being? We do not know. Will it all some day vanish from us? That also we do not know. But in our consciousness each part comes from an unknown and unconscious depth, bearing a name and reminding us of several associated conceptions. We can neither imagine nor express our experiencing of these without formulating consonants and vowels with which we spell out their names.

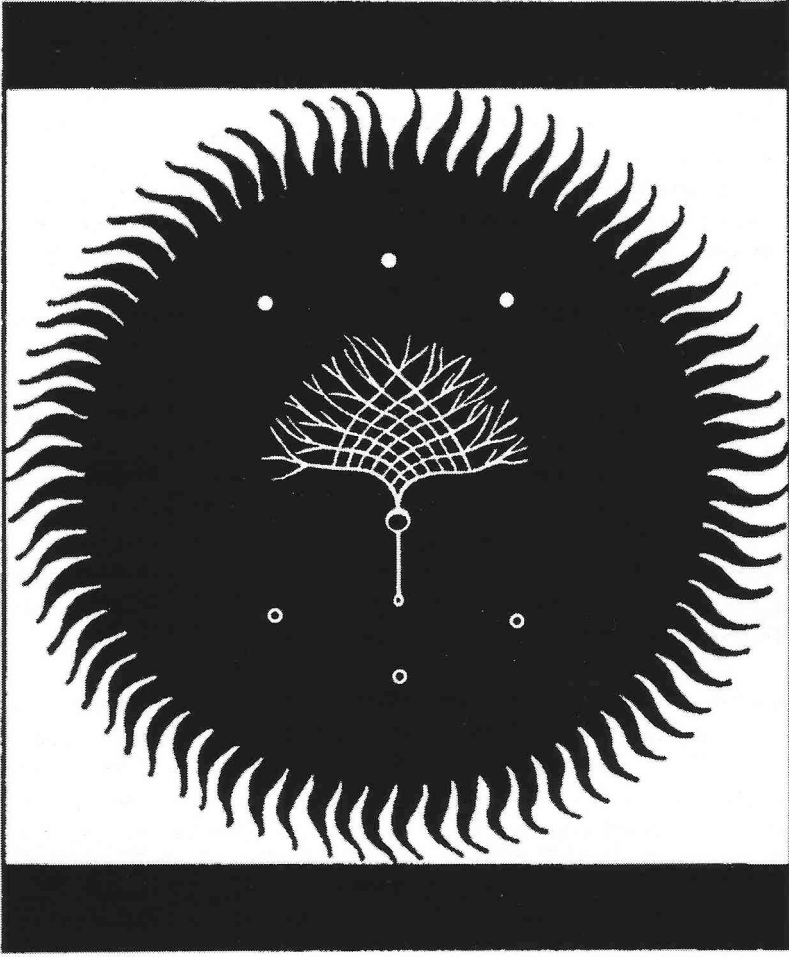
Just as we see the sky or earth, a tree or man with our mind's eye, we see the consonants of the alphabet and the appropriate vowels with which they can be wedded into a meaningful relationship. Once this is accomplished, our vital breath is willing to be their vehicle to transport them from the world of our hearts' impression to the external world of transactional expression. If the consonants are the body of a *mantra*, its soul is the melodious musicality of the vowels (*svara*). When the two are combined it becomes a colorful presentation (*varṇa*). An elaborate picture is woven with words in praise of truth (*ṛk*) and sung with rhythmic grace (*sāma*). The word and breath rejoice together. It is such a music and dance of jubilation that comes from the core of our selves to fill the atmosphere of this world.

The most external impression of the music of the spirit flashes back from the firmament as the shining celestial bodies. If every star in the sky is a cupid to every other celestial body, in the inner space of consciousness there is not a single thought or an isolated idea which is not curious to know how many other thoughts are hidden in the unconscious and how many are already in the arena of mind's imagination and recalled memory with which the mind is fabricated, the intellect is challenged, the memory is mimicked and the ego-sense is made to plunge into its fanciful affectivity of pain and pleasure.

Thus, three great areas are decorated according to your taste: the world of words, intellectual criticism and the inner breeding ground of ever-new suggestions that are fed into the gross and the subtle. Corresponding to these we hear of the secret of the beautifier of the three cities (*tripurasundarīrahasya*) and the secret of the psychodynamics of the mantra (*mantrākṣararahasya*). These secrets are not discernible by the reason of the uninitiated. They are called Śiva and Śakti, Kāma and Kṣiti, Ravi and Soma, and the triads of Smara, Hamsa and Indra, Para, Mara and Hari. Through an inward vision of mystical penetration, each one is to be known as a mystical reality.

Śiva and Śakti are not to be confined to personalized concepts. Only by immersing deep into a serenity that goes beyond even the silence of total absorption (*pralaya*) can one know Śiva through an identity of cancelling out the subject and the object. A magical flow is always happening between cause and effects and the relation of counterparts which gives the cohesion and continuity that is implied in the all (*sarvam*). Only when individual recognition is totally merged in its oceanic infinitude does Sakti become a reality. Again, the sun and moon are not to be seen as a star and a satellite. The Self has a numinous integrity not shared by any other light. It is self-founded and is radiating in all directions, not as a physical energy but as the one spiritual insight to which all individuated selves belong, like the rays of sunlight belong to the sun.

The relationship between the sun and moon is one of the original and the presen-



jṃ sarvaśamkarī

tative. What looks like the brilliance of the moon is the image or reflection (*pratibimba*). This is how the conscious psychic world of the four inner organs is animated by the central Self. If the Self is the sun, the psychic world is the mirroring moon (*soma*). It has within it a lunatic spirit which maddens the psyche. In the field of the psyche, like waves rising one after another, emotional fluctuations come with the swaying wind of desire, which in their turn weaken the individuated self and deteriorate its counterpart, the object of pleasure. These two are bracketed as the desire (*kāma*) and the moral world (*kṣiti*). Three principles are always operating in this inner world which has the horizon of the unconscious marking the frontier of individual awareness and a depth that is concealed from the person which is a storehouse of the incipient memories of the past. They are the libidinal energy which is bubbling up as a pre-conditioned memory (*smara*). *Smara* prompts the five organs of sensory perception and the motivated organs of action (*indra*). It in turn is controlled and regulated by inquiry, evaluation, judgement and value affectivity which are all ordained by the individual's consciousness in which resides the clear vision of wisdom (*hamsa*). Thus the triple principles in the subliminal field are *smara*, *indra* and *hamsa*.

This immanent aspect has a transcendental counterpart which is designated as *para*. The *para* and the *apara* can never be cut asunder into two. The link between the two is *mara*. The eternal continuation is kept alive as *hari*. These are the secrets to be discerned by the seer of the mantra (*mantradrṣṭa*). Those who are eternally consigned to the flames of contemplation alone come into this path of unbroken devotion. Grosser than gross is the external world. Very subtle is the world where meaning is concealed in sound. In all these, in a world of greater secret resides the cause behind all causes. It is from that inaccessible silence everything comes into being.

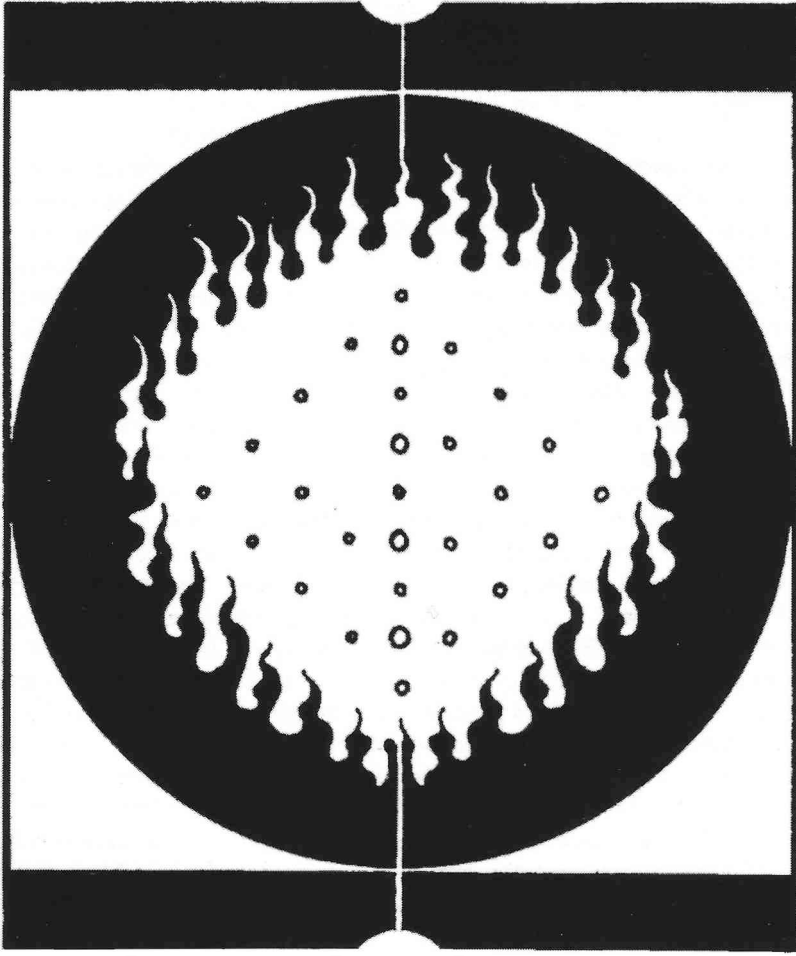
Even then, one can initiate oneself into the secret of this contemplative search only by turning to the details of the external world. Even the simple sight of the shining sun or a tiny little flower causes within us a spark of joy. Thus there is a secret link between the objective vision and the subjective in-depth glow of bliss. The key of our search lies in this link. The Absolute that is spoken of, the transcendental that is intellectually described, are all only shadows of shadows. We ultimately come to you and throw away all crutches into the ever-burning fire of desirelessness. Thereafter, we are not there to make a request or a prayer. *AUM*.

jm sarvaśamkarī

Meditation Thirty-three

O Mother, Sarvaraṅginī, innumerable are your powers to make everyone overwhelmed with ecstasy. Even a dewdrop is capable of radiating all the seven colors of the rainbow and causing a delightful illusion of seeing ruby in one moment and emerald in the next. Even though it evaporates away in a few minutes, it bespeaks how many wonders you have invested in every atom of this universe. Though the spherical body of the pearl-like dewdrop is so very small, it does not complain that it cannot mirror the entire sky and the horizon with all its details. It is with the same principle that you have structured the Self of all of us. Like the dewdrop, we also reflect in every brain cell the world you have spread out outside and the meaning you have inscribed within.

Like the alphabet characters holding each other to make a meaningful language, the dreaming glories of your mirrored beauty hold each other's image in a bewitching embrace to prove to us, your helpless children, how deep is your concern to make us rejoice in your sensibility. You borrow the divine eyes of Lakṣmi, the goddess of grace, and grant us the great boon of looking at the charm and benign grace of every beautiful form



sm̐ sarvaraṅjinī

just as Lakṣmi herself sees. When we revel in such a festival of beauty, we forget every apprehension we had of this world, which is sometimes misunderstood as a world of misery. Of all knowledge, the most astounding wisdom is the wonder of seeing the all-embracing beauty with which every form is bedecked and every name is sung in praise.

We do not forget that your Lord is the annihilator of Smara, the god of erotic memories. The cancellation of the sensuous disturbance caused by erotic memory was indeed the most positive shaft of supreme love by which the Lord saw his counterpart as the immeasurable beauty of his own dear self. So it is no wonder that you are offering us here the *kāmarājabīja* to initiate ourselves into the meditation for self-actualization. We begin with *aim*, the *kāmarājabīja*; and with *hrim* we enter into the *bhuvaneśvarībīja* and finally with *srīm* we return to your own glory. In the *śrībīja* all the flames of delight that have sprung from our own countless predispositions and endless actions recoil to the stupendous light of self-knowledge. We do not need any more actions to be our crutches.

It is as if the eye that looks for light is filled with its own brilliance and the ear that is eager to listen is flooded with the boundless *nāda* of the *para*. Such being the delight, we are liberated from the folly with which we have been pursuing many ratiocinated thoughts and calculated relativistic ideals of action with a false hope that by being

good and doing good we will someday get to the path of excellence. When a spark of fire catches on to the grass or dry leaves of the forest and the entire forest is subjected to the conflagration of a brush fire, the fire does not wait to question which tree brings forth sweet berries and which tree brings evil fruits.

