

QURUKULAM



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GURUKULAM

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EDITORIAL

BY DEBORAH BUCHANAN

In his *Yoga Sūtras*, Patanjali defines *āsana* very simply as a comfortable, steady posture. It is the position where we are settled into ourselves and are ready for spiritual discipline. It is not quite the beginning, as that happens with *niyama* and *yama*, the restraints and observances that Patanjali underlines as the start of his eight-limbed yoga. As Guru Nitya wrote, “*Āsana* is the ascent from base camp toward the peak in the pilgrim’s progress.”

Āsana is also used to refer to the throne on which the image of a deity sits, and we can think of ourselves as being established in our own divinity when we sit in *āsana*.

When we contemplate what we are established in, we first come to the place we sit, the ground, the earth. It is this earth that sustains not just us but the entire web of life on it. Being established on the earth means identity with it and caring for it. It is a posture of loving nurture. How is it possible to be established on something you disregard or deface? So *āsana* implies both generosity and compassion.

Āsana is the place of gathering into oneself all the tangential threads of energy and sitting quietly. We are established in our foundation, ready to sink deeply into our core. It is a posture of readiness, of openness and of listening. In *āsana* we are present in the moment. It is the paradoxical situation of being fully alive and engaged in a situation while simultaneously being completely unattached.

Guru Nitya also wrote, “Yoga is the science of disciplining consciousness,” and *āsana* is the step where we establish ourselves in silence. We watch our patterns, our modifications, and slowly detach from their compulsiveness. Here we can begin to allow that natural transparency of vision that is the basis of spiritual life to become unmasked, to become visible and alive in our lives. Each day allows us the opportunity to be in *āsana*: to collect ourselves and to participate in the natural communion of all beings.

In this issue of *Gurukulam* several of the contributors have explored aspects of this state of being in a posture of readiness and of settling into our foundation. We have Sebastian Varghese’s incredible paintings, along with his essay, which explore all the ways we are enfolded into the earth. As companions to those are Swami Vyasa Prasad’s article on the spiritual outlook from which to relate to climate change and John Paisley’s depiction of the Borneo rainforest.

We have Guru Muni Narayana Prasad’s New Year’s Message that explores how to remain balanced in our lives, both individually and as a society. That intersection

of the social and individual is additionally addressed through the continuing exploration of the Hercules myth by Scott Teitsworth.

The inner core of reality that illuminates each person is expressed both in verses from *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* and *Viṣṇu Aṣṭakam* and *Vāsudeva Aṣṭakam*, and in a further installment of Guru Nitya's *100 Verses of Realization*. How that core is manifested in joyful art is shown both in Peggy Chun's tapestries and Swami Tyagi's poetry.

And, finally, our continuing history of the Narayana Gurukula is added to beautifully in this issue by Bailey Young's article on his time with Nataraja Guru and the accompanying excerpt from *Word of the Guru*.

ĀTMOPADEŚA ŚATAKAM

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

BY GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

VERSE 41

*“itu kuṭam” ennatilādyamām “ite” nnu-
llatu viṣamā kuṭamō viśēṣamākum;
mati mutālaya mahēndra jālamuṅṭā-
vatinitutān karuvennu kaṅṭitēṇam.*

“This is a pot;” in that, what comes first, “this,”
is the difficult to discern; “pot” is its qualifying predicate;
for intellect and such *mahēndra* magic to manifest,
this itself becomes the *karu*, thus one should see.

This is apparently a very simple verse, but it summarizes the whole process of semiosis in a few words. Semiosis is the process of consciousness transforming itself into specific ideas so that it can become a communicable language.

Even though we are all living in the same world, and in some cases are even part of the same society, life is presented to each of us differently. From each person’s standpoint, we see certain things as important and do not notice some other things at all, which may be very important to someone else. Like the great Creator who is said to have created this world, each one of us is continuously in the process of creating our own world.

This creation always begins by specifying our consciousness so that we can start from one point and then develop it further. The first step is consciousness presenting itself a question, such as “what is this?” “who is this?” “why is this?” or “how is this?” The question occasions a search, which is imperative because of the lack of clarity. The mind is asking for certitude, for clarity. And what is not clear? ‘This’ is not clear. What is immediately presented to the mind is not clear. When you qualify ‘this’ it becomes clear.

In the question “what is this?” there are two aspects. One is the ‘this’-ness, the other, the ‘what’. ‘What’ is the qualification of ‘this’. When you say “this is a pot,” ‘this’ is qualified with the specific features of a pot. Now we know what ‘this’ is. It has become clear.

The mind doesn't stop there. It will present another 'this'. So then another question comes: "What is that sound?" If we don't answer the question, the mind won't be satisfied. So we think "It is a child crying." Then it's okay.

The mind goes on continuously presenting 'this'. When it is presented, it is vague. We want an explanation of it. Then the mind gives the explanation. For the mind to explain a phenomenon, a 'this', it has to summon previous memories which have qualities that resemble the new experience. We also use our senses as instruments to search out more about the qualities that can be attributed to the present situation, in order to clarify it further.

All this belongs to what we call semiosis. It has three or four stages of development. One is intrinsically connected with our basic urges and interests. It reveals itself only at the termination of each unit of experience. In semantics this is called pragmatics. Every bit of information which the mind gathers is to fulfill a certain need. The need can be biological, psychological, physiological, logical, mathematical or social. The fulfillment of the need comes only through the process that triggers the interest to turn the mind in a certain direction and give it its powers of maneuvering. We are not at all clear about the level where pragmatics enters consciousness, because it comes from the depth of our unconscious. In Indian psychology this is called *vāsanā*, the incipient memories or latent urges lying buried in the unconscious. Once the seed of a certain interest starts to germinate, it presents itself at the threshold of consciousness; like a bell it calls you to attention. You recognize that calling of attention as 'this'. Then the question comes, "What is this?"

Your ideas are subtle, and those ideas are prefabricated concepts. If you are working in a library and are asked to find a certain book, you can look it up in a catalogue, which will give you a number corresponding to a shelf in a certain section of a certain room. Like that, our mind uses a kind of cataloging. Information tags are attached to all the mind's nomenclature. For anything which is presented outside, there has to be a corresponding illumination within. You bring that from inside and see if it squares with the data that is presented by the senses. If there is a one-to-one correspondence, then you identify what is presented to you with the *pratibhā*, or corresponding concept. They become riveted together. Afterwards there is no separation of what has come from inside you and what is presented outside. In your mind it is a continuous whole, so much so that you do not even recognize that the psychic aspect and the physical aspect have now become integrated.

So from pragmatics you go on to what is called logistics. Logistics makes your ideation structurally meaningful. For instance, the subject and its predicate have to be related in a certain way so that your predication of the subject makes sense to you. Then if you want to communicate something to another person, you decide how you are going to express it. This is called the syntax. Only with all three of these aspects—pragmatics, logistics and syntactics—is the process of semiosis complete, even in such a simple statement as "this is a pot."

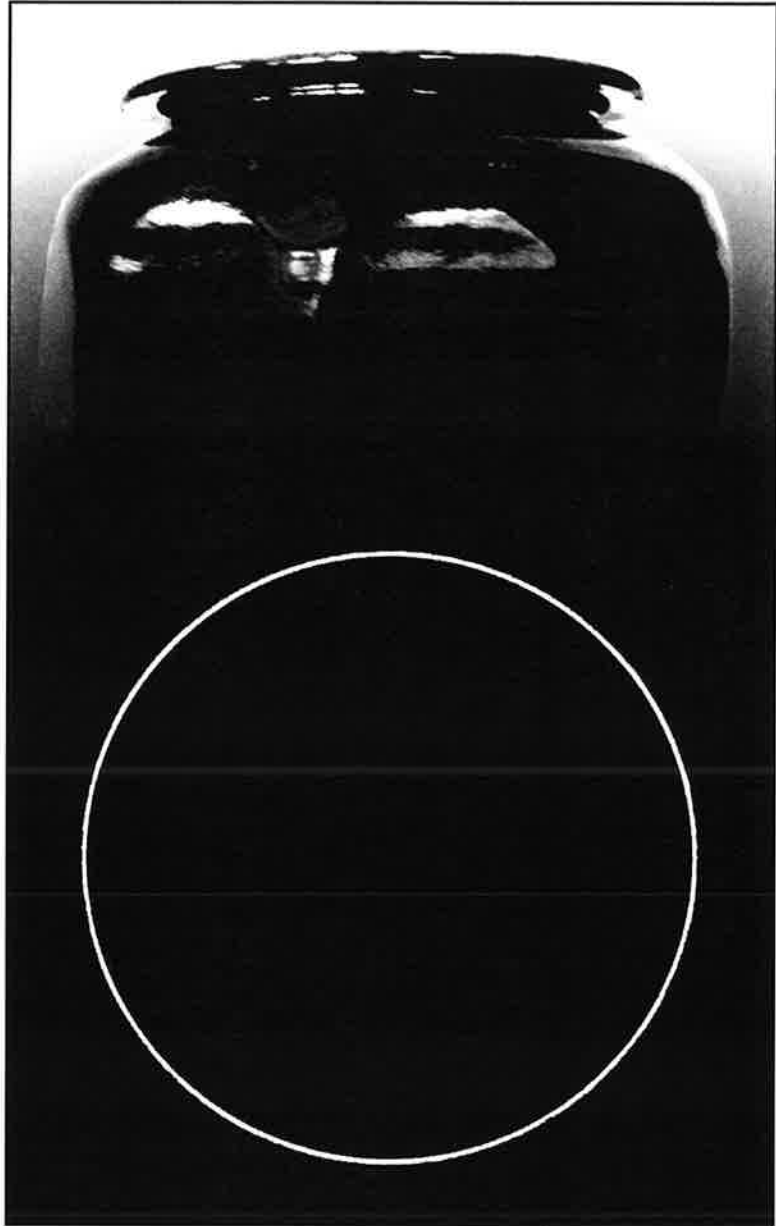
Now let's go back to the very first verse, in which the Guru said *aṛivilum ēri*, transcending or entering into the texture of knowledge. The term implies both transcendence and immanence. He says that withdrawing your senses and having surrendered your ego in an act of devotion, you should prostrate again and again to the *karu*. *Karu* is that substance or that reality or that yolk: that causal factor from which this cosmos and its psychological counterpart have both emanated.

Instead of describing it theologically as God, we are making a philosophical appraisal. The idea of the Supreme Cause is an adorable concept of the Absolute. We are asked to show our appreciation of this concept by inclining before it with an attitude of reverence, prostrating our egos again and again. This refers to the cosmological level. On the everyday phenomenal level, the same appears to us in our daily life in a million forms, always beginning with the simple question, "What is this?"

The questioning aspect of the mind is followed by the summoning of memory. Memory brings an appropriate concept to the surface, which is then linked with the presented subject. Then you make a judgment of predication. After the predication you become affected. Thus the four limbs of the mind—interrogation, recall, judgment and value appreciation—all line up. Only when a value appreciation finally emerges at the end of this process are the pragmatics presented. Although this ultimately is the cause which made your mind go through the whole process, it comes only at the end.

When a potter intends to make a pot, the pot is in the future. He has not yet made it, but the possibility of the future pot impels him to act toward it so that as the final realization he can accomplish the pot. The *abhāva*, the absence of a thing, is present in our mind as a possibility which is taking us from the future to the present. Usually we think that we are moving from the past through the present to the future. But it doesn't happen that way. The future is dynamic. It makes you move from a possibility to an actualization. That which is actualized thereafter remains frozen as an eternal event, an accomplished fact.

If you can see that this whole process is happening to you moment after moment, day after day, you will understand your inside and outside a little more clearly. This verse shows it to be such a simple thing: in "this is a pot," 'this' is the indiscernible, 'pot' is the qualifying aspect. You are participating in the creation of the entire world. My world has its own quality, and your world has another quality. My world is full of a transcendental analytic, while Nijinsky's and Van Gogh's is filled with a transcendental aesthetic, and Thoreau's and Whitman's, poetics, to say nothing of the rishis and all the great works of the rest of the globe. For you, it is likely to be another world. For a doctor the world is patients and redressing pain and bringing them to their normal state of health. For others it is the world of business and economics. So many things emerge from nowhere and become the facts of our individual value systems.



