

GURUKULAM



AUTUMN 2004

GURUKULAM

A Journal of Philosophy and the Arts

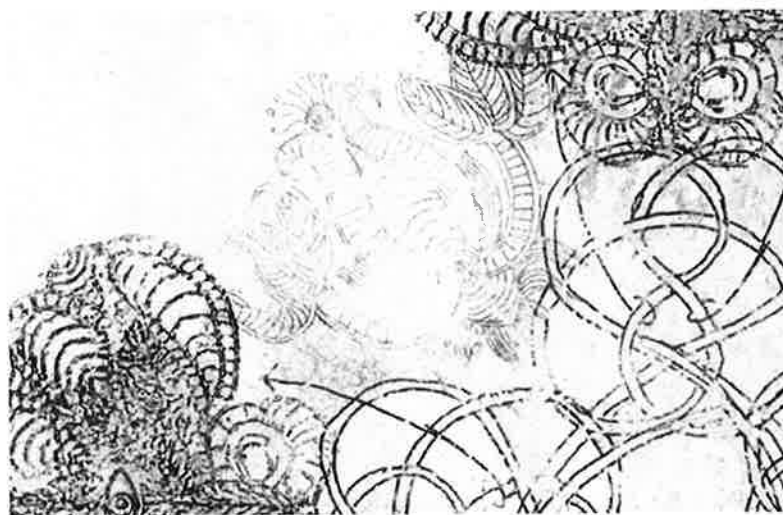
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 6 EDITORIAL
- 8 *KĀLĪNĀṬAKAM*: THE DANCE OF THE DARK GODDESS
by Narayana Guru
11 translation and commentary by Nataraja Guru
16 translation by Swami Vinaya Chaitanya
- 21 *ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM*, Verses 20 and 21
by Narayana Guru
translation and commentary by Guru Nitya
- 32 WISDOM OF THE BLUE GUM TREE
by Vyasa Prasad
- 35 GROWING IN THE DARK
by Scott Teitsworth
- 42 THE MASTER
by Kala Krishnan Ramesh
- 44 *ADVAITA DĪPIKA*, Verses 1 and 2
by Narayana Guru
translation and commentary by Guru Prasad
- 50 THE NATARAJA GURU WHO TAUGHT ME
by M. Purushothaman
- 53 THE SPRING COMES
by V. Ramachandran
- 55 MEDITATION ON ŚRI CAKRA, Meditation 50
by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

- 57 REVELATION
By Emily Teitsworth
- 58 MOVIE MUSE
by Peter Oppenheimer
- 60 WORLD GOVERNMENT 50th ANNIVERSARY
- 62 NARAYANA GURUKULA NEWS
- 64 ILLUSTRATION CREDITS



EDITORIAL

BY DEBORAH BUCHANAN

The Kaggalipura Gurukula was located at the rural outskirts of Bangalore, Karnataka State, surrounded by millet fields and open, rolling hills, with a small, fresh stream within walking distance. It was here in 1955 that John Spiers began publishing *Values*. The magazine was the English language newsletter for the Narayana Gurukula organization and provided a format for many penetrating essays by Nataraja Guru—on the structural secrets of the Bhagavad of Gita, and science and certitude, as examples—many of which have now been collected into books. But the magazine, like the Gurukula itself, was never allied to only one philosophical outlook or one school of thought. Wide-ranging discussions took place in the pages of *Values*, from articles on the literary legacy of the Tamil language to the teachings of Islam to C.G. Jung on the psyche of modern man. Harry Jakobsen, Nataraja Guru's first American disciple, wrote an article on Wisdom, Eros and the Bomb, which seems as pertinent today as then. Garry Davis, first World Citizen, began submitting World Government reports and accounts of his work as a global provocateur. Again, work all too current and necessary.

Over the next two decades John continued to publish *Values*, with both Nitya Chaitanya Yati and Fred Haas serving as guest editors. During these years *Values* was a modest and unassuming, but essentially revolutionary, platform for incisive explorations of the global scene and of worldwide philosophical traditions.

In 1971, John Spiers left the Narayana Gurukula, though continuing to publish *Values* until 1974. The publication of an English language newsletter, *Gurukulam*, was undertaken by Vinaya Chaitanya, out of the Somanhalli Gurukula, then transferred to the editorship of Muni Narayana Prasad in Varkala until 1980.

In 1981, under the direction of Guru Nitya, the *Gurukulam* began a new life, being published at the Bainbridge Island Gurukula in Washington State, U.S.A., with Nancy Yeilding as editor. Resurrecting an old German offset press, Nancy, Bob Tyson and Sraddha Durand printed three to four issues each year. It was in the *Gurukulam* that Guru Nitya's translations and commentaries were published—on Narayana Guru's *Arivu*, *Advaita Dīpika*, *Svānubhavaḡīti* and *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, and on Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, in addition to numerous original essays.

This short, historic survey has served as a preamble to introduce the new incarnation of *Gurukulam*: published out of the Portland Gurukula in Oregon, in a larger format, with two issues each year, Spring and Fall. As before, we hope to serve as a lively meeting ground of ideas where both creative and contemplative experiences can be shared. We agree with John Spiers summation in 1957: "This magazine is devoted to integrating human understanding unitively, impartially, and globally in the interests of the general good."

Narayana Guru was born in 1854 in Travancore State, South India. During his life as a wandering *sannyāsin*, he continually expressed the essential values of unity, simplicity and kindness found at the heart of India's spiritual traditions. Quietly, and with persistent dedication, Narayana Guru presented the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta so that it was open and accessible to any interested person. It was in 1923 that Nataraja Guru, Narayana Guru's disciple, started the first Gurukula, understood as the home and family of a wisdom teacher. It is to openly share the insights of both these Gurus that this magazine is dedicated. We hope to be a forum for all varieties of ponderings, extrapolations, questions, and possibilities, as well as quiet, lucid moments of insight. May we enjoy our journey together!



KĀLĪNĀṬAKAM

OR THE DANCE OF THE DARK GODDESS

BY NARAYANA GURU

The fertility of its valleys and the wet abundance of its rivers have always reminded Indians of the Goddess, or Devi, as she is called in her over arching, all-inclusive personification. The earth is seen as the tangible body of the Goddess—hills, lakes, and trees are not just symbols of the Devi's nurturing capabilities but are actual expressions of her power. This fecundity has its more ambiguous, shadowed side as well: not just water but blood, not just birth and life but decay and death, not just the lithe, lovely goddess Sakti, but also the dark and frightening Kali. The name Kali translates as the feminine form of *kāla* or Time, the eternal, final cancellation of all human aspiration. And *kālī* also refers to dice, or the chance nature of our life, whether happy or tragic.

She is the goddess who, though primarily thought of as dark and terrifying, embodies both the positive and negative aspects of life. With two of her hands she holds jewel-encrusted utensils with which she dispenses *annapūrṇa*, the sweetest of edible abundance; *Annapūrṇa*, in fact, becomes the name of a goddess, one of Durga's manifestations. Kali also holds a noose to catch and strangle her devotee and an iron hook with which to drag him to his doom. At the same time that she gives boons of refuge and sustenance, Kali devours and terrorizes. Like the monsoon clouds, she is dark and foreboding but she also brings replenishing rain. Kali is the goddess who drips blood from her fangs and wears a necklace of skulls as her garland. Yet it is she who provides the living energy for her husband Siva—the absolute, transcendent ground of All—to manifest in the world. Without her intensity and beneficence, he could not even move a finger.

It is to this complex and paradoxical goddess that Narayana Guru wrote his hymn *Kālīnāṭakam*. He is continuing the legacy of Sankara, the tenth-century scholar and guru, who wrote his own poem in praise of the dark goddess. In both of these works, Kali is invoked for her power and her beauty. She is seen as terrifying. She is implored for her blessings. She is seen as the central, resolving hub of life's contradictions and polarities, the one who confuses and destroys and the only one to whom we can appeal for realization.

These mystical and religious ideas are written in a dance tempo, as dance has for millennia been considered the paramount art form in India. Its movement is within space, its unfoldment is within time. And dance's aesthetic aspects, visual and aural, even tactile, unite our senses into a wholistic experience. By propitiating Kali and singing the rhythms of her dance, Narayana Guru carries on the long tradition of adoration to the living pulse of the Feminine.

Narayana Guru wrote his *Kālīnāṭakam* in Malayalam during the last decade of

the nineteenth century. The first English rendering was undertaken by Nataraja Guru during the spring of 1972 and appeared in *Gurukulam* magazine. However, the final forty-eight lines were left untranslated. The notes that accompany it were dictated in July of 1972. This is the last of Narayana Guru's compositions that Nataraja Guru translated. We are printing here Nataraja Guru's introductory notes, his translation and some final commentary on the poem.

Following Nataraja Guru's commentary there is a contemporary translation by Swami Vinaya Chaitnaya, which first appeared in the journal *Indian Literature*.



KĀLĪNĀṬAKAM

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY NATARAJA GURU

The following is a free translation of one of the most enigmatically intriguing compositions of Narayana Guru, whose Sanskrit title, *Kālīnāṭakam*, we have descriptively translated as The Dance-Drama of the Eternal Feminine or the Negative Absolute. It follows a style reminiscent of the *dāṇḍaka* form of poetry in which the words flow, as it were, in a high voltage sequence. The phrases follow one another in a very compact stream of close-knit integration. The only poem reminiscent of this style in English is, perhaps, Robert Southey's *How the Waters Come Down at Ladore*. The epithets, which string a continuity of events in the present participial predicative sense, form a chain or continuum as part of a process that itself flows like a brook or waterfall. The liquidity itself, petrified, would yield a sense of solidity, which the word *dāṇḍaka* (staff-like style) is perhaps meant to signify in such works as the *Daṣakumāra Carita*. It is hard to imitate the cadence, the rhythm and the clangorous jingling magic of phrases and epithets of

the original manuscript so dexterously accomplished by Narayana Guru. A weak replica is all that we have been bold enough to present here with due apologies to the Guru, who even once hinted to the present writer that such old writings of his need not be given much importance by me. By this gentle hint the Guru perhaps only meant to warn me of a certain mystical language, in the framework of which those compositions were originally conceived. A modern person like me, he thought, perhaps would never be able in the normal course to penetrate the



highly subtle structural implications of such an old-time literary style. Kalidasa, influenced by the highly cryptic Upanishadic secret doctrine, was a master poet in whose hands this mystically erotic material shaped itself like wax or plastic clay and submitted to his demanding, highly creative poetic art. Sankara had the ambition of rising to the same heights of poetic creativity as evidenced in his masterpiece of erotic mystical poetry called *Saundārya Laharī* (verse 75). Having now myself devoted four years of intense research to this style of literature, I feel that I can do some kind of distant justice at least to the present work. Many of my disciples who know no Malayalam have been asking persistently for at least a word-for-word rendering of this work to help them verify how erotic mysticism

works in the hands of these Gurus. Sankara and Narayana Guru could be profitably studied together as authors presenting the most finalized of positions in respect to the epistemology and axiology of Advaita Vedanta in its fully re-valued and restated form. Besides having a Tantric setting, we find theology and psychology presented here in a beautiful blend.

Adoration! O one of *nāda bindu*
(Of sound substance and drop of essence made)
Eternal feminine everlasting!
With lotus feet revered by saints
Such as Narada and others
O sacred lamp of wisdom pearl-bedecked
And flower-tender of the scriptures four.

Adoration to you, O Mother
Dear to the four-headed god
Brahma and others of his order
Who emanating all the universe
Holds sway over them (and)
With pleasing mien destroys all again.
Thus ever in joy delighting
Now playful and now in ecstasy
Raising repeated cries most agonizing
While dwelling within the ground
Of my own great delight.
Brimfully filling this universe
Lit up to view by the uttered word
Which penetrating deep within
And remaining as a minute grain
In interiority ultimate.
Wriggling and wriggling
While letting down a showering
Ooze of immortal bliss
Fully aware of every pain
Falling day by day to believers in your lotus feet,
Scorching effectively the seed of pain
Within those able for a while at least to fix
Their thoughts to rest on you
So that they begin to ignore
Every other form of contemplation
Of the flight of the “alone to the Alone!”
In such a manner
Filling the whole universe
With the self-same substance uniformly all over
To dwell therein excluding
The least taint of dross
Knowing never the least decrease
Even on long lapse of time
This day, alas, have we come to have

Awareness somewhat at least
Of this your tragic form
Shall this same effectively block out
The whole universe?
Able to know thus in this wide world
Who could there be alas?

Mighty Lord divine, chief of shining ones,
Gauri's wedded one goodness ultimate
Great Maya's Self, your glory
Some understanding it calls for.

Delving deep to the bottom of interiority
To pluck it up to the limits of the sky
What can give thus
A rude and shivering shock
To the celestial river Ganges
Mandakini of slow moving gait
Responsible thus to calm her down
With matted locks interlaced
And slender crescent with bone
Fixing well beyond the supple garland
Of resplendent glory of gems
A gem more precious on to a
Golden diadem made out of his upper cloth
That puts to shade even the lustre
Of the waxing fifth-night crescent moon.

Beyond the screen dauntless and indiscrete,
Ignoring default,
Losing his balanced foothold
And falling within the central beauty spot
Of the forehead to which tribute
It pays forever what wonder lo!
That the Lord of Earth who wears
The seven seas for girdle round his waist
As also Mahadeva and Brahma too
Should now be seen as in a picture
Caught within the power of Maya alas.

Even for great ones when we consider
Is it possible to cross
Beyond the power of Great Maya?

The flower-dart of that limbless one
 The God of Love what can encounter
 Which are no other than
 The arched tendrils of your eyebrow twigs.
 If these should strike the limbs
 Of Eros he could do nothing more
 Than to sneak away quietly
 To settle himself down alas!
 While to those devoted
 To your lotus pair of feet
 These very tendril twigs
 Of your eyebrows twain
 Are potent enough to dispel altogether
 All their inner state of distress
 When the same are kept close
 To the flanks for ever
 Emitting glimmering light intermittent
 Exuding the while from both corners
 Of the lotus tender eyes drops of honey
 Of kindness oozing out with every sob
 Repeatedly floods over to wash out all misery
 Out of the two corners of your eyes
 Even to such a gushing brook full of eddies.
 What can a lesson in adroitness teach
 Beyond such an expansive ocean of mercy
 What enables one to cross to the shore beyond?

On the farther shore beyond the ocean
 Of honey-tender ooze of honey-sweet kindness
 Lending ear to these hymns of praise
 Raised in chorus by the devotees of your feet
 Accompanied by dance and by song
 Wearing the while a pearl-set earring
 Sending up bright rays as seen reflected
 On the bright mirror surface of your neck
 Putting to shame the blood-red color
 Of the red hibiscus
 Those your twin lips through which are seen
 The rows of your crystal-bright teeth
 What wonder that it should out-do in brightness
 A brocade set with pearls!
 Shining ever brighter in this manner is the facial orb
 That can even overwhelm and put into shade

The very full orb of the mature moon
Showing twin rival sources of light on either side
Of the orb of its visage of tragic yet auspicious import
With pair of frightful teeth
Wearing in the wrist a bracelet provided with
Plentiful jingling bells
Drawing behind an enslaved trail of elementals
Flying into the air with shouts repeated
Repeatedly smiting with spear
Brandishing a goodly spiral conch
Holding up Death's head and scimitar
Raising shouts in a voice that could
Brave warriors disperse routed on every side before it
Putting to shame the lion's roar
Repeatedly bursting into cluster-peals
of bright laughter
Rendering unto dust her hard ball-like breasts
Keeping to the rhythmic pace of time-beat as well as
Melody of the celestial dance and song.



