

GURUKULAM



SPRING 2006

8

GURUKULAM

A Journal of Philosophy and the Arts

Spring 2006

Published by the Narayana Gurukula

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 6 EDITORIAL
- 8 WHAT SHALL I READ?
by Swami John Spiers; Introduction by Nancy Yeilding
- 14 *ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM*, Verses 25 and 26
by Narayana Guru
translation and commentary by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati
- 26 *ADVAITA DĪPIKA*, Verses 7 and 8
by Narayana Guru
translation and commentary by Guru Muni Narayana Prasad
- 30 LETTER TO HEADS OF STATE
by Garry Davis
- 32 MY EXTENDED FAMILY
by Emma Walker
- 38 THE TRAJECTORY OF SCIENCE
by Scott Teitsworth
- 47 THE LADDER
by Emily Teitsworth
- 48 TWELVE EASY STEPS TO LOSE YOUR MIND
by Sunita Pillay
- 50 CREATION MYTH
by Vyasa Prasad
- 52 *ŚRI JAGANNĀTHA* TEMPLE
by Nataraja Guru and Swami John Spiers
- 55 MEDITATION ON *ŚRI CAKRA*
by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

58 SPRING BREEZE
by Smitha Hariharan

59 NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE
by Guru Muni Narayana Prasad

61 GURUKULA NEWS

63 ILLUSTRATION CREDITS



EDITORIAL

BY DEBORAH BUCHANAN

Memory is the act by which we select a portion of our experience and freeze it, where we construct an isolated unit or gestalt of a continuously moving, unbifurcated process. We take what is whole and divide it into manageable pieces. We become the subject and our field of interest becomes the object. Sometimes this is a conscious interaction, though usually it happens automatically, beneath our level of attention.

This process is one of the attributes of *tamas*, and has both positive and negative consequences. Negatively, it acts to inhibit the flow of consciousness, creating an eddy or blockage. *Tamas* is that morbid attachment that keeps us stuck in outdated ideas and situations. It is, however, crucial to an individual, intellectual understanding of the world. Through the solidifying and consolidating actions of *tamas* the brain can experience its own acts, seek to know them, and seek to relate to other's experience. The building block here is memory.

These building blocks form a surface layer of memory that we use in our everyday lives. This kind of memory depends on polarity; we focus on a static section of a fluid process. It is essential to our lives as physical creatures and inquiring minds. If memory stops here, however, we are held captive in a small space within a much vaster world. A second mode of memory is the re-cognition of archtypal ideas and images that form our ground of awareness.

A number of the articles in this issue focus on memory and its deeper uses in a unitive comprehension of ourselves. In Swami John Spiers' book *What Shall I Read?* a former teacher of the Narayana Gurukula writes on which books he recommends to aspiring students. The audience is not students interested in just facts or a particular field of study, but those inquisitive readers who wish to understand their lives, who want to know what others have thought, questioned, and written about the human experience. Essential to the task of recommending and sharing, and to reading itself, is the act of remembering.

In *My Extended Family*, Emma Walker writes about how her experiences, her memories, of individual landscapes merge into an abstract, more profound meta-landscape that then emerges in her paintings. Here memory moves from a superficial, individual level to an eidetic visual expression.

The two essays on the *Śri Jagannātha* Temple are reminders of two types of collective, community memory. The first memory is for those disciples of Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru who wish to remember the history of their teachers. Second, there is a deeper allusion to the memory of *jñāna*, or intuitive wisdom knowledge, and its revelation in our lives.

The *stūpa*, the essential architectural form of Buddhism, is a reliquary. A part of the Buddha's remains, or of some Buddhist *arhat*, are interred under an earthen mound. It is there to remind worshippers of the Buddha's awakening. A fence is constructed around the *stūpa* to designate sacred ground and gates or *toranas* are erected at each of the cardinal points. The surfaces of the *stūpa*, the fence or *vedikā*, and the *toranas* are often covered in low relief carvings of the Buddhist Jataka Tales, the lives of the Buddha. In animated detail they describe not only the Buddha's lives but Buddhist philosophy and morality. *Sāñcī Stūpa* in Bihar State is the most historically and artistically important of India's remaining *stūpas*. The memories of saintly lives, mystical intuition and artistic skill from *Sāñcī* are seen here in the beautiful photographs of Nancy Yeilding.

Each of the three commentaries in this issue—on *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, *Advaita Dīpika*, and the *Śri Cakra*—speaks from that supporting ground of intelligence, *buddhi*, from which ideas arise. It is the living tissue, so to speak, of conscious life that finds expression in contemplative verse, and is called pure or divine memory.

The memory of our whole, essential nature is extensive rather than specific. It reawakens us to what is most sacred and most intimate in our selves. This is what Nataraja Guru was referring to in *Word of the Guru* when he wrote:

“Such meditation (or memory) has the final result, not of solving mysteries, but rather of making the sense of the mysterious live in the heart of man for ever.”



WHAT SHALL I READ?

BY SWAMI JOHN SPIERS

Introduction by Nancy Yeilding

What Shall I Read? is one of those books whose reference is to the timeless, making it as relevant today to those who yearn for the truth as it was when it was first written in the 1960s. In it, John Spiers speaks to us like a dear friend, sharing his intimate musings on the writings that illuminate the path to spiritual enlightenment. An engaging companion, his own humanity shines forth on every page, not as egotistical preoccupation, but as the basis for the guidance he offers. We are warmed by his caring, his sense of humor, his stories, and his enthusiasm.

At the same time, his writing and his intentions are equally clear, revealing his criteria for the selection of texts that provide answers to the haunting questions of life. From the very beginning, he places his suggestions in the broadest possible context. His alpha point is the very omega of the wisdom search, the inexpressible wonder of the All in All. He reminds us that Nature herself is the greatest book, a book of symbols that is “being written all the time, bubbling over with the genius of the Mother, with the newly produced, the unexpected, the marvelous, the *mysterium tremendum* which brings to the sensitive contemplative, trembling of the spirit, a numinous shiver which is the mark of adoration or *bhakti* (devotion).”

Deftly addressing the paradox of reading or writing about the knowledge of the Self that, as Plato declared in his Epistle VII, “is not something that can be put into words like other sciences,” John Spiers then takes us by the hand on a journey through the wisdom treasures of humanity. Along the way, he reveals not only his own erudition and integrity, but also many essential guideposts for the seeker who yearns for substantial answers to the eternal yet very personal questions about the meaning of existence and the nature of reality: “Who am I?” “What is happiness?” “How can I understand this world and my role in it?” He discriminates between types of books, from those whose purpose is entertainment, to social reform, to the all-out search for wisdom: “In every genuine wisdom-text, this Ultimate Absolute is never forgotten. It is both the seeker and the goal in one.”

Although it may appear to be just a book, *What Shall I Read?* is far more. It is a comprehensive outline for a full course of wisdom study. The author’s selections of wisdom-texts cross the so-called boundaries between Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, Pagan and Christian, Hindu and Islam, philosophy and fairy tales, psychology and mysticism, prose and poetry. Vast vistas are opened before us, prompting us equally to head for the nearest library and to silently immerse ourselves in the exploration of our own true nature.

Pulling no punches, John Spiers also clearly defines the difficult to attain attributes of the genuine seeker of truth as well as offering sound guidance to enable a seeker to discriminate between the charlatan and the genuine wisdom teacher. He points out that the genuine Guru “is the human symbol of the Absolute. He does not stand for a doctrine, but for the source of all doctrines. He is...the guide who knows the difficulties of the Way.” Having laid this foundation, he extols the often misunderstood, degraded or dismissed Guru-disciple relationship as integral to the wisdom search.

He gave his own whole-hearted attention to the dialogue with his Guru, Nataraja Guru, including making the Guru’s wisdom more widely available through Values magazine. We are all indebted to him for the role he played in dedicatedly serving as modern skeptic and scribe for the Guru’s groundbreaking translation and commentary on the Bhagavad Gita itself.

Although I never met John Spiers, I came to know him as an elder in the wisdom tradition of the Narayana Gurukula through my own Guru, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati. He especially provided an encouraging model when I assumed editorship of the English language Gurukulam magazine. In that capacity I had the opportunity to reprint some of his articles from Values and gain a deeper acquaintance with his world-embracing perspective. So it is with special gratitude and pleasure that I introduce this book to you.

Quotations from *What Shall I Read?*

Just think how remarkable is the way the Gita has spread round the world. No modern man can call himself educated unless he has some acquaintance with this most popular of all the wisdom productions of Asia. It is a mystery how this has come about. The Gita has never been propagated in the way that zealous Christian missionaries have “spread the Gospel.” There are no peddlers with satchels or vans thrusting the Gita into innocent and often unwelcome hands, as in the case of richly endowed evangelist Christian organizations. There is no Hindu Church with massive funds behind it, no societies for the propagation of the Gita. And yet the fact is that the Gita is known practically everywhere. We can only assume that the Gita has become universal by its own merits. It has caught the attention of all who read it. Everything about it is wonderful....

[He mentions a collector with 152 different translations in 16 European languages.] But for this singular diffusion, how else could I have come upon it when I was fourteen... nearly fifty years ago? Is it not strange proof of the way the wind of wisdom blows that a youngster, coming from the poorest of working-class

families, living in a small country town in Scotland, should be having this supreme wisdom text in his hands? Remember too, that in climate and in the intolerant religious atmosphere of bigoted Calvinism, Scotland is the dialectical opposite of tropical, easygoing, tolerant, idolatrous India. And yet, as I say, here was this wonderful Oriental Pagan wisdom text opening up inward vistas, striking mystical chords completely outside every kind of environmental conditioning in my consciousness. Their future effects for me were to be climaxed by my association, forty years later, as an amanuensis with my Guru in doing his own translation and commentary on the Gita, in the land of the Gita. Awesome indeed are the ways of the Absolute. (pages 38-39)

There are two main charges I have to level against the modern teachers of philosophy, which mar their works and makes me thoroughly suspicious of their judgments. The first is just pure high-hat conceit. Just because they happen to have been born two thousand years or more after Socrates they assume, on the basis of a convenient theory of up from the ape evolution to which they have been conditioned, along with a spiritual imperialism which must equate with the discoveries and inventions of technology, that they are by this odd destiny superior in every respect to these philosophical primitives, in exactly the same way as they view the so-called underdeveloped inhabitants of societies and countries who have not had the grace to be born in the technically superior West. With a built-in prejudice, the materialist's equivalent of the theological "holier-than-thou", they dismiss accurate observers such as Herodotus, although over and over again he has been proved to be correct in his observations. (page 36)

Why is Zen so popular in the West? I believe its appeal is largely because it dispenses with religion and scriptures, gods and priests....Zen appeals to the Western seeker because it is iconoclastic and goes in for direct seeing into the Wholeness. (page 34)

For twenty years now, Zen has spread all over the world with phenomenal vigor. Instant Buddhahood or Sudden Enlightenment caught on like Instant Coffee. (page 33)

Something must be said about this key city in the destinies of Europe. It was in Alexandria that the battle for the mind of the European was to be fought in the fifth century. It was here in 415 A.D. that the Church showed its true character as a power-seeking establishment, signaled dramatically by the savage murder, in a church, by a mob of mad monks, inspired by the local Bishop Cyril, of the noble Pagan woman philosopher Hypatia. This was a mere foretaste of the horrors to come as the Christians reached out to absolute power. Only a century later the

Emperor Justinian made it a mortal offense to swerve from the dogmas of the Church. Temples were either destroyed or turned into churches. All the Guru centers were forcibly closed and their inmates driven into exile or underground. It was the end of Guruhood and its wisdom in Europe, as these things are known in India. If I seem to harp on all this it is because this tragedy has made the European a distorted personality and barred him from true philosophy, unlike the situation in the Orient where Guruhood is taken for granted. (page 70)



Hui Neng, on a very common mistake made by more than Buddhists:

“When you hear me speak about the Void, do not fall into the idea that I mean vacuity. It is of the Utmost importance that we should not fall into that idea, because when a man sits quietly and keeps his mind blank he would be abiding in a state of the voidness of indifference. The illimitable Void of the Universe is capable holding myriads of things of various shapes and forms, such as the Sun and the Moon, and the stars, worlds, mountains, rivers, rivulets, springs, woods, bushes, good men, bad men, laws pertaining to goodness and badness, heavenly planes and hells, great oceans and all the mountains of Maha-Meru. Space takes in all these, as does the void-ness of our nature. We say that Essence of Mind is great

because it embraces all things since all things are within our nature. When we see the goodness or the badness of other people, and are not affected by it nor repulsed by it, nor attached to it, then the attitude of our mind is as void as space. In that we see the greatness of our minds.” (pages 99-100)

