

# GURUKULAM

VOLUME II • 1986

FOURTH QUARTER



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# GURUKULAM

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITION

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# Thoughts On Beginning Yoga

On a recent afternoon I was reflecting on a discussion with friends about undertaking a study of Yoga together. Our talk had been animated and punctuated by many questions: "Who is Patanjali? How is this Yoga related to the classes advertized as a kind of physical exercise? Is Yoga a practice, a philosophy, a religion, a way of life? Are there many kinds of Yoga? Every Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is labled Yoga, such as Samkhya Yoga, Karma Yoga, etc. Are these different kinds of Yoga or stages of attainment? What is the Sāṁkhya school of philosophy?"

From the library shelves I took down the Gita, Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, and Guru Nitya's commentaries on both, and began to read and take notes. I was interrupted by a knock at the door. I was a bit unnerved to find five very old and somewhat strangely dressed men outside. When they smiled with gentleness, I was reassured. I welcomed them in and offered tea. They seemed to feel quite at home and we shared a comfortable silence for some time. Then one of them spoke.

"Now," he said, but before he could go further, one of the others interrupted: "Wait, Patañjali, its not time yet for you to begin. First we have to hear from Kapila," and he nodded encouragingly in the direction of the sage of the five. Kapila's eyes were fathomless; they seemed to contain the pulsations of the entire cosmos. Instead of speaking, he simply inclined his head toward one of the others who spoke:

"Yes, it is right to begin with Kapila, for his philosophy deals with the mystery of the unceasing proliferation of the material universe. His famous work, called the *Sāṁkhya Pravacana Sūtra*, is the basis for the Samkhya school, one of the six major systems of Indian philosophy. However, it is appropriate that I speak for him, as I am the one who

actually wrote that book. I am Pancasikha, the disciple of Asuri who was the disciple of the great Kapila. Any discussion of Yoga has to begin with Kapila's theories as the basis for understanding the situation which the Yoga teaching seeks to address."

Pancasikha continued, "Sāṁkhya is a theory of evolution, a way to explain how the many things and beings and processes which compose the universe all came from the Indistinct. It is a rational system, not religious in nature, and does not refer to a Creator. According to Kapila, the three *gunas*, the qualities of clarity, agitation and darkness, are like three strands twisted together into the single rope of our cosmic and psychological reality. Because of the turbulence caused by their functioning, we forget that our true nature is eternally free, self-luminous and blissful. As a result, we suffer many pains. This is the context in which we have to understand Yoga. Its purpose is to deliver a person from the misery of wrong identification.

At this point, Patañjali cleared his throat and we looked at him expectantly. Seeing that his listeners were attentive, he spoke: "Now, the instruction for contemplative union in harmony." Although he spoke only a few words, they rang out with clarity and reverberated gently in the long silence which followed.

Then the voice which had interrupted earlier began repeating Patañjali's words: "'Now'...yes, yes, it's quite right for him to begin with 'now'. Some seekers have expressed interest in Yoga, thus showing some understanding that this science offers a path out of suffering. They are eager to find a way back to 'union in harmony'. But this is 'contemplative' union. Seekers must realize contemplation is not sitting and sogging, but requires a dynamic centering of attention and the capacity to

integrate theory and practice in the fabric of their own lives. Then they are ready to begin studying Patañjali's Yoga now."

The fifth of the old men responded, "Vyāsa, as always, we are thankful to have your explanations. One would think you would be tired after codifying ancient Indian philosophy, writing an extensive commentary on Patañjali's sutras, and singing the wondrous epic of the Mahabhārata, including that masterpiece of Yoga philosophy, the Bhagavad Gita. But your energy seems unabated and your insights as crystal clear as ever."

"Still, I would like to correct a slight ambiguity. Although we are certainly very grateful to Patanjali for his tremendous contribution of coordinating and revaluing the science of Yoga, it is not really his Yoga in the sense of Patañjali being the originator. In fact, Yoga is as ancient as India, as ancient as humanity."

Vyāsa replied, "That is so, Vacaspati Mīśra, as you make clear in your commentary. The fundamental nature of each individual is the harmonious union they seek. And, since the beginning of time, human beings have valued teachers and teachings which remind them of that and guide their reintegration with the cosmic symphony. However, the tendency for human thought and activity to fragment has affected even the science of union. Many different methods and schools of thought have been developed over the centuries. 'Union in harmony' has even become a commodity to be gained through the purchase of a technique or the mastering

of certain exercises. Many of them are harmless and even relaxing, but they are not the science which Patanjali presents with such integrity."

Patañjali spoke up again, "Vyāsa, I appreciate the clarity of your commentaries on the sutras I recorded in the attempt to set down the teachings of the science of union for the benefit of generations to come. Your Gita, in which conflicting strains of religion, philosophy and culture are brought together in eighteen chapters, each presenting an aspect of contemplative union in theory and in practice, is a part of that same process of revaluation."

Vyasa replied, "Yes, our efforts are completely congruent. Your explanation of the Yoga science is one that is full of compassion. And, century after century, these teachings, when dusted off and communicated in the language of each new generation, still offer profound guidance to students who seek lasting happiness. It is the way of wisdom that teachers like Nitya Chaitanya Yati keep coming along to give fresh interpretations."

With these words, Vyāsa rose and the others followed him out the door. Full of gratitude, I walked quietly beside them under the fir trees to the end of the drive. There we parted, silently saluting one another with folded palms, the traditional gesture of greeting and parting, which says, "I give my reverence to the pure consciousness shining within you." They walked away through the woods and I returned to prepare for the class. ♦

Nancy Yeilding

*What lies behind us and before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# *The Simple of a Person*

*The simple of a person is bound to be very great. It is love and devotion that makes the person's heart to be loved by everyone. Because the simple of a person is loved by all the Gurus.*

*All the people of the world are part of the Earth, and it takes love and devotion to make every part of their body move.*

*I love the comic books they have in India.*

*The sympathy of everything makes everyone beautiful, and all the gods and goddesses that roamed the Earth in the olden days after the dinosaurs died out and everything turned brown were very beautiful. All the men and all the women and all the kids are very loveable to me.*

*Wise Gurus always teach the clowns to spank people, and also the bad Gurus teach clowns how to behave properly.*



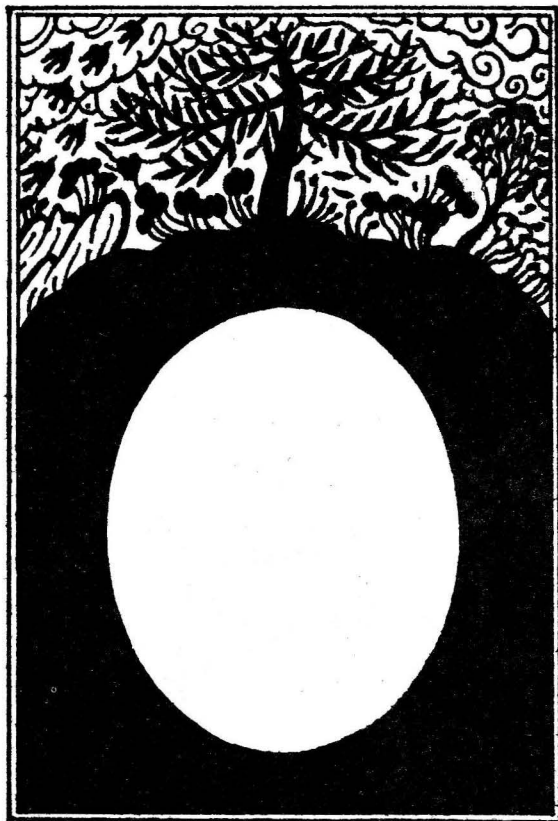
*Emily Aruna Teitsworth, Age 4*



# The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati



## Sixth Mantra

*eṣa sarveśvara eṣa sarvajña eṣo'ntaryāmyeṣa  
yonih sarvasya prabhavāpyayau hi bhūtanām*

This is the lord of all, the all-knower;  
this the inner negation factor;  
this is the source of everything,  
and the beginning and end of beings.

On a certain morning when you go for a walk, you may see along the footpath a large amount of white froth with innumerable bubbles all shining in the sun with a pearly luster. From where does this froth come? Certainly not from the grass. If you have the inquisitiveness of a child you may sit and touch the froth, to look for the source of it. To find out its cause, you need a lot of patience. If you seek relentlessly you will ultimately come to a small bug not bigger than a head louse. This amazing creature is called the 'spit-bug'. The enormous quantity of froth has come from the tiny mouth of that smallest of all creatures.

Compared to this spit-bug, there is another being which is infinitesimally smaller because it is not even visible with the most powerful microscope. Indians call it *ṛṣṭa*, the projector of the universe. In a clumsier way, Westerners call it 'the creator'. Functionally, the *ṛṣṭa* is a super-super spit-bug who spits out nebula after nebula from which the galactical systems are continuously emerging. What baffles us when we look at the quantity of froth produced by a spit-bug is the incomprehensible power of the bug; the quantity of the liquid emerging from it cannot be adequately accounted for when we consider its source. The spitting out, the projection and the creation of the world also offers a similar paradox. What is its material cause? Is it the substance out of which the universe evolves or the Word with which God creates?

The Indian God does not create with the Word; He only dreams. It is not that the dream is there because it is dreamt, but the dreamer derived his status from the dream that is dreamt. In this strange methodology we go topsy-turvy because God, who should have been the efficient cause, becomes the material cause, although there is nothing material about him, and his intention becomes both the efficient and final cause. With a view of putting some order into this otherwise incomprehensible story of creation, Narayana Guru, in his Universal Prayer, said:

Are You not creation, the creator too,  
As also the magic variety of created things?  
Is it not You again, Oh God, who is the very stuff  
Of which all creation is made?

Here we get the first and final cause and all the in-between causes implied in creation, all in one package deal. Pointing to the same, the seer of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* says, *eṣa sarveśvara*. Why *sarveśvara*? Because he is the unmoved mover. Sitting where he is he goes everywhere, and without moving he overtakes the fastest of all moving entities. Incidentally, Aristotle should be credited for defining God as the 'unmoved mover'. It is probable that Aristotle got this idea of the unmoved mover from his juvenile experience of falling in love with some young Greek girl, who must have learned her cunning by combining the strategies of Artemis and Aphrodite. A lover has only one dream: to make his otherwise depressive looking beloved bloom into a smile, however transient that smile is. There is a Hercules in

every lover who is willing to do any amount of labor to please the beloved. God is the most impossible of all beloveds. He is not sitting there as one person. He can be experienced only as the spasmodic convulsion of urges and appetities experienced as the first cause of all movements.

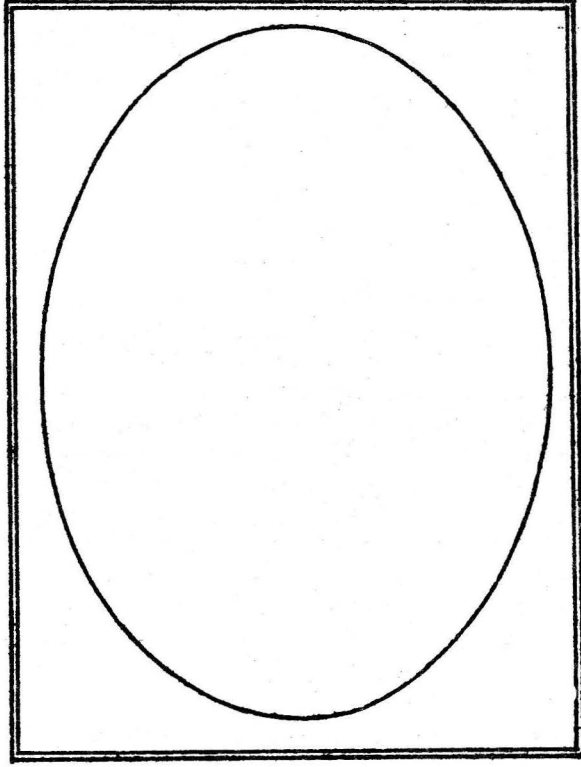
Love does not work alone. Love is born with a twin sister, Hate. Between them the ping-pong of life is played. In planning this gigantic intrinsic game, God transformed himself into a genius of mathematics of whom Pythagoras knew better than Aristotle. Even when creation was in its cradle, God was careful in structuring the atomic models of basic elements. He never made the mistake of mixing the number of protons with the number of electrons; consequently his atoms will never cross-fire. Only God knows how many eons passed when he was all alone to appreciate the efficient harmony with which his creation was progressing, until he got aides like Galileo Galilei who gave a third eye to modern scientists to look at the marvel of God's creation. Then an even more valient person came in that tradition, Sir Isaac Newton, who became lyrical in his appreciation of God's precision techniques. He admitted without reservation that God knew. The seer of the Upaniṣad knew it long before, so he said: *eṣa sarvajña*, "he is the all-knower."

In the opening mantra of the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* there is an intriguing appellation given to God. The Sanskrit word used is *āvasya*. India's monist philosopher Śāṅkara interprets it as "being enveloped or covered." This meaning is challenged by the qualified monists and the dualists who interpret it as "the indwelling." They are both right and both wrong. Or even more generously, we can say that they are both right and not wrong in the least. It is the weaver's intention to make a cloth, so he warps the thread around the woof. Both the warp and the woof are yarn. The monist sees only the primary oneness of the first cause. He thinks the cloth conceals the reality of the thread, by presenting the homogenous look of the final product. So he is right in saying the reality is hidden behind the superimposed idea of the cloth. In commenting on the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, Śāṅkara ingeniously applies a converse understanding of the theory of superimposition. Those who see the world do not see its hidden cause, God, because the reality of God is covered by the appearance of the world. Śāṅkara expects the wise man to see the reality as much on the surface as beneath, and reverse the order of superimposition, so that God, instead of being hidden, can be seen as the all-pervading principle.

The qualified monist and the dualists, who were pragmatic in their philosophical pursuit and realistic in their empirical approach, take into account the intention of the creator, whether it is a potter, a weaver, or God, and put emphasis on the finality of things as a concretization of the intention of the creator. The pot does not only appear to be a pot, but it is the potter's idea of the pot that holds every particle in its place to give the inner cohesion of the finished pot. Similarly, it is the idea of the cloth that prompts the weaver to ply

his thread in a certain way so that the final product can express in every bit of it the actualization of his intention.

On a much larger scale this is also true of God the Creator. Thus, God as Idea is the indwelling reality of this universe which issues out of Him. Hence it is said: "He is the indweller, he is the womb where the world is secretly nurtured." In the Gita, Krishna goes one step further by referring to himself as the father who has invested the sperm of every being into the respective wombs from which they are born. So it is said: "the source (womb) of everything." In this third quarter, the circle comes to a full round. Birth and dissolution are only two faces of the same Reality. So this is described as both the beginning and the end of all beings.



### Seventh Mantra

*nāntakṛpajñāṁ nabahisprajñāṁ no'bhayataḥprajñāṁ  
na prajñāna ghanam na prajñāṁ na aprajñāṁ adṛṣṭam  
avyavahāryam agrāhyam alakṣaṇam a dīntyam  
avyapadeśyam ekatmapratyayasāram prapañcōpaśamam  
śāntam śivam advaitam caturtham manyante  
sa ātmā sa vijñeyaḥ*



As not inwardly conscious, not outwardly conscious,  
as not filled with a knowing content, not conscious,  
not unconscious, unseen, non-predicable, ungraspable,  
bereft of quality, unthinkable, indeterminate, as the  
substance of the certitude of a unitive Self, as the  
calmer of the unmanifested, tranquil, numinous, non-  
dual, is the fourth limb considered to be. He is the  
Self; that is to be recognized.

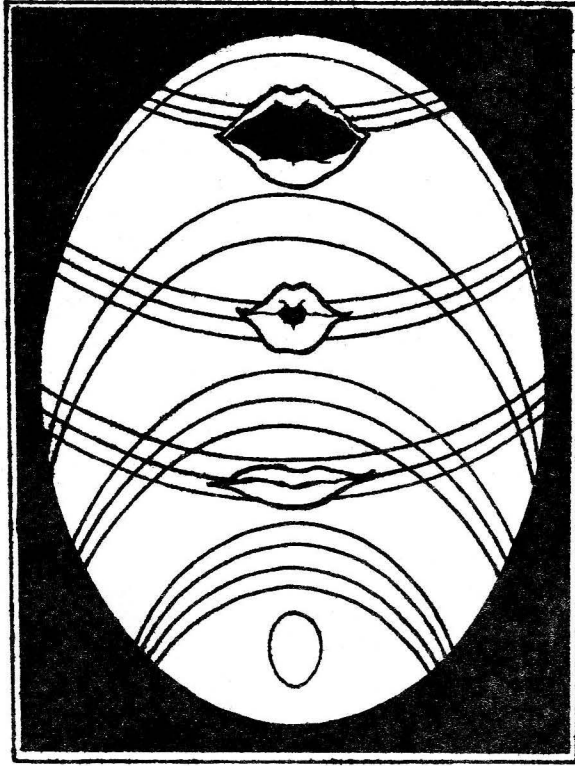
"Dust thou art and to dust thou returneth," is a biblical statement about a fact of life. However, the man who is holding onto the Bible with faith is also asked to believe that he is from God, and ultimately he will be called back to God. How does the Bible accomodate such glaring contradictions? This contradiction is not anything special to the Bible or Christianity. All religions subscribe to it. The fact of life has its relevancy only within the world of time and space where a continuous program of transformation is going on. The simplest example of it is our own life on earth. All physically sound people go into deep sleep and after laying there for a while absolutely unconscious they wake up and go from one program of action to another. Again in the night they are knocked off and go into the same unconscious sleep. This is very similar to coming out of the dust with an individual personality and then returning to the ignoble state of the dust. This is a repetitive process. Nowadays machines also behave intelligently by even initiating the programs with a certain amount of automation. They are doing it without a ghost in the machine.