When great poets like Dante or Milton talk about Paradise lost or regained, they are speaking of limiting value-worlds that their own myth-making tendencies create for themselves as consolation. All human beings are caught in necessity and, therefore, they feel great bondage. It is repugnant to the spirit of man to accept two rival truths such as heaven and hell at one and the same time. Great poets try to reconcile the antinomies involved in concepts such as these. *Kālīnāṭakam* represents the flux of universal human becoming. What Narayana Guru attempts to do in this poem is the same as what Dante does when he puts various intermediate intervals between heaven and hell by means of the levels of the inferno and purgatory, so that the mind can travel between the two limiting worlds of value and reconcile the contradiction, if any, that might persist between them. Thus he constructs a kind of spiral staircase between Paradise and Inferno.

In the ascent from one set of concepts to another, in the process of reconciling opposites, a subtle architecture of thought in the name of nominalism and conceptualism is involved. We transcend necessity in and through itself to arrive at a high vantage point that gives us the final consolation of contemplative life, attained by abolishing the duality between heaven and hell. The transition has necessarily to be indirect, and many intermediate agencies are brought in to bridge the tragic gulf between the world of necessity and that of freedom. All the possible consolations of philosophy are touched upon by the Guru Narayana in this composition, in a certain hierarchical order of succession. Without knowing the overall purpose of the author, the composition fails to give up its full meaning to the casual modern reader of poetry. Both heaven and hell result from constructions of the mind at different levels of consciousness. The levels are marked out here in very clear terms, and range from pure conceptualism to pure nominalism. Paradises can be lost or regained many times in a lifetime; it depends only on one's wholehearted dedication to truth.

Certain time honored clichés found in Sanskrit literature, especially in the poetry of Kalidasa and Sankara, are seen pressed into service by the Guru here. The jingling anklets of a dancing girl constitute the ultimate vehicle through which the mind is made to arrive at the culminating point of its journey or ascent, through the world of sound or music. The veena and the flute play their parts as well in this act of final consummation. Music is the food of love which takes us to the very final limits of joy or bliss. We enter thus the world of hallelujas and the spreading of good news, where alone all joy and freedom of the spirit can ever reside.

Kali here represents the negative principle of universal becoming in the form of an upsurging flux, as a billow of bliss within consciousness. The beauty value implied is tragic in its glory, which the Guru here tries to put into poetic imagery. The exact translation of the highly suggestive and fluid flow of phrases in this composition defeats every attempt to render it in cut and dried terms. Thus this word of apology on the part of the translator for finding the task too difficult of accomplishment, especially as he is trying to do the work from a hospital bed where he has been confined after a mild paralytic stroke for the past week or more.

KĀLĪNĀṬAKAM

TRANSLATION BY SWAMI VINAYA CHAITANYA

I adore you, O one made of
creative sound and the beginning point of space;
O eternal one,
whose lotus feet are ever praised
by Narada and other sages,
adoration to the flower-jewel lamp
that illumines the four Vedas,
adoration, O Mother, most dear to
the four-headed Brahma and other gods,
adorations to you.

Bringing forth the whole universe
and ruling over it,
destroying them in sport,
tasting, enjoying, playing, writhing,
shouting out terrible cries,
and residing in the realm of my joy,
becoming clear, disappearing, filling
and spilling out of the universe
and permeating it
like oil fills the sesame seed;
remaining as the core,
turning, twisting, pouring out
streams of ever growing bliss;
knowing the daily troubles
that come to the devotees of your lotus feet,
and burning out the seed of sorrow;
the enlightened ones who remember you,
even for a very short time,
know no other form
of the ultimate state.
Filling the universe fully
you rule over all equally
without any harm,
You remain ever, without diminishing.
To know you thus, just a little,
is hardly possible.
Will your terrible form disappear,

with all the universe too?
Who in the world is capable
to ponder over and understand all this?

O great divine ruler,
great lord of the goddess,
O blessed one,
O great Maya, your magical creation
of variety is puzzling indeed.
Your matted locks, shining with
crescent moon and bone,
subdue the roar of the fall of Ganga
that makes the sky tremble
and the insides shaken
and torn in fear.
Your necklaces of jasmine
and precious stones shine,
dancing, and swaying with your steps.
Your golden crown blazes with
priceless pearls.
The beautiful fifth-day crescent
humbled in defeat by your forehead,
pays tribute to it.
Falling into the red spot between your eyebrows,
the lover of the Earth goddess
who wears the seven seas for waistband.
As well as Mahadeva and Brahma
and all are caught in Maya,
strange indeed!
Even to the great souls,
O great Maya, your power
is difficult to cross over,
Your eyebrow tendrils
trouble the flower bow of the limbless one
if they fall on him,
ever so slightly even,
this god of desire vanishes, unmoving.
These same side-glances destroy
the sorrow of those fortunate ones
who contemplate your flower feet—
the source of all goodness.
Your eyes shine with
tears of compassion

that gush forth to wash away pain.
Across the ocean of joy
of your devotees you stand,
listening to the praises
sung by them
with music and dance.
Your golden earrings
shine and jingle, and reflect
on your mirror-like cheeks.
The red hibiscus flower
worships your ruby-red lips,
and your crystal-like teeth
put to shame rows of pearls.
Your beautiful shining face
worries the full moon,
its face clouding over.
It is terrible and auspicious at once,
the two canines sticking out
of the pearly rows of your teeth
are frightening and wonderful.
To the jingling of the bells
on your bracelet,
dance your retinue
of ghosts and spirits
surrounding you.
You are flying,
shouting and shrieking,
wielding spear, polished conch,
sword and skull cup.
Your voice, frightening,
scatters mighty warriors
and weakens the lion's roar.
Your laughter lends depth
to the peal of thunder.
Your hard, ball-like breasts
grind, in rhythmic dance,
the eight directions to dust.
You stand listening to
the music and dance of celestial nymphs,
playing drums, bells,
flutes and veenas.
Your golden breasts shine
with vermilion and sandal paste,

crystal clear and studded with
gems is your veil.
You are seated under the Kalpavriksha,
like another heavenly tree in bloom
With necklaces of bunches of flowers
and other decorations:
no one, alas, is gifted enough
to describe this, your beauty.
Your waist, just a handful,
is covered over with flower-
and pearl-decked silk,
the long hair spread behind
is caught in your girdle.
Your behind is a vehicle
for the god of love,
from which flow down
banana stem-like thighs,
worshipped by the elephant trunk
as of superior beauty.
Your calves, golden and tender
vanquish the quiver of the god of love.
The beauty of your pink soles
defeats the tortoise,
sending it to practice
penance under water.
Your feet are like lotuses,
brimming over with the honey of grace;
drinking this and becoming inspired
the chorus of celestial beauties sings
and plays on harps of varied notes.
You listen to all this
and dance with your companions
while ankle bells tinkle,
dancing gracefully
on the peak of Mount Kailas.
Goddesses flock around you.
Gods bow to you, worshipfully.
Your side glances flow
bringing forth true bliss.
and the desirable beyond desire,
contemplating your twin feet,
dwelling in your space, happily,
enjoying, becoming confused,

in bonds of selfish greed,
with sorrow for gain,
looms thus here because
You don't give a compassionate glance.
O kindly one, adorations to you,
again and again
I bow to you,
to reach the farther shore
of this frightening ocean of change.
Your feet are my only ship,
I have no other refuge
O Mother, ocean of mercy, I have come to gain
your honey-like side glance
that can actualize wishes.
May your lotus feet never
turn away from me,
I adore you.
Salutations again and again.
May my mind not get stuck
on wealth and sex
and power of possession,
losing itself in sorrow.
May I not think that
I am just this body.
May I soon be released
from the visible trap of maya,
woven by the three qualities.
Everything in this world of change,
even the moon and stars
are but a flash of lightning.
Hail, O Siva Mother,
Salutations, salutations.

ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY GURU NITYA

VERSE 20

*ulakinu vēṛoru sattayvillatuṅṅe-
nnulakar urappatu sarvamūhahinam;
jaḷanu vilēśayamennu tōnniyālum
nalamiyalum malarṁāla nāgamāmō?*

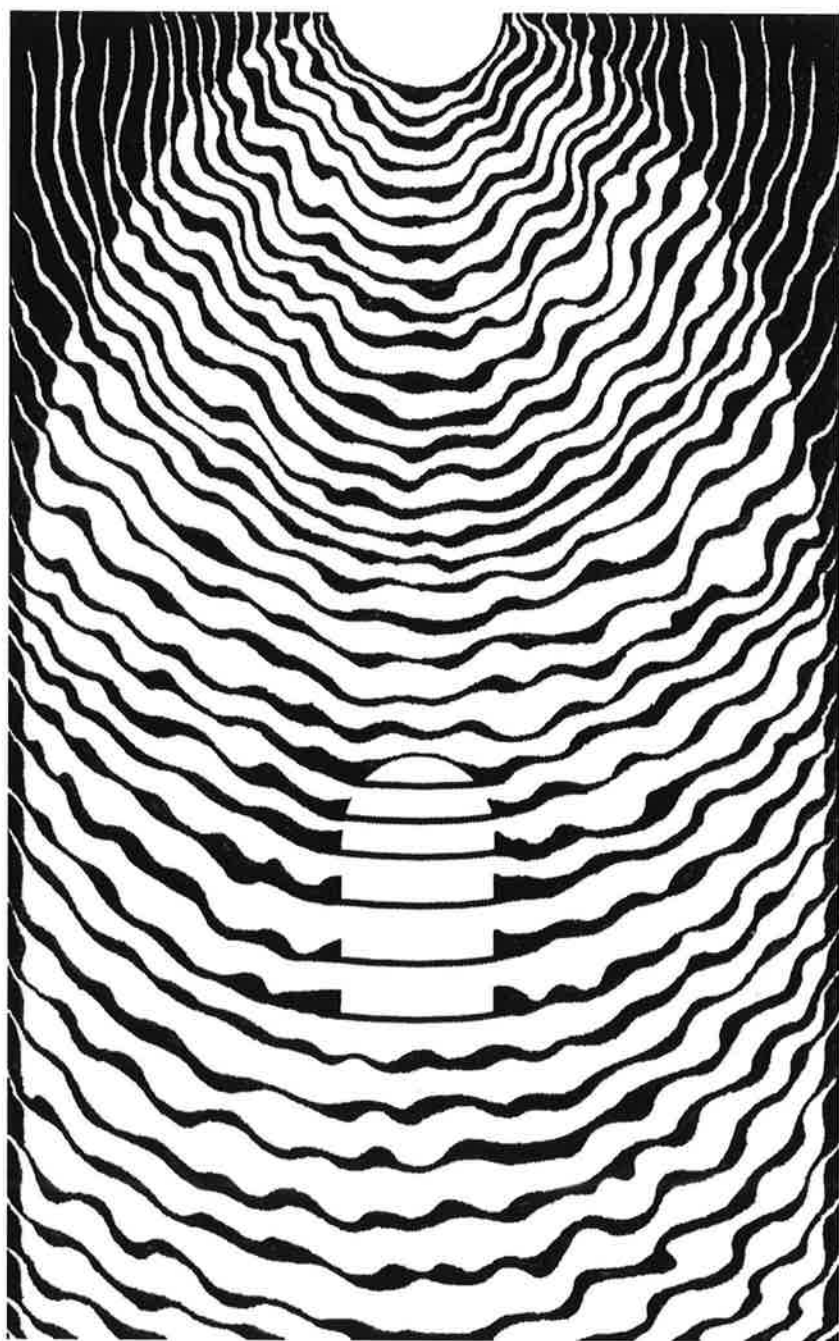
Other than this the world has no reality;
“There is”—all such that people say is without reflection;
even if to a numskull it appears to be a snake,
will a fresh flower garland ever become a serpent?

Occasionally this world we inhabit will appear to be very dark. We feel like running away from it. We think that somewhere there could be another world, one where everything is as it should be.

“I should run away from this wretched world to a more spiritual place.” With these kinds of thoughts people have made conceptual hells and heavens. They comfort themselves by thinking that as miserable as they are now, someday they will go to heaven and everything will be set right. At the same time, a lot of their motivation comes from the threat of a hell somewhere. Even great philosophers like Plato thought of a world of intelligibles where all the archetypes are, in contrast to this world of shadow—the shadows of the archetypes. Narayana Guru says this kind of duality is unwarranted. It cannot be justified. What is, is only this world.

It is how we understand the world that makes all the difference. Either you can think of it as a sea of tears, full of misery, or you can see in it the possibility of actualizing all your dearest values. We have seen certain analogies in the previous verses, like the transient waves on the surface of the ocean which, when you dive deep into it, is found to be a repository of sunken treasures. Or a desert land where the passing moments are like meaningless particles of sand, but when you gain a better understanding every grain becomes a priceless jewel.

After examining these analogies, we had a closer look at life and saw that we have a double arrangement within our system for knowing things. From the side of the world come certain forms of energy, such as light or sound waves, to stimulate our sensory system, while from the side of our psyche there has to be a self-luminous consciousness to lend itself to be modified by the stimulation coming from the external world. This modification does not happen haphazardly.



It is manipulated by the latent urges in us. Time here has a great significance. A certain impression that has been lying buried in us for several years or even many lives becomes potent to take over the present moment, synchronizing the light from within and the stimulation from outside in order to produce a certain effect. That effect can be pleasurable or painful. It can be attractive or threatening. Thus this complex situation is structured like a pearl, in which there is both light and darkness. The pearl has a kind of smoky translucency as well as a general opacity, even as it reflects pure light. So like the modalities of nature—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—we can see in it transparency, translucency, and opacity. We can see a light which gladdens our heart as well as a mystery which makes it difficult to evaluate its full worth.

So after giving a structure to the awareness of each passing event, we have seen the possibility of converting every experience into a living moment of priceless worth. This should be clearly in our mind when we consider the present verse.

The analogy given here is of a snake and a garland made of fresh flowers of great beauty. A man walks into his dimly lit bedroom. He is tired and wants to go to bed and rest. Reaching out his hand, he touches something cold and wet. He is greatly startled. In the dim light he sees something long and thin with dots on it, like a coiled up snake, and nearly faints with terror. Then he turns on the light and sees it is a garland made of the finest flowers dipped in rose water. It is fragrant, cooling, and very beautiful. Each flower has been especially chosen and arranged with great artistic skill as an offering of love.

Nothing is more valuable to a person than life itself. When the nature of the garland was hidden away for a moment, it appeared to be something which could take away life. Once it is clear there is no threat, however, the garland only enhances the value of one's own life. Dear life and the garland are two positive values, which become integrated into one sense of endearment.

Pavlov's dogs were conditioned to salivate whenever a bell was rung. Like that we are conditioned to many threats and attractions from our surroundings. The Guru specifically uses the word *ulakar* here, which means those who are conditioned by the pains and pleasures of this world. In another of his works, *Advaita Dīpika*, or *The Lamp of Non-Dual Wisdom*, he says:

To the wise man the world has substance,
and mind-stuff represents the value-form of delight.

This is contrary to what most Vedantins say. Usually they think that this world is unreal, but Narayana Guru asserts this is the only reality. There is no other.

