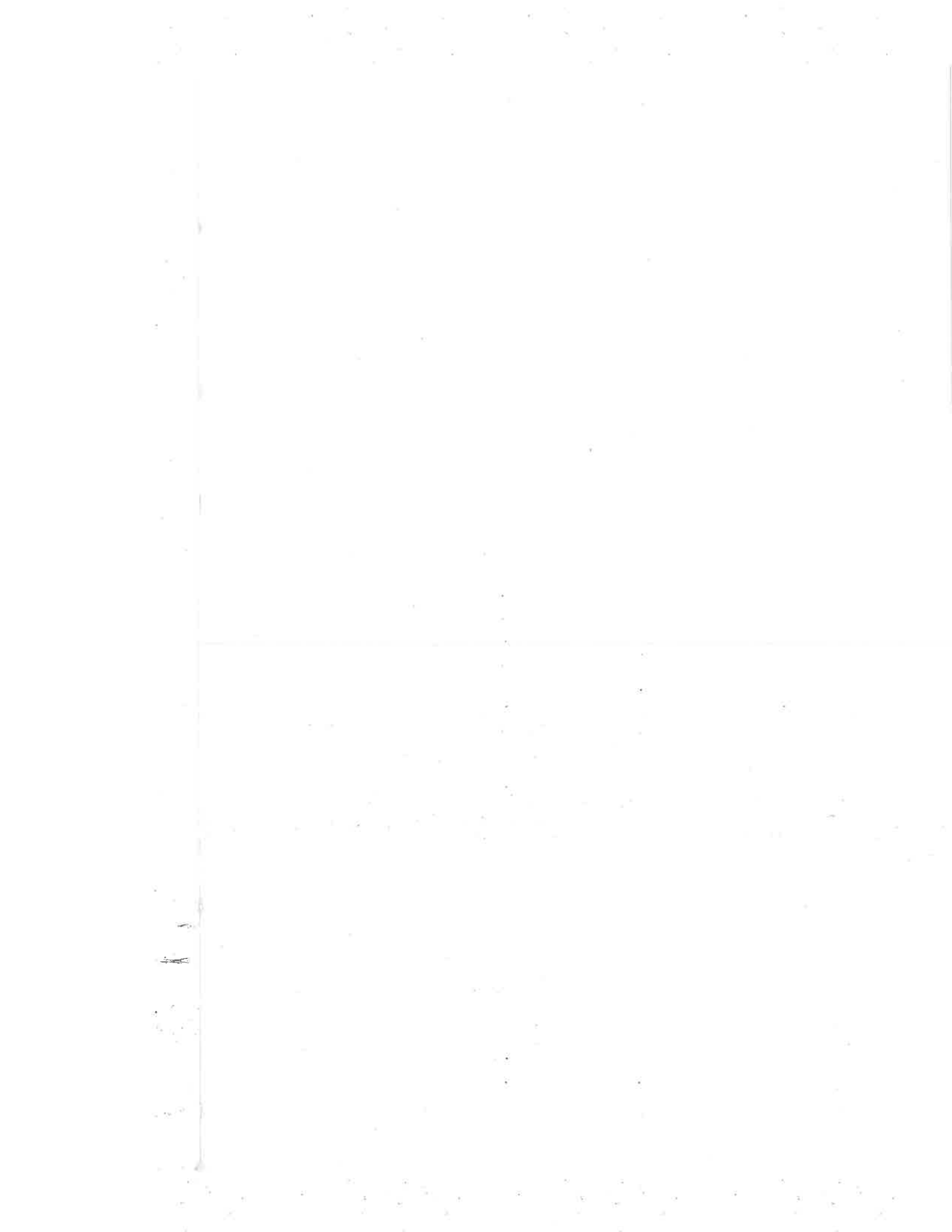


GURUKULAM



SPRING 2009



GURUKULAM

A Journal of Philosophy and the Arts

SPRING 2009

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EDITORIAL

BY DEBORAH BUCHANAN

We look at a calendar to decide which date works for an activity, we write in our planning book about projects we've done or plan to do. And when we look back, these notes serve as marks of our personal history: the facts of where and when and with whom. As families and nations we also organize our lives according to retrospective, factual analyses. We write histories and see ourselves as part of a linear progression of time and people.

When we go outside at night and look up at the flickering stars, we often ponder our own existence—who am I?—and our world's existence—how did it become what it is? what is its end? Over long periods of time and in different locations, people have responded to these questions with complex, profound stories that express meaning and relation. These stories, called myths, are what we use to understand ourselves.

In many peoples' minds, history and mythology are competing ideologies: fact against supposition, imagination versus experience. But the boundary line between them is permeable, and the interpenetration between the two deep and significant. Could we explain our world wholly with only one side of the argument?

In this issue we explore both approaches to human knowledge, history and mythology. There are the articles, Gurukula history, on Harry Jakobsen and his relationship to Nataraja Guru, and on his own philosophical pursuits. Harry's article, "Wisdom, Eros and the Bomb" is reprinted from the very first issue of *Values* magazine, September 1955.

There is the continuing examination of the Greek myth of Herakles and how it explicates certain truths still active in us. In addition, we are presenting in a special, small book supplement, Thomas Palakeel's retelling of Gilgamesh, the ancient Sumerian legend. It is a story compiled both of fact and fiction, coming down to us from a hoary past and yet which helps us to understand our own intimate lives.

The drawings from the ancient frescos of Sittavannasal, South India, are historical remnants of the important and powerful Pallava dynasty. They also illustrate living mythologies that have nurtured Indian culture for thousands of years.

As you go through the magazine, see how subtle is the division between what we call history and what we call myth, and how necessary each is to the whole of our knowledge.



ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

VERSE 37

*viṣamatayārnnezumanya vennu koḷvān
viṣamamakhaṇḍa vivēka śaktiyennyē
viṣamaya vennatināl vivēkamākum
viṣaya virōdhiniyōṭaṇaṅṅitenam*

The other is replete with difficulty;
and it is hard to win over without the power to
discriminate the unbroken; having won over the difficult,
attain to that discrimination which is opposed to sense interests.

What we seek is peace, the peace that can be associated with unbroken happiness. Where there is unbroken happiness there is also peace. This can be true only if the happiness is founded on truth. Truth does not change; what is true today should be true tomorrow also. Thus truth is consistent and continuous. Truth has an inner homogeneity, and if you are experiencing it, naturally you will be in a state of harmony.

Love is a state of great harmony. Stress or hatred is opposed to that harmony. Peace is opposed to restlessness; harmony is opposed to disharmony; truth is opposed to untruth; beingness is opposed to becoming. Thus we see there is the paradox of a dichotomy in our life, and we are looking for a solution by which we can overcome it.

When our consciousness operates, a dichotomy arises from the very heart of it. One half of it is experienced as 'I', and the other half is experienced as 'this'. Another way to think of it is 'I' and 'the other'. The other, unlike 'I', manifests as manifold units. We can say "this is my friend," "this is a pot," "this is my hand," "this is knowledge." In all these we are referring to 'this'. And what is 'this'? It is a very indistinct thing. We only know what qualifies 'this'. If we take away all the qualifications, 'this' becomes too difficult to grasp. The whole world is a proliferation of 'this'. So we can either say "that is this" or "this is that." At a distance they are not two.

The idea of 'this' enters into the mind and goes on bifurcating consciousness into many units. The net result is that it brings interaction between the 'I'

consciousness in us and thisness. The 'I' consciousness is not just a philosophical idea, it is socially structured with an egoistic status. This ego is monitored by our changing moods. Sometimes it is in a sublime state, sometimes it is in a passionate mood, and sometimes it is very depressed. It is not always the same. Its moods create a quality within our interactions, which very often take away our peace.

There are a number of things which we are exposed to in our lives over which we do not have full control. It is very peaceful to have a sound sleep, but if the mind is disturbed sleep won't come. You cannot force yourself to sleep. If you just say "let me sleep," it doesn't work. The mind has to become subdued from inside. The upsurges of consciousness have to become quiet. Of course, you can take a sleeping pill, but that is kind of a temporary suicide: you are killing your system with some poisonous medicine for a little while. You can also use the same medicine to put an end to all your misery by killing yourself completely, but then you have a permanent suicide. Natural death doesn't come like that. You cannot die at will, although you can kill yourself at will. But we are not planning to do any killing. If we die, we die gracefully. Like that, sleeping gracefully is different from forcing ourselves to sleep with pills.

How does sleep come? Nature has a rhythm. When solar energy goes to the other side of the Earth, we, being heliotropic people, experience a waning of energy. Activities become subdued, and sleep comes. If the mind is stimulated, either with stimulants or with thoughts, motivations, urges or passions, it will continue to be lively. Natural sleep is a blessing which comes only from inside.

Like that, we cannot forcefully love anyone. All religions exhort us to love, but if I walk into my neighbor's house saying, "Jesus said to love my neighbor as myself. I have come here to love you," they will probably get very annoyed and tell me to mind my own business. So you cannot force your love on anyone, it has to come in a very natural way. If someone comes and says, "I love you very much," that's okay. But if they were to say "I love you so much; why do you reject me?" I can't help that. If you love me I should also feel something reciprocal, and in this case I don't. One can't pressure another. Love comes only spontaneously. Of course you can create a situation in which love may grow, but all you can do is be available and wait for love to come. It is like sleep: both are natural occurrences.

Peace is also a natural thing that has to come by itself. Concentration is a natural thing. You cannot concentrate just by straining your eyes. Swamis from India may come and say, "Look at this candle. Put it on a stand at eye level and stare at it." Or they will ask you to breathe in a certain way. When you get exhausted from breathing hard, what else can you do but lie back? You might imagine you have gained something. The world is full of trickery. Someone finds out a way to trick your nervous system, and then they sell it and patent the technique. But there is nothing spiritual about any of these things.

The real issue here is how to win over *anya*. *Anyā* means the tendency of proliferating otherness. We are disturbed only because of this *anya*, this otherness. Wherever otherness comes it interacts with the 'I' in us, affecting our balance. If the

'other' is not there, our 'I' has nothing to fight with. The cancellation of the 'other' and the ego brings peace.

And how can we cancel out the effect of the 'other'? The 'I' and the 'other' must be unified. By knowing that what constitutes the 'I' is the same reality as that which constitutes the 'other' brings unification. We can also know that this 'I' is a fantasized modification of consciousness and the 'other' is a fantasized projection of consciousness. Both are false. Once we know that neither the 'I' nor the 'other' exist, there is no trouble. But it is not as easy as it sounds.

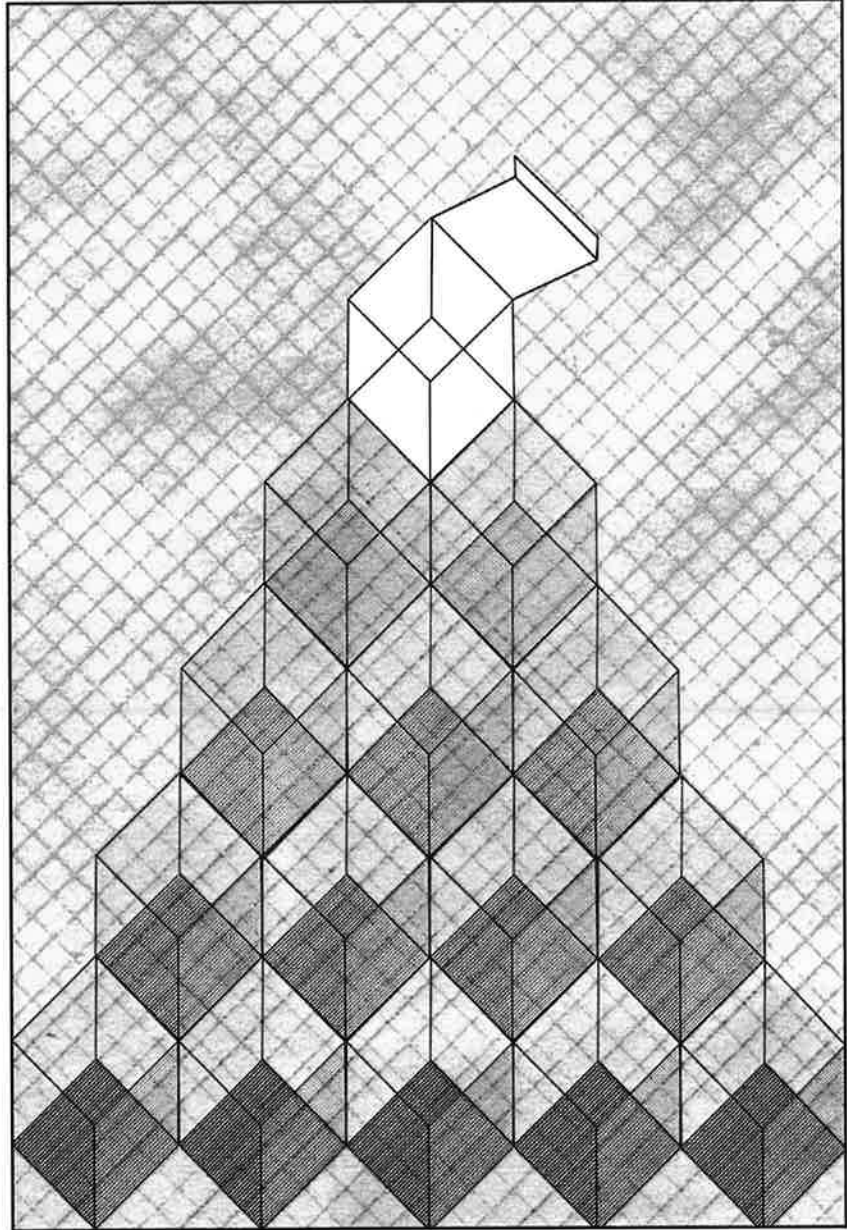
We have a body, and the body is equipped with its senses. Each sense organ brings a different kind of stimulus which acts upon our system. Many chain reactions come from just looking at a thing, say, or hearing a word. Thus we are bombarded from all sides with stimuli. In that bombardment it is next to impossible to sit quiet and calm.