Life becomes far more intriguing and worthwhile when the essence of it is related to the Universal Witness of the opening and closing of cosmic functioning. Here we make a departure from the intricate machinery of nature and go into the simplest of all realities which is described only with a non-functional function - "is" - or, more elaborately, "which alone is," *tat eva sat*. Is it a consciousness that is throbbing within? The rishi says no. Is it an elaboration or modulation of consciousness which is seen as all this? Again the answer is no. Now putting these together, we naturally have to dismiss everything felt and seen and experienced within and all that is registered by the senses and mind as existing outside.

One may suspect that the reality under discussion could be a subtle condensation of possibilities that can someday elaborate itself into time and space with variegated forms and names. That way it could be a potential consciousness through and through. But we have a conditioned mind. Whenever we hear terms like "knowing," "becoming aware of," or "conscious of," we create a playground, and put on one side a mysterious entity experiencing a state of awareness, and in the other field the drama that is unfolded to him. Such kinds of conditional states have no relevancy here. As we do not know any alternative other than inertial matter which does not have any sensation or awareness, we may come to the conclusion that it is incapable of

knowing. That surmise is dismissed.

It is a matter of deconditioning and unlearning whatever one has gained in this manifested world such as seeing, transacting, grasping, taking notes of hallmarks, anticipating, even though what is referred to is not any of this. One gets to it by transcending all this. By going beyond sound, touch, form, taste, smell, one comes to a peace with which one was never acquainted before. It is the numinous toward which everything moves. It is other than the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep. What is it? Well, it is the fourth. Call it *ātmā* if you may. This is to be known.



### Eighth Mantra

*so'yam ātmā adhyakṣaram onkāro'dhimātram  
pādā mātṛā mātṛāṣṣapādā akāraukāro makāra iti*

The same Self treated as the AUM is substance;  
state is substance and substance is state,  
under letters A, U, and M.

The earth under our feet is firm. We build our houses on it, till or plow the land and cultivate it. We make mines in it and dig out sturdy metals ranging from iron to gold. We think of the rocky hills and mountains as im-mobile. Except in the polar regions, water is not hard; it flows, and makes rivers, lakes and oceans. It has no shape of its own. Even more subtle is fire. It is a great revealer of forms with its own light. Air is like a spirit; we do not see it at all. It can sweep earth and make it barren, a desert land of sands. It can tickle water and make it tremble, or it cause tidal wavers of monstrous ferocity. It can make fire enraged and blow into conflagration. It can be as subtle as our vital energies. The subtler an element, the mightier it becomes in its power to manifest.

Even more mysterious is *ākāśa*, for which English has no proper word. *Ākāśa* is the donor of space for everything to be, and it is the grand arena of the electromagnetic field, and even of the vibration of such energies which we have not fully understood. It is this *ākāśa* which makes our own little globe a part of the gigantic universe. Indians attribute one quality to *ākāśa*: that is sound. There is *ākāśa* in the person, the vibrating space of consciousness within: it is the *citākāśa*. From this indwelling cosmic energy system, man, or rather his consciousness, reaches outward through the articulation of sounds and the world seeps into him through his organ of hearing. He can chant *AUM*. From his heart there arises the energy of sound, and it goes into the wide world making wave after wave. It affects everyone around him, including himself, because it comes back to him as a sound that can be heard. Thus, sound functions both centrifugally and centripetally. This is the greatest of all man's weapons to deal with the world at large. He can immortalize himself with his word. Certain powerful beings, like Lord Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and the Prophet Mohammed articulated words of wisdom whose echoes are still vibrating, and those sounds, like alchemy, create godlike people from the morbid mass of the five elements.

The rishis saw, in the scheme of articulation, a four-fold centrifugal expansion, and a three-fold centripetal inversion. The four-fold centrifugal manifestation consists first of *para*, the unmanifested infinitude, from which manifestation arises; the second is *paśyanti*, the configuration of ideas in the deep unconscious, from where it can activate the pre-conscious threshold of the individuated mind where the mystery of semiosis takes place. Then from the *paśyanti* the manifesting word enters into the secret manipulation of *madhyāma*. There the meanings of conceptual configurations are clothed with the tonality of sound provided by the measured release of quantum of *prāṇa*. Finally there is *vikhāri*, which brings sounds bursting into meaning in the auditory awareness of the listener. The centripetal inversion begins with the mouth whose lips are fully parted, such as when we articulate "A." And the second location is seen in the throat, as when we say "U," for which the lips are rounded, and finally it culminates in the heart, where we say "M" with the mouth fully closed.

These three sounds "A," "U," and "M," are symbolically looked upon as three measures that can respectively represent the wakeful, the dream and the causal unconscious. Although the forms that belong to the earth are perishable, the idea carved into the niches of sound can remain as eternal Truth. For that reason, like the fourth, with which we became familiar in the previous mantra, the Word, *logos*, *AUM*, is also imperishable, *akṣara*. At all the four levels of consciousness, *AUM* is the link between the individuated person and *brahman*, the substratum of the cosmos. This is the grand scheme of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*.

(Continued in next issue.)





# The Katha Upaniṣad

Translation and Commentary by

Muni Narayana Prasad

## XVI

*Pleased with Nachiketas,  
the great soul (Yama) told him:  
Now I give you one more boon.  
This sacrificial fire will be  
known by your name indeed.  
Also accept this multi-formed  
garland.*

Yama taught Nachiketas the fire-sacrifice. Nachiketas repeated the whole proving that he understood it. Yama became pleased with him and granted one more boon: "This sacrificial fire which enables one to reach heaven, will hereafter be known by your name." This was the additional boon. That is how the sacrificial fire got the name *Nāchiketāgni*. It indicates that the ritualistic instructions became well established in Nachiketas. Along with this additional boon Yama gave him a multi-formed gem-garland as a gift. Gems are the most coveted of worldly wealth. According to Vedism, a heaven which can be attained by rituals is considered to be the ultimate of worldly happiness. Thus the multi-formed gem-garland stands for the enjoyment of heavenly happiness which became Nachiketas' own, or attainable by him. In short, the Vedic instruction given by Yama to Nachiketas was understood by him and became fruitful in him.

## XVII

*One who kindles the sacrificial  
fire, which has now become known  
as *Nāchiketāgni*, three times,  
having won alliance with  
the three (i.e. the father, mother,  
and the teacher) becomes the  
performer of the three duties  
(of learning, understanding  
and practicing), crosses over  
birth and death. By knowing  
the god who is born from  
Brahman (the Absolute)  
and is the knower and the  
one to be praised, revering  
him by kindling the triple-  
fire, one attains this  
ultimate peace.*

The claim in this *mantra* is that one who kindles the sacrificial fire three times, indicating that one is seeking happiness in alliance with one's father, mother and the teacher, crosses over birth and death. Also, by giving reverence to the god who is born from the Absolute and who is also the knower in oneself through kindling the triple-fire, one attains peace. The word *trināciketa* could either mean the one who kindles the fire three times, or the one in whom the instruction on fire-sacrifice has

become effective in three ways, i.e., by learning, understanding, and practising. The latter sense is more acceptable philosophically. Knowledge becomes one's own only when these three effects of it are fulfilled. One who has achieved these three aspects is called here *trikarmakṛt*. It is claimed that such a one crosses over birth and death and attains peace. But that attainment is only in alliance with one's father, mother and teacher and it is subject to their pleasure. Peace attained in this way has a limited scope. That is why the word *imam śāntim* (this particular peace) is deliberately used here. The ultimate end of the Upanisadic teaching is the attainment of that peace which is without any limitation. This *mantra* indicates the difference between the peace of mind attained in alliance with worldly relations and the one attained with an absolute sense of freedom. Those who cross over death through ritualistic means enjoy happiness in heaven as mentioned in the *mantra*. But the peace aimed at by the Vedantins is not the one gained by heavenly enjoyment. The word *brahmajñānam* also indicates that the god revered here is not the Absolute but the one who was born of the Absolute.

#### XVIII

*One who kindles the triple  
Nāchiketa fire, on knowing  
these three, knowing thus,  
builds up the Nāchiketa-fire  
and rejoices in heaven, having  
cast off in advance the bondage  
of death and having overpassed  
suffering.*

Those who perform rituals according to the instructions in the Vedas reach heaven and rejoice there. The previous

mantra and the present one show that the superiority of this joy is only relative. In the relative context the most superior happiness one can expect is that of heaven.

#### XIX

*O Nachiketas, that teaching on  
sacrificial fire which you  
chose as your second boon  
and which leads to heaven  
has become yours as taught  
by me. People will tell of  
this fire as yours indeed.  
Now choose the third boon.*

Yama has granted the second boon and he praises Nachiketas' discrimination in choosing boons.

#### XX

*Some say that man exists  
after his death. Some others  
say that he does not exist.  
Such being the uncertainty,  
I wish to be instructed by  
you on this. Of the boons  
I choose this as the third.*

Nachiketas introduces the fundamental problem to be dealt with in this Upaniṣad. Some believe that the soul of man exists after death, while others believe that nothing exists after death. Nachiketas prays to Death to clear this unsettled problem for him. This he chooses as his final boon.

(Continued in next issue.)

# The Science of Harmonious Union

Commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Śāstra*

Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Patañjali's *Science of Harmonious Union* (*Yoga Śāstra*) is a textbook which is complementary to the *Science of Categorical Enumeration* (*Sāṃkhya Pravācāna Sūtra*) of Kapila. The Sāṃkhyan epistemology is analogous to the evolutionary theory of an expanding universe which commences with a paradoxical steady state in which the spirit of awareness and the material of an in-conscious nature remain interlaced, suppressing the intrinsic quality of both. This is the state of the indiscernible (*avyākta*). Then it proceeds to trace a progressive, centrifugal function in which categories after categories come into elaboration until the self-propelling organism of one of the biologic species turns out to be a member of a social matrix in which he or she, as Rousseau puts it, is in chains everywhere and is laboring under the agonizing pain of his or her accountability for existence.

Patañjali commences his instructions from that point of evolutionary culmination, to guide a return to the aloneness of pure awareness which is attributed to the spirit as its pure and homogenous nature. Hence the aphorism, *atha yoga anuśāsana*, is given as the opening statement of Patañjali:

Sutra I:1

*atha yoga anuśāsana*

*atha*: now  
*yoga*: Yoga  
*anuśāsana*: instruction

Now, the instruction for contemplative union in harmony.





It is customary for a book which details a system of philosophy in India to begin with the reason for elucidating that particular philosophical vision. The discipline of Yoga had been developing in India before the advent of the Vedas so Patañjali was not actually the founder-father of the philosophy of Yoga as he is often referred to. He was one of the able coordinators and revaluators of this science of man's harmonious union with himself, the world, and the cosmic law that governs the entire universe ranging from the cognizing of a sensation to the formation of a galaxy.

"Now" (*atha*) can have several meanings out of which we should highlight the most appropriate. Both in chronology and epistemological import, the Yoga philosophy of Patañjali is to be seen as sequential to Kapila's philosophic vision of cosmic projection. Considering this, "now" means, "after having heard Kapila's aphorisms of Sāṃkhya, now you will be benefited by familiarizing yourself with both the theory and practice of the science of Yoga." The second and more important way to understand "now" is the state in which man exists at present, as a psychosomatic system with several aberrations which are tending to become more and more pathological, and as a member of a species which seems to be planning its own destruction with strife and hatred.

Commenting on the above-given aphorism, Vyāsa thinks of the word *atha* as a pointer to specify the competency of the seeker who wishes to acquaint himself with the science of Yoga. According to Vyāsa, Yoga is *samādhi*, equipoise in consciousness. It is not the steady state of inert matter in its stagnation of evolution, but the continuous rebalancing of a poise that is kept up in and through the flux of a cosmic order of continuous transformation and transvaluation. However great and wonderful the macrosystem of cosmic transformation, the seeker is an individual with his or her consciousness enmeshed in the biologic organism of a human body. The only equipment that is given to him or her is the organism's capacity for mentation. This functional core of individual consciousness is volatile in nature. It is described with the term *kṣipta*, which can mean a process of de-structuring and consequently re-structuring, thereby causing an internal change in its pattern of existence. This natural occurrence need not necessarily be equated with the conscious registration of the affective recognition of a specific value. But when the change happens from one manifested state to another, highlighted with the affectivity or afflictability of a value interest, it is called *vikṣipta*.

Flickering consciousness pauses for a split second characterized by the veiling of consciousness in between one focus of consciousness and another. The shift of focus also implies the illumination of a new interest. A transient interest or attention can be momentary or persist for a period of time in which a highlighted interest becomes serial. At the terminus of one series there again arises a veiling, obscuration or opacity which erases the identity of both the subject and the object. This most important function of the inertial quality of our psycho-somatic system is generally underrated by most people because of the pathological condition that can be precipitated by the inertial factor which is recognized both by Kapila and Patañjali as *tamas*. Vyāsa designates the recurring myopia between the focus of consciousness on



separate value experiences as *mūḍha*, forgetfulness.

*Mūḍha* does not operate alone. Consciousness is a flow. Unless there is a holding back, one interest is sequentially followed by another. There is no given rhyme or rhythm to the flow of consciousness. It is pressurized according to the bearing of an interest on the total persona of an individual. When several dynamic interests spring forth from the seed-bed of interest, an inhibitory agent in the field of consciousness has to hold them in check until one interest is fully lived. This intercepting function is called *nirodha*. It is like an undetectable consciousness which polices around the field of focusing awareness, holding back any interest of a different nature.

When obscuration and inhibition play their proper role and a highlighted interest is allowed to prevail as an undisputed life interest, that gives a sense of satisfaction to the entire organism. Attention becomes centered. This is the most powerful and useful role of consciousness. It is called *ekāgra*.

Vyasa, as a superior teacher with clear wisdom, extolls the high value of the centering of mind as the most conducive moment of harmonious union. In the light of *ekāgra*, or concentration, the other functions of consciousness are looked upon as incidental and unimportant. When *kṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *vikṣipta*, *nirodha* and *ekāgra* are taken as integral parts of the structure of the consciousness generating principle in an individual, we cannot underrate the importance of any part. However, because of the possible association of *vikṣipta*, *mūḍha* and *nirodha* with several psychopathological incidents in a person's life, they are looked upon with a certain suspicion if not abhorrence.

Vacaspati Miśra has written a further elucidation of Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's Yoga called *Vicāradi Tika*. According to him, Hiranyagarbha was the original teacher of Yoga. This is to be understood along similar lines as the statement in the Gita that the first principles of *Brahmavidya* and *Yoga Śāstra* were taught by the Lord as the sun-god

Vivaswan, the father of Vaivasvata Manu. We have commented on this in both our English and Malayalam commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. The Lord is to be understood as the innate principle of control and the source of all energy to function. The sun in the firmament is looked upon as an overt symbol of the supreme light that is shining in all inconscient substances. To some extent, the solar sun also physically rules over all forms of matter out of which the planets of the solar system have been created. In the Brihadāranyaka Upaniṣad, Hiranyagarbha and Prajāpati are the counterparts of a dialectical system of want and fulfillment, representing the dual principles of *vaiśvānara* and *virat puruṣa*, the will to live and the governing laws by which life urges are to be fulfilled in the right manner so one becomes established in the realm of absolute satisfaction, characterised by the *samādhi* or absorption of the Yogi.

The word *yoga* is derived from the root *yuj* which means "to contemplate." It is not to be confused with the root *yujir* which means "to join." Most people think of an act of conjunction happening in Yoga. This is incorrect. When a sleeping person wakes up, there is no conjunction. There is only the transformation of an innate nature which is experienced as an empirical awareness. Similarly, in Yoga, what is happening is not a union with a second reality but a change from heterogeneity to homogeneity.