It is in this universal reduction that the mind becomes rid of all questions, all remembrances, and all identity. In the equation that is rendered through wholesale burning, the all is equated with nothing and both numerator and denominator are reduced to a unitive silence. In that silence the pearl that surpasses all prizes is recognized as the supreme wisdom of Śiva, *cintāmaṇi*. All the searches made for it through countless lives were of no avail. Finally it reveals itself as the core reality which every seeker had in his or her heart all through their lives. It is this realization that surpasses all the wonders with which you have been amusing your children in the eternal sport of your *līla*. O grand rejoicer, your victory is our victory. Hail. Hail.

sṃsarvaraṅjini

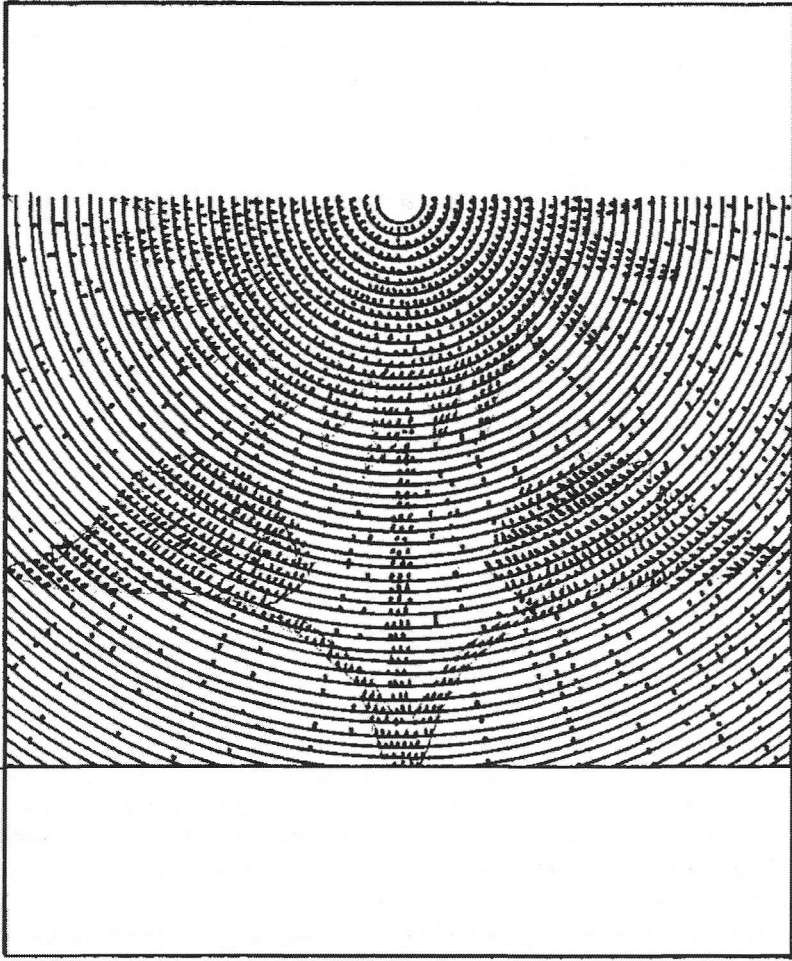
Meditation Thirty-four

O Mother, rejoicer in the rejoicings of all, when this eye sees a flower, that simple experience is comprised of the radiance of the sun, the beautiful design and fascinating color of the petals of the flower and a thrill in the perception of beauty. Thus, heaven, earth, and the Self all come together as a confection of joy in which no one bothers to know what is inside and what is outside. If a simple flower can unify the earth, heaven, and the conscious appreciation of the Self, how great is the unitive appreciation in which the sun and moon and all the shimmering stars of the sky, and every panorama of the world, and the countless millions thrilled by inner thoughts and outer perception come together. If that enormous world of frontierless vision and the collective joy to which all sentient beings are subjected are not circumscribed by small circles designated with the triviality of I-consciousness, there is nothing to separate a person from another.

When an artist paints a picture his brush goes into all kinds of pigments, bright and dark, warm and cool. The variation he makes is not to destroy the pleasure of the seeing eye. It is only to enhance the beauty of vision by creating contrasts and complementarity between strokes and colors. Even so, in the divine order of things, pleasures are fleeting and pains are also equally vanishing. We learn the secret lesson of your loving care both from the smiles of pleasure and the tears of pain. You have different modes to fashion passing moments to suit the temperaments of each one of us. Unfortunately we pull our shutters when you have arranged a table for a feast in the neighbor's house.

We hear that the distance between two stars can be sometimes measured only in terms of light years but you do not mind presenting a million stars to our gaze all at once. Such is your sense of bounty and generosity in sharing. Day or night, in the wakeful hour or in the dream, in the sleepless night or in the contemplative hour of beatitude, you do not miss a chance to pass on to each one of us some measure of joy. The source hardly matters. Sometimes it is a garden bird singing. At another time it is a grandmother telling a story. It comes to us through the inventions and innovations of scientists and technologists. It can be the sight of a leaf circling in the air as it falls to the ground. Sometimes for no reason you tickle our memory and we recall a name so dear to us. When we have no control of ourselves and we sleep, oblivious to everything around us, you send us a fascinating dream or playfully shake our wits with a nightmare.

Thus your programming is endless. It is not confined to one person or to one species. Both the animate and inanimate members of this world receive your catering. If a person rejoices only in the most ephemeral of things, you do not consider that person ignoble or not worthy of being loved or served. If someone is feeble and devoid of strength



jñā sarvonmodinī

to get up and do the hazardous exercises you give, you allow that person to lie down and sleep. To another who is stubborn and determined to climb the highest peak of the world, you are only too ready to rouse his enthusiasm. It looks almost as if you rejoice in the game of pushing the goal of the resolute farther and farther.

This enormous game has been going on in this world from the dawn of its creation. In conformity with your wish humanity has been accepting the challenge with dedication. In response to that, on the face of the globe, many are the cities they have erected. Many are the networks of conveyance and communication that have been created. The surface of earth, the waters of the ocean, the sky above and even outer space, have all been surveyed and charted, with travel routes neatly laid out so that even the slightest joy known to anyone can be easily relayed and shared with so many others, not only of the present. Joys have been perceived and chronicled for the future.

Thus human life has become an activity of telling everyone the good news that there is hope. The poor are given the hope that they can become rich in so many ways, rich in their coffers, rich in their knowledge, rich in their hearts, rich in their friendships. Those who are weak are nursed back to health. Those who are weak in understanding are given the right perspective. Those who have become anemic, without tasting the in-

vigorating sweetness of love, are shown the path of love. To those whose minds were cluttered with unclear ideas and vague notions, clear knowledge is transferred, which has given them certitude and a will to reach out to new avenues of truth. To many who were benumbed with exposure to cruelty and poverty of experience, a new consciousness is given which makes them sensible to the finest shades of beauty. To some who had become callous and cruel, with despotic ideas, you showed the virtue of becoming humble and serving one's brother by turning strength into compassion and aggressiveness into the loving kindness of a good Samaritan.

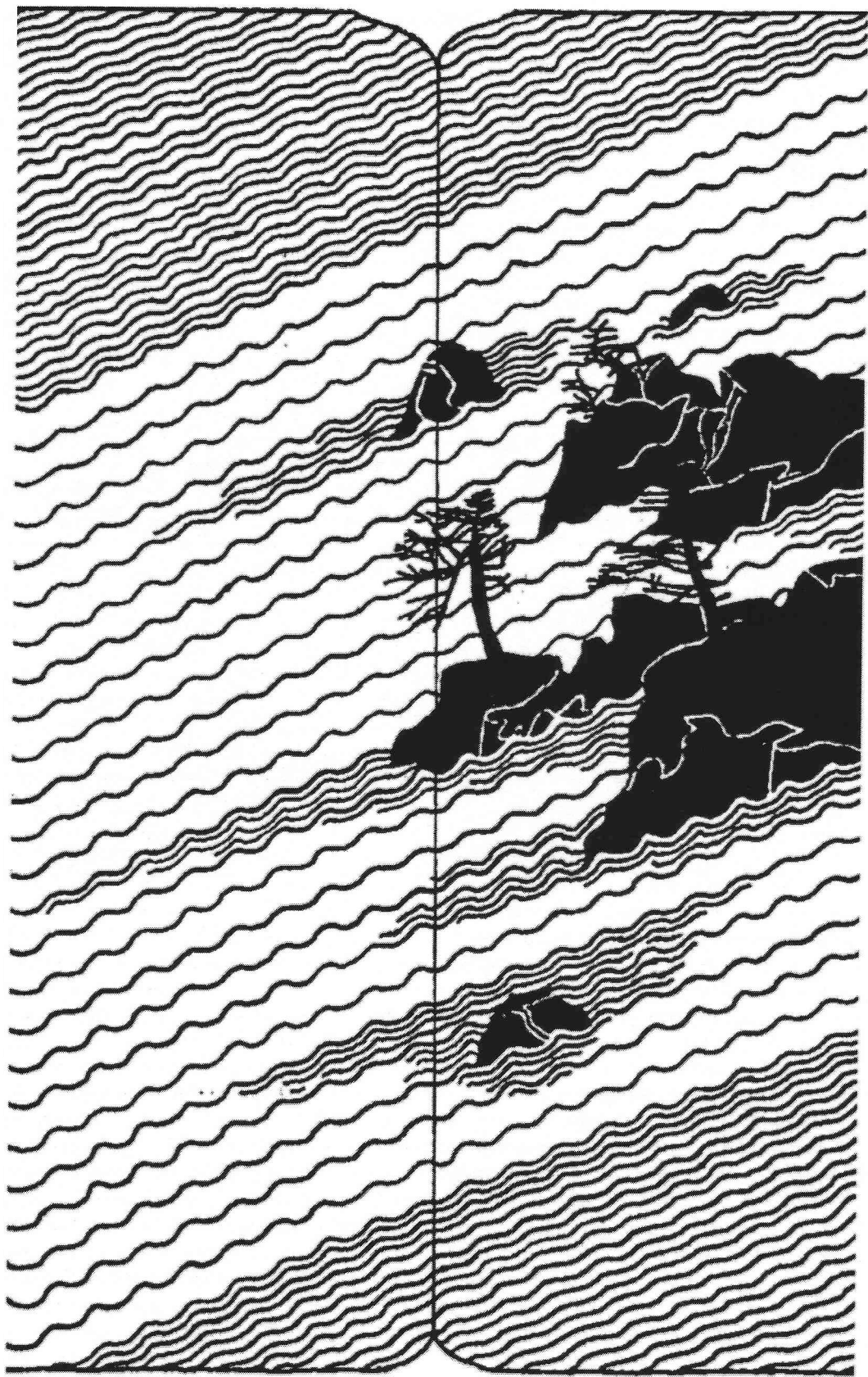
When we snatch a moment from our days and nights of crowded programs we see that what we individuals understand and appreciate in our daily lives is only an insignificant edge of the enormous benevolence that you are showering upon us. More and more we are exposed to the positive joy of your kindness. We begin to see how the divine manifests in all. Even in a gentle touch we get the message of the whole world. Just as we are electrified with a whisper of friendly assurance, we find ourselves lucky to pass on that joyous message to everyone in our neighborhood. When neighborhoods are interwoven, the whole world becomes a neighborhood. Then it does not matter to us if we have not seen your face, if you have a face. By holding our neighbor's hand we can identify the touch of that hand as your loving touch. All this is happening like many single strokes an artist puts on his canvas or notes a musician plays on the keyboard—they are all immersed in the collective manifestation of the beauty that is created as a picture or the harmony that is brought forth in a symphony. So it is no wonder that you are recognized as the collective knowledge of our common awareness.

Beneath such vivid actions and gentle performances, there is a vast field of the subjective phenomena which you are generating through dreams. All our civilizations and cultural expansions have come from the dreams you have put into our minds. Thus you are not only spreading out yourself in our wakeful selves but you also enthrall us in the subconscious. When you see we are tired and cannot take any more, you give us greater rest. Like an ocean which has become tranquil, you take away the ripples of all thoughts and in deep sleep we become rested. Regaining strength and stamina, we wake up. Some of us are so fortunate that we get an equal measure of peaceful beatitude when we transcend the hefty transactions of life and the pain/pleasure dualities. Such is your all-filling compassion.