Let us briefly catalogue the difficulties we have with this. It begins with the exposure to stimuli which create a number of reactions in us. Secondly, our mind gets into certain whirlpools; these mental whirlpools are called worries. We are exposed to two main kinds of worries. One is retrospective remorse, and the other is prospective anxiety. Retrospective remorse comes in the form of guilt: "I have done such and such a bad thing, now what can I do? My self image or my social image is tarnished. I am no longer the same honored person in the eyes of my friends. Society is now suspicious of me; my integrity is questioned. Nobody will accept me as an honorable person any more. I have lost something precious in my life. I am deceived, cheated, defeated." We become bitter over our remorseful remembrances of the past and we feel worthless, annoyed, angry or vulnerable.

We also suffer from prospective worries such as feelings of insecurity. Our calculations have gone wrong. We see new factors rising up about which we are uncertain. We do not know how to deal with the new situation. The stock market may drop unexpectedly. Someone may corner the market on some product or raw material and make the supply dry up. If tomorrow the Egyptian president gets angry and closes the Suez Canal, all the shipping in the world will have to be rerouted and all the world's trade will be delayed. The same thing could happen in Panama. Some fool can even do something to unhinge the whole world. And who knows? Maybe someone is planning a sneak attack on us.

All these worries are only in people's minds, but they can affect the whole world by making us act in certain ways. We are living in a society; we are not separate individuals who can fully insulate our lives from the onslaught of social trickeries. So we are afraid of the next one. How can we ever get out of these whirlpools of worry? They are empirically valid. They are not entirely our fantasies.

Another category of difficulty is the deep urges and passions in us that create various kinds of hungers. The hunger of the body itself is a great problem for the world. There are so many countries where the hunger for food is a daily experience.



The hunger of the mind and of physical passions can be even worse than physical hunger in the sense that it can drive you to act inappropriately, to be a victim of your own drives. I have young friends who are very troubled because of their sex problems. They have not found a proper person to relate to, and so it has become a terrible conundrum. There are some others who have a hunger to be intellectually or spiritually nourished. They write me that they do not have a proper person to talk to, with whom they can discuss anything serious, valuable, philosophical or spiritual. They feel as if they are in an arid desert land where there are no worthwhile values.

We could go on multiplying this catalogue of the blues of life. But what we need to know is the way out. Even a small pinprick in one of your toes is enough to affect you totally, taking you out of your mental and physical balance for at least a little while. Your body can develop so many kinds of diseases. It is actually a great wonder that most of us at least seem to be sane. It is easy to go insane in this world, yet there is still a fair amount of sanity left.

Anya, this differentiating factor, is always running amuck and creating problems for us. In fact, the whole world is in an eternal state of strife because of otherness. The Guru says that somehow we have to triumph over this great fear of the other and bring all to a sameness. He gives us a key idea here, *viṣaya virōdhini*, that which is opposed to a sensual orientation. *Viṣayam* means projecting the source of your happiness onto a thing and thinking it is the thing that makes you happy. Therein lies the crux of the problem. Once you think, "Without this thing I can never be happy," you have already alienated your happiness. You have created a chasm between your present state and a prospective future where happiness can be encountered. By default you have decided that at this moment you are not at all happy; you can be so only in the future. You feel that somehow you have to move away from the present to the future, and you won't be happy until then. You worry that you might miss this thing in the future in which your happiness is invested, and that your search will be a total failure and an absolute disappointment for you. Thus we alienate our happiness and postpone it via the visaya of the object of happiness.

If, on the other hand, you know that you are the source of all happiness and there is nothing to seek on the outside, the outer thing becomes associated with happiness only because you allow it to participate in your happiness. Discrimination is the key to making this happen. What kind of discrimination? The Guru says *akhaṇḍha viveka śakti*, it is not a discrimination which makes a thing different from you, but a discrimination which makes something also you or you also that. It is a unifying discrimination, not a separating one. If 'this' and 'this' and 'this' can all be brought under 'This', and then 'This' and 'I' are brought together as one, then you get it.

This is the reason Narayana Guru asked us in the very first verse to see the common link between the outer world and the inner world, which he described as

karu, a universal consciousness which is the divine manifestor of everything. He said we should withhold our senses and prostrate before That again and again. He asked us to look at the unlit light which shines within us. All that we see may look different, but it is the same light. When we turn to that light and allow it to guide us we get *akhaṇḍha viveka śakti*, an unbroken sense of discrimination.

Throughout all these verses the Guru has been telling us how we can overcome our troubles. Back in the thirteenth verse he said, "Look at that Supreme One which transcends the three modalities: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Pick the flowers of your mind and offer them to that Divine One. Turn your senses inward; cool the feverishness of your life; get your obligations unwound; merge into the glory of That." He told us of the blessed grace that comes to us like a flood, which fills the desert land and turns every grain of sand into a precious stone. He also told us to offer the flowers of our mind to the Divine if possible; if not, we should make a program of actual worship and expression of devotion or we should philosophically meditate on great dictums to get over the illusions of life.

The ultimate thing is to become *saumya*, which means finding the quietness within you. It is by attaining *sama*, sameness, that you become quiet inside. This is to be cultivated throughout. Each day begins a new series of encounters. Each encounter is to be taken as a challenge to reestablish your inner serenity, inner quietness, inner sense of sameness through an act of adoration, an attitude of worship and a sense of the sublime.

There is no need for you to win all the time. Your greater victory lies in your acceptance of defeat, allowing the other to win. You may be in an argument. What does it matter if you win or not? Give the other person the chance to win. Even if he uses some falsehood, when you allow him to win he rethinks the situation. In his heart of hearts he knows he did not deserve the victory. He knows the truth of your silence. You do not become egoistic and you don't make the other person egoistic either. It will chastise him as well as purify him.

Thus, through the cultivation of silence, sameness and serenity, you come to a unitive understanding from within. This brings peace and harmony. Where there is peace and harmony, love spontaneously comes. When you give yourself into the hands of grace, the hands of the Divine, things which are difficult to attain become abundantly possible. Then you can say you have attained the discrimination of the unbroken, by which every 'this' is brought under the spell of the universal sameness.

VERSE 38

*palavidhamāy aṛiyunnatanyayonnāy
vilasuvatām samayennu mēlilōtum
nilayeyarīṇu nivarṇnu sām̐yamēlum
kalayil aliṇṇu kalarṇnirunṇiṭēnam.*

What is known as many is the other,
and that which shines forth as one is sameness;
having known the state, which is going to be spoken of, and attained release,
remain dissolved and blended in the state of sameness.

These words are to be understood in a very special way. In the usual Malayalam sense, *nivarṇnu* means a person becoming upright. In Nataraja Guru's commentary he has taken it in that sense. But I am taking it from the original Sanskrit source. In that there are two complementary terms: *pravṛtti*, the path of action and *nivṛtti*, the path of release. Those who are caught in the path of action get entangled in many action-reaction situations and bondages of karma. One who works out his release from this is called *nivṛtti*. I am taking the word *nivarṇnu* in this sense, as one who is finding his release.

There are various differentiating prejudices in which our mind is caught. Regaining the mind from such bigotry is also to be understood as *nivarṇnu*. A man may believe he is a Christian or a Muslim, that there is no other true religion, and that if you do not find your salvation that way you are doomed forever. His mind is caught in a certain way of thinking. It may be well and good for him, but it pits so many other people against him, and he cannot share his way of life with them. In this way we make factions and differentiations, which are the basis of conflict. How we release our minds from such kind of bigotry is what the present verse explores.

A special term here is *sām̐yamēlam*. *Sām̐yam* means like-ness. Someone may be playing tennis and someone else football. Superficially it looks quite different, but if you look for identity you can see both are sports, and both give entertainment and physical exercise. The mode may look outwardly different; still there is *sām̐ya*, likeness.

Another word to understand is *kāla*. It is a term that comes in Yoga and Tantra. It is to be understood in the context of two other words, *nāda* and *bindu*. *Nāda* is the subtle vibration of sound. Our whole body itself has an unbroken sound, which the yogis call *anāhata*. The central locus of your psychophysical life is called *bindu*. When you are breathing up and down it is likened to a mantra which is said to be equivalent to the articulation of *haṁsa*, also an unbroken sound going on within you. It can find its own center or *bindu*. When you center your consciousness in any of the synergic centers, it is as if consciousness is flowing or streaming

centripetally and centrifugally, while keeping that locus as a monitoring force. One may find it in the center between the brows, the heart center, the throat center or any of the other centers.

When a certain interest develops from the center of your being, it enlarges and becomes a whole field of interest. As a function, this aspect of the self is called *kāla*. If you are looking for differentiation, the *kāla* will be seeing differences everywhere. If you are looking for unity, then you will find a hundred reasons for seeing all as the same. One has to cultivate the *kāla* of sameness as a functional reality, not just as an idea.

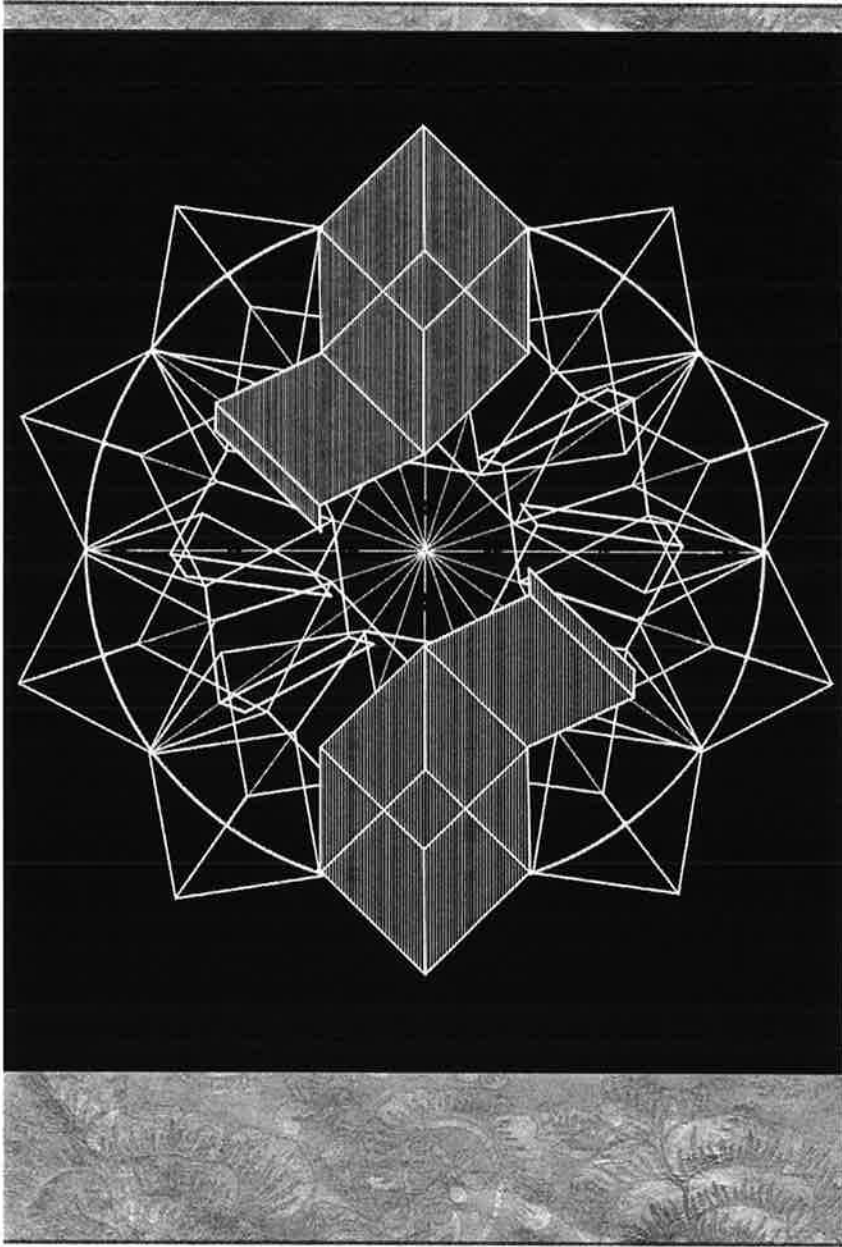
When we examine our external tastes, we see that they differ very much. One man's meat is another man's poison, as they say. In the Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter thirteen, Jesus says, "If you think I have come to bring peace, nay, that's not it. What I've brought is division. In a house of five people, three will be against two. In a house of three people, two will be against one. I have placed a discordance between father and son, between mother and daughter, between the son-in-law and the father-in-law."

What's with all this discord? When we think of Jesus, we think of unity, so it's hard to understand this statement. We can find sense in it only when we think that the unifying factor is transcending the pettiness of all relativistic considerations. In this world everybody is full of relativism and therefore there is no agreement. The agreement can come only when you transcend this and see the Lord or whatever.