A doubt can arise in the mind of the student as to why *samādhi* alone is considered to be Yoga, when there are other planes in which the mind can stabilize, such as in the case of the ecstatic ones who enjoy blissful states of ecstasy (*madhumati*), those people who become dear to all as if they themselves have transformed into something similar to sweet honey (*madhu pratika*), and those who are rid of all sense of suffering (*viṣoka*). The answer to this will become evident as we progress with our study and clearly understand the different kinds of *samādhi* that arise in one's progress to the state of absolute aloneness, *kaivalya*, which is the ultimate goal of Yoga.

There is also a question possible regarding the admission of *kṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *vikṣipta* and *nirodha* as constituents of mind modification (*citta vṛtti*), especially when we study consciousness with a view to directing it towards one-pointed attention in the intrinsic nature of pure consciousness. Most commentators cast aspersions on these four factors, interpreting *kṣipta* as the state of the distraught, *mūḍha* as the state of the stupefied, *vikṣipta* as the state of the restless, and *nirodha* as the state of the suppressed. When the smooth functioning of consciousness is negatively afflicted by any of these states it is only natural to categorize them as pathological disfunctions or malfunctions. In our surroundings we can see people who are continuously in a state of being distraught such as in the case of infants and imbeciles. The state of the stupefied can be seen in those who are so pathologically withdrawn or infatuated that they behave like stupids. *Vikṣipta* becomes restlessness of a chronic nature only in the case of a person afflicted with anxiety neurosis. *Nirodha* also becomes pathologic when, under pressure of paranoia or conditions of repression, one is afraid of admitting the occurrence of one's natural urges. In spite of these four aspects of *citta* having a tendency in the long run to cause psychological disfunctions, in the normal working of the mind, they all fall in their rightful place for consciousness to flow as a well

regulated stream. We have already shown how these five limbs of consciousness aid each other, especially arresting the flow of the stream meaningfully to make *citta* concenter in a specific value admission and appreciation.

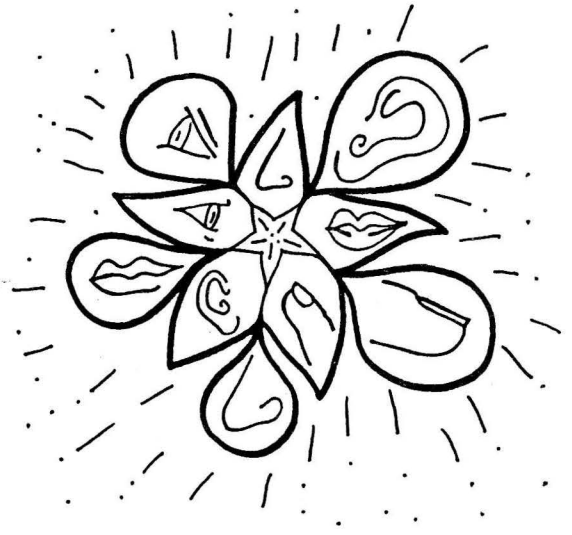
The inner organ to which both Yogis and the Vedantins allude is a four-fold mechanism with four distinct agencies of operation. They are the interrogative aspect (*manas*), the structuring of associations of memories with an inquiry as to their relevancy in presenting with a will to know (*citta*), the crucial judgement that is to be made about every situation to which attention is given (*buddhi*), and the affectivity that is registered for the future retention of a memory which can always hold out a memory tag to caution the *jīva* of its affective importance, pleasurable, painful or indifferent (*ahamkāra*). As inquiry, judgement and affectivity are all mainly based on the registration of a memory, its retention and recall, *citta* is considered to be the main body of consciousness. Hence Yogis mainly concern themselves with the modification of this aspect which mimes the external world in every organism. This is very similar to a mirror reflecting the image of its surroundings, or the external world being mirrored in each bubble that clusters in a frothy mass of foam.

According to Vyasa, when, in the modification of *citta*, concentration on its original pure nature happens again and again, that cleanses it of subsequent modifications which come through one's action performed unwittingly, unconsciously, or with deliberation caused by ignorance. Every seed that is invested with the performance of a *karma* becomes a potential for future distraughtness, infatuation or stupefaction, restlessness, and suppression or repression. That potential can be nullified by holding the mind in a state of absorption for a long time. Such absorption normally happens when one feels an at-one-ment with the identity of an object of perception, the presentation of an idea, a sense of ecstasy, or the retrospective state of being absorbed in the ego-consciousness without slipping into unwholesome states of ego-

cathexis. When natural absorption leads the modification of consciousness into a wholesale appreciation of any of these four aspects - *vitarka* (perception), *vicāra* (ideation), *ānanda* (ecstasy), or *asmita* (ego identity) - that is considered *samprajñāta yoga* or *samprajñāta samādhi*. At a further level of absorption these four-fold movements of consciousness can be arrested by removing the incentive to perceive and the incentive to ideate, by the non-interest in pleasure-seeking, and by the absolute release of ego-consciousness. In such a state Yoga becomes more mature and aids the aspirant to the ultimate goal of aloneness, in which case it is called *asamprajñāta yoga* or *asam-prajñāta samādhi*.

Of the five-fold components of *citta vṛtti*, *nirodha* needs special attention. It naturally occurs to hold back irrelevant urges and interests when the *citta* is deliberating on any given topic of interest. When *nirodha* becomes pathological, it causes various kinds of inhibitions and generates phobia and fear complexes. But the same *nirodha* becomes an instrument to discipline the entire range of *citta* for the persistent experiencing of concentration or absorption. In a subsequent *sūtra*, there will a special reference to *nirodha*. Similarly, a special reference should be made of *vikṣipta* which can occur in the form of an aberration of an established discipline. In fact, *vikṣipta* becomes one of the major impediments in the yogic disciplining of one's mind. In yogis like the Buddha, *samprajñātattva* amounts to total mindfulness and *asamprajñātattva* to *śūnyata* or the absolute void of phenomenality. In Vedānta *samprajñātattva* relates to the consciousness of pure existence (*tanmātra anubhūti*) and *asamprajñātattva* relates to the experiencing of unalloyed consciousness (*cinmātra anubhūti*).

The world is a quintuplication of the five elements of grossness, viscosity, thermo-dynamics, gaseousness and ethereality. In their horizontalized manifestation these give rise to smell, taste, form, touch and sound. When there



is no quintuplication and the elements are in their own state (*tanmātra*), they do not lend themselves to be experienced. Thus when the material basis of phenomenal manifestation is separated from pure consciousness, *puruṣa* comes to its aloneness. The progressive step one makes from *samprajñātattva* to *asamprajñātattva* is that of going away from the quintuplicated phenomenal world to the pure state of one's self.

Patanjali gives his definition of Yoga in

Sutra I:2

*yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ*

*yogaḥ*: Yoga

*citta*: of the mind

*vṛtti*: of the modification

*nirodhaḥ*: restraint

Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications.

In this definition there is no mention of the total restraint of consciousness. From that we deduce that cognitive consciousness continues to operate even when restraint is exercised. We have to become familiar with the principle of modification by taking into account the source of the pure effulgence of awareness, which is the *puruṣa*, and the aid to illumination arising out of nature,

*prakṛti*. This is somewhat analogous to physical light such as sunlight illuminating an object. We do not see sunlight except as it is reflected from an illuminated object. Similarly, *puruṣa* as such is not seen. When the pure light of *puruṣa* illuminates an object, that illumination is the person's cognizance. In that cognizance the person experiences not merely the self-effulgence of *puruṣa* but also the clear and pure mirroring quality of nature. That particular quality of nature is called *sattva*, for the reason that it gives an identity of a cognition which is not falsified with any defect of the mirroring agent.

This is not always the case. The pure light of *puruṣa* can be intercepted by another aspect of *prakṛti* which has a disturbing quality, to be known hereafter as *rajas*. It acts like a colored glass which partially lends its own color to the cognition. Further, it has a power to distort both form and dimension, as well as to induce in the act of cognizance an altered pace of movement such as an urgency of apprehension. The third aspect in the mirroring quality of nature has the capacity to arrest vision, freeze the cognized experience into a consolidated memory, and even conceal an object from being illuminated. If *rajas* has the dynamic to energize consciousness, this particular quality, called *tamas*, can deplete energy to an extent of inducing lethargy in the cognizing person and even hampering the clarity of comprehension. Hereafter in our study of Yoga, the three qualities are to be remembered as integral parts of nature which is always in a state of flux.

No quality stands by itself. However, there can be a predominance of one quality over the other in different proportions. Even in the confused and vague comprehension where *tamas* dominates, there can and should be a certain amount of *sattva* to aid cognition because cognition never occurs without *sattva* providing the ground. The immediate consequence of cognition is *prākhyā*. *Prākhyā* is a comprehensive vision of an object or idea presented to the mind.

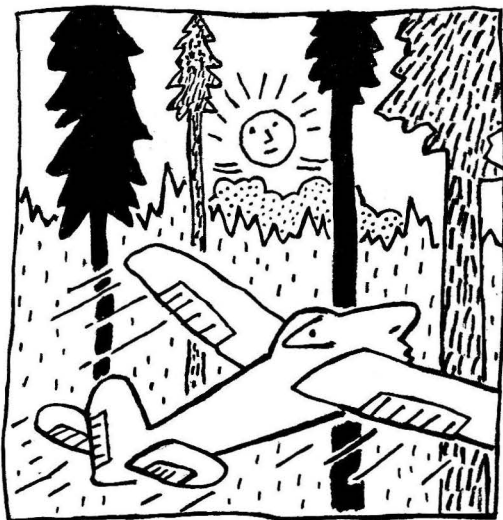
*Prākhyā* is immediately followed by an

excitement of psychic energy which acts as a stimulant for the individual to react to knowledge presented to the mind. Consequent to the excitement, a certain action can follow. This is known as *pravṛtti*. *Pravṛtti* is a modification with a positive emphasis on action. The action need not be an overt expression which pushes into service the organs of action - vocalization, creative function, motility, procreation or excretion - which can occur in several ways, combined or separate. Even when these actions do not overtly manifest there can be an internal function very much like an alchemic, psychosomatic operation whereby a *samskara* (a registration of the impression) is made. The registry of an impression is like etching a figure in metal or stone. It can remain (*stithi*) until the total decomposition of the physical constituents that serve as the physical-chemical and biologic basis of the mind. During the wakeful hours the stream of consciousness winds its way through several objects, events, and assemblages of names and forms. In accordance with such encounters *citta*, (the inner bulk of consciousness) is continuously sculpted into a permanent memory storage.

Thus *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, along with their three counterparts, *prākhyā*, *pravṛtti* and *stithi*, fill our days and weave the biography of a person. In a feeble manner *prākhyā*, *pravṛtti* and *stithi* also occur in the subjective consciousness of dream where innumerable compositions of pre-established memories are re-constituted into many fictitious and exaggerated formations. We will come to that at a later stage.

When *sattva* is favorably aided by the energizing power of *rajas*, the disposition to act benevolently becomes enhanced. If the influence of *rajas* overbalances the dominance of *sattva*, affectability increases, attachment becomes very colored and the desire to possess increases. In the place of the combination of *sattva* and *rajas*, when *sattva* and *tamas* combine, the disposition to act tends to stray more into negativity. The deflections from ethical





norms can bring in more and more corrupt practices. When tamasic disposition becomes very strong, infatuation or blindness to reality brings total perversion. Effort is to be made from the side of the *jīva*, or individual, to steer past the corroding powers of *rajas* and *tamas* to regain the clarity of sattvic mirroring of the objects of perception and the conception of ideas. Only when the correct presentation of proper illumination is attained does the adherence to ethical norms enable one to build up a consistent character that can be called virtuous or spiritual. In all these functions the identification of intellect and the luminosity of *puruṣa* are so intensively intermingled that one does not see the intellect as different from the *puruṣa*. When all the vestiges of *rajas* are removed from the sattvic mirroring of mind, spiritual virtue becomes dynamic and acts as an elevating catalyst called *dharma megha*. When that happens, confused mentations (*vikalpa*) and creative mentations (*sankalpa*) cease to darken consciousness. Their place is taken by pure contemplation or *dhyāna*. The *dhyāna* that occurs in such a state is *dharma megha dhyāna*. The expression, *dharma megha*, is an allegoric way of saying that virtues come like a rain-cloud and favor the yogi-aspirant. A cloud is taken to its destination by wind. Similarly, the physical and subjective

effort of the yogi can take his discipline only to a certain extent. Thereafter, like a cloud being taken by wind, the disciplined mind of the yogi transverses in the spiritual realm without any ego-oriented effort.

Just as water is the flowing current of a river, psychic or spiritual energy (*citi śakti*) is the transforming medium of consciousness. However, like the constancy of the basic structure of water, *citi śakti* by itself never loses its nature at any time. Hence it is considered unchangeable and untransmissible. When and where intellect presents an occasion, *citi śakti* simply illuminates it. The discriminative function of mind which distinguishes *puruṣa* from *buddhi* should not be considered identical with the function of *citi śakti* because, even in the discriminative function called *viveka khyāti*, there is a touch of impurity. Momentary discriminations can happen in a mind even when it is cluttered with several latent impressions. When the latent impressions persist in the form of concealed memories, the absorption one might get cannot be final. It is still a seeded condition from which any *vāśana* (latent impression) can sprout and present itself to fill the mind with all its accompanying urges for action and gratification. A seeded state is called *sabija*. Even when *śamādhi* occurs to such a state of mind, it is only a *sabija śamādhi* or a *śamprajñāta* conditioned state. Only when all the latent impressions are systematically curbed and made impotent does the non-seeded state come. In the non-seeded state, called *nirbija*, there can arise *aśamprajñāta śamādhi*, an absorption which is pure and pervaded with the homogenous pure consciousness that is identical with *puruṣa*. Thus Yoga can be either of those with conditioned states or those who are freed of all conditioned impressions. In Vedānta also there are similar classifications of the emancipated seers who retain a personal ego for moving about in this world with the intention of doing good to fellow beings, and those who are totally void of any ego and consequently oblivious to their bodily needs and claims of the

phenomenal world on them.

The word *nirodha* which is referred to in the *sūtra*, when read with Vyasa's commentary, offers two possibilities of interpretation. Vyasa is known for his adherence to Vedānta. Realization in Vedānta is a total, in-depth experience which spells only one possibility: Self-knowledge is total. Either you know the Self or you do not. It cannot be known in parts. Total identity with the Absolute, if taken for Yoga, automatically dispenses with all *sankalpa*-s and *vikalpa*-s. Hence, *nirodha* is not an exercise on the part of the aspirant. If, on the other hand, graded perfection through *sadhana* is recognized, as in Patañjali's Aṣṭanga Yoga, one should look into four possible *nirodha*-s in *samprajñāta samādhi* and also four *nirodha*-s which alone can lead to *asamprajñāta samādhi*.

The first exercise of *nirodha* deals with *śavītarka samādhi*. The most natural experience of every person is a perception of an object, visual, auditory, tactual, cutative, or olfactory. Of these, the first three kinds are constantly experienced during the wakeful state. Although auditory experience is more intense than visual, the main distraction that comes to a person is from the varieties of forms that are paraded before his eyes. The *vikṣipta* that takes place is the shifting from one form to another. According to Vedāntins, the attention that goes to a form when one is looking at it has a back and forth movement of consciousness, now resting with the object of vision, and then centering in the subjective consciousness of the seer. This oscillation between seer and seen is called *bhāna vṛtti*. Although for the purpose of orientation this can only be so, it is a common experience that a highly attractive visual form can rivet one's attention to it for a long time, not letting the consciousness self-realize, even for a little while. In that case the perceiver and the percept enter into an intense identity. It is as if the *vṛtti* has become stabilized by the mode of the vision. Two *nirodha*-s have already taken place in such an instance. One is

the cessation or rather unconscious prohibition of any other form or interest from entering the established space of attention. This act of *nirodha* is a spontaneous and automatic function which the unconscious is capable of achieving. The second is as follows: the attention aroused by the subject presented to the *puruṣa* in an aesthetic appreciation of the intellect generates an *ānanda* which is akin to the very nature of *puruṣa*. Therefore *puruṣa* does not look for an alternative. This is a unity that is established between *dṛk* and *dṛśya* and thus it satisfies the general requirement of Yoga, the union of the pairs of opposites.

The same may also be experienced by isolating one sound such as of the *anāhata* which one hears within oneself in which union is established between the hearer and what is heard. The tactual experiencing of union quite often happens when one's identification with the inner sensation of respiration cuts off one's attention from one's agency of respiration. Thus, *nirodha* can happen in many ways, and can always lead to a total identification of the experiencer with the experience. This initial quieting of the mind only pacifies modifications and does not take away the potentials for further agitations.