One thing that is hard for most people to understand is the concreteness they create out of a subtle mind. For instance, a typewriter sitting there is a concrete fact. If you lift it, it is heavy. When you touch it, it is hard. When you operate it, it functions. You can create a desired effect by working on it. It is a concrete fact, but the concreteness, the sense of weight and hardness and so on, are all experienced in your consciousness.

It is not only concrete for you, it is concrete for me, too. Thus, it is a concreteness we can share, called the universal concrete. The universal concrete is a participatory function of all minds. Because of the minds' homogeneity, we fully agree in a transactional sense. The universal concreteness we jointly create gives transactional validity to our world. In wakeful consciousness, where two people cooperate in a situation, they are dealing with the universal concrete, unaware that the psychic aspect and the physical aspect are amalgamated in their knowledge through the process of semiosis.

Philosophers have written pages and pages elucidating this idea. Narayana Guru has expressed the whole thing in the first half of a small verse: "This is a pot;' in that, 'this' is the obdurate; 'pot' is its qualifying aspect." Putting them together you get the idea of a concrete pot. That is a universal concrete. Once you hit upon a universal concrete you have not only made a present, you have also made a past, because that experience will remain with you for the rest of your life as a recorded event. It is frozen and kept forever.

Thus, the whole of the past is generated at this very moment by the promises and potentialities of the future. Is it not a great miracle? Is it not happening like a great magician's magic? You are the magician. 'You' doesn't mean your ego. Your poor ego is only one of the tools used by this marvelous magician who is sitting inside you. That same magician is in an ant, a fly, a bee, a bird, in an idiot as well as a genius, continuously making things manifest.

In the next verse, the Guru is going to ask us to turn to that 'this'-ness with more clarity. It is adorable, a wonder within you. In this type of understanding you become more intimate with your God than when you relate to Him in the situation of a church, where you are analogically putting Him outside you as a foreign entity. Here it's you, the very process that is going on within you from moment to moment. You can never get nearer or closer than this to the very Creator, because the process of creation is going on here and now in what you call your mind, your intellect, your understanding and your affectivity.

VERSE 42

*“idamaṛive” nnatil ādyamām “ite” nnu-
llatu sama; tante viśeṣmānu bōdham;
mati mutalāyavayokke māri mēl sad-
gati varuvān itinebbhajicciṭēṇam.*

“This is knowledge”; in that, what comes first, “this”,
is sameness; its qualifying predicate is awareness;
for intellect and all such to vanish, and for the true path to come,
this should be meditated on.

The most elemental form of ideation is the presentation of a subject and the predication of that subject. When a subject is first presented we say, “What is this?” We answer by making a judgment. Even when there is no apparent question, one is implied in the indicative term ‘this’. *This* is so-and-so. *This* is someone else. *This* is knowledge. *This* is non-knowledge. Whether the subject is concrete or not, true or not, the indicative is there, and it is a symbol for the question the mind has raised. Next the question is followed by a judgment, which is the predication of the subject. When you say “This is so-and-so,” ‘so-and-so’ is the predicate. In “This is knowledge,” ‘knowledge’ is predicating the subject ‘this’.

In an earlier verse, Narayana Guru described ‘this’ as *viṣama*, the part of knowledge that is difficult to discern. If one person is sitting in a room and someone else is standing outside asking, “Do you see this?” the one inside will have to ask “What this?” He won’t have any real interest until he knows what ‘this’ refers to. So just hearing ‘this’ is not enough: you have to explain what the ‘this’ is. In fact, the entire process of our mind is to be all the time explaining ‘this’. We have no other business. We just go on interpreting every ‘this’.

There is another aspect of our consciousness which comes to a decision: “This is such-and-such.” The part making the decision is called the intellect. In Malayalam it is *mati*. In Sanskrit grammar we have *nirdeśika*, *pratiḡrāhika* and *sambandhika*. *Nirdeśika* is that which integrates, *pratiḡrāhika* is that which you grasp or learn or understand, and *sambandhika* is that which relates one thing to another. Corresponding to these three in Vedānta are three categories of mind: the questioning aspect, *manas*; the recalling aspect, *cittam*; and the deciding aspect, *buddhi*. In logic, these are called the subject, the copula and the predicate: the subject is interrogative or suggestive, the copula is relative, and the predicate is the decisive.

So these triple functions are universally recognized to be going on all the time. Then there is an agent behind them, and in whom all these take place, recognized as the ‘I’.

Now, just what kind of decision is the intellect making? It is deciding what name should be given to what form. It is coordinating a name and a form, a mental image and a corresponding word symbol. When you say “this is a pot,” there is an image of a pot, which is a concept. ‘Pot’ is a sound which revives an image from your consciousness. The image is then conjoined with the sound. The intellect is finalizing, out of a series of concepts, one which is most appropriate for each situation. This is then underlined and promoted as “the” concept.

This does not take place in a passive mind with no interest. Every concept is marked with a certain coloration indicating a value. These values are very dear to the individuated self. “Here is a piece of paper.” “It is not just a piece of paper, it is a dollar.” When you say it is a dollar, it evokes more interest than a nondescript piece of paper. With each sound, each word, each evoked form, a certain value also comes to the mind. And when that value comes to the mind, you react to it. Our reaction can range from a high degree of infatuation to extreme indifference. Just hearing a certain sound or seeing an image can evoke a whole variety of interests throughout this range.

There is an old saying that a percept without a concept is hollow, and a concept without a percept is substanceless. A concept is either a processed percept, or it is what is mentally perceived. Regardless of whether it is mentally or physically perceived, it becomes a unit of value. That unit of value cuts itself off from other values and the rest of our knowledge. Consciousness is chopped into many fragments by our deciding upon the values of things, items of interest, upon whatever is presented. Through this process every item of knowledge decided upon by the intellect vivifies the world, vivifies consciousness.

Where does it all come from? Out of the one knowledge. From this one overall knowledge we modulate one little piece, and then label it and put it aside as a separate entity. We already belong to a world of unity of consciousness, of universal awareness, which has no specificity at all. Then when indicativeness tickles the mind, one definite piece is carved and forged out of consciousness. And it does not stop there. Every indicative knowledge points you to a certain possibility for gratification. When awareness becomes special, a special interest in you finds an opportunity for fulfillment. Groups of these special interests get related to each other. Someone might say to you: “There is a new film out at the Bijou Theater.” Then you wonder: “What time will it start? Is it tonight? How will I get there, and who will go with me?” A whole chain of reactions comes, at the end of which you decide whether or not to go to the film. Thus, the specifying of knowledge leads you to action, and each action itself leads to other actions.

The whole network of daily life is woven by a series of one ‘this’ after another, along with their meanings. It is all done by the intellect, correlated to the person’s ego, *ahamkāra*.

Narayana Guru says *idam arivu*, “This is knowledge.” In ‘this’ is *sama*. It is the same in all statements of individual units of knowledge: all knowledge begins by saying *idam*, this. Bertrand Russell, in his Logical Positivism, makes an analysis of what he calls atomic sentences. In them, the nuclear aspect is ‘this’. A word is like a bomb. When I throw the grenade of a word to you it bursts into your mind, with the result that a meaning is evoked. In Sanskrit this bursting aspect of words is called *sphoṭam*.

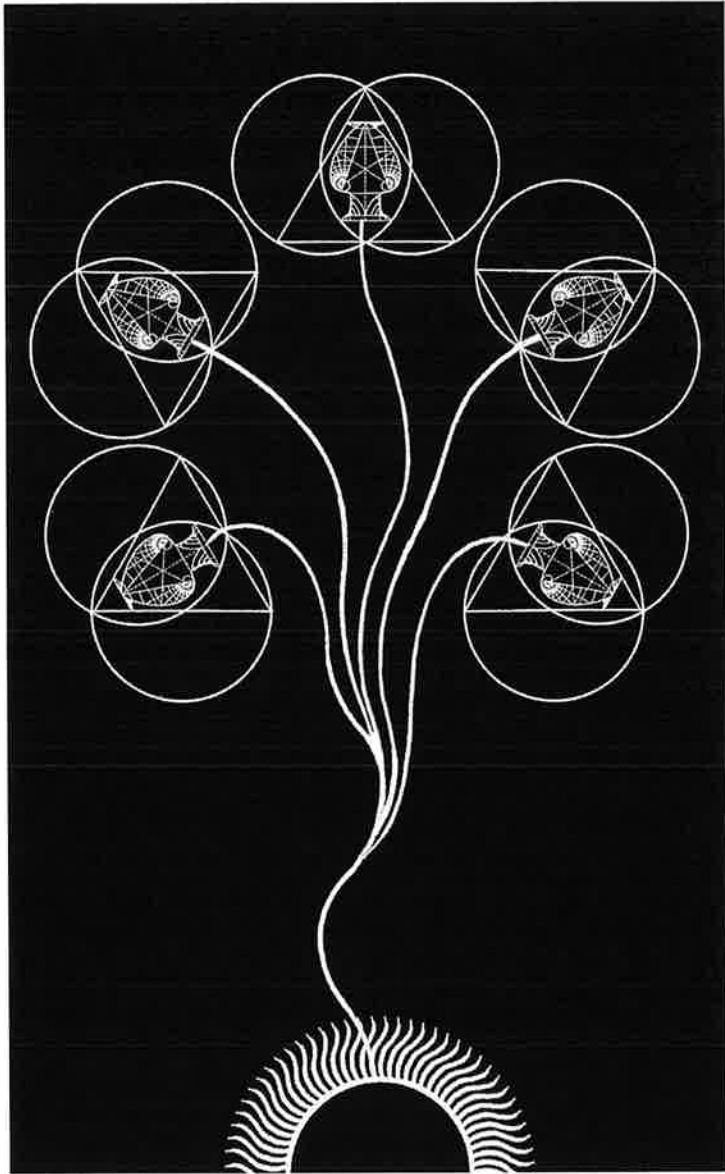
We are shooting at each other with the bullets of words. They come and hit us and we react to them. So our world of conscious activity is caused by the bullets of words.

If we sit in silence, it is fine. It is not the silence of a graveyard. It is an all-filling silence. We are not being with one specific form of endearment, we are in a natural state of eternal bliss. In the present verse, the Guru puts it that all the specifying aspects that come are aspects of consciousness, nothing else. If the intellect which is causing these specifications can be removed, you get *sadgati*, the right path. While *durggati* is the path that leads you to trouble, to bondage, *sadgati* is the path which brings you liberation. Vedantins also have two paths. One is called *pravṛtti*, the involved, that which binds you to action, the action-oriented path, while the other is called *nirvṛtti*, the releasing way.

The Guru’s point is that if you seek liberation, you should ask the question, “What is this?” You don’t ask “What is this?” in the way that takes you to individual specifications and things. You are aiming at the ‘this’ in the sense of “What is the this-ness?”

Ramana Maharshi always instructed people to ask the question, “Who am I?” Between the ‘this’ and the ‘I’ the whole range of the mental process happens. Most often, a Guru or teacher instructs a disciple *tat tvam asi*, “That thou art.” ‘That’-ness is identified as you. And what is ‘that’? That which includes everything. Everything that can be summarized in the indicativeness of the mind is ‘that’. ‘This’ and ‘that’ are not separate. The whole realm of indication taken together is ‘that’. ‘That’ is none other than you. So you are instructed to meditate on ‘that’. Other instructions include *ayam ātmā brahma*, “This self is the Absolute,” where you are meditating on ‘this’; and *aham brahmāsmi*, “I am the Absolute,” where you are meditating on ‘I’. Ramana Maharshi’s instruction is to meditate on ‘I’ when you say “I am the Absolute,” in order to arrive at the transcendental notion of the Absolute.

Narayana Guru gives here a form of meditation for arriving at the meaning of two of the great dictums of the Upanishads: “That thou art,” and “This self is the Absolute.” He combines both into one and says *itine bhaji citēnam*, “meditate on this.” This will clear your mind of the triple functions of interrogation, relation and judgment. These are separated, but they originate from the all-comprehensive ‘this’-ness.



In the previous verse, the word 'this' is indicated as the yolk or the substance which makes everything. In the first verse we were asked to kneel before that knowledge which is everything, cultivate devotion for it, consecrate ourselves to it, make obeisance to it, and prostrate ourselves again and again. If a person is contemplative, he should have a detached mind so that he knows that even when he is relating to many things, they are all born of one consciousness, called 'this'. Then we will not be caught in the magic that we ourselves create.