Huang Po adds: “Your true nature is something never lost to you even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained at the moment of Enlightenment. It is the nature of the Bhutathata (Such-being-ness). In it is neither delusion nor right understanding. It fills the Void everywhere and is intrinsically of the substance of the One Mind. How, then, can your mind-created objects exist outside the Void?” (page 100)

There is a saying that God is not mocked, and the ancient Greeks knew that hubris, overweening pride, too much, was followed by madness and disaster, what they called nemesis. Jung was troubled with the perilous age we live in. “Virtually everything depends on the human soul and its functions,” he said. “It should be worthy of all the attention we can give it, especially today when everyone admits that the weal or woe of the future will be decided neither by the attacks of wild animals nor by natural catastrophes nor by the danger of world-wide epidemics, but simply and solely by the psychic changes in man. It needs only an almost imperceptible disturbance of equilibrium in a few of our rulers’ heads to plunge the world into blood, fire and radioactivity.” (page 115)

A quote from D.H. Lawrence about science: “Only let me say that to my mind there is a great field of science which is as yet quite closed to us. I refer to the science which proceeds in terms of life and is established on data of living experience and of sure intuition. Call it subjective science if you like. Our objective science of modern knowledge concerns itself only with phenomena, and with phenomena as regarded in their cause-and-effect relationship. I have nothing to say against our science. It is perfect as far as it goes. But to regard it as exhausting the whole of human possibility in knowledge seems to me just puerile. Our science is a science of the dead world. Even biology never considers life, but only mechanistic functioning and the apparatus of life. I honestly think that the great pagan world of which Egypt and Greece were the last living terms, the great pagan world which preceded our own era once, had a vast and perhaps perfect science of its own, a science in terms of life. In our era this science crumbled into magic and charlatanry. But even wisdom crumbles.” (page 123)

A poem from William Blake:

“O! why was I born with a different face?
Why was I not born like the rest of my race?”

When I look, each one starts! when I speak, I offend;
Then I'm silent and passive and lose every friend.
Then my verse I dishonour, my pictures despise,
My person degrade, and my temper chastise;
And the pen is my terror, the pencil my shame;
All my talents I bury, and dead is my fame.
I am either too low, or too highly priz'd;
When elated I am envied, when meek I'm despiz'd."

The life of Blake coincided with three social cataclysms, the Industrial Revolution, the American Revolution and the French Revolution. It was the misnamed Age of Reason. Historians of philosophy think of Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, Newton and Comte. In the brutal actual world reasons were found for every wrong, for the child labour in the mines and weaving factories, for the slave trade between Africa and America, for the oppression of "the lower orders." Men were hung for stealing a loaf of bread. It was lawful and reasonable to imprison those who dared to expose all this or the Church and State. Blake had reason to expose this fickle reason which found reasons for the unreasonable. (page 130)

Blake's secret was that he saw with direct intuition, with the spiritual organ of the numinous, an extra sense. He tried to show a blind world what this extra sense was: "Error is Created. Truth is Eternal. Error or Creation will be Burned up, & not till Then, Truth or Eternity will appear. It is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to Behold it. I assert for My Self that I do not behold the outward Creation & that to me it is a hindrance and not Action; It is as the dirt upon my feet, no Part of Me. 'What' it will be questioned, 'When the Sun rises do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a guinea?' O, no, no. I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly Host crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.' I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it and not with it." (page 134)

ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

VERSE 25

*oruvanu nallatum anyanallalum cē-
rpparu tozil ātmavirōdhiyōrttiṭṭēṇam;
paranu param paritapam ēkituññō-
reri narakābdhiyil viṇeriññiṭṭunnu.*

What is good for one person and brings misery to another
such actions are opposed to the self, remember!
those who give great grief to another
will fall into the fiery sea of hell and burn.

After presenting the positive approach to the happiness of all in the previous verse, Narayana Guru here counterbalances it with the negative approach, which brings in the problem of evil. All lovers of mankind throughout history—saints, philosophers, saviors and masters—have given consideration to the problem of evil.

In the last three or four verses, whenever the Guru referred to the ‘other’ he used a special word, *aparan*, meaning one who seems to be another, but when properly considered is not. Here, however, he uses *paran*, meaning one who definitely is another. When such a dichotomy comes into our life and we do not see any kinship with another person, even the compunction against doing evil doesn’t go very deep. A kind of morbidity comes to the mind; we become dull and insensitive to the pain we cause others. To that extent we shrink into our egoistic shell and lose touch with the transcendent aspect of reality and its all-permeating beauty.

One definition of the Absolute is *satyam śivam sundaram*. *Satyam* means the all-pervading truth; *śivam* the auspicious, peaceful calm which is absolutely harmonious; and *sundaram* is that which is positively experienced as beauty *par excellence*. To have a comprehensive vision of the Self, one should experience the overwhelming beauty of the Absolute in both its manifested and unmanifested states. When there is a deficiency in this vision, ignorance is casting its shadow on us. When the shadow of ignorance becomes more and more pronounced, we see

less of truth and become increasingly identified with our physical entity, which separates us from our divine nature.

This question is taken up and elaborated on in one of Plato's dialogues, *Timaeus*. In it the whole story of creation is discussed in a mythological way, and when you read it, it has a profound effect on your mind. It seems the Creator at the time of creation wanted to make a universe teeming with all kinds of life. He mixed together the essence of the four elements with his own immortal essence. His spirit, the divine, is indissoluble; it will always be immortal. The elements, however, are not: they come together and separate.

The elements have their own qualities, such as fire burning and air moving as wind and causing hurricanes. Similarly water can be blown into great waves, and earth can become morbid. These elements and their qualities are also present within each individual. When your elements are affected, sensations come from that side into your Self or spirit. On the other hand, the capacity to know and to animate flows from the spirit into the four elements. There is a two way circulation from the elements to the Self and from the Self to the elements.

This theory of Plato's is used by St. Augustine in developing his own study of evil. He considers evil to be a negative principle, unable to stand by itself, like a shadow cast by the sun. It is akin to a deficit intelligence in place of positive intelligence; it is also a deficit cause.

This is given in another way in the Bhagavad Gita. In Chapter Six, verses 5 and 6, we are given the instruction that the Self should be raised by the Self, and the Self should never let down the Self, the Self is the best friend of the Self, and the Self can also become its own worst enemy. Whenever you consider part of the Self as non-Self, that non-Self itself will become your enemy, it will behave as if it is your enemy.

We can experience this in our everyday life. If I consider a certain person as my very Self then it will be a great joy to have him around. Everything we do brings great joy to my heart: seeing him, talking with him, admiring him. The joy does not happen anywhere else than in my heart, so I am bringing joy to myself by giving my love to him. But if I consider him as not being a part of me, as not belonging to me as part of my Self, he may become my enemy. He is an 'other', and the very fact of seeing him walk into my room fills me with rage. My body starts shivering and trembling with anger. I cause myself great pain by hating him in this way, pain which may not affect him at all. Then I feel fear that this fellow has come to do some evil to me. I avoid him because I fear for my safety: he is my enemy and may become violent. He may take away my possessions. I start living in fear.

Of course, its all just an attitude within me. I can make myself happy in my friend's presence, or I can make myself very miserable just by changing my attitude. This is what the Gita calls making the *anātmā*, the non-Self, behave as the enemy. In considering part of your own Self as non-Self, you make that part a potential enemy. In one way or another we are all doing this every day by alienating people,

by negating people, by cultivating discontent within ourselves. It is a scourge, a plague. If we do not like the presence of certain people, their very look or sound, we don't have anything to do with them. In this way we chop up our world into so many small bits and poison several of them.

So when this friend we are speaking of comes to me, I turn to my other friend and say, Look, our good friend is here. Then her mind also brightens up. Another friend asks who is here. Oh, it's our friend!—and she also becomes happy. Happiness is contagious. On the other hand, if I say, "Here comes that idiot, I don't like him at all," my enmity also is contagious. My other friends do not have any problem with that person, but when they hear me talk like that they also become negative. They wonder what that guy has done for me to hate him and they become suspicious. My negativity spreads like a cancer from one heart to another. Thus all the time we create smoke and fumes, a poisonous pollution of the mind, and enmity everywhere. Then bickering, gossip and backbiting appear on all sides. The *narakābdhi*, the ocean of hell the Guru speaks of, is not anywhere far away, it is right where we are.

Narayana Guru's disciple Nataraja Guru, in his commentary on this verse, says that when a spark of fire goes into a pile of sticks, it does not just burn one tiny bit of it. It will affect the next piece and the next until it becomes a conflagration. Like that, when we sow the seeds of discontent it is contagious. In a very literal sense it can become a hell fire, even when small discontentments accumulate.

An example of this is the little pamphlets printed and circulated in Japan prior to World War II that said, "America is our worst enemy. Our fleets and manufactured goods are rivaled by American mercantilism and American capitalist expansion, so they are our enemies. Spread this to every corner of Japan." In America the same kind of rumor was spread: "Japan is our own worst enemy. If we allow that country to go on expanding, there won't be any America left." In each country, stereotypes and prejudices were fostered and reinforced. Soon American minds were filled with venom, and Japanese minds were filled with venom. A terrible war was fought, culminating in atom bombs being dropped on two Japanese cities. That was real hell fire: tens of thousands of people burned in no time, and many more slowly while suffering horrible pain and death.

It is not just a story Narayana Guru is telling us. It can become actual at any moment. It all begins from just one spark of discontentment or one wrong notion, and we have millions of them from which to choose. America has a huge stockpile of deadly weapons, enough to annihilate the entire planet many times over. Until recently, Russia's stockpile was almost as large, and at least a half dozen other countries have nuclear arsenals. What are we doing? Accumulating the ability to devastate the whole universe? It all begins as paranoia in the mind of one person expressed to another. Someone in the CIA or the Pentagon says, "I really see the possibility of Russia or China attacking us tomorrow," and then we go mad, preparing to do more destruction than ever before. Unfortunately it is not only in



the matter of realization that the oneness of the Self operates. It also works very efficiently in becoming polluted with negativity.

St. Augustine took two ideas from Plotinus and Plato, deficient causation and the aesthetic conception of evil. Man has free will. The freedom of his will, when it is in resonance with a universal will of goodness, is a salvaging factor. Free will can also become a free expression of the ego which is cut off from the light of the spirit. When it is cut off, it places sensory pleasures or physical well-being as more valuable than spiritual excellence. This is the idea of deficient causation.

Nature itself is against such kinds of excesses which the egoistic will brings upon life. When a person relishes his food too much and goes against nature's laws by becoming gluttonous, the excessive food poisons his physical body. He eats more than he can digest properly, and accumulates toxins that are absorbed and that cause him physical disease. Plotinus and St. Augustine say here that nature is coming to our aid to save us from the excess of free will originating from the dark side of the self, which is the ego.

Like physical disease, other kinds of excess bring war, pestilence and so many other problems. The exclusive cultivation of vast areas of one type of crop, for instance, has brought about an explosion of damaging insects and plant diseases. The pollution we release in the air has devastated forests, caused cancer in humans and even eroded buildings. The list of such excesses is very long. All of them are considered as the evil which originates from man's free will.

Man should learn how he can exercise a true free will, which is when he is freeing himself from the clutches of his sensuality, from the demands of his *vāsanās*, and when he is seeing the oneness of all from inside. Only after getting free of these conditionings does true freedom of will come. Otherwise, you think you have free will, but you are a slave to your senses and your urges. You make your reason a kind of donkey upon which evil rides to its own destruction.

The second idea that St. Augustine shows us is also in the Bhagavad Gita, which says you can only free yourself by being the Absolute. As St. Augustine poetically puts it, if you can see the grand beauty of the panorama of creation and sing with the mind of the Creator, you make a beautiful world for yourself. The gorgeous sun which rises in the east as a golden disc, the gentle breezes that come from the salty oceans and the breezes from the mountains laden with the aroma of spices, the clouds that bring rain to our gardens, the singing birds and the blooming flowers, the variety of plants that provide food for man and other beings—when we see this grand beauty everywhere we are having a panoramic vision of the Absolute. We become so saturated with the sense of its magnificence that we cannot alienate ourselves from the wonderful goodness of the Absolute.

This is where the aesthetic cause of evil comes in. When you have lost the sensitivity to appreciate things aesthetically, when you become incapable of seeing the beauty of creation, you become a corrupted person.