The *śavītarka samādhi* that we have just mentioned can also easily lead to *śavīcāra samādhi*. Most people think that *vicāra* is a pure mental function. In reality, the conscious aspect of it is very physiological. We think with words and all words are ready to be articulated, where the larynx is in conjunction with the tongue. The first *nirodha* is that of not articulating the words of one's thoughts. A *vicāra* or idea comes like the formation of a wave from the depth of consciousness, climbs to a peak, and then submerges. But when the yogic aspirant enters into a serene envisioning of the significance of a thought, the linear movement of *vicāra* is replaced by a contemplative appreciation of the *sphota* aspect of the word-content in the idea which restricts the occurrence of another thought. Thus, the restraint



that is caused by a fascinating thought itself prolongs the attention given to it. *Savicāra samādhi* offers no external crutches to hold on to. Hence, it is not so easy as performing *śāvitarka sādhanā*. Only in a mind where the seeded urges are less turbulent is *śavicāra* union successfully effected.

*Sānanda samādhi* is an in-depth restraint where the deep desire to be with oneself is united with the existentiality of one's identity which gains a deep imperiential connection with the *puruṣa*'s blissful nature. This happens only when one promotes oneself from *śāvitarka* to *śavicāra* and *śavicāra* naturally culminates in a state of *dhyāna*. *Sasmita samādhi* presents itself when all wrong identifications of oneself, such as with the environment, the body, sensations, thoughts, etc., drop off. It is as if one comes to the center of one's consciousness and does not recede with the ripples of centrifugal vibrations. The *nirōdha* in this case is a centripetal adherence to the centering of oneself, such as in the case of having only one center for one's psyche and the cosmos. Up to this point, the exercises in *samprajñāta samādhi* continue.

*Citta*, the most central piece of the psychosomatic mechanism which on one side is receiving its animation from *citi śakti* and, on the other, has for its individuation a body endowed with the *prāṇa*-s, sense organs, *manas* and intellect, can be swayed into different functional levels by the instability of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. When *sattva* *guṇa* of *prakṛti* becomes a dominant factor, *citta* becomes *citta sattva*. Only when the purity of the *sattva* in its manifestation as *citta* is maintained can the yogi successfully carry out *sādhanā*-s. Hence one has to take care of oneself with formidable *nirōdha*-s exercised on all sides such as in a reservoir where pure water is stored and is not allowed to be polluted by environmental factors. When the horizontality of *rajas* blows into *citta sattva*, its equipoise is disturbed and turbulences arise. Hence there has to be a constant vigil of the stabilization of *sattva* by practising *vairāgya* (restraint).

The equipoise of consciousness is to be established again and again through *abhyāsa* (repetitive practice).

Both in Vedānta and Yoga, *viveka* (discriminative knowledge) is given a high position. In Vedānta, *akhāṇḍa viveka anubhūti* is the tightrope on which the Vedāntin has to pace with unfaltering steps in absolute ease. In Yoga, *viveka khyāti* is the rope that leads an aspirant to *dharma megha*, the cloud of showering virtue. *Citi śakti* (pure consciousness) is given high marks such as being infinite, immutable, untransmissible and the illuminator of all. If *buddhi* is like the eye with which we look, and *citi śakti* is the light that illuminates an object, perception takes place only when the two occur together.

The finale of Yoga discipline is given in

**Sūtra I:3:**

*tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam*

*tadā*: then (meaning at the time of attainment of *asamprajñāta samādhi*)

*draṣṭuḥ*: the seer (meaning the Self)

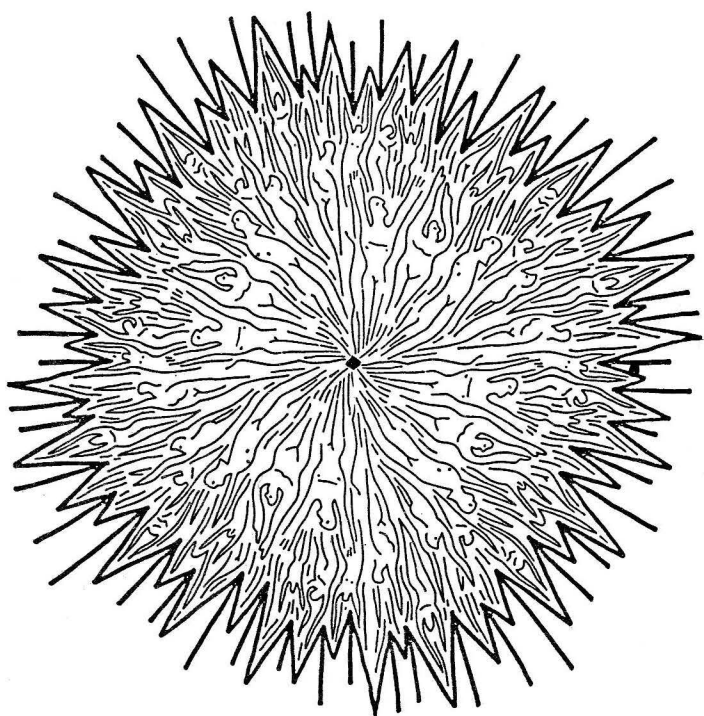
*svārūpe*: in his own nature

*avasthānam*: remains

Then the seer remains in his own nature.

This is the ultimate to which a yogi aspires. In the normal course of life, the intellect borrows light from *puruṣa* through *citi śakti* and assumes the reflected position of the seer. It relates with the empirical world with the sense organs and mentations, such as of a recalled memory or imagination, and transacts as if on behalf of the *puruṣa*. But when the *citi śakti* is withdrawn and confined to the *puruṣa*, there is neither the *buddhi* animated by it nor the world of name and form illuminated by the light of the *puruṣa*. Consequently the subject-object duality ceases and the *jīva* attains the aloneness of the pure effulgence of *puruṣa*. This is *kaivalya*.

(Continued in next issue.)

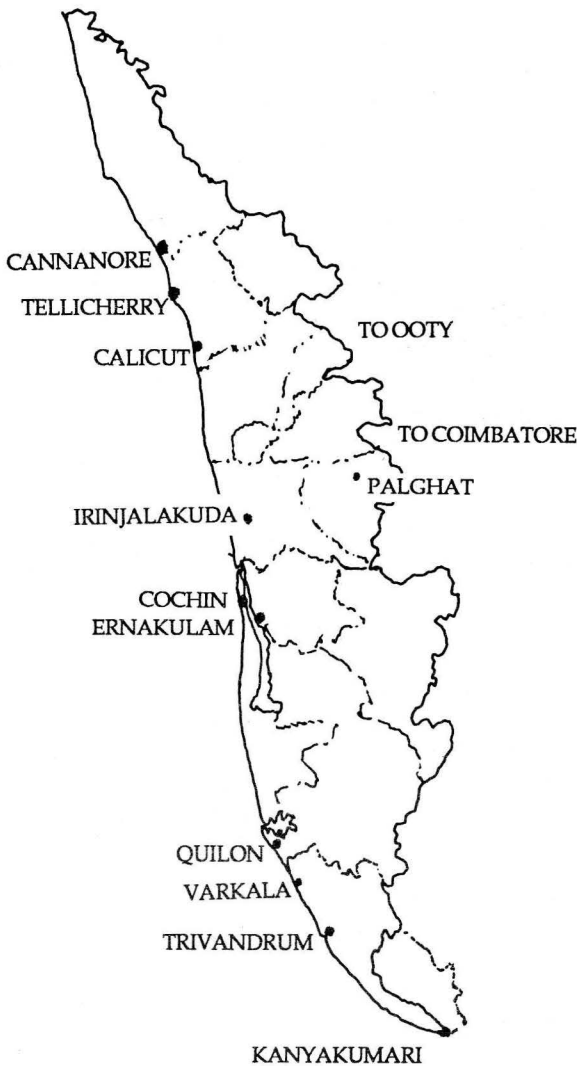


pRIYAM APARAṆṬE ATENPRIYAM; SVAKĪYA  
pRIYAM APARAPRIYAM IPRAKĀRAM ĀKUM  
NAYAM ATINĀLE NARANNU NANMA NALKUM  
KRIYA APARAPRIYA BETUVĀYVAREṆAM.

The happiness of another,  
that is my happiness;  
one's own joy is another's joy —  
this is the guiding principle;  
that action which is good for one person  
should bring happiness to another.

# Wonder Journey With a Wandering Guru

Nancy Yeilding



Kerala State, South India

The next morning we boarded the Day Express to travel north along the coast to Calicut where another lecture series was scheduled. Although the topic titles were the same, I knew the content would be fresh, as Guru never repeats the same talk, taking each occasion as an opportunity to tap inner well-springs of inspiration in resonance with the interests and needs of those who sit before him. This time, the talks were in Malayalam, but I could follow them enough to tell that, indeed, each topic was being developed in an original manner. As in Trivandrum, the hall was filled to capacity each evening. On the last evening of the series, Muni Narayana Prasad arrived from Varkala with copies of five new Gurukula books to be released: the third volume of Guru's exhaustive Malayalam commentary on the Gita written in the form of a dialogue between a modern teacher and student, his Malayalam commentary on Śankara's *Vivekacudamani* (The Crest Jewel of Discrimination), a step by step guide for the serious seeker for self-realization, his English commentary and translation of Narayana Guru's *Arivu* (Knowledge), and *Beyond Cause and Effect*. Also released was Nataraja Guru's *Vedanta Revalued and Restated*, reprinted from *Values* magazine, the original Gurukula publication. The Mangala Press at Varkala Gurukula had printed all of these works, as well as previously, Nataraja Guru's three volume *Integrated Science of the Absolute* and *One World Economics* and numerous English and Malayalam books of Guru's. All this, along with monthly production of *Gurukulam* Malayalam magazine. By western standards the quality of these

publications is often poor, but considering that every letter of even the thick volumes has been hand-set, and every page hand fed through the press, what Prasad and the press workers have accomplished over the last several years is really amazing. Seeing all that is yet to be done spurs a hope that our U.S. press can soon share more of the load.

The books were officially released according to a typical Indian ritual of one well-known community figure giving a speech and handing them over to another well-known person who also gives a speech. Again and again Guru points out the emptiness of ritualistic practices in Indian culture, whether indigenous or acquired from the British, highlighting the underlying values or function to be accomplished instead of the outward formal aspects of social behavior. He had suggested that perpetuating this way of releasing books was unnecessary and the Gurukula could just officially announce their release for sale. But friends in Calicut had already made the usual arrangements. Afterwards, Guru spoke briefly about each of the books, describing their wisdom content, sharing with us all a beautiful feeling of fulfillment and appreciation of the work of many hands. He spoke not with a personal sense of pride but with deep satisfaction in the continuation and flowering of the vision and work of Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru. Advertizing of the books to be released had generated advance orders from over 500 people in two months, all not previously associated with Guru and the Gurukula. This, in addition to the upsurge in response to Guru's articles in many leading journals, and the serious, devoted attention of every audience he now addresses, whether at a university or open meeting, are all indications that Nataraja Guru's many years of *tapas* (sacrificial discipline and dedication) are beginning to bear fruit. Speaking later of the bright young people who are now becoming seriously interested, Guru said, "For sixty years we have had fools, madmen and criminals parading through the Gurukula. Now, slowly, real beings, real souls are coming.

But Kerala is still drowned in religio-caste conditionings. So, for us, Ooty is the ideal place for our work."

While we were in Calicut, Guru was invited to address both the students at the Law College and the Bar Association. When the requests came, several lawyers were present. Guru asked them, "What is law?", but none of them gave an answer. After he and I discussed different types of law such as laws of nature and human-created conventions, he asked, "What does advocate (the commonly used designation for a lawyer in India) mean? What is the bar?" When again they were silent, Guru mentioned having asked a history professor what history was and, just recently, six years later, having received his answer. He said, "Now, probably in six years they will come up with an answer about law." Such questions from Guru about one's major interests have a way of simmering in the mind for a long time, causing one to reflect on the meaning of what one is doing, calling forth revised answers over the years as understanding grows.

At the Law College, Guru encouraged the students to draw a parallel between the neutral position of the judge in a court of law and their own faculty of discrimination. He talked about the difficulty of achieving neutrality because of our psychophysical conditionings which predispose us to judge in certain ways.

"We are continuously asking 'What is this?' about everything that is presented to us. Drawing on a confection of the data presented and related memories which come to mind, we immediately make a judgement about it. So every initial response is prejudicial. Following this, however, we undergo a phase of self-criticism in which we look for evidence both opposing and supporting this original assessment. We compare the two sets of data and then come to a more critical judgement."

Guru then pointed out that the law students were being given a training to scientifically discipline their minds so they would be better equipped to look at both sides of an issue from a neutral position, with an open mind. He asked

them to remember the purpose of such a discipline—that of upholding truth, justice and beauty together as a central norm in the midst of the many relativistic values of the world. He identified the defense of this normative notion of the Absolute as the proper role of all those involved in the field of law.

Guru then talked about the difficulty of discerning truth, describing how the hysterical situations of the courtroom can come within one's own mind. Our sensory perceptions, influenced by latent conditionings, can trigger psycho-physiologic responses which bring an emotional upsurge before reason has an opportunity to function. Reactions influenced by urges deep within us can come into conflict with our ethical standards, creating deep ambivalences and confusion within us. Guru then said we need to ask the light of our inner judging faculty, *buddhi*, to preside as a neutral presence in the midst of the dissension of our inner attorneys representing our fragmented aspects. We can form a law college in our own minds every day, slowly disciplining ourselves to identify more and more with the neutral light. That will enable us to perceive the imperative assertion of truth which shines at the core of each confection of facts and concepts.

Guru then described how the East-West University takes its classes to the people and asked the law students to take their understanding of law and justice to the poor villagers of India, meeting people as human beings and

speaking to them not in the jargon of the courts, but as friends. He encouraged them to help those of their neighborhood with their knowledge by giving legal advice and arbitrating conflicts. Mentioning the overload of the courts which was recently lamented by one of India's Supreme Court Justices as a major obstruction to real justice, Guru said that performing such service would not undermine the courts but rather transform a situation of double loss to one of double gain for the persons concerned and for society as a whole.

At the Bar Association the next day, the hall was packed with lawyers, many wearing their court garb of white collars and black robes. Guru mentioned that all his life he had avoided courts, lawyers and legal wrangles and that he had never seen so many lawyers in one place before, nor previously addressed such a gathering.

The President opened the meeting with a quote from the Bhagavad Gita. When Guru got up to speak, he said he had been wondering why. Then he said he thought it must be because Krishna was an advocate. He gave the definition of advocate as one who speaks for another, as a voice for the voiceless. Krishna went to the Kaurava Court to speak for the Pandava brothers who had been unjustly treated, symbolizing one who speaks for those who are unwanted, uncared for. Guru then drew a parallel between Krishna, Jesus and Mohammed as advocates, Jesus as representing the





voice of the people to God on the Day of Judgement, and Mohammed as the voice of Allah to the people.

Guru asked the lawyers present to remember Tagore's lament about the fate of the voiceless millions in India and to see how they could be advocates for them, revising the law wherever vestiges of barbarism or protection of vested interests are perpetuated as unjust laws.

Guru then gave the dictionary definition of law as the rules laid down for the regulation of order, and introduced the Sanskrit concept of law, *dharma*, which implies the appropriate functioning of each microcosmic individual as part of the macrocosm of world order. He discussed three aspects of *dharma*: intrapersonal, interpersonal and cosmic.

"Disfunctioning at any of the three levels will bring discord and unhappiness. Within one's self, the body automatically adheres to nature's law in its functioning. But the mind has to consciously discern law and adhere to it. For this arena, the judge is one's own conscience. To be happy, one has to reconcile with oneself, and satisfy one's own conscience."

"In the realm of interpersonal functioning we need to establish a common ground in which what pleases us is pleasing to those around us. Because of the great difficulty humans experience in living in harmony, societies have evolved codes of law to govern their corporate life, presided over by court judges. Natural law does not always suffice as a guide for human behavior such as in the case of a malnourished cat who will eat one of her just-birthed kittens in order to have the capacity to feed the others. Like parents who find it necessary to teach their children many "no's" for their own protection, societies have evolved sets of rules which mainly act to restrict or inhibit human nature."

"The third level of law is cosmic, the unknown, the functioning of which we only rarely catch a glimpse, but which we have to reconcile with. It is here that the compassionate ones such as Buddha, Christ and Krishna come to stand as our advocates, guiding us to restore our harmony with that all-embracing reality. What they teach us is that if you want peace, you should grant it to



others; if you want happiness, you should ensure the happiness of the other, and if you want reverence, you should show reverence to others. The sovereignty of each individual is to be respected, and each allowed to live the life most dear to them."