When we sit around reveling in our small talk or singing together or playing together we are in a number of small worlds. Each one is like a colorful light that is a spectacular aspect of our small measures of joy called *pramoda*. Even on such occasions there is a witnessing consciousness in each one of us which is not limited by our bodily trivialities. The inner consciousness has no special occasion. It is inner as well as outer. As we pass on from one game to another or one joke to another this consciousness continues as a serene joyous insight of life. It is like the several sensory messages going into the one mind and generating the consciousness of living with all. We call it *moda*.

When we are delighted and when we are not delighted, life does not remain static. It is always on the lookout for the new moment approaching us. Every moment is like a messenger coming from you, bringing us the gospel of tomorrow. At once, we get into alertness. A new moment has several potentials and possibilities which are all designed by you. It is for us to pick up the probabilities with courage and transform as many of them as possible into actualities. In the spearhead of life's motivations and actualizations we have our daily approach to the fulfillment and goal of life which we call *sukha*. Sitting behind us as the propelling force and an untiring enthusiasm, you are pushing us on and on to make this life a tremendous success, with each individual's contribution to the general good and the good of all. We call it *ānanda*.

jñā sarvonmodinī



Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:

One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction by Narayana Guru

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Verse 16

*adhikaviśāla maru pradēśamonnāy
nadi perukunnatupōle vannu nādam
śrutikaḷil vīṇu tuṛakkumakṣiyennum
yatamiyalum yativaryyanāyitēnam.*

A very vast wasteland suddenly
flooded by a river in spate—
thus comes the sound
that fills the ears and opens the eyes
of the one who is never distracted;
such should be the experience
of the seer *par excellence*.

To many people, this world is like a desert. When they retrospect and look for what they have achieved in life, they see nothing worthwhile that they have attained. It fills them with great sorrow. When they look around to see what they can get, they also do not see anything. Their future is bleak. Thus their past, present and future are all filled with meaninglessness. Their life may be considered to be like that of one who is lost in a desert land. Everywhere there is only sand, sand and more sand. Then they see a canal with clear, blue water in the far distance. They go running to it, but it disappears. It turned out to be only a mirage. After running from one mirage to another, they give up the fruitless chase and become utterly hopeless and desperate.

Some people realize this only at the very last moment, when the call of death

comes. As they lie helpless on their death bed, the whole life they lived appears as totally wasted and worthless, and they are filled with great remorse. Of course it is far too late to rectify the situation. But some people realize this earlier in life. They are so blessed that even at an early age they sense that there is something wrong with the world of values with which we are surrounded. These wise ones suspect the validity of these seeming values.

When the eyes are turned outward we see several forms of attraction. Naturally we are drawn towards them. We use our ears only to find our way to these attractions, in a way making our ears subservient to the cause of the eye. But if we close our eyes and sit at the feet of a blessed one, he may give us the secret key that all masters have: the key to the kingdom of God, as Jesus put it, or the key to the cave of the heart where Krishna says he resides.

There is a musical symphony going on unbroken, continuous, in each one of us, but we don't hear it. Its not hard to hear. We have only to listen. Our body is not an inert mass, it is like a great city. Its music is like the city traffic, which we only hear when we listen for it and are not interested in something else. There are so many things happening within us all the time. Each subatomic particle makes a musical note as it whizzes around, and each organ has its own melodic line. So,

millions of musical notes arise in us, blending into a magnificent symphony that never stops. If we turn inward, we can hear this music of ours. To different people it sounds different. I always hear it as the tuning of a tambura or someone playing on a harp. This inner sound is called *nādam*. The *nādam* can become several times more meaningful when we sit at the feet of a master and listen to his word.

When the multitude went to the Mount to listen to Jesus, he gave a sermon which changed the lives of his listeners. Even two thousand years afterwards, that which came from his lips still goes deep into our hearts and touches us. What we hear is called *śruti*. The Upanishads are called *śruti* because when a disciple sits with veneration at the feet of a teacher, as was done in the ancient days when they were composed, what he seeks is *śruti*, that which is heard. *Śruti* is the music of the whole universe, the symphony of its creation, how it is sustained, and where finally it dissolves back into oneness.

A Guru says "That thou art." When a disciple hears this, he understands the purport of the Guru's words as "I am That." Before coming to this realization, though, the disciple has to give up his present concept of the 'I'. The present concept is "I am this body, I am this mind, I am these senses, I am known by such and such a name, I belong to such and such a country and such and such a family." These are all limiting conditionings of the 'I'. They are to be dropped one after the other. This false identity has betrayed us. The Guru is giving us our genuine identity, "You are That." This is known as *upadeśavākya*, the dictum of instruction.

Once there was a young man named Svetaketu. He was sent to a Gurukula, a forest university of ancient days, for study. He studied twelve years. When he came back home, he was very proud of his graduation and went to his father to show off his knowledge. He said, "Father, ask me anything you want to know about astronomy or economics or archery. I know all these things now."

His father responded, "My dear son,

many have gone from our family to the Gurukula before you, but nobody returned with such conceit. What happened to you? Please tell me—what is it, knowing which you know everything? And what is it, not knowing which you do not know anything?"

Svetaketu was stunned. "Father, please repeat the question. I never heard such a question before. You please tell me what it is, knowing which you know everything, and what it is, not knowing which you do not know anything. My dear father, I think my teachers also do not know this. Otherwise they would have taught me. So I prostrate at your feet. Accept me as your dear disciple. Teach me."

"Ok, I shall teach you. Go and bring a fruit from a fig tree," said his father. He went and brought one. "Now cut it. Look into it. What do you see?"

"I see very tiny little seeds. Each seed is so small—smaller than a mustard seed."

"Cut that." So he cut it. "What do you see now?"

"Almost nothing; just a little white stuff."

"From where does a fig tree come, my son?"

"From that."

"So this is that which becomes the fig tree?"

"Yes."

"*Tat tvam asi*, Svetaketu. That thou art, my son. That which looks invisible and yet becomes all this, you are That."

Then Svetaketu was asked to put some salt crystals in a vessel of water and bring it. His father asked him, "Where is the salt?"

"Father, it is dissolved."

"Now touch the surface and taste it."

He tasted it. "It is salty."

"Now touch the side and taste."

"Salty."

"Put your finger at the bottom and taste it."

"It is salty."

"The salt, which is invisible and yet pervades every drop of water, That you are, my son. *Tat tvam asi*, Svetaketu."

The father went on taking a number

of examples, showing over and over how one reality pervades everything and seems to be many. When the fig seed changes into a sapling, leaves come from it which are very different from its roots, very different from the seed itself. Then flowers come which are different from the leaves. The fruit is again different. So many formal variations come from one source, yet they are all one.

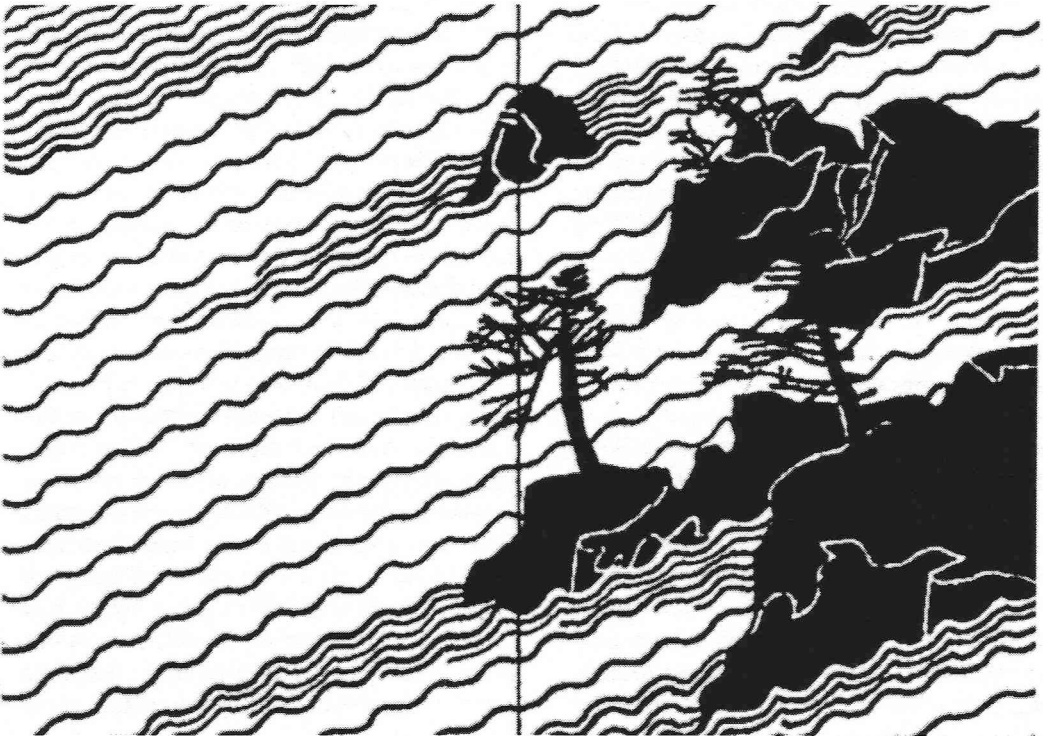
So this is *upadeśavākya*, the dictum of instruction. For meditating on the instruction two other dictums are given. They are called *mananavākya*, the dictums for meditation. One of these is *prajñānam brahma*. When you are deep asleep, consciousness is filling that state which has within it no division of subject and object, and yet it has all the possibilities of becoming the dream or the wakeful through the slightest stimulation. *Prajñā*, or the seed ground of all this universe, is within you as the basis of consciousness. It opens up as every form in the dream, and it unfolds as everything seen in the external world. Knowing this you say, "All these varia-

tions which I see here are all modifications of my own *prajñā*. *Prajñānam brahma*: all the variations that I see in the form of this cosmic universe are none other than the Absolute."

This universe is not a separate thing, it is an extension of our own self. It is not something that can be rejected. It is to be endeared to us. This world is our Self.

When I see everyone here as my own self, I become many times more responsible. My responsibility is an unlimited liability: I owe everything to everyone. I am not only my brother's keeper, I am responsible to the whole universe in preserving its truth and maintaining its law, its rhythm. I am fully committed. I turn inward and meditate. I don't see any sun or moon, no vegetation, no human beings, no birds or animals. This is the subjective world of pure thoughts and feelings.

All this is coming from a light within me which is like a ceaseless spring, a fountain from which the stream of consciousness flows. This is my *ātman*, my soul. The other *mananavākya* is *ayam ātmā brahma*,



the soul is *brahman*, the Absolute. If you open your eyes, that world is yours and you are That and That is Brahman. If you close your eyes, that's Brahman too. Inside and outside, all the time, you see only That. This reverberates in your mind: "My Guru said 'you are That, That thou art.'" Through relentless meditation, participating in the world with the meditation *prajñānam brahma*, or by withdrawing from the world meditating on *ayam ātmā brahma*, one comes to the secret of the unity of all.

This is the *rahasya*, the secret, which was referred to in verse 14, when it was mentioned that a person who is a yati only by outward appearance does not get this secret. As he does not get it, the world outside still appears to him to be three-fold: the world of sky, the world of atmosphere and the world of earth. It remains divided into the past, present and future. And his inside will remain as three broken bits: the knower, knowledge and the known. But when one gains this inner secret he is no more a *kapaṭayati*, no more a yati in appearance alone. He is a *yativar-yan*, a noble seer of a restrained life.

The unbroken symphony which one hears in one's own physical body, and the new realization which comes from the word of the Guru that everything is One, extends the song, extends the symphony until it fills the three worlds with a great resonance. It is like the rumblings of an ocean. You hear your inner world filled with this one music.

Earlier we were told that there is a light which is not kindled, not lit. When you are sleeping and waking and thinking many thoughts, this light is looking on intently, seeing everything, witnessing everything, and illuminating everything. That eye is always within you, but as you were running after the mirage in the desert you were turned away from it. Instead, you were using two external eyes of distraction. When you hear this all-filling sound of musical ecstasy, the eye of wisdom opens. When it opens, you see everything through it. Now all your desires are absolved, you have no more any desire.