Ramana Maharshi had a kind of sarcoma, a very painful form of cancer. His left side was tearing away from his body. Thousands of people were sitting around in deep despair. They themselves had no cancer; they were not suffering from anything physical. Only one man had this dreadful disease, but there was no joy in anyone. All were very sad. Even the ashram peacock's cry was like a terrible

lamentation, as though it were voicing the anguish of all the thousands of people sitting there. Among them were people from America, Japan, all over the world. There were Hindus and Muslim, Catholics and Protestants, children and old folks, beggars and millionaires, heads of government, doctors. This huge variety of all kinds of people were united in having a very painful time.

Maharshi's sister came to his bed and started screaming. She was crying aloud. Maharshi looked at her and said, "What is the matter?" She said, "It's you! It's you! You are going away!" She had no disease, but she was the one who was crying and he was sitting there serene, calm and unaffected. As she cried, he added, "Going? Where? Where can I go? And where is to go?" He did not see any place to go nor did he see anyone going anywhere. This is the only place. There is nowhere else to go.

When I was a student, I felt very miserable. The whole college situation seemed meaningless, so I wrote a letter to my principal stating I was going away. He sent back a note asking me to come and see him before I left. When I went to his office, he invited me to lunch with his wife and him. He said, "It's a fine thing that you want to leave on finding that this place is not meaningful to you anymore. That's very good. But tell me, when you go away, are you going to take your mind with you also, or are you going to leave that here?"

"Surely I take my mind with me wherever I go."

"That means you'll be taking the same sorrow, sadness, suspicion, doubts, misery, everything with you. It will be the same in the place where you go because you are taking all this with you. If you can leave your mind here and run away from it, fine."

This is so true. I get letters almost every day from people who say that they want to get away, to run away. Go away where? We think all the misery is because we are with certain people and certain situations. When we move away it will again be a wonderful world. If you can create a wonderful world in another place, you can create it where you are now, too.

Ultimately, what is? Only the light from within you, which is illuminating your life. What is illuminated becomes colored, darkened by the venom that comes from within your own previous conditionings. You become entangled in your conditioned misconceptions. But if we look back to the source of illumination, we become less affiliated with the murkiness around us.

It's up to us to make our world miserable or beautiful. When the shift is more and more on the sensory side, we are drifting into the shadow. When the emphasis is more and more on the spirit, we are reclaiming and rehabilitating ourselves in the values that are imperishable. We can be assailed by doubt, fear, a sense of strangeness, difficulty in communication, and lack of understanding of the motivations of people. Here we are removed from the center, the spirit.

We have to reconcile with the fact that on the sensory side of life—the physical, biological aspect of life—there are inevitable changes. There are transformations such as birth and death, growth and decay. We cannot do anything about them. They have to be accepted. Once they are accepted, what is left can be absolutely beautiful.

You can also find beauty in the changes themselves. I've been reading about the life of Karl Jaspers, a man who was very sickly from childhood. He was always threatened by heart disease and bronchiectasis, but he was able to accept them, saying, "These are my limitations. I have to go to bed every now and then. but then I can again get up and work." He saw the bright side of life, the truth. First he saw truth as a scientist would see it. He studied jurisprudence, then medicine, followed by psychiatry, the methodology of doing research, and the pure philosophy of life. Finally he became a full-fledged philosopher. He did all this by always putting the bright side of life first, while his diseases were pushed to the background. Jaspers' life was very beautiful. Despite his condition he lived a rich life for almost eighty years, learning to see the world as a wonderful reality of great beauty.

There have been many people who were even more unfortunate than Jaspers. Friedrich Nietzsche, for instance. He had migraine headaches, a very small percentage of eyesight, and terrible pain and spasms all over the body. He couldn't eat any spices—the slightest trace would give him stomach cramps and make him vomit. Often he couldn't sleep. His doctors didn't want him to use his eyes for reading, but he would sit ten hours at a stretch and write before he was pulled down by his ailments. Great pain and torment filled his life, but he treated it as a shadow behind and put his own light before him. He drew great strength from this light, and accomplished a great deal.

When you consider examples like these, do you realize how fortunate we are? Our plight is not so terrible. We have comparatively much better health and faculties. Our medical care is humane and even correct much of the time. Our food and the comfort of our surroundings exceed even the wildest dreams of medieval kings. Where is there cause for despair?

The passing moments of our lives are to be made lively and rich. One thing I have learned in my life is that the moment that comes will not come again. It's gone. You can see the moment approaching. Receive it with open arms. Glorify it by enriching it with your joy, finding a new value, a new sense of direction in life. Have a renewed sense of wonder. Thus, that moment becomes eternalized in your life, it is a moment to be remembered and to be proud that you could live it so well. Then you can move on to the next moment; this one has already been immortalized in you. What you have achieved in that moment is your eternal repository. Wonderful! You feel fulfilled. You are filled with gratitude: "Oh, I lived this moment so wonderfully!" This is your own life, in this very world, with all these amenities given to you in the here and now.

With this understanding you are eager to race to the next moment because it is going to be wonderful, going to be beautiful. It will yield so much. You see the promise of the future already in it. It is going to be still more wonderful than what you have already lived. Then you pass on to the next with joy and grace. The day opens up with such beauty, such promise. There is nothing like life, nothing like this world, a world where you can make friends, a world where you can create beautiful things, a world where you can share beauty with others and where you

can make others part of your own self. A world where there is such an abundance of love and sharing.

The only thing is that you shouldn't drift into darkness. Don't look at the world as something horrid, but as beautiful, divine. Every bit of it. Then we know we are the creators of our own fate. Not through this individual ego with all its vagaries, but through a full affiliation with the eternal, supernatural light that enriches everything. Only then will we have the strength to become masters of the situation, the whole beauty of creation, the beauty that has painted the petals of the flowers, which has given shape to the butterflies and birds, which makes the mountains look awe-inspiring and the oceans look vast, which makes the clouds float so gracefully overhead. This is where we find our true freedom.

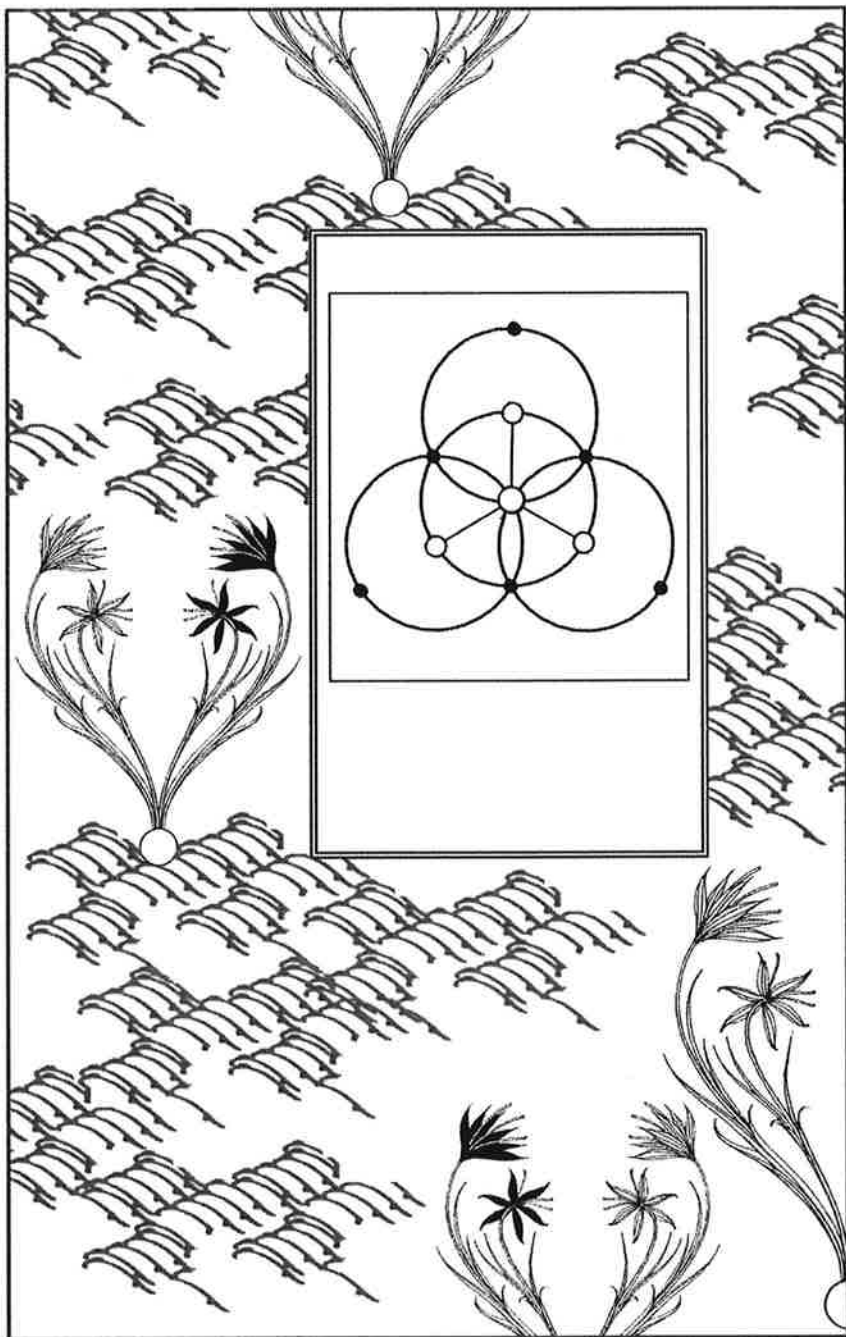
You belong to the same over-mind of beauty. Not with your ego but with your spirit. Participation in it will reveal to you the divine artist in you, the divine musician in you, the divine intelligence, the divine creator, the divine lover, the divine unifier, the divine peacemaker within you. It's such a blessing to be in this world, to be born here and to live here. This body of ours will fall away just like a candle burning out. But before it burns out the candle gives off a lot of light. What does it matter that it is eventually extinguished? It has lived its moment of light. We live surrounded by smoke and darkness. Make up your mind that you will live this day, each coming moment, in all its worth and beauty, and that you will share it with all. This is the great teaching the Guru offers us.

VERSE 21

*priyamoru jātiyitenpriyam tvadīya-
priyamapara priyamennanēkamāyi
priyavisayam prati vannitum bhramam; tan-
priyamapara priyamennariññīṇam.*

Endearment is one kind; this is dear to me;
your preference is for something else;
thus, many objects of endearment are differentiated
and confusion comes;
what is dear to you is dear to another also;
this should be known.

Experience falls into two categories, the internal and the external. In the external world we interact with things, people and various kinds of events. Inside us, we entertain ideas, recall memories, and experience certain sensations. Yet all of these experiences can be grouped together in one category as the object matter of experience.



The subject in each case is what you call 'I'. I see this orange outside. I like it. I have an idea and I like it very much. Here the idea is inside me and the orange is outside me, but both are objects of my interest. There can be a thing outside which I like and you do not like. I may also have an idea that I like but you do not like. You like another idea. You have a subjective feeling or notion as well as items outside, which are all the objects of your interest. So now we have three things: 'I', my idea, and what is not 'I', or what is outside me.

There is one more factor also. There is a pure light in us, a pure Self, which has been described in this work in so many ways. In the very first verse it was described as the one cosmic yolk which is transforming into everything, the *karu*. After that it was compared to a supernal sun of pure awareness shining in the firmament of consciousness. Again it was compared to an oceanic treasury. We treated it as the one knowledge behind all knowledge, which unifies the knower, the known and knowledge within itself. Then it was compared to a light which was never lit and which will never be extinguished. Apart from shedding light, it illuminates things and it is always looking on as the eternal witness.

Next we tried to see it as the one changeless truth behind all changes. That was further understood as the truth that is revealed to a contemplative person who knows the secret of the sacred syllable, aum. After that it was pictured as the supreme light which fills our inside so much that all the horizontal interests in life become verticalized by the experience.

Again the same light was described as the neutral consciousness of the witnessing self sitting under the tree of life, and not being caught by the tendrils of the phenomenal creeper which is overladen with the flowers of individuation. Thereafter we saw it as the oneness, the uniting factor, which allows one person to understand another, and is the homogeneous reality in our recognition of different things. Again, we saw within us the continuity from one 'I' identity to another; it is the golden thread which passes through all separate notions of 'I'. In this sense it is the unifying factor in the 'I' consciousness of different people. Then we saw it as the one reality which comes to its fullness and perfection when the consciousness associated with an individuated self in the form of an embodied being is liberated by the fall and decay of the body. It never perishes: it comes to perfection. We saw it as having a likeness to that supreme Lord who remains unaffected by the three modalities of nature. We were asked to turn to it and affiliate ourselves in a bipolar attitude of love and devotion whereby we can offer to that Lord all that sprouts in our mind. In this way we remain one with the unchanging reality.

What comes in between us and this wholesome experience? The threefoldness of the things outside. Past, present and future; here, there and far beyond on earth, the atmosphere and the sky; all are introduced to trifurcate our experience. Triadic experience occurs inside as well as outside, with the knower, known and knowledge; enjoyer, enjoyed and enjoyment; and actor, action and what is acted upon. A person with a unitive understanding can see the sameness outside and inside. It is again and again that sameness we are referring to in this course of study.

When our life is fragmented and bits of it are lying scattered around meaninglessly, the light of this One can come like a flood to overwhelm our divisions and charge every event with great significance. Every grain of sand becomes a pearl of priceless worth. It has been described as absolute joy, experiencing which you transcend the passing of time. Everything becomes a timeless, eternal reality.

We have also seen that in the same world, even people endowed with great wisdom will put their emphasis on different aspects of truth. One will say the cause is real; another that the effect is real; while yet another will say it is neither the cause nor the effect, but what you derive from it that is real. Such varying approaches are what lead to fighting among people. After showing us this danger, Narayana Guru warned us to be careful, that this world can indeed be threatening. It can be dark, frightful and depressing. If your mind is already tainted with the dark colors of fear, since it is through that very mind you look at the world, this world will also look very frightening. But if your mind is free of such taint, then you see it as a fresh garland of newly picked flowers, very beautifully strung together. Thus in its structure, function and value this becomes a world of great endearment, full of truth that can be adored as vast wisdom.

These are some of the analogies that Narayana Guru has presented to us in the first twenty verses of *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*.

Now the Guru tells us to look again at that light within. It is always shining forth with the same kind of brilliance, but it passes through a kind of mechanism of different gears. The gears can make the light seem brighter or darker. It can even be turned off for a time. When that happens you are in state of *tamas*. Light is still within you, but it is as if you are in the dark. You are helpless. Then it can be turned on a little. It is your own little light. And it can be turned up to its fullness also.

When you turn your light on, it illuminates your world of experience, whether inside or outside, as if through a shielding glass. The glass is your mind. It's not a very faithful device for giving you a transparent vision; it is clouded in various ways. It is already colored with your interests, which have come to you because of previous conditionings. You yourself have experienced pain or pleasure previously in conjunction with something you are now encountering, so you are already colored in favor or against it. Several of these prejudices or preconditionings are already present in you. And the conditionings need not necessarily be previous ones. Someone can put into your mind a prospective expectation, which also colors the mind. All these bring about differentiation.

Reality has three unifying aspects. One is called *sat*, existence. I exist, you exist, this couch exists, the house exists, the sky exists, the world exists. All these can be brought under one common heading of existence. All that exists is a genuine existence which implies the existence of all. It's called *sat*.