"To achieve this, we need to understand that law is intricately related to education, economics and aesthetics. Transforming India's legal system to a just one necessarily includes changing the cruel mockery of the educational system to one that helps each person to know himself or herself and to unfold his or her potentials instead of just manipulating them to fit a certain box. In order to change the orientation of the educational system, the socio-economic set-up has to be transformed from competition for position and wealth to a just reallocation of resources. Then the values of peace and happiness can be reinstated as the meaning of human endeavor."

"Changing education and the socio-economic set-up are intrinsically related to the cultivation of a sensibility which can appreciate the loveliness of a rose, be attuned to nature's beauty. Greater aesthetic sensibility will enhance preservation and creation of environments which are conducive to living the highest human values."

Although his talk was brief, Guru left the lawyers with much food for thought about enhancing their own personal happiness as well as playing a more constructive role in society. For those caught up in the pressing concerns of their career and family life, it is easy for perspective to narrow. The generous ideals of youth give way to a competitive vying for social position and material wealth, apathy about the fate of others, and a consequent loss of a value orientation which gives meaning and stability to life. Each talk that Guru gives reminds his listeners of their values and encourages them to reorient their lives. He stands as a powerful representative of the possibility of giving one's values expression in one's daily encounters.

That expression in silence is sometimes even more powerful than in

words. We went to visit a dear friend's old mother who had been very ill for a long time. When we reached the house she was asleep, a tiny, shrunken body under a fresh white sheet, being nourished by an intravenous feeding tube. The family tried to wake her up, saying that she would be very sad to learn that Guru had come but she had remained asleep. When she was called, she responded, but her sleep was very deep and her voice came from far away. Guru said, never mind, that the *atma* (self or soul) knows. And, as he sat holding her hand, all of us experienced a few moments of sublime serenity. When we left there was a new brightness in the family. As there are no ego-generated obstructions in Guru, his inner core of utter peace acts like a magnet, drawing others close to the same reality within them.

The next day we traveled to Irinjalakuda where Guru had been asked to participate in a function unveiling the first of a series of stupas to be erected around Kerala and in major cities, bearing the words of Narayana Guru. This is the vision of a sincere follower of Guru's who wished to emulate Asoka, an ancient king of India who offered Buddha's guidance to the nation by engraving his teachings on stones which were erected around the country. As this man is very wealthy, he had also been able to secure the attendance of India's Vice-President. Due to Indira Gandhi's assassination, security for public appearances of all Indian leaders is very elaborate, with uniformed guards and officials everywhere. Thus, the occasion provided opportunity for ego-posturing at all levels. In addition to Guru and the Vice-President, Kerala's scoundrel of a Chief Minister, a Supreme Court Justice, and the President of the SNDP (a caste organization using the name of Narayana Guru), were all invited to speak. In the midst of long-winded political speeches, Guru's words stood out in their sweet simplicity and brevity, expressing gratitude for this sharing of the imperishable Word of the Guru.

The occasion brought to mind a story Guru tells about a conference in the U.S.

sponsored by a swami from India who had invited Guru to preside. The swami gave an animated talk for a couple of hours. Then, in a somewhat exaggerated manner, he introduced Guru as a great teacher of Advaita Vedanta (non-dual wisdom) and asked him to share his knowledge. Guru stood before the microphone in absolute silence for two minutes. Then he said, "This is the essence of Advaita Vedanta."

Guru has said of teachers coming to the U.S. from India that it is very difficult for even a sincere person not to be corrupted by the chance to gain power and wealth that comes the way of many Indian teachers from a confused, gullible, affluent society seeking happiness from exotic sources. Only a person who is firmly established on a spiritual ground can resist such temptation. Though many in both the U.S. and India are currently reacting to the news of Rajneesh's troubles with almost vengeful glee, this understanding provides a context in which it is possible to feel some compassion for this man whose adamant criticism of the false gods of religion and society won him thousands of fanatic adherents who generated a new religion in his name. That in turn created a financial empire and an opulent, self-indulgent life-style that earned him violent envy and hatred from both his closest, most trusted followers and society at large.

In contrast is Guru's beautiful story of Ramana Maharshi being approached by a group of people requesting him to come to the United States so they could make him known to the world. They said they could use radio to broadcast his word to millions of people and that would move the world. He asked them if they really thought the word was so powerful. They said, "Yes, especially your word." Then he asked where the word comes from and they replied, "From thought." "Thought?" "From the mind." "Mind?" "From the self." Then he asked, "Does the self talk?" "No, its nature is silence." He asked them, "Can you transmit my silence over the radio?" When they agreed they could not, he asked, "Then where is the need to take this (his way of referring to himself) from here to there?"



Fortunately, this same absolutist vision could manifest differently in Nataraja Guru and Guru who both did come to the United States (and Australia and Europe), not for storming the world and building a big movement, but in response to serious students motivated not by a blind religious devotion but by a sincere desire to find a truth which transcended the superficial norms of a materialist society and yet did not violate sound reasoning and common sense.

After the Irinjalakuda function, a car was arranged to take us to Dr. Rithuparnan's house in Coimbatore. Coimbatore sits at the base of the Nilgiris (Blue Mountains), a few hour's drive from the Fernhill Gurukula. The doctor and his wife have been devoted to Guru for many years and their home is like a way-station, always with a warm welcome for Guru and those traveling with him. They are an educated family, all speaking English, and relatively affluent. Those two factors, in addition to a son and daughter-in-law having lived several years in London, have brought them a high degree of exposure to the West so their outlook is modern in many respects.

At the same time, the family structure is very traditional, following the pattern of all (3) of the married sons, with their wives and children, living under their parents' roof. As also is common in traditional households, a small room in the house is set aside as a puja room, a place of worship where a small altar with an oil lamp and incense burner is set up before numerous pictures and statues of deities and gurus. These rooms are manifestations of the devotional trait deep in the Indian psyche, ranging from blind faith to an ennobling sensibility.

In the younger generation, there are growing signs of conflict and confusion about integration of scientific investigations and religious faith, modern (i.e. Western) and traditional life-styles. This was evidenced the next morning when the doctor's oldest son, himself a doctor who had recently returned to India after a residency in England, started asking Guru a series of questions in great earnest. First he wanted to know why vegetarianism was upheld as virtuous and insisted upon by many Hindus. Guru replied that the reason for being vegetarian is not as an article of faith but because it allows you to feel a peace in your heart that you are not taking life. Then the doctor asked why the Christian and Moslem religions say eating meat is o.k. Guru said that those religions evolved in the setting of the desert where agriculture was difficult and they depended upon hunting and eating animals for their survival. So they developed a convenient philosophy that animals have no soul. I immediately thought of the cows living at the back of the house and wondered how anyone who had ever looked into the eyes of a cow could doubt that she had a soul.

The doctor then said that many animals in nature are carnivorous. Guru responded that human beings cannot always guide their behavior by nature's laws, and gave as one example the female spider eating the male after mating and the baby spiders eating the mother after hatching.

The next question was whether Guru believed in God. Guru said, "If you are

asking me if there is a God sitting somewhere, my answer is no. But if you are asking me if God is, my answer is God is ALL, God alone is."

Doctor: "Is that ALL energy, in the sense that Einstein said energy equals matter?"

Guru: "Yes, if in your concept of that nothing is left out."

Doctor: "What is religion?"

Guru: "Faith."

Doctor: "Faith in what?"

Guru: "Faith in beliefs."

Doctor: "Then does prayer have any meaning?"

Guru: "Yes, if you pray, 'Oh, great compassionate one,' then part of your consciousness becomes compassionate. That ennobles and uplifts you." Guru added that he is not religious, that his orientation is that of a philosopher, a scientist. The doctor replied, "But you are unusual. You are the one others come to for help. For us, when everything is going bad, we lean on religion so we don't go mad."

His questions continued: "How did life start?" Guru responded with one of the Hindu names for God, Narāyana. He said, "Our ancients had a great deal of intuitive knowledge about this world which is reflected in the words they coined. *Naran* is water; *āyana* is resting. Narayana is that which is supported by water. We can understand it as protoplasm. That was the beginning of life." Doctor: "Was it an accident?" Guru: "No. There is an overall intelligence which coordinates all in the scheme of nature. That also can be understood as the scheme of God." Guru asked the doctor if he had read Hume's *Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion*. He hadn't, so Guru recommended it to him, saying, "We usually think of nature as earth, sky, water. But when a poet is inspired by the beauty of a fluttering butterfly to write a poem, then the wings of the butterfly, the beauty, the poet and the poem are all to be understood as nature. Religion was created from curiosity, wonder and fear; out of human attempts to understand all these aspects of nature. Over time, part of religion



branched off and evolved into science, concentrating on the formulation of specific causes and effects."

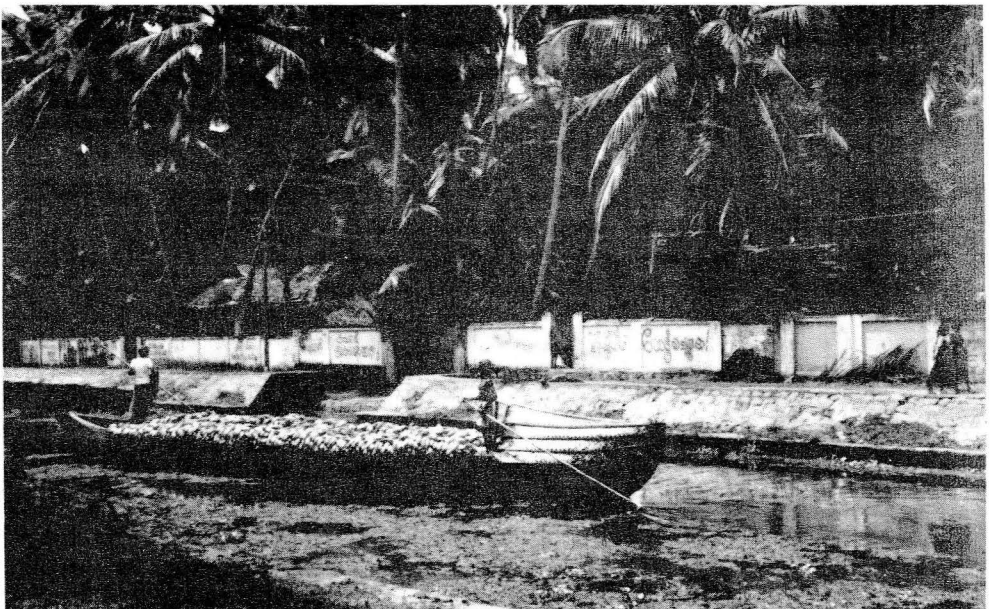
Remembering the source of both religion and science as human attempts to understand and come to terms with the world provides a context which throws light on both. Each is regarded by its adherents as offering a true explanation of reality, one based on faith in scriptures, prophets and their interpreters, the other based on faith in experimental proof, statistics and their interpreters. In their rush to embrace the advances of technology, human beings, at first in the West and now, spreadingly, throughout the world, have glorified science and blindfolded themselves to the very real dangers it presents to the human race. Most obvious of these is the development of nuclear weapons which can destroy the world many times over, along with the resulting outrageous diversions of the world's resources away from other pressing human needs. Less obvious is the slow destruction of the environment through pollution which is generated both by the production as well as the use of technology's advances.

At the same time the push of organized religions is towards expanding their strength and influence by accumulating adherents who recoil from these fears and from the bewildering

complexities of social life to the security of prescribed beliefs and moral codes. Philosophy, in the rare instances when it is not lost in intellectual argumentation, has the capacity to avail itself of both physical and metaphysical understanding of human beings, the universe and their inter-relationships. Philosophy needs to be resurrected from its burial in the universities of the world as a protracted study of the history of philosophy and intellectual game-playing and reinstated as the principal dynamic of a vital, fulfilled life.

Nataraja Guru once was invited to speak to the philosophy students at Kerala University. He was welcomed by the President of the Student's Union who was wearing long black robes as a mark of his office. Nataraja Guru asked him how he could expect to become a philosopher if he didn't question why he was wearing those robes, especially in such a hot climate. Guru said, "You are still admiring Col. Dyer (the man who ordered the Jalian Valabag massacre) and perpetuating the customs of the British Raj where they make no sense." That young man, Unnikrishnan, became a sincere student of Guru's and recently received his PhD in philosophy, based on the first thesis written on the philosophy of Nataraja Guru.

*(Continued in next issue.)*



# World Citizenship - Alternative to War

## Letters of Garry Davis and Guru Nitya

4 July, 1986

To: First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev  
President Ronald Reagan

As leaders of your respective nations, you have accepted the legal obligations incumbent on your positions as Chief Executives. Nevertheless, vis-a-vis each other and despite such organizations as the United Nations and other international bodies, as you are aware, you together confront a global anarchy which precludes rational solutions of problems affecting your citizenries, the main one being international war.

Despite apparent differences your so-called foreign policies, therefore, are nothing more than mirror reactions to each other. In reality, based on the dichotomy inherent in the nation-state system, engendering in turn artificial hostility, they are fundamentally the same. As national leaders, you both are obliged to accept that dichotomy which, in political terms, means you accept war per se as an option between your nations. And given the anarchic condition between your nations, that war option finally becomes obligatory. Hence your panoptic and suicidal arms race.

If implemented, however, with today's nuclear weapons, this built-in hostility can only lead to the annihilation of the human race along with literally millions of other species

on planet earth.

As conscientious humans and World Citizens, we of course cannot permit this.

It is self-evident that no so-called summit meeting between you two can eliminate the war/peace dichotomy. On the contrary, you both reinforce it by only discussing the content of the problem: the reduction of nuclear weapons, verification and so-forth, but never the problem itself, that is, the surreal nation-state system which you represent vs. the reality of humanity's legitimate existence. To presume that such a meeting is a "summit" therefore is a travesty since neither of you can nor pretend to represent humanity.

Moreover, in a world of some 170 sovereign states, for you to arrogate the title "summit" to a sterile diplomatic exercise between you two is to reject the mandate of all other heads of state to represent their citizenry. You will recall the recent statement addressed to you both prior to your General meeting by six heads of state, Raul Alfonsin, Miquel de la Madrid, Olof Palme, Rajiv Gandhi, Julius Nyerere and Andreas Papandreu, which claimed that "... the prevention of nuclear war is the key issue not only for your peoples and their destinies but for



all peoples on every continent."Their concern for "all peoples" is a tacit endorsement of a unitive and universal politics which alone can serve the people of the world.

While admitting, however, that "the prevention of nuclear war" surpassed your national mandate in affecting "peoples on every continent" and that "mutual confidence" was essential "in order to insure the preservation of the planet we all share..." they did not, ironically, advocate world law or government as a *sine qua non* of that confidence despite their own positions as heads of local legal entities based essentially on the self-same "mutual confidence." Again they exposed the impotence and indeed irrelevance of all national leaders to the resolution of the war/peace dichotomy.

Composed of sovereign individuals exercising their right to choose their own political allegiance within a global social framework, this (world) Government in legal fact, alone represents humanity's claim to legitimacy.

This Government, therefore, in its concept and operation, is the actual, legitimate and continual "summit conference" to which you allude.

Its World Cybernetic Commission, under the coordinatorship of Stafford Beer, in order 1) that humanity be faithfully and justly represented and 2) that no deception be continually practiced on a disparate public, is hereby authorized in the future to assist at any and all "summit" meetings between you in your office as heads of state. Lacking this valid and inclusive representation, such limited, dual meetings between you two will continue to be merely ill-fated parodies wherein you both betray your mandate as "leaders" of your respective peoples.

I wish to remind you that, as the potential war/holocaust situation as outlined in my petition of March 15, 1985, to the International Court of Justice still pertains, and indeed has been exacerbated by your recent hostile decisions, and as I retain, by default of the said Court and all lower courts to

which I have appealed, my status as a stateless world citizen, my citation of you as war criminals under the international law of the Nuremburg Principles stands.

Sincerely,  
World Government of World Citizens  
Garry Davis  
World Coordinator

My Dear Garry,

Yours of 4th July 1986 along with Stafford Beer's "Decision Making About Decision Making," and your "Statement for the Million Minutes of Peace Appeal."

The fact that you have addressed the draft to Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and President Ronald Reagan proves that in your mind they are leaders of people in some sense and that they cannot be ignored. From time to time there appear within the numerator of geo-dialectics certain people or events which have a specific significance, and it is only normal that a wise man gives credence to their relativistic importance. Even if these people are only figure heads, they are there because of an invisible denominator factor which in the present context you are representing. It is the people of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. who, from behind the curtain of the geo-political denominator, put Gorbachev in the Kremlin of Moscow, and Ronald Reagan in the White House of Washington D.C. You are certainly very right in assuming that the meeting of national leaders cannot alter the present situation, either of the hoarding of nuclear weapons or the mounting of the built-in hostility between the two "super" nations.