We are strange kinds of magicians that create a magic which we then get caught in the snare of. We need to be so clever that we create, but only amuse ourselves and do not get caught.

Once I painted a demon on one of the walls of a house where I was living. At night, I became so afraid of it I couldn't go down the hall where it was. I had done it with chalk, so I took a cup of water with me and when I passed by it I threw the water on it. Then I couldn't see the chalk while it was wet, so I could go past. The next day I was not afraid, but again the next night I did the same thing.

Like that, we are always creating demons out of our own minds and becoming afraid of them. Narayana Guru says to not get caught in this delusion.

EARTH BENEATH

BY SEBASTIAN VARGHESE

The earth beneath enfolds rocks, water, minerals, metals, lava, colossal energy and immense treasures from the past. Incessant time transforms dead trees to coal and diamonds, and, similarly, memories into myths and stories into legends. Fossils emanate the history of the land. The epics of heroes and warriors are embedded in the relics. Remnants and relics, hidden underneath, breathe in and breathe out these memories. Some are buried deeply, while others lie close to the surface.

When the dust of war has settled, the remains show the futility of the victories as well as the defeats. At the end of their lives, great heroes look like ordinary mortals. They all acted side by side in the grand opera of life, where forms come, play their part and vanish for countless generations. The theater of *anicha* unfolds and enfolds seamlessly and endlessly. Layers and layers of soil are soaked in the blood of pain mixed with tears of happiness. The human drama happening above the terrain revolves for eons in a mighty whirlpool of the space-time continuum.

Transience is a constant reality of the phenomenal. I am trying to explore and reflect both the anxiety and the tranquility it creates. The earth emanates a certain calmness and dispassion about all these transformations. I juxtapose the micro and macro frames of references to reflect this ever-transforming nature of life. The subtlety of this subject demands time and contemplation. It takes several weeks for me to complete each work.

The planet is still balancing and sustaining after all the abuses we have inflicted upon it. We know that the innate harmony of its vital functions is being perturbed, yet a new sun shows up every morning. Soil darkens and becomes fertile again. Rain still falls, sometimes with a different rhythm. Fresh seedlings break new ground. Seasons change in new and complex patterns, and they are reflected in the soil and in the life around. A “new earth” is born every day. We muddle through fresh realities continuously. Here we are trying to make our thoughts and emotions relevant by sticking to our stories, the tales of ordinary heroes.

Image making ultimately is a gesture of gratitude to the planet, our home, and the all-encompassing phenomena of which we all are part.









ŚRI VĀSUDEVA AṢṬAKAM AND VIṢṆU AṢṬAKAM

BY NARAYANA GURU

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

GURU MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD

Verse Two

O *Govinda*, the recoverer of the Earth,
O dear son of Gopa,
the one who finds joy
in taking care of cows.

O one who can make
one's own beautiful body
felt by each of the Gopi girls.

O husband of Godevi
(Goddess of the earth),

O one always worshipped by
such gods as *Maheśvara*,

O the Lord of both *Śri* and *Bhū*,

O *Hari*, please take away
all my afflictions.

Enchanted by you and attracted to you,
in this sense you are *Hari*.

O *Hari*, you being so, please destroy,
through enlightenment,
all my sufferings in life.

Govinda

O Lord, you are known as *Govinda*, indicating you gained possession of *go*. There are many meanings in the word *go*. One is "the earth." Thus the word *Govinda* means one who has gained possession of the earth from the demon king *Mahābali*. According to another story, you, by assuming the form of a boar, restored the Earth, in the form of the goddess *Bhū*, after the deluge. In that sense, you are also *Govinda*. Following other meanings of the word *go*, the name suggests that you keep cows, *go*, in your possession, that you endow prosperity to the all-wish-

fulfilling cow, *kāmadehenu*, that you are the leader of the cowherds, that you are the protector of the higher world known as *goloka*, and that you recovered the Vedas from total loss. Of the three main deities of the Indian pantheon (*Brahma*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*), you are the god of sustenance. As everyone is well aware, everything is sustained by the earth, and you are the lord of that earth. All the beings emerge from this earth, they are sustained by its products, and finally they go back to the same earth. This cyclic nature of life continues beginningless and endless. No one knows what science controls from behind, and what logic works from behind. That everything is nothing but part of the mysterious unfolding of you is the only thing we are capable of thinking of.

Gopasuta

Whereas you are the protector of the entire world, your life, in your incarnation as Sri Krishna, the foster son of Nandagopa, an ordinary man who found joy in looking after cows. The word *nanda* means happiness and *gopa* means the protector. According to the *Bhagavata Purāṇa*, you grew up in Gokula on the bank of the river Yamuna in North India. The world *kula* means abode and family. Like the animals protected by Nandagopa, we too are cows, protected by you. This indicates that all world masters, *jagad gurus*, live among ordinary people who are in need of protection in the form of wisdom teaching. In your own case the noblest of all roles you played, as is well known, was as the guru who taught wisdom to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. All beings, particularly human beings, look toward such a protection, and unless the need of this care was felt by people, perhaps no idea of God would have found place in human minds.

Gopī-janāṅga-nijāṅga sanga

One of the famous scenes described in the *Bhagavata Purāṇa* is that of your sportive dance with the cow girls or gopis at Brindavan. This chapter of the story is well known as *Rāsālīlā*. Though erotic sentiments are attributed to this dance, you were then only a small boy and the gopis were grown women. They really signify the numerous people who constantly adore you, and the ultimate limit of such adoration is marked by supreme love or *parama prema rūpā*. An equally accepted concept is that love reaches its zenith between a man and a woman. For this reason, the supreme love the devotees feel toward you and your tenderheartedness toward them have often been related as love with an erotic sentiment. Also, in many religions some devotees treat themselves as beloveds and God as the lover. Though God is One and the devotees are many, each of the devotees feels the direct presence of the divine separately. Likewise, the numerous gopis too feel your presence with each of them individually.

Your mysterious unfolding manifests so that each of the individuated forms that arises feels your presence in their being regardless of the illusory distinction

between mind and matter. The gopis too feel even your physical presence with them, each feeling that she is dancing along with you. Even the feeling of bodily physical oneness is not to be ruled out. Enlightened beings are well aware that you are the one substance that unfolds itself both as soul and body in any and every living entity. Thus the gopis feel their identity with you, and they feel your and their physical existence as the same, as one experience.

Maheśvara mukhya vandyā

It has already been mentioned that you are the husband of the Goddess *Bhū*, or the Earth Goddess. It is at your dictates that all the gods perform their respective roles as part of sustaining the world order. Whatever may be the number of gods imaginable, whatever may be the specific duty of each of them, all necessarily are part of the whole universal system of life. And this system is kept in proper order by you alone. You are conceived by me as nothing other than *Brahman* or the Absolute. Therefore I imagine that the other gods having specific duties in the total order of the world, offer obeisance to you. Thus I address you as *maheśvaramukhy vandyā* or the one always worshipped by gods as *Maheśvara*.

I am a poet with the freedom to imagine any deity as representing *Brahman*. Thus sometimes I conceive *Śiva* as having that status. Then all the other gods, including you, would be imagined as worshipping *Śiva* and others.

Verse Three

O the one of black bee-like hair,
O the one adorned with peacock feather,
O the one whose splendor is
like that of the dark rain clouds.
O the one whose lustrous body
is bluish like the *kalāya* flowers,
O the mighty one,
O the one who has tender affection
towards one's own devotees,
O the one who has lotus-like eyes.
O the Lord of both *Śri* and *Bhū*,
O *Hari*, please take away all my afflictions.

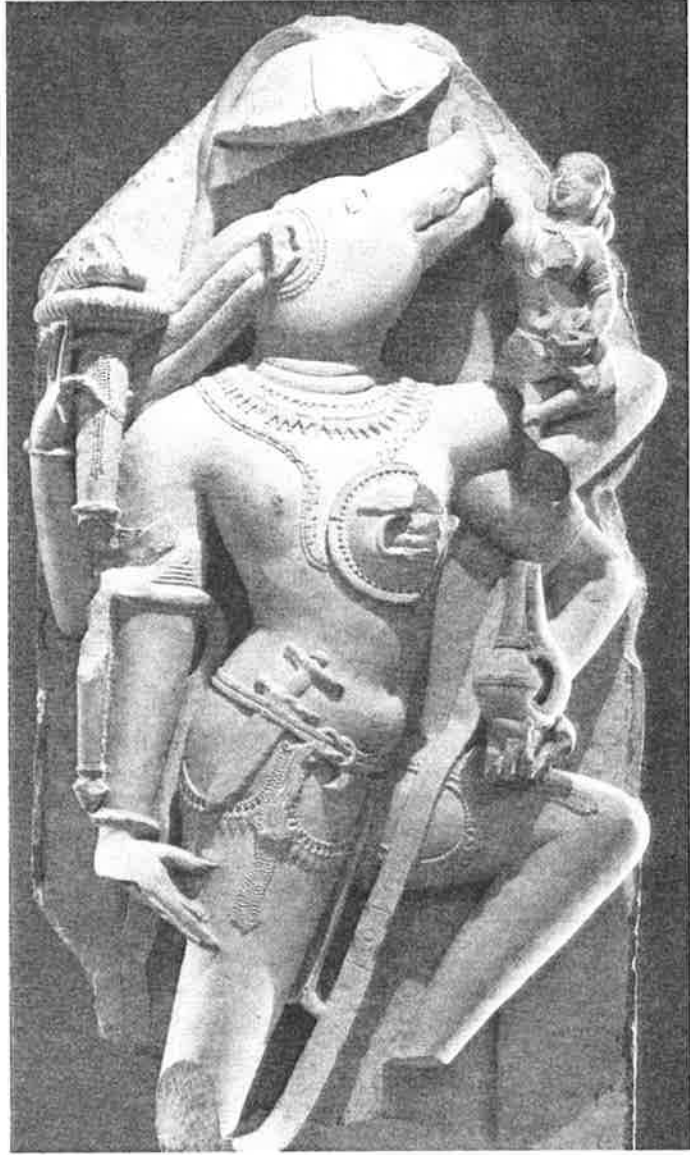
Blue Color

O Lord, all your devotees prefer to see your form as blue. The dark hair that shines, the blue and lustrous peacock feather your head is adorned with, the blue

rain cloud around you that makes you appear all the more shining, the light bluish color of your figure so like blue *kalāya* flower—all these are inseparable from you in your devotees' minds.

Sustaining this universe is your mythologically conceived function as one the three Hindu deities. This universe under your care is not apart from you but is your own body, as conceived by Vaisnavites. Each of the details of such a universe, closely examined appears to be a sort of inexplicable, sportive manifestation of seven colors, but looked at from afar each of the universe's phenomena takes on a bluish hue. The growth of thick vegetation on the surface of the earth is always seen as a darkish blue, and from space the entire planet is blue. It is your tint, blue, that colors the entire universe.

This universe forms your body, and you are a *deva* or shining one. No *deva* is a *deva* unless he emits *dyuti* or brightness. Your body is both blue in color and shines. Thus you look like the splendor of dark rain clouds appearing against the background of a bright sky, or, as the rishis wrote poetically, you resemble the *kalāya* flower. With all these thoughts arising in my mind, I address you as *kālāmboda dyuti kalāya komala tanu*: O the one whose splendor is like that of the dark rain clouds, O the one whose lustrous body is blue as the *kalāya* flower.



REMEMBERING NATARAJA GURU

BY BAILEY YOUNG

“A day like this. You can never appreciate it enough.”

The day was, as in Browning’s poem, at the morn; the morn past seven, but not by so very much, given the hint of crispness in the air and the clear quality of the light. The year was spring by European reckoning, summer in the Indian: a day in May, 1972. My snapshot caught the Guru outlined against the silhouette of the mountains over the valley from Fernhill, his light ochre clothes responding to the refreshing breeze. He was not talking to me in particular. It was one of those moments after the coffee class, before the puja that preceeded the morning meal, a moment when one’s own newly reestablished cleanliness met the morning freshness and the day still stretched far ahead. “This is pure enjoyment. You can never enough appreciate such a day.”