I am aware of my existence, of your existence, of the existence of the world. Thus I have an all-embracing awareness that includes everything. What is not in it, I will never know. This awareness, which includes in it good and bad, far and near, one and many, big and small, irrespective of all variations, is just one knowledge,

cit. So we have one all-inclusive existence and one all-inclusive knowledge.

I value my beingness and you value your beingness. Everything tends to become valuable in one way or another. All these values are measured by our own happiness. This is called *ānanda*. So we have *sat*, existence; *cit*, knowledge; and *ananda*, the primordial value. Taken all together, the whole of reality is therefore called *satcitānanda*.

One can be permeated with the consciousness of *satcitānanda*. It can be blissful if it is not differentiated, but instead of this generic sense of existence, subsistence and value, we tend to see things individually. When they are broken into bits we have instead *asti*, this is; *bhāti*, I know it; and *priyam*, I love it. In Western terms these correspond to cognition, connotation and affection. In the fragmentary notions of *asti*, *bhāti* and *priyam* there is scope for a great deal of confusion. We can have “This is, I know it, I dislike it;” or even “This is, I do not know what it is, therefore I do not know if I like it or not.” Only when we cultivate an ever-prevailing sense of unity are we out of this confusion. When we identify with the egoistic self we see only through this fragmentation and do not experience *satcitānanda*.

If we can approach life from the point of view of the all-seeing witness, which is not tainted with incipient memories or proliferating interests, then we will see the good of all, the general good, in which what pleases me is also included. This is not attained, as some mistakenly think, by summarily dismissing what pleases me as an individual.

Often there arises a tendency for us to become self-critical if what we like is not liked by others. Yet if we are all human beings, there should be an underlying happiness regarding what we like. I like vegetarian dishes, and some of my friends like non-vegetarian dishes. So should I give up my vegetarian diet in deference to the others’ non-vegetarian tastes for the sake of unity? Of course not. We have to think more generically about what we like. Vegetarian food and non-vegetarian food are both essentially food. I love to have food, and my friends also love to have food. At this level we are not different. So I can go with my friends to a restaurant and I’ll have what I like and they can have what they like. We are all partaking of food. Basically, our need is the same and our fulfillment is the same. The differences are only in the particular details. Of course, the differences are also important and can’t be overlooked. When I am hungry and you are hungry, I cannot just say that as both of us are one, I will eat for you also. You have to take care of your side of the business.

We have to distinguish how we cater to the general happiness, and what implications it has in its particular aspects. A husband and wife may love each other very much. They live a unified life, but that does not mean that they do not have two toothbrushes. Having separate toothbrushes does not take away from their friendship in the least. When we shift our focus from particular objects back to the Self, we will stop getting so confused on this issue.

Four elements are involved from this perspective: the Self, the ego, objects and our interest in them. An interest usually comes between the ego and the object;

actually it is the interest lying buried behind the ego that directs it to the objects. All this happens in the light of the Self. Unfortunately, the light is the part we completely forget. It is in this light of the existence of the Self that we derive the idea of the existence of the object. It is from the knowledge of the Self that we derive the notion of what we know. And it is from the value of the Self that we derive the enjoyability of the object. These three basic facts we forget when we are concerned only with the objects themselves.

Even after we learn this wisdom, when we go out in the world our life is again governed by preferences. 'My' comes instead of 'our'. "He is my friend, my Guru. I have a right to protect my friend." "No, no. He is my friend; he is my Guru. I see it like this." Then they fight. The combat is in the ego field. From there if you can get into the spirit field it is very wide; there is enough room for everything. When Alice wanted to join the tea party, all the animals said, "No room! No room!" Alice was indignant. "There is plenty of room. Why do you say there is no room?"

There is plenty of room. You don't have to fight and say that because that person is there you don't have any space now. Your space is not taken away by anyone. The space you occupy is always there for you, and the space occupied by the other is there for them. The Absolute is big enough to include everything and everyone.

Jesus said, "Don't bother about the flocks. My sheep can be outside the flock also. Why do you bother about a person being in a different church? If I am really the Good Shepherd, I will go where he is. It doesn't matter if he wanders away from the group. In my Father's mansion there are many chambers." That's a beautiful way of putting it. There is not just one chamber in God's mansion; it has such variety that there are unlimited possibilities.

We have to reorganize our lives and make our visions wide. The more interests that are there, the more wonderful it is. You paint and I sing and another person dances: it will only enrich our lives the more. Why should everyone do the same thing? In contrast to the Soviet communists, Mao Tse Tung once said, "Instead of one flower, let there be a million flowers blossoming. Why should there be only the red flower? Let there be a million flowers with a million hues, flourishing." That's wonderful. Even when a million flowers of a million hues flourish, it is the flower-ness that we glorify. In other words, if we know the essential value that is lived out differently by different people, and if we glorify that, it is one. Let us cultivate that insight by which the oneness is immortalized.

WISDOM OF THE BLUE GUM TREE

BY VYASA PRASAD

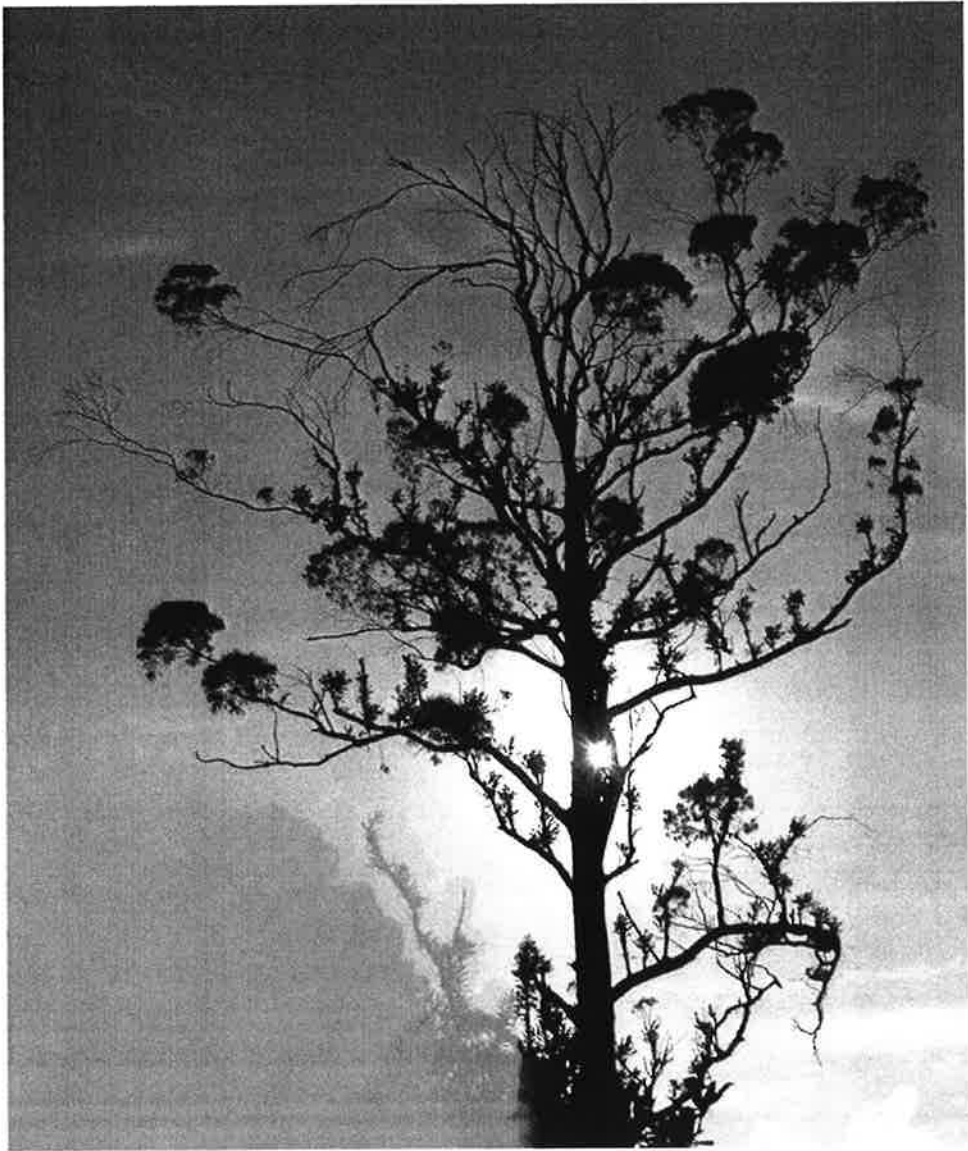
When Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from troubled dreams he found himself transformed into a monstrous insect. So begins Kafka's story *Metamorphosis*. My transformation was quite different. I awoke one morning from pleasant dreams feeling heavy and immobile as a log. I could not understand what gripped me. Then I looked at myself and suddenly discovered that I had become a eucalyptus tree. My feet were rooted to the earth, penetrating downwards in search of water and spreading horizontally to stabilize my trunk against the strong monsoon winds.

Now I am no longer a puny human but a lofty tree, silently witnessing the world around me. I hear every conversation, notice every movement, and see far beyond the distant horizon. I am the first to greet the sun at dawn and the last to bid twilight farewell at dusk. I am in harmony with the cycles of the waxing and waning moon and the hooting of the eagle owl. Birds emerge from their cozy nests and sing their melodious songs while perched on my branches. Sometimes I hear the echoes of a human song, "Morning has broken, the first bird has spoken." My leaves sparkle like the eyes of Pallas Athena. Bluish green, they cast intricate dancing shadows and their constant rustling in the wind reassures me like an eternal mantra.

My ancestors heard the laughing cries of kookaburras and watched kangaroos hopping by while Koala bears feasted on their resinous leaves. They arrived in the Nilgiris Mountains of South India from Australia in the year 1863. I have now become the most patient ornithologist, familiar with the Nilgiri laughing thrush, flycatchers, warblers, wagtails, babblers, blue chats and bulbuls. My uncomfortable moments are when sharp sickles prune my leaves in order to distil their precious medicinal and aromatic oil.

I am a quick grower and have become huge, sprawling and majestic, rivaling the giant sequoias. I have no memory of being a seed or a sapling or even the time my leaves matured from horizontal broad ones into vertical ensiform shapes. I do not remember my parentage or lineage. Now, however, I belong to the Myrtaceae family. My capped bud is unique enough to christen me with the Greek name *Eui* (well) *Calyptosi* (covered). From the time of Aristotle, we have been classified and categorized. I am now differentiated from my fellow genus members as the species *eucalyptus globulus*.

And for the historically minded, I may add that *eucalyptus globulus* is the best-known variety of gum trees and that our name has been bestowed, it is said,



by the French botanist De Labillardiere on account of the resemblance of the waxy fruit to a kind of button worn at that time in France.

Furthermore, It was Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, the German botanist and explorer (from 1857 to 1873 the Director of the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne), who made the qualities of this eucalyptus known all over the world and so lead to its introduction into Europe, North and South Africa, California and the non-tropical districts of South America.

I must have faced many dangers before taking root in this fertile soil. Now I face a new challenge as I hear rumors that my species is harmful to the environment here in the Nilgiris. Scientists have objectified my reality while theologians consider me, as part of nature, to be inferior. I know, though, that I am very valuable and beneficial. I hope one day this truth will be fully understood. Spinoza, my philosopher friend, makes me feel wholesome because he rightly equated my processes to the Supreme. I have even appealed to the aesthetic sensibility of artists who like to sketch my anatomy. My timber is very useful and has heated many hearths. I look forward to rainy days and I give back moisture to the atmosphere. In this way I bind the sky to the earth. I hold the muddy bank from sliding, and generously provide living space to myriad creatures.

The gnarled knots on my trunk are poignant reminders of turbulent times. My girth tells me that much time has passed by and each year is marked by a special

ring. I have not counted them for it seems irrelevant to be very concerned about a perennial rhythm. I prefer to participate in the timeless wonder and endless joy of existence.

Rooted in the firm earth, I reach out to the limitless sky. I am fascinated by the blue dome and its invitation to climb higher and higher. Glancing upwards, space appears infinite compared to my terrestrial limitation. At night the stars and planets that are strewn across the sky

capture my imagination. Perhaps one day I will understand their mystery and speak their language and know all about our terrestrial origin and purpose.

Enough of this relapse into human speculation. Let me return to my peaceful meditation, harmonized by the elements, and graced by the benevolence that sustains the universe. I am a blue gum tree.



GROWING IN THE DARK

BY SCOTT TEITSWORTH

I've been having intense nightmares all my life, off and on. Many of them were one of a kind and quickly forgotten, but four have been repeated throughout my adult life. I believe I've come to understand what they mean, and in the process freed myself from a powerful subconscious motivator operating through fear.

Our amazing minds process a lot of information while we're sleeping or otherwise engaged. Whenever we become stumped by a problem we can just put it aside and come back to it later. Especially if we "sleep on it" we'll often find the solution, or at least a step towards the solution comes to mind immediately. When the problem is an unconscious one to begin with, we of course aren't turning it over in our minds while awake. This is where dreams come in.

While unique dreams may serve a specific purpose, repeated ones carry a message, "Look at this! Check it out!" To keep recurring they must contain extremely significant content, material that ought to be integral to negotiating the path of one's life. I don't often remember dreams or do much work with them, but when they happen over and over, and when they cause a paralytic fear which hangs over into the waking state, they get my attention.

During dreaming the mind cleverly epitomizes symbols of events in order to either present them to the conscious mind or to use them for further subconscious analysis. Repeated dreams encapsulate broad and important bands of psychic material and represent the mind's attempts to bring them into awareness. Nightmares, by accentuating the fear element that accompanies certain events in life, signal problems that are likely to be unconscious motivators. It is well known that anxiety or fear directs much of the behavior of human beings. Only by addressing these fears and bringing them into wakeful awareness can they be disengaged to allow decision-making of a more intelligent and less reactive kind. Then we can spend our lives in positive endeavors rather than merely avoiding the negative.

The recognition of the meaning of nightmares at least for me has come at the very end of a process of dealing with them unconsciously. All along they've been working themselves out on their own and I've only been a passive witness, so passive in fact as to be frozen with terror at times. Once they have finally worked their way to the surface, they've lost their grip on me. It often happens that when light is brought into darkness the unsettling objects lurking there turn out to be fairly ordinary.

Recognizing what a dream represents is not just a matter of consciously comparing it to memories of the wakeful state. You ponder and wonder, and eventually the meaning leaps out at you, accompanied by a satisfying little rush

that's an affirmation from the subconscious that "Yeah, you finally got it!" Once you've had this jolt of recognition you begin to see the ways in which the dream represents the source gestalt. I suspect this "flash" is prima facie evidence it is true. While we often make mistakes in discriminating the real from the unreal, the feeling of revelation is in itself an indication of validity, emerging as it does from the part of the mind which is the originator of the dream in the first place.

My four dreams turned out to symbolize major life stages and the threat or disjunction they posed to my psyche.