Your happiness is such that it can be compared to no happiness. There is no greater happiness than this. Such a seer should be the model for our minds.

In this sixteenth verse, there is a quintessence of all that was taught in the previous fifteen verses. We began with:

In and beyond the knowledge
which shines
at once within and without as the knower
is the *karu*; to that,
with the five senses withheld,
prostrate again and again with devotion
and chant.

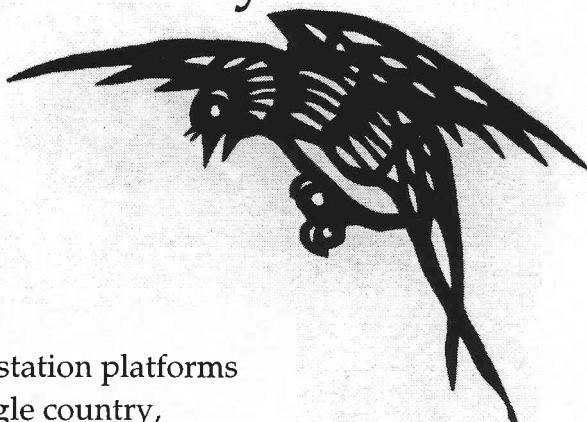
One who is withdrawing the eyes is called a yati. The restrained seer is given in the very first verse.

Ordinary knowledge is the desert of this verse. When you transcend ordinary knowledge and go beyond, then alone you see the one reality which is shining outward and inward all at once, both as the cosmos and the psychic world.

In the second verse we were told that it is one sun in the firmament which is seen as all this. When you listen to the Word and meditate, it opens your eye, the eye that is not only seeing all but has created all this for you. The Upanishads say, "What eye, that world." What you see, that is your world. The British Scientists' Association says, "We believe what we see." The fact is, we see what we believe. We always try to see to establish our belief. So if you become one with the Absolute, you see the Absolute everywhere.

Then we were told of the surface of the ocean and the grand treasury of values in its depths. Here, when wisdom prevails like a flood, the wasteland of your life becomes an oceanic treasure. What were previously only grains of sand are now transformed into pearls of priceless worth. Everyone you meet, everything that happens—previously it was only a grain of sand, now it's a pearl of great price. Life becomes so enriched by the change in our attitude and in our vision. What could be more wonderful, more beautiful, than this? ❖

Awaiting Stability



I.

They stand waiting on station platforms
across this wide rectangle country,
with the wind blowing their hair back
south or east against the walls of brick buildings
while the sun scorches blackbird wings overhead
and looks for flashes of silver coming along
the down-below green land.

The people hear clicks and hums
rise and fall in approaching valleys
and along the delicate lining of the sea,
and when the train comes rushing through the station
with the smell of ocean and desert
stuck forever to its heaving silver sides,
expectation is lost to scent and shine.

II.

Above, each dark, shining bird tracks with ageless geometry
the path of the sun, the reach of its brilliance
that stretches out to touch each train car.
Across countless horizons the train captures
all expectant voices and earthly brilliance
and moves them past squatting buildings and green hills
to where the land, long ago resigned, slowly
curls in upon itself,
and lets the rushing train
uncover its golden-hued spread and lost stability.

Emily Teitsworth

A Date With The Divine

*In this hour of peace and lull
I feel blessed to watch the sky,
gazing at it from my window,
my look-out into the heavens.*

*The pretty face of the moon is out there
hiding behind the silver-rimmed clouds.
In the far off sky I see the shimmering stars—
the fireflies of the beyond.
The mammoth trees of my garden
have all gone dark into silhouettes.*

*On my writing desk sits
my unflickering lamp—my friend in need.
It constantly prompts me to pick up my quill,
and when I do so, it looks on
as if it relishes every word I write.*

*On seeing this I always wonder what the spirit is
and how it hides in the molecular folds of matter.
Is not the spirit the wine of life,
the honey of God's essence?*

*When the sheen of the moon haunts me in my privacy,
am I not secretly sipping
a peg of divine ecstasy?*

Nitya

*A gentle kiss of poesy on my lips
can electrify my whole being.*

*Whenever a mischievous muse
plucks the strings of my heart,
I hear the choir of the heavens
reverberating in my soul.*

*Once in a while, dear darling Fantasia
comes to nestle into my bosom
and to whisper to my soul
her sweet nothingness.*

*That bewitches me so much
that I leave my heavy body behind
to dance with the elves
and to have a rendezvous with Titania.*

*There are connoisseurs of wine who can
distinguish one sip of wine
from another enthralling sip.*

*Thank God, you made all out of
your single be-atitude.
But I distinctly taste the uniqueness
of each joy and separately envision you.*

Interview or Innerview?

Showkath

After prayer class, everybody walked toward the kitchen for lunch. I was sitting on the sofa, opening the morning mail when Guru asked me, "Are you tired of writing?"

Hearing this question filled with compassion, I said, "No, Guru. It was too fast, and I missed some words. But I will sit with Thampanannan or Ramakrishnatten later to read through it once again and get it right."

Usually during Guru's classes, four or five people would take down what Guru said. Sometimes when Guru was in the depths of meditation, there would be an outpouring of words of wisdom; he would be unaware that he was speaking too fast for the people writing down his words to keep up. At other times, his voice would mellow down to soft whispers. Those who had been recording Guru's classes for several years were able to catch even the words that come pouring out or in soft whispers. Usually, at the end of the class, one person would read aloud from their notes and the others would point out any word that had been missed. Guru would also point out required changes and corrections. Later, many of the note-takers would sit together and make a corrected copy. Then a person with good handwriting would make a fair copy or a typed version. The final copy would become part of one of the many books Guru published.

Later, while dictating letters, Guru inquired, "Who are those two new people that came today?"

"They are from the law college, Guru. They are editors of the college magazine. They have come to seek an interview."

"Ask them to come in here."

I found them in the Gurukula greenhouse, admiring the blooming flowers.

I went up to them and said, "Guru is calling you."

They hurriedly followed me to the veranda where Guru sat and prostrated before him. They were asked to sit on the sofa. I sat by Guru's feet, on a cushion on the floor. Without any formal introduction or preamble, Guru began to speak to them, "This part of the Nilgiris mountains is a tourist center. Lured by the beautiful mountain ranges stretched around, many Keralites come. They know that there is an old man living out here in Fernhill. After strolling around in the Botanical Garden and looking at the lake, they finally find their way here. They come to see this man with a big head, Ganapati's tummy, long flowing white beard, and, to top it off, in ochre robes! They come to gape with wide eyes at this living creature, like looking at a caged lion in the Zoo. When I ask them to take a seat, not one will sit. They are all showing respect and humbleness I believe."

When I ask them what they have come for, they all have the same answer, 'Just to see.' I sit for them for a while. When their fancy and eagerness subside I tell them, Now you may go around and see the Gurukula. I have some work..." I am half heard, half unheard; before I complete my sentence, they jump up and prostrate at my feet. My feet are all swollen and just to have them touched causes great pain. They do not listen to all that. Some put pressure on my feet for a long time. Some bathe my feet with tears. Finally, they all leave. I do not understand what they get by just seeing me. That apart, now why are the lawyers here? To cross question me?"

Guru's casual conversation filled them with great zeal and confidence that was written on their faces. They looked at each

other and smiled. The person sitting closest to Guru said in a feeble, fearful, humble voice, "Guru, we are editors of the college magazine. Everyone is keen to have an interview with Guru in that. It would be a great blessing if you could spare some time for us."

"Speak loudly! I cannot hear. If it is difficult to speak loud, tell this chap. He will tell me in a tone that I can hear."

After that, whatever they said, I repeated to Guru.

"Inter-view will do? Don't you need inner-view?" Guru asked smilingly.

Hearing that, we all laughed. Guru went on, "Have you written out all your questions?"

"Yes Guru!" they replied with great enthusiasm.

"Okay then, go ahead" Guru said and leaned back on his chair. Taking out the prepared questions and paper to write Guru's answers, they got ready. The person sitting near Guru asked, "Guru, what is your view on the present education system in Kerala?"

"Oh! That's good!" Guru replied. "For the past ten to twenty years, I have written many articles about Kerala's education system and the changes that can be made, which have been published in many papers; I have even published a book on that which has had many editions. After writing so much, do I still have to repeat my views on the education system in Kerala?"

Guru's sense of humor had vanished. He sounded annoyed. "What books of mine have you read? Have you read my book on education?"

Both of them turned pale. Not knowing what to say, they sat hanging their heads down. On seeing that, with anger Guru said, "This is the sickness with Keralites. You are yourself an example of the meaningless education in Kerala's system. When a question is asked, and you sit and hang your heads down without answering, I will not consider it out of devotion or humbleness."

"Did you hear what I asked? Tell me, what have you read?"

"Oh my God! Today is gone," I

thought to myself. Guru's anger spreads like wild fire in the jungle. I gestured to them to say something. One of them said in a trembling choked voice, "I have read some books, weekly and newspaper articles."

"I am not insisting that you should read my books. But when you go to interview a person, the least you can do is to have some basic knowledge of the topic and that person's perspective. Even that seems alien to you. When I think of you, who are tomorrow's law makers and law builders, I can only sadly say, 'Oh! how disastrous!'"

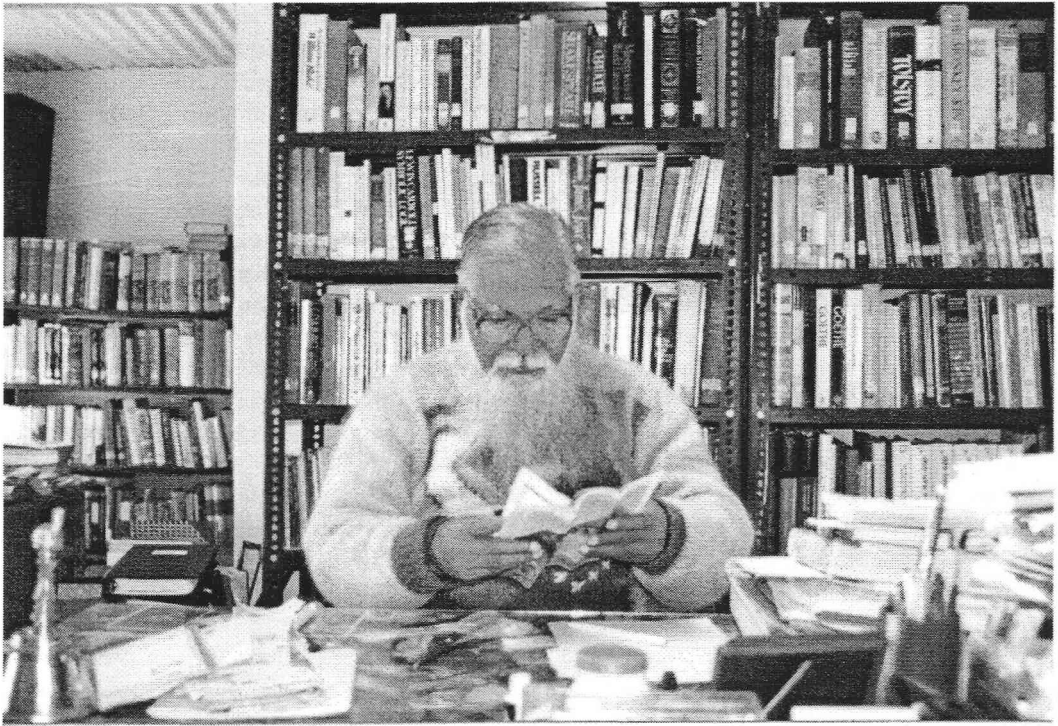
Guru remained silent for a while.

Both of them sat uneasily, looking like they just wanted to run away.

Then Guru gently began to say, "Sons, when you go to interview somebody, if you cannot read all the books written by him, at least get acquainted by reading what he has already said regarding the subject and areas that you would like to talk about. Read articles written by him, and find areas that he has not touched upon, clear any doubts that you have on what he has written, question parts that you disagree with. It is only when you create such a situation that an interview will turn out to be of some value. Otherwise, when you bring questions prepared by someone, and rattle them out like a machine, the person hearing them will not feel like answering you, but like chasing you out of his sight."