Several of us Western disciples, if that’s what I could then be called, were standing around in the space in front of the house when the Guru came out, accompanied by Madhavan. Of all the moments, few or many depending on how you look at them, that I spent in his presence, this is one of those whose memory has remained fresh for me, down through the years. It was perhaps the first moment, or until then the fullest, when some echo of the Word he carried penetrated the confused and confounding swirlings of thought and sensation that I had carried from France to India (from Philadelphia to France, from adolescence to youth, from before I could remember to where I was) to lodge firmly in my understanding.

How did I come, did we come, to be there, just outside Ootacamund, the hill station high in the Nilgiris, that May morning, the very last May when it would have been possible for me to hear the Word from the lips of this man, this rotund, bearded, bespectacled South Indian gentleman with the splotches on his balding pate, who had been compared jocularly (and had compared himself) in hippie San Francisco to the cartoon character Mr. Natural? I can never think on it without emotion welling up. Where does that story properly start? With our brief visit at the Island Gurukula, Ezhuamali, our first definite encounter with the Gurukula universe? Was it there that we first heard about the Gurukula up in the mountains, and got directions how to get there? To tell the truth, though, we were not much impressed by this encounter, did not pick up from Freddy and Brigitte any vibes (as I would surely have put it then) that made us feel that whatever these people were up

to held much promise or interest for us. Perhaps when we set out from Goa on our jaunt into South India, I had already jotted down in my notebook some reference to an ashram in Ooty among the places we might visit. We did not set out with any very clear and definite intentions, except that, now that we had experienced an India mediated through our association with Western hippies, now that we had lived a month on the beach, shared many a fruit-and-yogurt meal, chanted *aum* and danced under the full moon with our friends the Rainbow Gypsies, now that half a year had passed since leaving the West on what we had loosely talked of as a six-month journey, now that the hot weather and the wet weather had still not arrived but we knew they were coming, now was the time to go on our own into the real India, to learn at last, perhaps, why it was that we had come, really, all this way. Yes, when I think about it again the emotion wells up. Seek and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

I keep saying "we". That's Bailey K. Young, almost 28 years old in May 1972, who thought of himself as a kind of refugee (from his native USA, from the frustrations of PhD research, from the West, and even from modern civilization), and Christine Merlie, a bit younger, a bit estranged from her good bourgeois French family, a bit engaged in progressive activities, such as helping immigrants learn better French, more than a bit unsure about how she wanted to proceed with her life after procuring some of the good *diplomes* (e.g., literature, linguistics) which might qualify you to go this way or that, but you need to know which way you want to go, and you don't. They had met in the summer of 1969 on an old farm in the south of France being fixed up for the retirement of the parents of a mutual friend; she had taken the initiative to come visit him in Philadelphia for the spring semester of 1970. He had joined her in Paris, in her six floor walk-up, cold water *chambre de bonne* on the Blvd Raspail that summer, when he came over with his fellowship to pursue his doctoral research project regarding archaeological evidence of the transition from the Roman Empire to the early Middle Ages. By the spring of 1971 they were still getting along well enough, but both were feeling at an impasse where getting on with life was concerned. The idea of taking a break from all this and just going to India on an open-ended voyage appealed to both of them. In his case it had something to do with readings and coursework in comparative religion during college days, and no doubt with various casual conversations and encounters in the years since, including a brief stay in Haight-Ashbury at its height of fame. That and the conviction, or the hope, that on the Indian subcontinent there yet subsisted something of an older civilization resisting contamination by the rationalistic and materialistic forces driving the West in directions that filled him with distaste, foreboding, dismay. Of her motives, impulses, expectations, she may decide to speak for herself. One September day we set out, hitchhiking with backpacks laden from the *Porte d'Orleans*. Adventurous months lay ahead; enough to mention here how we encountered on the boat from Marseilles to Istanbul the

Rainbow Gypsies, a hippie tribe in the best sense, colorful, creative, generous, living each day as a celebration, seekers on the spiritual paths. They had been drawn towards India when they met, at the Solstice Festival at Stonehenge, the boy Guru Maharaj. I came to think then, and I still think now, that traveling for a time with the Gypsies was among the great blessings of the journey that helped to open my heart. Leaving Goa in late January I still thought in terms of getting back together later with Ricardo, the dancer from California, with Lothar, Gantussi, Rea, and whomever else may have joined the tribal core, to find them again in North India, and perhaps to make the return together. At the decisive moment, though, I was moved to make a different choice.

The hot weather drove us up to Ooty. So I recall. The part of our South India jaunt that I remember most distinctly is the week or so we camped among the ruins at Hampi, the ancient Hindu city of Vijayanagar (destroyed by the Muslim victors in 1570s), enjoying swims in the cool river. A chance conversation in a bus station procured an invitation to spend three days in a Kanarese village, Yeslur, as guests at a wedding; I still have those photos. Of the trip down the waterways of Kerala, to Cochin, to Trivandrum, I have vaguer memories, jogged by the photos that have survived. But now it was March and the intensity of the heat was increasing. Was it time to think of returning North, then West? At any rate here was the little train that would take us up into cooler altitudes, where we could rest and prepare ourselves at this ashram. I remember that an incident of some kind with an Indian railway official somewhat spoiled the train ride for me, but by the time we stepped out by the race track in Ooty, into a green landscape scented by eucalyptus trees I was feeling restored. At Fernhill we were made warmly welcome by a Dutch woman, Mylle Kooyman. There was a small boy with a ready smile there. Was there anyone else? Or did they only start to show up over the next couple of days? Robert Greenspon. Charming John and Mike. The Guru was due soon, Mylle told us. Do I remember in "three days" because I was soon to be hearing him say that the Gurukula should offer hospitality to anyone without question for three days? My memory of his arrival, and who was with him (Bennington, surely; Mark and Judy already? Patrick?) and how the routine got started is not just now precise. The reason of course is that I was only partly "there". I was happy enough that things had worked out this way, that our visit to the ashram would include some exposure to its guru, like icing on the cake. But I was already planning in my mind our return north. And then, back to the West. And then what? I don't even remember if I felt anguish at the continuing uncertainties of my life. I had discovered that I was good at the business of getting from point A to point B, and absorption in this task kept the larger questions at bay. Of course we joined in with the routine. At 5:30 Mylle would give the wake up call and soon we were sipping hot coffee. It was still dark as Nataraja Guru began his comments on *Saundaryā Laharī*, and the vagaries of disciples, and the vertical and horizontal axis, and light would begin to peek from

behind the peaks, the sky would tinge with changing colors. I paid intermittent attention. At the morning puja I was carried (as I had not been at the Island) into the chanting of the Isa Upanishad, of Narayana Guru's poetry. I enjoyed walking into Ooty, visited the botanical garden, came back to the tasty pleasure of afternoon tea. At night all you got was this rice water, this kunji. I was getting my fill of this place, a very pleasant place certainly, filling up on the experience, before moving on.

Did the moment described at the beginning occur during these first few days? I don't think so. I don't think I was yet ready to hear. Memory, though, is so fuzzy, unreliable. What I can say with certitude is: the day for departure came. We rode on the bus down to Bangalore. We went to stay at the Chamberlains'. Now it was time to go out and make the necessary arrangements. But

I didn't. Instead I turned to Christine, tears came into my eyes, I said something like: "Why are we leaving? We came all this way from Europe to learn something about India (or was it something about wisdom? Or just something?) and now we seem to have found something worth listening to. Why are we leaving?" If we talked much at this point with Wynn and Sally, I don't remember. I know that we got back on a bus, rode back to Ooty and were part of that last summer teaching season of Nataraja Guru in his beloved Fernhill home. I just can't ever think about it without the emotions returning.

"Don't be afraid to make your mistakes." Over the years certain phrases have remained fresh, and returned again and again to nourish and provide steadiness at crucial moments. This one struck home in the heart of a young man prone to fear the world and doubt the role that he might play in it. Why had I come to India anyway? It was not just frustration with wresting the thesis into a manageable shape; it was also a deeper reluctance to commit myself to the path that completing the thesis would open. At the root, the fear of making a big, BIG mistake. Fear feeds on itself,



multiplying inhibitions. Fear can prompt paralysis. Setting the thesis project aside and setting out on an open-ended journey to the East was defiance of paralysis. But it took the Guru's words to change the inner dynamics. They were not words spoken to me particularly. I had not much particular exchange with Nataraja Guru. When we returned to Fernhill, announcing our desire to stay for a spell beyond the classic three days, he spoke to us. My memory is not so clear as to what exactly was said. He asked about qualifications to study *brahmavidyā* philosophy, as I recall. I would have sketched my educational background, for I remember him nodding that it was appropriate. He did ask (funny how I almost forgot this!) about our stay in December at the ashram in Hardwar of the boy Guru Maharaj. I explained that we had followed our friends but decided, after a few days, that this path was not for us. He nodded and said something about the power exercised by the boy's mother. And he approved us as students, thus giving Bennington authority to give us the letter we would need to get our six month tourist visas extended. But I never sought a private talk with him. I would have been wary, even afraid, of one. Morning after morning I sat among the group of "disciples," listening to his words, yes, but also fighting them. Sometimes they seemed to treat matters abstract and hard to follow. Sometimes they became personal and might be quite sharp and biting in regard to some disciple. I remember one day remarks about Bennington made me raise my inner shield; what might he say about me if I betrayed my thoughts? What if he could read my thoughts? My suspicious thoughts, my that-statement-is-outrageous thoughts, or my No-I-won't-go-along-with-that thoughts. As I got more of a sense of the complex relations among this group of disciples, my inner wariness grew greater. Did I really see myself becoming a part of all this? Silently, during those morning coffee classes, an inner struggle went on as I sought to gain some insight into wisdom yet keep myself apart. It was during the puja that these conflicts subsided. What I took at first as some stuff to be gone through before the delicious meal, soon became the most nourishing moment of the day (at least in retrospect, I'm not sure I would have put it that way then). The chants entered my soul, taking on richer and richer meaning, and though I cannot recall any specific commentary made by the Guru, I remember his words enhancing for me the sense of peace and understanding. Centering is the word that occurs. For the first time in my life I was becoming centered. I could let myself be carried toward a greater understanding. There were no mistakes to fear.

DIALECTICS IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

BY NATARAJA GURU

The guiding Word of the Guru has contemplation as its pivot, for contemplation alone clearly reveals how to fit the one end of reality (so to say) into its legitimate counterpart or apparent opposite to which it naturally belongs, and by this means enables us to harmonize our life practically as well as spiritually in relation to the three chief approaches to existence, namely, in the intimacy of functional metabolism within the limits of the body, in the larger domain of the whole cosmos, and finally, in terms of reflexive self-realization as a whole. It is in this sense that Narayana Guru, like Sankara, categorically denies any intermediacy, any 'third platform' (*tr̥tīyam sthānam*). The fertile realm of the absurd is rigorously excluded.

But an equally grave source of error remains. Although religious, racial or cultural concepts have often involved these invalid third feature luxuries, thus helping to divide the house of humanity against itself, that integral and unitive way of contemplative understanding which is called wisdom should never be treated as if it were an extra flourish, a luxury of appendage to life. Prejudices are often put on a pedestal and worshipped while fundamental human values are thrown away as useless lumber. Every closed, integrated human group develops static modes of thought and behavior which prepare that group for war against another. History has many such instances of large-scale brutality; hence those cherished values that hold humanity together as one family have to be restated. Man has to be more truly ambitious in a more worthy human sense.

For this to come about, contemplation has to come to the aid of right thinking. Guru Narayana's words contain the seeds of such a freshly integrated, wholehearted way of thinking. They have a direct bearing on individual or collective human happiness. In fact, it is to the extent that a Guru is concerned with the welfare of humanity as a whole, and in his primary role of enabling men to discover universal human values, that guru-hood itself may be said largely to consist. In this sense, every Guru worth the name is a World Teacher or *jagad-guru*. Such a *jagad-guru* may seem humble to his contemporaries, and may be slighted by them while still alive, but he carries with him the secret of contemplation which, when understood, contains those dynamic life-principles which can help all closed groups to break open their frontiers and join hands with their neighbors and

fellowmen everywhere in a spirit of forgiveness and willingness to start anew ever freely in the adventure of bold integral living as men among men—all differences abandoned. Advaita Vedanta, therefore, is not an apologetic escape symptomatic of weakness in confronting life, but rather a necessary aid and power for ensuring human welfare.