Dream One usually began with me strolling through a vast arcade, with arched windows on either side containing complicated scenes which I wasn't really paying much attention to. I came to a long tunnel, which was like a cave that passed under the mountainous ridge to my left and emerged into another arcade on the other side. Being fascinated with tunnels I entered and proceeded like an adventurer to explore. Somewhere towards the middle it would get darker and more claustrophobic, and a sense of dread would come over me. A malignant force, evil and inexorable, seemed to emanate from the very mountain around me. The terror grew until it crushed me to my knees, and it was with great difficulty I could continue. There was an overwhelming, choking fear of death, of being trapped inside the mountain and never getting out. I could barely breathe. Eventually though, I would struggle to the other side and emerge with tremendous relief into another arcade, and the feeling that friends and family were not far off.

Over time I conquered my fear of the tunnel and would go through for fun, even though the crushing terror would come back somewhere within. And soon I remembered the fear but didn't actually feel it all that much. About then I began to lead tours through, carrying sandwiches and flashlights and basically having a lark with my friends. Even when I would try to experience the fear again, I could no longer feel it at all.

Dream Two involved a gigantic rectangular building set in a wooded parkland. The outside was fairly pretty, with trees dappling the brickwork and some fields in the distance, but once inside you were trapped. There was a mad scientist type and a few others whose house it was. The interior was like a cluttered museum, room after room full of unidentifiable stuff on tables and in display cases. Not much specific happened, but no one was allowed to leave, and the terror was like icicles stabbing through your heart. There was a feeling that something dreadful was being planned for you, and you were helpless to resist. It took your breath away and your strength ebbed to nothing. It was certain you would lose your very self in there.

Often the dream involved walking through the woods to the house, the fear intensifying as I approached. The building itself literally oozed malice. There was a kind of satanic device over the door, a kind of warning, but with a perverse, helpless fascination my feet would lead me up the stairs and through the double doors every time.

Later there were friends along sometimes. The main fear was that I was helpless

and at the mercy of the sinister people inside. There was no chance to stay away; I was drawn to the place like a moth to the flame. Over time the building became uninhabited, and the sense of dread ebbed away. I would visit and be unable to recreate the intense terror, though I'd try. I could remember being afraid, but that was all. From the outside it appeared deserted. Nowadays I hardly ever go there.

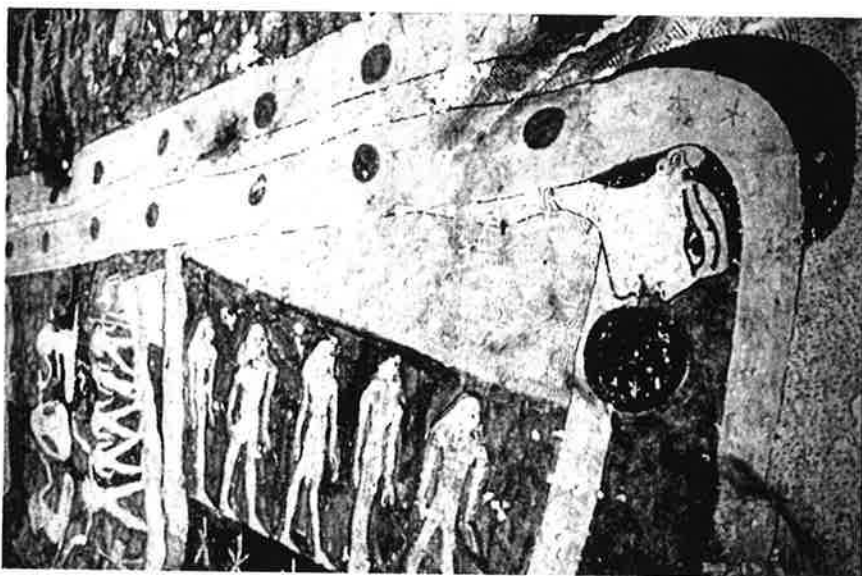
Dream Three was the least frightening of the four, the only one that didn't make me virtually disintegrate in horror. There was plenty of anxiety, but not the sheer terror of the others. It involved a huge building, long, rectangular and many stories high. Each floor had a main hallway with regular rooms on each side and stairs at either end. People lived in the rooms, including me, and we would often visit each other. But we never used the halls. All around the outside walls were secret passages that connected different parts of the building in mysterious ways. You never knew where you would come out. If someone was following you, there were secret closets to duck into. Secret stone stairs went up through odd corners. It was kind of *intestinal*, it was so convoluted inside the walls.

At the far end of the building was an ell containing a sizable auditorium. One of the main secret passages came out at the back of the stage. There was invariably a performance of some kind going on, often with me in it. I remember usually feeling I hadn't learned my lines or my part, so I'd get out and improvise a comedy routine or interact spontaneously with the other actors. The audience didn't seem to care that I wasn't following the script as long as it was amusing. Most of the focus was backstage, in anticipation of the performance. There was the worry that you were expected to do something, but you didn't know what.

As time went on the building moved to a town in Mexico with a thriving market. The dream would usually include a long journey down through the desert to the town. Sometimes I'd stay in town and just look over at the old building, which hulked there just at the edge of the action. The bustle of the market somewhat matched the busy, hive like quality of the giant building.

Dream Four brought back the sense of dread and doom to match the first and second nightmares. An old brick tower straight out of a horror movie loomed up at the edge of a huge farm with vast barns. I've always been afraid of heights, but I'd be drawn to climb up the tower even though it was on the point of collapse and exuded a malignant sense of being alive and very evil. Once up in the room at the top there would often be a storm with lightning and thunder, or an earthquake. The tower would start to topple over and I'd have to rush down and get away. Sometimes it would collapse with me in it.

Again—amazingly—part of the mesmerizing quality of the nightmare was that I was so drawn to the tower. I had to go, even knowing it was evil and extremely dangerous. The tower was often different, sometimes old and made of brick, other times like a water tower with open ladders to climb, and the danger of collapse varied from immanent to hypothetical. One night I watched from a little distance away as it collapsed completely and smashed itself to bits on the ground. After that I began to explore the rest of the farm and stay away from the tower.



Although the tower would be back, leaning over precariously at the far end of the farm, it became a distant and less threatening presence.

The huge barns were scary, being mysterious and full of unknown spaces, but intense dread just couldn't be generated there. I did a lot of exploration in them, which became more and more ordinary as time went on. Pumpkins and hay bales replaced bladed machinery and recondite spider-webbed corners. Once more the fear had become a distant memory. I couldn't feel it even if I tried.

As I mentioned before, these dreams occurred so frequently in my life that they eventually worked their way into my waking consciousness. I'd mull them over occasionally, but just in isolation. Then, about a month ago, I had a flash of insight and understood what they all meant, one after the other. With that, the last tongues of fear associated with them rolled back and left for good. At age 51, after thirty years of both conscious and unconscious struggle to understand, I had run them to ground. Dare I say it was a great relief?

So perhaps to you, the reader, these things look obvious when written out and put in chronological order as I've done. They look fairly obvious to me now, too. But when you're caught in a nightmare, the terror is so palpable, clutching at your vitals, choking and darkening your mind, that their meaning is anything but obvious. Intellectual understanding is only the tip of the iceberg compared to the thorough plumbing of the depths that takes place during a full-fledged nightmare.

Dream One is clearly a birth dream. Very familiar territory. Everyone has them. We all pass through the birth canal, excepting some C-section delivery babies, but how many of us actually get to relive the fear we all must experience in coming into the world? It is thought of as good therapy and there are a number of techniques to do it, but it looks like it can be accomplished by one's own dream therapy without any complicated assistance. Perhaps you're already doing it and

haven't recognized it yet. That's why I'm writing this article, as a matter of fact, to help us all remember that this is very likely going on in each of us. Everyone's dreams will be different, but they'll quite likely cover this same subject matter.

Of interest perhaps in this first dream is the busy arcade on either side of the birth canal. There's a lot going on both before and after gestation. The pre-birth side always seemed more like home to me than the postpartum side, even though the latter was where my family was waiting for me. I think this is because our true home is in the unmanifest rather than the manifest. Another interesting aspect was that the direction of movement on the two sides was opposite, as seen from an overhead witnessing point of view. Before the tunnel I moved to the right in my mind's eye, and afterwards headed left. I think that may be significant. To put it simply, the flow of our earthly existence is reversed from our liberated experience in the afterlife (or pre-life). I suppose there would be another tunnel at a different point in the arcades where you would cycle back, representing death, but I never got there.

It's amusing that after getting over the fear I became an intrepid explorer of the birth canal tunnel. I imagine this relates to my native curiosity and enthusiasm about sex, but that's another story....

The second dream was the last I solved. That big building turned out to be my grade school, to which I had a mile walk through the woods. The double doors were, well, regular schoolhouse panic doors, and the satanic device above them must have been the Central School logo. The mad scientist and others were the principal and teachers. I had more anxiety than most in converting from a natural life to the socialized environment of school. I hated it and was terrified of it in many ways, but only when I understood the dream did I realize how devastating a conversion it actually was.

For the first few years of my life I had had a tremendous amount of freedom. I lived in an idyllic world where I was allowed to roam freely around the neighborhood, which was full of kids, dogs, undeveloped lots for playing ball, and woods and waterways for exploring. Forcing me into school was like breaking a wild horse. I bucked and fought against going to a place where I was unnerved by the loud noises, aggressive boys, and programs I didn't understand. I spent a lot of time being yelled at in the vice-principal's office. It was several years before they were able to "saddle" me, though I retained a certain wariness for the duration of my school years.

This is the time of our life when we go from freedom to bondage, abandoning our unfettered life for the world of rules and obligations. The school symbolized this process, but it is one which is enthusiastically promulgated by parents and society as well. Words, both written and spoken, begin to replace direct action in the child's life, and other people's interests begin to take precedence over our own. Whether or not it's an inevitable transformation, it's helpful to understand the psychological trauma we went through and how we suppressed and internalized the misery of it.

It's a truism that society clamps down much harder today than it did in the 1950s when I went to grade school. We at least were allowed to retain a small

portion of our independence and dignity. Nowadays those children who can't be quickly assimilated are given mind numbing drugs to smash their independent behavior instantly. How much more ghastly than my nightmare will be the dreams of those whose every shred of personal integrity and unmediated expression is instantly and completely demolished? Ask George Orwell. Ask those who bring their dad's automatic assault rifles to school and open fire.

Dream Three turned out to be my middle school, and represents my life from about age 10 to the beginning of adulthood. The teen years are when we appear to live in a square, comprehensible world but really are doing whatever we can get away with in secret. Or trying to, anyway. The anxiety comes from scheming to stay out of sight—going about through those secret passages—while still living an outwardly acceptable existence.

This is even more graphically represented by the stage performances in the auditorium. I was always neurotic about not understanding what society expected of me. The gap between my inner feelings and my assigned role was vast and disturbing. Like many kids I learned to “ham it up” and make people laugh. While people were laughing they didn't force you to behave according to the rules. And of course the feeling you have at this age is that you are on stage, the center of attention, so you've got to perform every minute or the audience will start throwing rotten fruit. That's a lot of pressure! But it was anxiety, not terror, for the most part.

In fact, as time went on things got better and better. In my life, the last period when my native country flirted with ideas of freedom was during my teens and twenties. Unconventional behavior and antisocial attitudes were somewhat encouraged. It appeared the suffering of children was going to be mitigated. So my nightmares weren't so awful, just confusing and involved.

At the end of my childhood I made a long journey into Mexico and had a wonderful adventure, making many friends and being totally independent. It was a cathartic event in my life and is represented by the Mexican market that became the focus of the dream, while the old school sat, visible but unattended, over to the side. This was when I left behind the secret and arcane world of the teen and entered the open marketplace of adulthood.

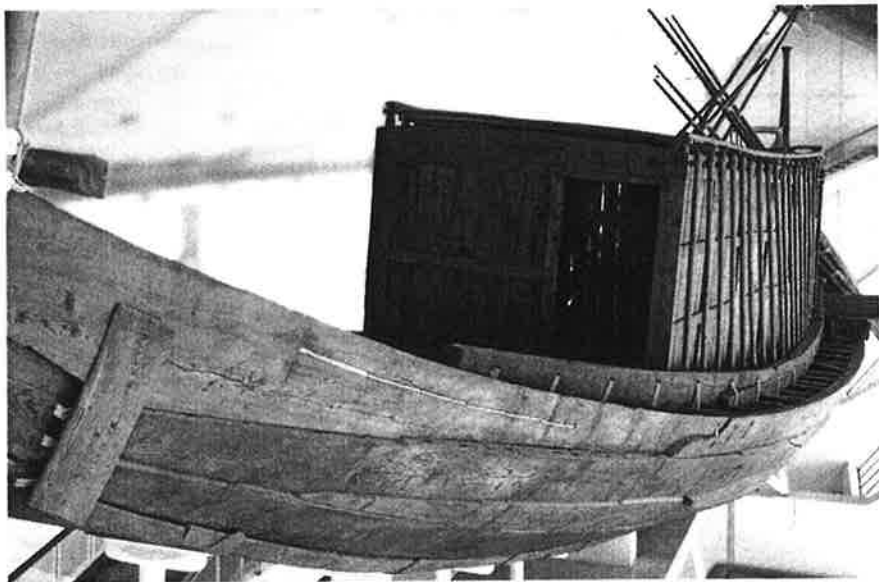
The fourth dream represented my working life as an adult. A farm is where work goes on, like Maggie's Farm in the Dylan song. I was a firefighter in real life, and the tower was a morphed watchtower just like the ones that used to grace the tops of fire stations before telephones replaced visual sighting as the means to raise the alarm. The different kinds of tower may have been the different fire stations I worked in over time. The terror of that job was very real, what with burning and collapsing buildings and the daily threat of hostile bosses who were always looking for ways to get rid of me. One of the most difficult parts was to overcome my fear of heights to climb tall ladders and walk on slippery rooftops. For years I had to force myself to visit high places and ascend cliffs to get over my fear enough to be able to function in my job. All of those elements were embodied in the dream

tower: the high climb, the wobbly, immanent collapse, the chaotic lightning storms which represented fires, and the palpable hostility so reminiscent of the head office and its negative, military mentality.

It seems that everyone realizes that religions become evil when they demand absolute obedience from their members. It's a critical danger signal. But as a society we are in the process of granting absolute authority to the workplace. If you don't immediately obey the boss, you're fired. Why isn't this seen as being just as evil as religious conformity? My inner self recognized it for what it is, and projected it into the tower I was drawn back to night after night, which helped me to deal with it. The fear of not having a job is a primary source of adult insecurity. Why can't we try to mitigate the misery of life with secure employment? Everyone's psyche is delicate and deserving of consideration. There are plenty of unavoidable tragedies for us to process, so whenever we can we should make sure we don't create additional difficulties for the dear, lithe sprites who have become embroiled in our world, maybe only by accident because they find tunnels attractive.

So there you have it. Since these are archetypal situations for the most part, perhaps you can recognize in your own dreams some similar elements. Or perhaps it's just fun to hear a few of the fancies our infinitely inventive minds cook up to teach us and help us get through the night. I'm more convinced than ever that a powerful force for problem solving and growth is hidden within our own minds and is busily instructing us through symbolism.

Sweet dreams!



THE MASTER

BY KALA KRISHNAN RAMESH

Lest they should fail,
He set them no goal.
The Master.

By the fire, edging and pushing,
New monks. The Master's
Vacant seat glows.

Last day of class on
Buddha Nature.
"Void only," so saying
the Master retires.
Monks left sitting
over uneaten dinners.

To he who asks for
A sign, "Fireflies to
light your way home."
So saying,
The Master.

Explaining love,
Saying, "Full moon
in bowl awaiting alms."
The Master.