In the Mahabharata, the children of two brothers became a divided family, a divided home. There, one hundred people were pitted against five. The divisions multiplied. Those who were loyal to the five became one group and those who were loyal to the hundred were another. They decided to fight, and there was a great battle. When Arjuna came to the battlefield wanting to wage war, he was asked to look at his enemies. When he looked around, he was surprised to see his friends on all sides. He couldn't believe he was standing there bearing arms against his own grandfather, his own teacher, his cousins and best friends. He thought, "How can I fight these people? How could I go on living after killing my best friends, my close relatives? What is the meaning of life?"

So on all sides we have discord, division, strife. What Jesus said may seem very cruel, but it only acknowledges what is happening in most houses and most families. The husband is against the wife, children are against both. One year we may find them in great love, saying "God is showering his special mercy upon us." The next year they are at the marriage counselor and then the divorce court. What is all this? It is called *anya*. Narayana Guru says that this tendency is seen everywhere, differentiating, separating, breaking away, alienating, rejecting. The rivers of tears that are shed because of this have no end.

There is a way out. It is called *sama*, cultivating sameness. In the Bhagavad Gita, chapter six, a whole series of verses is given to tell you how to cultivate sameness.



First of all, there needs to be a basis for sameness. In the Bible the basis is to love your Father, your God, with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. Then what happens? You find that all mankind has the same Father, which makes everyone brothers and sisters. Then we become responsible and committed to each other; we become each other's caretaker. We share and care for each other because we belong to the same Father. The first statement brings a corollary: to love your neighbor as yourself. *Sama*, sameness, comes where you say "as your own self." So the very Jesus who said "I have brought division," also gives the antidote. The absolute nature of "all your soul and all your heart" means you have no selfish reservation. It is a total consecration. You are giving up completely.

Today I was writing to a person who occasionally asks for counseling from me, a very wonderful person full of love, piety, devotion, and great love for God and for other people. But there is always one spark of doubt in the mind. It is a very tiny spark that snowballs and becomes a big cloud of darkness and confusion. Then for six months everything turns out to be meaningless and frustrating. My advice was to give up that tiny little doubt and to be without any kind of a reservation: to love totally. When you whole-heartedly give, then you receive in full measure.

So, anyway, in the sixth chapter of the Gita Krishna says, "Be established in me. What makes a thing what it is, is its beingness. A thing becomes stable because of its beingness. Know me to be that beingness. Without me nothing can be, because I am the beingness. After having found it, feel devoted to it. Let your love flow toward it as the one beingness in all, as the one beingness which makes truth truthful, goodness good, beauty beautiful, love endearing."

You cultivate this through constant meditation. I am not speaking of meditation as sitting cross-legged with eyes closed, or some such. Life itself is a meditation. Everything passing in our life is a theme of meditation. When you say "this exists" and "this does not exist," what enables you to say it is that beingness. That is what we are asked to adore as the one God. It is up to your taste to call it God, or the Supreme Principle, or the one reality, or beingness, or what you poetically feel within you as the greatest empathy you can have, the sense of beauty you feel as an artist, the great love you feel as a lover. In all these there is a substantiality of beingness. You sense it from your heart.

Then the Gita says to see That as your own central reality. You are constantly saying "I am, I am, I am." What assures you of that "I am" is the light within you. "I am That" is just like saying "I am that I am." See it as the Absolute in you. Thus, having found beingness as the reality of everything, and as your own reality, it is easy to see that the real in you and the real in all other things are the same. This is how you gain the secret of sameness, *samyam*. It will bring you great serenity, great peace.

When you are seeing sameness but others are not, will you still have peace? Does this work when others do not see it? If your children are restless, and they

are shouting and running around the house, you just think, “Well, it’s their age. They are young and have a lot of energy. In my childhood we were all like that also. If I love my children I should allow them to have their free expression. Let them play. How happy are my children that they are so exuberant!” Then you don’t feel annoyed. You rejoice that your children are healthy and cheerful, running around and making a lot of noise. So if you think of the others you are not disturbed, but if you think only of yourself in isolation it could be very irritating.

If the children are not yours but your neighbor’s, they are even farther outside the small circle you draw around yourself. The *anyata* comes here: “They are not mine. They belong to someone else, the other.” If they come running into your house and raising a ruckus you at once feel hatred. You drive them away. “Don’t they have their own house to make noise in? Why should they come bother me when I have things to do?” You cannot bear them for even five minutes. Your *dṛṣṭi*—how you look at it—has changed.

When you know that the Self in you and the Self in others is the same, that knowledge brings *maitrī*, compassion. If someone is mentally upset, you don’t just tolerate it. You embrace that person and share their feelings in order to help. Cultivation of this compassion brings about fellowship.

When your compassion becomes a functional reality, *kāla*, then it is as if you are melting into it. The idea of *kalamnirunnu* in this verse is that you melt into the state of the functional reality of your vision of oneness. *Sāmyamēlum* is when the feeling of oneness is felt from within as an experience of universality. You don’t see yourself as different from others. Everyone is free to advocate their own religion, their own way of life, eat their own kind of food and speak their own language. You have taken away all the barriers in your mind. You think, “It’s OK, it’s all mine. All the three worlds are mine and these are my kinsmen. I don’t have any sense of differentiation.” It has become *maitrī*, true fellowship.

You bring about oneness through wisdom, compassion and fellowship. At this juncture in the Gita, Arjuna says to Krishna, “This all sounds very fine, but I have to actually live it. My mind is not under my control. Like a wild wind it comes. Sometimes a ship lying quietly on the sea will be caught by a wind which drags it away and batters it and breaks it to pieces. This is exactly what my mind does to all my decisions and good intentions. I take a good resolve, but like a typhoon the mind comes and whips it away and wrecks it. What can I do?”

Krishna agrees. “That is so, my dear Arjuna. Mind cannot be forcibly controlled. Sometimes it is like a whirlwind. But don’t you see that the mind is not a whirlwind all the time? Your mind may be restless for a little while. It may smoke and fume. But after some time it calms down, and when it does you have access to it. That is the time to show it the right way. When the mind is sitting calmly, show it there is no need to boil. Your true nature is divine, and everything is a manifestation of the Divine. Don’t feel agitated. Deep down the mind understands. The next time it

raves, somewhere it will know that this is not the right thing to do and it will settle down faster than the previous time.”

In this way Krishna shows how to gently tame your mind by detaching yourself from the things with which you are infatuated. Also how, by continuous *abhyāsa*, continuous practice, you can make it learn to love everything as aspects of the one Being or the one Supreme. How, by maintaining *vairāgya*, detachment, and doing *abhyāsa* continuously, you will one day be able to make your mind fully in harmony with your vision of oneness.

The meditation of this verse is to watch for the many tendencies to close down or become narrow in your vision. Instead, enlarge your boundaries and thus find your *nivṛtti*, release. Only then will the functional reality of seeing oneness become a persistent way of life.

TANTRIC IMAGES

BY SUSAN PLUM

Much of traditional Indian art uses the human body as its canvas, employing it to visualize, to make manifest, subtle philosophical principles. We encounter gods and goddesses, *gandharvas*, *yakṣīs*, and *asuras*—all recognizable as incarnate beings yet carrying with them in their bodily presence complicated spiritual insights.

Tantra, as a dark, vibrant cousin to India's mainstream spirituality, sometimes uses the human body to represent its ideas. More often it uses abstract images to express its understanding of the cosmos.

As human beings we are most essentially coherent, discrete units of vibration, audio and visual, and Tantra seeks to express what exactly the nature of those compositions is, and to influence it along certain spiritual pathways. Tantric art uses prescribed forms, colors, and geometric relations to render tangible an intangible core reality. And it works to guide us to an experience of that reality. According to Tantra, by contemplating the image, by allowing it to seep into and alter our consciousness, we can access our own deeper being and release our unacknowledged spiritual abilities.

The three images presented here are paintings on glass by the American-Mexican artist Susan Plum, working in that Tantric tradition and enriching it with the aesthetics of her Hispanic heritage.







ADVAITA DĪPIKĀ

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

GURU MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD

Verse 19

One sees when eyes are open;
When closed one remains simply blind;
For the consciousness within finds no outlet.
Wisdom, likewise, does not become revealed on its own,
For it needs an eye, and that eye should be luminous as well.

The philosophical problem this work mainly deals with and its final answer, have all been made sufficiently clear. That what we perceive constantly is not the world but is merely the aggregate of the countless forms, both subtle and gross, in which one consciousness or *ātma* manifest itself, becomes revealed to a *jñānin* alone. And only those people who are endowed with the penetrative eye to go beneath the veil and see what is within will become *jñānins*. This veiling curtain, we know, is nothing other than the appearance of the phenomenal world. Just as removing the veil of the ornament-form and seeing the gold is reality, this world veil has to be removed. Then alone it becomes clear that what appears as the world is nothing but *ātma*. This perception requires an intuitive eye. This eye has to be bright and has to be kept open as well. Unless so opened, no final solution to the problem dawns, all ending up as an experience like that of one who tries to see something with his eyes closed.

Many may there be who attempt to find a cogent solution to the problem by relying on logical reasoning. Such attempts will continue endlessly and the problem will remain without a solution. But at the opening of the intuitive, penetrative eye of wisdom, the veiling curtain is removed. The question also vanishes, needing no answer. What then remains is this experience alone: consciousness remains conscious of its own existence.

Verse 19 brings this commentary on the *Advaita Dīpikā* to a close.



REMEMBRANCES OF HARRY JAKOBSEN

Harry Jakobsen was Nataraja Guru's first disciple in the United States. As part of our Gurukula history project, we are reprinting an excerpt from *Autobiography of an Absolutist* where Nataraja Guru writes of their first meeting. Following that we have a *Time* magazine news piece, an interview with two friends about Harry, and finally an article written by Harry from *Values* magazine.

From *Autobiography of An Absolutist* by Nataraja Guru:

There was in the congregation or audience a simple Norwegian sailor who had jumped ship and settled down in the States. He was a full blooded man to whom mystical interests came normally and who was beginning, vaguely at first, to take some interest in spirituality or mysticism of some unconventional type. He was the owner of a machine shop and an expert inventor of tool grinders, know for his genius in several states in and around New York and just making good as a self-made engineer. Tall and well built with all human instincts in normal function, he was also a natural mystic who had confidence in penetrating any problem that any other human being could. He had a contempt for eggheads who pretended to know more than they actually did.

This rather shy and sensitive man was listening to my speech that day and watching me too, as he told me later when we became the best of friends forever a month or two later. He admitted then that he felt a strange attraction for me creeping over his whole being just when I began to cast about for words in vain and finally failed floundering. He had established a sympathetic kinship with me which became further signed, sealed and delivered, as it were, to him just at the time he watched me admit my failure to make a good speech and abruptly broke off.

This was just the thing that worked in my favor with him, so finally and fully as he admitted, that he decided straightaway that he had found the man he was looking for to teach him. That I was introduced by Swami Nikhilananda as a direct disciple of a Guru in India and that I could still be found failure in that characteristic way was for him too good to be true. After the lecture when all were dispersing, one Mr. Horne of Lyndhurst, who was a friend of the sailor turned machine-shop owner, whispered to me that he had found someone who would give me a cheaper room on the other side of the Hudson in East Orange, New Jersey. It turned out soon that it was none other than Harry Jakobsen, the same mystically disposed machine-shop man. He was there himself to confirm the availability of the room. It was to be free and I could be his guest as long as I liked. (pages 326-327)

From *Time*, December 23, 1957: "The Light That Failed"

When Roy G. Jacobsen, 26, of Long Valley, N.J., switched from Dartmouth to Columbia University in 1951, he had some pretty exalted notions about what he was after. He wanted nothing less than to learn all about truth, understanding, integrity, enlightenment, justice, liberty, courage, honesty and critical judgement --the very virtues he saw extolled on countless plaques and friezes about Columbia's campus. But after searching for the light, first as a physics and then as an English major, Jacobsen gave up. In his senior year, he flunked four courses, and the college refused to give him his degree. Last week, when Columbia filed suit against him for \$1,000 for repayment of a student loan, Jacobsen lashed back with a suit of his own. Columbia, he said in court, is guilty of "false representation" for not telling him that "it was not equipped to teach pure reason" --and wisdom. Jacobsen demanded \$2,000 for every year he wasted at the college, plus cancellation of his \$1,000 debt, plus \$1,000 for the tuition he had paid and \$16 for legal expenses. Speaking for the college, Dean Lawrence Chamberlain said that wisdom is only "a hoped-for end product of education," and that neither Columbia nor any other institution could teach it. But that argument did not impress the embattled Jacobsen one bit. After all, with two other students, he is now learning wisdom, truth, understanding, etc., at a special school in Long Valley called Gurukula (home of the philosopher)--a school, he told reporters, that is very much like Plato's Academy. The Plato of the place: Harry Jacobsen, a \$100-a-week tool designer-turned-guru. At week's end a somewhat mystified Superior Judge Frederick Hall gave Columbia until January 3 to file an answer to Jacobsen's counterclaim.

From an interview with Andrew Larkin and Moni Pillai, Spring 2008.

Andrew: This was around 1976, when Harry was in his seventies. I had been in Hawaii with Nitya. He was soon going on to Fiji and Australia and Singapore, but shortly before he took off he said, just out of the blue one morning, "Would you like to go to Florida?" just like that. And so this was a very intriguing and amusing question, and I said, "Sure, I'll go to Florida. Why not?"