One possible misunderstanding that can arise from this verse is to think of action in a linear way. If we consider all the actions that we do in life and their virtues, we may be filled with a sense of self-righteousness and see injustice in our suffering for things which we have seemingly never done. This is a linear vision, and karma is not to be understood as linear. It is highly complex. Our actions make one composite whole, and our responsibility to each other is unlimited. If we do not understand our unlimited liability to each other and make it a partial one, then our thinking becomes relativistic. Our understanding is no longer that of an absolutist.

Any deficit in any one of us is also a deficit of the whole. The deficit action of one can weaken the whole system to an extent. The contributory effect of that kind of karma is like a carbuncle, which is a localized disturbance, but the poison it generates circulates throughout the body. In a sense it is the poison of the whole body that comes and accumulates as a carbuncle in one place. Similarly, through specific people the poison of our collective activity is manifested. If that person retrospects about his own personal life, he may not see anything to justify the pain coming particularly to him. Here it is not the individual but the collective Self which is suffering.

Only if you take it in this way will the suffering of Christ make any sense. Otherwise, how can his crucifixion be a matter of concern to anyone after two thousand years? How does that help? It was not just one person's action: a sacrifice was given in a collective sense. Although the sacrifice was of one person, in it we see the essence of the entire universe.

We have to see it both ways: one person's sacrifice as a sacrifice for all, and the evil of many people as the evil that affects each person. I recommend to you both Plato's *Dialogues* and St. Augustine's *City of God* (Chapter XII, 6-7) and *Confessions* (Chapter VII, 13) for further reading, because this is more than a fascinating study. It is our daily problem. It is good to have some insight into it. Some of the finest souls on earth have given their best thoughts to this subject, and these books do a great amount of searching.

With this verse and the previous one, Narayana Guru gives the world his contribution of social ethics based on Self-realization. It should become a cardinal principle of our own lives. It is not confined to any creed. On the positive side you are asked simply to see the Self in all and befriend it. From the negative angle you are told that if you make your own Self alienated from you, you will cause a boomerang of the same evil upon you. Thus, for your own peace and unbroken joy it is necessary to contribute to the general good every day and every moment. We take upon ourselves unlimited liability to bear the cross of all; we commit ourselves to be our brother's keepers. The best teaching of all the world's scriptures is epitomized here in eight brief lines.

VERSE 26

*avayavamokkeyamarttiyaniday ni-
nnavayaviyaviyeyavariccitunnu;
avan ivan ennatinal avan ninaykku-
nnavasatayamavivekamonninale.*

Holding the limbs together, remaining like a bolt,
the limb owner envelops as vaporous being;
for this reason, “that man” and “this man” arise in this way—
so that man believes, due solely to the weakness of
non-discrimination.

This body of ours, which is constituted of many parts, is held together by the living entity. Everything is kept together by the agency of breath, which is vaporous. As one such constituted body looks different from another, we fail to discriminate the living entity that is pervading all beings as one and the same.

It is commonly believed that there are no two snow crystals that look alike. Similarly, we never come across two human beings who are exactly alike, although they all have the same kind of body. The police take advantage of this fact when they record people’s fingerprints for security purposes. It seems impossible that with so many billions of hands in this world, multiplied by ten for all the fingers, no two fingerprints are the same. We make a big deal of this difference, which we see only on the skin of the thumb, for instance. The whole world attaches so much importance to such a superficial variation solely to find out who did something wrong. But no matter how much you study these prints you won’t learn who did something right. A thumb print is only useful for finding out a wrongdoer; it won’t help you to find the good or discern truth.

If you look at a big wrestler’s body it is so round; the muscles look like they are made of steel. He moves around with so much confidence in his strength, but if he does not breathe for a couple of minutes that is all it will take for him to lose consciousness and fall down, crashing to earth as if he has no strength at all. If he does not resume breathing quickly, his body becomes stiff. Then it swells up and all the cells break. The body decays and soon becomes part of the earth. Is it not a great wonder that that little breath in us is maintaining all the functions of the body? It causes us to cerebration, circulate blood, respire, digest food, grow and change, and learn and retain our memory. All this depends on a tiny bit of vapor: the incoming and the outgoing breath.

So what is it within us that goes on doing everything for us, expanding and contracting the lungs, keeping up the throb of the heart? We walk around in this body all day and we live in it all the time, and yet we do not know anything of these

functions. Physiologists, neurologists and biologists are all running around looking at every synapse, cell and protein formation, thinking that from this they will get some clue. They know something is altering proteins, something is making synaptic changes and cells are growing and dying, but what is that something? Nobody knows. John Lilly asked the question, who is the programmer? There is a grand program going on in this human biocomputer, but who is the programmer?

The programmer is called in this verse *avayavi*, the one who owns all the separate parts of the body. The limb owner is making this vaporous thing operate, and this operation causes weakness in the power of discrimination.

You are sitting here. The life in you did not come from a piece of stone or out of thin air. It came from two living people, your father and mother. Go backward in your mind and retrospect. See how you were lying as a fetus in your mother's womb. Go beyond that. Before the union of your parents were you not still potentially in them? Yes, sure. So then what is your age now? It is from your birth date to now, plus your gestation, plus your parent's age. And behind your two parents are four other people, your father's and your mother's parents, so add in their age. If you go on like this for twenty generations, you already have more than two million people and hundreds of years behind you. Over two million people involved in producing you in just twenty generations. Now go back even before the appearance of human beings, to other species. Who then is alien to you?

This very life which is now functioning in you is spread out through all these forms of beings. It is one and the same principle in all. Do we have eyes to see it? No, we are too weak to discriminate that way. The Guru says *avaśatayām*, we are weak so we cannot discriminate. Since we cannot discriminate we can only take into account the immediate changes within this one system.

What is knowledge or awareness? As scientists understand it, it is only a specific change that happens chemically in our brain matter. Recent studies of synapses have shown that in learning they undergo a plastic change of shape and size, and then retain the change by molecular function. This is understood as a constituent part of a general experience of pain or pleasure caused by the agitation of the nerves. When you say two and two make four, this is what happens. Also when you get a pinprick this is happening. And again when you say "I am thinking of God," this is what is happening. Thus, substantially, there is no difference between your knowledge of comprehending the Absolute and having a pinprick. At the nervous level it's all useless, superficial agitation. Such an understanding may bring us total dismay.

We soon come to a dark chamber and stand outside its door, unable to penetrate into it to know the secret of how this agitation is manifesting. Who keeps this order? Who decides what kind of plastic change should occur to represent an idea? Who decides how it can be retained? Who decides what kind of protein to make and when? Even our clumsy research has isolated and named more than twenty varieties of protein, but no one knows what is behind it. Our knowledge is



coming and standing at the portals of this wonder, unable to penetrate beneath the surface. Beyond lies a great darkness. The greatest of all wisdom, all knowledge, is happening behind that door and in that darkness. It keeps the whole universe proliferating and multiplying endlessly. What a great wonder it is!

When we look at it this way this very earth on which we walk is the great mother from which all this has come. How many times should we kneel with gratitude that all this was made possible from mere dust! It may look superstitious to say that out of dust God created man, but it is the perfect truth. Forget God if you like, but you can certainly see that out of the dust of the earth came all of you who are sitting here, listening to another clod of earth who is articulating. Seen from inside like this, how can we be different? And yet our little pains are so very important to us. Our life is not ruled by wisdom but by pain: little, little pains and agitations.

Narayana Guru is lamenting the weakness which makes it difficult for us to go beyond the darkness and see the wonder of all this. He is preparing our minds to receive his definition of the Self, which he gives in the next verse. This is not something you discuss and know by your reason. You have to lay down your tools and watch the game for a little while with the attitude of a silent witness. Retire.

If you like, you can try to imagine the two million, ninety-seven thousand, one hundred and fifty people who were your progenitors in the last twenty generations. Line them up behind you and look at everybody's face. See how you have come directly from their scrotums and ovaries. None of them were aware of producing a child, they only found out when the woman vomited and had terrible pains that something had happened to her. You and I came in secret and in ignorance. Nobody knew, but unfailingly it was going on all through the long years. The unfortunate genes that happened to get into me as a sannyasi, a celibate person, may perish with me, but that won't stop the world. I can only stop my part of it. Life, which was to be perpetuated for millennia to come in my scrotum, I can put an end to it and give it peace, peace, peace. But so many others have already contributed to perpetuation. After their children will be another twenty generations, another two million people lined up.

Behind us we see not only human beings. As Carl Sagan has said, we can also see the dragons and dinosaurs as our great-grandfathers. I do not even know all the species involved, which means I have forgotten my own great-grandfather. Sagan even speaks of the possibility of a gnat mating with a giraffe and becoming an ostrich because the life-bearing genes of each are not bigger despite the proportion of their bodies.

Thomas a Kempis, in *The Imitation of Christ*, says that all the learning you have gained here has helped you only to increase your vanity. How can you ever gain your sanity again? He claims you have become profound in knowing all the theological explanations of the Trinity, but you have lost your humility. We become humble just as soon as we come to know that there is nothing to be proud of. We do not yet know who we are. When you say "I do not know," that's the temple in which

dwells your real being. The door of that ignorance has to open. There is someone within the dark chamber saying "I know." When the sound "I know" comes outside, it changes into "I don't know" because it is a knower who is saying "I do not know." This is a big miracle, the knower who is sitting behind and saying *avijñātam*, "I do not know."

In the Kena Upanishad it says one who does not know claims that he knows, and one who knows keeps quiet. The wonder is too much for him even to acknowledge what he knows.

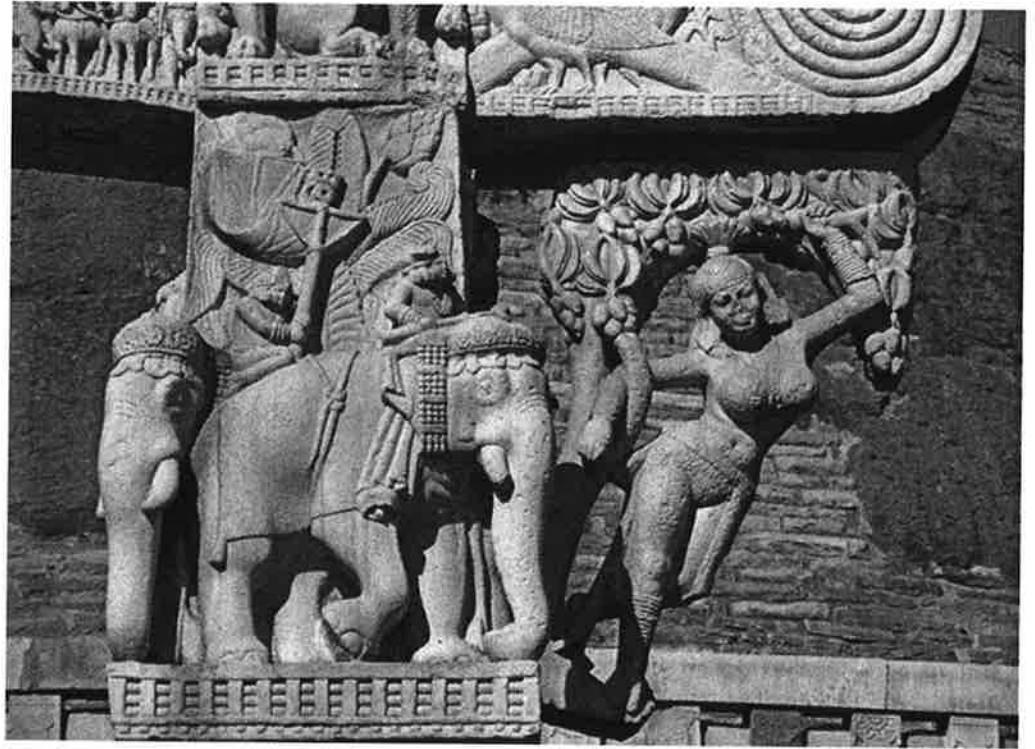
While I am speaking to you, countless millions of bacteria are having breakfast inside my lungs and my heart. They are all separate beings with their own personalities. If you look through a microscope at a dab of spittle you can see that each bacterium walks around with its own program, some with a shirt or pants, shades, clean-shaven or with a beard. Yet with all this inside me I behave as if I am only one person. So either I am millions of people or we are all one person.

Now think of this magical bolt by which all these corporeal entities within the body are held together as if they are one. Meditate on this. What is it that keeps your whole body united? Why doesn't it fall apart?