The crusades of the Middle Ages were fought on the irrational ground of loyalty or commitment to hypostatic ideologies of a religious sort. Today a similar pattern has emerged, polarizing the USA and the USSR, with the difference that the ideologies are colored with political prejudices and economic interest. Whatever is the goal before them, their

hangups are also hooked onto hypostatic ideologies. Reagan and Gorbachev only represent the prejudices of countless millions of people, and a true world educator should find ways and means of diffusing the present irrational veneration given to such partially understood, and therefore relativistically conceived ideologies.

In your draft you agree that there are 170 sovereign states. If the World Government of World Citizens admits to the plurality of sovereignty, it implies the acceptance of the hierarchy of sovereignty with the USA and the USSR at the top. Such an evaluation is bound to be rated in fascist norms. Thus, we should not agree to this even by way of concession. True sovereignty, as you rightly understand, is the entire people and therefore every individual has a right to represent the one sovereignty of people. He or she is a bonafide donor of the essence of sovereignty through an act of sacrifice and surrender with the intention of merging his or her voice with the voice of humanity.

Even St. John of the Cross declared that on the summit of Mount Sinai there happened "nothing, nothing, nothing, and only nothing." To some extent a good neighbor can prevent his or her neighbor from going bad but one cannot prevent another from going mad. The correction of insanity lies in sanity. We should not be rivals in a world where many seek acceptance as "true messiahs."

As the denominator stands at the vertical alpha point, our stress should be on impressing the root rather than the summit. The holocaust has not yet been initiated because human beings at large are still rooted in love and fair play to their neighbors. It is this root aspect we have to strengthen with the infusion of our own confidence and trust in humanity. Our appeal should be to fellow world citizens and not to pseudo-messiahs.

Yours ever in the service  
of fellow world citizens,

Nitya



# Plant Life Preservation

## An Interview Between Guru Nitya and Wolfgang Theuerkauf of the Botany Faculty of East-West University, Allatil, Kerala, India

**Guru:** Please tell us when you decided to have a Botany Center with a life-preservation unit for plants in the Narayana Gurukula at Wynad and how you went about it.

**Wolfgang:** It was not a sudden decision, but a development that has taken years. The more I saw the deterioration of the forests, the more I became interested in the preservation of plants. Over the years the interest in this field has been growing. So it has been a process of growth rather than a deliberate decision. In the same way, the action of establishing the Botany Sanctuary has not been wilfully brought about, but has grown up like a plant.

**Guru:** How did you come to take an interest in plant life?

**Wolfgang:** It is because plant life is so predominant in Kerala. The vegetation here is so powerful that it kind of over-shadows animal as well as human life. Living in Kerala one cannot help but love and respect the life form which is the matrix for all other life here as well as in other tropical countries, more than in the other zones of our planet.

**Guru:** In the forests there are a number of plants which people haven't noticed. So when they become extinct people don't know about it. What is the importance of observing all plants and preserving those that are becoming extinct?

**Wolfgang:** What you say is quite right, especially in tropical forests. There are many plants nobody knows about and no research has been done on them. We may not even know when they

get extinct. A hundred plants may get extinct and nobody will know about it, but we will know the effects because the forest is in unity, and if you disturb a part of it you disturb the whole unity. When you disturb the forest, you disturb the ecology of the whole country. If you destroy the ecology of the whole country you will disturb the climate also. Understanding this, it is not difficult to see that by disturbing the ecology of the forests we will destroy our own environment.

**Guru:** Have you taken any notice of the wild flowering plants of Kerala?

**Wolfgang:** Yes. Most plants that exist are flowering plants. Roughly 250,000 species of plants exist and of these about 230,000 flower. There are quite a number of flowering plants which are very interesting, for example, the ginger family which is very abundant in Kerala. This family is very valuable for human life because all members are either aromatics or medicinal plants. Kerala also has a very rich population of orchids. This is because of the geography of Kerala which is very conducive to the growth of these plants. Most of the plants of South India are found on the Western Ghats, of which Kerala has the part which is most abundant with plant life.

**Guru:** In Far-Eastern countries like Indonesia and Malaysia orchids are grown on a very large scale, mostly of a hybrid variety. It seems you have a preference for pure breeds. Why do you prefer the pure breed to the hybrid which looks more beautiful?

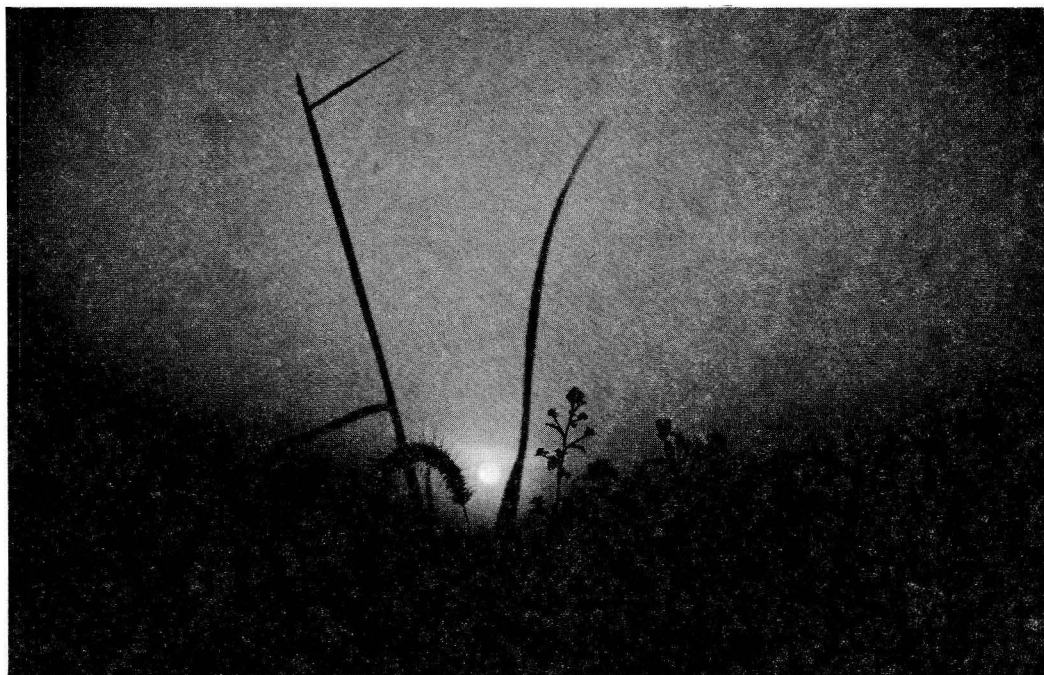
**Wolfgang:** Actually it is not a pure

breed. One is called a hybrid and the other is called a species. One is made by nature and the other is made by man. Now, those made by man have quite a few advantages at first sight. If you look at just the flowering plants, they are more showy, they flower more often, and they will be easier for human beings to handle. But they are useless for nature. They can't exist in nature and so they do not contribute to the ecology of a place. Every other plant which is created by nature has some place in the ecology of a certain environment. Each plant is like a little wheel in a watch which turns and makes the whole clock run. Hybrids don't do that. Since they have no place in nature, if you put them in nature they will die. Even with human care, they have to be sprayed constantly with all kinds of poisons because they are easily attacked by various kinds of pests. So they are useless, for nature, and I am interested in preserving the work of nature. For the work of man, there are people who run nurseries and do business who will take care of it.

**Guru:** Weeds which grow by themselves are also natural, but man finds that weeds are enemies to his crops. Hence people are bent upon destroying

weeds. Do you think weeds should also grow?

**Wolfgang:** Definitely! Weeds should also grow. Actually there are no weeds. Plants only become weeds when human beings have disturbed the environment. When the ecology is disturbed then as species which is more vigorous turns into a weed. No weeds exist in nature because everything is in a state of balance. There is control and no species takes up too much space. But once human beings come in, it gets disturbed and some plants become over-populated and turn into weeds which are nasty to us. Even then, not all weeds are bad for our crops. It is a great mistake to think so. What we do is actually a great mistake - we eradicate all other crops and favor just one species of which we plant many in one place. It is called a 'monocrop'. That makes the work very easy because it becomes factory-like: you always do the same thing, at the same place and the same time, and it looks more effective. But, finally, you create diseases and destroy the soil. Actually many of the so-called weeds are helpful to our agriculture. They keep certain insect pests away and they enrich the soil. So it is a mistake to eradicate all the weeds.





**Guru:** When you focus your attention on natural plants growing in their natural surroundings, by shifting them to your garden, or giving special attention to them by preserving them, don't you disturb the ecology of that plant life?

**Wolfgang:** Of course, anything that you do in nature is disturbing it in a way. An elephant going through the forest does it too, but not in the same manner as human beings because he is a part of that environment. Now-a-days we do not have the question of disturbing nature because there is hardly any undisturbed nature left. Recently, on a visit to a forest office, I saw a map that showed parts of the Western Ghats of Wynad that had once been forested areas. The present forested areas were shown in green and the planted areas and areas inhabited by human beings were shown in white. The whole map was mostly white with a few green spots in one or two corners. The whole ecology has already been disturbed. There is no question anymore of going to a certain environment and pulling out plants and causing more disturbance.

**Guru:** Do you have any classification of the plants and do you keep them in a certain order?

**Wolfgang:** Yes, I keep them in a

certain order, that I would call an ecological order. It is not a botanical order because you can't keep plants that way. For example: in the orchid family, some grow in wet places, others in dry ones, some in the sun and some in the shade. So if you put them according to their botanical order, you will destroy most of the plants. I put them in the same order that they grow in nature.

**Guru:** In nature there are a number of plants which do not get much rain or sun. When you care for such plants in your sanctuary, do you water them everyday, or only water some of them every day?

**Wolfgang:** It depends on the kinds of plants because some of them require more water, and some less. We water them according to their requirement. At the same time, we have to give them more care than they get in nature. For example, plants which may not get water for half a year of the dry season will have to be watered regularly because they have been disturbed and we have taken them out of their place. Actually it is very cruel - there is a poor plant growing and human beings rip it out of its place and put it in another place. This is quite a shock for the plant. To overcome this initial shock we have to give it some extra attention till it gets its old security



back. Once the plant has overcome this initial shock we can keep it like it grows in its own environment.

**Guru:** Do you record the specialities or peculiarities of the plants you are preserving?

**Wolfgang:** Yes. We keep records of every plant which we collect. First we record the place and time of collection. Then we put the ecological conditions under which it was growing – wet or dry, on a slope or level ground, single or in groups. Then the time of flowering. We note the time of seeding. We note down remarks on how the plant will be most easily cultivated because every plant we take from nature needs a special treatment. So these are the points we need to know for the kind of work we are doing.

**Guru:** In your life preservation program do you include trees, or only herbs and shrubs?

**Wolfgang:** We are mostly concentrating on herbs and not so much on shrubs or trees. I want to start an arboretum, a garden for trees of Kerala or maybe the Western Ghats, but that needs special study and special care. At present we just don't have the time.

**Guru:** Do you know of any other agency which is doing similar work?

**Wolfgang:** The technical term for what we are doing is 'preservation ex-situ' and should normally be done by botanical gardens. I have not seen the botanical gardens of the North but the botanical gardens I am familiar with have not taken up much work in this direction. There is a new botanical garden coming up in Trivandrum, the Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute, which is doing quite some research work. They are collecting many plants but they are concentrating more on research than preservation. I do not know of any other institute which is working predominantly on plant preservation.

**Guru:** Do you have any special section in your garden for medicinal herbs?

**Wolfgang:** I have just made a beginning. This is another special study. Nearly every plant has some kind of

medicinal property. Kerala is very rich in medicinal plants and most of these are used in the Ayurvedic system of medicine. So there is already a lot of knowledge about these kinds of plants.

**Guru:** Did you have any special training in botany or ecology?

**Wolfgang:** No, I am a layman.

**Guru:** Then how did you come to know all this?

**Wolfgang:** Just by doing the work. Once you get interested in plants, you want to know what kind of plant it is, how it is related to other plants, whether people know about it, what its name is, what use it has for people, and thus learn more and more about it.

**Guru:** Do you keep notes on your studies on plants?

**Wolfgang:** We keep notes along with the records of the plant. As I said, we note the ecology of the plant. If I find out something special about the plant, be it medicinal value, a fruit plant or special ornamental plant, then we record that and of course I mention their names - scientific name, local name and Sanskrit name.

**Guru:** How do you decide that a certain species is going to become extinct?

**Wolfgang:** I don't really decide by myself. Of course, certain data come from experience – I go to many places and notice the frequency of certain kinds of plants which enables me to decide which plant is rare. But I don't have to do all the study from the beginning. There is quite a lot of research going on in India, especially by the Botanical Survey. There are several people who have studied the ecology of a certain environment, or a certain family of plants, and they write about it. They give reports on which species are rare and which are not. So I put my experience with what I learn from other people.

**Guru:** At one time there were several varieties of chillis grown, but now only a few varieties are available in the market. The same is the case of bananas: out of the very many varieties, only four or five varieties are now available. Is there any way we can reverse this?



**Wolfgang:** It is very difficult because it means changing the economic system. But we can start collecting older varieties and make them available. Now most people want to make easy money. The numbers of other kinds of people are much less.

**Guru:** Some plants can function as insecticides or pesticides, as some herbs can protect other plants from pests. Has anybody done such a study?

**Wolfgang:** I am very interested but have not found anything related to biological pest control of tropical crop plants. As far as I know, there is no literature available on this theme.

**Guru:** Do you have sufficient literature on tropical plant life?

**Wolfgang:** We do not. Books on botany are very expensive. Our research library is growing slowly but steadily and at present we lack a number of books which are necessary for our work. We hope to be able to fill the gap in the future.

**Guru:** Can you tell us about the ecological relationship of air, soil, and water, and what happens when modern fertilizers and pesticides are used.

**Wolfgang:** Everything is interrelated. Where there is water plants can grow, and where plants grow there will be water. Good air makes for healthy plants, and plants purify the air. In Germany forests die because of air pollution. So all-in-all, one can say that a place with a good plant population will have a balanced relation between soil, air, and water.

Chemical fertilizers kill the soil by killing the microbeings which live in the soil. This in turn destroys the top soil in a longer or shorter period of time depending on the climate. In the tropics it takes only one year, while in temperate climates the soil may survive ill-treatment for a longer period of time. If we do not apply these modern means of cultivation, the plants which are growing in a place can give back what they have taken from the soil. If this is handled in a wise manner we can cultivate in the same place indefinitely without destroying the soil. Using modern systems we behave like para-

sites, only taking without giving anything back. This attitude, together with the application of chemical fertilizers and pesticides will quickly turn our fertile places into lifeless deserts.

**Guru:** We have tried growing cabbage and cauliflower without using insecticides, but at the fourth leaf stage some pest comes and eats up all the leaves. Potatoes were grown without using chemical fertilizers but produced only a small crop. So in spite of all good intentions one is at a loss.

**Wolfgang:** You can compare this problem to a person who takes some drug to keep going. The drug is bad for him and will finally destroy him, but if he suddenly stops taking the drug, he will collapse. The plants you have mentioned are much hybridized and are meant to be grown with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. If you withdraw these chemicals, the plant behaves like the drug addict and will not be able to survive. What makes the story worse is that pesticides create new pests which are worse than the ones they were meant to destroy. So once you stop applying the pesticides all the various new pests of your neighbors will attack your crop. Plants not so highly hybridized may more easily survive the onslaught.



**Guru:** What facilities like water, electricity, manpower, number of acres, etc., do you have for the plant preservation center?

**Wolfgang:** I have an extension of 13 acres. Water comes from a river at the boundary. I do not have much manpower, only three or four people. More than half of the land is virgin forest.

**Guru:** Do you have contact with other botanical gardens from whom you receive advice and help?

**Wolfgang:** We have received advice and help from a number of botanical gardens and institutions like the University of Kerala, Botanical Survey of India, and the Leiden Botanical Garden of the Netherlands. We have exchanged information and plants.

**Guru:** Do you publish articles in the media on the work done?

**Wolfgang:** Very little. Mainly because of lack of time.

**Guru:** What are your needs for further developing the center?

**Wolfgang:** Manpower.

**Guru:** What kind of people? Do you give training?

**Wolfgang:** The work needs dedicated people who are not working only for hard cash but have a deep and

sincere interest in what they are doing. Over the years knowledge relating to the preservation of tropical plants has accumulated and we will be able to train people who have an interest in the subject.

**Guru:** Do you think that the botany taught in schools and colleges is any good, or can you recommend some changes?

**Wolfgang:** Very often the study is unrelated. Students study it only because it is available to them. It would be very good if the botany taught in our schools and colleges were more related to plant life. At present, it very often seems that the students are learning about books about botany rather than the plants which constitute their environment. Often they are not interested in doing more because they chose botany as a subject only because no other place was available to them. Even if they have an interest in their study, they may not be able to use what they have learned in their life because they will get a job which is totally unrelated to their field of study. It is very difficult to make any suggestions in the context of this interview because the entire system of education would have to be changed.