He said, "Good. I have a friend who lives in Florida, and I'll write you a letter of recommendation." So he wrote this very short letter, in fact it was two sentences. It was something like, "To whom it may concern: The bearer of this letter [laughs] is Andrew Larkin. Please instruct him as you see fit." It was very, kind of, general objectives for my visit. They were not spelled out at all.

So, I was very intrigued, and at the end of the Hawaiian episode I flew to San Francisco and stayed with Josie and her group in Palo Alto. I bought a bus ticket, and at that time I had probably a hundred and fifty dollars to my name. I bought a bus ticket one way to Florida with that money, which left me with about sixty bucks. The trip was a five day trip, and I remember going through New Mexico, and through New Orleans, which was a kind of a scary place. And then having grits for

breakfast in some tiny little town in Alabama. By the time five days had gone by I was really desperate for a bath.

As I got nearer to my destination, which was Clearwater, I rang up and was told that Harry had had a heart attack. This was a shocking development. It called into question the whole trajectory of my trip down there, but he said something like, "Call again in three weeks or so, and I might be in a better state."

(Andy has a few months working for a faith healer and revivalist. Then he links up with Harry.) Following my work with the revivalist preacher, Harry was at great pains to run through the differences between enthusiasm for fundamentalist religious vocabulary, which can be kind of an emotional high for people, and what real philosophy is about. That was something thing he was at pains to articulate, and was an important focus then. I think actually his teaching had some of the religious high aspect, like my first encounter with the Guru, and that really kind of cut through my revivalist experience.

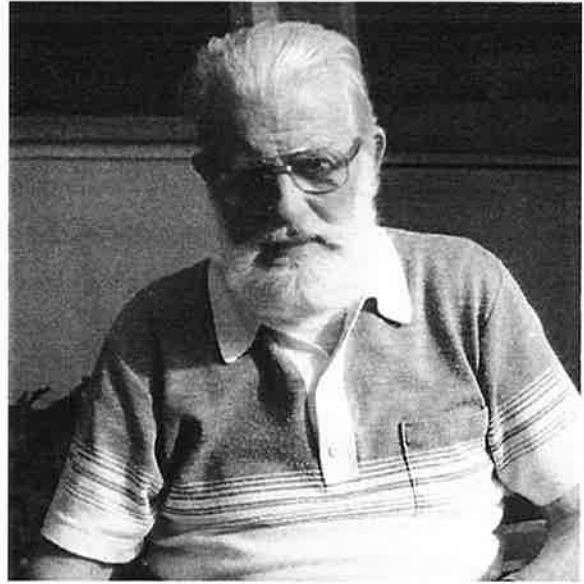
Debbie: So, how did you end up back at Harry's?

A: Well, I had a little bit of money in my pocket, so I went back down to Clearwater. At first I was staying with his daughter Ruth. She understood, I think, that I was a student of Nitya, and had come to see Harry, but I felt that to camp out at Ruth's was not a good thing for me to do.

D: She was married and had kids?

A: Yes. They weren't expecting to put up with this kind of strange, scruffy character, with a goatee and big work boots and the grungy backpack. So after meeting Harry I resolved to go out and get a place to stay. I thought, this will be a snap in Clearwater, Florida, just like things had worked out well in Tallahassee or Tampa, or wherever I had been traveling with the preacher. I left my backpack at Ruth's and hit the street. I walked all over town and could not find a place to stay that wouldn't have entirely wiped out my slender resources. I just kept walking. I thought, "Fate will further me." The sun went down and it was getting kind of chilly, and I went to the main square of Clearwater and there was a truck there and it said, "Truck will not start. Be back in morning. A.W. Hinkel," on a little note on the back of the windshield. I tried the back of the truck and it was open, so I crawled in there. I bought a newspaper because it was getting really cold and I slept under the papers to try and keep warm. I kept waking up in the middle of the night because it was so cold and it had started to rain. I went occasionally over to the IHOP to get a cup of coffee and sit there for an hour or so, then I'd go back to the truck. So I spent the night in the truck, and the next morning I thought, Well, I'll just head back over to Harry's.

I got to Harry's and he said, "Where have you been? We were going to call the police! We thought you had been picked up and you were kidnapped and you were dead. Why didn't you call us?" I told him the story about the truck and he got very happy. He was smiling from ear to ear. He said, "This is a very good sign. You have proved yourself to me. But, you're still being a flake, because you didn't check every opportunity." He looked at me again, and I knew that he was right, at that point, because



there was a boarding house clear at the other end of town from where he lived, that I'd knocked on the door. It had a sign that said Rooms for Rent, but no one had answered the door. So I thought, That's the only place that didn't pan out—I'm going to go there immediately. I knocked on the door. The woman came down, and she had one bed left. I spent the night there. It was a very strange place.

Then I had to get a job, which I did, at a restaurant washing dishes. So my pattern of life with Harry started to be that I showed up at his place in the morning and we would talk. Often we would go out and have lunch at the neighborhood cafeteria, where he would be joined by other retirees who were his friends. I don't know if you ever encountered any of these folks?

Moni: Yes, we met those friends. I was staying with Mary and Harry, and before we would go to see Guru he would call his friends to come there, so we could have breakfast together. There were all these retirees and elderly people there. And there was Harry, tall, handsome and well-groomed, with in a nice white beard and white hair, very handsome...

A: Very charismatic looking.

M: Here I am in my sari. He takes me out. I know he is so proud, and all other people are looking, "Where did you find this beautiful lady?" [Laughs] He presented me like that. And then he told them about me and how Nitya is here and how happy he is that Nitya came to see him. Then he would have breakfast with everyone. They all talked a little bit, but they all envy Harry because he is with me,

he brought me. Then he calls the waitress and the waitress will come and they all have a special, happy relation. They all love to serve Harry. The other people all have their separate personalities. Then we leave.

When we go he will always say that he thinks that how he met Nataraja Guru really changed his life. He said, "I made a lot of money afterwards." But he also quoted from the Gita about value and karma. Then he would say, "There is this bubble, Moni, I do not know when this bubble is going to burst." He knew he had a heart condition so he might not live much longer, and he wanted to go to India one more time. His family wouldn't let him, because of his heart condition. I think that his inner spirit was what kept him going and kept him in a better place so that he was still enjoying life without much worry.

M: He did go to India with Nataraja Guru, long ago, and traveled around with him. That's what I remember him saying to me.

A: I think the thought of death was greatly on his mind at that point. And he, of course, was very philosophical about it. He said, "It's death that gives life meaning." This was a thing he repeated many times in my presence.

He was a very charismatic person, and he embodied this kind of cheerfulness and poise that anyone who met him found very appealing. So when we would go out he was always the center of attention. Without even trying to engineer it, the conversation would turn to philosophical matters. All of his friends were armchair philosophers. They would weigh in on different questions, and it was quite fascinating. There would be these very lively coffeehouse debates that Harry would have with his friends. After we would leave such scenes, Harry would often be commenting on what so-and-so thought such-and-such, offering a perspective on the characters as they'd been revealed by what they said. It was just a fascinating thing. But he wasn't feeling very well, not energetic. He'd just had a heart attack, and he was, I think, having a series of small ones even while I was around.

After awhile we had a reading program. Harry brought out the *Dialectical Methodology* of Nataraja Guru, so we were reading Greek tragedies and talking about that. He was also talking a lot about the relationship of men and women, talking about his own relationship with Mary. He would offer his perspective on Mary's point of view from the standpoint of a male. He would say this is our dialectical relationship, and this is how it plays out in our relationship, and that was quite fascinating. And some of the issues in the Greek stuff we were reading were all about that. Man-Woman Dialectics is an article in there.

D: Did he talk about his times with Nataraja Guru?

A: Yes, he did. I think some of this has already been published, but from Harry first hand I got a picture of how he had grown up in Norway. He knew that he wanted to leave Norway as a very young man. He wanted to get out of Norway. He told me that he had met a Sami (Laplander) woman, a fortune teller when he was young. She looked at his palms and said, "You will travel and you will be a great man." I don't know if that's generic advice to some young kid.... [laughs] but he remembered that, and he'd been in the merchant marine, at a time when sailing was very dangerous. I think he would... it might have been a sailing vessel, I'm not sure, but he would describe having to keep watch on deck during an Atlantic gale, and feeling like his life was in constant peril. It's like you get four hours of sleep and then you're back out on deck in very hazardous conditions. It was his passport out of Norway, but he jumped ship. He was on the lam—he didn't have papers for maybe fifteen or twenty years. He was an illegal. He trained himself to be a machinist, and as part of the war effort he invented a torpedo tube that was a kind of innovation. So when the FBI finally caught up with him they said you have a choice of either working for us as a designer or going to jail. [laughs] Then I think he got his papers, because he had been so good at what he did. And then he was decorated, I think, by Eleanor Roosevelt at the end of the war.

D: And what attracted him to Nataraja Guru?

A: This was a really touching thing and I don't know if it communicates itself in a written account of their meeting, but he felt his own ignorance keenly. He felt like he was an ignoramus—that's how he described himself. This was such touching humility in his character, I think, and it was a very genuine thing. Some charismatic people are egotists. Harry would sometimes describe it as the natural charm of the absolutist. He would talk about that, how if you are really in touch with your authentic core, you become a kind of charming person. People are endeared to you; people will gather around you. He used to say, quite without boasting, that if he went out and sat on the beach in Clearwater, Florida, people would come around him and he would be teaching them philosophy. That would just happen—it would just happen like that. I thought, Yes, this is really who this guy is, a very impressive person. His humility was very striking, and he would say, "You know, I knew this was a huge gap in my life, that I just didn't have." He put it in a quite secular way. He would say, "I was an unlearned person." Which was striking to me, because I always thought of people who were around gurus as having some sort of mystical dimension to them. He completely downplayed that. To him, learning meant learning about who you were, but in a very normal manner. That was another word he used a lot, normalcy, to describe somebody who was authentically connected with themselves in a kind of natural state.

When he met Nataraja Guru he described it as a kind of tearful encounter with somebody he finally sensed had that kind of dimension of learning. I think the emotional quality of it may not come through in his account, but I think he felt it as a kind of lifeline for him. Did he mention that to you, Moni?

M: Even when he talked about Nataraja Guru, it was as if he was right in his presence, as though he'd never left it, even though years had passed. For him Nataraja Guru's presence was right there, and he was still that young Harry.

A: One time, just before I left, Harry brought out a dhoti of Nataraja Guru's, that he kept as a kind of a souvenir. He wrapped it around me and said, "You are this person." [laughs] It was a funny thing. He just wrapped this cloth around my middle and said, to dramatize the point that you don't have to look outside, This is for you.

He would talk about the Schooley's Mountain Gurukula a bit, and he told that story about how Nataraja Guru was up in the winter, stranded in the blizzard. Harry came up with a load of wood and there was Nataraja Guru sitting on the stove, with the last embers in the stove about to go out. Nataraja Guru had said, "I'm making this place holy." That was his statement. He was just sitting on the top of the wood stove. You know, Nataraja Guru counted on the beneficence of the world, right up to the last ember. I often saw that behavior in Guru Nitya too, in matters related to the denominator side of life. There would be something that would come in to bolster the scene, at the hour when the last resources appeared to have petered out.

Harry also told another story about when they were living up there. He had had an argument with Nataraja Guru about something or other, and when he was driving away he hit a deer. He was just devastated by this, so he went back to Nataraja Guru. Nataraja Guru said, "See, this is what happens when you get mad."

There were all kinds of things. I can't even remember all of the things that probably made an impression on me during that period of time. I also have a vivid memory of him sitting in front of the TV, watching the Iranian revolution broadcasts, the scene where the Americans were being held hostage. I remember him saying, "You know, this could come here." At the time I thought, "Man, you're nuts!" [laughs]

Also, some encounters that we had with his kids. He had a son named Johnny, and Johnny had a role in Harry's machinist business. They had had at one point a very rocky relationship. Mary described a fight between them. It was a description of Harry standing his ground with Johnny, Johnny threw something at him, threw something right at Harry's head, but he didn't get out of the way. He knew that Johnny would not hurt him. That was a point she made, that in his nature he had a kind of confidence in people, a core of nonviolence. You know, their relationship was quite tense, but she knew that he understood Johnny well enough not to be

threatened by him. And at the time I knew them they were quite close, very close, and Johnny was taking over the business, I think.

D: Moni, you were there for a week with Guru, staying with Harry and Mary. Did Guru give any classes, or did Guru and Harry talk at all about Nataraja Guru?

M: I was there a week, but, you know, I wasn't at Harry's house most of the time. Only in the morning I'd just go and see Harry. Harry was saying, "I can't believe that Nitya is here! When he talks it is just like Nataraja Guru, memories are coming back." That's how he was, fully excited about it. For Guru Nitya it was amazing to hear everything from Harry about Nataraja Guru. And their conversation! Harry remembered the exact wording of Nataraja Guru. So between them they had the benefit of their mutual love.

D: I remember Nitya always calling Harry his older brother. There was this real sense of respect and deference accorded him.

Bushra (recording engineer): Was that the first time they met? What was it like, that first encounter?

M: Harry was just like if Nitya came here, to see you and Andy. They knew each other through correspondence, but they haven't met in person. And then they saw each other, and later on Harry said, "Nitya is the right person. He quoted everything from Nataraja Guru. He is the Guru." That's how Harry said it—there were no challenges to Nitya.