Once a good friend of mine in Australia came to see me. She was so overjoyed about meeting me that she was driving madly and her car struck a lamppost. After the big shock, she found something was missing. She could find only one hand. The other one had come off and was lying behind her. She couldn't believe that a hand could come off just like that. She was fully in her right mind when people came running up to help, but she told them not to worry about taking her to a hospital. She said, "My friend can heal it just by touching it," and insisted on going to a chiropractor who could put it back in its socket. Then she was brought to me. She said, "It's all right, just touch me." None of us know how it really happened, but after some time she was all right. Just as the hand came off it came back. Who healed it? How did it heal by itself so easily? We don't know.

Where is this bolt we are speaking of? There is actually no nut and bolt; it is all held together just by supposition. When you are walking on your two feet you do not realize you are performing a great circus feat, balancing a body upright on just two legs. This wonder called life, that is what you should meditate on.

See how that wonder is the same in a slug as well as in you. When you come to this place for meditation, don't trample on all the poor slugs. They cannot walk fast. Like you they want to be around us, and come up the stairs little by little. But before they reach the meditation hall, some pious meditator tramples them. We have a spider sitting here in the corner meditating with us. All these seemingly insignificant creatures are part of the same web of life to which we also belong.



ADVAITA DĪPIKA

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY GURU MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD

VERSE SEVEN

'This exists', 'this exists'; thus what has being
ultimately, alone is real;
everything else is fleeting and thus unreal.
The changeful apparent forms that clay assumes are all unreal;
The clay that underlies them alone is found Real when well thought of.

Ultimately what is Real? Answering this one question is the task all philosophers and scientists have before them. An infallible method acceptable to all has to be there to discriminate the real from the unreal. Clearing the path of this method in a scientific way by delineating the characteristic features of the real and the unreal is what the present verse does.

We began the present inquiry admitting the existence of the apparent world and examining its essential components. It is changeful, which is the reason for distrusting its reality. What then is to be counted as real? That which ultimately exists, that which eternally exists, is real. The apparent world does not seem to be real ultimately, for an element of insubstantiality is evident in what appears to be. A piece of cloth, for example, disappears in the being of yarn; yarn in turn disappears in the existence of cotton fiber; and fiber finally disappears in its constituent elements. These elements too ultimately disappear in the being of consciousness. The being of consciousness, on the other hand, has nothing causal behind it in which it disappears, for it is conscious of its own beingness. Thus we cut open an infallible path leading us to what is ultimately real, along with arriving at the certainty for which we search. Modern science resorts to almost the same path in its search for reality, only that scientists do not admit that names, mental images and objects together make up the world. The aggregate of perceptible objects, in the understanding of science, constitutes the world. And what ultimately underlies the world's material appearance—energy—is thought by them as real.

Thus modern science also admits in principle that what really exists is that to which we finally come when advancing our search through the enumeration of, "This is real," "This is real." Yet what that reality—energy—is, still remains a conundrum. Vedanta, by defining the unreal as that which is fleeting, that which

is changeful, helps us in this matter. How does this criterion help us evaluate the conclusions of science? Is the reality of science a particle or wave, changeless or changeful, eternal or fleeting, one or many? Though the scientists wish their conclusion to be one, the energy they reveal is not one but many, each different in its intensity and nature. The life span of some of these energy forms is less than a hundred-thousandth of a second. Such dissimilarities as weak force, strong force and neutral force have also been discovered. In short, the ultimate reality scientists know is not one, not eternal, not changeless. Provable both as particle and wave, and for that matter as substance and no-substance, it remains a mystery for them. What is there underlying this mysterious, changeful, more-than-one form of energy? The mind or consciousness that knows them alone. This is the conclusion the Guru comes to in the present study.

In order to help us methodically decide what eternal Reality ultimately underlies all apparent existences, the Guru here conveniently makes use of the pot-clay analogy very famous in classical Vedanta. Pot, pan, plate, cup or whatever form the clay assumes, it never ceases to be clay. Likewise it is the consciousness-substance (*cit*) that assumes the forms of countless names, countless mental images, countless perceptible objects. Even while appearing as all these, it never ceases to be consciousness in essence. Its existence never ceases to be either.

The one everlasting consciousness (*cit*), what ultimately exists (*sat*), radiantly manifests itself eternally. This radiant self-manifestation of consciousness is known in Vedanta as *bhāna*. It causes the unfoldment of its own *ānanda* content as pleasurable, painful or indifferent experiences. This is true whether one realizes it being so or remains completely ignorant of it, as is clarified in the next verse.

VERSE EIGHT

Even in the state of being ignorant
 one's existence as well as its specific
 radiant self-manifestation does not remain unknown;
 so too is value experience,
 all three (*asti*, *bhāti*, *priya*) thus find expression;
 what is real in rope, in association with the idea of snake,
 we know, assumes a new this-ness.
 Well thought of, this analogy can be considered
 to illustrate the three-fold self-manifestation of consciousness.

Asti, *bhāti* and *priya* are three conjoined technical terms of Vedanta. *Brahman* or *ātmā*, we know, are defined as *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. These three are signified by the terms *asti*, *bhāti* and *priya*. *Sat* means existence, and is experienced by an individual as "I exist." This experience of self-existence is referred to as *asti*, meaning "something

exists.” The essential content of self-existence, we know, is pure consciousness, *cit*, the consciousness of beingness, effulgence in essence. Never remaining inactive, it incessantly finds expression as continuous, stream-like experiences. This knowing function of *cit* is named *bhāti*, meaning “the shining forth of something.” Every such experience, more than an event of knowing, involves an evaluation as well, relating the known object to one’s own value notions or likes and dislikes, and thus treating it as pleasurable, painful or indifferent. This phase of evaluating function of consciousness is termed *priya*, meaning “the state of being dear.” *Asti*, *bhāti* and *priya*, in other words, are three facets of every individual’s conscious being.

Take the case of an ignorant person. He is not at all aware of the one Reality that exists underneath all that is perceivable and conceivable. In his perception, what is seen as the existential world is real. (That all such visibles are unreal we have already seen.) Those who perceive thus are called *ajñānins*, the ignorant. *Ajñāna*, ignorance, is the incorrect knowledge of treating the unreal as real. The *ajñāna*-causing mental function is what is known as *avidya*, nescience.

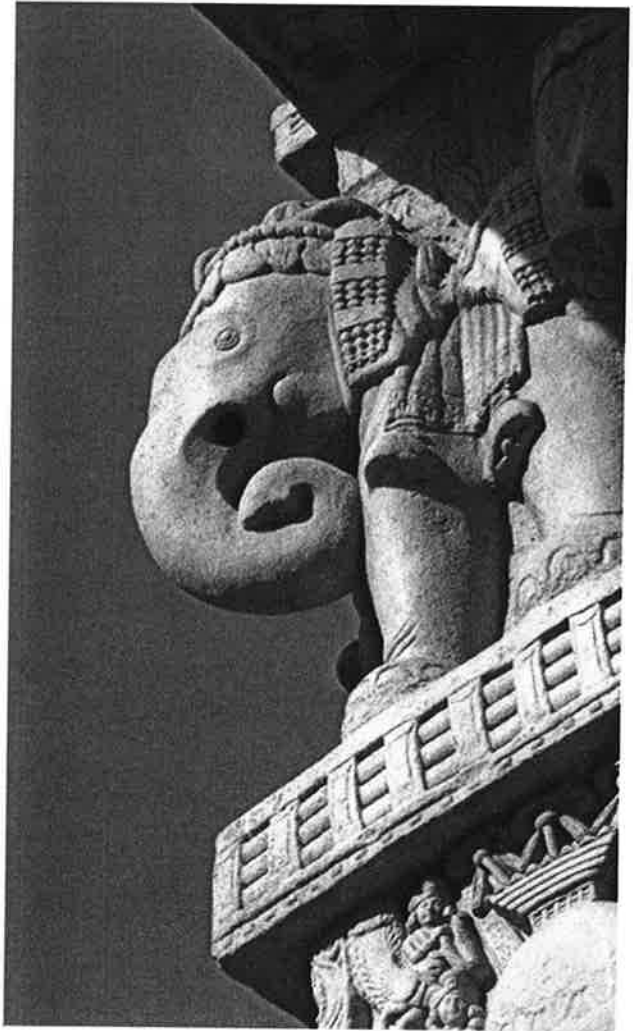
Ajñānins too have the sense of existence—the sense of self-existence and the sense of the world existing around them, never their absence. They too thus experience beingness or *asti*. Likewise the act of knowing goes on for them constantly. They are aware of the changing world as well as the person who perceives the changing world. Individual consciousness or mind thus finds expression as all these experiences, called *bhāti*, uninterrupted happiness. Every such act of knowing or experiencing, even in the case of the ignorant, is an event of evaluating what is experienced in terms of pleasure, pain or indifference. *Priya*, thus, is not absent in the knowing function even of the ignorant.

A *jñānin* perceives his own existence, his experiences, his pleasures and pains, merely as the *asti-bhāti-priya* facets of his own beingness. Its own cosmic counterpart, he sees, is what we call the world, the constantly changing, unpredictable facets of its appearance, and the pleasures and pains it entails. An *ajñānin*, on the other hand, is incapable of thinking of the Ultimate Reality. Yet in his case too, the *asti-bhāti-priya* trio is not irrelevant; it is only that he remains ignorant of its place in his life.

The Guru, in order to illustrate this point, resorts to the rope-snake analogy. The analogy, we know, is that of mistaking a piece of rope in twilight for a snake and thereby becoming frightened. In the perception of one who sees correctly what is really there, the rope alone has existence, rope alone is cognized as existing, and there is no frightening object at all. That person therefore remains fearless. The one who mistakes the rope for a snake has his own *asti* experience (that of the snake), *bhāti* experience (that he sees a snake), and *priya* experience (that it is a frightful being). Only that the trio in his case is much different from what is true for the *jñānin*.

In other words, both when a *jñānin* perceives consciousness alone as real and when an *ajñānin* sees the world as real, the trio of *asti-bhāti-priya* is equally

relevant—that consciousness exists, that consciousness functions, and that from consciousness well up pleasures and pains, are equally true. Only that the former person is aware of it being so and the latter is not. These three (*asti*, *bhāti* and *priya*), we should remember, are none other than the individuated facets of *sat-cit-ānanda*.



LETTER TO HEADS OF STATE

BY GARRY DAVIS

To presidents and prime ministers:

George W. Bush, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac, Ehud Olmert, Pervez Musharraf, Abdul Kalam, Hu Jintao, Kim Jong Il

Conscious of my rights and responsibilities as a member of the total world community, I cannot stand by while governments pursue a policy of nuclear attack regardless of the seeming justifications they may devise. Such an attack is not only criminal under international law, but morally and biologically indefensible. Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction. They are indiscriminately destructive and they poison our atmosphere, causing deaths around the world for many thousands of years. They threaten the very existence of humanity.

Prevention of such an attack and eliminating the threat and capability to launch nuclear war is therefore a necessary requirement for the safety and wellbeing of the human community, as well as for its environment on planet Earth.

Due to your publicly-declared nuclear policies which threaten humanity, the undersigned, as a stateless World Citizen and as a representative of a global constituency of sovereign citizens, will seek your indictment as individuals for the following crimes under the statutes of the International Criminal Court at The Hague:

- (a) The crime of genocide;
- (b) Crimes against humanity;
- (c) War crimes.

The indictment's Table of Authorities will include:

- the St. Petersburg Declaration, 1868;
- the Hague Convention, 1899;
- the IVth Hague Convention, 1907;
- the Aristide-Briand Pact, 1909;
- the Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928;
- the Nuremberg Principles, 1945;
- the United Nations Charter, 1945;
- the Tokyo Charter, 1947;
- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948;
- the World Health Organization Constitution, 1948;
- the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, 1948;
- the Geneva Convention, 1949;

- UN Resolution 16653 (XV), Nov. 24, 1961;
- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966;
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966;
- UN Resolution 33/71, 1980;
- the Rights of the Child Convention; 1989.

Included in the injunction will be a mandamus for total disarmament of all nuclear weaponry and facilities as well as damages which would be assigned to social needs of the human community along with protection of the global environment.

Article 27 of the Statute of the ICC – “Irrelevance of official capacity” - codifies the legal fact, which has been part of the body of international law since 1950, that “...as a Head of State or Government...a member of a Government or parliament...shall in no case exempt a person from criminal responsibility under this Statute...” In short, you enjoy no personal “immunity” from international legal indictment as individual heads of state.

The Preamble and Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights furthermore mandate that global law and its institutions outlaw war itself throughout the world. Such evolution in the application of law is essential for the safety and wellbeing of the human community, as well as its environment on planet Earth.