To the wife beater
Saying, "The wheel turns,
In winter dried fish."
Master leaves the room.

Teaching time,
He says, "In the stream
blue sky, black ravens, green leaf.
All flowing away."
The Master.

Teaching time,
Saying, "Robbed on pilgrimage
The traveler becomes a monk
Till his wife sends someone
Searching."
The Master.

"Take this out,"
Pointing to the great bell
Sitting on its shadow.
The Master.

All about him,
Listening crows,
Master saying "Void only"
leans upon the scarecrow.

Teaching maya,
Swatting a mosquito.
Holding out his bloody palm,
The Master.

ADVAITA DĪPIKA

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY GURU PRASAD

Narayana Guru's original works, whether philosophical poems or hymns, are all imbued with the essence of advaita (nondualistic) perception. The Guru adopts a different approach in each of his works to unveil his philosophical vision. In the *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction) he presents his philosophy of non-dualism comprehensively, dealing with all relevant philosophical problems in his own original and systematic way. In *Darśanamālā* (Garland of Visions) on the other hand, he more or less follows the traditional methodology, although the garland-shaped structural scheme is something not heretofore conceived by any predecessor in the Vedantic tradition. Narayana Guru summarizes the core of Vedanta philosophy in five verses in his *Brahmavidyā Pañcakam*. His other purely philosophical works are *Ariṅga* (Consciousness), *Śloka-Trayi* (Triad of Verses), and *Advaita Dīpika* (Lamp of Nonduality), each addressing a specific major problem that arises in Advaita philosophy.

Seekers have emerged always, everywhere in the world. They try to answer two questions: "Who am I?" and "From where did this world come into being?" Though seemingly different, the two questions are mutually complementary. Finding an answer to the former leads one to the conviction that the reality underlying one's own being is what constitutes the essential content of the whole world as well. Conversely, the search for the causal source of the world answers the question "Who am I?" also, for every individual being is an inalienable part of the world. The one Reality that underlies the being of oneself and the world thus becomes revealed, and a seer living as an embodiment of that Reality is known as saksatkara, a realized one.

Ātmopadeśa Śatakam, the most comprehensive and important of Narayana Guru's Malayalam compositions, is an attempt to answer the question "Who am I?" In the *Advaita Dīpika*, on the other hand, the reflections begin as a search for the Causal Reality that underlies the world. The first eight verses stress one basic stance crucial to Vedanta: that one Causal Reality alone has real existence, and that that Reality is in essence pure and unconditioned consciousness. The world, according to this view, is unreal. Then a problem arises: even after becoming fully convinced that the world is unreal, it continues to be perceived by the senses. Why is this so? The next seven verses answer this question succinctly. The Guru finishes the work with two verses giving us directions as to what kind of spiritual discipline will enable us to solve this problem for ourselves.

The finality of Vedantic teaching—Self Realization—is not based on logic. Nor is the solution to the problem raised in *Advaita Dīpika* based on logic. It is rather

an intuitive penetration through dialectical wisdom that solves the problem.

The fixed idea that the world exists as it appears is the root cause of all the problems in life. Vedanta teaches that what exists is not the world, but consciousness or atma alone. What appears as the world is simply imagery that emerges and disappears in consciousness because of its own *māyā*. Taking it seriously is the mistake we make. Contemplation along these lines makes life peaceful, contented and stable. Lending a helping hand to seekers who tread this contemplative path is the sole purpose of this short commentary.

Prostrating at the feet of the original Guru and author, Narayana Guru, and his two successor-disciples, my own gurus, Nataraja Guru and Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati, who blessed me with the insight that enabled me to write these words, I offer this commentary at the hands of seekers.

VERSE 1

Names in their thousands,
mental images in their thousands,
and the corresponding inalienably emerging objects in their thousands—
these together constitute the world.
As long as not reflected on properly, it seems real,
as do dreams persist to seem real
as long as the dreamer does not wake up;
as he wakes up, the entire dream
becomes merged in the awakened one.

The name of this philosophical poem is *Advaita Dīpika*, Lamp of Nonduality. *Dvaita*, duality, is the state in which one perceives or admits two realities or more than one reality. *Advaita* is the opposite, meaning the state in which “not two” is perceived.

The world we're familiar with is constituted of countless multiple entities. Considering all such apparent entities as real on their own is what *dvaita* signifies. *Advaita*, on the other hand, perceives one underlying Reality in all that appears as many.

The question naturally arises, what is this underlying causal Reality? This question is where the real seeking begins.

Dīpa means lamp, and *dīpika* is a little lamp. A little lamp lit makes a little of the surrounding area clearly perceptible. Here too a little lamp is lit—the lamp of nondual perception, shedding light within a clearly conceivable area of thought. As a result a basic doubt that many a Vedantin has not yet dared to ask, though arising right from the very core of what Vedanta ultimately teaches, gets solved: why the world continues to be perceived by the senses even after we have become convinced that it is unreal.

That this world is an aggregate of countless names and forms is a classical concept as old as the Upanishads, the most ancient sourcebooks of Vedanta.

Going still deeper than this, the Guru here thinks of the world as constituted of innumerable names, and innumerable mental images paired with their corresponding innumerable objects of perception.

What modern science thinks of as the world is the sum total of all physical entities physically perceived by our sense organs. This physical world is boundlessly expansive. Do the objects thus perceived really exist as they are perceived? We are not sure. Even if we grant they do exist, they do not form the experienced world unless an experiencing mind or consciousness is present. And in that mind numerous ideas are formulating, each corresponding to an object. This domain of ideas or mental images has to be as extensive as the objective world. World-experience is thus a two-faceted functional situation in which the endlessly expanding world of perceptible objects forms one facet, and the corresponding endlessly expanding world of mental images forms the other. One facet is meaningless without the other.

Every object in the perceptible world has a corresponding image in the perceiver's mind. The Guru calls it *pratibhā*, literally a corresponding bright image. Every image thus formulated is always given a name, which, whenever articulated, helps recall the image of the object. So too, encountering the same type of object recalls the pre-established mental image and its name, enabling us to recognize it. As far as man, the living being who communicates through language, is concerned, the inseparable arenas of these three—names, mental images and external objects—constitute the experienced world.

Ideas, we know, get formulated in our mind; names doubtlessly are devised by mind; and the external perceptible objects, as we'll soon see, are nothing but mind or consciousness-substance manifesting itself. The three, in short, are nothing but one unconditioned consciousness become variously conditioned. Therefore, what really exists is none of these three, but is one unconditioned consciousness alone. This truth becomes revealed only to an enlightened seeker. Until thus enlightened, the world as it appears seems real, the mental images seem real, and the names seem real.

One of the peculiarities of the human mind is that it dreams. Scenes common as well as uncommon in ordinary life are often seen in dreams. They may be believable or unbelievable, pleasant or unpleasant, but they are all mere dreams. Not real. Yet their being unreal becomes revealed only on waking up. Until then all those scenes would be counted real. Where do these seemingly real scenes disappear on waking up? Nowhere else than in the one who was dreaming. Thus those scenes do not simply cease to exist, but only disappear in the dreamer, who continues to exist.

Human life and the human mind pass through three states: waking, dreaming and sleeping. All of them along with their experiences are nothing but various dream scenes seen by one unconditioned consciousness. Dream has no existence apart from the dreamer's mind, which itself assumes the form of dreams. This world is an eternal dream dreamt by the one pure and unconditioned consciousness, also called *cit*.

No dreamer is aware of the fact that what he sees are mere dreams. So too, one

who is engrossed in the world-experiences that pass through the alternating three states, does not realize that what he continuously perceives is a prolonged dream, that those scenes are not real on their own. One waking up from this ignorance is comparable to the waking up of the dreamer; only on this waking up he realizes that what he was till then perceiving as the world is merely one pure Consciousness manifesting itself variously, and that its existence is merely dreamlike. We are simply part of that dream.

Whose is this dream called the world? Whose consciousness is it? No one's. It is simply the nondual consciousness that unfolds itself as all experiences. Inconceivable, though when conceptualized it can be seen as cosmic as well as individuated. In the former aspect it is known as *brahman*, and in the latter as *ātman*. The cosmic aspect is at times called *Īśvara* (God) or *Parameśvara* (the Supreme God) as contexts demand. Thus it could also be said this world is a dream dreamt by *Parameśvara*, as the Guru himself conceives in the beginning of *Darśanamālā*, his most important philosophical poem in the Sanskrit language. He says:

In the beginning, non-existent indeed was this world.
Thereafter the dream-like upsurge of everything
was caused by *Parameśvara* by his sheer will. (I,1)

Woken up from this dream, what remains would be *Parameśvara* alone, *Brahman* alone, *Ātman* alone, 'I' alone. In the absence of this 'I', in the absence of the perceiving 'I', the very existence or nonexistence of this perceptible world is of no relevance. Such is the life to which reflection takes a turn in the next verse.

VERSE 2

Unreal becomes the visible world when seen
devoid of the perceiving subject.
None other than a mirage seen in the desert land
of consciousness is this world.
None other than the causal substance
is what underlies effects:
As what is real in waves is water alone.

In verse one we examined what kind of reality the visible world is. The conclusion was it was similar to a dream. The formulation of dreams takes place in the mind of a person who sleeps. In the absence of such a mind, no dream happens.

This point is made use of here to enter one of the central ideas of Vedanta.

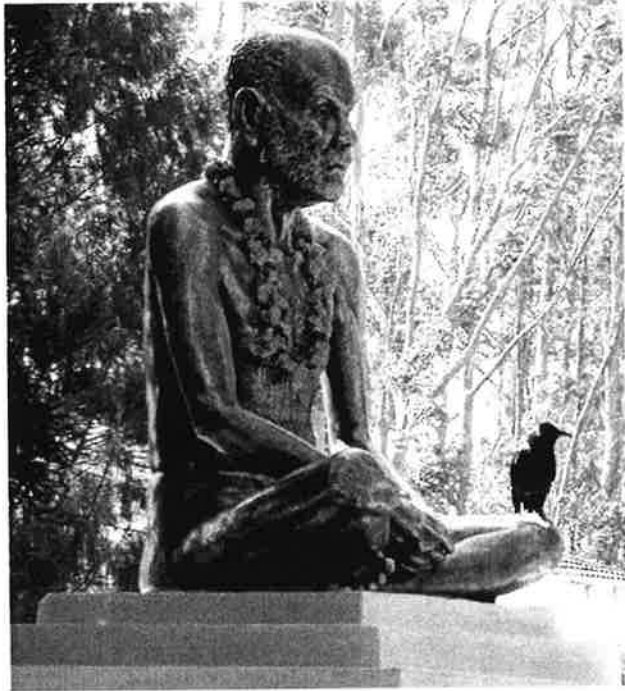
First it is considered how the subject and the object, or the perceiver and the perceived, are related. The perceiving consciousness is then thought of as the causal substance, and finally how cause and effect are related is cogitated on.

Always involved in every event of knowing are the perceiver, the perceived and perception. In Sanskrit they are known as *dr̥k*, *dr̥śya* and *darśana*, and together they are known by the term *triputi*, the tripartite factors. The perceiver here is none other than the dreaming mind of the last verse, and the perceived is the world constituted of names, mental images and external objects. The claim the Guru makes is that the latter is unreal in the absence of the former. Take, for example, the case of something being directly perceived. The thing gains the status of being 'the perceived' only when sensed by an eye that is in the vicinity. Unless thus perceived, the thing is not 'the perceived' at all. That the thing will be there even when not perceived is our common notion, yet someone else seeing it is its basis. Asserting the existence of something not yet perceived by anyone anywhere, not yet even imagined by anyone, makes no sense. In short, the existence of 'the perceived' is meaningful only when perceived by a perceiving eye or a knowing mind. Therefore the Guru says, "Devoid of the perceiving subject, the perceived world is unreal." The perception is that the perceiving mind is what makes the world perceptible, or real.

What then is undeniably real? The knowing mind alone, consciousness alone. It is in this consciousness that the dream sights mentioned in the last verse get formulated. The world, in other words, has only a dreamlike realness. What really exists is the dreaming consciousness or mind alone. The dream we are familiar with is not ceaseless; the dream called the world, on the other hand, is not of that sort: it continues to loom as real even after knowing that it is not real. The unreality of the world is therefore clarified further with the help of yet another analogy: that of the mirage. Water would be seen flowing in a desert land in the distance in broad daylight. Our knowledge that it is a mirage does not make its appearance vanish. Likewise is the world: even after realizing it to be unreal, it continues to appear real.

What is the desert land in which this grand mirage of the world appears? It is pure, unconditioned consciousness, *cit*. "I am the perceiver" and "The world is the perceived" simply form the opposing facets of the same grand mirage. In other words, "I am the perceiver" and "The world is the perceived" are ideas that get formulated in our consciousness. The very same consciousness, functioning properly, becomes aware of the unreality of the subject-object duality, and realizes their appearance as dreamlike or mirage-like. It thus becomes evident that the knowing consciousness alone is real. The known object, of which the subject-object duality is but a part, is unreal. Ontologically speaking, *dr̥k* or the knowing consciousness alone is the causal substance that has its own existence. The experiences "I am the perceiver" and "The world is the perceived" are all effects. In this specific sense the knowing consciousness is the cause and *dr̥śya* or the perceived is the effect.

The coming into being of anything should be from some source called “cause,” and what emerges out of the cause is called “effect.” In the case of making a pot, for example, clay is the cause and the pot is the effect. Clay cannot assume the form of a pot on its own; a potter has to work on it. The potter too, thus, is a cause. Clay is then called the material cause and the potter the incidental cause. Our concern here is not the making of a pot but the creation of the world. If the world is an effect, in the place of the pot, what is the clay-like substance out of which it emerged? And who was the creator? Since no causal reality other than consciousness exists, both the causes have to merge in one, also known as Brahman or Atman or even the Supreme God. *Brahman* or God or *ātman* is therefore considered the material-cum-incidental cause of the world in Vedantic terminology.



The effect, pot, has no existence apart from that of the cause, clay. So too the world’s existence is inalienable from that of the causal substance—

consciousness. As clay assumes the apparent form of many pots, so too our consciousness manifests itself as the entire world. Thus the world has no existence separable from consciousness.

Another example dear to the Guru to clarify the inseparable oneness of cause and effect is that of waves and the ocean. Water of the ocean is the cause, and waves are mere apparent, momentary forms that emerge in it. What is real in waves is water alone. No waves exist apart from water. Likewise, the world is the sum total of ripple-like forms that emerge in the ocean of consciousness. No world exists apart from it.

Substantiating this notion from the point of view of modern science is what the next verse does.

THE NATARAJA GURU WHO TAUGHT ME

BY M. PURUSHOTHAMAN

It was the early 1940s. I had passed my Seventh Class at the Asan Memorial Malayalam Middle School, Vilabhagam, and rushed to join as a Form II pupil at the neighboring Sri Narayana English High School at Nedunganda, situated at a distance of about 10 km. from Sivagiri. An education in an English school was something that I had been looking forward to, with hope and ambition. The school was perched on a small hill in an idyllic setting. On the west was the Arabian Sea washing almost the bottom of the cliff. In the east, beyond the backwater with an island in the middle, green hills rose gradually to the distant Sahyadri. To the south a green canopy of cocoonut leaves stretched as far as the eye could see. And a row of Casuarinas trees growing along the road in front of the school hummed in the wind and gave soothing shade in the midday sun. All through my life I have wondered whether Kumaran Asan's opening lines of *Prarodhanam*, which referred to "forests, backwaters, the waves in the sea and the Sahyadri hills" have some resonance with this setting, as he was born only about two kilometers away.