Saying thus, Guru looked towards me, "Go and bring all the books that I have written."

I brought a copy of each of Guru's books. Guru picked them up one by one and handed them to the two young men, saying, "Take all this, read peacefully, fill your heads with some information and then come back. I do not have time to just talk aimlessly. I am not a Swami who sits here eating three meals a day, looking forward to people prostrating at his feet. I am an old man, working each day from early morning five o'clock to ten o'clock at night. So, without wasting more time, dear children, go now and come back



when you are ready."

Taking my hand, Guru got up and hurriedly walked into his room. I turned around and saw them both straining with the weight of the books and looking dazed. I thought, "Poor guys! Maybe this is their first such experience." Guru returned to his desk and dictated some letters. Soon Paruakka came with lunch. I put Guru's medicines on his table and walked toward the kitchen to have lunch.

They were still sitting on the sofa, nervously flipping through the pages, not knowing what to do. I approached them smilingly and said, "Come, let us go for lunch." As we walked toward the kitchen, I asked, "Are you going back today?"

"No! We will not leave today. We would like to go see the town, and we want to listen to Guru's evening class," they said.

"Oh! That's okay, as you wish," I said, and had lunch with them and returned back to Guru. By then, Guru had finished lunch and was getting ready to take rest.

Parvathyakka and I together helped Guru to walk to his bed. As I was very tired, I put my head down on Guru's table and also dozed off. Guru woke up at three

o'clock. He began to write letters as usual. At five o'clock, he set out for his evening walk. After returning he had dinner, and continued to dictate his replies to letters. After a while, Jyothicheachi came in and said, "Guru, shall we start prayers? Time is past seven."

"Ayo, Mole (Oh, dear daughter), is it past seven? We have been so busy writing letters, that we did not notice the time going by." Saying, "Come, let us pray," Guru got up. Guru's classes usually follow prayer, so everyone got ready to take notes. After a short pause of silence, Guru inquired, "The children who came in the morning, have they left?"

I turned around to see. They were sitting right behind. "No Guru! They are here," I said.

"Ask them to come and sit in front, where I can see them," Guru said. Both of them came forward and sat in front of Guru. Hanging their heads low, they did not look up at Guru. "I thought you both had left. Where were you so long? I didn't see you when I went for a walk in the evening."

Hearing Guru's empathetic question, one of them replied with a sigh of relief,

"We went out to the town Guru."

"Ah! Do you have paper and pen to write?"

Wondering what they would write, they looked at one another. Seeing no reaction, Guru smilingly asked, "What! You don't want the interview?"

"Oh yes, we need your interview, Guru!" they exclaimed and hurried to fetch their file.

"Poor children!" Guru said and sat with eyes closed.

They soon returned with the file and got ready to write and looked expectantly at Guru. After a while, Guru opened his eyes.

"Read the first question," Guru softly said.

"Even though Kerala has the highest literacy rate, the youth in general still face a lot of problems. There seems to be no end to their problems. To be relieved from mental stress and strain, they turn toward alcohol. If this situation continues, no doubt there will be chaos in Kerala. What is the way to get away from this meaningless lifestyle and to dwell in a consciousness filled with benevolence?"

It seemed that they had reframed all their questions. Smiling at them Guru said, "Okay, write. . ."

Guru spoke to them for over two hours, giving deep, thought-provoking, and sometimes touching answers to all their questions. They struggled to keep pace. After the class, Guru said, "Rewrite whatever you have taken down in good handwriting neatly, and read it out to me tomorrow morning. If there is anything to be corrected or included, we can do it then. Now, it is very late. Everybody go and have dinner."

It was a very cold night. Unaffected by that, both of them sat up late in the library, rewriting everything. In the morning, they read it out to Guru. Guru made a few corrections here and there and perfected it and gave it back to them.

When every thing was done, Guru asked, "Are you leaving today?"

"We have to go today Guru" they said.

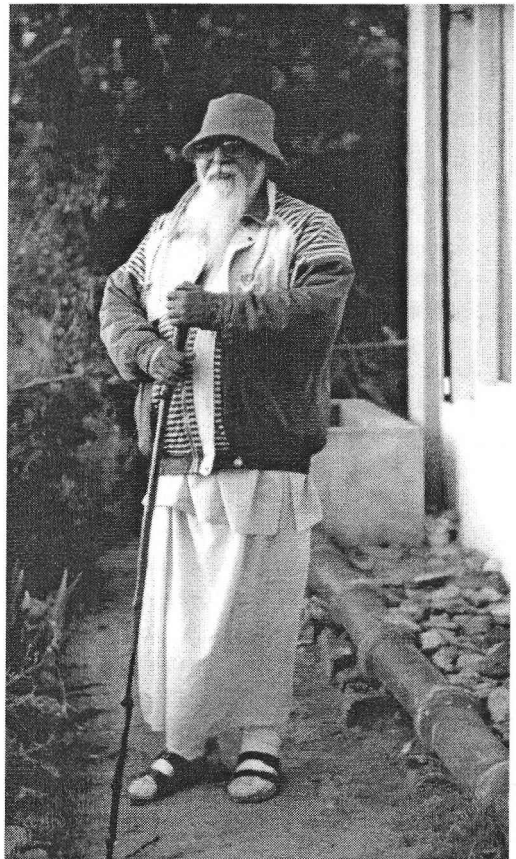
"Okay then, go and come again. Let

good be showered upon you."

The two student editors then took Guru's blessings and set out to leave. I asked them, "What now! Are you satisfied and happy?"

Holding my hand tight, they said, "Showkath, you people are so lucky to live with such a great Guru. How fortunate you are! We now understand and see the difference between a Guru and a teacher. Dear friend, we can never forget life's most blessed moments, that we experienced in Guru's presence. It is with sharp awareness that we leave this place. Within just one day, we have realized that we were not really living all these days. We will surely come again."

Watching them leave, I stood thinking, "How many people have left here with their souls filled with clarity? Guru's presence will remain with them as a glowing flame forever . . . forever . . ." As I stood pondering over Guru's grace and compassion, someone came to call me. I walked towards Guru's room. ❖



Revelation in the Wilderness

Introduction to *The Key to Genesis*

Dr. G.H. Mees



Anyone interested in fully understanding Guru Nitya's teachings will find the writings of Dr. Mees of more than passing interest. Mees was Nitya's first Guru, and an important influence on his life. The section of Nitya's autobiography about his time with Mees is among the highlights of the work. Upon his arrival, Mees immediately set Nitya to work typing Revelation in the Wilderness, his major work. It is wonderful to imagine the young future Guru as an apprentice, painstakingly pecking the keys of a typewriter amidst the unsurpassed beauties of the Kanva Ashram in Varkala, Kerala in the middle twentieth century.

The Key to Genesis is the first of two small books (with Evolution, Paradise and the Fall) which came more or less as supplements to Mees' magnum opus. The works are undated, but are from around 1956-58. They contain clear expositions of some of his crucial ideas, so are in fact keys to his entire orientation as well as revelations regarding the beginning of the Bible. The works remain as fresh and relevant today as they were in the 1950s, a testament to the universality of the truths they contain.

Brief notes: while feeling has become more a part of the school curriculum now than it was in his time, Mees' assessment of teaching is extremely insightful, and will prove useful to anyone in such a role. An Exposition of Traditional Psychology is the subtitle of Revelation in the Wilderness. It is likely by the time the later books were written that Dr. Mees considered it a more dignified title. Permission to reprint is kindly granted by the Kanvashrama Trust, Tiruvannamalai. The two small books are now incorporated within the Revelation.

Scott Teitsworth

Literal and Symbolic Interpretation

The first Chapter of Genesis has been generally assumed to present an account or theory of the creation of the material universe and of the evolution of life. For that reason it cannot be a source of wonder that modern man, with his knowledge of material processes in the universe and of biology, has tended to look down upon Genesis as a poor product of an ignorant mentality. No doubt the people who knew the meaning of Genesis in past ages would have shaken their heads if they had come to learn of the modern way which tends to take everything at its face value alone and to interpret spiritual scriptures as if they were textbooks of astronomy, physics or biology. For Genesis does not describe cosmic and biological processes. Its purpose is more profound.

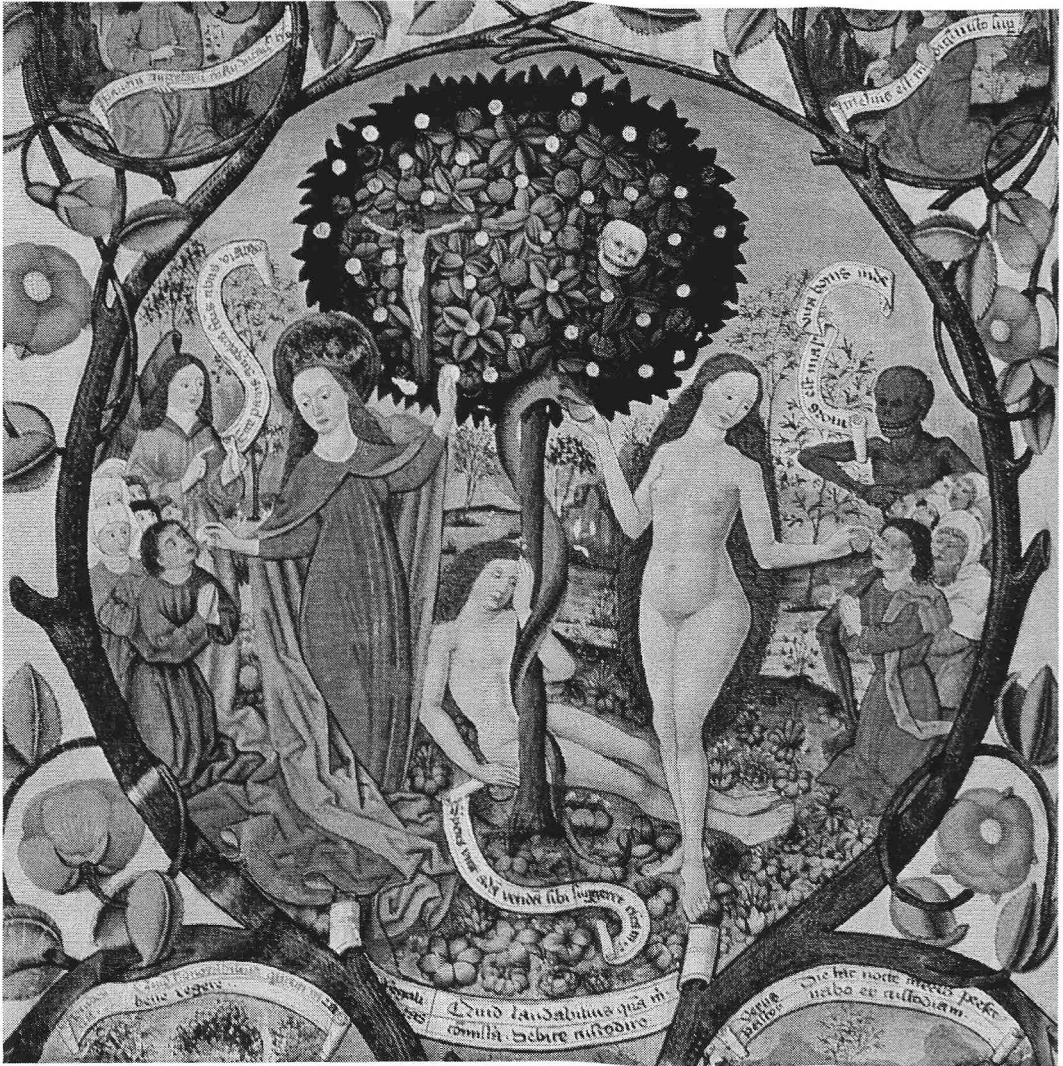
The aim of religion is to make man happier and to help him find peace and bliss, within himself and in his relation to the world without. It does not make anyone happier to know how the material world is created (assuming that such knowledge is possible at all) and how the physical processes take place and can be controlled. In connection with many aspects of science the world has learned to its cost to what extent control of matter can endanger and destroy peace and happiness. Atomic bombs and clouds are now looming in the sky threatening to shatter man's peace altogether and to cloud his horizon for evermore.