Yours sincerely,
Garry Davis

MY EXTENDED FAMILY

BY EMMA WALKER

These paintings are part of a body of work that has been produced in the past year. But in reality they are the result of all the years that I have been painting. Each work that I do somehow informs the next and so all the paintings that I have ever produced form a kind of family with an ever growing ancestry. With these new works, I feel that I have pushed through into a new territory that I have been trying to reach for a long time. The subject matter is not new. Landscape and the natural world seem to be recurring themes that I never tire of. But the manner in which these works have been painted has become much looser. Painting fearlessly, without thought is not as easy as some might think as they stand before a Jackson Pollack, declaring that their 3 year old could do better. The fact is that a 3 year old would do it better. It seems that as we age we gradually build up layers of conditioning and fear, ending up terribly weighed down by baggage laded with expectations and conventions that can make our every move self-conscious and laborious. The primary aim in my practice is to try and work without these limitations. I am finally starting to feel that I am getting closer to this objective.

To write about a specific work is slightly strange for me, as painting is so much about the process and not so much about the end result. Once a painting is finished it seems to have a life of it's own and hopefully speaks for itself. The end result is of course always fascinating for me to behold. That instant when my mind, hand and heart all seem to know at the same time that the moment of completion has finally arrived. When I am really happy with the outcome, there is often an extraordinary sense of surprise and wonder. "Where did this come from?" "Is it really me that made this painting or were there other forces at work?" I have come to the conclusion that there are certainly other forces involved. Love, confusion, the muse, poetry, fatigue, joy, longing, music, grief, passion, literature, annoyance, dreams. The list could be endless. Everything that informs my self is drawn into the process. This all has something to do with the Divine of course...

The way I paint is a very intuitive process. Decisions about where to go next in terms of composition, palette, textures and subject, get made on the hop. I never start a painting with much of an idea of what the outcome will be. Instead I always work using many layers of paint and I enjoy manipulating paint in a variety of different ways to build up rich and varied surfaces. In this way the painting can reveal itself gradually and be visually interesting in a variety of ways.

I seldom paint from "life". The landscapes that emerge on my canvasses are all and none of the numerous landscapes that I have walked through and have drunk

with my eyes and other senses. I guess they are more about the essence of landscape than an actual depiction. For me this is much more rewarding than trying to represent something literally. To capture the atmosphere and the feeling of a place is more my aim. In doing this, I hope that the people that look at my work will have some kind of an emotional response and that these invocations of landscape will somehow resonate with others.

The technique of painting in many layers is also symbolically important. It is as if each layer somehow contributes to giving the painting a sense of history and a real physical presence. Like organs, bones, muscles, arteries, veins and skin all being essential and intrinsic parts of the human body. So too does each layer of paint need to be applied (even if some of them end up completely obscured by the next) to make up the finished piece. Sometimes I will photograph a work in its various stages and it is fascinating to see how many paintings there were beneath that final layer. Perhaps this is analogous to a life lived. All of those countless moments that contribute to the experience of being alive and of the person that we become through all of these experiences. Painting is my way of making some sense of the world and my particular incarnation in it.



CLOUD SHADOW II by Emma Walker



SQUALL by Emma Walker



THE ROAD AHEAD by Emma Walker



SQUALL II by Emma Walker

THE TRAJECTORY OF SCIENCE

BY SCOTT TEITSWORTH

I have always loved math and physics. Raised an atheist squarely in the rational scientific tradition of the west, for a time I narrowed my sights to the visible and calculable aspects of the universe. But it was never fully satisfying. There was a nagging sense that a lot was missing. On my college entrance exams I got the highest score possible for math, but that achievement didn't reflect a growing discomfort I was feeling about the limitations of academic reasoning.

Ultimately, calculus did me in. It's based on a core assumption that a near approach to a thing tangentially is as good as being right on the mark. I couldn't accept it in my gut even though it "worked" in practice, because I knew perfectly well there was an infinite range within any distinction, near or not. An analogy can never be the thing itself. Life can be viewed as an extended series of analogies, a struggle through a wide range of disciplines to approximate the absolute essence of what is. I was unwilling to make the leap of faith that modern math requires, to presume that it accomplishes what other systems aim for and fail, when it so plainly didn't. After a second try, at university, I abandoned mathematics and went looking for another way to enter into life exactly rather than approximately. But I never gave up the enjoyable mental exercises of playing around with numbers and rational concepts.

For several centuries Western science prided itself on its ability to limit its purview to observed objects. It studied existence in isolation, *sat* if you will. Only at the beginning of the twentieth century did the observer, *chit*, become recognized as an inescapable factor in the scientific outlook. Grudgingly, the witnessing mind has been incorporated into the picture. But thus far is far enough! Unwilling to fully embrace *sat-chit-ananda*, the whole enchilada, science has been grimly determined to not admit the value factor, *ānanda*, into the equation. The insistence that there is no meaning to the universe is one of the key a priori assumptions of the scientific faithful. Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the foundation of that assumption too is beginning to crumble to nothing.

Several recent books have addressed the new directions of scientific thought, none as exciting or coherent in my estimation than *Science and the Akashic Field*, by Ervin Laszlo (Inner Traditions, 2004), luminously edited by our own Nancy Yeilding. Laszlo has spent nearly half a century pursuing a Theory of Everything as a philosopher and scientist, teaching at Yale for many years and lecturing widely around the globe. While motivated by the classic questions of philosophy, Who am

I? and Whence this world? Laszlo chose science as his route, “because empirical science is the human endeavor that is the most rigorously and systematically oriented toward finding the truth about the world, and testing its findings against observation and experience.” In other words, he felt science was the most reliable approach to valid knowledge. Laszlo eloquently addresses the impending transition to a new outlook early in the book:

“The depressive futility inherent in the negative face of Western civilization has been spelled out by the renowned philosopher Bertrand Russell: ‘That man is the product of causes which had no provision of the end they were achieving,’ he wrote, ‘his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and the whole temple of man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.’

“But the face of progress need not be so cold, nor the face of fall so tragic. All the things that Russell mentions are not only not ‘beyond dispute,’ and not only are they not ‘nearly certain’; they may be the chimeras of an obsolete view of the world. At its cutting edge, the new cosmology discovers a world where the universe does not end in ruin, and the new physics, the new biology, and the new consciousness research recognize that in this world life and mind are integral elements and not accidental by-products. All these elements come together in the informed universe—a comprehensive and intensely meaningful universe, cornerstone of the unified conceptual scheme that can tie together all the diverse phenomena of the world: the integral theory of everything. (pp. 14-15)

Of course, Russell also pointed out “The fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence that it is not utterly absurd; indeed, in view of the silliness of the majority of mankind, a widespread belief is more often likely to be foolish than sensible.” At the time he said this he was bucking some pretty absurd popular notions, but later in the century scientific materialism enjoyed a few decades of widespread popularity and is now showing signs of foolishness too.

Meaning has come to be associated with religion—a subset of philosophy—so science has made an a priori assumption that it must avoid it to remain scientific. Ancient notions of God in their simplistic modern guises certainly appear unreasonable, and their presentation as being on a par with science is laughable if not scary. And by presuming an all-controlling God, science can be seen as completely beside the point and unnecessary. However, information is flooding in that in some mysterious way the unfoldment of life is far from a blind process.

Unfortunately, power mad religious bigots are, as always, muddying the waters. The current gambit is called “intelligent design,” an innocuous sounding name for a



vengeful God bent on empowering his followers to eradicate all nonbelievers. Scientists are well advised to be skeptical, since religion has proved so often to be a perfect vehicle for the human race to bathe in blood. While scientists can be plenty arrogant, they generally stop short of insisting on the eradication of nonaligned parties.

An article challenging “intelligent design,” by Daniel C. Dennett, an apostle of traditional Darwinism, appeared recently in the New York Times. While exposing the ulterior motives of intelligent design’s proponents, it was rife with categorical and unproven statements like “The designs found in nature are nothing short of brilliant, but the process of design that generates them is utterly lacking in intelligence of its own.” That’s an a priori assumption on a par with belief in God. I’d love to know how to correctly distinguish brilliant from intelligent, myself. Dennett also says, “[Let’s] look at what contemporary biology has demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt: that natural selection - the process in which reproducing entities must compete for finite resources and thereby engage in a tournament of blind trial and error from which improvements automatically emerge - has the power to generate breathtakingly ingenious designs.” Ingenious—how does that differ from intelligent? Essentially, all that’s asserted is that a theory, natural selection, has the ability to generate incredible designs. True or not, that doesn’t prove it’s how the universe works. The blindness of nature is an assumption, nothing more. Furthermore, if the theory is beyond all reasonable doubt, all doubt is by definition unreasonable, so you must either believe it or go to hell. Sound familiar?

Entrenched beliefs in purely blind randomness stem from the admirable methodology required of scientists to strive to not make assumptions. But simply because blindness is assumed doesn’t mean blindness is thereby proven. Science is now coming to the realization that some form of intelligent patterning is accelerating creation and evolution to a tremendous degree.

Laszlo’s book on the quantum akashic field points out that since up until recently intelligence was automatically subtracted from the modeling equations in physics, many presumptions but also lots of evidence of how such an unlikely “accident” as our universe could come about were scrupulously eliminated. New mathematical models for calculating true randomness in evolution indicate an order of quadrillions of years of blindly mucking about to produce a simple mammal-like creature, roughly a million times longer than the calculated age of our universe. And that’s after starting with a viable universe at the outset. The highly respected mathematician Roger Penrose has calculated the probability of



hitting on a universe as perfect as ours via a truly random process from among all possibilities as one in 10 to the 10 to the 123rd power, which is by far the largest number I've ever heard of, even larger than a googolplex.

The key idea in the new physics to make all this rapid evolution possible is that the quantum vacuum, nicknamed the ZPF or zero point field, isn't empty as it appears, it's packed with an unbelievable amount of energy. Would you believe one hundred orders of magnitude greater than the energy at the center of the sun in each cubic centimeter? That's one estimate. And the energy is holographic, meaning each part replicates the whole and is able to store vast amounts of information. The kind of information that could even contain the results of previous random universes, forming patterns in the ZPF that could assist the current universe avoid unsuccessful strategies and hone in on the tried and true.

The equations keep insisting the energy's there, but for a long time mathematicians conveniently deleted it, as it's not perceptible. Now some of them are wondering if they were deleting God, in a manner of speaking. The ZPF is very nearly omniscient, certainly omnipresent, and approaching infinitely omnipotent. If it only had a mean streak....

Nitya Chaitanya Yati, in his *Psychology of Darśanamālā*, points out why resolving this paradox is so important: "As a result of the conditioning of the faithful by the established religions, and of the skeptics by the categorical statements of science, man has become bifurcated in his sense of his true beingness. Having thus separated him from his true ground—that substratum that gives rise to all beings—those responsible for this have largely repressed in him the sense of wonder and delight in which one who knows his true being lives all the time. Looking in vain for some religious statement or scientific formula which will neatly encompass the whole mystery of being, so that we can file it away in our box of consumer goods and calendar maxims, we have forgotten that the mystery we seek to penetrate is our own mystery." (p. 56)

Science and religion are equally guilty of suppressing humanity's natural ebullience. A meaningless universe is little better than one run as a dictatorship by a heartless Overlord. Neither encourages us to become more than worms, victims of circumstances beyond our control. Happily, there is a strong movement nowadays toward a much more optimistic view of our place in space.

In Laszlo's book, the limitations of Darwinism and other branches of science are thoroughly explored. It appears that science is on the verge of another major

era. Many of the old hypotheses are breaking down in the way Newton's mechanical universe broke down with the advances of relativity. It may be that science is at last discovering the importance of meaning, which will validate the ancient seers' integration of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* as a complete unit of experience.

Basically, and in a non-fundamentalist sense, intelligence—or as it's put with due caution, patterning or in-formation—is being revealed more and more in scientific experiments. (Such patterning that guides and infuses the course of manifestation is what Indian psychologists call *vāsana* or incipient memories, by the way.) Laszlo includes reports of several fascinating experiments demonstrating that evolution takes place rapidly and far from randomly. They show very clearly that entities respond to environmental stresses by instantly mutating and quite frequently passing the mutations on to their progeny. It is incredibly exciting that experimental science is finding ways to go beyond Darwin and Newton, beyond blindness, into an intelligent universe brimming with consciousness. Once you grasp the absurdity of true randomness, the new directions make perfect sense. Sure, we should always guard against a provincial God creeping in to “skew the pitch” away from absolute neutrality, but having done that we can admit that there are still far more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. Conscious, meaningful intelligence may well be the very ground and purpose of existence, and it may reside everywhere, not just in some far off, imaginary deity. Laszlo gets to the nub of the argument in a section worth quoting at length:

“The ‘synthetic theory,’ the modern version of Darwinism, still insists that randomly produced genetic mutations and the chance fit of the mutants to the milieu evolve one species into another by producing new genes and new developmental genetic pathways, coding new and viable organic structures, body parts, and organs.