I was elated to be in the new school. However, the elation did not last long in the face of some shocks and surprises. My class teacher, a small, chubby man, with his rimmed glasses hanging loose on the tip of his nose, took one look at my class work and tossed it ceiling high, showing his disgust at my handwriting. He asked me to copy-write five lines and show it to him every morning. Eventually he was so pleased with my progress that he allowed me to write the class register every month. Then came the announcement that one Dr. Natarajan was going to be our new headmaster. All we knew was that he had obtained his doctorate in London (wrong, of course) and he had been away from Kerala for many years. Some connection with Sivagiri was mentioned but not clearly explained or understood. I used to go to Sivagiri for my fortnightly bath at the spring and so the new headmaster's link with the place pleased me. Soon after I had another shock. The current head of the school was appointed as the method master, responsible for school discipline. This move shocked me because he had once caned me for not coming forward with information about one of my classmates who hid a cane that one of the teachers regularly used in the classroom! No wonder I was a little scared of him.

Dr. Natarajan introduced an interesting innovation, the morning assembly, immediately after he took charge. The school used to begin with prayers sung by two girls in the sixth form, the highest one, and located a long way from my class, making it difficult to decipher the start and the end. The new format was that all pupils and teaches were to assemble in front of the school, standing on

the veranda, on the road or under the Casuarinas trees. Two girls would start the proceedings by singing the morning prayer and then Dr. Natarajan would speak on a topic of the day. He spoke in English, which was translated into Malayalam by one of the students in the sixth form. At first most pupils thought that the headmaster had forgotten his native language because of his long absence from Kerala, but that notion was soon dispelled when we saw him correcting the student on his translation. Why did he then choose English for his morning talk? I will come back to that.

Meanwhile the morning assembly did a little damage to my developing personality. One morning at the beginning of a month, my class teacher asked me to write the names in the class register. When the bell rang for the assembly I stood up to go, but my teacher insisted that I should go on with my task. A few minutes later the dreaded method master came in, chided me for disobedience and ordered me out of the class to the assembly. When my class teacher found that I had not completed the work and disobeyed his instructions, he grew angry and accused me of cowardice for not standing up to the method master. All I could do was console myself with the thought that if he was so righteous and brave he should have confronted the method master himself! Of course I had a wry inward smile, knowing he would not dare.

At midday, from a vantage point on the hill, we used to watch with fascination the whales swimming their way up and down the Arabian Sea. One day we heard that one of the whales had beached itself at Anchutheng (Anjenco), two or three kilometers down the beach. The headmaster, Dr. Natarajan, immediately invited interested pupils to join him in an outing to see the whale. I was one of a small group of pupils who volunteered. Arriving at the scene we were astonished to see this black giant of an animal lying utterly helpless on the sand. We were not sure whether it was dead or alive, but the headmaster was at hand to answer all our questions. He, trained in zoology, appeared pleased to tell us about the animal. The only sad note was the sight of some open, blood-red parts of the whale cut away by someone interested in an afternoon meal!

I appreciated the educational value of this small episode only years later when I had the opportunity to teach in schools in Europe and study educational psychology, which stresses the importance of first-hand experience as the building block of learning. Of course, to the Guru—who had taught in Switzerland, the land of Pestalozzi, a pioneer in educational methods in children's early learning stages, and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris, where Piaget was doing his innovative researches in educational psychology—the role of first-hand experience must have been a familiar and valued theme. When he came back to Kerala from Europe and applied for a suitable opening, his application was rejected on the excuse that his social background was inappropriate for a job with the State. How ironical that his father and grandfather had received the same response from the government bureaucracy! No one can say how he would have influenced educational development if he were given the opportunity. Again I am reminded of Kumaran Asan who accuses "the cruel

caste system which may have aborted the birth of many Perumals, Sankaracharyas, Thunchans and Kunchans” in his poem Duravasdha. It is interesting to note that a few years ago changes had been made to the school curriculum in Kerala giving opportunity to children to gain suitable first-hand experience as an essential factor in their education. Late by about sixty years?

Within a few months Dr. Natarajan disappeared from the scene. However, he came back two years later when I was in the fourth form. He taught us English for a few weeks and one of the lessons still lingers in my memory. It concerned the pronunciation of the word “one”. We pronounced it in the usual Malayalee style, sounding “o” as in “obey”. Dr. Natarajan corrected us by pronouncing the word first phonetically, then writing it on the blackboard as “won” and asking us all to say it correctly until he was satisfied. I sometimes wonder whether he spoke in English in the morning assembly to deliberately set an example to the whole school on how the foreign language should be spoken. In other words, he sought a degree of perfection as far as possible. I found this same passion for spoken English perfection in Professor V. Ramachandran’s article Nataraja Guru As I Knew Him.

Again, Dr. Natarajan as the headmaster disappeared from the scene rather abruptly. No one bothered to tell us, the pupils, about the changes among staff. It was just not the done thing. Several years later I happened to meet Dr. Natarajan in India at University College in Thiruvananthapuram, where I was in the final year of my degree course. A sports show was being put on in the university stadium opposite the hostel where I was staying. As three of us climbed to the top of the terrace, we saw our old headmaster. We went over and greeted him and began chatting about the event and competitions in general. In an attempt to vent an old dissatisfaction that I had been harboring for years, I ventured to suggest that the elocution competitions for youngsters at the annual gathering at Sivagiri was not fair. My point was that giving the youngsters the topic much in advance of their performance gave some the opportunity to benefit from able parents and relatives with professional skill. I had some experience in elocution and essay competitions and thought that the best procedure would be to give the topic, say, an hour before the presentation so that the youngsters’ true ability and skill would shine through. Dr. Natarajan’s reaction showed that he suffered no fools, and he displayed irritation over such a scurrilous comment. He made the point that oratorical skills were being tested and he saw nothing unfair in the procedure. The emphatic style of his response silenced my friends and me and we turned to other matters!

That was the last time that I saw the Guru. I left India in 1950 and although I did visit India briefly twice before his samadhi, I did not get another opportunity to see him again. Nowadays, whenever I go to India I make a point of visiting the samadhi site and attending the seminars held at the Gurukula in December.

THE SPRING COMES

BY V. RAMACHANDRAM

I am fifty-five and I realize I have been dying for these past fifty-five years. It is equally right to say I've been living for that time. Life and death. They have a bipolar relationship. They are the two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. Still, I prefer to say I have been dying. And the process will be complete within a few years' time. Then the ever-hungry flames will lick this body into their entrails, leaving behind no vibrations of life.

These changes are simply peripheral and common to all. They take place only in the time-space continuum. But there is an area within us that is not affected by time and space, where time is undone and always remains constant. The rishis and Vedantins of the past, from Badarayana to Narayana Guru, have called this area or understanding *para*. Nothing is born there, nothing dies there. All branches of knowledge blossom out of the *para*. It is unlimited and transcendental in nature. Therefore with the senses, which are limited in nature, the unlimited can never be understood.

The question is: What is to be done to realize *parā*, or the core of our being, the kingdom of God within us? Let me quote Basho, a famous Japanese Zen mystic. Zen has exercised a great influence all over the West in recent years because it is easy to understand. At the same time it is very difficult to put into practice. Here is Basho's haiku:

Sitting silently,
Doing nothing, the spring comes
And the grass grows by itself.

Basho's words seem to be very simple, but a little explanation is necessary to appreciate the depth of them.

First let's look at sitting silently. Man has been running and running. He always wants to go at top speed. But what is it for? He doesn't know. Three centuries of scientific and technological development have allowed him to run faster and have more comfort but less happiness. It has taken him farther from God and nearer to the dust. Therefore Basho tells us, "Hey you! Stop running and just sit somewhere. Sit silently."

The dictionary definition of silent is "the absence of sound," but this is not the meaning here. Suppose you are alone in your room. You close your eyes and look within. You can see somebody there; you can hear voices. So many figures make their appearance inside you. You are surprised that you are not just a single person, an isolated individual. Instead, you are a crowd—a crowd on two legs.

Only when your mind is cleansed of all these figures and all this internal noise can you experience true silence. That's what Basho means here. Your spiritual journey begins from that silence. It is a journey that only begins and never ends.

Next, doing nothing. You don't have to do anything external, you don't have to break your legs in the hope of practicing a particular yoga *āsana*. Any position that is comfortable to you can be followed.

Up to this point Basho has focused on the personal effort of the wisdom seeker. As Christ instructed seekers of truth, "Let you seek and cease not from seeking until you find." The next two lines speak to the experience of the seeker. When all the preliminary conditions are properly satisfied, a transformation takes place. A new climate grows within us, in which the personality in all its totality flowers. That's what Basho means by spring comes. When it is spring God makes his appearance. You cannot force spring to appear, it happens of its own accord at the proper time. When it comes, grass grows by itself. When the presence of the Divine is felt, you experience unlimited happiness. You are wafted to a world of ecstasy. You experience freedom, an inner freedom that kisses the circumference of eternity. Into that heaven of freedom, let's all try to awake, try to awake.

Try to awake!



MEDITATIONS ON ŚRĪ CAKRA

BY GURU NITYA

MEDITATION FIFTY

O Mother, bestower of grace. In an archway you place the keystone vertically at the center and the supporting stones or bricks are placed first at the horizontal alpha, then one upon the other, each slightly tilted until they make a perfect arch. When you make a garland or necklace of pearls you place the pendant in the middle. All the other beads are to enhance the beauty of the central gem. Altogether the garland looks excellent because each pearl or precious stone complements the magnificence of the other.

In a banquet, the king or president is seated on the throne or central chair, where he is surrounded by all the other dignitaries. The king or president represents sovereign value and sovereignty goes to him with the consent of all the others. In the solar system you have given a central place to the sun and the planets are orbiting around it. Between a person's brows you mark the one eye that is the light of the soul. On either side of it are the eyes for phenomenal vision, accompanied by all the other senses.

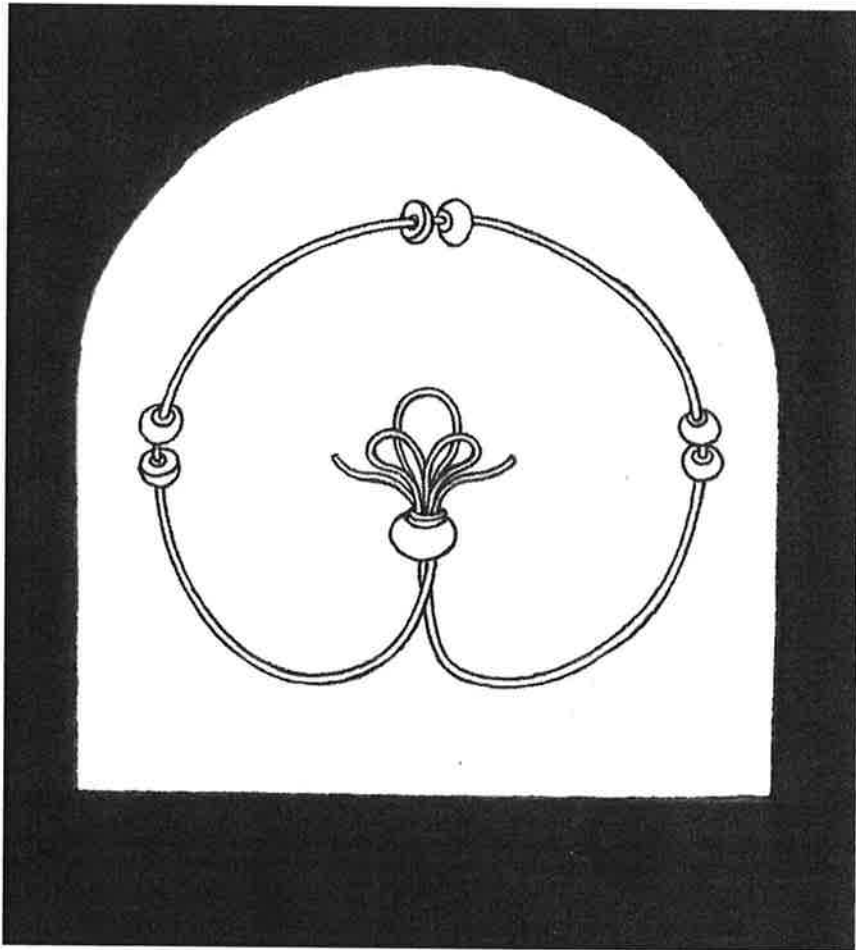
In the world of rejoicing, the silent contemplative sits totally absorbed in you while others sing and dance. You expect the wise person to see the one Divine in all and be absolutely free without possession and without desire. But you expect all others to remain in their assigned positions, dutifully carrying out all their responsibilities. In the world of aesthetics you show the highest beauty to the seer of the mantra who transcends the pleasures of the senses. And yet you are generous to give in the sensual world elaborate sciences of creation in the fields of music and art and architecture.

Thus you have many varieties of dialectical interplay between the one and the many. In one sense, where we choose the one, the many are to be rejected. Where we choose to be with the many, the one is unattainable. A certain amount of regret is inevitable in the discipline you enjoin on us. In the world of ontological rejoicing, the other is as real as you are. The singer has her audience and the expositor has his spectators. A couple can hold their hands together and dance to the tune of the spheres.

There is a thin line that always separates the relative from the Absolute. Like the swarms of bees that cluster around honey-oozing flowers, those who have an eye for the pleasures of the world crowd in the market place. You do not denounce them. You give them their pleasure in commerce. Many are the consumer goods

that are produced and exchanged. But in the silent splendor of the sanctum nothing is sold and nothing is bought. The rare person who enters the sanctum expects nothing but the peace that surpasses all other values.

In you we can see the epitome of the entire universe of values. As a connoisseur of all beauties, all arts and all crafts, you sit there telling the beads of the rosary of letters and melodiously playing on the strings of your veena. You are always surrounded by poets of high imagination, artists of exquisite talents, and musicians who have gone into the most subtle nuances of the notes they play. You lend them all your attention. Your appreciative, admiring glances bless everyone on your right, left or in the front, wherever they are. However, you never give up your secret admiration for the transcendent because your wisdom eye is always where your Lord is. Nothing can cause the slightest distraction in the steady attention you give to the omega. Such is the secret of your grace. O Mother, only the initiated understand this. Only you know who is worthy to be initiated. Our supplications to you.



REVELATION

BY EMILY TEITSWORTH

“What do you mean?” The moon rose
slowly out of its bare-branched web.
A few coyotes howled from the clearcut. Who knows
what well of thought feeds the poet’s nib

or why the sky freezes after the December sun
has dropped behind the Coast Range? The russet field grass
hummed lullabies for the bright clouds at noon,
then hymns for the purple night, its stars rising fast

behind the house. We came in from a walk
along the old logging road, our breath vanishing at the door,
and the moon framed in the kitchen window hushed our talk.
The world is a still picture, intemperate, constellations like lore

without words, the scripture that means
but doesn’t tell. Winds that scoured the hill are now silent, coyotes pose,
snouts raised, along the north field’s horizon, pine trees leaning
into the still air behind them, and the deep frozen

sky swallowing their cries. I don’t know if intention leaves any trace,
veins of ore sparkling in the rocky undersoil. We all learn
to look at the world like an ancient plan, bleak space
opening the future’s adit as our planet turns—

not forward, but on an axis, not plotted beforehand
but revealed, like the moon shedding its robe
of dead alders. Our eyes are hooded as we stand
by the window, watching the edge of this ragged globe

drain of color, swallow the night’s last star.
And at dawn, spin the story of what we’ve seen, who we are.