Modern man has largely lost interest in "established religion", because its dogmas, based almost wholly upon a literal interpretation of Scripture, offend his intelligence. He has become convinced that the great astronomers and physicists of these days have something to tell us that is more intelligent than the superstitious and outworn traditions which are contained, according to his belief, in Scripture. And who can blame him, as long as he does not know the deeper meaning hidden in the fundamental teachings of "Genesis"?

Warnings against the literalism-that-kills have already been uttered in very ear-

ly times. Origen wrote in the beginning of the third century A.D. regarding the Creation-tradition: "What intelligent person would fancy, for instance, that a first, second and third day, evening and morning, took place without sun, moon and stars; and the first, as we call it, without even a heaven? Who would be so childish as to suppose that God after the manner of a human gardener planted a garden in Eden towards the East, and made therein a tree, visible and sensible, so that one could get the power of living by the bodily eating of its fruit with the teeth or again, could partake of good and evil by feeding on what came from that other tree?"¹ And yet many generations of Christians have been "so childish"! It is true that quite a few people have intuitively felt that many statements contained in the Bible should be explained symbolically, and some have attempted to do so. Unfortunately the meaning of the basic symbols of the ancient traditions of mankind has been long forgotten, even though some symbolic implications have been preserved. But knowledge of a few words of a language does not give understanding and command of that language. As words only serve a useful purpose when they can be grouped together to form intelligent sentences, so symbols are only of use and interest in their interrelation. A symbol by itself, that is, taken out of its context, has only a very vague inspirational value, largely depending on its connection with the unconscious. A symbol grouped intelligently with other symbols in a myth, a ritual or some other tradition remaining over from more enlightened times, contributes to a lesson in traditional psychology which may contain, literally, a world of meaning.

Elsewhere² I have shown at length that the symbolic meaning of the Commandment of Moses, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness that is in heaven above", is that man should not interpret his sacred traditions in a literal way. The warning against idolatry is a cautioning against *mental* idolatry. By an irony of circumstances



The Tree of Life and Death, 1481

even this symbolic warning has itself been explained in a literal sense, already in early times.

The Bible is full of warnings against literalism. I have shown at length elsewhere³ that Jesus thundered at the "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"⁴ for the same reason, accusing them of killing the prophets, that is, those who reveal the inner or symbolic meaning of Scripture, which is often much the opposite of the literal meaning. I have also shown that Jesus was killed by the priests of Jerusalem, representing the literal interpretation of the Law or Tradition, because he stood for the inner meaning. The Sin of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the only sin that

"shall not be forgiven",⁵ is also intimately connected with literalism.

As "prophecy" is, etymologically and traditionally, the "forth-speaking" of the inner meaning of the Law or the Tradition, "blasphemy" is the "hurt-speaking". This is the wrong interpretation of the Law, based on the literal and the rational view. Therefore Jesus said: "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."⁶ *Thought* always stands in the way of the spiritual or inner functions of life. The Holy Ghost is the

spirit of the Law or the Tradition. Quite significantly Jesus, before he spoke the words just quoted, said: "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."⁷ "Blasphemy" against the Holy Ghost, that is, the wrong interpretation along literal and rational lines of the Spirit of the Tradition, is the unpardonable sin, because it affects the world at large. It poisons the minds of others and turns them away from the Tradition, which offers them the chance of Salvation. Therefore Jesus said: "Woe unto you, lawyers, for you have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering ye hindered."⁸ The "key of knowledge" is the Key to the inner or symbolic meaning of the Tradition. Its use allows a man "to enter into himself". Preventing oneself from entering into the Spirit of the Law is stupid, but hindering others is hurtful and "unpardonable".

When Jesus speaks on this subject his indignation is violent and boundless, and it is clear that the hurtful literal interpretation of the Law is a subject that concerns him almost more than any other. This is the case because his very mission was bound up with it. He came to "fulfill the Law" in its inner and symbolic meaning, in a priest-ridden world which interpreted it in a literalistic manner. He accused the professional upholders and teachers of the Law of "blasphemy", of killing the prophets and of building their sepulchers. The killing of the prophets is the stopping of the mouths that "speak forth" the Tradition from within. Jesus himself was killed by the priests of Jerusalem because he had come and lived for that purpose. The building of a sepulcher of a prophet means the establishment of a sect with a special creed. This symbolism is still commonly understood in those parts of the East where the inner meaning has prevailed over the literal meaning of religion at least among a few. A son and disciple of Kabir Das, the Indian mystic, once said: "A sect is the mausoleum of the Guru."

It is clear that the literal and rational, or rather, pseudo-rational, interpretation of Scripture, makes for divisions among men and creates sects, as at an earlier stage it was responsible for religions ceasing to be in spiritual communion with one another.

The symbolic interpretation of the Tradition makes for harmony among groups and unity of aim among men. Jesus' high purpose was to gather the fragments of a dilacerated humanity, both within the soul of every human being and in the world at large, and reunite them. This can be achieved only when the symbolic universality of the Tradition is recognized. It did not serve the purpose of the "lawyers" of the time of Jesus--"hypocrites" he called them--to speak in accordance with the Holy Spirit of the Tradition. Later on it did not serve the purposes of the Christian Church and the sects into which it consequently split up.

In the early Church, however, the position of "prophets", forth-speakers of the symbolism of the Tradition, was very high. We read in a Church Order of about 100 A.D.: "But every true prophet, who is minded to settle among you, is worthy of his maintenance.... Thou shalt take, therefore, all first fruits of the produce of the winepress and threshing floor, of oxen and sheep, and give them to the prophets; for they are your high priests."⁹ It may strike one who is accustomed to the organization of the Church along the present lines, to be strange that the same Church Order enjoins the following: "Elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not covetous, and true and approved: for they also minister unto you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not: for these are they which are honored of you with the prophets and teachers."⁹ The bishops were ordained, but not the prophets, for they were not appointed by men to fulfill certain duties, but taught by the Holy Ghost what they ought to say at the time they should say it.¹¹ In other words, they were spontaneously "called" and "ordained", that is, "ordered", by the Holy Spirit to speak forth

the esoteric teachings of the Tradition, as they were needed at the moment.

Because Jesus wanted men to live according to the Holy Spirit of the Tradition, and condemned the literal interpretation of the Law, St. Paul, that great forth-speaker of the Christian Mysteries--which formed but a re-statement of the Tradition which existed "from the foundation of the world"--wrote: "Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."¹²

Even as Moses condemned the mental idolatry of literalism--in the long run to no effect--the early Christians condemned it--also to no effect, for the same voice in the wilderness must be raised again in our days. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."¹³ St. Paul's reference to ink applies to his own day, and that to the stone tables to the time of Moses, who was grappling with the same problem. In the older traditions "the heart" is symbolic of the spiritual, and not the emotional life, as in more recent times.

Most significant of all are St. Paul's words, when he mentions the "sufficiency of God", "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."¹⁴ In the times in which Jesus lived--as again, in modern times--God is not all-sufficient to men, but they are "sufficient to themselves." Hence all their problems. The killing power of literal and pseudo-rational interpretation forms the most ancient problem of man and is also implicit in a verse in the Root-Tradition: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."¹⁵

Origen held that Scripture has a body, a soul and a spirit: "Scripture itself also consists as it were of a visible body, and of a soul in it that is perceived and

understood, and of the spirit which is according to the patterns and shadow of the heavenly things."¹⁶ The "visible body" of Scripture is the book with its paper, containing the letters forming the "literal aspect" of the teachings. The soul of the teachings is partly perceived or felt and partly understood. That is, it evokes both the emotional and rational functions. The spirit of the teachings "is according to the patterns and shadow of the heavenly things." In other words, it is highly symbolic. For once the expression "the patterns and shadow of the heavenly things" should be taken in an almost literal way. For the "heavenly things" are the stars, the patterns of which are symbolically connected with the destiny of man. Originally the heavens of religion were traditionally bound up with "the heavens above", not in a vague and general way, but most systematically and in detail. As we shall see presently, this is stated in the first Chapter of Genesis. It has been shown elsewhere that the entire Bible is based on this.¹⁷ The spirit of the teachings is realized by the intuitive or prophetic function.

The four aspects of Scripture are perceived by the four functions--the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual. The four functions of the Züricher School of psychology--perception, feeling, thought and intuition--are based upon the four functions of Traditional Psychology. These four functions, to which a basic, fifth function is reckoned, are traditionally connected with the Four Elements and the Quintessence as the Fifth. Here we are dealing with universal symbolism which lies at the root of all great traditions. I have shown elsewhere at great length that this is the case with all the ancient religions of Asia, Europe and Africa.¹⁸ It is also met with in America. For instance the famous Aztec Calendar stone¹⁹ shows a central figure, symbolizing the Sun, and rectangles around its face representing the Elements Earth, Air, Fire and Water.

Since Genesis is intimately interwoven with, or even based upon, the symbolism of the Elements as representing the various psychical "fields", "worlds" or



The psychological functions

- physical
- feelings (incl. erotic)
- lower mental (incl. moral)
- spiritual (incl. intuition)
- insight(incl. faith)

The five Elements of Nature

- Earth
- Water
- Fire
- Air
- Ether

The four Kingdoms

- material
- vegetable
- animal
- spiritual

The five senses

- touch
- taste
- smell
- hearing
- sight

"spheres", the basic symbolic relations must be dealt with first, at least in their fundamental divisions, as shown above.

Ether is the Sphere of Light, the Quintessence. Air is the Element of the Spirit. Just now I referred to "elements", "fields", "worlds" and "spheres". It is clear that these words, which are used even now in everyday language without their original implications being any more understood, refer to the same provinces of life and action, viewed through the glasses of the various psychological functions, namely, respectively physical, emotional, rational and spiritual.

The simplest and most basic meaning

of the Cross with branches of equal length, a symbol as old as the world of sacred tradition, is that of the harmonious relation of the four psychological functions, with the fifth, the essential function, comprising faith and insight, and rulership over oneself, in the center. In the pyramid the four angles below represent the four functions, and the fifth at the top the quintessential function. A vast amount of symbolism is based upon the Five Elements, grouped in one way or another. The fundamental symbolism is universal, and in addition to that every religion knows parallel subdivisions. I have dealt with them at length elsewhere.

Origen's four aspects of Scripture--visible, emotional, intellectual and symbolical--are based, as everything "Christian", upon an earlier tradition. In an old Jewish work the symbolism of the word "Paradise" is dealt with. It describes how the Initiator AMN (Amen) takes the soul in four stages to PaRDeS or "Paradise". The four stages are brought in connection with the four letters of the word PaRDeS. These are traditionally interpreted thus: *Pa* indicates the Paschout or literal sense, *R* the Rimmaz or simple allegoric sense, *De* the Derousch or superior symbolic sense, and *S* the Sod or supremely esoteric sense.²⁰

The Paschout or literal sense is what is visible to everyone and forms the starting-point of the journey along the "spiritual path". The Rimmaz or simple allegoric sense has to be discovered during the second stage of that path, with the function of feeling. During the third stage the intellectual function must comprehend the Derousch or superior symbolism--which, as we shall see presently, is predominantly rational and applies to the dynamic function of thought and the choice between "good and evil". During the fourth stage of the path the spiritual-intuitive function must discover the Sod or supreme esoteric sense. When the fullness of life has been perceived, felt, understood and intuited, at the hand of the four aspects of Scripture, Paradise--always traditionally connected with the Ether or Quintessence--is reached, or, from another angle of vision, realized.

The textbooks, on which modern teaching is based, are concerned almost exclusively with the function of physical perception and the rational function. They do not appeal to the emotional function (which is left to the teachers) and even less to the intuitive function (which has to spring forth from the taught without being evoked to any extent). Many modern books have a moral appeal--generally colored emotionally--it is true. But in Traditional Psychology the moral function is classed with the function of thought. This is already expressed in Genesis in "the knowledge of good and evil".

Therefore modern ways of teaching overfeed the functions of material perception and thought, and starve the function of feeling and the spiritual-intuitive function. The four functions are not working in harmony in the average man of our time. As a result people are full of problems, and so also in consequence is this world at large.

In Europe and America there is a strong tendency to identify morality and spirituality. But anyone who has common sense and looks around, is aware that there are a great many people who are moral saints, but lack inner peace and do not know true happiness. In the East the identification of morality and spirituality is as a rule avoided.