“Yet random rearrangements within the genome are entirely unlikely to produce viable species. The ‘search space’ of possible genetic rearrangements within the genome is so enormous that random processes are likely to take incomparably longer to produce new species than the time that was available for evolution on this planet. The probabilities are made a great deal worse by the consideration that many organisms, and many organs within organisms, are ‘irreducibly complex.’ A system is irreducibly complex, said the biologist Michael Behe, if its parts are interrelated in such a way that removing even



one part destroys the function of the whole system. To mutate an irreducibly complex system into another viable system, every part has to be kept in a functional relationship with every other part throughout the entire transformation. Missing but a single part at a single step leads to a dead end. How could this level of constant precision be achieved by random piecemeal modifications of the genetic pool?

“An isolated genome working through randomly generated mutations is not likely to produce a new and functional mutant. If such a mutant is in fact produced—and produced time and time again in the course of evolution—the mutation of the genome must be precisely correlated with conditions in the organism’s environment. This correlation was often suspected, but in the twentieth century it was dismissed as a mysterious form of ‘pre-adaptation’—the idea that mutants are somehow spontaneously tuned to the conditions a given species finds in its milieu. Yet unless mutations in the genome are in fact precisely tuned to conditions in their milieu, the resulting mutants will not survive: they will be eliminated by natural selection.

“How is it, then, that complex mutants have *not* been eliminated—how could the biosphere be populated by millions of species more complex than algae and bacteria? This could only be if mutations in the genome are highly and quasi-instantly responsive to the enviroing conditions that affect the organism—if genes and environments form an interconnected system. Evidence is now available that this is indeed the case.

“The evidence is statistical, and it goes back to the beginning of life on this planet. The oldest rocks date from about four billion years, while the earliest and already highly complex forms of life (blue-green algae and bacteria) are over three and a half billion years old. Because even the simplest forms of life manifest a staggering complexity, if the existing species had relied on chance mutations alone, this level of complexity is not likely to have emerged within the relatively short period of about 500 million years. After all, the assembly of a primitive self-replicating prokaryote (primitive nonnucleated cell) is already a complex undertaking. It involves building a double helix of DNA consisting of some 100,000 nucleotides, with each nucleotide containing an exact arrangement of thirty to fifty atoms, together with a bilayered skin and the proteins that enable the cell to take in food. This construction requires an entire series of reactions, finely coordinated with each other.



“It is not enough for genetic mutations to produce one or a few positive changes in a species; they must produce the full set. The evolution of feathers, for example, does not produce a reptile that can fly: radical changes in musculature and bone structure are also required, along with a faster metabolism to power sustained flight. Each innovation by itself is not likely to offer evolutionary advantage; on the contrary, it is likely to make an organism less fit than the standard form from which it departed. And if so, it would soon be eliminated by the pitiless mechanisms of natural selection. The cosmologist and mathematical physicist Fred Hoyle has pointed out that life evolving purely by chance is about as likely as a hurricane blowing through a scrap yard assembling a working airplane.” (pp. 86-88)

Another biological anomaly indicating the fundamental impact of consciousness is the way many diverse entities function together in a virtuoso display of life expression. Laszlo includes a fascinating section on what’s called whole-system coherence:

“No matter how diverse the cells, organs, and organ systems of the organism, in essential respects they act as one. According to Mae-Wan Ho they behave like a good jazz band, where every player responds immediately and spontaneously to however the others are improvising. The super jazz band of an organism never ceases to play in a lifetime, expressing the harmonies and melodies of the individual organism with a recurring rhythm and beat but with endless variations. Always there is something new, something made up, as it goes along. It can change key, change tempo, or change tune, as the situation demands, spontaneously and without hesitation. There is structure, but the real art is in the endless improvisations, where each and every player, however small, enjoys maximum freedom of expression, while remaining perfectly in step with the whole.” (pp. 83-84)

Biologist Teilhard de Chardin studied cells as autonomous units that function together to make individual beings while seeming to have no awareness of the whole of which they are a part, and then wondered in turn if there was a greater organism in which each of us is like a cell. How would we know? How could we find out?

Scientists are, predictably, not flocking to embrace these cutting edge ideas in anything close to a stampede. It’s good to keep one foot firmly planted on known ground when taking a step forward. The old paradigm is staunchly maintained in a highly readable book, *Parallel Worlds*, by Michio Kaku. Still, the “old” ways are far from conservative, they’re pretty new themselves. It’s amazing how far out even mainstream physics has gotten these days, while upholding a veneer of humdrum respectability. Infinite universes, multiple dimensions, wormholes

through time, neutron stars rotating more than a thousand times a second, you name it. Or how about this: due to the counterbalancing of positive and negative forces in the quantum flux, Kaku claims a universe like ours could be created from “a ridiculously small net amount of matter, perhaps as little as an ounce.” The old guard reminds me of how back in the 1960s we would be tripping out of our minds on LSD through dimension after dimension without any solid grip at all, but knew how to pretend that we were “normal”—at least enough to fool the police.

Fascinating as it is, the book abounds with examples of breathtaking assumptions cloaked in colossal arrogance. Truly, scientists and fundamentalist religious types have much in common. Gurus have taught by example that if you're in contact with truth there is no need to swagger, but these guys clearly aren't listening. On page 297, Kaku quotes astronomer Donald Brownlee: “Mother Nature wasn't designed to make us happy.” How's that for a priori! Why would there be any other reason to bother creating a universe? Here's my favorite of many outlandish claims:

“Whether we like it or not, if we are to pursue a career in science, eventually we have to learn the ‘language of nature’: mathematics. Without mathematics, we can only be passive observers to the dance of nature rather than active participants.... Galileo once wrote, ‘[The universe] cannot be read until we have learnt the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without which means it is humanly impossible to understand a single word.’” (pp. 217-218)

As a matter of fact, academic disciplines like math turn you into a passive observer and away from active participation in life, if anything does. Kaku goes on to point out how mathematics and physics are so great because they can create “models” of the universe. There isn't even a claim of true unitive understanding, only of accurate models, analogies, which anyone who examines the history of science can see are constantly being modified and amended, and occasionally thrown out completely. For instance, Benoit Mandelbrot has demonstrated, within the last forty years, that in fact triangles and circles are not the geometry of nature, and has introduced a new mathematical model that is a much better replica of the world we see. Luckily for us, the history of the universe is not merely the history of humans making increasingly accurate models of reality, or we would never have developed beyond the plankton stage. You can't eat analogies. All that aside, by citing a single statement from a scientist terrorized by the Inquisition as “proof,” Kaku claims religious, poetic, artistic, literary, mystical, and all other nonmathematical forms of understanding the universe are a priori invalidated. That's politely called hubris.

Still, the fantasies of scientists are incredibly fascinating, the religious myths of our day, brimming with imagination and subtlety. If you can get past the hubris, there are some great stories being cooked up. For instance, there is a lot of excitement nowadays about string theory. The gist is that the universe is not made up of tiny point-like particles, but of even tinier little violin strings. Once particles are modeled as strings, the mathematics comes into resonance, but only if you assume 11 or 26 dimensions. This is a very poetic model, with infinite universes vibrating to the music of the spheres, and all the known particles representing harmonics of the strings. Sadly, the strings are too small to re-gut your guitar with: a billion, billion times smaller than your everyday proton. Moreover, you have to add in a bunch of imaginary particles to even things out, but it's possible they'll turn up some day, since they're mathematically logical. I don't know about you, but I LOVE this stuff!

Too bad the wisdom of the ages gets short shrift from most scientists, while imaginary particles are insisted to be real. If anyone wonders why we keep destroying intricate civilizations and ecosystems with our "progress," maybe this is the place to take a good hard look. We can only hope that the far more humane and meaningful models of scientists like Laszlo will turn the tide before we reduce our wonder-filled and harmoniously intelligent planet to a desert of unconscious particles, thereby fulfilling our own bitter prophesy of long ago.

THE LADDER

BY EMILY TEITSWORTH

My heels beat like rain on a stone floor—
call and response, the living striking life into the dead.

This first day of the new world I sacrifice detachment
to colder desire, the power of my most private needs.

In my spine a whirlpool, what is and what was
chasing each other like hounds.

The fourth rung of the ladder suspended in blue space,
a last step towards speaking my fears.

Words bloom like fiery lotus petals from my mouth
and a monsoon of fire breathes over the hills.

The earth rises as a dream before me.
Night becomes day, I sing an elegy to the darkness.

At the end, each shard of sky, one million voices
chanting their master's name, and then nothing
but smoke rising on the wind

TWELVE EASY STEPS TO LOSE YOUR MIND

BY SUNITA PILLAY

Step 1. *Make sure you have more than one particular goal in mind.*

Pursue different paths simultaneously in order to divert your energies and scatter your force. You should begin several projects and never complete any of them. Move on to the next thing. It helps to *talk* about what you are going to do, yet take no action. Don't forget to keep expecting that each of your various endeavors will provide you with fulfillment or monetary gain. A frenetic lifestyle will help your mind to un-focus.

Step 2. *Dwell upon past issues and let them permeate your subconscious.*

This is the best way to allow fear into the psyche, which is an essential component to an unsound mind. Not being able to let go of the past is essential, so spend an hour each day visualizing the particulars of a humiliating or depressing past event. Relive all of the details and dwell on what you could have or should have done. Maintain insecurities at all times, and be afraid to let them go.

Step 3. *Work long hours on something you hate for the money.*

Spend time figuring out which activities you detest, and simply find a job that focuses on those. The more time you spend on the job, the more you will come to hate yourself, but know that you can take comfort in your paycheck.

Step 4. *Never sit with the uncomfortable silence.*

One of the best things about our modern society is that we can use distractions to our advantage. We never have to be alone with our thoughts. Turn on the television, as that is the easiest way to deflect the attention from ourselves. Cell phones, walkmans, chat rooms, or an overactive social calendar can all serve a useful distractive purpose. Becoming a workaholic helps, too. Lord knows what your suppressed thoughts will reveal, so avoid silence at all costs.

Step 5. *Don't live simply.*

Accumulate material things and become attached to them. You should buy things to make yourself feel better. Seriously consider complicating your life by basing your happiness on events beyond your control.

Step 6. *Never really listen to others.*

It's important to listen to another just long enough to formulate what you're going to say in response. Keep all conversations competitive, whether serious or humorous. Try to be right and rarely give anyone else credit. This applies, of course, to all conversations, except those that involve an employer.

Step 7. *Never seek the wisdom of the ancients.*

This will only bring mental and spiritual clarity.

Step 8. *Don't open your mind to possibility.*

You're only going to disappoint yourself, so you might as well not dream.

Step 9. *Never use your intuition.*

Do not trust yourself. You are not a part of the divine play. You are not God. It helps not to think very much of yourself. Self-flagellation may be an option for extreme cases of over-identification with the divine.

Step 10. *Keep repeating destructive patterns.*

Wash your hands repeatedly but forget what's truly unclean.

Step 11. *Fix the external aspects of yourself and neglect the internal.*

Getting a Botox injection is easier than delving deeply into your pain.

Step 12. *Never meditate upon your impending death.*

Accepting your death is the only true way to embrace your life and heal your mind. *Why on earth* would you want to do that?

CREATION MYTH

BY VYASA PRASAD

One Alone. In the beginning it was as if Non-existent.

Actually we do not know if it was existent or non-existent because knowledge was not divided into the knower and the known. Maybe it was Darkness or the Void. Or maybe it was consciousness embedded in Consciousness. We cannot even say that it was, for time was not fragmented into the past, present and future. Only a *mysterium tremendum*, pregnant with possibility, an unknown wonder pervading itself, with no nonliving or living entity whatsoever. Not a sound to disturb the Silence, not a form to occupy space. Nothingness, nothingness, nothingness.

Yet this apparent nothingness harbored a quiescent knowledge, for the vastness of eternity conceived a dimensionless location from where originated a stir, a pulse. The ripple that reverberated was the genesis of time, and that instance was followed by another and a sequence began. Time was created and together with the movement of the spreading ripples, space. As time and space came into existence, the quiescent consciousness seemed to become chaotic with no purpose, no meaning, lacking structure and function. It seemed disastrous, but the primordial consciousness was also an intelligent knowledge principle in which a homeostatic possibility merged the chaos into itself. This was none other than absolute Love. At once the disorderliness was overwhelmed by this shining wonder. In the presence of Love, structures began to organize themselves. Rules were laid out and the elementary particles began to emerge in pairs, each embraced by its counterpart.