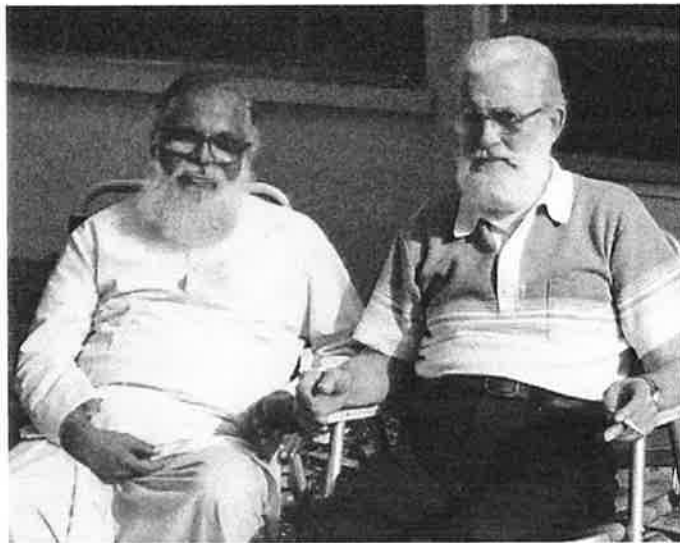
M: Mary was not into any of this. Harry was so much into the philosophy. They were both different personalities. In thinking about the family they would think together. Other than that, about his philosophical side of life, Mary didn't care.

A: They respected that about each other. But there was a clear kind of divide, and they felt free to make comments to each other, teasing, caustic comments. Mary was a very beautiful person. Her exterior was quite caustic but you could feel this current of love underneath it. Her manner of showing it was an aggressive kind of teasing. She teased everybody. She was a very short kind of ball of fire. Really a wonderful person.

A: Nitya was very conscious of trying to hook some of his students up with Harry, to kind of nourish that dimension of Harry's existence. I think he'd done that with a couple of other people. I think Josie was editing some of Harry's writings, possibly.

But in my time with him, this was my first exposure to the whole notion of dialectics. Harry was spending a good deal of time reading this book by Nataraja

Guru, but he would drag dialectics into ordinary situations. One time I got him a bag of potato chips. I'd gone out to that little café to get him lunch, and come back with the chips. I couldn't open the potato chip bag, and Harry said, "Don't you know anything about dialectics! Bite it where it's weak!" [laughter] And he was always engineering little situations like this that highlighted some dialectical point. The



last thing he ever said to me was, as I got on the bus to go back to Minnesota, he pointed down to my boots and said, "Your feet stink!" [laughter] He'd kind of taken the edge off any sentimentality.

Another thing that I've often thought about Harry was that he was a very pragmatic, practical person. You know, he was a machinist, one dimension of him was

a person who worked with his hands. I think he didn't really get that I was into the arts, that didn't make any sense to him. That whole combination of being a machinist and being the student of a guru was a fascinating combination to me. At one point he said to me that the highest kind of person you can become is a bricklayer/scientist. This was the marriage of the two sides of the human being. That's what he really tried to set up in his company.

He had some memorabilia from some of his other students. He had a crystal ball from Garry Davis on his shelf, and he said that he had made Garry give up crystal gazing. [laughs] He demanded this from him. Anyway, that was how Harry put it. What Garry's side on that would be, I don't know. We should ask him.

Harry's program was that people would come to him to learn machine tool making, and then he would also teach them philosophy. So there was a kind of commune that he ran, the first American Gurukula, in New Jersey.

M: How many people went there?

A: I have no idea, but that was the program. I mean, it was not what you would call an accredited institution of higher learning, but that was Harry's agenda, tool

making and philosophy. He embodied a combination of traits that I thereafter found deeply appealing, the marriage of those two sides, and that was one of the major things that I absorbed from him, if I can say that I absorbed anything, that of bringing the two sides of the human being together. The pragmatic side of Harry, in terms of what I understood a “normal” person to be, he embodied that. He embodied the dimension of somebody who could work—this is a kind of fundamental thing—he could make tools. He was a tool maker. And a philosopher. Both together.

D: Perfect that he met Nataraja Guru, because in all of his writings his recurrent phrase was the renormalization of people. People going off on these, I won't say hysteric, but attenuated mystical personal adventures, or sinking into depression, and Nataraja Guru always wanted to renormalize that, on a very central, neutral level.

A: Yes. And for me Harry always completely embodied that, and I think that other people who encountered him respected him on so many different levels. It was really obvious that he was a man of many attainments, but his attainments were all harmonized in a very beautiful way...the waitresses just thought he was the cutest guy.

M: [laughing] Mary didn't know anything about that!

A: But when we would go out to dinner you could really see that he was such a flirt! [laughter] And he'd say, “This is making her feel really normal.” He would say that and really mean it.

M: You know, some people need somebody in their life of high values and high learning. But when they go into their world and they make money and get into business, and then they forget it. That philosophy was good, but now this is my life. But in Harry's case it wasn't like that. He made all this money, but in his core he had this philosophy that really helped him to be stronger, and made him free too. If anyone comes who is interested in philosophy, they can continue and listen to him and benefit. But on the other side, Harry is a good, successful businessman.

A: I think that about wraps it up.

WISDOM, EROS AND THE BOMB

BY HARRY JAKOBSEN

Eros is the ancient Greek counterpart of *kāmādeva*. The exaggerations of sex in Western countries must strike the Indian as peculiar and ridiculous. That man or woman is fortunate who lives in a simple natural environment where clothes are merely functional or more so than in Europe or America. Even today in Travancore, men and women wear alike the white cloth around the waist, the mundu. but as "civilization" develops, it elaborates in fashions and styles, makes more distinctions between the sexes.

Serious people who are strongly influenced by common religious beliefs suffer terrible repressions because of the misunderstanding of Wisdom and Eros. They try to control their passions by suppressing them and find it impossible. Somehow or other they must have their gratifications, but it is then accompanied by shame. So sex arouses the conflicting feelings of disgust and fascination. Instead of being an honest enjoyment, sex becomes a furtive indulgence. It loses all art and finesse. In this there is a loss of value or human happiness. This makes both the inhibited and the non-inhibited person inwardly angry. This anger may not be admitted, but it there all the same. The evidence for this is the large number of "respectable" people who become superior and angry both at the Sage and the Prostitute.

This imbalance has a tragic effect in the greater social sense. Because of lack of recognition of one's own private nature, repressed energies which might be used up in personal sex life become explosive potencies to blow up in social life.

It is quite clear that most leaders of society, legal, educational and religious organizations do not understand this, when they provide socially approved sublimating channels. For the kind of energy that does rise up as a substitute to individual erotic desire is a subconscious feeling of revenge on society. Eroticism is tolerated in magazines and visual entertainment on the one hand, and at the other extreme there is the double-sided worship of the scientific creations of industrialized society. People are both proud and afraid of the atom bomb. Nobody really believes that such destructive abominations emerge from human natures having the Good of All in mind.

What is the truth here? Is it not that such scientific horrors and weapons of destruction come from large numbers of human beings who are artificially deprived of normal primal and nature-given joys which are their birthright?

Wherever human beings live in collective bondage to their own creations there is intense psychic suffering and frustration. There is a lack of recognition of differing private natures of individuals and consequent unhappiness.

Still the human being is unique. He can live in peace because he still has the power to discover what he has lost. And certainly he can live in greater harmony than he does today. But large numbers of sensible men and women need to be shown the real cause of human suffering, which lies within themselves.

I can only deal with that aspect of the situation which belongs to the colder regions of the world familiar to me. We must look at the man-woman relationship here where nature insists upon greater activity and where the world of necessity is more dominant.

Here the male, in order to procure the necessities of life, remains too much away from association with the growing children. Thus by necessity the female becomes a major influence in education. Here her own wants motivate her teaching of the young.

She teaches the boy, above all, to become a good provider-husband and omits to teach him to be a good lover. Girls under her care naturally learn the technique of catching of a good provider-husband. This is done simply by thoughtlessly repressing the erotic nature of the boy and by encouraging erotic attractiveness in the girl.

Thus the girl gains a greater knowledge of human nature and has a decisive advantage over the boy. Sex then does not trouble her as much as the boy. She is already to some extent pacified by devotion to her own beauty. Clothes and cosmetics and other sex aids are familiar to her as soon as she can waddle. She feels, to some extent, that she is "sugar and spice and all that's nice" as the nursery rhyme puts it.

At the same time, the boy's love of adornment and beauty is discouraged and he gets early a sense of shame created by this abnormal conditioning. His normal nature is curbed and he is told that he is made of "nails and snails and puppy dog's tails." Nor is he taught any real wisdom. All he is taught is repressive religious morality, and all in favor of feminine domination. Society refuses to see the injustice in all this.

The well-tutored and submissive social person does not realize that this lopsided growth and development of the human male and female is one of the root causes of war. War is the ultimate outcome of a harsh, rampant industrialism. The prospect of war encourages various kinds of commerce. This may not be admitted but the facts are there.

Such is the case also with crime. The policeman and the criminal are two counterparts whose existence depends the one on the others. When people cease to want policemen they will cease to have criminals.

Similarly when people cease to want hospitals they will cease to feel diseased. Indeed we have an increase in diseases and a desire for more hospitals because both diseases and hospitals belong to the same pair of wants.

Nor is there any real need for poverty or for the feeling of poverty. Many poor people don't feel poor. But we must have it to enjoy wealth and of course to do good to the poor.

This is never spoken out. It is submerged and is the will of a subconscious collective mind. Anybody who exposes this contradiction meets with violent opposition and denial. That itself is symptomatic. He is held to be wicked and antisocial and by common agreement outlawed by respectable society. Prostitutes are condemned and vice trials are held in the name of what is moral, completely confusing and mixing up Eros with greed on both sides of the law. The hidden desires of repressed people are encouraged and capitalized on for money making. Can such confused societies have much of positive value to offer humanity? The prospect is dismal indeed.

I feel there is no immediate solution. Religion and education have become too fixed and rigid to ever turn radically towards good sense. I believe that bold and contemplative natures will have to assert themselves and offer a solution

I can think of two ways: one is to establish by one's own effort schools of wisdom, where common sense, philosophy and psychology will be the main basis of education. This may be done along the lines of the ancient forest schools of India. The other way is to approach the erotic side of human nature through art, which was also done in ancient India.

Such a reciprocal relationship showing the way to release suppressed energies in favor of a happier, calmer existence would in the long run make human beings more honest, more tolerant and, in effect, kinder.

There are sex variants. When society objects on moral grounds it ought to be able to supply the answer of how they can enter a calmer state of mind. Can one be happy and enter a calm state of mind, however, when energies are bottled up and not given an outlet? Tensions can be released by both actual experience and long contemplation. Normal restfulness can only be reached after desires have been satisfied. This can be done in one's own private way. Nobody will what that is, since no one needs to account to another's why. But to ask of another why and then to feel ashamed is merely to reveal one's own repressed state of mind.

Pleasure is only for the sake of pleasure and the knowledge of this must lead to final wisdom, to the realization of the highest value of all, that of universal recognition of all human beings, of all human natures, the way they really are, and to abolish hypocrisy and pretence. Only then are we on the way to beauty of character and body.

Thus psychic tensions can be reduced and monstrosities like the atom bomb can be abolished by clearing the way for people to live according to their own true nature. In the long run, this is the remedy for suffering humanity.

HERCULES' LABORS

BY SCOTT TEITSWORTH

Herakles' third labor was to capture the Cerynian Hind. A hind is a female red deer. This one was gigantic, had golden antlers and hoofs of brass, and was sacred to Artemis, (Diana), goddess of the hunt. The creature was so fast it could outrun an arrow, which in those days was about the fastest thing imaginable.

Upon waking from a deep sleep, Herakles just caught a glimpse of gold glinting off the hind's antlers, but that set him off in pursuit. He chased it to the ends of the earth for a full year. Finally it began to tire and sought refuge in a mountain sacred to Artemis. Herakles was able to wound it there with his arrow. Then he caught up to it and carried it back to Eurystheus to prove he had accomplished his task. On the way he encountered Artemis herself, and had to beg her forgiveness for capturing her sacred deer. He then took it back to the king, but when he gave it to him it escaped and ran like lightning back to the goddess.

It continues to amaze me when I read up on these labors that almost everyone is content to simply describe them, as if they have no meaning. The only exceptions are the curious book I mentioned in the last installment, *Sacred Mythoi of Demigods and Heroes*, edited and published by The Shrine of Wisdom, and of course the good Dr. Mees in his *Revelation in the Wilderness*. While shaky on some of the facts, such as making the hind here out to be a stag (male), *Sacred Mythoi* at least aims at revealing the significance of the labors to a seeker of truth, and it coordinates their order with the zodiac in a sensible way. It is heartening to have the anonymous author as a compatriot in the exegesis of this fascinating myth.