We take it for granted that all men are interested in their own happiness and, in what is the same thing generally, the happiness of humanity as a whole. The one cannot be exclusively contemplated without the other. When either the individual or the many are isolated, the formula becomes misapplied and gives contrary results, which we call 'fatal irony', nemesis, or a travesty of providence. The strange factor of irony which is known as *māyā* melts and vanishes before the keen eye of contemplative science. Solutions to problems become simplified. The duality between the one and the many must be abolished. Those open human values which never come into conflict with others must be rediscovered and directed to the service of one and all.

This excerpt is from *Word of the Guru*, first published in 1952, republished by DK Printword in 2003, page 71 in the new edition.

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES TO NAVIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

BY SWAMI VYASA PRASAD

MYSTICAL MESSAGES BEYOND TIME AND CLIME

One is beyond what can be counted
the other is ordinary; other than these two there is not
any other form existing in waking, or in dream,
or in some city of the gods; this is certain.
Ātmopadeśa Śatakam V. 67 (Narayana Guru)

The Tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name.
The unnameable is the eternally real.
Naming is the origin
of all particular things.
Tao Te Ching, V.1 (Lao Tzu)

There was a door to which I found no key,
There was a veil past which I could not see,
Some little talk awhile of me and thee,
There seem'd — and then no more of thee and me.
Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam V. 32

When Self-knowledge (*atma-vidya*) shrinks,
then ignorance is fearful;
substantiation by name and form,
in the most terrible fashion, looms here, ghostlike.
Darśana Mālā Ch.1 V.7 (Narayana Guru)

We take long trips.
We puzzle over the meaning of a painting or a book,
when what we're wanting to see and understand
in this world, we are that.
Quatrain 549, (Jelaluddin Rumi)

Earth is the Mother; and we are her children.
Atharva Veda

BACKWARD GLANCES AND CAUSAL SPECULATION

Emerging out of the Dark Ages, the thinkers of the 18th century European Enlightenment laid the foundation for the scientific revolution that would transform the entire world. The shackles of dogma had already been weakened by Copernicus and Giordano Bruno. But as reason gained ascendancy over faith, a schism developed between spirit and matter. The philosophies of Descartes, Locke and Newton encouraged materialists to dominate nature with their culture and dominate feelings with reason. Matter came under the purview of the scientists, while spirit was relegated to the realm of religious experiences. The physical world investigated with empirical instruments became the domain of science, while the metaphysical realm beyond the reach of measurement became the concern of religions. This divorce of faith from reason sowed the seeds for conflict centuries later.

The West's desire and ability to control and dominate nature gradually spread around the world through the industrial revolution, international trade, and colonization. In due course the schism between spirit and matter became established in the minds of leading thinkers of the modern era, and the "objective", the "demonstrable," and the "a posteriori" came to be accepted as the most reliable form of knowledge. Seeing is believing.

Eastern philosophy never created a schism between the world of experience and the realm of transcendence. Both were understood as two aspects of the same Ultimate Reality. The rishis of the Upanishads composed rhapsodic hymns in praise of the Supreme Spirit, which is at once the transcendental and the immanent. The objective world of experience is a projection of one's own consciousness. We see what we believe.

Thus the cultures of the East and the West developed two civilizations: that which resonates and is one with all earthly manifestations, and that which denies sentience, spirit and psyche to all elements exterior to humankind. At the same time, Western society's notion of liberty, equality and fraternity liberated the rigidly hierarchical societies of the East. The dismantling of ancient social structures has not yet been fully accomplished, and the East is in the process of assimilating change and coping with the interim chaos as centuries old established modes of life begin to collapse and new possibilities emerge.

In *The Relation of the Individual to the Universe*, Rabindranath Tagore writes, “The civilization of ancient Greece was nurtured within city walls. In fact, all modern civilizations have their cradles of brick and mortar. These walls leave their mark deep in the minds of men. They set up a principle of ‘divide and rule’ in our mental outlook, which begets in us a habit of securing all our conquests by fortifying them and separating them from one another. We divide nation and nation, knowledge and knowledge, man and nature. It breeds in us a strong suspicion of whatever is beyond the barriers we have built, and everything has to fight hard for its entrance into our recognition.”

In contrast to the civilizations cradled in brick and mortar, we have the way of the rishis and druids living in forest hermitages or wandering freely, neither sowing nor reaping, nor storing in barns, living in absolute freedom, sustained by the benevolence of Providence. It was from these forest communities and desert retreats that the wisdom heritage of the world emerged. Wisdom teachers have continuously affirmed the oneness of consciousness, happiness, knowledge, God and the Self. These are not disjunct values, but aspects of one essence.

In the light of Tagore’s observation, modern democracy is inherently flawed in favor of urban dwellers and the culture of opulence.

Neurotheology, an emerging interdisciplinary field of neurological and spiritual studies, is demonstrating that the human brain is uniquely constructed to perceive and generate spiritual realities. Left to themselves humans are naturally spiritual, while the influence of urbanization might actually fracture spiritual capability. Natural spirituality corresponds with the Upanishadic dictum, *Tat Tvam Asi*, or That Thou Art, as well as with the principle of the *via negativa* followed by the 6th century mystic Dionysius the Areopagite and the Vedantins of India, and the negative education of Rousseau.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

An overall epistemology takes both the Beyond and the Ordinary together into consideration and deals with the problem in a wholesale manner, rather than dealing with a piecemeal annexation of one aspect disjunct from the whole. We cannot treat the problem as an event “out there” without a corresponding awareness “within”. Contemporary lifestyle has interfered with natural laws and so climate change may be considered as the outer manifestation of an inner ethical problem of human beings.

Many insights are shrouded in the *lingua mystica* of the ancients and need to be restated in the *lingua scientifica* of the modern world. In this task we are confronted with a very fundamental problem—that of the alphabet itself. David Abram in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous* blames the invention of the phonetic alphabet for triggering a trend towards increasing abstraction and alienation from nature. He writes, “Only as the written text began to speak would the voices of the forest, and of the river, begin to fade. And only then would language loosen its



ancient association with the invisible breath, the spirit sever itself from the wind, the psyche dissociate itself from the environing air.” Another author, Leonard Shlain in his book *The Alphabet Verses The Goddess*, points out the difference between images, which are concrete and are perceived in an all-at-once manner, and alphabets, which are abstract, with symbols arranged in a linear sequence. To perceive images the brain uses wholeness, simultaneity and synthesis. To get the meaning of alphabetic writing, the brain relies on sequence, analysis and abstraction. Both authors agree that alphabetical writing altered the neurobiology of the brain so as to sever human connection with the natural world. The poet and the artist are able to capture the essence of the world, while the scientist struggles in vain. While technology has created a new culture of virtual spaces and mass communication, there is a silver lining in the reemergence of symbolic language through cinema, television and computer graphics. We see rudimentary symbolic language in the use of the color scheme in traffic lights and identical icons on signboards in airports across the world. Power Point presentations have become ubiquitous. The emergence of the Vook integrates video with written text. As eBooks become popular, there is a possibility of new genres of animated picture and written word literature. In these instances, symbolism offers a new language of secularism. And when we dream we enter a realm of symbolic language. We may be at the threshold of another neurobiological transformation, this time by reviving the ancient human relationship with symbols.

The iconography and symbolic pictographs of the ancient world used proto-language based on images. These cultures are known to be egalitarian, natural, and with considerable harmony between the genders. One of the best examples of such an egalitarian society is the Harappan civilization. The anthropologist Jonathan Kenoyer has studied the Indus Valley Civilization, and he writes, “The Indus cities did not grow up around a central palace or temple, as was common with other early states. There is no evidence of elite burials filled with material wealth. Perhaps the most striking feature is the small amount of evidence for military conflict and not a single depiction of warfare or captive taking.... From these early times, people decided how to organize their settlements, how to interact with other communities, how to resolve conflicts, what to do with surplus food and wealth, and how to pass on knowledge from one generation to the next.” The Indus Culture used images extensively in the form of seals and symbols, which are yet to be deciphered. Today we can experience the mystique of iconography in statues of the dancing Nataraja, among many others.

In the Indian philosophical tradition there are four means of obtaining valid knowledge They are: direct perception, inference, comparison, and word testimony. The first three means are useful in the transactional world while *a priori* word testimony, *śabda*, is the means to gain transcendental knowledge.

Like students of mathematics who are willing to accept the abstract notion “x”, let us accept the *a priori* normative notion that the Eternal Spirit pervades the universe, including the individual self. The Isavasya Upanishad says, *īśāvāsya idam sarvam* or the Lord pervades all this. The spirit is indestructible pure consciousness, beyond the reach of climate change or global warming. This is the One Beyond of Narayana Guru, the Eternal Tao of the Taoists, and the Mysterium Tremendum of Omar Khayyam. Nothing can bring about the destruction of This which knows no decrease, according to the Bhagavad Gita (Ch.2 v.17).

Having established our *a priori* foundation, let us now deal with our *a posteriori* knowledge of climate change and the looming apocalypse of global warming. This is “the realm of the ordinary” of which Guru Narayana speaks, the place of “a little talk of me and thee” of Khayyam, and the realm of particular things of the Taoists. This is where we find ourselves when Self-Knowledge shrinks. This is the world where we seek our daily bread.

It is in this world that human beings should act as good stewards, managing their natural resources with care. Instead their actions are careless, bringing destruction to the world along with the natural habitat of myriad other living creatures. Narayana Guru observed, “It would not have mattered so much if the effect of man’s misdeeds struck its blow only at mankind. But the innocent monkeys and birds in the forest have to forfeit their peaceful life because of man. The rest of Nature would be thankful if, in the process of self-destruction, man would have the good sense to destroy himself if he must, alone, leaving the rest of creation at least to the peace which is its birthright.”

METHODOLOGY

Between the polarities of the edict of a dictator and the tantrum of a child, we have the intermediate possibility of a mature dialogue. Both dialogue and dialectic have the same Greek root, *dialegesthai*, meaning “converse with”. Dialectical understanding takes both the counterparts of a situation into consideration. The activist on the street is the counterpart of the meditator seated in a Zendo. One is active, the other is contemplative. Their apparent mutually contradictory stands are cancelled by intuitively understanding the common ground they share, which is their intentionality and their goal. The meeting point of opposites is a non-polarized neutral position where they cancel each other out. Cancellation does not yield horizontal gain or loss, but a vertical value of satisfaction. The transcendent (One Beyond) and the immanent (the ordinary) intersect and function in and through the living experience of every person. One cannot escape into the transcendental spirit and at the same time continue his or her existential life. Neither can existential life be devoid of the transcendental element. Reducing environmental pollution will enhance the transcendental in the here and now.

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

Our first resource is *abhaya*, fearlessness. We resolve to be courageous and use our creative intelligence. The only thing to fear is fear itself.

The second resource is *satyam*, truth. A transparent vision should guide our understanding. Truth should be the foundation of thought, word and deed. A corollary to truth is *dharma*, the innate principle that gives integrity to everything.

The third resource is *jñāna*, knowledge. We must have reliable sources of knowledge so that half-baked notions and superstition are kept in abeyance. The world we experience is not real as such, but a phenomenon created by the relationship between coexisting opposing forces. The blue of the sky, for instance, does not exist per se. It is a phenomenon generated by the interaction between invisible rays of light with invisible particles in the atmosphere. When the sun



is near the horizon, light rays elongate and blue turns to red. We cannot see the invisible photons or atmospheric particles which are the cause, and we see only the effect, which is the blue color of the sky. Climate change is an effect that is thought to have an anthropogenic cause. Interdisciplinary thinking is better than compartmentalized specialization. Buckminster Fuller said that specialization precludes comprehensive thinking.

The fourth resource is *ahimsā*, non-violence. Human beings should respect nature and hold all natural processes in awe and reverence. Nature is a symbiotic interactive system. Interdependence is the *modus operandi*. Her hierarchy develops from simple structures to intricate complexity in a spiraling centrifugal manner. Nature is self-replicating and proliferates manifoldly. It is a self-governing and self-regulating system, with inbuilt homeostasis and cybernetic feedback loops that affect self-correction. Paradoxically, nature functions in a perennial state of

imbalance. It is therefore impossible to control nature and unwise to interfere with her inherent intelligence.

The fifth resource is *tapas*, effort. All accomplishments require sustained effort. One should not feel disheartened and should be willing to apply oneself diligently until the goal is attained.