Modern ways of teaching are predominantly rational and both follow from and contribute to the fact that the people of the present age exist psychologically in a state of departments, in which the various functions carry on a semi-independent life and are often at loggerheads with one another. But ancient ways of teaching were synthetic and syncretic, and made a simultaneous appeal to all the functions. The ancient traditional way of teaching was by myth. Mythological stories dealt with psychological problems and their solution, and appealed to the emotions, the function of systematic thought, the moral man and the intuition. They were "inspiring", appealed to the function of faith and brought insight into the mystery of life. When they were recited to the letter or enacted, it was a good training for the perceptive function of the various physical senses. The purpose of myths was to bring all functions into play at the same time.

Modern man has so completely forgotten what a myth is, that the expression "it is a myth" is now being used to denote something of baseless imagination or nonsense.

This is the case--need it be said--because myths have been interpreted in a literalistic manner. Mythological personalities have been taken to be personified forces of nature, when, on the contrary, they represent aspects of the psyche which

were clothed in natural attributes. This course was inevitable, for man has no other material to draw upon for his metaphors and symbols than nature, both material and animate. Though modern man, in his literature and pictorial art, is ever creating new metaphors, decorating and illustrating types of men with attributes borrowed from nature, it has so far not seriously occurred to him that his ancestors in past ages not only did the very same, but carried it to the extent of an exact psychological science, which was, as I have shown elsewhere, world-wide.

The difference between the metaphors of modern days and of ancient times consists in this, that while authors now vie with one another in creating unusual and personal ones, for (what the an-

cients would have called) profane purposes of entertainment, the ancient used them in accordance with a universal science for psychological and theological purposes of education, of salvation from sorrow and of bestowal of enlightenment.

When comparing them closely it will be found that the modern metaphors are, on the whole, reflections of the traditional ones, for to a great extent they emerge from the unconscious in which the ancient ones are still present. The former are used in an arbitrary manner which would have shocked the teachers of old, who employed them according to a fixed scheme.

Let us now turn to the basic tradition of the Jewish and Christian faiths--the greatest teaching of all in the Bible: the first Chapter of Genesis. ❖



The Creation of the Sun and Moon

Endnotes

1. *An Exposition of Traditional Psychology, I.*
2. *An Exposition of Traditional Psychology, II.*
3. St. Matthew 23; 13-39.
4. St. Luke 12; 10.
5. *Ibid.* 12; 11-12.
6. *Ibid.* 12; 10.
7. *Ibid.* 11; 52.
8. The Didache; or, The Teaching of the Lord, through the Twelve Apostles, to the Gentiles, XIII, 1 and 3. From: Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church, edited by Dr. B.J.Kidd, Vol. I.
9. *Ibid.* XV, 1-2.
10. *Ibid.* XV, 1-2.
11. See St. Luke 12; 11-12, quoted above.
12. Romans 7; 6.

13. II Corinthians 3; 3.
14. II Cor. 3; 5-6.
15. Gen. 2; 17. *An Exposition of Traditional Psychology,, and Evolution, Paradise and the Fall.*
16. Lev. Hom. V.
17. *An Exposition of Traditional Psychology, I, II and III.*
18. *An Exposition of Traditional Psychology I, II and III.*
19. Now in the National Museum, Mexico. See "The Art of Mexico," by Betty Ross, in Studio, April 1947.
20. "Vision de Iechezkiel", article by P. Nommès in Le Voile d'Isis, 1930 (Actes de la Société de Philologie, 1879).

Book Review

Deborah Buchanan

The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony
by Roberto Calasso
Alfred Knopf; New York: 1993

A few years ago a friend gave me Roberto Calasso's book, *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, mainly because of the title, since my second daughter is named Harmony and we thought the coincidence amusing. Upon beginning to read the book, I almost immediately found myself in a whirl of names and events that were so unrelated to anything I knew that all I could do was to simply keep reading, hoping to find some touchstone of recognition. Fortunately these appeared every once in awhile, flashing a wonderful insight into an otherwise incomprehensible series of stories. I thought of myself as a swimmer out to sea, lost in the vast waters but still treading, finding something there mysterious and beautiful. Then I would have to stop and gasp for breath. A few weeks would pass and I would start a section all over again as I really could remember very little of what I had already read. In this way it took me over two years to finish Calasso's book, having read most parts of it certainly more than once.

Now, three years later--having looked through the lovely illustrated children's book on Greek mythology by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire (*Greek Myths*; Doubleday, New York: 1962) and having spent three weeks in Greece visiting many classic ruins and museums--I have come back to Calasso's book on Cadmus and Harmony. And what a wonderful book it is! Calasso is that rare scholar who has made what he studies completely his own, so that when he writes about it, both the fact of his study (the stories and their histories) as well as his own deep understanding flow out easily and beautifully. He

tells the tales of Greek mythology and, even more importantly, he tells the story of those stories: he unearths the connections and insights from under the cover of their vigorous activity. He looks past the glittering surface of spear and crown, rape and desire, vengeance and creation--all these which are the outward face of an amazing world view that still dazzles and instructs.

"How did it all begin?" That is the question that opens *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, and it is the underlying first question of all the Greek myths. Out of Chaos and those primal forces that are the Titans, emerge the gods and goddess of the Attic world. Each emergence, each creation, is another response to that question, "How did it all begin?" No longer is the pantheon the dark welter of unconscious forces that the Titans expressed. The Olympic gods and goddesses both pose and answer the over-arching questions of psychology and teleology, the questions about necessity, eros, possession, sacrifice, individuation, compassion and terror.

Out of the numerous variations of so many numerous stories, Calasso focuses on those that highlight the essential characteristics of the Greek world. We begin, of course, with Zeus, king of all gods, who is engaged in that favorite of all godly pastimes: abduction and rape. In the story of Zeus as the white bull who escapes with the young girl Europa, Calasso underscores the manifold strands of the myth: its heterogeneous forms, the actual or historical background underlying the tales, and the great psychological themes playing out through the gods' actions. Zeus, as do all the other gods, interacts with mortals as well as other gods; and in that interaction the gods' role is to possess (to

abduct and rape) the mortals, to intoxicate them with a heavenly fever so that they are carried beyond themselves into a transcendent divinity.

It is not just through abduction that men and gods interact, however. Battle, sacrifice and sorrow are also pathways between the worlds of heaven and earth. Calasso uses the stories of Achilles and Agamemnon—their polarities and their intersections—to delineate the different roles that men play in the world of war and ritual. And there is Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter whom he sacrifices, white, innocent body held down on the sacrificial alter: the primal sacrificial victim in a world that demands sacrifice in order for action to take place.

In the beginning for the Greeks, those of Hellas, there was Helen, "the most beautiful woman in the world," who gave rise to a deadly war that devastated both sides. It is also another tale of a woman abducted from Greece, from Europe, to Asia and whose abduction begins a long complicated series of events, just like Europe with Zeus. The Trojan War perplexes the modern mind: all that carnage and heroism over one woman who willing let

herself be abducted? Calasso's understanding of Helen and the following war cuts through the surface interplay of shame and honor to the core of what Helen represents. I want to quote a paragraph of Calasso's from the final banquet when Helen's husband Menelaus is toasting her, back at home, regaling their guests with her exploits.

Twenty years later, Menelaus had understood a thing or two about the woman beside him. He no longer thought of punishing her, as he had for so many years and so obsessively fantasized. He was happy to have understood of her what amounted to no more than the hem of her tunic. And this, among other things, was what he had understood: that for Greeks and Trojans alike Helen had posed the danger of the phantom, the image. Living with the phantom is ruinous, but neither of the two sides had wanted to live without. It was over the phantom they had fought. And now the phantom went on threatening and enchanting life in Greece.

Could we ever find a more perfect description of maya herself?

In every story there is a thread that



leads to another story, all the participants and the all the acts leading into and out of one another. Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra is sister to Helen. The hero that tries to save Iphigenia from her sacrificial death is Achilles, who is himself eventually killed in Troy by Apollo, that god another character in the long war. And as the Greeks sail for home they reenact the first voyage of Odysseus. Odysseus whose constant guide and patron was Athena, Athena who rescues him with a sash from the White Goddess, a daughter of Cadmus and Harmony who drowned herself in the sea only to become the patroness and savior of all sailors. And who was Cadmus? The brother of Europa! Cadmus who, while searching for his sister after her abduction, actually rescues an imprisoned Zeus.

Calico comes to the center point, that seed of life that animates the Greek tales, right in the center of his book. Here we find Ananke, Necessity, mother to the three Fates, and an old Mediterranean ancestor. Ananke was the faceless goddess who stood above Olympus, her tight coils of netting inescapable, her gloomy implacability inherited from earlier Sumer. Even the gods and goddess are bidden to do as Ananke demands. And yet how much the Greeks loved play and, as an integral part of play, deceit. Calasso traces the symbol of Necessity--The Milky Way, the goddess' netting that surrounds all of earth and heaven--and how it is changed into the belt of stars and webbing that Aphrodite wears as she walks.

Ananke belongs to the world of Kronos. Indeed she is his companion and sits with him on their polar throne as Zeus sits beside Hera in Olympus. That is why Ananke has no face, just as her divine spouse has no face. The figure, the mobile shape, will make its appearance only with the world that comes after theirs. The Olympian gods know that the law of Kronos has not been abrogated, nor can it ever be. But they don't want to feel it weighing down on them every second of every day. Olympus is a rebellion of lightness against the precision of the law, which at that time was referred to as weight and measure. A vain rebellion, but

divine. Kronos' chains become Hepahaestus' golden web. The gods know that the two imprisoning nets are the same; what has changed is the aesthetic appearance. And it is on this that life on Olympus is based. Of the two, they prefer to submit to Eros rather than Ananke, even though they know that Eros is just a dazzling cover for Ananke.

In the world of Greek mythology, history is never distinctly history nor myth only myth. Everywhere gods and men interact, cohabit, marry, and plot against one another. There is a constant transformation between the different realms: heroes, gods, mortals, and even animals change one into the other. There is a fluidity where manifestation and individuation are not fixed: none of the beings is isolated nor are they mutually exclusive.

Gods and mortals are fascinated with one another and need one another. And when this ceases to happen the Greek world ceases to be that brilliant, unique outline on the horizon. The end to metamorphosis--literally: after or beyond form--is the dividing line marked in the sand between the ancient world and our modern visions.

All these stories twine around to find their end in the marriage of Cadmus, a mortal man, and Harmony, goddess of music and concord. The multifarious, antagonistic strands of Greek myth are for a short moment united in them. Under their auspices the heavenly and earthly realms co-exist, however tremblingly. Their marriage was the last time that heavenly and mortal inhabitants participated in a common life. And when they both die, at the end of a long, fruitful and difficult reign, that world disperses forever.

Roberto Calasso writes of these tales in a way that itself is enchanting and enlightening. He too is an old bard, recounting these endless myths across water and fire. He makes that strange and glimmering world of Greek gods irresistible, showing us how the world of the story is really everything: it is the place where dream and action and hope and despair come together, again and again, always alluring, always reassuring. ❖



*Only Zeus, the Father of Heaven, might wield the thunderbolt;
and it was with the threat of its fatal flash that he controlled
his quarrelsome and rebellious family of Mount Olympus.
He also ordered the heavenly bodies, made laws, enforced oaths
and pronounced oracles.*

(Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Penguin Books, London, 1960, p. 53)

East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



In addition to the vast legacy of books written by Guru Nitya, many of his inspiring classes have been preserved either on video or audio cassettes. We have begun the process of gathering and copying his videotaped classes and digitizing his audio-taped talks for our archives and for distribution.

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Vijay and Girija Pillay, we now have a complete series of video-tapes of the *Bhagavad Gita* classes given in Crown Point, Indiana, when Guru Nitya was last there in 1990. This set (8 volumes) may be ordered from Bainbridge Gurukula, 8311 Quail Hill Road, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 for \$100.00 including postage (in the US). Individual tapes are also available at a cost of \$14.00.

We have audio tapes of Guru chanting the *Bhagavad Gita* and the works of Narayana Guru. We have also received, with gratitude, copies of some classes given in Singapore and Australia to add to our recordings of classes given at Stanford and University of Portland during the 1970's. If you are in possession of any of these precious tapes from classes given in your area, we will greatly appreciate it if you could send copies to Bainbridge Gurukula so we can add them to our archives.