This labor paints a picture of seeking a spiritual goal in life. The hero starts out with only the sketchiest idea in his mind, the alluring glint of gold. We begin any quest with a mere glimpse of what we're after, often more imaginary than real. Arrows symbolize directed thoughts or intentions, and a worthy goal keeps well ahead of what we imagine, therefore it outruns our ordinary "arrows." A goal continues to recede for a long time as we chase after it, because our original inspiration was necessarily lacking. Thus we are drawn to an ever-improving conceptualization. Herakles chases his vision through all the seasons and all the countries of the world, until it is worn out. In other words, the full panoply of techniques of seeking are all pursued and found inadequate. After trial and error eliminates all the commonplace methods of capture, the object of the quest ascends a sacred mountain. This means the goal becomes sublimated, spiritualized. At this stage Herakles can strike it with his best arrow, his best intention, from the depths of his soul. As *Sacred Mythoi* tells us, in its theosophical style that adores capitalization:

It is easy and natural for the Soul to aspire, but purely natural aspirations do not necessarily lead the Soul to a realization of those Ideals which are above and beyond Nature.... Therefore, natural aspirations must be turned, ultimately, to that which is supra-natural and divine for their ideal realization. (33)

Herakles at last catches up to his goal on the sacred heights. He has had to wound it with his arrow, or he would never have caught it. This means that the actualities of any situation inevitably compromise the hypothetical purity of what we imagine. In the beginning our goals are idealized, and to make them real we must adapt our theories so that they can fit with the actual world. Yet we must take care not to compromise so much as to kill them completely. The mystical deer we seek must still be recognizable for what it is: a beautiful, mythological creature. Someone less than a hero or spiritual champion might wind up with only a steaming pile of dead flesh. ~~But Herakles does not kill the hind,~~ he lifts it onto his shoulders to carry it back to his guru, the one making him do all the labors. We use the phrase shouldering a burden even today for the moment we take up the task of actualizing a vision.

Meeting the goddess en route to delivering the goods teaches us that we must be humble and acknowledge the divine source of our mission. We are not to take all the credit onto our own shoulders. We are simply one part of a grand scheme.

Lastly, in spiritual matters we cannot directly pass on our accomplishment to another. It is ours alone. Even less can one who has not pursued the goal be qualified to receive its fruits. We cannot act as a proxy to anyone else, much as we might want to, nor can anyone act as proxy for us. Therefore when Herakles tries to give the hind to Eurystheus it vanishes in the twinkling of an eye, returning to its divine mistress. The frustrations of generations of gurus, who watched their wise advice converted into satiric, dim reflections by their disciples, is reflected in this final touch.

The fourth labor was to capture the enormous and ferocious Erymanthian Boar. On the way, Herakles passed through the realm of the centaurs, half horse, half men, who were known to be carousers and fighters, not to mention sexually voracious. One centaur, however, Chiron, was wise and a model of decorum. Herakles went to him to ask advice, and Chiron advised him to drive the boar into deep, fresh snow, which would make him easy to catch.

Heading out to retrieve the boar, Herakles stopped off to visit a centaur friend of his, who ate meat raw. He convinced the centaur to open a jar that Dionysius had given him, filled with some very potent sacred wine. The smell of it drew a crowd of centaurs, who became drunk and rowdy and attacked Herakles. A fight ensued where Herakles drove the centaurs off with his poisoned arrows, killing many. He then went to the forest and drove the boar into the snow, tiring him out. He caught the boar in his net, bound it tightly with rope and carried it to Eurystheus.

Of all the labors, this might be the easiest for us to discern the meaning. The boar epitomizes selfish indulgence; even today we call people pigs who rut around in untempered desires. If you hog things to yourself, you are being piggish. If you insist on things going your way, you are being pig headed. And so on.

But, as we have often noted, our vitality is not to be simply suppressed but to be tamed and sublimated. We must redirect our energy from insatiable carnal appetites to the higher erotics of love of the divine. Therefore Herakles does not kill the boar, despite its having devastated the forest where it lives, but catches it alive and binds it. He uses his net, symbolic of mental intelligence, to subdue his animal urges.

Herakles is easily diverted from his task at first by his association with the rowdy centaurs. In case we need one, this is a hint as to the meaning of the quest. The cave he parties in is not unlike the bars and nightclubs of our time. Just as the situation threatens to embroil him permanently, to make him an addict and fellow cave dweller, he escapes by firing off his poisoned arrows at the advocates of indulgence. This use of extreme directed force is necessary to break free of the lures of addictive pleasures.

Herakles then traveled to the devastated forest and drove the boar of indulgence into the snow. Addiction, both personal and collective, lays waste to our beautiful environment. We all have experienced how addicted family members can wreak havoc; likewise the addiction of modern society to unsustainable growth and rapacious consumption is destroying the whole planet. To stop the damage, we must somehow temper our burning passions and regain our cool, our balance. We say "cool it" when someone is over-agitated. "Chill out." Pristine, new-fallen snow is virginal, unsullied, and cold. The boar of desire is indeed insatiable, but when it is redirected into the peace of cool wisdom gently falling from the heavens, its madness dissipates and it calms down. As Dr. Mees puts it, "The field of snow illustrates that there is nothing like a cold bath or cold counsel to put down libidinous excitement, in all fields of life in which it may manifest itself." Herakles driving the boar into the snow teaches us that a measure of firm intention is involved with effecting the cure.

When the boar of unrestrained passion has become tame, it can be snared in the net of intelligence, making it fit to lay at the guru's feet as an offering. A true offering is one that has been won through valiant struggle, not something that has been offhandedly purchased at the market. The net symbolizes the mind, the loom of consciousness. Using it in the capture means that intelligence must be brought to boar, er, bear. Herakles wisely binds the boar tightly so that it cannot escape and begin another rampage. Since we can't fully trust ourselves regarding our desires, they must be trussed.

No matter how you go about it, taming our animal instincts is truly a Herculean task for each of us.

ONE HUNDRED STEPS TO REALIZATION

BY

GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

STEP TEN

If you sit in a dark room all alone where you cannot see anything, including your body, can you still recognize your self-existence?

Yes, I can. I experience most things about me not by discerning things with my sight. For instance, the fact that I have consciousness and that thoughts become conscious to me is a self-evident experience. Suppose in the same situation another person also happens to be there and asks you “who are you?” Being surprised by a stranger questioning you in the dark, you ask him likewise “who are you?”

*What could be your answer and the reply to your counter-question?
Both answers will be the same: “I am.”*

When there is such identity in both answers how do you interpret the same answer being given by two people?

I would naturally think of the other person’s “I am” as referring to his self exactly as I was referring to my self.

When you say “I am” what do you mean?

I experience the core of my consciousness as “I am.” For that reason, I interpret the other voice responding to my question “I am” as similarly identical with the core of his self.

What do you understand from the identity of the two people’s spontaneous acceptance of their mutual response?

I understand that the core aspect of our ‘I’ consciousness, our self, has a bipolar identity.

However, even when you do not object to the other person responding to your question, as “I am,” don’t you recognize that the other voice belongs to another

person with a separate body, with another mind, another set of sense organs, and different promptings of his mind?

Yes, I do recognize his separateness in body, but I also recognize that the other person in his self is not altogether another. We have identical selves.

When you refer to your self as "I am" aren't you referring to the other as "you"?

When I say "I am", my reference is to my subjective self, but when I speak to the other, his subjective self is my objective self.

When you and I interact and agree to view the two selves as one, how do you come to such unanimity of mutual agreement?

We agree about each other's self intuitively.

What is intuition?

Henry Bergson explains intuition as follows: "There is one reality at least which we grasp from inside and not by a simple analysis. That is our own person in its flow along time. It is our self that endures. We can sympathize intellectually or rather spiritually with no other thing. But we do sympathize surely with ourselves." (*La Pensee et Mouvant*, Geneva, 1946)

Is this what Narayana Guru calls advaita?

Yes, Narayana Guru calls it *advaita* and his disciple Nataraja Guru calls it unitive understanding.

What is Nataraja Guru's concept of unitive understanding?

He once wrote: "Unitive understanding consists essentially of abolishing duality. This duality is to be understood not merely as a theological doctrine which in common parlance, especially in India, separates God from Man, as when we speak of the difference between the theological doctrines of a Ramanuja, a Madhva or a Shankara. Monism and monotheism still belong to the ordinary speculation of the philosophy of the scholastic or the theologians. The truly dialectical content and the import of the term non-duality belong to the domain of dialectical thinking which, as between the Self and the non-self, or as between the one and the many, reduces all duality into unity. The unitive way is that of the central core of the stream of consciousness where it has nothing to do with mechanistic objects hardened as a crust round the liquid central flux of eternal becoming. It could be conceived in terms of a vertical axis passing invisibly at the core of the polyhedron, to which form of clear crystal we could compare pure contemplative consciousness."

STEP ELEVEN

When you say "I", what do you mean?

At the central core of my being, my self, I have an awareness that there is a conviction that I am the monitor of my knowing, hearing, seeing, doing and experiencing. It is this identity of correspondence I recognize as my 'I' consciousness. I proclaim it in English as "I", in Sanskrit as *aham* and in Malayalam as *nan*.

Each time you say "I", has it the same meaning?

Every time I say "I" my reference is to the same monitor. As the monitor's function arises circumstantially, the shades of meaning of "I" superficially vary.

Is there anything which does not vary in the connotation even when the circumstances vary?

Yes, always the essence of the seer, hearer, doer and the experiencer is the same.

What do you think of the essential unity of the meaning when you are obliged to say "I", "me" or "my" several times a day under different circumstances?

Whether I say "I" or "me" or "mine" I always recognize that the essence of these terms tallies with the existential essence of my self. The circumstantial coloration of meaning is superficial. The rules of grammar of the language in which I explicate my operational identity will always direct me to identify myself in the first person, which I invariably introduce as the performer or respondent.

Because of the changing circumstances, if you are obliged to say "I" or "I am" twice or twelve times or a hundred times, does your self become multiplied and become several?

From my birth to death I continue to be the same. For instance, although I respire again and again my respiration is a continuous flow, so I remain the same irrespective of the varying performance of breathing.

If you say "I love you, but I hate your brother, and the other members of your family I do not love or hate," don't you see a paradox in what you attribute functionally to your self?

Really, no. Pre-Socratic philosophers and pluralistic Vaiseshikas, and dualistic Samkhyans held such a view, but it isn't right. My self is the very subject in me. However, the objective counterpart of my self can function differently. The functional part of my self can act as an instrument. The functional instrumentation of my will is the doer. This instrumentation of knowledge may be wielded by my ego, *ahamkāra*, but *aham* and *ahamkāra*, self and ego, are not the same. Only a dualistically conceived I-consciousness functions as the non-self.

If you say 'I' has the same essence from childhood to death, then the self must be the totality of the essence of all your pronouncements of 'I'. Is that so?

Theoretically, yes.

But we cannot assert that every time you say "I" its essence is the essence of pure Self. Why?

Because my reference to 'I' is on most occasions related to my philosophically oriented self.

What other kind of self can manifest?

The self can be tarnished with the shades of the several ambiguities, guilt feelings and social considerations of the ego. When 'I' consciousness is intimately identified with emotionally tinged ego, or with social or personal profit and loss motivations, the essence of the ego is tarnished with ego identified with ignorance, which compounds ignorance by making false judgments. Then what is being presented by saying 'I' is my conceited self, and not my pure self that is identical with the Universal Self.

Why is that so?

Because the inner core of my self has to lean on the instruments of the body-mind complex of the living organism.

What are the instrumentations that the self utilizes?

There are instruments called *karaṇas*: the five organs of perception and the five organs of action, and there are four psychic organs called *antakarāṇa*.

What are the psychic organs?

The *antakarāṇa* or psychic organs are mind, memory recall, intelligence used to make judgments, and the ego asserting its will against pains or in its favor with pleasures.

Are there physiological, biological, and socio-psychological considerations to be taken seriously by a wise person who is willing to see all as one, in the context of nondual or unitive understanding of the Absolute?

The hundred steps suggested by Narayana Guru here are intended for the truly wise person.

What kind of reasoning is to be adopted by wise people wishing to transcend all hurdles?

Dialectical reasoning is to be preferred to mechanical reasoning. In Plato's Republic we read that dialectics is the coping stone of wisdom. Nataraja Guru

introduces us to Eddington's *Nature of the Physical World* to help understand Narayana Guru's summation of the 'I' which, while being multiple, assumes continuity with the totality of the self-substance. He says:

Even within the domain of unitively understood metaphysics there is room for the one-and-the-many paradox to persist. A monist in the philosophical sense or a monotheist in the theological sense should not be confused. This, however, often takes place. One who sees all as one, in the context of non-dual and unitive understanding of the Absolute, is the truly wise man.

The latter implies a dialectical approach which is not given to the mechanistic reasoning of even correct theologians and philosophers. Reason has to go one step beyond even the intuition that Bergson postulated. When the faculty of the dialectics which, as the coping stone of wisdom in man, attains to its full scope of directing and regulating thought processes, through its ascending and descending movements as we have elsewhere studied, one would be able to think of an Absolute that unitively combines being and becoming and even the one and the many by one single act of understanding.

When the Guru states here that the sum total of the divergent multiplicity in consciousness attains to continuity with the One, which represents the Absolute in a more finalized sense, he is only delving further into the structure of the notion of the One Absolute. The Absolute can have a positive and a negative side. The conflict between the two has to be overcome by a dialectical approach. The One and the many can coexist without contradiction or paradox in the mind of a trained dialectician, while to the mechanistic thinker, who is not a true contemplative and who is incapable of using higher mathematical symbols like the square root of minus one, there is a glaring intellectual cul-de-sac out of which he cannot jump.

The one and the many selves, whether seen as between two individuals or within the plus and minus sides of the same individual can thus be seen to attain equality, sameness, homogeneity or continuity as here mentioned. Unitive understanding is what is here implied, which is the proper subject matter of nondual (*advaitic*) wisdom.

BEES IN WINTER

BY EMILY TEITSWORTH

What did she find in that city
of no bees, no hummingbirds,
no sifting silver leaves?

In her dream the bees' honey kiss
touched her lips, brushed against
the whispering lips of dawn

as it snapped tree branches
so gently with its sweet rising voice.
The windowpane glowed like maple sap.