The sixth resource is *dāmyata*, self-restraint. Restrain the addiction to control and dominate, and restrain the urge to enjoy at the expense of the environment or by exploiting fellow human beings. Aggressive extroversion needs to be tempered with sobering introversion. The ego creates a boundary by assuming the role of knower, doer and enjoyer.

The seventh resource is *datta*, being charitable. Sharing and giving spreads wealth. A need-based system of equitable distribution should replace the current economic model propped up with banking cartels and unfair trading practices. There is enough food to feed the world and enough goods to cater to everybody's needs. Economic imbalances need to be set right for a just and fair world.

The eighth resource is *dayā*, compassion. Human transactions should be touched with an element of kindness and compassion. Cruelty to the planet, plants and animals, and to ourselves and our fellow human beings should be sublimated into a compassionate attitude towards all sentient and non-sentient beings.

The ninth resource is *saundarya*, beauty. Nature is beautiful. The starry heavens above, the snowy mountains below, the colorful flora and the captivating fauna around us are alluring. Aesthetics should infuse our sensory world, elevating our consciousness and refining our emotions. The artist Paul Gauguin lamented, "There is always a heavy demand for fresh mediocrity. In every generation the least cultivated taste has the largest appetite." Quality rather than quantity should be the norm.

The tenth resource is *tyāga*, relinquishment. Ultimately everything passes away and perishes. Instead of clinging and holding on, it is wise to let go of things and ideas that have served their usefulness. Static and closed attitudes should transform into dynamic and open states of mind.

TRANSFORMATION

It is ironic that scientific progress has led us to an age when an impending apocalypse has become a unifying force. This *enantiodromia* is an opportunity to move forward towards the greater challenge of understanding consciousness—the inner environment, or inner landscape, that is shared by all of humanity. The cosmos and the psychos are interlaced to create the grand universe, understood objectively "out there" and subjectively "within" by all sentient beings.

The complexity of geo-dialectics with power plays between nations was evident when world leaders gathered at the United Nations Summit on Climate

Change in Copenhagen recently. Climate change has been given due recognition at the highest of international forums. But arriving at consensus and or even fully understanding the complex nature of the issue seems to have eluded influential governments, encouraging concerned individuals to take climate change in their own hands. Google Earth announced that it is adding new features that will allow users to “view” any location on earth up until the year 2100, according to both the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s high and low emissions scenarios. This feature empowers every desktop and laptop computer user to become a climate change monitor.

The industrial age opened the “Pandora’s Box” of sequestered carbon buried in the earth for millennia.

Nobody thought of managing the tons of carbon released into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels.

This shows the one-sided approach of science and technology.

New engineering is necessary to mitigate disaster with the help of innovative ideas. Large rafts of reflective material can prevent the North Pole from heating, should the ice melt. Geodesic domes can protect entire coastal villages from inundation. Networks of rural and urban centers can become hubs of transportation, involving the population to mobilize resources, while at the same time localizing consumption patterns. Along with the reduction of greenhouse gases, disaster management strategies need to be put into place.

CONCLUSION

Lasting peace at the personal and interpersonal levels is the ideal foundation for human happiness and well being. Meaning is important to satisfy the spiritual nature of human beings. Our answers have to be in the context of the perennial questions: Why are we here? Where have we come from? and Where are we going? Only by addressing the ultimate questions do we find the final solution.

THE SIXTH LABOR OF HERCULES

BY SCOTT TEITSWORTH

In his fifth labor, Herakles learned to channel his spiritual energies to rapidly overcome impossible obstacles. Herakles' next task was to rid Greece of the Stymphalian birds. These were man-eating creatures made of brass, with sharp bronze feathers that could be shot at their victims, and poisonous dung. Moreover, they were sacred to Ares, the god of war. They had settled in a swamp near Lake Stymphalus and were terrorizing the surrounding countryside, destroying crops, orchards, and even buildings. Nesting deep in a dark forest, they were breeding like crazy and threatening to lay waste to the entire region.

Herakles first thought this labor would be a walk in the park, but when he arrived he found that the ground was too swampy to support his weight, and the forest was so thick he couldn't see anything anyway. As he stood wondering what to do, he was approached by the goddess Athena with a solution. She instructed Hephaestus, the divine blacksmith, to forge a stupendous set of bronze clappers. When Herakles smashed them together with his supernatural strength, it startled the birds, and they flew up out of the forest where he could shoot them down. Herakles picked off a number of the birds with his deadly arrows, and the rest flew to an island sacred to Ares in the Black Sea, never to return.

Well, I have news for those ancient Greeks: the Stymphalian birds have returned at last, and their flock is bigger than ever. The Stymphalian brass is now called the military brass.

It is quite plain that these birds represent warriors run amok, or what we nowadays call the military/industrial or military/corporate complex. That they are sacred to the god of war makes this patently clear. They even bear an uncanny resemblance to the latest evil invention, the unmanned killer drone, which has trumped the long and painful struggle to establish legal justice within a violent and bloodthirsty species. Now anonymous murderers can execute people at will, without the least fear of being called to account by any judicial system.

We live in a time when the military mindset has essentially conquered civilization, where the clever birds have even usurped the honorific of "heroic" for themselves. Masters of propaganda, they readily convince young humans that they are the true heroes, and recruit many to join them in the fight against the enemy, which happens to be the very humanity they are laying waste to and that

the children are members of. At least the ancient Greeks knew who the real heroes were in this tale: the local citizens, not the birds.

Like the fast multiplying flock of birds, the “defense” industry has swollen to huge proportions and is busily laying waste to vast areas of the planet. The composer of the myth probably anticipated this, as Herakles was unable to kill off the birds, but merely drove them away. It may be that they cannot be eradicated short of divine intervention, and here’s why.

Once a military clique has detached itself from civilian control, it takes on a life of its own, like a macro version of a super bacteria. Veiled in secrecy, humans become mere pawns within that secrecy’s structure, with no one having either the will or the ability to rein it in. Anyone proposing to curtail its excesses is simply excreted: fired or moved to a position of no power or even executed, while enthusiasts of continued lucrative adventures are rapidly promoted. When you think of the Kremlin or the Pentagon and their ilk, they are for all the world like the Stymphalian forest, dark and impenetrable. If you try to enter you will sink in the bureaucratic muck before you go ten feet. Inside it is so dense that you cannot see any of the “rare birds” who thrive there; much less can you “pick one off” by exposing their evil deeds. If you do flush one out you might be able to bring it to justice, but the birds can reproduce it immediately. It’s all perfectly legal and perfectly well insulated from outside interference.



Athena is the goddess of civilization, wisdom, strategy and skill, among other things, but primarily of civilization, of a healthy social web. Civilization is eternally opposed to warfare, which tears it to shreds in a jiffy, flouting its every aspiration. Its primary reason for even existing is to control the mayhem which prevails when humans aren’t governed by law. The modern military actually arose as a fatally flawed method by civilized people to put an end to war and wholesale thievery. Athena—the civilizing impulse—must teach Herakles how to defeat the evil birds. Unfortunately, this is a temporary victory at best, with only a handful of sacrificial lambs shot down. The remaining lovers of violent power are only driven underground, where they take delight in plotting their ever more explosive return.

The use of the clappers to startle the birds into flight is an interesting image. A tremendous blast of sound, reminiscent of the opening salvo of the Kuruksetra War in the Bhagavad Gita, chases the creatures out of hiding. It is curious that a loud noise symbolizes a wakeup call, or a jolt of clarity. Dr. Mees notes that Herakles' clapper is related to Thunder, and is wielded by the Guru. Civilization occasionally mounts such an effort also. The Nuremburg trials after World War II come to mind, when for a brief period the idealism of a healthy society held the upper hand over the pestilential minions. Sadly, as with Herakles, a few bad actors were picked



off but the majority escaped. In the case of the Nazis, many were actually brought into the United States and promoted to key posts in the military and covert intelligence, all with top secret clearance. That's like Athena adopting the Stymphalian birds

after they were flushed from the forest and taking them back to Mount Olympus to keep it "safe" and stand guard. What can you say to that level of stunning stupidity?

A good myth is true on many levels, and we always want to address the personal implications. Even this highly "external" seeming myth has important lessons for seekers. Most of us probably won't be curing military madness in the public arena, but we can root out its homologue in ourselves, where there is certainly a correlative impulse.

We all have our secrets and veiled motivations, which may not all be benign regarding other people's interests. Of course the birds feast on human flesh, since that's the prime delight of the whole business of war. Like that, we each have a vicious streak deep in our psyche that preys on the feelings of others, that likes nothing better than to tear them apart and watch them squirm. If we don't acknowledge that side of our total makeup, we are only deluding ourselves.

It's not uncommon to associate with people who wittingly or otherwise can help further our objectives, enshrined in the adage "birds of a feather flock together." But here the feathers are sharp, metallic and deadly. A spiritually alert person should always question their own impulses to be sure they are aboveboard and legitimate, if not harmonious. Herakles picking off some of the birds with his arrows symbolizes using a sharply honed intelligence to negate our evil tendencies. We must fire our most clearheaded understanding right into the center of the problem or it will escape and regroup.

It is no accident that nearly every great saint and all the grand masters of the spirit extol peace and compassion. Yet in their name it is still far too easy to whip up their followers into a lethal frenzy. We must never be that type of deluded imitator.

Ahimsa is such an important concept because we humans are innately primed to respond to provocations—real or imaginary—with violence. Especially in groups or flocks, ruthless behavior is almost irresistible. We know we will be evicted from the group if we don't acquiesce to its dictates, so we compromise and rationalize about it. The Gurukula and similar spiritual outposts proudly proclaim the central tenet of ahimsa so that all participants can rest assured that those institutions will never issue a call for any kind of injurious activity.

The occult booklet *Sacred Mythoi of Demigods and Heroes* doesn't have too much of interest regarding this labor, though it does tangentially note the military connection. As each labor is associated with an astrological sign, this one is Scorpio. The booklet tells us, "Some perverted Scorpio aspects are such as pertain to uncontrolled impulses, unbridled passions, destructiveness, callousness, tyranny, vindictiveness, intolerance, secretiveness, and pessimism." Seems to me like every sign has these qualities, but never mind. It's all about the metal birds. So that Scorpions don't feel too badly, their good side is also presented: "But the pure influences of Scorpio are controlled forcefulness, energy, penetration, skill, resourcefulness, thoroughness, determination, devotion to the ideal, strength, courage, and potent regenerative capacity." Ditto for their ubiquity throughout the zodiac. Which is fine.

Just as the birds only retreat to a distant island and are never defeated, our own militant instincts cannot be completely eradicated, but only kept under control. Given the right stimulus they will flare up again. We have to remain on guard lest they return to wreak havoc. Within us are archetypes of both Herakles and the Stymphalian birds, and although we would prefer to identify with the hero, we should acknowledge that the entire myth is cradled deep in our unconscious. That will keep us from getting an inflated sense of our own wonderfulness, and keep us honest in preparation for the complex labors yet to come.

ONE HUNDRED VERSES OF REALIZATION

BY GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

STEP TWELVE

Immediately after waking up in the morning, what do you do?

I clean my body. I wash my eyes and mouth, I take a bath and change my dirty clothes for a fresh cloth.

What is the organ that is formed at the beginning in your body?

My skin.

What is your skin?

It is the outer covering that wraps up my entire body including the limbs, giving individuality to me. My skin marks my individual boundary from the external world.

What is the most prominent element of the external world?

The sky.

Which organ of your body is always exposed to the atmosphere?

My skin. All five sense organs of perception are formed from the skin. It is the seat of sensitivity. There is no organ in me which is sensitive unless it is a specialized characteristic of the skin.

What is the sky?

It is an empty space in which all the stars including the sun and its solar system are placed. Close to the Earth, that empty space is filled with air. The air carries with it dust and other pollutants. So the air also puts that on my skin.

What is the greatest function of skin?

The skin produces the function of all the sense organs to provide sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. For instance, whatever voice or sound the air brings, it is received by the drum of the ear, which is made of skin. All values of life begin with the perception of the skin.

Isn't skin very fragile?

Yes and no. Part of the skin combines with sweat and is washed away when we take a bath. Even though skin takes much wear and tear, it is the best defense device of the body. It can easily sustain burns, bruises, wounds, and so forth, but often these are easily repaired. It is the most transformative, self-mending part of the body.