MOVIE MUSE

By PETER OPPENHEIMER

What the bleep is going on here? How much of what we call reality is our own imagination or projection? How does each of us build up our picture of reality? What do cutting edge scientists have to say about the nature of mind and matter? How does consciousness influence matter? Is there a meeting ground of science and metaphysics? And what the bleep do all these questions have to do with our personal happiness and the peace and well-being of the world?

What the Bleep Do We Know is the name of a new movie which deserves to take the country by storm in much the same way Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 9/11 did earlier this year. What the Bleep Do We Know is at least three movies in one, each of which could be enjoyed on its own merits and which together offer the viewer a veritable symphony of experience. First of all, What The Bleep incorporates a mind-bending documentary about the latest findings in such fields as quantum physics, biochemistry and neuroscience, and what these findings have to say about our own perceptions, moods and responsibility. In the documentary segments, we are showered with a dazzling array of facts presented at a dizzying speed, but we are also then given time and opportunity to help us ponder over the implications of those facts.

One study, convincingly presented by a Harvard Ph.D. currently teaching at Stanford, describes an experiment done whereby in 1993, 4,000 volunteers from 100 countries converged on Washington, D.C., (the so-called "Murder Capital of the World") to meditate on peace and harmony. The organizers predicted a 25% reduction in crime over the three months of that summer. When told about this experiment in advance, the D.C. police chief joked, "It would take two feet of snow to reduce the crime rate that much this summer." The chief became the meditators' biggest supporter after the crime rate indeed fell by 25%.

In addition to being a documentary, What the Bleep has the elements of an animated feature which takes the viewer on an amusement park ride through the folds and fringes of the human brain and along the neuro-pathways that extend throughout the body. One amazing scene is of the electrical impulses in the brain, generated by the "synaptic storms," which signal and determine all mental activity.

It is during the animation sequences we get to view such marvels as the inner workings of the most sophisticated and extravagant pharmaceutical factory in the world, the hypothalamus. Yes, a pharmacy within our own bodies. "Want some uppers? Okay, here, have a shot of adrenaline." "Need a painkiller? Here are some endorphins." Scientists now know that there is a unique chemical match for every emotion, a cocktail of peptides and neuro-hormones of mood altering intensities

all mixed to order in the hypothalamus.

But beyond both the documentary and animation-ride aspects of the film, *What The Bleep* features an engaging dramatic narrative in which Marlee Matlin plays Amanda, a young to middle-aged photographer who is struggling in her personal, professional and social lives. While obviously kind at heart, Amanda is plagued by headaches, low self-esteem and distrust in the motives of others.

Marlee Matlin is a marvelous actress, best known for her break-out performance opposite William Hurt in *Children of a Lesser God* and her recent guest star turns on *The West Wing*. Her Amanda is instantly sympathetic and accessible to us and we can identify with her, even in her clumsy or mildly paranoid moments. We learn to see the world through her camera and hence her eyes. That world changes for both Amanda and for us as she moves through her days and begins to become more conscious of her own projections and reactions to the world around her.

Because many of the developments are unexpected, I don't want to spoil the fun, but as a teaser I'll just mention that two fascinating and significant encounters involve an interaction with a super-savvy street kid who sweetly tries to lure Amanda into a game of hoops, and a professional assignment to photograph a wedding in the very same church in which Amanda had gotten married, a marriage which soon disastrously flamed out.

Part illuminating documentary, part animated feature, part intriguing story, *What the Bleep* defies description or precedent. A big part of the joy of seeing this film is the surprise and mystery it can generate. My only two criticisms are that there was one of the many studies presented that struck me as smacking of pseudo-science, and at times the tone of the narration devolves into the strained enthusiasm of an infomercial.

Those two criticisms aside, we are most fortunate at this time to have a movie playing in the theater which is at its core about the movie that is always playing in our mind. More promising still is that this movie holds out a great hope, backed by science, that with awareness and a posture of observation and cultivated intention many of the problems in our life and the world around us can and will be resolved in ways we have yet to imagine.

Who the bleep knew?

WORLD GOVERNMENT'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

A half century ago on September 4, 1953, from the city hall of Ellsworth, Maine, a new government, the World Government, was declared by a stateless World Citizen, Garry Davis. This government was based on three common world laws:

- One God (or Absolute Value)
- One world
- One humanity

It was mandated by over 750,000 individuals from over 150 countries who had already claimed the sovereign civic status of world citizenship via the International Registry of World Citizens that opened January 1, 1949, in Paris. The World Government was therefore based on the actuality and legitimacy of the human race rather than on the alleged sovereign nation. The new government also claimed "territory" which encompassed the whole world.

The Nuclear Age had begun eight years prior on August 6, 1945, with the United States bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which shocked the world public into awareness of with its indiscriminate destructive power. Thus began a "contract with humanity" to which each human was bound, whether conscious of it or not, for if humanity died, all individual humans died. Albert Einstein—the father of the Nuclear Age—warned at the time that if the human race did not now eliminate war itself, then war would eliminate the human race.

The new World Government certified the global contract overtly and from a very different standpoint by providing individuals with documents based on fundamental human rights, sanctioned by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December 10, 1948.

As individuals have become aware of the new government's existence, they have taken advantage of its global identification services and the legal assistance provided by its World Judicial Commission. Today, millions of human rights documents have been issued by the World Government's administrative agency, the World Service Authority, with main offices in Washington, D.C., and Tokyo, Japan.

Humanity, however, still faces grave threats. Nuclear proliferation among nine nations has grown. Seventy-five wars, large and small, have been fought between nations killing over 25 million people with a refugee population exploding to over 50 million. Air, water and soil pollution is increasing. Rain forests are burning. Global warming is a scientific fact. Mass poverty amidst the excessive wealth of the few creates explosive social crises resulting in increasing acts of vengeance.

Yet positive signs of human ingenuity and fellowship abound. Communication is now virtually instantaneous globally. Thus awareness cannot be stopped at

national frontiers. Laws have been instituted that promote justice beyond national jurisdictions. Space itself is inviting human exploration, and the space station makes a global revolution every twenty-nine minutes. Though still rampant in some parts of the world, disease is slowly giving way to scientific cures. While national leaders remain enmeshed in 18th century fictional feudalisms, non-governmental organizations representing every human interest abound. Finally, humanity's sages have come roaring from their forest and monastic retreats to sound the prophetic alarm of Armageddon if the perennial principles of unity and universality are not manifested politically.

Should humanity survive the next fifty years, it can, in part, thank today's citizens of the embryonic World Government.



GURUKULA NEWS

The annual convention of the Narayana Gurukula will be held at the Gurukula headquarters in Varkala, Kerala, South India, from December 23rd to 29th, 2004.

Another Gurukula center was inaugurated at Palakkazhi, Palakkad District, Kerala, in June of 2004.

A new prayer hall is nearly completed at Vidya Nikethan in Konni, Kerala, which is the birthplace of Guru Nitya.

The following books of Guru Nitya have been reprinted by the Narayana Gurukula in Varkala: *In the Stream of Consciousness* and *Meditations on the Way*.

The following books of Guru Prasad have been reprinted by D.K. Print World in New Delhi: *Katha Upaniṣad*, *Kena Upaniṣad*, *Vedanta Sūtras of Narayana Guru*, *Karma and Reincarnation*. Books by Guru Prasad that are to be published soon are: *The Complete Works of Narayana Guru*, *Darśana Mālā*, and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.

From Somahalli Gurukula, Swami Vinaya Chaitanya attended a national workshop on the translation of Vachana poetry into English and Indian languages. Friends in Brazil, who had visited Somahalli, are working on a project for world peace, inspired by Nataraja Guru's One World philosophy, and a music album based on the *Bhadrakālī Āṣhtakam* of Narayana Guru.

At the Fernhill Gurukula in Ooty Guru Prasad inaugurated the Guru Nitya Dhyana Mandapam on March 21, 2004. Afterwards Nancy Yeilding lead participants in the construction of a labyrinth next to the samadhi building.

A series of workshops on various arts and philosophy have been held in Fernhill. These included:

- Dr. George David on Macrobiotics;
- Cyber Power Towards One World Economics by Mr. S. Radhakrishnan;
- Herbal Medicine and Community Market by Rev. Fr. Joseph Chittoor;
- In Search of Faith by Prof. D. Krishnaraj;
- The Life and Times of Coetzee by Mrs. Indu Mallah;
- Tribal Culture in the Nilgiris by Tarun Chaabra;
- Cosmic Evolution and Yoga Philosophy by Mr. R. Kuppaswami;
- Blissful Self and Blissful Life by Swami Charles Chaitanya.

On May 14th, the Mahasamadhi Day of Guru Nitya, there were a number of musical and poetry presentations to a large gathering of friends.

In addition there was a poetry workshop in May with Swami Vinaya Chaitanya, Sadhu Gopida, Mr. Jayamohan and Mr. T.P. Rajeevan present.

Swami Thampan has been traveling in the Himalayas, and Swami Vyasa Prasad has been working with Swami Vinaya Chaitanya on editing Nataraja Guru's *Saundarya Laharī* for reissue.

Nancy Yeilding from the Bainbridge Gurukula is offering an email-based class. Currently two groups—composed of members in countries around the world—are tuning to the universality of the Self through their study of *That Alone, The Core of Wisdom*, Guru Nitya's commentary on Narayana Guru's *One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction*. If you are interested in participating, contact Nancy at islandaranya@foxinternet.net. Concurrently, Sraddha Durand is transferring the archived tapes of Guru Nitya's classes to CD's which are available from her at sraddha@ispwest.com. Also at Bainbridge Gurukula, the East-West University class on Living Creativity has been studying the World Tree or Tree of Life that figures in world mythology and is used in the lingua mystica of humanity all over the world.

At the Portland Gurukula classes on the *Saundarya Laharī* continue. Scott Teitsworth is giving classes on the Bhagavad Gita at the Unitarian Church. Anyone interested in receiving class synopses and participating online, contact Scott at tapovana@hevanet.com. Scott has finished editing Guru Nitya's book *Meditations on the Self*, which will be published in the spring of 2005, and is now working on editing three of Nataraja Guru's books that will be reissued together as *Unitive Philosophy*. Production of the *Gurukulam* has resumed at the Portland Gurukula. Special thanks to Lisa Rappoport and Kobe Kemple for all their assistance with the magazine.

Web Addresses :

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

<http://homepage.mac.com/sraddha/gurukula>

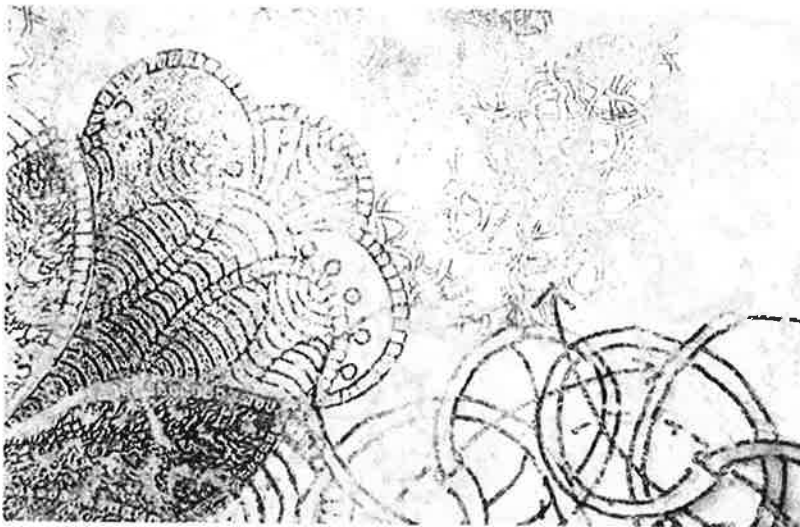


ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Front Cover Solar Mandala, embroidery on fabric with painted glass frame;
Susan Plum, 2002

Back Cover *Naturaleza Extrana*; mixed media on board, Susan Plum, 2003

5 Detail of *Naturaleza Extrana*; Susan Plum, 2003

Dancer, carved schist; Hoysala Period, 12th century, India

9 & 10 *Gandharva* and *Apsara*; watercolors from the frescos at
Sittannavasal, Pallava Dyanasty, 7th century, South India

14 Goddess *Kālī*; watercolor, 19th cen., Bengal, India.

22 & 27 Digital images; Andy Larkin, 2004

33 Photograph of Blue Gum Tree by Vyasa Prasad

34 Faience Bowl, Maid playing music in bower, 1370 B.C., Egypt

38 Nut, Goddess of the Sky; tomb painting from the Valley of the
Kings, 2000 B.C., Egypt

41 Solar Boat used to ferry the Pharoh's soul after death; Cheop's
Pyramid, 2500 B..C., Giza, Egypt

49 Photograph of Narayana Guru statue; Fernhill Gurukula, Vyasa
Prasad, 2003

54 *Rāginī* from a *Rāga Megha* painting, *Rāga Mālā* series, 18th
century, Rajasthan, India

56 Digital image; Andy Larkin, 2004

61 Photograph of Garry Davis: 1956, India

63 Detail of *Nauraleza Extrana*; Susan Plum, 2003

GURUKULAM

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITION

GURUKULAM magazine is a publication of the Narayana Gurukula, a spiritual and educational organization dedicated to sharing the teachings of Narayana Guru and his successors, as well as to the exploration of the world's many philosophic and artistic traditions.

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 from 1973 to 1999. The current Guru and Head is Muni Narayana Prasad.

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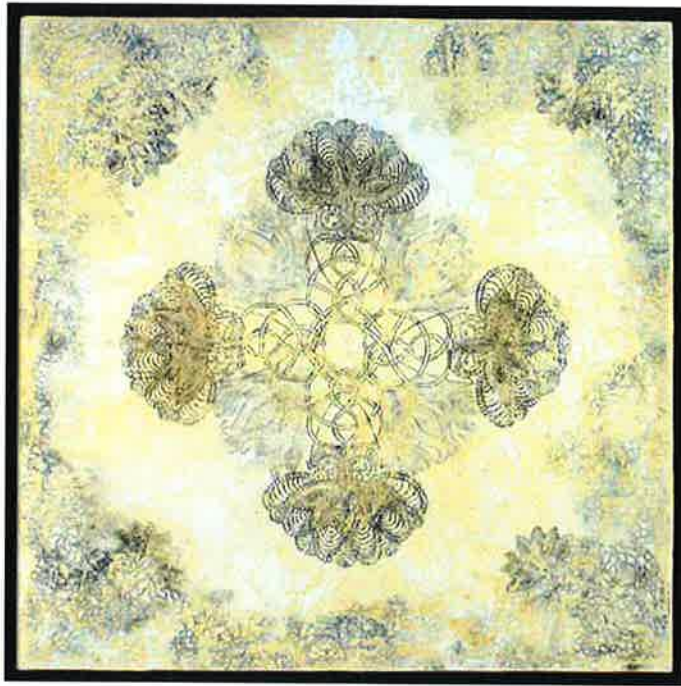
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