As the sound quality of many of the audio tapes is lacking, we have recently purchased the equipment to record the audio cassettes on compact discs. This will allow us to filter out most of the extraneous noise and make it easier to organize, store and mail copies. Since this is a very time-consuming process, the CDs are not yet available, but we will inform you when they are.

Financial contributions to aid this project will be gratefully accepted.

Not Just Surviving

Peter Oppenheimer

In December 2000 the Narayana Gurukula held its 50th annual convention at its headquarters at Varkala in Kerala State. For six days hundreds of people were living together in and around a single compound with dorms, huts, guest rooms, large kitchen and dining hall, organic vegetable garden, cowshed, wells, swept sand courtyard, bookstore, printing press, prayer hall, and plenty of mango, coconut, papaya and banana trees. Lectures of spiritual, philosophical and practical import, group discussions, meditation, chanting, fire ceremonies, sumptuous feasts, and music and dance performances were daily highlights from which one could pick and choose one's own level of participation and appreciation. I found the atmosphere, activities, and assembly particularly heartening in light of the fact that having attended six or seven previous conventions this was my first one since the passing away of our beloved Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati.

Frankly it was with a touch of hesitation and trepidation that I had returned to India in the Fall of 2000, because in my dozen previous visits to the Gurukulas over the past 30 years, it was Guru Nitya who had consistently been the central focus and inspiration for both the teachings and lifestyle that drew me and many other Westerners there. As I prepared myself for this visit, I found myself wondering how much of the spiritual light and day to day heartfulness that had been the hallmarks of the Narayana Gurukula would have survived his physical absence. I was amazed and uplifted to discover that the heart and soul of the Narayana Gurukula Movement is not just surviving but is in fact thriving. The key to this is most assuredly the dedication, generosity and vision of the many people who continue to live, work, study and dream within the Gurukula.

On the final day of the convention, I convened a special assembly of the twenty-five or thirty people present who are currently full time residents of one or another of the dozen or so Narayana Gurukulas in India. At that time

I conducted a discussion during which I asked each person to share and shed some light onto just what it is that draws them to live within the Narayana Gurukula, what they are most proud of about the Gurukula Movement, and what they enjoy most about living in the Gurukula. Initially I was planning to edit the comments by narrowing them down and then rearranging them by subject. But as I read them over again, the whole chorus in its entirety struck me as rather orchestral in its elegies and epiphanies, elations and declarations. Each voice presents a glimpse into the interior thoughts, heart, values, and lifestyle of a person who to a great extent is eschewing the materialistic allures of the ever-burgeoning globalized (i.e. capitalistic, consumeristic) culture to live a simple daily life with a more spiritual orientation, motivation and appreciation.

✱

I seek satisfaction. The philosophy of Narayana Guru has the depth to satisfy the intellect and the substance to fill the heart also. There are also ample opportunities for action. I love the freedom given by the Gurukula, and I am aware of the responsibility it implies. In freedom we bloom. I hold that freedom close to my heart. I was raised a Christian. In that tradition I was given predigested pronouncements. Here we chew over everything.

✱

Gurukula life is full of contentment. I understand directly from the mouth of the Guru that I am part of the Universal. I am leading a new silent life here, and new fields of knowledge are opening up to me.

✱

The pure wisdom of Narayana Guru is what keeps me here. From Nataraja Guru to Guru Nitya and Guru Prasad this wisdom is being given in abundance.

✱

I am here to be the simple seeker that I want to be and to share the love and beau-

ty of the world with others.

✱

I met Guru Nitya by accident and upon seeing him I felt a great sense of peacefulness and contentment radiating from within him. I thought, "Why can't I have this in my life? Why can't I be with him in Ooty?" After I began attending Guru's classes there, I started feeling that same contentment and peace. I am still experiencing this through the Gurukula.

✱

I went to the university and learned about things like math and English. But there the teachers and students were in a state of great tension. Studying here I find that is not the case. Guru's words explain many things about life.

✱

What I like about being here is that though working on the publications I get a chance to read the words of the Gurus constantly.

✱

I had heard about the Gurukula as a child, but only after my marriage to one of the inmates did I come to understand the Gurukula well. I came to understand the great contribution of the Guru to the world only after studying his words.

✱

The difference between the world outside of the Gurukula and the world inside the

Gurukula is very clear. Outside there is a lot of strife. There is no security either physically or psychologically. Here it is safe, silent, and peaceful. There is not the struggle of existence that you find elsewhere. Enjoyment increases as you get to know each other and enjoy the calm environment with others. There is not much stress or strain here.

✱

In most ashrams, all the inmates are in one mode. Here you can see so much variety. All here are living as one family and yet giving each other that much freedom. We all love each other. That is what I appreciate most. The recognition of oneness and at the same time the appreciation of difference.

I am the only son of my parents who had close relationship with Mangalananda Swami who was a part of the Gurukula fifty years ago. I have so many friends here who are like brothers and sisters. You can't see such kind of relationship anywhere. People are sharing everything. If Ramakrishna has two *dhotis* and I have none, he will give me one of his. I also really appreciate how criticism is allowed on a one to one basis but not with a third party.

✱

I came to the Gurukula to enlarge the little knowledge I have to its larger limits and



to contribute what I do know to be a part of the whole. I expected the guidance of a Guru and I got it. What I enjoy most about the Gurukula is the lovingness of the inmates. All the affection not only feels good, but it also provides a model worth emulating.

✱

I am proud of the freedom we are getting in the Gurukula, freedom to develop, freedom to expand.

✱

The Gurukula is here to help one to enhance one's own essential personality. There is space for that here. Guru Nitya wanted to include art and such precious values as part and parcel of the Gurukula.

The Gurukula is helping me to avoid an identity crisis. Previously I in fact did have an interior and social identity crisis. Through the wisdom teachings of great men, I came to understand the possibility to identify socially as a World Citizen and interiorly as the Absolute. At about the age of thirty-five, through both suffering as well as enjoyment I began to ask, "Who am I?" and "What is this world?" In Guru Nitya I found a model of what I consider the highest values. By following those footsteps I started realizing my own limitations.

That was the first enjoyment I had. The next was from the human beings who are

like me and who have come to share this life in this wonderland of companionship. Their words, deeds, deep silence and emotional variations are like a mirror reflection of my own pitfalls and successes. So I study more from our mistakes and try to avoid them the next time.

More than the controllable factors, I find that an uncontrollable development which we call a "chance factor" or "the grace of God" is playing the major role in my life. I can be honest with myself and for that I resort to the words of every human being, especially those near to me in each moment. Ultimately I am taken to a space beyond the three dimensions.

✱

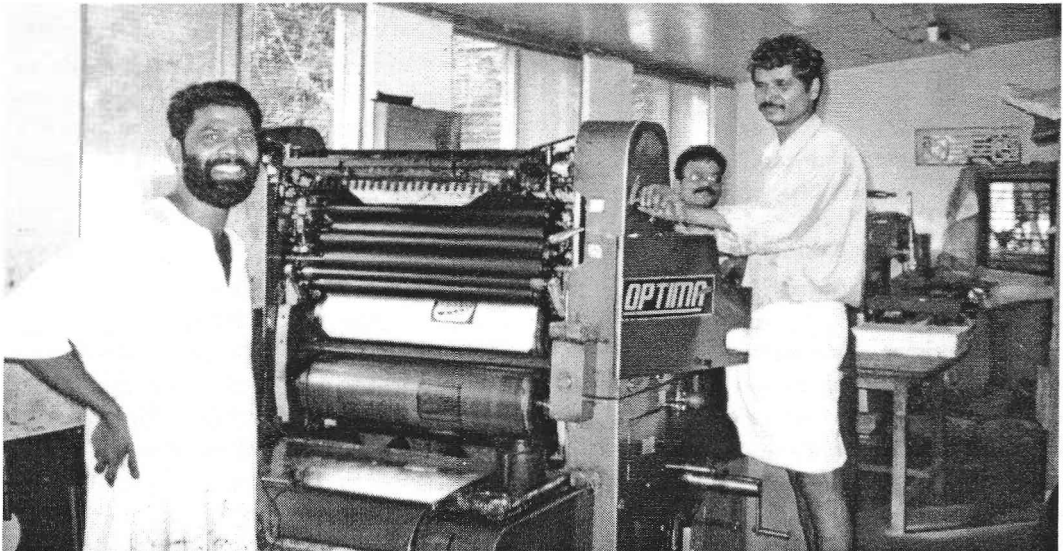
Life in the Gurukula is not about being proud. It is humbling. Until recently it was humiliating. It can be ennobling. It is a sustaining factor in my life. I am proud of being a disciple of Nataraja Guru and that I also received the "Guru Grace" from Guru Nitya.

✱

I'm very happy because the founder Guru, the successor Guru, and again another successor all lived and upheld themselves as absolutely honest human beings as well as spiritual beings. Again, it is continuing. I am very happy.

✱

I am perhaps the happiest person in the



Mangala Offset Press, Varkala

Photo and Illustration Credits

5-15: Graphics by Andy Larkin
16-20: Graphics by Andy Larkin
21: Traditional Chinese paper cut.
28: Eritrean Sibyl, Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Rome, 1510

33: Creation of the Sun and Moon, Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Rome, 1510
39: Bronze statue of Zeus from Artemision, c. 450 B.C.E.
42-43: Photographs by Nancy Yeilding
44: Photograph by Sraddha Durand



world. I don't think I'm in the Gurukula. I think I am the Gurukula. I hope others feel that too about themselves. I live today. I don't have any dream in my mind. That way I won't be disappointed also.

✱

The Gurukula is a congregation of contemplatives. The ultimate aim of contemplation is liberation or all sorts of freedoms. Within the Gurukula we enjoy freedom to a greater degree than most ashrams. Externally we can move freely as we like. If we want to travel around we can. If we want to put a restraint on ourselves, we can do that too. It is up to the individual. There is support for that here.

✱

I'm a local of Varkala. Narayana Guru had close association with and spread his light throughout this area. My father taught me that before Narayana Guru this locale was shrouded in darkness. There was no real culture or civilization here. The Guru emphasized education. He also taught about all religions. He never rejected critical thinking either.

✱

I'm proud of the wisdom tradition made

available here to all who come. It is like a well from which one can ceaselessly draw for one's sustenance. Peace and contentment are available to all here as well.

✱

The Gurukula can boast four Gurus and, who can say, there may be even more *brahma jnanis* (those who realize and typify the wisdom of the Absolute).

✱

The Gurukula is a gateway to go beyond the transactional and illusionary realities and reach the ultimate value. The Gurus are like lamps and they pave the way for the seekers. The Guru is a light unto himself, and he gives light to others, who may be groping in darkness. When we go beyond time and space, we can find a kind of equality of virtue in everybody. All are fellow beings, and fellow beings are neighbors, and neighbors are brothers and sisters, and brothers and sisters are one in the self, and the self and the ultimate truth are one. What brought me here is not *vasana* (latent preferences and habits) but God's own destiny. In the ultimate value both the goal and the way, the means and the end, are identical. ❖

East-West University and Narayana Gurukula Publications

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/islandgurukula>

By Nataraja Guru

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

By Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Love and Blessings (Autobiography)
Beyond Cause and Effect
The Psychology of *Darśana Mālā*
The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (Volumes I, II, III)
The *Saundaryalaharī* of Sankaracarya
The *Bhagavad Gītā*
Neither This Nor That But....AUM
Love and Devotion
The Haunting Echoes of Spring
Experiencing the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*
A Bouquet of Verses in Praise of the Supreme Mother
Sree Narayana Guru
Daiva Daśakam (A Prayer for Humanity)
Marxism and Humanist Nonarchy
God - Reality or Illusion?
Arivu - Epistemology of Gnosis
Prāṇāyāma
Psychology: An Eastern Perspective
Vināyakastakam
The Psychodynamics of *Pranava*
Gītā - A Managerial Science
An Intelligent Man's Guide to the Hindu Religion

By Others

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

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

Narayana Gurukula
Fernhill P.O.
Nilgiris, Tamilnadu
643004 India

Publications Available From:

Narayana Gurukula
Srinivasapuram P.O.
Varkala, Kerala
695145 India