What are some other features of skin?

The skin can become hard and turn into teeth, horn, feathers or hair. When it is not of any further use, it sloughs off to return to nature's elements of air, fire, water and earth. It is the skin that mainly brings feelings of heat and cold to the body. It is the key controller of the body's metabolism.

What happens when the skin decays?

The individual organism inside it also deteriorates.

What does the human body preciousely protect?

The Self or Soul is the living principle that presides as the immortal indweller of the body. What God is to the world, the Self is to a living person's body.

What are the possibilities of identity of the 'I' consciousness?

I can identify the Self with my body.

Do you have dirt only in your body and on your clothes?

No, the dirt in the body and in clothes is comparatively negligible. There is a greater dirt accumulated from childhood which lies dormant in every grown-up person. That dirt is mainly in the form of incipient memories (*vāsana*). In my life there were many unfulfilled desires. Consequently, there were frustrations. Like the physical body, the mind also may become diseased. Repressed desires and suppressed feelings can cause backlashes, which are detrimental to spiritual health. By making insightful contemplation all these mental evils are brought to the surface, and with proper discipline they can all be corrected. Narayana Guru refers to these inner psychological scars of the soul as *antakāla*. We have to be clean both in body and spirit for optimum health. Another possibility is to identify oneself as the all-knowing wisdom core which can transcend everything that is perishable. Identifying oneself with the Absolute is the highest of blessings.

STEP THIRTEEN

Do you know the nature modalities? And what are they?

Yes. They are three invisible natural propensities, like gravitational forces, which are respectively known as *sattva*, the clear, pure nature of individual consciousness; *rajas*, the translucency of consciousness which brings irresistible coloration to the psyche through strong affects like desire, anger, sense of revenge, infatuation, etc.; and *tamas*, the negativity which brings feelings of misery, despondency, and deep inertia that veil the presence of the Spirit.

How does a person overcome these three forces?

By affiliating oneself with the Spirit.

Who is the supreme Spirit?

God.

What is he called in India?

Īśvara or *Parameśvara*.

In Indian mythology, who is *īśvara*?

Śiva is called *īśvara*.

Is *Śiva* visible?

Śiva is visible, invisible, or even innumerably visible.

If *Śiva* is visible, what is his special attribute?

His visible form is covered with the ashes of the three modalities of nature: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

*How do you align yourself to *īśvara*?*

"I am" is the finite and *īśvara* is the infinite. So I hold the Supreme in absolute veneration. I offer to *īśvara* my complete belongingness. I exert my sense organs for getting a correct orientation to the factual details of time, space, and objective correlatives that are to be coordinated from circumstance to circumstance. All the same, I will give maximum contemplative passive relaxation to my core consciousness. I minimize the overt use of my ears and physical touch, and keep my eyes passively closed. I control my food habits to fixed timetables. Thus, my senses will be divested of excitement, they will be kept cool. Super excited states of mind will not be resorted to as far as possible. More and more time will be leisurely converted into passive states of beatitude with a deepening sense of devotion. As part of my discipline, I will cultivate a sense of intimacy with the joyous concept of the Divine or the Godhead via lifelong companionship with the Self as identical with God. All the same, I will not give myself to dreams of euphoria. In nature's beauty and the subjective feeling of the world-filling sense of blessedness, I can

enrich my inner awareness of the divine symphonic grandeur of the harmonizing music of the spheres.

STEP FOURTEEN

What makes one's identity with the Self false?

Its tri-basic fragmentation.

What is tri-basic fragmentation?

To evaluate the knower, the known and the act of knowing as having parity between them is called *tripuṭi*, tri-basic error.

What exactly is the error in tripuṭi?

The knower is the subject and the known is the object of knowledge. When these are viewed as separate, a specific act of knowing transpires between the subject and the object.

How do you rectify this error?

When the nature of the object permeates into the subject, the same permeation of the substance of the object makes the knower identify with the substantial awareness of the object. That cancels out the disparity between the knower and the known. In knowledge, the knower and the known become homogenous. After the establishment of homogeneity the fragmentation cannot stand.

When the fragmentation has no more locus standi what happens?

The subject and object merge in the existentiality of the Self, and the substantiality of the Self-awareness becomes the one Value in which what was looked upon as above and below ceases. The middle ground gets transformed into the value essence of both the subject and the object, and both the existing *sat* and subsisting *cit* combine into the essential *ānanda*. Thereafter knowledge has the same status as the Self or *ātman*.

What is the authority to look upon the Self as the Ātman as well as Brahman?

The authority for identifying the Self comes from the four great dictums of the Upanishads, the *mahāvākyas*. These are:

1. *Tat Tvam Asi* –That You Are.
2. *Prajñānam Brahman*–The central cognitive intelligence, *prajñānam*, is the Absolute.
3. *Ayam Ātma Brahman*–This Self is the Absolute.
4. *Aham Brahman Asmi*–I am the Absolute, the *Brahman*.

What are the special values or import of these four dictums?

The first dictum, *Tat Tvam Asi*, is the dictum of instruction, *upadeśavākya*, coming from the Guru, as illustrated in the Chandogya Upanishad by Aruni to instruct his son Svetaketu, by which he again and again confirmed to Svetaketu “*Tat tvam asi, Svetaketu*—that thou art, Svetaketu.” It is on this *mahāvākya* the disciple has to contemplate to make his or her *manana*. It is the postulation to be deeply pondered over.

The second *mahāvākya*, *Prajñānam Brahman*, is expressing the detailed force of cognitive pondering by which the substantial epitome of all cogitated factors is critically examined to identify the same with one’s irrefutable existential truth.

The third dictum is *Ayam Ātma Brahman*. After examining each establishment of Truth one comes to the conclusion that This Self is Truth, and thus consequently comes to the conclusion *Ayam Ātma Brahman*, This Self is the Absolute.

The fourth dictum is *Aham Brahma Asmi*. This is the experiential dictum, the dictum of conclusive certitude. Everything generated in this world came from Prajapati. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad it is said that when Prajapati looked at the manifested world he did not see anything which had not come from him. So he gave the final *mahāvākya*, *Aham Brahma Asmi*, I am verily the Absolute, the Brahman.

What is manana?

Manana is to not deviate from the given formula, and it is to be taken as the key instruction given by a self-realized Blessed Soul. It is an a priori teaching to be considered until it yields the secret of its application.

By merely repeating the mahāvākyas does a person become fully realized in the Self?

No, only by resorting to the full discipline given as instructions in the Upanishads, can a person successfully cancel out all duality and establish identity with the Self, the One without a second. Then one becomes the true Self.

YOU ARE TRUTH, BEAUTY AND AUSPICIOUSNESS

BY SWAMI TYAGI

I have not seen You
even though I have searched.

You are formless, all-filling,
Everywhere.

I have desired to hear your sound
but that attempt was also in vain.

The inner reverberation is silence.

When I look inward
you are the very eye
which makes my own eyesight.

As sound in my heart
You are echoing without interruption,
the *anāhata*.

Your serenity is beyond dewdrops.

The fragrance in You
is the fragrance in all flowers.

These words are powerless
to express You properly,
as you are the Mother of worlds
whether You give birth to speech or not.

THE GREAT WEAVER

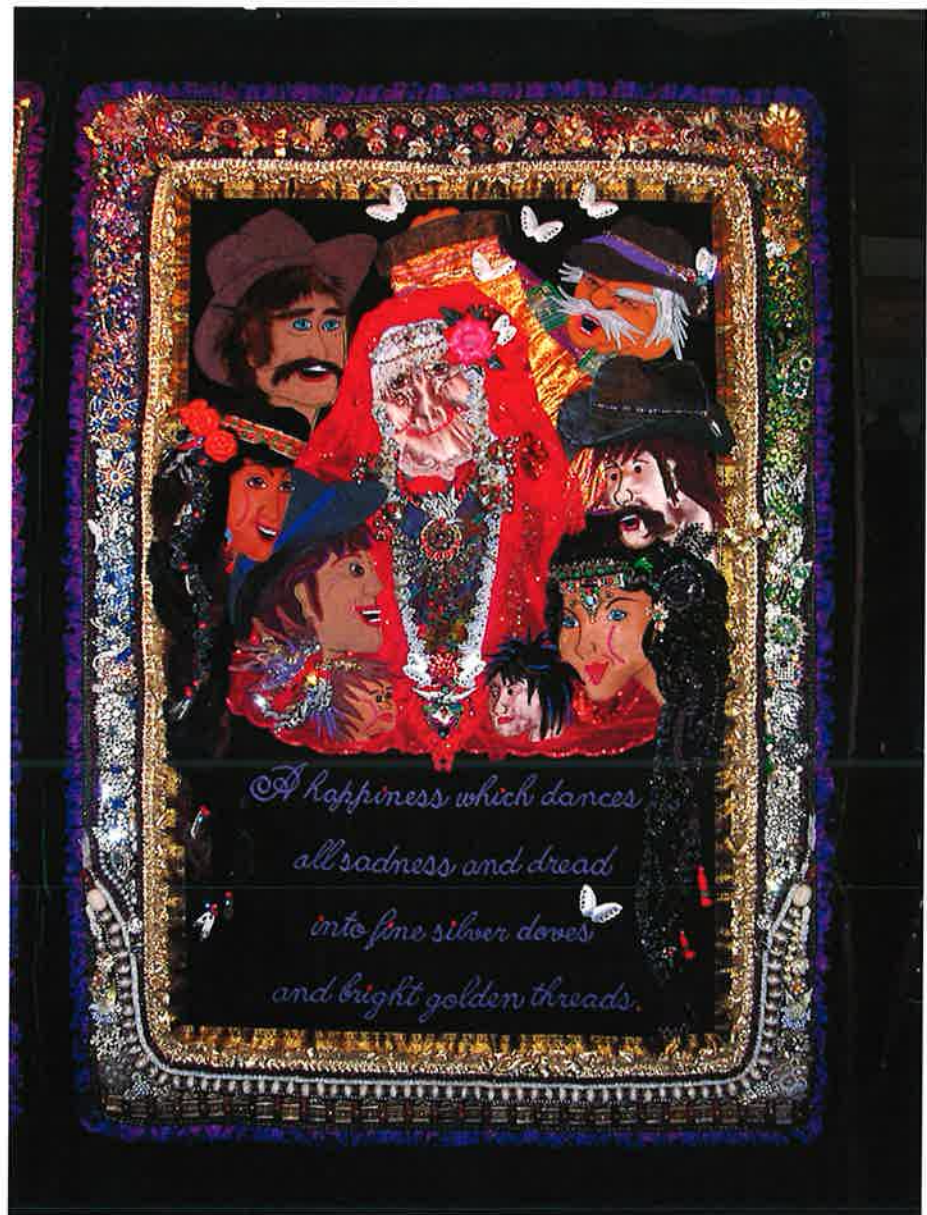
BY GURUSHARAN JYOTHI

The Mohawk River flows so beautifully, singing its own rhythm, washing the shores of the small town of Marcola, shaping the land of Oregon. On the river site is Peggy Grace Chun's two-storied house. The verandah of her house makes you feel as if you are almost standing in the river. I sat there and watched the mysterious, arching river flow, making waves of churning white water. By listening to its gurgling sound and watching the water's patterns, I thought of God's creativity, the fashioning of everything around us. I stood there in awe for more than an hour. I forgot myself into Time and Space. I forgot that I was walking towards Death, the inevitable truth one has to pass through.

Peggy Grace, the goddess who weaves philosophy, gently whispered into my ears, "Jyothi, let's have some snacks and tea. You can always come back and wash away your worries just by listening and watching this river, which can heal you."

After tea, Peggy was kind enough to invite me to her studio to show me her art piece called Silver Doves and Golden Threads. It is a poem and a song and a work of art. It was like the river flowing outside the house which I was watching just moments ago. The theme or message of Peggy's work is about the whole world as one family. From around the globe Peggy has collected materials such as silk, satin and velvet, pearls and gems, gold and silver. Then she has stitched and pasted global art and culture into her five feet by five feet tapestries, with the intention of uniting all of this multicultural art into one piece. For one story character's pant's pocket, she stitched her late husband Jeff's jean pocket. Altogether it has taken twenty years of her continuous effort. I used to call her by the Indian goddess name Tripurasundari, meaning the creatrice of the Three Worlds.