As the grand drama of the cosmos began, joy and creative happiness pervaded the cosmos, even though there were few forms and structures were yet unfinished. Mathematical law was the first tool used by the self-aware knowledge to structure the all-pervasive energy expanding in all directions. Information and energy combined to give shape to ideas through dialectical formulation. Energy began to flow in very precise spins, like eddies in a river, creating matter magically as if out of nothingness. The attraction and repulsion of the basic blocks of prime matter brought more complex forms into existence. The primordial life principle pervaded the newly formed matter in a hylozoic fashion. It was miraculous and marvelous. In a short while the laws became self-propagating and self-proliferating. The limits became apparent only when time and space seemed to culminate, or there was disharmony with Love. Increasing complexity led to imperfection and accretions of ignorance appeared on the scene.

Since relative time had now become operational, it took billions of years for matter to settle down. The potent transformation continued in one form

or another, at the same time there came to be stable masses where the elements remained relatively unchanged. In these circumstances a new drama took place in which elements combined in a very precise manner and became self-generating creatures. A stable environment assisted these creatures in their development and they were called living because of their stimulus and response. From the mineral world, in association with the sun and the moon, there came heliotropic plants that were rooted to the ground. In the waters of the oceans that girdled the earth there emerged creatures gifted with mobility and the ability to swim. Some even had the freedom to move on land. The creative principle, never at rest, continued to express itself in myriad ways. Like a creative, intelligent artist or a poet with a fecund imagination, the primordial consciousness operating from the core began to relate with its own manifestation at the periphery in a variety of ways. The centrifugal and centripetal game that ensued created one creature after another. But bewildered by the grandeur of the surroundings in which they were living, they were largely compelled to act on their self-preservative instincts.

Into this blindly instinctual world there came a higher manifestation of intelligence. These complex beings were able to understand the meaning and purpose of the grand universe and all the creatures that inhabited it. Even these beings had limitations, but being blessed with an innate ability to invent language, they were able to understand the visible as a manifestation of the intelligible and also transform the visible into the intelligible through ingenious symbols. Most of them were fearful and could only huddle together, but a few became bold and ventured to explore outward and inward and put searching questions. At first they made up stories to keep themselves amused and to explain things they could not understand. But then following generations became wiser and invented many devices to make their explanations lucid. The wisest among them were also the most kind and generous and they gave their fellow beings the knowledge that would make them happy and set them free. Thus by finalized Word-wisdom the perennial, primordial quiescent original knowledge, without beginning or end, came to know itself through its manifestation. Those who know That live in Wonder.

ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA TEMPLE

BY NATARAJA GURU & SWAMI JOHN SPIERS

In February of 1908 Narayana Guru installed the *Śrī Jagannātha* Temple in Tellicherry, Kerala State. This was two years after forming, with the poet Kumaran Asan, the *Jñānodāya* Yogam. Then in 1958 Nataraja Guru came to the temple to celebrate its Golden Jubilee. We are reprinting here both Nataraja Guru's message for that Jubilee and an article about the temple by Swami John Spiers.

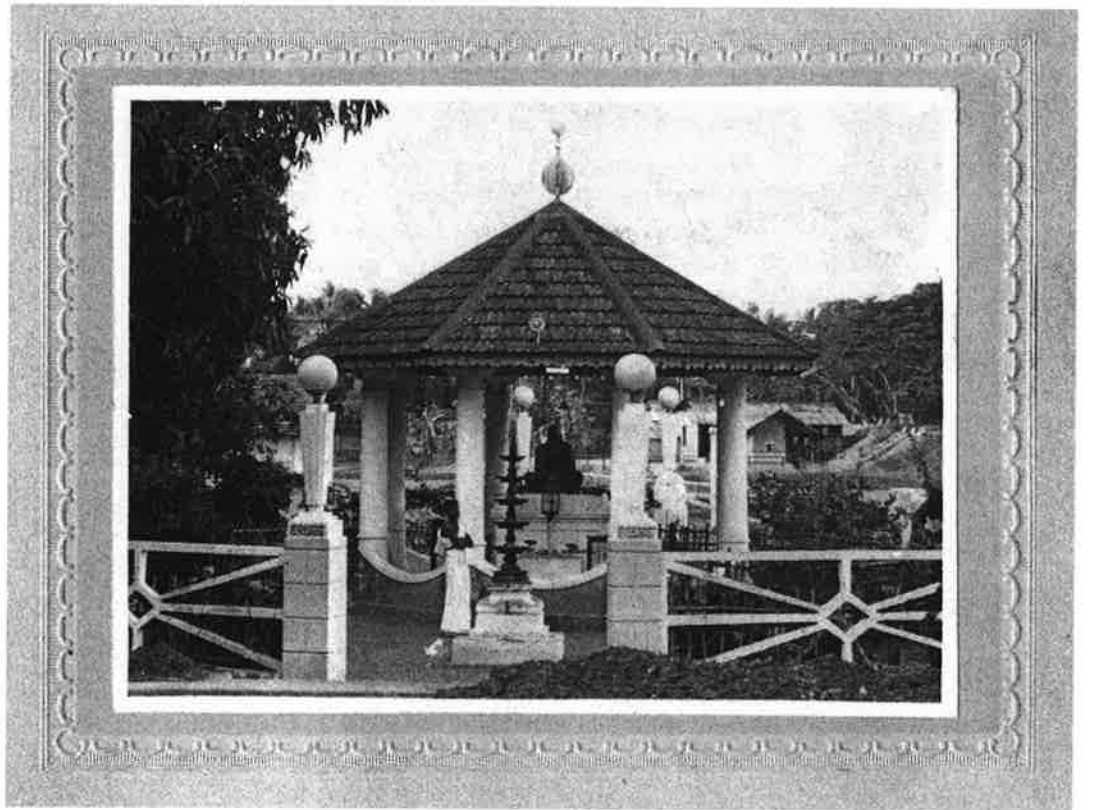
The *Śrī Jagannātha* Temple and the *Srī Jñānodāya* Yogam are twin foundations originating in the name of Guru Narayana. *Jagannātha* points to the principle of the Absolute which triumphs over all that is relative. It stands for the highest of human values and indicates a supreme ideal. It is a beacon that calls humanity to the goal of perfection. *Jñānodāya* refers to the dawn of wisdom by which *Jagannātha* is to be attained. These twin aspects have been operating on the socio-religious matrix of human society in the west coast of South India and have played their roles as inseparable poles of one another through fifty years up to today. Hand in hand, the institutions have grown from one milestone of progress to another. Today we look back only for one second to turn again quickly to the glory of the future that lies before us for the work of the Guru. Let me wish that we remain more and more true to the ideals and aspirations that the teachings of the great Guru have indicated to us. Let us once again close our ranks and march together to the goal of One Caste, One Religion and One Brotherhood of Blood for all humanity.

Nataraja Guru

The Temple of *Jagannātha* was installed fifty years ago by a *jagat* Guru. Everything about this great Guru Narayana was universal. That is the first significant note.

The word Jubilee is derived from the blowing of the ram's horn, the jubil, by the ancient Jews every fifty years. When this sounded it meant that all debts were cancelled, all lands were restored to their original owners, all in bondage were released. It is a message of freedom from all man-made restrictions.

Today the mighty conch shell will be blowing. It is an absolutist note which also signifies the jubilee of freedom for all who come to understand their real status with that Lord of the World whose rule is recognized in this great temple. To recognize this means that our thinking must be universalized. As devotees of this world master, this means that all other loyalties to family, to community, to State, to society and to nation, must be subordinate to Him. This is the second point of significance.



This means that our pursuit of money must be for the sake of *Jagannātha*, for the welfare of all. It means that “our people,” words that one often hears, must mean the entire human race. It means that our politics must be world politics. It means that we must in every way possible pattern our thinking always on world lines, whether in religion or in social outlook, in education or in the humble affairs of our homes. Our children as followers of this supreme Deity must be brought up as World Citizens.

All religious faiths recognize this Supreme who is worshipped here. There is therefore no conflict with any, be they Christian, Muslim or Buddhist, Jaina or Zarathustrian. All come to Him. And, as Narayana Guru said, the underlying religious principle is the pursuit of happiness. It is to find that happiness that people worship.

We may use intricate mudras and ceremonies in our worship if we wish, employ all the elements, fire and lights and the perfume of incense, and the offerings of food and water, all signifying the dedication of our senses to the Lord of All. But above all, our own ways of thinking must be reoriented. Our thought must be directed, as Sri Narayana’s was directed, away from the closed little groups and out towards the whole of humanity.

In doing so, we enter into identity with holy *Jagannātha*. In the affairs of life, we can always speak for the universal, helping those with lesser aims to see the rightness of the open world view. We can do this in the home by fairness to all; in councils by being generous in legislation; and seeing that nowhere is the world outlook of the world master broken.

Not for any lesser end than the universalization of all could a great Guru like Sri Narayana lay the foundations of this spiritual center. This indeed should be world territory, a spiritual world territory, where world thought and world principles and world vision are upheld. Let it be so!

Then blow the mighty conch notes in jubilation! Let this be a world note of joy and let these glad tidings of universal happiness spread! And may the Grace and Blessings of *Jagannātha* be with us all on this wonderful occasion!

Swami John Spiers

MEDITATIONS ON ŚRĪ CAKRA

BY GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

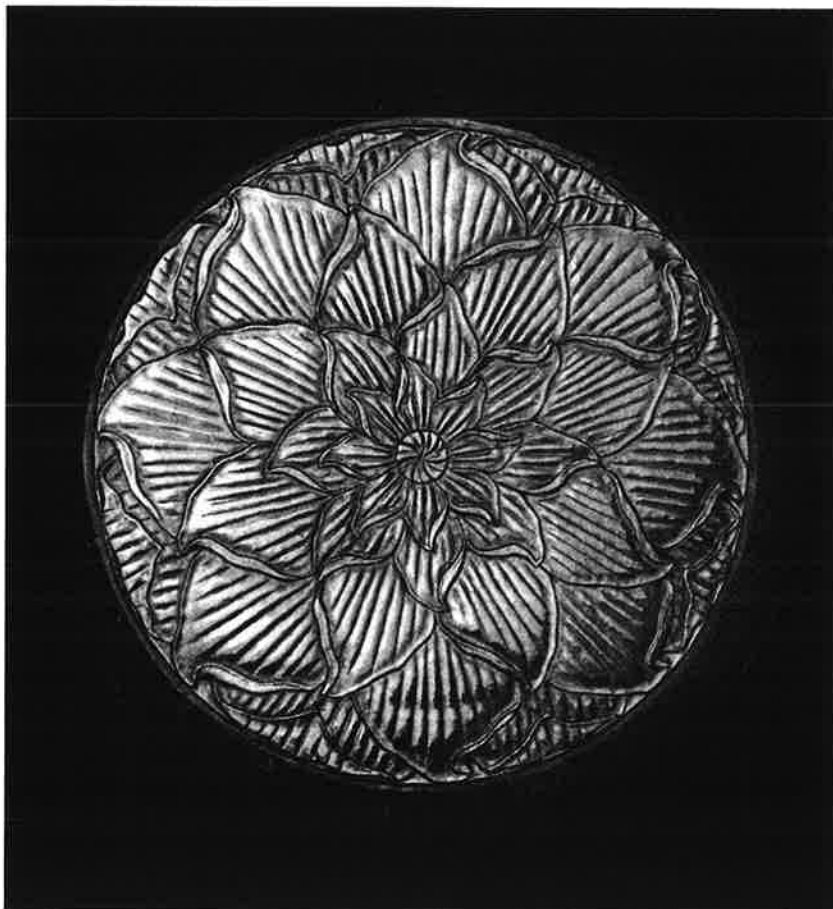
Meditation Fifty-three

O Mother of fulfillment, You have the discrimination to bind and you have the sovereignty to release. We have come to this day, either to terminate the sportive game of life, if that is your wish, or to go into another cycle of phenomenal transformation, if that is decreed by the nature of our attainment. You have a tri-basic law for bondage and cyclic phenomenal transformation. You also have another norm for re-establishing the Self on the throne of its supreme sovereignty and absolute freedom.

Many are the triads which you have brought into the constellation of phenomenal creation. First you choose the circumscription of the numinous factor by mirroring it, which retains the semblance of the self-founded luminosity of pure-consciousness. This is recognized in Vedānta as an obversion of *pratyang caitanya* into *ābāsa caitanya*. *Pratyang caitanya* stands for the uncontaminated original while *ābāsa caitanya* represents its phenomenal conversion. The triad implied here is *cit*, *caitanya* and *cetana* (the pure, the potential to manifest, and the manifested). Consequently there arises a ground that is veiled by phenomenality (*māyā*) and the superimposition of an unreal impression. The ground is the eternal which is not ever affected by either its being veiled (*āvaraṇa*) or by superimpositions made on it (*vikṣepa*).