She lay on the sidewalk and listened
to the rumble of sewage under the street
like thunder breaking in her heart.

Fields of apples and grapes, dry air
smelling of granite. There was no bridge,
no river, no sky even to carry the wind.

The roads ran with the juice of rotting grapes.
She closed her eyes and the warm darkness sang to her,
sang of secret fires flowering in the wasp's garden.

LIVING A HARMONIOUS LIFE: AN INTRODUCTION

BY NANCY YEILDING

At the turn of the twentieth century a wise teacher from South India described the culmination of Yoga in a very alluring manner: “When mind, the bumble bee, sips the honey-like sweetness of one’s own bliss, fluttering ceases and is drawn into union.” This poetic description given by Narayana Guru echoes and elaborates the definition of Yoga given in one of the foundation texts of Yoga, the Bhagavad Gita (VI:23): “Yoga is disaffiliation from the context of suffering.”

These definitions are not academic; they speak directly to our experience of life, which can range from being punctuated by suffering to being permeated by it. They also speak to our constant yearning and search for happiness. We are all acquainted with the fluttering, not to say, disturbed and agitated nature of our minds, as they respond to inner and outer provocations. Yet we have all tasted, sensed, or at least heard of the possibility of bliss. We want to make true lasting happiness our own, but don’t know how.

The teachings of Yoga are a direct, compassionate response to human suffering. They are also very wise, offering a practical philosophy capable of guiding us from suffering to happiness. But we should note that the assurance given by the Gita is not that we can somehow escape or destroy the context of suffering but rather that we can disaffiliate ourselves from it. We suffer because we are afflicted with a case of mistaken identity. We see ourselves as physically and psychically separate, when, in fact, we are a part of one whole. Yet it is so easy to think we are nothing but the tiny bit of the universe that is bounded by our physical outline and defined by our experiences. From that mistaken identity, all forms of suffering follow, from the petty to the profound.

In the *Yoga Śāstra*, the science of harmonious union presented by Patanjali, the obstacles to happiness are expressed in compelling detail as: physical pain or distress, depression, doubt, exaggeration, laziness, hankering, insanity, having no firm ground for spiritual orientation, and instability. Although he wrote long ago, this list could just as easily have been compiled today. Whatever external causes of suffering we encounter, whether global, social, interpersonal, or intrapersonal, we as individuals experience them as our own pain, distress, confusion, instability, and so on. Even when the suffering of others evokes our compassion, we personally experience it within.

We suffer—and we seek happiness and freedom from suffering. Yoga originated as a natural response to this human condition. It is why it was developed, why its teachings have been followed, elaborated, and passed down from time immemorial to the present.

Yoga is as ancient as human history and reaches even beyond it to the past so distant that it is hidden by the shrouds of our unknowing. According to Alain Danielou, renowned scholar of Indian religion, history, and art, Yoga originated as long ago as the sixth millennium B.C.E. as an aspect of spiritual practices affiliated with the archetypal contemplative known as *Śiva*. These extremely ancient beginnings are attested to by finds made in the sand-buried ruins of Indus Valley civilization, first discovered at the end of the nineteenth century. “These ruins, covering a considerable area of which only a tiny part has been explored, reveal the existence—between the third and second millennium B.C.E.—of one of the most developed and refined civilizations of the ancient world. . . . [It] stretched as far as the Ganges valley and along the coast toward modern Mumbai. Mohenjo Daro—the best preserved of the towns of this civilization—is uniquely modern, with its grid of streets, its balconied houses, its bathrooms, jewels, engraved seals, system of writing, and so on. Such a city is the result of a very long-lived culture.”

Plentiful among the engraved seals of the Indus Valley were those bearing depictions of an archetypal yogi, sitting cross-legged under the spreading branches of a tree. According to Nataraja Guru, a penetrating mid-twentieth century philosopher who united Eastern and Western outlooks in his universal approach, “this figure of the man meditating under a tree has dominated the spiritual language of India persistently and continues to dominate it today as ever. Both literature and iconography are full of references to this archetypal emblem.”

Wherever we are in the world, we can readily call to mind examples that reveal how this potent image has spoken to people everywhere, most often as depictions of the meditating Buddha, but also of other wisdom teachers such as the Jain gurus, as well as iconographic representations of various saints and deities, both male and female. Regardless of our spiritual or religious affiliation, we are drawn to the serenity of the meditating figure, the gentle smile that indicates the happiness and peace we yearn for, sensing that it speaks of an inner foundation, a steadiness that can weather the storms of life.

As Nataraja Guru points out, this ancient spiritual tradition also manifested in literature, in the histories, epics, and religious, philosophical, and mystical writings that preserved and developed India’s indigenous spiritual heritage. The Dravidian Indus Valley civilization was highly developed long before the Aryan invasions. The roots of Yoga thus pre-date Hinduism, which developed out of the initial clash (and subsequent synthesis) between the contemplative ways of the Dravidians and the aggressive sacrificial practices that marked the Aryan worship of gods who personified the forces of nature. Both of the great ancient epics of India,

the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, record this clash in symbolic form. Certain actual events related in these texts, both of which draw on even more ancient sources, are dated roughly to the third or second millennium B.C.E. Both epics make ample reference to Yoga as a discipline of senses and mind, practiced to gain spiritual insight and power. But more to the point is the section at the heart of the Mahabharata known as the Bhagavad Gita. It, along with Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*, is one of the primary and best-known sources of the teachings of Yoga.



In the middle of the first millennium BCE, the Buddha's early sermons gave expression to yogic ideas, particularly in the four *brahma-vihāras*—friendliness, compassion, joy, and equanimity—and the eightfold path, both of which are very similar to the tenets of *Yoga Śāstra*. Although its principles and practices are fundamental to the practices of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religions, the science of Yoga is unrelated to any religion. The disciplines of Yoga are not predicated on any set of beliefs, and are not related to any forms of worship of God or gods.

But this scientific nature of Yoga does not mean it is divorced from our lives. It reveals intimate details of how memory and thought become cages in which we are trapped. Even more important, it offers us a clear approach and methodology to free ourselves. As the second chapter, the *Sādhana Pāda*, makes very clear, the disciplines of this science are not performed in a vacuum. In fact, they are predicated upon wholesome ethical behavior and the cultivation of values of universal and perennial significance. Although the practice of Yoga is an individual pursuit, it naturally results in greater harmony with others.

There is a lot of uncertainty, which has given rise to much speculation and dispute, about the date of composition of Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*, with estimates typically ranging from the third century BCE to the third century CE. Although the date cannot be fixed with certainty, "this brief text represents the earliest known systematic statement of the philosophical insights and practical psychology that define Yoga. Through the centuries since its composition, it has been reinterpreted

to meet the needs of widely divergent schools of Indian Yoga, for which it remains an essential text.” (*Yoga, Discipline of Freedom*, B. S. Miller.) Yogis and scholars agree that Patañjali was an able compiler and editor whose work helped to preserve and pass down the priceless wisdom of Yoga, the science of harmonious union.

The form Patanjali adopted, that of the *sūtra*, was often used in Indian philosophy. The word *sūtra*, which literally means “thread,” refers both to the short statements or aphorisms of intense condensed meaning, of which the ancient philosophical textbooks were composed, as well as to the entire work consisting of such aphorisms strung together. Each of the six major systems of Indian philosophy have their *Sūtra* textbook, such as the *Brahma Sūtras* of Badarayana for Vedanta, the *Sāṅkhya Pravacana Sūtras* of Kapila for Samkhya, and both Buddhism and Jainism have their *Sūtra* texts as well.

The condensed nature of the *sūtra* style—coupled with the intricate and subtle nature of Sanskrit, the language the *Yoga Sūtras* were composed in—makes it imperative for us to have the aid of an able translator and commentator in order to understand the powerful teaching they embody. Over the centuries, many wise and compassionate teachers in India took up the challenge of interpreting them. Some of the most well-known are Vyasa in the fifth century, Vacaspati Mishra in the ninth, Bhoja Raja in the eleventh, and Vijñāna Bhikshu in the sixteenth (who all wrote in Sanskrit). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries numerous scholars and teachers undertook the task of translation of both the original text and its commentaries into English. Sadly, the result was often a text in which Patanjali’s intent of guiding us from suffering to freedom was obscured in the tangles of language and philosophical discursiveness. Still, several well-done translations and helpful commentaries were also shared with the world.

Another obscuration arose, paradoxically, through the manner in which Yoga became popular in the West. Instead of the comprehensive, holistic way of life expressed by Patanjali’s *Yoga Śāstra*, Yoga was typically packaged—most often as a commercial product—as merely a form of exercise, a series of stretches, postures, and breath control, with an occasional nod toward meditation. All of this can be very beneficial of course, and it certainly must answer a need, as Yoga has not only become very popular but big business.

The theory and practice of Yoga, however, offer much more in the way of invaluable guidance, which this commentary reveals. Guru Nitya presented these insights and explanations as a series of classes for his students in the U.S., Singapore, and India, in response to their yearning for liberation from suffering. Published serially in the *Gurukulam* magazine from 1986 to 1999, this commentary includes only the first two of the four chapters of Patañjali’s work but, as Guru Nitya will make clear, it is a full exposition of the transforming path of Yoga.

With the compassionate wisdom of Guru Nitya as your guide, you are invited to enter into Yoga, and to benefit from its teachings and practices, leading you, like the bumble bee, to the heart of the sweet bliss of your own Self, which is the Self of All.

THE CUCKOO AND I

BY GOPI DAS

Every time I played my flute
a cuckoo responded to my song from the garden tree.
Sometimes, when busy, I would forget to sing.
The cuckoo would then call out impatiently
in its most melancholic tone,
reminding me to take the flute and begin the duet.
Then I sang the songs I would wish to sing
to my beloved.
And the cuckoo took the part of my beloved
and sang in return.
Once I was so sad and singing without cease;
and all through the day
the bird accompanied my voice with its song,
as if to assure me again and again
of its permanent companionship.
I was consoled forever by the love of the bird,
amazed how a bird could have the wisdom
to understand a sorrowing human heart!
Thereafter I came to understand
that it is possible to love a bird
in the same way one loves
a beautiful woman.

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2009

BY GURU MUNI NARYANA PRASAD

Let us pray on this eve of the New Year for the peace and contentment of all humanity. Let us pray for the well being of our global village.

But what do peace, contentment and well being mean? These days our world seems filled with a discontent originating from an economic recession that began in the US. and is now spreading its tentacles across the world. Let us note, though, that this recession is not caused by any true shortage of what really makes our lives content. The current shortage is only in the way of money, which is really but a medium for exchanging nature's resources. Yet Nature's bounty is still available for our natural needs, if we take care not to abuse her bounty or abuse one another.

Today's mercantile economy focuses primarily on the extraction of resources and the use of labor for the immediate accumulation of money and the luxuries it buys. The so-called science of economics seems to pay little attention to the sustainability of this overall situation. Nature is bounteous, but she has limits. Scientists are strongly warning us of all kinds of impending disasters like the exhaustion of energy reserves, soil and ground water depletion, increasingly polluted rivers and oceans, the extinction of entire species or ecosystems, a deteriorating ozone layer, and global warming. Since economic systems and material welfare are not really based on money so much as on nature's bounty and human endeavor, nature herself and the way we relate to her must be the greatest consideration in any future science of economics. To abuse nature is to destroy the very basis of our economic system. Hence, our economic system must come into accord with the reality of the natural world order, as studied in sciences like ecology.

Some economists opine that the current recession is the result of the on-going modern globalization process that the markets are going through. But when listening to economists it is important to remember that much of the science of economics itself is not based on humanity's welfare as a whole but rather on what ensures the wealth of nations, as expressed notably by Adam Smith. It is really a science or philosophy of mercantile economics designed for the sake of a profitable market. To make one nation wealthy at the expense of another has always been implicit in this system. Though most economists are aware of this fact, it seems few consider just how flawed this concept really is.

Mercantile economics is far older than Adam Smith, but its sociological and psychological effects seen today are important to note. Our modern world has become a world that gives an inordinate amount of value to material wealth, and this undoubtedly reflects the values and logic of mercantilism. Such a system really

causes humans to crave money or material goods far beyond what is natural or necessary. It is this unchecked craving, without regard for the welfare of anyone else, that has created the current market crisis.

Furthermore, to accept taking advantage of other individuals or even nations for the sake of money alone cannot make for a lasting happiness on either side of the situation. Human relations, between individuals and communities, are an inseparable part of any economic system; and the nature of these relations affects



our psychological state of being. Mercantilism can and does create the scenario of victimization, between individuals, communities, and countries. And though not measurable, no amount of material wealth can cover the psychological perversion and unhappiness it necessarily brings. In other words, our current economic system and its values cannot possibly make for the lasting happiness of any individual or group so long as it is not fair and morally sound. Indeed, it can have the opposite effect. For the sake of our social and psychological health, the social and psychological implications of our economic philosophies and practices have to be addressed.