I asked Peggy what inspired her to create this great work of art and how she brought it all together, so many different elements which were not supposed to be together because of either prejudice or caste. She responded with a gentle smile. Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati had been her professor at Sonoma State University in 1974 and had given her the insight of Narayana Guru: One Caste, One Religion, One God for Human Beings. She also added the native American prayer, "Mitakuye Oyasin" or "We are all related." In both of these sources, the core is that the whole world is connected, we are all one family. So Peggy's art work is a connection world woven carefully together from both Eastern and Western perspectives. The Eastern outlook is represented by gypsies and the Western by Native Americans. The underlying principle for both is the same philosophy, that all of us are interconnected with Mother Nature and each other. In pure essence, we are all the same.



*A happiness which dances
all sadness and dread
into fine silver doves
and bright golden threads.*

Throughout the tale, she remembered and wove in the essence of Guru Nitya's poetry, songs, freedom, inspiration, beauty, innocence, compassion, wisdom, humor and creativity. In every character of her piece these qualities are integrated in a meticulous way. At one point the message of the Bhagavad Gita is included with Guru Nitya as Krishna (in the character of Tantay). In the Gita context, Arjuna's agony, the dialectical conflict of his not wanting to fight against his family is answered by the wise teacher Krishna. The problem of Arjuna in the Gita is a problem that mankind continually confronts; in one way or another we all face Arjuna's dilemma. By answering Arjuna's questions, Krishna is revaluing the morality of personal ethics and social life to establish justice. The Gita reveals an intimate knowledge of our basic instincts and how life can become spontaneously harmonized. Through harmony, peace prevails.

Peggy blended the Bhagavad Gita and the Native American saying of "Peace, be gentle, we are all one family." Both strands are blended into a wholeness of being, neither from the West or the East, but of the core, the "this" and "that" which essentially we all are. I am reminded of the greatest prayer of India, *lokaḥ samast`a sukhino bhavantu* or "Let all beings in the universe be healthy and happy."

I bowed before Peggy, the goddess who is living philosophy each moment and rejoicing in her heart with the ever-flowing river of the Absolute. Throughout the night I listened to the river sound with its song after song. The full moon was shining on the river and it looked like glistening melted silver. In my heart I was in deep peace with the combination of Peggy's river of creation and the mysterious river flowing outside. Let Peace Prevail.

BORNEO'S HIDDEN FOREST

BY JOHN PAISLEY

My trip to the Maliau Basin came about because I had heard that Adrian (Banie) Lasimbang, my longtime friend and now Micro-hydro Expert for Partners of Community Organizations (PACOS) in Kota Kinabalu, had just commissioned an important micro-hydro project in Bario, one supported by the Borneo Project (of Berkeley, California). I wrote to congratulate him and finished the conversation with, "I still want to see Maliau Basin before I die!"

He replied, "Sabah Foundation has just hired me to do a feasibility study for six turbines at research stations in Maliau Basin. You can join the team and come with us!" So as soon as Banie set the dates for the study in April, I bought a ticket.

Maliau Basin is a unique geological feature in central Sabah, a volcanic depression surrounded by massive cliffs. It was unknown to anyone but local people before 1947, when a pilot almost collided with a towering cliff while flying through the clouds. It was designated a conservation area by the Sabah Foundation in 1970 and remains one of the few remaining pristine rain forests on all of Malaysian Borneo. Researchers are allowed by special permit to visit and study the area.

The security gate to the Maliau Basin Conservation Area is about a day's drive from Kota Kinabalu, about half of it on dirt road. Another half hour's drive takes you to the Studies Center, a new compound of buildings with accommodations, a conference center and a dining hall with an expert staff of chefs who serve wonderful food. I was completely taken by surprise by all of it. I thought we'd be staying in leech-infested jungle camps eating rice and canned sardines. Instead we had beautiful "hotel" rooms with showers, wild boar wandering around the yard at night and early in the morning, rhinoceros hornbills squawking and eating strangler figs in the gigantic trees around the camp, fresh tracks of Bornean pygmy elephants on the roads, and the hooting of gibbons each morning. I saw giant moths, giant beetles and unimaginable plant life.

For the next several days we were busy conducting the feasibility study, slowly moving through the forest. We climbed over huge boulders, thrashing our way through thorny thickets, climbing slick clay trails next to ethereal plumes of falling water. We slept in rough camps near wild rivers, heard the calls of helmeted hornbills, saw gibbons swinging, flying and dropping through the leafy limbs of enormous, and now rare, ironwood (belian) trees.

The joy and excitement of days like those will draw me back to that forest as long as it's there. It is a place vital to Earth, breathing oxygen into our air, but also so

hostile to humans, with its forbidding terrain, oppressive heat, thorny vegetation, poisonous plants, insects, and reptiles warning us not to disturb them. At night when I would lie in my hammock happy to be out of the reach of the leeches, a thought returned haunt me. "Someday soon, maybe no one will be able to witness this ever again." Death is irreversible. The death of the rain forests would be catastrophic, a domino that would bring down global ecosystems in ways we can't even predict. But the effect on the human psyche would be equally devastating. Simply put, we need this forest and it needs us. We need to save it and we can. If we can't meet with the wild, we can never be fully alive.

Small is good. The small generators that will be installed in these forest camps will produce only enough power for cooking and lights for small groups of trekkers. The generators will be powered by water from a stream through a pipe that takes a small amount from a natural pool a short distance uphill, then allows it to flow back into the stream. You get the idea. Do not disturb the forest.

A major threat to the continued preservation of Maliau is its coal. Great veins of coal lie exposed on the surfaces of the basin's cliffs. Mining companies are trying to convince the government to allow them in. To make sure this will not happen, Dr. Waidi Sunun, the supervisor of the conservation area, has decided that it must be opened to ecotourism. He believes that the small but sustainable revenue generated will trump offers by the mining companies.

The rest is up to us. We need to keep talking about the rain forests. We need to visit them if we can and get to know them. We who care form a circle. If the circle of caring is big enough, it will encompass the forests and they, and we, will survive. We will persevere. We will be okay.

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2010

BY GURU MUNI NARAYANA PRASAD

The Guru and Head of the Narayana Gurukula movement, its inmates and the teachers and students of the East-West University of Brahmavidya together wish everyone a balanced New Year.

But if this is to happen, we must assess whether or not our life is balanced. Today we live in the Age of Machines and Computers. As such, many of us are quickly moving toward a lifestyle in which machines perform our needed physical labor and computers perform our needed mental labor. These machines and computers were, in fact, designed to make our lives more restful and contented by taking much work off our hands. In other words, they were designed to be our servants. But, it seems, as we move toward this new lifestyle, we become more and more oblivious to the fact that a life devoid of such natural activities as basic physical and mental work itself becomes mechanistic and insipid. And in a life chock full of devices ever ringing and buzzing wherever we go, we end up living at the beckoning call of those devices. Indeed, this has become much of the work we do! If we look at it the other way around, we ourselves are becoming the servants of the machines and computers that were originally devised to serve us. This lopsidedness is not only creeping into our professions but also our educational system and even our lives at home.

This tendency or lifestyle of serving machines could be considered to have originated in the 18th century with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Several great writers of the 19th and 20th centuries have already depicted the degrading effects of living in overcrowded, polluted cities where people work like machines for the machines of factories of offices, and for the profit of a few. But, unfortunately, those of us in the 21st century are now perhaps becoming more like the machines themselves! In other words, perhaps we are beginning to behave and even perceive reality in a narrow and mechanized way. Such a perception affects our values. This, of course, means becoming more distant and disassociated from our own humanity.

Becoming the servants of industry means we are unconsciously taking up the values of industry, which is all too often to make more and more money. Even our hallowed educational systems, which were established to better humans on all levels, are becoming increasingly restricted to aiding students in the goal of simply making more money. As such, we condition the new generations to become money-making machines, when in fact there is so much more needed to live a happy live. We do not take this lightly because these money-dependent values have

not brought about happiness but a money-dependent lifestyle. This is another kind of lopsidedness that is creeping into every aspect of our lives. Instead of feeling more content and balanced, today many people feel their lives to be helplessly filled with anxiety and burdens. Obviously the old adage, "Money alone does not bring happiness," is not being heeded. More than a few mental and emotional disorders are caused by a machine culture that does not take real human needs into consideration in their global sense.

We are by no means recommending here that one should ignore or disown the gains made by science, industry and technology, nor ignore their genuine material needs. Instead we plead for a broad perception by which these gains are given their proper place in life and are utilized as such. We should remember that science, industry and technology are to be our servants, meaning they should allow us, not deny us, to grow in the dignity of our humanity, and assist us in making our lives more peaceful, contented and balanced. So let us ask ourselves, what is in truth a natural and happy life, in work and play? And what is the place of machines, computers and money making in a natural and contented life? What is the balance between them? No education, profession and home can really be devoid of life, and no life can be devoid of education, profession and a home. If we consider these two sides together, we can see a dialectical secret implied. Discovering this secret will help us bring balance into our lives. So a balanced life need not begin with governments and educational institutions. It begins with us, because by actualizing such a balance in our own lives, we affect the institutions and society at large, of which we are a part. This is not the power of machines, computers or money. This is our unique power and freedom as humans.

Discovering the truth of what a balanced life is should be the goal of us all, in all fields. Scientists, industrialists, educators and every other kind of worker should strive to understand and actualize a more balanced, natural and contented life. As such we will inculcate and pass on values to our children that will help them to live happily. We can insure our own well being, and that of future generations, if we begin to think practically and globally. This can be the culture of future generations: if we begin to think practically and globally, a culture of balance and happiness will come into being. May the world teachers, or *jagad gurus*, like Narayana Guru guide us in such matters, in all our fields of interest. Once again, we wish everyone a balanced New Year.



GURUKULA NEWS

We report with sadness the passing of K.V. Anandan, a longtime Gurukula associate. Many people will remember his generous hospitality and his support of the Gurukula. K.V. Anandan's reminiscences of his association with Nataraja Guru and Guru Nitya were printed in *Gurukulam*, Spring 2007.

Garry Davis is the subject of a movie script. The movie focuses both on Garry's life and the history of World Citizenship. A website about the projected movie is www.onefilm.com. Sadly, a few months ago there was a fire at Garry's house, which is also his office, and all his records and files were destroyed. Friends are working to help Garry recover his files and information and establish a permanent World Government file. You can get more information and learn how to help out by going to www.worldgovernment.org

Walter De Buck, the artist who carved the granite statue of Nataraja Guru in front of the Ooty Gurukula, visited Fernhill again in November 2009 with his wife Mia Verstraete and their children. His current website is www.walterdebuck.be

The Gurukula at Somanahalli in Bangalore, Karnataka, is building a book house to be open to the public. A brochure about the project with photos of the Gurukula can be sent to you by writing to narayanagurukulabangalore@gmail.com

At Bainbridge Gurukula the old German off-set press and the paper cutter have been removed and there is new space for meetings, readings and meals.

The Gurukula website has changed its address; it is now:
<http://www.narayanagurukula.org/>

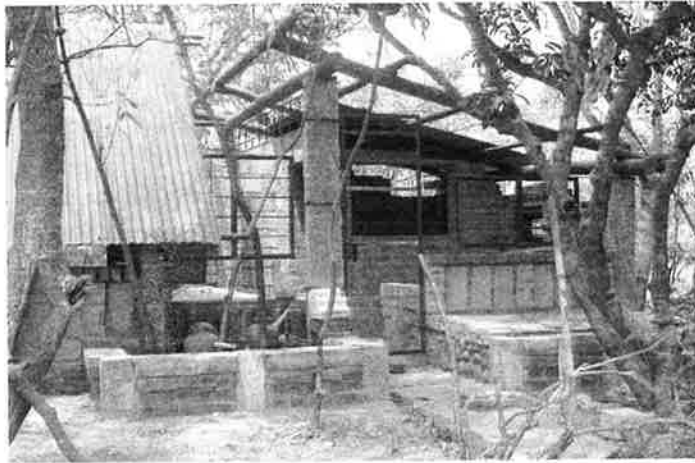
Ongoing internet classes on *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras* can be accessed through:
islandaranya@toast.net.

For book introductions, articles, and class notes from the Portland Gurukula:
<http://scottteitsworth.tripod.com/>

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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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