**Guru:** Thank you very much. ♦



# The Silence of God's Long White Beard

Mahasamadhi Robert Greenspon

## 4: Schematic Exegesis of Silence; A Structural Analysis

"HE WHO KNOWS DOES NOT SAY" — Ancient Oriental proverb.

*Sri Bhagavan Uvacha:*

*"Yajnanam japayajno' smi..."*

*"Maunam chai' va smi guhyanam"*

Bhagavan spoke:

"Of sacrifices I am the sacrifice of silent repetition;"

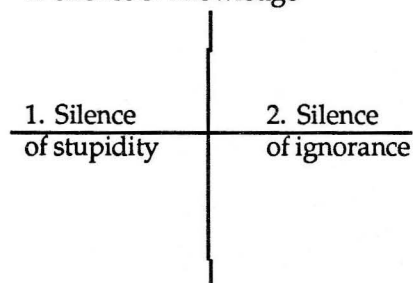
"Of esoteric secrets I am silence"

"The superiority of silent prayer to loudly uttered formulae comes from the fact that the former approximates to contemplation which is subjective and involves no outer expression. In all matters of esoteric significance here called 'guhya' (secrets) there is place for an all-inclusive and subjective attitude of silence which enhances the value of each secret." [Bhagavad Gita, chapter 10, 'Vibhuti Yoga' verses 25 & 38, commentary by Nataraja Guru].

Divine wisdom has been restated as the silence of the Absolute. Where there is nothing, 0, there is silence. Where there is only one, that is also silence. Silence can represent the source of all, be it 0 or 1. Where there is 0 there is no duality; where there is only 1 there is no duality. 0 and 1 are both 'advaitic' concepts. Silence also represents non-duality between hearer and heard. Where there is either only 0 or 1 there is the silence of non-duality. Where there is zero there is no one. A person is some one. Sound implies duality and to break from silence to sound we must break from 0 and 1 to 2; 2 is the archetypal form of

duality. The smallest possible form of duality means something more than one, i.e. 1 followed by a decimal point, an infinite series of zeroes and another 1 (1.000...1). The duality between 0 and 1 is a more difficult concept. If there is only zero, there is no person. Person is represented only by 1, a vertical parameter, though person can be represented by a point or circle which is also the sign for zero. 'There is nothing more superior than the person', such the upanisadic dictum. Upanisads say that every thing is woven warp and woof on the supreme person which is more readily acceptable than that everything is based on nothing. The silence of one as source deserves elaboration hence let us resort to a quaternion structural exegesis:

### 4. Silence of knowledge



### 3. Silence of wonder

Here we have proposed 3 negative forms of silence, left and right handed horizontal denominator silences, one negative silence and a fourth positive vertical aspect sustaining the entire structure. We have: 1) The silence of stupidity, lefthanded horizontal. This is the mute dumbfounded silence of brute beasts, a helpless form of awareness due to lack of intelligence; 2) The silence of

ignorance, righthanded horizontal. This is the silence of blissful innocence. A lack of skill, training or experience creates this form of silence which does not imply a lack of intelligence, but only a lack of positive knowledge. This is also the silence of deep sleep (nescience); 3) The silence of wonder, negative vertical. This silence is also not a lack of intelligence but only the absence of finalized certitude found in positive knowledge. The silence of wonder covers forms of silence such as trance, mystical awe, perplexity, curiosity, admiration, enquiry, doubt, marvel, and especially the silence of a profound desire to learn and know positively; 4) The silence of knowledge, positive vertical. The 3 negative forms of silence do not qualify as suitable answers to questions. In fact it seems these other forms of silence are deviations from the peace of pure silence; the lower forms of silence are seeking to know the higher form which is the silence of knowledge.  $2 + 2 = 4$  is a form of positive knowledge that we all share in the silence of certitude. Higher mathematics is known only to advanced students and top-secrets in the the world of military technology is the silent knowledge of a rare-elite or chosen few. *Samadhi*, cosmic-consciousness, clairvoyance or omniscience are higher forms of positive knowledge known in silence by the initiated chosen-few or well-instructed ones. Awareness is the ultimate term. Supreme knowledge is knowledge of the person and the pure silent science of the Absolute is knowledge termed '*Brahma Jñana*'.

Silence means peace, in pure peace even the duality of sounds are absorbed into a more unitive surrounding silence. Peace is a most-high value and silence implies an absence of disturbance; the peace of silence designates both source and zero. The most positive aspect of silence is the archetypal form of knowledge and peace. When Nataraja Guru questioned his Guru Narayana for scientific answers, the Guru's answer was the certitude of a positive form of silence which invokes a profound or infinite degree of wonder. This story is part of

the now growing myth of Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru. Silence as an answer is the silence of one as the silence of zero is no answer. The silence of one is none other than the Absolute; the knowledge of such silence is

THE WISDOM OF  
ONLY WONDER ONE ALONE

### 5: Myth in the Making

One evening returning home to the Fernhill ashram at sunset, walking behind the Gurukula milk cows, Nataraja Guru remarked to his disciples; "*Brahmacharya* means to walk behind the cow." That all men are mortal or that mortal man can somehow scientifically survive the experience of death is an experiment (we can assert with full certitude) that every man must perform for himself. "I am a greater Guru than Jesus Christ, I don't eat fish." "When I die people will laugh and say 'the old geezer finally kicked the bucket.'" Thus spoke the dravidian Nataraja, his words the content of a now growing myth. The story of Narayana Guru's questions concerning some small stones falling from the roof, the story of Narayana Guru's silence as answer to Nataraja's questions, the stories and histories of mystical events, happenings and experiences of numerous devotees and followers of the Guru such as Sri T.N. Natesan all form content to the now perpetuated growing myth of Narayana Guru and Nataraja Guru, both or whom attained to deific status in the minds and hearts of their followers per force of affinity to the spirit of myth. Guru Nataraja left us here in this world with the thought that non-dual knowledge of the structure of the Absolute is revealed and gleaned from both some old story and some new theory. Whether a Guru is merely a superior human teacher or the divine, occult and mysterious embodied in human form, in considering the subject of 'Guru' we must refer especially to the



mythological context to accrue all possible data. Old stories, Guru legend and lore, abound while modern scientific theories about Gurus might be sociological, psychological, cosmological or theological; 1895 - 1973 marks the mortal experiment of Nataraja Guru, seeking scientifically the happiness implied in the full certitude of a genuine knowledge of the Absolute. The archetypal mythological Guru is an oracle to refer us to the primordial, to whom all contemplative values are inherent. The calibre or degree of accomplishment of a superior contemplative can be assessed by ascertaining how many values or mythological archetypes the contemplative has recognized or included within the pantheon or repertoire of his mystical experience. Recognition of high values would range from absorption into the ecstatic formless consciousness of *samadhi*; another would be to perceive the formless divine light or radiant effulgence of a supreme person or Creator, while another would be to receive a vision of some particular form of God such as a Nataraja, Shiva dancing with naked Himalayan milk maids. Strange fate has entombed Narayana Guru on Sivagiri and enshrined Nataraja Guru on Narayana Giri. People remain confounded as to which of the Gurus is holding pre-eminence, Narayana or Nataraja. This bears allusion to the mythological rivalry between Shiva and Vishnu. At one point in the myth Shiva impregnates Vishnu who assumed female form to give birth Ayyappa who is worshiped by numerous human devotees in South India this present day. A hypothetical situation would be a further story in which Vishnu manages to make Shiva pregnant. Myth always fully allows God to be God and anything to happen while science does not always allow for a God. That God can be God coupled with the attribute that with God all things are possible is the basis of Yoga philosophy. If God can be God then you and I can be God because all things are possible, even our union with God. Nataraja Guru was seeking scientific

knowledge of the Absolute in non-dual terms; now that he is dead and gone the power of myth allows him to continue his search for union until he finally succeeds; these days he may be making good progress to actually becoming and being God the theological Absolute with whom all things are possible. Once the Guru is actually God, he will then be in a better position to genuinely enlighten and benefit his disciples.

#### 6: No Minor Miracle, No Small Wonder, No Slight Mystery

Small wonder that the mystic syllable 'Om' is suffix to the word 'wisdom'. Wisdom is a most silent wonder, a most wonderful Silence, the silent warmth and radiance of the golden sun. The point or bindu is a concentrated circle. The circle appears both as the zero and the place holder in the decimal system based on ten. Ten is both 1 and 0, 10. Zero again appears in concentrated form as the decimal point. One is represented by a vertical parameter and dividing one by two (the archetype of duality) and rendering into decimals we get the digit .5 which is the number of human fingers on either hand. One man, two hands, ten fingers, God's will or mere chance?, to the contemplative this is the challenge and the wonder of the Absolute. The decimal point or bindu appears again in Guru Narayana's poetry: "Adoration to you, embodiment of '*Nada-Bindu* '"; this is addressed to the Absolute in the form of an eternal hypostatic mother goddess. We have to see and understand things clearly with scientific precision, this was a belief that the Guru always wanted to impress upon us followers. The *nada-bindu* refers to a concentrated point of *nada* which is the self-same substance of sound. This particular *nada-bindu* is attributed to the eternal hypostatic female (*Devi*). It is a sound that cancels all into its silence, the *Devi*'s sound of silence, absorbs all into a unitive sound state. Here the word 'sound' can mean fit, healthy, well-built, firm, strong or resonant. English word 'sound' appears in sanskrit '*Soundarya*'



(beauty). To Narayana Guru's mind, his mystical visionary experience was something real. This is what he is pointing out. This point-of-sound represents the cosmic egg (ova) of the universal mother, the egg is the females power to create which is target for the male seed, but no merely mortal seed can reach or penetrate the hypostatic egg of the cosmic mother. The sound it emits is the power to absorb and destroy all lower creation into its unitive substance and then re-create. The first point of Gururji's *Kali-stotram* is to pay homage directly to the egg of the deity. This is the Gururji's appreciation of females. In Guru's vision of the universal dance he later proceeds to praise mother's "comely breasts bright as a pair of golden pots smeared with scented yellow sandalwood paste." The following questions arise; Is Narayana Guru having a hallucination?, a vicarious experience based on literature?, is his mystical vision based on the reality of actually seeing the breasts of a super human deity or is he deifying a beautiful young woman?. Why advaitins write poems to the beauty-content of ample females is no small wonder. This is the challenge and wonder of the Absolute to the mind of gifted contemplatives. According to the myth being perpetuated on behalf of Narayana Guru, he would often burst out in mystical emotion exclaiming "Ammma, Ammma", and shed tears. Jesus Christ used to cry "Abba, Abba" (father, father). Mohamed exclaimed "Allah, Allah" the unnameable. Nataraja Guru says this is because he was choking on a piece of potato. The approaches of various saints to the Absolute has been revised by Nataraja Guru by relying more upon this single term, the 'Absolute'. That we are all born from father and mother is no minor miracle. The beauty of the mother, the beauty of the father, everybody's beauty, the beauty of the superior excellence, works, joys and accomplishments of the peoples. If we took less for granted and re-read our common shopping list, we would read a list of wonders. Actually there is nothing but wonders, no one is none but someone is

a silent wonder, there is no more superior greater wonder than the person. To attain immortality, it is one's own onus to attain immortality for one's own father and mother; one cannot go to One alone but only when all are One, then one is all alone.

Out of love of knowledge, *jijñāsa*, and the wonder for all life, man ponders phenomena in terms of physical science. Lightning, thunder, gravity, rainbow, the spectrum, electromagnets, changing colors of ripening fruits, the development of color photo prints, myriads of miracles are all described by the language and theories of physics and chemistry. A magnet contains the principle of both 0 and 1. The power of attraction is a kind of negative void or vacuum '0' that creates a kind of suction which is the urge to create unity or oneness. Pondering the propensities of the electron, the basis of the material or non-self, we are moved to silence, the silence of ignorance or wonder, but finalized certitude in knowledge about electrons is nowhere, it is not understood in terms of the self or awareness.

When an original philosopher begins to ponder the wonders of life and existence, certainly there are enough wonders and no easy law or axiom to apply to cover all mysteries, but after critically examining the perceptual evidences of the physical world we finally become drowsy and after a hard day of wondering about everything we fall asleep. This is the primal origin of metaphysics, by getting tired, losing interest in the wonders of the world, sleeping, dreaming and awaking we are impressed that the phenomena directly associated with the self, psyche and consciousness are of greater primacy and import than those of the world. The circle appears as zero and as decimal point, hence the wonder of mathematics; love and wedlock produce new offspring, the wonder and miracles of biology and psychology. There is the law of gravity and the law of Karma. For the former we accept the word of a physicist and for the latter we accept the word of a sage telling us about 'God' who pervades all down to the fingernail tips like oil in

sesame seeds; reciprocally there are laws of Karma that bear no reference to a theological God and there are purely mystical theories about gravity. Churning the cream the butter rises to the top and floats, boil it and take the ghee; whether this is the will of God or we should demand a scientific explanation, this is anyways the law of milk. Light travels, reflects, refracts and focuses, this is the law of light; some laws bear affinity to several phenomena while others are unrelated, independent or contrary. All aspects considered the frame of reference, Absolutist epistemological gnosis, dialectical methodology and scientific certitude of the Guru's word is in itself a discipline distinct from all other schools of thought to be studied, considered and appreciated. This well-balanced well-formulated attempt to approach world law, united nations and a unified science of the Absolute is the Law and Word of the Guru, based upon wisdom, compassion, reason, common sense and silent knowledge of awakened spiritual intuition. Apparently there is no apparent Absolute, amidst all the miracles, wonders and mysteries, the Absolute is a least the one or all that tolerates all laws in simultaneous co-existence. 'Might-makes-right' was always an Absoute in itself and that chaos can gain final primacy is the scientific superstition of brainy physicists who have fathered the bomb; the possibility of the meek inheriting the earth or the lamb lying down with the lion refers to the eternal law of a benevolent Absolute, One who weaves of himself and rights all wrongs. It is profound how disciples so wholly submit to the will of their masters, Tilopa instructed his *sat-sishya* Naropa to "look into the mirror of the mind." The principles involved in a mirror reflect and project most of all possible principles in physics and metaphysics, psychology and neurology. Even the god Shiva would never be aware of his own appearance without the assistance of a mirror. An advanced concept of nature or '*prkṛtti*' is that creation is like a mirror of crystal

clear light and liquid mind stuff, permeated by the breathing spirit of the one *purusha* it both reflects and projects, weaves and creates from its own subtle substance, the mirror of *prkṛtti* both projects and reflects the facial attributes of Shiva. There might be some dirt in the substance of the mirror or in the substance of the soul that obscures our chances of seeing our-selves reflected as that of Shiva. By ascertaining with any certitude how the photons bounce off of the quanta of atomic mirror particles and radiate back through the optic nerve to give the vision, we could feel accomplished that we have arrived at the threshold of God-consciousness, which is always something positively real, such the Gospel of the *Brahma-jñānis*.

May the Absolute, the goodness of life, the abode of abundance and delight, bless us all with enhanced support to our paths and careers as blissful, silent wondering contemplatives. The O in only, the om in wisdom, the myriads of wonders, hence this new year's message is hereby dedicated to the Guru's pure love of the Absolute and its continuous contemplation. ♦



# Musical Mandalas

Scott Teitsworth



After recently having visited with both Nitya Chaitanya Yati and Beethoven in the same summer, I was struck by a similarity in their presentation and effect. Both begin their works precisely at the level of understanding of the listener with an inviting simplicity that immediately captures one's attention. While the themes are always new and refreshing, one has a sense that they deal with ideas one has been familiar with for a long time. Once one feels welcomed by this feeling, the music or discourse progresses to subtle and blissful modulation which leads one higher and higher in understanding. One is so much a participant that there is almost no awareness of diving deep into uncharted territory. Only in retrospect can you appreciate how far you have progressed away from your original orientation. The words of the one Master and the music of the other have an analogous ability to affect and enlighten us.

The medium in both cases is of course sound. Sound has an inner symbolic connection with ether, the most subtle of the five elements, earth, water, fire, air, and space or ether. It vibrates with our innermost sensibility, and has meaning in proportion to the attention we focus there. Although we often consider sight, connected with the element air, as our most important tool of apprehension, it does not register at nearly so great a depth as sound. Television, with its remarkable ability to disorient, is ample proof of this. Watching something can pile up a vast amount of information in a short period of time, but it lacks meaningful integration with our inner personality. This compilation of disjunct facts through visual perception actually masks the value-depth within us that

resonates with sound, known in Sanskrit as *ānanda*.