The real ground is none other than pure consciousness. Because of its circumscription it comes to have the new status of the cognizing ego (*jñāta*). When subjectivity arises in it, objectivization (*jñeya*) automatically happens. As the prevailing consciousness exists with an oscillatory dynamic, knowledge is at one moment with the ego-self (subject) and the next moment with the object (*viśaya*). The oscillatory phenomena is recognized as knowledge (*jñāna*). Once the tri-basic schism is introduced into individuation, the whole psychological content of the individual is fated to live as a person with the Self (*ātman*) as the ground, the *antakarāṇa* or inner organ as the instrument of mentation and the senses as the bodily conditions to color the registry of every impression as an experience.

Every experience has a wakeful impact followed by a processing of it (*saṃskāra*) to be stored in memory (*citta*) for subsequent recall (*anusmaranam*). In the perceptual cognition (*jñāna*), willful action (*karma*), and affective evaluation



923

(*iccha*), triple qualities of your procreative nature enter as pure-clear (*sattva*), affective exaggeration (*rajas*), and inertial retention (*tamas*). You bring another kind of triad into the cognitive world of the assessment of truth—revelation of absolute truth (*paramārtha*), a comprehension of empirical reality (*yathārtha*), and an illusory perception of the unreal (*pratibhāsa*).

After these initial preparations the great game of cyclic birth and death is given with an interlude to attempt perfection which can qualify the person to be released. You are always watchful of this game with the eye of perfection, with the relativistic eye of approximation, and with the eye of assessment which decides how much of the incipient memory is left to be cleared away. Corresponding to the triple aspects of the spirit, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, you retain their negative conditional shadows *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. If we come to see the pure ground on which the drama has been enacted umpteen times and if we make a breakthrough, the bonds of ignorance in our hearts will automatically be cut asunder and we will wake into the pure state of fearlessness (*abhaya*). Then the game is over.

If any shade of doubt, fear or incipient memory is left, you are sure to notice it and begin the game all over again. This sport of yours is beginningless. Its substance is ignorance. Its modes are of multicolored variegations. Its coexisting devices are the principle of veiling, *āvarana*, and the principle of superimposition or projection, *vikṣepa*. In your benevolence you have decided the game should have appropriate termination. Such being your indelible law, we have only one course left to us. That is resigning everything to your unfailing wisdom.

O compassionate one, *Karuṇāmayī*, accept this final dedication and total admission of your sovereignty (*śaraṇam*). All the intrinsic values which have constituted this person in his or her individuation are given up here and now (*sarvadharmān parityajya*). We take refuge in you. *AUM SAUM*.

SPRING BREEZE

BY SMITHA HARIHARAN

The spring is your blessing,
fragrant with the fullness of beauty.
When your grace fills the flower baskets,
heart throbs quicken,
wrong notes change and merge in harmony.
When do I transform,
becoming the melody of your heart's beat?

A poem is like a flower,
poems like a flower garden...
But you gave me
an entire spring!
Can it be compared to winter?
Who but you can create
Such a spring of love?

With no change of space or time,
with no measure of pride and pelf,
the spring of love you sprout
in all, in no way anticipated,
quickens, flowers and fruits;
What matter if it's in my mind-garden
or in another's yard?
You never put a stop to
the eternal, endless beauty,
fragrance, passion and wakefulness.

When I see the gifts you pour out of your goodness,
what can I do but leave off all sorrow
and with a full heart, whisper,
Let it be!

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2006

BY GURU MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD

I, on behalf of Narayana Gurukula and its inmates, as well as of the East West University of Brahmavidya and its students, wish everyone a Happy New Year.

The same wish was offered last year also, as has been the case each every year. While greeting you the same way last year, all of South Asia was under the spell of the tsunami phenomenon. The sufferings and damages it caused are yet to be fully redressed. As a whole, 2005 was a year of calamities, many of them nature-made and a few caused by human greed and indiscrimination. Inordinately heavy downpour, earthquakes, cyclones and the like were the natural calamities. There were widespread complaints that the governments of the countries like the United States and India were not adequately prepared to ensure the safety of the people and to minimize their sufferings. The tsunami, as is well acknowledged, appears only once a century or so. Keeping a permanent administrative machinery ready to monitor and face such very rare phenomena seems meaningless.

Two kinds of preparedness, it seems, are necessary to face all such natural calamities. The first is to make use of all the available discoveries of modern science and technology to forewarn the public of such events as early as possible, particularly concerning disasters that repeat, to evacuate people from dangerous regions and also to rehabilitate them. The second is preparing people mentally to face boldly and with a sense of equanimity all unavoidable calamities, even that of one's own death, that appear as nature unfolds its own creative urge of which destruction or dissolution form an integral part. Many cries about the lack of the first sort of unpreparedness gain publicity. While the latter is equally important, no one seems to complain about it.

A great teaching of the Bhagavad Gita is:

“For something unavoidable
you have no reason to grieve.” (Chapter 2, verse 27)

Everyone craves for pleasing experiences and the avoidance of sufferings. We simply remain blind to the fact that what makes life really happy is finding oneself midway between pleasure and pain. Narayana Guru says on this:

“He who keeps to the middle position
enjoys everlasting happiness.” (*Svanubhāva Gīti*, 15)

What man needs is the enlightened boldness to treat favorable and unfavorable events, both in the individual and global realms of life, with a sense of equanimity, and the enthusiasm and steadiness to react with discrimination as situations demand. All natural calamities, not excluding one's own death, are to be treated with such an attitude.

Last year the tsunami phenomenon shook India terribly, and many spiritual movements and organizations took up extensive relief and rehabilitation activities. Why did the Narayana Gurukula, a spiritual movement, not do so? This is a question that may have risen in the minds of at least a few.

Being directly engaged in relief and rehabilitation activities pertains to the first sort of preparedness already mentioned. Many are the individuals and public movements, including government machineries, to do such works. But only a very few are there to enlighten people on the second sort of preparedness. The responsibility taken up by the Narayana Gurukula is of the second type. The former is more akin to what in India is known as *pravṛtti-mārga*, the way of direct action, while the latter is related to *nivṛtti-mārga*, the way of withdrawing from direct action. Narayana Gurukula enlightens and emboldens people to face all the tragedies of life. This is a humanitarian activity, though of a more subtle level. At the same time, we appreciate and feel happy about all the good works performed by numerous individuals and movements.

Let this New Year also make our life really happy through the enlightenment to place ourselves midway between pain and pleasure. May the Blessings of the Eternal Guru be with us!

GURUKULA NEWS

The new prayer hall has been completed at the Varkala Gurukula and was dedicated in December 2005. A photograph is on page 64 of this issue.

The annual Gurukula Convention was held in late December with 300 disciples and friends attending the deliberations and more than a thousand people partaking of the meals served each day. Philosophical papers based on the *Darśanamālā* were presented and there were music and dance performances.

D.K. Printworld has issued a paperback edition of Guru Muni Narayana Prasad's book *Karma and Renunciation*. Guru is also working on his Malayalam commentary on the *Ashtavakra Gita*, on both English and Malayalam commentaries of the Chandogya Upanishad, and a Malayalam commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad. D.K. Printworld has also reissued Guru Nitya's book *Neither This Nor That but Aum*, now in its fourth edition.

The National Book Trust of India will soon be publishing the English translation of the *Collected Works of Narayana Guru*, with an introduction in regional languages by Guru Muni Narayana Prasad.

On May 14, 2006, a celebration of Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati's *māhāsamādhi* was held at the Fernhill Gurukula in Ooty. The guest speaker was Gen-yu Nonaka, chief priest of the Imaayamadaishi Temple in Kyushu, Japan. He spoke on "The Influence of Buddhism on Japanese Culture and Spirituality." There was also a video of the Imaayamadaishi Temple Festival and a presentation of Japanese dance. Later Sri Nedumangad Sivanandan and Smt.V. Sindhu gave a violin duet and Smt. P. Kanchana gave a classical Indian dance performance.

During February 2006 Nancy Yeilding gave a Sneha Samvada (love dialogue) at the Kanakamala Gurukula. The seminar focused on verses 44-49 of Narayana Guru's *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*. First the paradoxes that all faiths help their adherents to resolve, such as to protect and be protected and to love and be loved, were explored; then the ways to enhance one's ability to look beyond outer forms to the essence of commonality were studied. Each approach helped the participants to intimately realize Narayana Guru's verses. Evenings closed with music and dance.

There are now four email-based study groups centered around *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, which enable participants from all over the world to join together in spiritual community and deep Self-study. For information contact Nancy Yeilding at islandaranya@toast.net.

Sraddha Durand is translating Guru Nitya's taped talks and chantings to CDs. Those available are: Hymns and Poetry of Narayana Guru; What is Meditation?; *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* recitation in Malayalam and English; meditation on the Chandogya Upanishad; and classes on *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*, verses 1-4. These, along with a price list, are available at: 8311 Quail Hill Rd., Bainbridge Island, WA. 98110, USA; email is sraddha@mac.com.

Copies of *What Shall I Read?* by Swami John Spiers are available through: Poothatt Narayanan, 44/2819 "Manesha", Deshabhimani Rd., Cochin 682-017, Kerala, India; email is vignesh97@eth.net.

Garry Davis can be contacted at worldlaw@globalnetisp.net.

We continue to solicit and accept reminiscences on the history of the Gurukula and on personal experiences with the Gurus, as well as articles, poems and illustrations for consideration.

Web Addresses:

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

<http://homepage.mac.com/vyasa>

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

scottteitsworth.tripod.com ("Nitya Teachings")



ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

- Front Cover Lustration of the goddess *Lakṣmi*, stone carving, *Sāñci Stūpa*, Bihar, India, photograph, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- Back Cover Lotus *maṇḍala* (top) and *nāgā* (bottom), stone carvings, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photographs, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 5 Elephants, stone carvings, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photograph, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 7 Sacred footprints and *dharma* wheels, stone carving, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photograph, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 11 Swami John Spiers, Kaggalipuram Gurukula, India, 1970
- 17 Boating on a River in Autumn, Ch'en Huan, active early 17th century, ink on paper; from *The Orchid Pavillion Gathering* by the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2005
- 22 Landscape in the Style of Huang Kung-wang, Wang Yuan-ch'i, 1269-1354, ink on paper; from *The Orchid Pavillion Gathering* by the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2005
- 25 *Yakṣī* with elephant, stone carving, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photograph, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 27 Elephant, stone carving, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photograph, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 34 Cloud Shadow, oil on canvas, Emma Walker, 2005
- 35 Squall, oil on canvas, Emma Walker, 2005
- 36 The Road Ahead, oil on canvas, Emma Walker, 2005
- 37 Squall II, oil on canvas, Emma Walker, 2005

- 40-43 Sections of the *toranas*, stone carvings, *Sāñci Stūpa*, photographs, Nancy Yeilding, 2006
- 53 *Śri Jagannātha* Temple, Tellicherry, Kerala, photograph
- 56 Lotus image carved in jade, India, 17th century
- 62 Drawing *maṇḍalas* at Sneha Samveda workshop, Kanakamala, Kerala, photograph, Karen Mae, 2006
- 64 New Prayer Hall, Narayana Gurukula, Varkala, Kerala, 2006



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. Our attitude is best expressed by Narayana Guru: "Our purpose is not to argue and win, but to know and let know."

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

PUBLICATIONS BOARD: Bushra Azzouz, Deborah Buchanan, Sraddha Durand, Andrew Larkin, Scott Teitsworth, Nancy Yeilding.

EDITOR: Deborah Buchanan

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION USA: Yearly, \$20.00 for two issues. Outside the U.S. add \$5.00 for surface mail. Contact: GURUKULAM, 11290 NW Skyline Blvd., Portland, Oregon, 97231.

E-mail address: tapovana@hevanet.com

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION INDIA: Yearly subscription price is Rs. 100. Contact: Narayana Gurukula, Srinivasapuram P.O., Varkala, Kerala, 695-145, South India.

SUBMISSIONS are made in the spirit of free sharing and cross-pollination. We reserve the right to edit for clarity and space. Please send articles and art for consideration to:

11290 NW Skyline Blvd.,
Portland, Oregon, 97231, USA
tapovana@hevanet.com.



PUBLISHED BY THE NARAYANA GURUKULA