Today's market is of a truly global dimension. That means the monetary system guiding the market will also have to become of a global dimension if crises like the present one are to be mitigated or even prevented in the future. But economics often focuses on something that is really only an improvisation, namely money and its exchange, in proxy for nature's resources. Hence, it will never be an entirely exacting or stable science as the natural sciences are. But if its ideas and goals rest merely on the wealth of nations or the few at the expense of others, it can never realistically tackle global problems, nor can it even claim to be a form of global

economics. According to the law of supply and demand, if it really is a law, when supply of a product increases, the monetary value of that product decreases. It seems few economists have considered whether this "law" is a truly scientific and sustainable way to run our world economy. Is an economic system with a greater parity between nature's products and their monetary value possible. where an increase in production means a proportionate increase in monetary income and a decrease in the former means a decrease in the latter? And wouldn't a value shift from money itself to what money represents, the use of nature's resources, be more logical? Such a shift might even help curtail humanity's greed for money, as it could focus on providing humans with what they really need.

Doing this, shifting from money to nature, is our message on this New Year's Eve: we request that all of us together, including our leaders, consider what it means to build a truly human and nature based system of economics that is in accord with reality. To consider, let us first ask, what is wealth? Is it money or is it the peace, human contentment and well being that comes from living in accord with one another and with nature? Is it for nations and us alone or is it for the entire global community?

MOVIE MUSE

BY PETER OPPENHEIMER

Though certainly one of the most entertaining art forms, cinema is called to a higher purpose beyond mere entertainment. Cinema, at its best, asks us to reach beyond ourselves, to empathize with the feelings of others—who through both sympathy and identity turn out to be aspects of our own greater self—flashing before us. When sages, prophets and mystics speak of spiritual transformation, it is exactly this shifting of the center of our I-consciousness from the individual personality and its personal narrative to the spiritual center of all life everywhere. People move along this spiritual continuum as we move from selfish self-concern to that of family, neighbor, community, nation and eventually the entire planet.

Good cinema helps to move us along this path. It gets us out of ourselves and trains us to identify with others and to enlarge ourselves in the process of learning how differently life may appear and savor to others. Conversely, when made purely from self-serving motives and in an exploitative manner, cinema can have the opposite effect of alienating us from others who are demonized, stereotyped, or disrespected, and of numbing us to the real pain of others by either trivializing or glorifying violence and abuse.

It seems that the selection committee for the 13th annual International Film Festival of Kerala, held this past December, must have had the loftier purpose in mind. The overall effect of the 185 films screened (from 53 different countries) was a broadening of understanding across national, religious, racial, cultural, class and gender boundaries and an enlargement of the identities of each of the more than 8000 delegates attending the festival. To become a delegate one needed only register by paying the equivalent of a \$6 registration fee, which then entitled one to an 8 day all-access pass to all 8 venues, each of which presented 5 showings per day. A truly dazzling and dizzying experience.

The Festival itself unfurled in the immediate aftermath of the horrifying Mumbai terrorist attacks and against a backdrop of attempted genocides in Africa and two brutal occupations in the Middle East. The deterioration of the global economy and environment also challenges all caring members of humanity to sit up and take notice, and then to take steps toward peace, recovery, healing and reapportionment of resources. The Festival organizers paid homage to the those suffering under the above-mentioned strains by beginning the opening night ceremony with a poem written for the victims of the Mumbai attacks the lighting of candles distributed to all in attendance. There was also a statement from Kerala's Minister of Culture and Education to the effect that cinema can contribute to the

development of the human being, both individually and collectively, by providing a way for people from different cultures to better communicate with and understand each other.

It takes a kind of fierce dedication and the focus of an obsession to sit through 30 films in 8 days, as did this reporter. But the rewards are manifold. This year—my seventh consecutive IFFK—a full half of the films I saw rated a B+ or better, for the first time. One of my rating criteria for a B+ is that, cheapskate though I am, I would normally be delighted to have plunked down the 10 bucks and devoted two precious hours to see it. The breakdown by country of this Top Fifteen (B+ or better) was impressively varied: Iran (3), Burkina Faso (2), Palestine (2), France, Algeria, Germany, Turkey, Mexico, U.S.A., South Korea and India.

The only director to place two films in my Top Ten was Idrissa Ouedraogo from Burkina Faso, whose work was represented by four films in the Contemporary Masters package. The two I saw and loved were *Yaaba (Grandmother)* and *Tilai (The Law)*. Both take place in a traditional though contemporary African village where old ways clash with the modern, and time-honored chains of authority clash with the hearts' desires of individuals. Idrissa shows great understanding and sympathy for those on both sides of this cultural divide.

In *Yaaba*, an old woman is branded by her village as a witch and banished to eke out a meager life for herself on the outskirts. Bila is a young boy with a fondness for the woman, adopting her as a grandmother, seeking her out, offering companionship, joking with her, bringing gifts and defending her against other boys his age who pelt her with stones. Bila's best friend is a slightly older female cousin, Nopoko. They are always looking out and standing up for each other, sharing each other's chores, while all the time teasing each other.

Building on his already compassionate nature, *Yaaba* teaches Bila to refrain from judging others, even those who seem to be breaking some tribal or moral code. Bila and Nopoko always take the side of the underdog, as evidenced in a scene with the village drunkard. This open-hearted acceptance runs stream-like through the movie. That and a questioning of the cultural belief that adults always know more than children and men more than women.

Things take a dramatic turn when Nopoko comes down with tetanus from a knife wound while protecting Bila in a fight with a group of boys who had ganged up on him. *Yaaba* may be the only one who can save Nopoko's life, but still the villagers want no part of her. What is to be their fate?

In spite of my bias in favor of the low-key, independent and populist cinema of Africa, Asia and Latin America featured at IFFK, I am awarding this year's Best of Fest (rather, of the 30 films I saw) to a French film entitled *The Class (Entre Le Mur)*, which won the grand prize at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

The Class is a breathtakingly tenacious and intimate look at one year in the life of an ethnically diverse, inner city, middle school classroom in Paris. To say

these kids are a handful is an understatement, and their teacher Mr. Marin, played by the author on whose autobiographical novel the film is based, makes his job harder (though certainly more fruitful) by refusing to clamp down hard or stifle the intense energy with which these kids are continually coming at him.

The film opens in the teacher's lounge on the day before school starts, as schedules are handed out and new teachers are warned which kids are likely to create problems (most of them). This is the first film I've seen capture the noise and chaos of a room full of adolescents bursting with ideas, hormones and interests, most of which seem to have little to do with the subject at hand. With the tenacity of a warrior and the equanimity of a monk, Mr. Marin is determined to have a positive impact on those in his charge.

In one typical scene the teacher is engaging one student who is refusing to write her name on her paper on the ground that he knows her handwriting, while other students are protesting that the exercise is corny, still others are surreptitiously texting on their phones, unauthorized cookies are being shared around, several are talking and laughing, while in another corner a boy is performing tricks with his pen.

Further adding to the challenge is that this one class is made up of students with a wide variety of languages, cultural backgrounds, skill levels, attention spans, impulse control, respect for others, motivation and fields and degrees of interest. Mr. Marin takes great pains to include everybody and to acknowledge and incorporate into his lessons even their most confrontational and off-subject outbursts. Without allowing the class to ever quite become a free-for-all, an atmosphere is created which, in effect, is free for all.

Mr. Marin is neither a pushover nor a saint. Kids who display grievous disrespect are sent to the principal, though he later goes to bat for those same students during their disciplinary hearings. And, in fact, it is an ill considered and cutting outburst by Mr. Marin that creates the classroom crisis, which builds to the film's climax as the school year draws to an end.

The Class is a marvelous movie, as true to life as it is exhilarating and perplexing, as open-hearted, well-intentioned, courageous and complex as is its protagonist, and as full of energy, angst and joie de vivre as are the kids who constitute its class.

Rounding out my Top Three is *At Five in the Afternoon*, the fourth feature by the bold and beautiful Iranian director Samira Makmalbaf, who made her stunning directorial debut with the powerfully touching *The Apple* in 1998 at the age of seventeen. Samira was present at this year's IFFK as a member of the international jury, and I was reduced to the level of a paparazzi trying to capture her lovely image with my camera. *At Five in the Afternoon* is the first film to be made in Kabul, Afghanistan, after the collapse of the Taliban regime, and its subject is the still fragile and oppressed, though tough and resolute, aspirational dreams of a young woman named Nogreh, who harbors the outrageously blasphemous ambition to one day become the president of Afghanistan.

The film opens with the haunting ghostlike image of a woman walking the streets hidden under the full cover of a burka. She seems somehow there, but not there. The form of a person is suggested, and yet totally unavailable for self-disclosure or interaction. She joins a crowd of similarly cloaked women in a courtyard, chanting from some scripture to the effect that women should refrain from dancing and revealing their charms and that men should avert their eyes and control their lust.

Coming out from this prayer meeting, the woman removes her burka, revealing western dress, puts on some white pumps and with a smile hurries off to join a newly reconstituted primary school for girls, where hundreds of teenage girls are engaged in lively discussion of many subjects and issues.

The girls are called together and the headmistress begins with the request, "Please stand up if you want to be a doctor....lawyer....teacher...." Each time dozens stand. When she half-jokingly says "president," only two stand. Interestingly during the open casting call for the female lead, this same question was put to a large group of Afghan young women. The only one who stood up was eventually cast to play the lead role of Nogreh in the film. There follows a spirited debate among all the girls present as to why or why not such a thing as a woman president could ever be possible in Afghanistan. The movie would be worth seeing for this scene alone.

But there is so much more. Nogreh is living with her orthodox father in a camp for refugees from war torn areas of the country. The refugees are living packed into makeshift shelters, such as bombed out ruins and even in the fuselage of a downed fighter jet plane. The film has an extremely fresh and vital feeling to it. There are several unanticipated plot developments and surprising encounters and relationships, such as the one between Nogreh and a French soldier, neither of whom speak the other's language. A hallmark of this film, as in all of Samira Makmalbaf's films, is the sympathy with which all characters are treated, even the more conservative and old-fashioned ones who would place obstacles in Nogreh's path toward independence and self-expression. There are many stirring and haunting images which pack an emotional wallop. I did not want this movie to end. Ultimately the film soars both as the depiction of a young woman aspiring for spiritual and social goals and of a city in ruins made majestic by the grit and grace of the people surviving in it.

GURUKULA NEWS

The new building complex at the Narayana Gurukula headquarters in Varkala, Kerala, formally opened on December 22, 2008. It houses, on two floors, a new kitchen, a dining hall, two dormitories, one each for men and women, and three guest rooms. The construction is not yet complete: a final, third floor will have nine rooms to accommodate Gurukula students and is expected to be finished by the end of 2009.

The annual Gurukula Convention was held from December 23-29, 2008, and went well. The theme of six seminars held in connection with the Convention was the Essence of Non-Dual Vision and its Application in Actual Life. The fields chosen for discussion were: Personal Life, State Governance, Economics, Modern Science, Education, and the Originality of Narayana Guru's Life. Guru Muni Narayana Prasad gave talks each morning on one of Narayana Guru's philosophical poems, *Advaita Dīpikā*.

From April 1-12, 2009, there was a Youth Camp at the Varkala Gurukula to familiarize the young generation with spiritual and ethical values. And from May 1-4, 2009, there was an East-West University seminar in Varkala, with the main theme the Philosophies of the Far East in Relation to the Philosophy of Narayana Guru.

Guru Prasad made a short visit to Kuwait from April 18-26, 2009, and was accompanied by Dr. P. K. Sabu, a senior Gurukula student. They gave a series of classes on the philosophy of Narayana Guru.

D.K. Printworld will soon be bringing out *The Shorter Poems of Narayana Guru* with translation and commentary by Guru Prasad. Two other books by Guru Prasad that are in preparation for publication are *The Gospels in Light of Vedanta* and *Vedanta Up Through Narayana Guru*.

Guru Nitya's commentary on the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali, titled *Living the Science of Harmonious Union*, has recently been published by D.K. Printworld and is available from their New Delhi office and from the Gurukulas.

Scott Teitsworth of the Portland Gurukula, U.S.A., visited India in January and February, 2009, including Varkala, Somanahalli and Fernhill. He conducted seminars and classes at the Gurukulas, and gave a talk at Sree Narayana Guru International Study Center in Mumbai and at CMS College in Coimbatore.

Scott and Swami Vyasa Prasad began a video interview project, recording the reminiscences of many long time Gurukula affiliates. The aim is to preserve the memories of peoples' experiences with Narayana Guru, Nataraja Guru and Guru Nitya. These videos will create an invaluable archive for the Gurukula.

Nancy Yeilding held her annual *Sneha Samvada* classes this past winter. At Fernhill Gurukula the classes were on verses 29-30 of *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*; at Sulthan Bathery Gurukula verses 26-28; at Kanakamala Gurukula verses 30-31; and at Eddapally Gurukula on the Six Steps to Realization. Online, Nancy has begun another *That Alone* class, as well as beginning one on the *Yoga Sūtras*, both at islandaranya@toast.net.

The Portland Gurukula is studying Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras* using Guru Nitya's commentary, *Living the Science of Harmonious Union*. Class notes are available by writing to tapovana@hevanet.com.

In this issue: "Living a Harmonious Life" is the introduction to Guru Nitya's commentary on Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras*. And "100 Verses of Self-Realization" is the continuing serialization of Guru Nitya's last work.



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Sittannavasal was a Jain cave site in South India, active in the early centuries of the first millenium. The frescoes from those caves, some of the delicate, exquisite paintings of early India to survive, were copied in drawings by Prof. G. Jouveau Dubreuil of Pndicherry College and reproduced in *Studies in Indian Painting* by N.C. Mehta, published 1926.

For most of the magazine images, in this issue and previous ones, thanks are due to Kobe Kemple—whose graphic design work has made *Gurukulam* crisper and, overall, more beautiful to read. We would like to acknowledge his work and participation.





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.

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