Beethoven and Nitya Chaitanya Yati also share a certain traditional unfold-ment of their inner lives. Both demonstrated early in life an intensity of mind directed toward philosophic and spiritual questions, and a high degree of intelligence to manage this concentration. In this way a kind of mystical fervency was attained. In their one-pointed devotion to truth, neither man showed much patience with the delicate and imbalanced egos of the narrow-minded, who are always so ready to take offence anyway. Gradually this zeal transformed into *bhakti*, the upsurging of what may be called true prayer, which rises above philosophy like a tree from a pregnant seed. Poetry, insight, and kindness are some of the biproducts of the relation with the Divine that is established in this way, and these become important elements of their middle works. Then as *bhakti* leads to *yoga* and *yoga* to *nirvana*, their works become like a pathway into the great void. Nitya stresses that whatever can be named or conceived cannot be the Absolute. Beethoven's last works, especially the string quartets, left the entire musical world wondering where he had gone. He had broken free of all structures to write music of pure bliss, and the Classical Age of music ended in a flash.

And now to the point: a sampling of savory dishes from Master-chef Ludvig van Beethoven.

It has often been noted that Beethoven's Piano Sonatas are a kind of sketchbook for his Symphonies, and that these in turn were practice writing for his String Quartets, where he found his most perfect expression. While overly simplis-

tic, this does give an indication of the relative importance of these three major areas. As mentioned, there is a chronology of Beethoven's life contained in the 32 Piano Sonatas. If nothing else, the piano is a handy framework for composition, and while Beethoven did much of his composing in his head, many of his most characteristic ideas were developed in the Sonatas. The repertory standards are Op. 13 (*Pathétique*), Op. 27 #2 (*Moonlight*), Op. 53 (*Waldstein*), Op. 57 (*Appassionata*), Op. 81A and Op. 109. Other Sonatas of great beauty and importance to which I would direct the contemplative listener are Op. 7, Op. 10 #3, Op. 22, Op. 28 (*Pastoral*), and the last five, Op. 101-111. While the popular works, here as elsewhere, tend to be big statements easily grasped, these latter ones show Beethoven's affection for and association with crackling electrical entities, idylls by the riverside, human suffering transformed into celestial realization, and other delightful subjects. Indeed, while much has been made of the importance of suffering in Beethoven's music, not enough attention has been paid to how in the overall scheme of a work he draws the listener from an empathetic acceptance of suffering to its philosophical and spiritual transcendence. It is precisely here we most clearly see the mark of the great Master and Guru that Beethoven really is, and the foundation of his statement that whoever understands his music will be freed from attachment to suffering and misery.

Closely paralleling the Piano Sonatas are Sonatas for cello and piano, violin and piano, and Trios for all three instruments. All are delightful works, but a few might be singled out: Op. 69 and Op. 102 #1 for cello; Op. 24 and Op. 47 for violin; and Op. 1 #3 and Op. 97 among the Trios. Music from these categories is some of the easiest to enjoy in all of Beethoven.

The Symphonies are all well known and well loved, so I need say little about them. It is interesting to note that they were produced in pairs, with one of each pair exhibiting what might be called male characteristics and one with female characteristics, or *yin* and *yang* in more modern terms. This dualistic

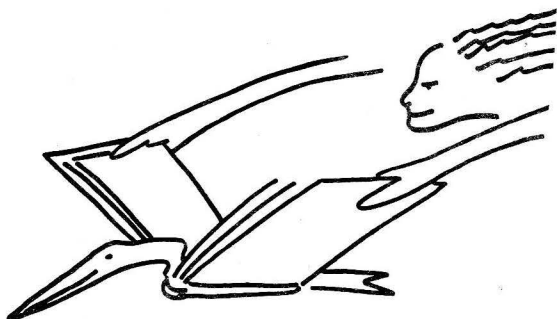
approach is synthesized in the last, the Ninth, a work of startling transcendentalism. Its first three movements paint celestial landscapes peopled by elemental beings, while the fourth might justly be called a wedding ceremony between the soul and God. All the elementals are in attendance. In the center of the movement a march begins in the earth element, ascending steadily through water, fire, air, and ether to burst in a blaze of light beyond all mortal coils. It is Beethoven's greatest blessing to humanity, a bequeathment of joy, not a joy of 'good times' but the joy of complete liberation. To my mind this is the greatest work of art the Western world has ever produced. It never fails to impart ecstatic joy in an attentive listener.

The String Quartets are clearly Beethoven's most profound statements. As such they can be difficult listening, demanding an intense concentration combined with a childlike openness that one may only rarely be prepared for. When such a mood does come these are the works to turn to, especially the late ones Op. 127-135. An earlier Quartet is the perfect introduction to the genre, as well as my personal favorite: Op. 59 #3. In fact, this is the piece I would recommend to the reader who might wish to hear only one work in conjunction with this article. It is also perhaps the least known of Beethoven's finest works, a recondite treasurehouse of delights. This may be due to the fact that it does not yield up its meaning on a first hearing the way the Fifth Symphony or the *Appassionata* Sonata do, but it is not so abstruse as to take ten tries before it is understood, either. As with all great music it grows in value with each hearing, and the first few times one may not resonate perfectly with it. There comes a moment, however, when suddenly it makes sense, when suddenly we have "ears to hear." A leap in comprehension has been made without conscious effort, and our sensibilities are permanently enlarged. This is how we recognize truly great music, or for that matter how we recognize the greatness in the wisdom teachings of a Guru like Nitya Chaitanya Yati. ♦



# Book Review

Deborah Buchanan



It is late in the evening and the poet is walking in the darkness, chanting poems, his voice full.

Walking along roads through the pine forests, the flag of the wine shop is seen fluttering in the wind.

On a winter morning the poet rolls frost into a ball to eat, hoping to dispel his hangover.

Each of these scenes is part of a poem by Yang Wan-li, traditionally known in China as one of the four masters of the Southern Sung dynasty (AS 1127 - 1279). His poems are translated, most for the first time, in a book by Jonathan Chaves: *Heaven My Blanket, Earth My Pillow* (New York: Weather-hill, 1975). Yang is the man lying under heaven's blanket with his head cushioned on earth's pillow. For him poetry is not a scholarly pursuit but the expression of one's immediate experience. Poetry is the medium that helps the poet to explore and commune with his world; it is the exuberant link that illuminates.

On the surface many of Yang's poems are not at all striking. They seem ordinary and easy, even simplistic one is tempted to say. On rereading, though, there is a lyricism that presents itself and a haunting intuition speaks through the everyday images. The language is direct, uncluttered - Yang was known as "the colloquial poet" - yet evocative. The straightforward, objective descriptions of everyday life create a subtle meditative state in which the poet and reader both participate.

Fog veils the river and the mountains  
but sounds of dogs and chickens

show that a village lies ahead.

The wooden planks of the ferry deck  
are covered with frost;  
my boot makes the first footprint.

*(Taking the Ferry at Ta'Kao)*

Yang Wan-li's poems describe a common-place event, such as boarding a ferry, but with these moments he sketches a bridge that crosses the centuries and a variety of social constraints so that the inner worlds of a thirteenth century Confucian scholar and a twentieth century reader are connected. We may never stop at a peasant's hut on return from a Taoist temple or travel by palanquin to an official post, yet Yang's poetry has made the experience our own. It is Yang's great skill - his use of limpid and transparent images - that the inner being is revealed.

Words are used in Yang's poems like the ink lines of a Zen painting, bold yet sparse. They render possibilities without defining too harshly. There is an openness in the poems which allows the reader to participate. Yang was in fact influenced by the Ch'an Buddhism (Zen) of the Tang and Sung schools, and specific Ch'an phrases are incorporated into some of the poems. Yet the philosophy is felt even more when Yang strongly declares himself:

Now, what is poetry?

If you say it is simply a matter of  
words,

I will say a good poet gets rid of  
words.

If you say it is simply a matter of  
meaning,



The river is clear and cold; a fast rain  
falls in the gorge.

At midnight the cold, splashing  
sound begins,  
like thousands of pearls spilling onto  
a glass plate,  
each drop penetrating the bone.

In my dream I scratch my head and  
get up to listen.

I listen and listen, until the dawn.

All my life I have heard rain,  
and I am an old man;

but now for the first time I understand  
the sound of spring rain on the  
river at night.

*(Night Rain at Kuang-K'ou)*



I will say a good poet gets rid of meaning.

"But," you ask, "without words and without meaning, where is the poetry?"

To this I reply: "Get rid of words and get rid of meaning, and there is still poetry."

As a serious practitioner of poetry Yang had early in his life made a methodical study of various styles and forms, working his own poems in such modes. Finally, though, he came to moment of great breakthrough and an establishment of his own poetic voice.

Mountain thoughts, river feelings,  
never betray them.

Rain forms, sky patterns are always  
beautiful.

Closing the door and searching for  
verses is not the way of  
poetry.

(*Going Down the Hen Mountain  
Rapids, Gazing at Gold Flower Mountain*)

From then on Yang walked a path independent of the strong and proliferating schools of poetry then popular. Individual poets of immense stature had shaped the poetry of the Tang dynasty (AD 618 - 907): Wang Wei, Tu Fu, Li Po. Now in Yang's time groups of poets came into prominence. Yang intentionally distanced himself from these schools and their particular prejudices.

Yet Yang did participate in the underlying community - China's cultural vision, it could be called - of the *wen-ren*, the scholar/poet/artist, that was so vibrant in the Sung. The man of this cultural ideal moved fluidly between the various aspects of artistic expression, using whichever medium was more appropriate, words or visual images. Poetry and painting were seen as inseparable twins, complements that merged into a whole, complete artistic ethos. The personal vision that was shared was always one that moved over the core of China's cultural history. Each poet, each painter first steeped himself

in his culture's legacy, then reworked those modes to his own understanding. Writing in the formal *shih* style (where each line is composed of either five or seven characters), Yang Wan-li used many of the traditional themes with both ingenuity and humor...a pattern was shifted so as to surprise, a particular image inverted to change its meaning.

Afraid that the autumn wind might  
be jealous of the peonies,

I cut a branch and put it in a porcelain  
vase.

The heavy curtains are drawn, the  
doors are closed—

why do the petals keep falling off?

(*Red Peonies in a Vase*)

Throughout the book *Heaven My Blanket, Earth My Pillow* are reprints of Sung paintings. They depict two men tucked in a corner on a cliff, near a tree, watching the moon in a vast empty sky; or a fisherman wrapped in a reed cloak standing on his boat that floats amongst reeds and grey tints of water and sky. Following Chinese tradition, these paintings are an interplay of the endless varieties of ink tone and brush work. There is a distinct change, however, from the paintings of the Northern Sung (AD 960 - 1126). China was still then in the flush of the Tang dynasty, a dominant and vibrant society that breathed assurance into all its works. The Northern Sung paintings were majestic and created a world both self-sufficient and ex-pansive. But in AD 907 the Mongols captured the north of China and the Imperial court had to move south. In the paintings of that new dynasty there is a certain removal and detachment, an elegance, as infinite vistas give way to small scenes of life. These paintings are the intimate echo of Tang vitality. Yang Wan-li's poetry as well participates in his age's drift away from the monumental. Yet his poems do not falter on the edge of exquisiteness. The inner strength of his intuition grounds him, and the voice behind his words speaks of contemplation, not retreat.

# East-West University Report and Narayana Gurukula News



Some of the basic principles and goals of the East-West University are:

1. The most precious gift man treasures at the core of his heart is wisdom.
2. Wisdom is a free gift which is at once surging from the depth of a person's soul, like water filling a fountain, and also descending on man as grace, like sunlight which comes from the ever-shining orb glowing in the firmament.
3. Wisdom brings fearlessness and boundless joy, and it is to be shared with one and all.
4. Wisdom is not to be sold or auctioned and it cannot be a commercial proposition.

Considering these self-evident facets of truth the East-West University wishes to take knowledge to the people rather than asking people to buy knowledge at a high bid from a sophisticated seat of learning.

These avowed principles are the basis for the Winter Gypsy (peripatetic) Semester on The Spectrum of Value Science - Its Theory and Practice:

Value science is *Ananda Sastra*. *Ananda*, or pure happiness, is the basic truth of Being or the Self. Happiness is lived only when it is appreciated either imperientially or experientially. While the peripheral experience of a value is



relativistic and ontological, the intuitive envisioning of it is imperiential and therefore transcendental.

**Participants:** A core group of students are attending the entire course. They are traveling with the teachers from place to place. The main bulk of each class is composed of the observers or listeners from each locality. Two essential requirements of the core students are a deep seated yearning to know and a working familiarity with the language in which instructions are given (English and Malayalam).

**Fees:** As we do not sell or buy knowledge, no fee is levied, except the student paying full attention to every item of a class given.

**Attendance:** By attendance we do not mean the physical presence of a student in a class but the alertness, the vigil, and the wakeful inquiry of the mind with which a person can absorb the spirit of the class. If any student fails to give that attention, he or she is in need of a correction. Education should be given to such a person both as a nourishment and a process of therapeutic healing.

**Accommodation:** As the lifestyle of the entire group is of a wayfarer, the core group student is expected to conform to the

pattern of a wandering *bhikṣu* , making the best of any available accomodation.

Food: We do not buy or sell food, but the people to whom we take our university are naturally warm in their hearts and share with us whatever food is available. In turn, we should amply reward the people of each locality by rendering our best services. The best of all services is the share a smile with them.

Schedule: November 1-5, 1986, at Narayana Gurukula, Vizhumala, on a hill-top with a panoramic view of a rock rising into a cliff. Class conducted by Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati on "The Insurmountable Dimensions of the Libido - and the plight of man all over the world to satisfy it, to surmount it, and to sublimate it," based on Narayana Guru's *Mananathitha*.

November 7-14, at Divyashanti-niketan, Malayatoor, based on the first ten verses of Narayana Guru's *Svanubhavadgiti*.

November 17-22, at different localities, on "The Deep Seated Irrational Fear Which Torments the Unenlightened - and how to tackle it with penetrating insights into the pure light of the Self," based on *Prapanca Śudhi Daśaka* of Narayana Guru.

November 22-28, at Grace Cottage, Edappally, a course of initiation into the mystical depth of ones deeper Self by which both the presentative world and the representative world are brought together into a fusion of beauty.

December 5-10, at Vidyaniketan, on the varieties of devotional experiences.

December 11-29, at East-West University Headquarters in Varkala, on "Mind and Matter," based on Narayana Guru's *Citjāda Cintanam* and *Citjāda Cintakam*.

January 3-14, 1987, at the beautiful forest abode of Amritabindu Ashram,

Vythiri, based on Narayana Guru's *Sivastava* - the adoration of the Absolute as the innate dancing principle of the universe.

January 15-30, at Kanakamala Gurukula, Tellicherry, a place of exquisite beauty where both the sunrise and sunset can be hauntingly intriguing, course based on Narayana Guru's *Sadasiva Darsana*.

Beginning March 1, at Narayana Gurukula, Fernhill, the next course will commence with "The Symphony of Values."

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In January, Muni Narayana Prasad will travel via Singapore and Australia to the Gita Ashram in Fiji where he will teach for some time. In his place Mantra Chaitanya will officiate at the Varkala Headquarters.

Vinaya Chaitanya has returned to Somanhalli Gurukula where he will continue with the translation and publishing of Gurukula works in Kannada, already begun with a beautiful translation of *Daiva Daśakam*. Rebuilding of Kaggalipura Gurukula, also near Bangalore, has begun with the help of friends there.

The Portland Gurukula is continuing its study of Narayana Guru's *Svanubhavadgiti*. Monthly East-West University classes will include a watercolor class by Suellen Larkin, a slide presentation by Darlene Dehlin, a music evening by Scott Teitsworth, and an evening of poetry by David Leedy from Bainbridge.

Island Gurukula Aranya has concluded its study of Narayana Guru's *One Hundred Verses of Self-Instruction* and is beginning an extensive practical study of Patanjali's *Yoga Śāstra*, Science of Harmonious Union. The Gurukula has at long last begun the cooperative effort of purchasing the land on which it has been growing, gratefully returning the trust of Nancy and David Leedy who have been loaning it. ❖

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# East-West University and Narayana Gurukula Publications

**By Nataraja Guru**

An Integrated Science of the Absolute (Volumes I, II, III)  
Towards a One World Economics  
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Wisdom's Frame of Reference  
World Education Manifesto  
Anthology of the Poems of Narayana Guru  
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Vināyakaṣṭakam  
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God: Reality or Illusion?  
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Prāṇayāma  
Meditations on the Way  
Psychology: An Eastern Perspective  
Arivu - Epistemology of Gnosis (Translation and Commentary)

**Other**

Dhyāna Manjuṣa  
Nataraja Guru's 90th Birthday Souvenir  
East-West University Yearbooks - 1978 and 1981  
Functional Democracy - Muni Narayana Prasad  
The Philosophy of Śrī Narayana Guru - Dr. S. Omana  
A World Academy of Wonder - J.L. Ascharyacharya  
The Blessing of Being Not Educated - Peter Oppenheimer  
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